

# Judgment on Egypt and Sodom

*Last Things*

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**Bible Text:** Revelation 8; Ezekiel 16:46-52  
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As we work through the book of Revelation, once again from Revelation 8, page 1,921, beginning at verse 1.

1 When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. 4 The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. 5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

The word of the Lord.

*Lord, I pray that you would help me to be clear and concise and compelling and practical, true to Scripture, and Lord, we pray for the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, who alone can take your written word and write it on our hearts, that you would do so for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

Now, if you recall, we've been thinking about this for about two weeks and I had quoted an Oxford professor who said the best way to understand the book of Revelation is as a symphony, as a symphony, and so in a symphony you may get a theme from the past and it plays out again and then again, and then there are fugues where this theme and that theme compete against each other.

The unity of John's book, then, is neither chronological nor arithmetical, but artistic, like that of a musical theme with variations, each variation adding something new to the significance of the whole composition. This is the only view which does adequate justice to the double fact that each new series of visions both recapitulates and develops the themes already stated in what has gone before. (G. B. Caird (1966), *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine* (London: Black), p. 106)

And if we think of the book of Revelation that way, I think we're on really solid ground because it's not given for us to put a chart on the back wall here and to figure out, well, now, as we are on October the 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and what's going on in the Middle East right now and between Russia and the Ukraine and China and Taiwan and us, and all these things, to know exactly, well, we know exactly what's going to happen next week. That's not the purpose of the book.

The purpose of the book is to encourage us to be steadfast, to hold onto the Lord, and the themes of the book are taken, if you go back to Genesis all the way through the Old Testament, the book of Revelation takes all of those things kind of again like a musical, a note here and a musical note there, and weaves them together into this magnificent symphony that concludes with the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the restoration of Eden on earth.

And so we looked last week and we thought about, when did this take place, what are these prophecies about, and I laid out to you that there are several schools of thought. There is the preterist, and that is that this was fulfilled substantially in the first century. There's the futurist that tends to ignore that and looks at pretty much all of it in the future. There is the historicist.

And I had a good friend who died—he helped me with my doctoral dissertation—named Nigel Lee, and Nigel Lee was a committed historicist. He believed it was history, the whole of Christian history written from the beginning and going forward, so that when you get to Revelation 9, which we will be getting to, God willing, within a week or two, it's the prophecy of the coming of Islam, and the first coming of Islam with Muhammad and his conquest there of the Arabian Peninsula, and then pretty much of the Middle East and North Africa and crossing over into Spain and Portugal.

And then the second part of Revelation 9—this is the historicist view which a majority of Protestants believed until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—is a prophecy of the fall of Constantinople with that those big Polish cannons that were hired out by Mehmed II when he conquered Constantinople by firing those big guns that broke down the walls of the greatest city the world has ever known in 1453. So that’s the historicist’s view.

Now, what do I believe? I believe there is always truth in any set of doctrines that Bible-believing Christians have set forth. There is truth. Notice I said there is truth. I didn’t say that they all have the truth absolutely.

So as I look at this book, I’m compelled towards a somewhat preterist view, that this is focused on the first century, and I think as we looked at—and if you didn’t get to hear last week’s sermon, it is on SermonAudio, the video is there, there’s also the transcript.

(Whenever I do the transcript, I spend a lot of time annotating with references and so on. But I think that it’s focused **fundamentally**, but **not exclusively**.)

Because remember this about Bible prophecy, if you go back to the Old Testament again and again, the prophecies in Isaiah have an initial fulfillment in the time of Isaiah, but they don’t exhaust those prophecies.

Take the prophecy of the virgin birth. That, I believe, and again, you’d have to go back to the sermons, is a reference to Isaiah’s second wife, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son. You will call his name Immanuel.” And I think you can prove that conclusively and absolutely within the book of Isaiah itself. But! This is so important, that doesn’t exhaust it.

Prophecy recapitulates itself over and over and over again. So the ultimate fulfillment of the prophecy of the virgin birth, Isaiah 7:14, is in the case of the blessed virgin Mary who conceived the Lord Jesus Christ as a pure virgin and gave birth to him as her firstborn son, and that is the ultimate fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy.

Isaiah had at least two sons, Shear-jashub and Maher-shalal-hash-baz. Both these boys’ names had symbolic value (Isaiah 8:18). Shear-jashub roughly translates as “A remnant will

return” (Isaiah 7:3), while Maher-shalal-hash-baz’s name is “Swift is the spoil, speedy is the plunder” (Isaiah 8:3).

These sons were given to Isaiah as object lessons to the apostate king of Israel, Ahaz, who didn’t trust in the Lord but in the king of Assyria to rescue him from Rezin and Pekah. The boys’ early childhood pointed to the very short span of time until these kings were removed.

Maher-shalal-hash-baz is also called Immanuel by Isaiah’s new virgin wife (Isaiah 7:14; 8:8), an event of great significance (Isaiah 8:1-5).

However, Matthew makes absolutely clear that Isaiah’s second child points beyond himself to the Lord Jesus Christ as the ultimate fulfillment of the prophecy (Matthew 1:18-25).

(<https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=313221814547893>)

So again, prophecies have an initial fulfillment and then they recapitulate over and over again in some cases so as we look at this, we don’t want to rule out the future aspect of these things.

But let’s take a moment and look at something that I think is very critical to understanding this middle section here of the trumpets, because remember that the seven seals open up the seven trumpets. And so if you turn with me over to Revelation 11, page 1,924 and verse 7.

Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. (Verse 8) Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. (Revelation 11:7-8)

Scratch your head for a moment. Where was Jesus crucified? He was crucified in Jerusalem, and this indicates something to us very powerful. Jerusalem is Sodom. Jerusalem is Egypt. And these judgments were coming on Jerusalem which is, we’re told here, figuratively called Sodom and Egypt.

Let's see how that bears out for a moment. Turn with me if you will, to the left, to Isaiah 1 and verse 10. Isaiah 1 and verse 10 and listen to the words that Isaiah says there in Isaiah 1:10, and that's on page 1,060.

“Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom.”

Who's he talking to? Isaiah is a prophet of the southern kingdom, the kingdom of Judah. He prophesies during the time when the northern kingdom is sent off into exile under the Assyrians and the fall of Samaria in 722, the northern kingdom. He's a prophet of the southern kingdom. The leadership of the southern kingdom is in Jerusalem. And listen to what he says, what does he say to the rulers of Jerusalem? He says:

“Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah!”

He's taking them to task and he's telling them, “All these things you're sacrificing to me, they're no good, they're of no value because your heart is estranged from me. Your hearts are just like the hearts of the rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah,” who didn't have a heart for God. So Jerusalem is Sodom.

Now holding your hand there, let's go over to Ezekiel 16. Ezekiel 16 and this is a chapter that very few people will ever preach on—but I've preached on it before—because it's so lurid and colorful. And so in in Ezekiel 16 and beginning in verse 46 that's on page 1,306, look at what he says in verse 46, “Your older sister was Samaria.” He's writing to the Jewish people, the people who lived in Judah, and he's writing as a priest, because he was taken into captivity under the Babylonians, and he is foretelling the fall of Jerusalem and he's addressing the rulers there with a very potent metaphor and what is that potent metaphor? Here he says,

46 Your older sister was Samaria [the northern kingdom], who lived to the north of you with her daughters; and your younger sister, who lived to the south of you with her daughters, was Sodom. 47 You not only walked in their ways and copied their detestable practices, but in all your ways you soon became more depraved than they. (Ezekiel 16:46-47)

Do you remember what the Lord Jesus said as he was dealing with the cities in the Galilee that had ignored his teaching, that had witnessed all these things, and he said, “It will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for Sodom than for you!” (Matthew 10:15; 11:23; Luke 10:12)

Let that sink in for a moment. It will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for Sodom than for you. That’s very serious, isn’t it? What does that mean? It means one thing right now, I’ll say, if you are self-righteous, if you believe yourself to be better than other people, if you look down on other races, other religions, other cultures, and you think you’re self-secure because of who you are, that’s exactly what the people were doing in Jesus’ day, particularly the Pharisees. They looked down on other people, and Jesus said it’s going to be more tolerable for the people of Sodom on the day of judgment than it will be for you. And that says something else to us.

The people of Sodom didn’t just get burned up and that’s that: death and all over. The people of Sodom will stand before God one day, as the people of the United States will, as the people of Israel and the Gaza Strip and Ukraine and Russia and China will stand before God one day, and all of those people who look down on others, who thought themselves to be superior to others because of their great moral integrity, it will be more tolerable for those who have been resurrected to stand before God in judgment from Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for them (Luke 12:47-49; Revelation 20:11-15).

And again, so in Ezekiel 16, he says here in verse 49. What was the sin of Sodom? You ever thought about it? It’s not what people think. He says,

“This was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters, they were arrogant.” Arrogance? You mean that’s the sin of Sodom? Yeah, let’s read on.

“Overfed,” and that’s not just that they had potbellies, and I need to take off a few pounds.

He says, “and unconcerned.” They were apathetic. They had too much money. You have too much money? I think of that song from Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess:

“I got plenty of nothing, and nothing’s plenty for me. Rich folks,” he says, “they got to worry all day how to keep the devil away.”

So what was Sodom? It was the United States of America, if you want to look at a pattern. A very wealthy nation, we’re the wealthiest nation in the history of the world, and what do we spend our wealth on? Self-aggrandizement. We’re bored. We just need to have something more to titillate ourselves and to stimulate ourselves.

And so he says, arrogant, overfed, unconcerned. They did not help the poor and the needy. The poor and the needy. I like this bulletin cover “Called to Serve.” “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters or sisters of mine you did for me.” (Matthew 25:40)

Why does God give you money? God gives you money to share it. When God gives you wealth and power—wealth and power are mammon—when he gives you wealth and power, he means for you to use it to help the poor and powerless.

And so here’s Sodom again, look at that, verse 50, “They were haughty.”

They were haughty. They were in the junior league. They were Rotarians. They were this, they were that. I used to be a Rotarian, so I’m not condemning Rotarians as such. I’m simply saying they looked down on other people. They were blue bloods. They looked down on others.

So there they are and what’s the last thing? What do bored people do? What do people who don’t have to eke out a living daily by hard, hard work to feed themselves and their families do? Here it is, here’s the last one, and the last one is what they’re famous for, “and they did detestable things before me.”

They did detestable things before me. A culture that is wealthy and apathetic and bored ends up in all kinds of sexual experiments that call down the fire of God. That’s what they do, and that’s what they’re famous for, but we fail to realize what led them to that sense of sexual experimentation and all of the perverted things.

And so the key here is to understand something, and that is that when Jesus is speaking to the rulers of the Jewish people in his day, and he’s calling

them Sodom, what he's doing is saying exactly what Isaiah said, exactly what Ezekiel said, and we just go on very quickly in that passage, and he says there in verse 52:

Bear your disgrace, for you have furnished some justification for your sisters. Because your sins were viler than theirs." (This is the sins of the Judeans.) Your sins were viler than theirs, they appear more righteous than you. So then be ashamed and bear your disgrace for you have made your sisters appear righteous." (Ezekiel 16:52)

Wow! What do you think that the Jewish people living in Ezekiel's day, when they got this prophetic word sent down to them from where he was in Babylonia, what do you think their reaction was?

The same reaction that modern American so-called Christians react to any preacher who will preach from the Bible. Look at what he says again. He said, "So then, be ashamed and bear your disgrace, for you have made your sisters Sodom and Samaria appear righteous." He says, wow, wow, wow.

Now, going back to Revelation, the judgment is on Sodom. Who is Sodom in Revelation 11 and in verse 8? Sodom is where Jesus was crucified.

Wait a minute, I thought he was he was crucified in Jerusalem just outside the gates of the city? You mean that they took Jesus down to the Dead Sea, to the southern end of the Dead Sea, and they nailed him to a cross there in the ruins of Sodom, which are actually under the Dead Sea, and that black mud they'll rub on you are the cremains of the Sodomites and the Gomorrites.

(Sandy and I had that treatment in 2008 when she and her sister and I traveled to Jordan and Egypt.)

What is he saying? He's talking about the present city of Jerusalem that existed prior to the Romans destroying it, where not one stone was left standing on another. Wow!

What is the Wailing Wall? The Wailing Wall is the foundation of the temple of Solomon, but the temple of Solomon was destroyed in AD 70 (This was a verbal slip. The temple of Solomon was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586



BC. This temple was rebuilt in 516 BC, Ezra 6:15), and all that remains of it are the foundation stones when the temple was, in 19 BC, rebuilt, under a massive remodeling program under a half-Edomite, half-Jewish man named Herod the Great.

So there he's saying it, and he's calling that city of Jerusalem Sodom. Notice what else he says, he was crucified in Egypt. Now Jesus traveled to Egypt because of Herod the Great, his persecutions. He was warned to leave. His adopted father Joseph and his biological mother Mary were warned by God to flee, and they fled to Egypt and so fulfilled a prophecy, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son" (Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:14-15). But Jesus lived in Egypt briefly, but he was not crucified there.

Where was he crucified? He was crucified in the city of Jerusalem, and Jesus foretold in Matthew 23, at the very end of that chapter, he says:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children to me like a mother hen gathers her biddies underneath her, but you were not willing. (Matthew 23:37)

In other words, the leadership of Jerusalem, the leadership politically and religiously, hindered the work of the Lord Jesus Christ to call the Jewish people to himself. And you know why he's crucified, the people were following Jesus, but the political and religious leaders plant people in the mob to cry out to Pontius Pilate, "Not Jesus but Barabbas!" (Matthew 27:15-23)

And when Pilate washes his hands and he says, "I'm innocent of the blood of this just man" (Matthew 27:24). Of course, like all politicians, that was symbolic, he couldn't wash away his responsibility. But then this hideous cry, this horrible cry goes up from the people when he said, "I'm innocent of the blood of this righteous man," and they said,

"His blood be on us and on our children!" (Matthew 27:25)

Whoa! Oh my! They're snared by the words of their mouth (Proverbs 6:2). And what happens? Jesus had said that within a generation, that is 40 years (Matthew 23:36). Jesus is crucified in 30 AD, and in AD 70 his words were literally, graphically, absolutely fulfilled. "His blood be on us."

Now those people who repented of their sins and cast themselves on the Lord Jesus Christ were saved. They were delivered. They understood a prophecy that was in the gospel of Luke, and they fled (Luke 21:20-24). They fled. Wow. But those who remained only became more arrogant, more self-confident, more self-righteous. They were dominated by the zealots.

Read the writings of an eyewitness of the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 and that was a Jewish general by the name of Flavius Josephus. That was his adopted name because when he went up against the Romans, he realized it was a hopeless battle, and so he turned over himself and his armies to the Roman general Vespasian, and then he became an apologist for what happened and said, “My own people forced this to happen by their arrogance and rebellion against God.”

And he’s the greatest source of information of first century Judaism, and he tells us the story nine years later of what happened in Masada. I’ve been to Masada. And what happened is that remnant of zealots, the zealots were so zealous, they didn’t care what they were doing to their own people. **They murdered the Jewish people.** They murdered many, many other people in their zeal to establish an arm against Rome, believing that they could somehow, or another defeat the Roman armies.

And so finally these zealots knowing that the end is near—they escaped Jerusalem, and they go out into the Judean wilderness, and they capture Herod’s great fortress that overlooked the Dead Sea, Masada. And as I mentioned last week, that’s what happened there, when the Romans finished their massive engineering feat, building a ramp to go up to Masada and finally, when they use their ram rods and break in, there’s a survivor.

The survivor had hid themselves, and they report what had happened. The zealots were so full of hatred and jealousy, and strife, and bitterness that they drew lots, and **they murdered their own children, their own spouses, murdered one another, and the last person to be alive, so far as they knew, murdered himself, suicide.**

It’s just like Islamicist suicide bombers. Wow, God doesn’t approve of suicide. And in the modern Israeli state, founded in 1948, where do Jewish soldiers go to take their oath of allegiance? They go to the place of mass suicide.

Wow, that's like going to Jonestown, and pledging allegiance to Jim Jones. That's like the Muslims who will blow their own children up.

I'm not talking about all Muslims, I'm talking about Islamacism, which is the version of Islam closest to the Quran. And you know, when you look at modern conflict in the Middle East, you need to never forget what is found in the *al-Hadith* and in the *Hadith*, Muhammad receives a word, and it says, "Oh, Muhammad, don't put down your sword. There's a Jew hiding over there. Go and kill him."

Allah's Messenger said, "The Hour will not be established until you fight against the Jews, and the stone behind which a Jew will be hiding will say, 'O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, so kill him'" (Al Bukhari, Imam Muhammad bin Ismail bin Al Mughirah, (1997) *The English translation of Sahih al Bukhari with the Arabic text*, Vol. 1-9. Translated by Muhammad Muhsin Khan. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Darussalam Publishers and Distributors), 4:113).

True Islam, according to the Quran and the *al-Hadith*, is about annihilating the Jewish people. Wow, wow, wow. And that's why people will sometimes strap bombs on their own children and send them into a marketplace. And that's what happened at Masada in AD 70.

So again, he's saying something here that's striking, and he warns them. He warns them, "Look, remember, remember what happened."

And I'm going to stop there and, God willing, pick it up next week and look at Egypt because Egypt is in view as well.

And if you look at the first of the trumpet blasts, those trumpet blasts reflect the curses on Egypt in the exodus—if you look over that perhaps this afternoon before next week. And before I close, finally I want to address these words to anyone who may be watching on the internet.

You know, we live in perilous times. I have no idea what is going to happen in the Middle East, and I want to say our prayer should be for the warring children of Abraham. Whoa! The warring children of Abraham. Never forget you have Ishmael as well as Isaac. Never forget that you have Esau as well as Jacob.

And never forget that so many people became believers in the Lord Jesus Christ in the first century (Acts 5:14). You had hundreds of priests who converted, priests, those who were permitted to go inside the temple. You had hundreds of priests who became Christians, who became followers of the Lord Jesus Christ in the first decades of the Christian century following the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (“And a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith,” Acts 6:7).

You had thousands upon thousands of Jewish people who embraced the Lord Jesus as their Lord and King and Messiah, and those people were able to escape the terrible, terrible tragedy that fell to the city of Jerusalem when the civil war broke out in AD 66, climaxed in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem.

And so currently, we see a war between Abraham’s warring children fighting over a piece of real estate. I want to tell you the piece of real estate that really matters is the heavenly Jerusalem, and my citizenship is there, and it’ll never be taken away from me (Galatians 3:26-29; 4:25-31; Hebrews 12:22-24).

How do I know that? I know that because I have repented of my sins. I’ve turned from my sins and cast myself on God’s mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Have you ever done that? Have you ever done that? It’s so easy in modern America—well it used to be in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—so easy in modern America to be a church-goer, externally moral, and yet not have a heart for God.

Here’s a question I’d ask you. You believe you’re a Christian. Do you delight in God? Do you enjoy God? Do you look forward to being in his presence through prayer and study of his word? Do you delight in gathering with God’s people to adore him? If you don’t, I would urge you to question yourself. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 13 and said:

“Examine yourself,” these were church-going people, “Examine yourselves to see whether you be in Christ.”

Would you do that? And if you would commit your life to the Lord Jesus Christ, please contact me and I’ll be happy to help you follow up.

May we pray.

*Lord, bless this word that as we ponder it, we may apply our hearts to the ways of wisdom, that we may know Jesus and love Jesus and live for Jesus. For Jesus' sake. Amen.*