

Vine of Sodom

by Tricia Berg

For their vine is from the vine of Sodom, and from the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of poison, their clusters, bitter. Their wine is the venom of serpents, and the deadly poison of cobras. Deuteronomy 32:32-33

Earlier in the same passage, more information is given about the enemy in the verse above.

"For they are a nation void of counsel, and there is no understanding in them. If they were wise, they would understand this; they would discern their latter end!" Deuteronomy 32:28-29

After our verse at the top, it continues on as follows:

"Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly." Deuteronomy 32:35

God will judge both His own people and His enemies; so if we are believers, let's be sure we're not behaving like enemies. (Mal. 3:13-4:3, Ezek. 9, 1Cor. 3:16-17, 2Tim. 2:19, Heb. 4:13, 1Pet. 4:3-5)

*For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge **his people**." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Hebrews 10:30-31*

"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done." Revelation 22:12

People who are not believers often function as "enemies" of the cross. Paul himself hated Christians and persecuted Jesus by persecuting those who were His, right up until He became a Christian himself. (Acts 9:1-31, Heb. 11:6) However, Paul's letters were not written to unbelievers who would never read them, but to believers who should know better than to behave like unbelievers, the way they acted BEFORE they came to the knowledge of the TRUTH. (Philip. 2:12-16, Rom. 12:1-2, Eph. 4:17-5:21, 1Pet. 4:1-7, 2Pet. 1:3-11, Matt. 5:13-16, 2Tim. 2:24-26, Titus 1:1, 1Tim. 4:6-16)

*Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. **For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. Philippians 3:17-21*

Having one's belly be a "god" (and therefore being an idolater who worships a false god) means that a person is more concerned with earthly pleasures than they are concerned about their Father's heavenly kingdom and their inheritance in it—just like Esau and his desire to fill his stomach with soup at that moment such that he couldn't have cared less about his birthright. (Gen. 25:29-34, Gen. 27, Heb. 10:26-39, Matt. 6:19-21) That is why the mind set on flesh leads to death, but the mind set on the things above leads to eternal life. Whatever you love the most controls you, and we as believers are to love GOD most and be controlled by the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 8:5-18, Gal. 6:7-10, Titus 3:3, 2Pet. 2:19, Rom. 6, Rom. 13:13-14, Gal. 5:16-25) We overcome or "conquer" this world by abiding in Jesus (who already overcame - John 16:33, Rev. 2-3), which is to walk as He walked. (1John 2:1-6, John 15:1-11, Matt. 25:14-30) He loved people and had no concern whatsoever for His own comfort. (John 4:31-36, Matt. 8:19-22, John 12:24-26, John 13:35, John 15:12-14, Matt. 9:35-38) The definition of "loving one another" has NOT been expanded EVER to loving SIN. (Rom. 1:32, 1Thess. 4:1-8, 1Cor. 5:9-13, John 5:14)

*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. **For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"** Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. 1 Peter 4:12-19*

*As obedient children, do not be conformed to the **passions of your former ignorance**, but as he who called you is holy, you also **be holy in all your***

conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." **And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile**, knowing that you were **ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers**, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. 1 Peter 1:14-19

Notice that the false teachers who teach others to use grace as a license to commit sexual sins also "deny their Master." (Rom. 6) This does not only refer to those who say there is another way to be saved than through Jesus. Most people recognize that you cannot possibly be a true Christian if you don't even understand that He is the ONLY way. (John 14:6, John 3:18, John 3:36) These false teachers have "crept in" to the church. They are wolves in sheep's clothing, as we can see by their ungodly behavior. (Acts 20:29-34, Matt. 7:15-29) In the context, we can see that this phrase "deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ" refers to those who refuse to OBEY their Master and Lord, all the while CLAIMING Him as their Savior. (Luke 6:43-49) They will be condemned! There is no condemnation IN Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1), but they are NOT in Him. They are not abiding in Him by doing His will, but rather are included among the "enemies" that Paul describes above, whose end is destruction. (John 15:10) They don't even KNOW Him AT ALL! (1John 3:4-10, Rom. 8:9) They do not understand about the body being a temple of the Lord to be kept HOLY. (1Cor. 6:15-20, Rom. 1:24, Col. 3:5, 1Thess. 4:7) They aren't merely "slipping," but they are leading entire households and congregations astray! (2Tim. 3:1-9, 2Tim. 4:3-4, Titus 1:11, 16)

*But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be **false teachers among you**, who will secretly bring in **destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them**, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will **follow their sensuality**, and because of them **the way of truth will be blasphemed**. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. **Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep**. For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; if **by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly**; and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly **distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked** (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his*

righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and **to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority**. Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord. But these, **like irrational animals, creatures of instinct**, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. **They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime**. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. They have eyes full of adultery, **insatiable for sin**. They **entice unsteady souls**. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! Forsaking the right way, they have **gone astray**. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness. These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. **For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."** 2 Peter 2:1-22

Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, **ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ**. Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—

*just as **Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.** Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever. It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "**Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.**" These are grumblers, malcontents, **following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.** But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." It is these who cause divisions, **worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.** But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by **snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.** Jude 1:3-23*

We saw above WHY they do what they do—they love their sin more than they love God. They love temporary pleasure, riches and fame more than the inheritance they CLAIM to have in heaven—just like Esau (and also Balaam, who accepted money from Balak to give Balak's message instead of God's to the people—sound familiar? Num. 22-24) and encouraged the Israelites to commit adultery with the nations around them after God warned them repeatedly to remain separate - Exo. 34:11-16, Num. 31:16, Rev. 2:15—just as WE are to abstain from the wickedness of the fallen world around US - 1Pet. 4:1-5, 1Thess. 4:3, 1Thess. 5:22, 2Cor. 6:14-18).

We need to ALL heed this warning and refuse to participate in or approve of all forms of impurity (and all intimate relationship outside of marriage between a man and woman is outside of God's will). Esau's sin was not sexual, but he lost his inheritance nevertheless. His inheritance was to have been the double blessing of the firstborn, just like ours. (Heb. 12:22-29, Rev. 21:7-8) God has prepared wonderful things for those who LOVE Him, and He has told us that "those who love Him" will OBEY Him. (1Cor. 2:9, John 14:15-24) We have not yet RECEIVED our inheritance. (1Pet. 1) Thus, the stern reminders to persevere in the faith until we do. (Gal. 5:19-21, Heb. 6:4-12, Heb. 12:14, Rev. 2-3, 1Cor. 15:1-2, Philip. 2:14-16, 2Thess. 2:15, Heb. 3:5-6, Heb. 10:23) We WILL be forgiven when we repent, but if we persist in our sin long enough, continuously quenching the Holy Spirit's attempts to bring us back into God's will, then eventually we may no longer hear Him. If we no longer hear Him, then our faith has no sustenance. (1John 1:5-10, Heb. 3:12-13, 1Thess. 5:19, Rom. 10:17, Psalm 119:105)

We can learn much from the mistakes of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Bible is filled with useful advice for those who desire to please God. (Gal. 1:10, Col. 1, 2Tim. 2:3-7)

Genesis 18:20-19:29 (Destruction of Sodom (and four other cities) for their grave sins.)

For the look on their faces bears witness against them; they proclaim their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them! For they have brought evil on themselves. Isaiah 3:9

But in the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: they commit adultery and walk in lies; they strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from his evil; all of them have become like Sodom to me, and its inhabitants like Gomorrah." Jeremiah 23:14

Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them, when I saw it. Samaria has not committed half your sins. You have committed more abominations than they, and have made your sisters appear righteous by all the abominations that you have committed. Ezekiel 16:49-51

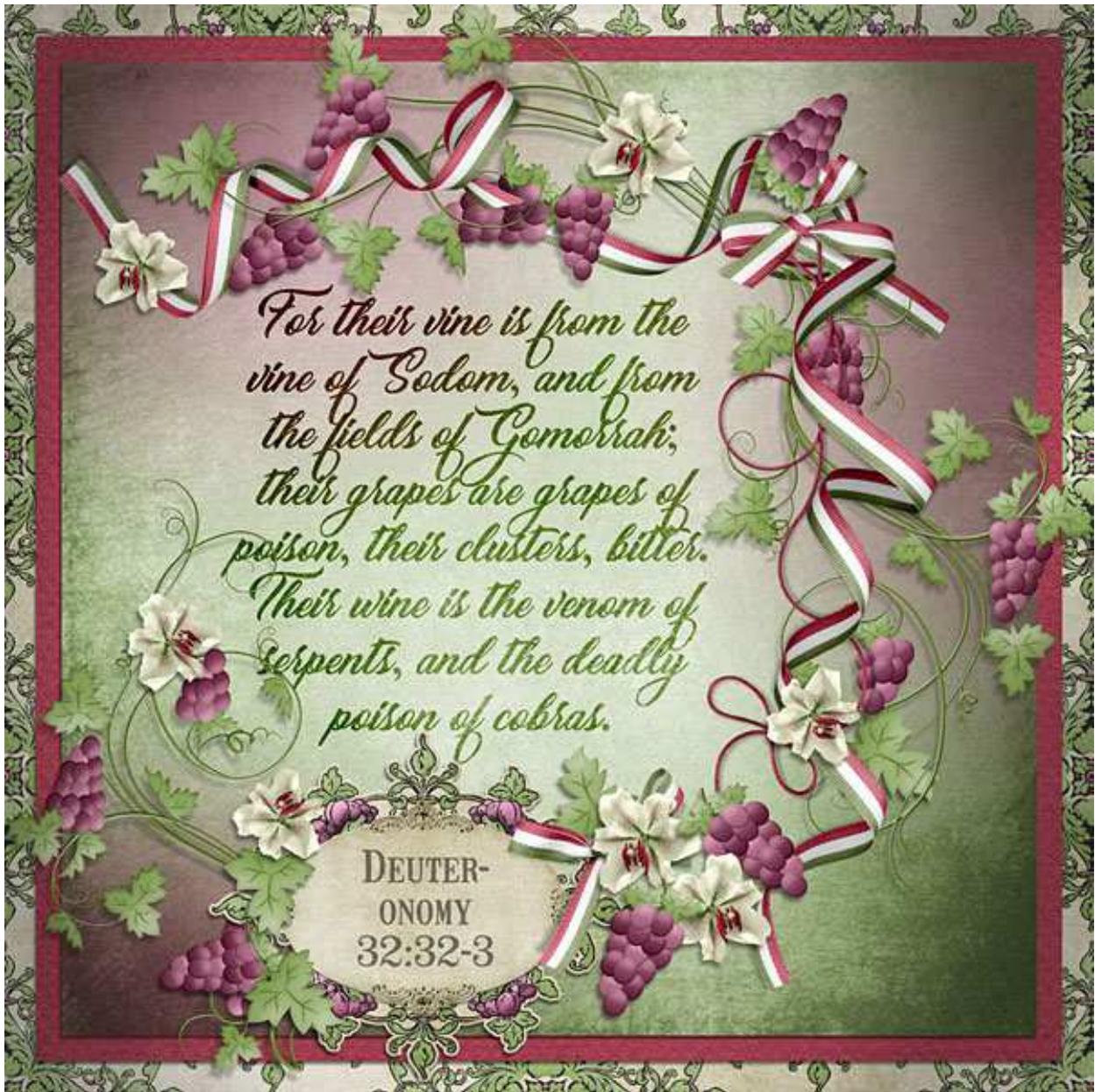
Please note: Sodom's sin is not "multiple choice/pick the one you prefer." Since the Bible says sexual immorality, pride, lack of care for the poor, etc., then it is "all of the above." One of the worst things God hates is when people are

prideful, whether of what they have in possessions, talents, attributes, etc., or of their sin. Sodom was both.

There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers. Proverbs 6:16-19

Now these things took place as **examples for us**, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be **idolaters** as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." **We must not indulge in sexual immorality** as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. **We must not put Christ to the test**, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. **Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction**, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore **let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.** 1 Corinthians 10:6-15

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