

“SIX SAVE SODOM!” (OR, A HEADLINE THAT NEVER WAS)

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Genesis 18:16-33 recounts a conversation between God and Abraham wherein the latter pleaded on behalf of a den of iniquity called Sodom. Abraham's nephew, Lot, lived there and he did not want Lot's town to be wiped from the map by the wrath of God. So Abraham asked whether God would destroy Sodom if there were fifty righteous people in it. God said he would spare Sodom for the fifty. Less than confident fifty could be found, Abraham asked whether God would spare Sodom for forty-five righteous souls. God said he would. Abraham, who must have had a grasp of Sodom's nefarious ways, felt compelled to get the number even lower. He asked whether God would spare Sodom for the sake of forty godly citizens. Yes. What about thirty? Yes. Twenty? Yes. Even as few as...ten? Yes, God would spare Sodom for the sake of ten, should they be found. Notice, God did not insist that the righteous had to *out-number* the wicked. God did not insist the number of good had to *equal* the number of evil. God would have spared a host of people for an *extreme minority* of ten.

As the story unfolds, only four make it out of Sodom alive, including Lot, his wife, and their two daughters (Lot's wife quickly perishes when she later looks back, disregarding God's warning). Think of it. It would have taken *only six* more people, combined with Lot's family, to spare the entire city from death by fire and brimstone. Military might could not have saved Sodom. Unbridled patriotism could not have saved Sodom. But righteousness, on the part of only six more people, *could* have saved Sodom. Alas, the six did not exist.

Solomon wrote, "Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). The United States has been here for over 200 years, in which time God has blessed us to an historically unprecedented extent. To our shame, America has, in the last 100 years, become increasingly skeptical in outlook, materialistic in lifestyle, and wicked in practice. We have lived to see God removed from the classroom, hedonism glorified, and the Bible vilified. Surely the blood of countless aborted (i.e. murdered) American children calls to God, as did the blood of Abel (Gen. 4:10). We have turned all the way from denouncing homosexual perversion to embracing its practitioners, allowing them to have a societal influence out of all proportion to their true numbers. In many cases, we have even tried to sanction the evil with legislation. Imagine it. God obliterated Sodom for its sin—not the least of which was homosexuality—and now our own country seems bent on making sure that same kind of people are coddled, protected, endorsed, unoffended.

And yet, America still stands. Why? It is not due to our military prowess. It is not because of our highly touted diversity. And it is not because of our much vaunted attitude of toleration. America stands because God allows her to stand (Dan. 4:25; John 19:11). And it may well be that God allows her to stand because of the righteous people (i.e. Christians) who are still here.

Christians are the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13), and righteousness exalts a nation. If Sodom is any indication, the number of faithful Christians in the land may be a huge factor in God's determining the country's fate. Will the United States continue for 500 years? Will it end tomorrow? It may hinge on the Lord's church. A sobering thought, is it not? There seems to come a time when a people's sins are so numerous God considers them to be full, or complete (cf. Gen. 15:16), after which that people is destined to ruin. It falls on our shoulders to be the preserving influence for righteousness, which, in turn, will lift up this nation. Is there a ratio of saints to sinners in America that, even now, God is keeping his eye on? For our souls' sakes, as well as for the country's, we had better fall on the right side of that equation.

