

The Great Escape— Lot



GENESIS 19:24-29

²⁴ Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven. ²⁵ And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. ²⁶ But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

²⁷ And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. ²⁸ And he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley, and he looked and, behold, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace.

²⁹ So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived.

Let's
acknowledge
two difficult
issues with this
story up front.

First, did God
really burn
these sinners
off the face of
the earth?



Yes. Scripture uses the sudden destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as an example of God's righteous judgment on sinners, and Jesus used it as a warning for people in the end times.



Fire and brimstone preaching may be unpopular, and politically incorrect, but it is still an indispensable part of sound biblical teaching.



Trifling with God and his law invites
God's judgment and wrath .

Second, was Sodom destroyed for the sin of Sodomy?

Genesis 13:13 says that “The men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord.”

And Sodomy was one of the sins they were known for.

The bigger issue is that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were openly rebellious in their sins and refused to repent.



- The **signature sin of Sodom** has taken over every aspect of American life and culture.
- Entertainment, news media, education, business, and even a large part of religion.



Companies with a 100% "pro-gay" rating by the Human Rights Campaign:



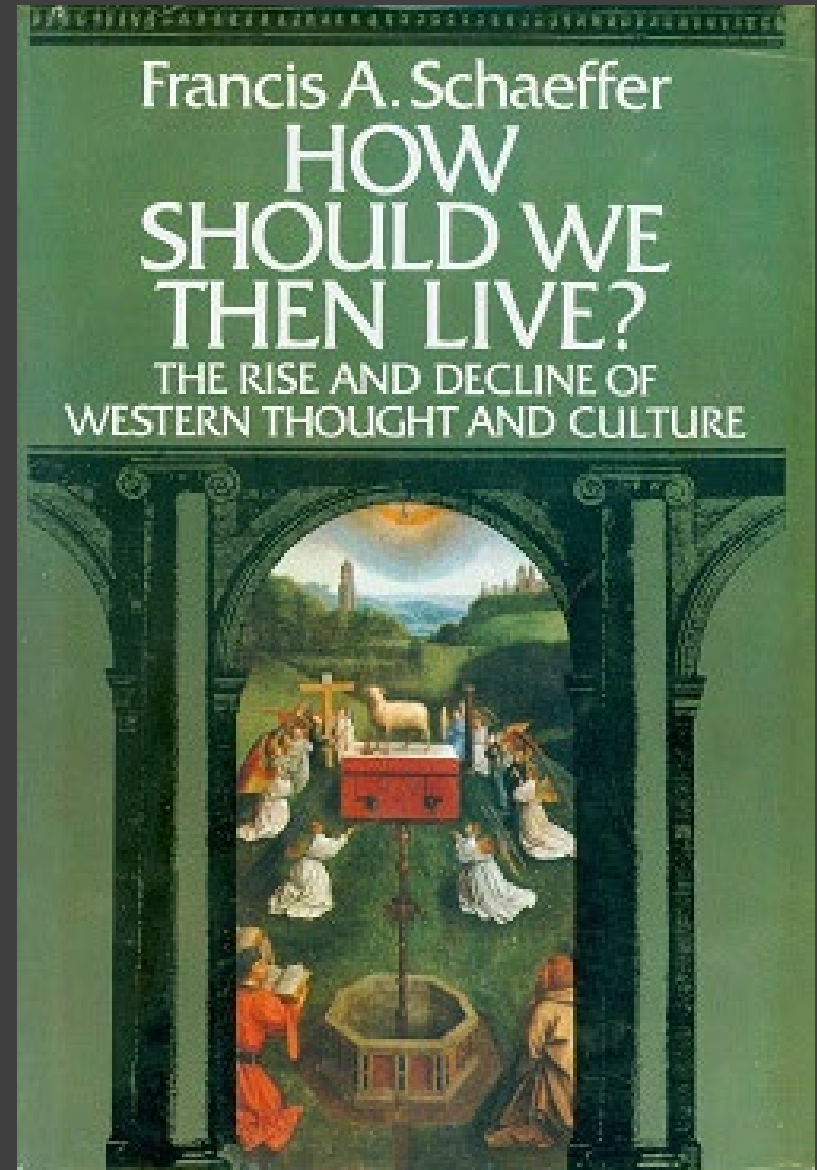
Some years ago, my wife, Ruth, was reading the draft of a book I was writing. When she finished a section describing the terrible downward spiral of our nation's moral standards and the idolatry of worshiping false gods such as technology and sex, she startled me by exclaiming . . .



“If God doesn’t punish America, He’ll have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah.”

—Billy Graham

America, along
with the rest of
Western culture, is
in grave danger.



- The lesson of Sodom and Gamorrah isn't just for the godless culture.
- It is a message for all of us.
- All of us have hearts that are prone to stray from God and attach themselves to other things—our **fatal attractions**.
- ***Drugs, alcohol, sex, and food*** are some of the more dramatic addictions, but they are not fundamentally different from cravings for ***comfort, control, love, approval, money, or anything else we turn to for happiness*** instead of God.

- Each of us is a **walking combat zone** where the forces of good and evil struggle for control of our souls.
- This message is about **saying no** to your **fatal attractions**.

Lot was almost destroyed because he failed to realize the progressive nature of sin.

1. Lot looked toward Sodom.



When Abraham and Lot grew so prosperous that the land could not support keeping their herds together, Abraham proposed that they spread out and gave Lot first choice as to what direction they would each go.

Genesis 13:10, 13

¹⁰ And Lot **lifted up his eyes** and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) . . .

¹³ Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD.

- Lot's troubles all began simply by *looking* toward Sodom.
- The old saying that “there's no harm in just looking” simply isn't true.
- A great deal of sin begins by taking a look at something you have absolutely no business ever getting into.

2. Lot moved close to Sodom.

Genesis 13:11-12

¹¹ So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. ¹² Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom.

- Lot initially didn't move into Sodom. He just moved *near* it.
- There is danger even in getting close to sin.

- In a scene from the old TV show *“Hee Haw”*, Doc Campbell is confronted by a patient who says he broke his arm in two places.
- The doc replies, *“Well then, stay out of them places!”*
- We cannot regularly put ourselves in the face of temptation and not be affected.
- When faced with the problem of temptation, we need to take the good doctor’s advice and “stay out of them places.”



When you flee
temptation, **don't**
leave a **forwarding**
address.



Proverbs 9:13

¹³ The woman Folly is loud; she is seductive

- Our fatal attractions are **LOUD**.
- The **closer** you are, the **louder** they get.
- Get close enough to something that tempts you to sin and you won't be able to hear anything else.

Since temptations become *louder*,
stronger, and *harder* to resist when close,
you must have a *plan* for *putting as much
distance as you can* between yourself and
whatever tempts you.

3. Lot finally ended up in Sodom.

Genesis 19:1-2

¹ The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was **sitting in the gate** of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth ² and said, “My lords, please turn aside to **your servant’s house** and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way.”

- Just five chapters after we read that Lot **looked** toward Sodom and then **pitched his tents near** there, he's living in the city.
- He **owns a house** there.



- Lot had become a **community leader** in Sodom.
- The city gates were where the leading citizens of a city sat to do business
- It's where business **leaders made deals** and where **judges sat to decide disputes**.



- Sin is progressive in nature.
- Psalm 1:1 speaks of *walking*, then *standing*, then *sitting* in sin.

Psalm 1:1-2

¹ Blessed is the man who *walks* not in the *counsel* of the wicked, nor *stands* in the *way* of sinners, nor *sits* in the seat of *scoffers*; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

- If you begin to *think* like the wicked, it is easier to *behave* like the wicked, and finally end up *belonging* to the wicked.

4. Lot almost didn't get out of Sodom.

Genesis 19:15-16

¹⁵ As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city." ¹⁶ But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.

- The angels had **warned** Lot the night before that the Lord would destroy the city the next day and they instructed him to warn his relatives.
- Lot's sons-in-law treated the warning as a **joke**.
- Even Lot was **slow** to grasp how serious the situation was.
- So the angels **repeated** their warning at dawn and commanded Lot to leave.
- But still Lot **hesitated**.
- Eventually, in a display of divine mercy, they literally **dragged him and his family out** of the city.

- Because *Lot's wife* *hesitated* during the rescue—she stopped and turned back for one last look at Sodom—she became a “pillar of salt.”
- She was covered and encrusted with deposits from the melted brimstone raining down out of the sky.



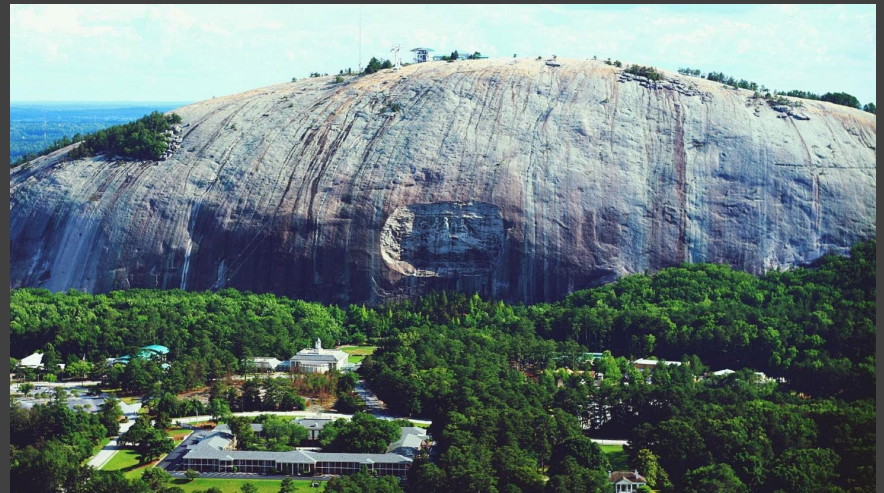
- Stone Mountain, Georgia, is geologically unique because it is the largest piece of exposed granite in the world.



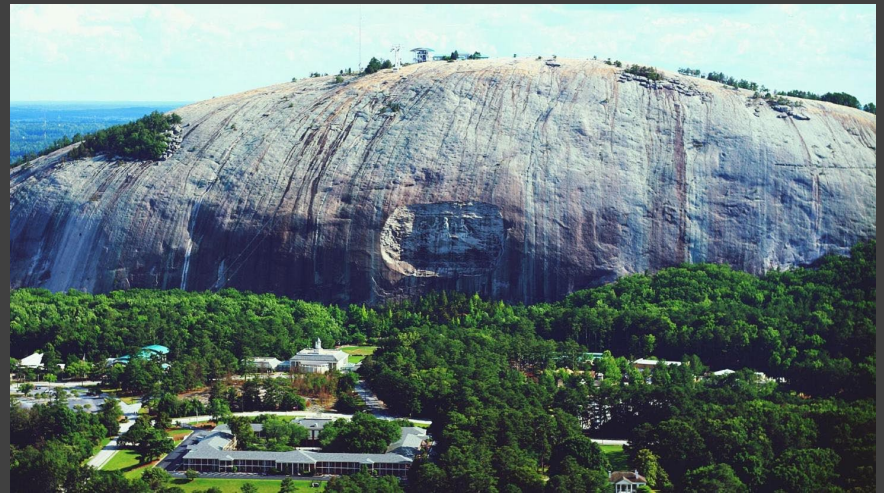
- The West side of the mountain has a *gradual enough slope* that a reasonable fit hiker can walk a 1.3 mile trail to the top of the mountain.



- But the *rounded top* of the mountain is *deceptive*.
- The other sides are much steeper than the side with the hiking trail and it is possible to walk right off the side of the mountain before you realize you're in trouble.



- Years ago, before protective barriers were put up, a young man who was walking around the top of Stone Mountain failed to notice the gradual, almost imperceptible downward curvature of the top of the dome.
- When he suddenly became aware of the fact that he was *powerless to retrace his steps to safety* and that he was beginning to fall, it was *too late*.
- He had *gone too far*.
- He had reached the *point of no return*.
- People nearby who heard him scream were powerless to help him and watched in horror as the man plunged to his death below.



- This world is full of people just like that young man.
- They have no idea that spiritually their souls are on a slippery slope and that they are sliding into hell.
- And many of them will not realize they are plunging into hell until it is too late.

Application

- *Understand that temptation has a progressive nature.* Resisting sin involves refusing to get near or even look at things that tempt us to disobey God.

- *Set up boundaries.* Keeping free of your fatal attraction requires establishing unscalable barriers between yourself and the thing you crave.

Proverbs 25:28

²⁸ A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.

- *Be ruthless with your fatal attractions.*

Of the things that cause us to sin, Jesus said to tear them out, cut them off, and throw them away.

Matthew 5:29-30

²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

- While Jesus is speaking figuratively here (he's not instructing us in literal self-mutilation), he is teaching us to **be absolutely ruthless** in combating our fatal attractions.
- You are in a full-scale shooting war with the forces of evil.

1 Peter 2:11

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

Ephesians 6:11

¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

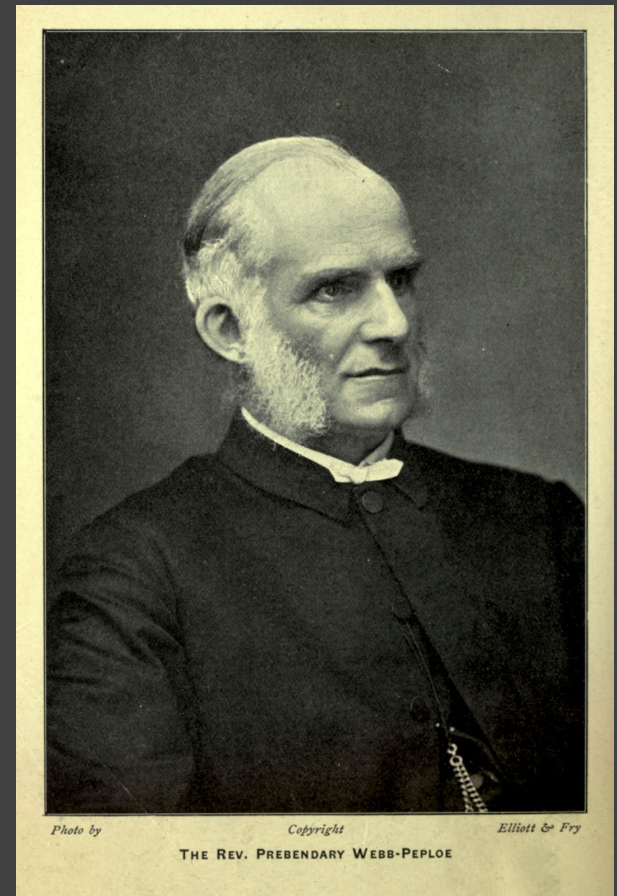
- The fight is on.
- There are rival kingdoms that war over your soul.
- Who owns you?
- Whom do you worship?
- Is the Creator and Ruler of the universe your God or have you fallen for a lesser god—a fatal attraction—of your own making?

- Your daily actions are all about **kingdoms** and **allegiances**.
- There isn't one square inch of **neutral territory** anywhere in the universe.
- Whatever you do, you are on your way to **one kingdom** or the **other**.

- Have a plan.
- Set boundaries.
- Be ruthless.
- Everything is at stake.
- Do it. Now!

[The child of God] is grieved at times—we have all found it so; he is disturbed in his blessed sense of communion with God by the fact that he has broken some one of God's perfect enactments: he has come short of the glory of God, he has wandered in thought at least from God, and communion is disturbed. . . . There is only one thing we can do as God's children: and what is that? **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** So that when I awake to the fact of having in any sense broken God's holy law, **I may instantly be restored** to communion with my Father and my Saviour, and there is perfect peace in the soul again. We have a precious advocate and a glorious propitiation in the presence of God; and therefore, if we discover our guilt and confess it, **in that moment the restoration is complete.**

—H. W. Webb-Peploe, 1885



“There shall rest upon each of us the blessed privilege . . . of **just taking ourselves instant by instant to God as sinners to the last**, saying, ‘God be merciful to me the sinner;’ and thanking God that there is not only a once-accomplished justification when I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, but **a perpetually-giving Christ for sanctification**; so that without this perpetual action of Christ, I should have to acknowledge myself at any moment to be lost, but that, thank God, I have to rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory if I rightly **accept the provision that God has made for me.**”

