

Fifty? There Weren't Even Ten

Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

Genesis 18:26 "And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."

Sodom was evidently one of the larger cities of the plain, although it is not known how many people lived there. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people who were given to sinful lives made it a den of iniquity. On hearing of God's plan to visit the city and to destroy it, Abraham spoke on behalf of those who lived there. He knew that Lot and his family had become a part of the city, and wanted them spared and any righteous people who might also be there.

When he spoke of the fifty, was it because he thought that even a city like Sodom would have at least that many good people? Fifty is not a great number, especially when there are a city full of people to consider. Then on second thought, know-

ing what he did of Sodom, Abraham began to lower the amount of righteous people that might be there. In Genesis 18:24-32 he goes from the fifty to ten as he revises his estimate of the city. God assures him that if there are ten righteous people in Sodom, he will spare the city. I wonder how relieved Abraham was when the Lord left him and went on his way. After all ten is not many, and Lot's family would count as part of the ten, wouldn't they?

What if this event were to happen today concerning one of our cities? Would there be fifty? How about the ten? Surely ten could be found, couldn't they? I suppose that the people of Sodom would have thought that they were as good as anybody. They didn't like it when they thought that Lot was trying to correct them. In their eyes they were doing alright and saw no need to change.

They had a religion of some kind. It suited them and their ways, so they didn't want to hear Lot, or anybody, tell them to change their way of life. Doesn't that sound like many people to-

day? They have their religion and believe it to be alright. Many teach that the bible doesn't mean what it says. Sin is allowed in some churches, with folks laughing at the notion that they might need to change. Drinking, gambling, divorce, and other acts condemned by the Lord are okay in some churches. While these are allowed, they ridicule the idea of holiness, church attendance, bible study, and the things that the Lord said to do.

Sadly, some hold grudges, don't forgive, and look down on others while claiming to serve the Lord. We may think that we are righteous, but if the Lord doesn't see us that way we would only be fooling ourselves. **2 Corinthians 10:18** "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." We can't compare ourselves with others, but we are to follow the Lord and live according to his word.

Whether it be fifty righteous, or ten, could they be found in a town, or city, today? Righteous, not by man's standard, but according to the standard set by God. And if they could be found, would you be in that number?

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AND AGAIN I SAY UNTO YOU, IT IS EASIER FOR A CAMEL TO GO THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE, THAN FOR A RICH MAN TO ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD. MATT. 19:24

ROPE OR CAMEL — WHICH DID JESUS REALLY SAY ?

IF YOU HEARD SOMEBODY SAY, "I TORE A LEAF..." YOU COULDN'T BE TOO SURE WHAT WAS MEANT UNTIL THEY FINISHED THE SENTENCE. "I TORE A LEAF...OFF THE TREE!" NOW YOU'D KNOW WHAT WAS MEANT! "I TORE A LEAF...OUT OF THE BOOK!" AGAIN YOU'D KNOW EXACTLY WHAT WAS MEANT—THE SAME WORD BUT WITH TWO ENTIRELY DIFFERENT MEANINGS: ONE, THE FOLIAGE THAT GROWS ON A TREE; TWO, A PIECE OF PAPER THAT'S BOUND IN A BOOK.

IN JUST THE SAME MANNER DOES THE ARAMAIC WORD "GAMLA" MEAN CAMEL; OR A ROPE; OR A BEAM. WHEN JESUS, SPEAKING IN THE ONLY LANGUAGE HE KNEW, ARAMAIC, SAID, "DADLIL LGAMLA LMEAL BAKHRORA DAMGATA AU ATIRA DNEAOL LMACOOHA DALAHA." HE ACTUALLY SAID "IT IS EASIER FOR A ROPE TO GO THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE THAN FOR A RICH MAN TO ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD." IN FACT, HE WAS ONLY USING A VERY POPULAR EXPRESSION OF THE DAY. EASTERN WOMEN, WHEN SHOPPING FOR THREAD WOULD OFTEN SAY, IF THE THREAD WAS TOO THICK, "IT IS A ROPE, IT WILL NOT GO THROUGH THE EYE OF MY NEEDLE!"

BUT WHEN THE EARLY GREEKS TRANSLATED THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS, FROM ARAMAIC INTO GREEK, THEY DIDN'T REALIZE THAT, IN ARAMAIC CUSTOM, NEEDLE AND ROPE HAD ANY CONNECTION. ONE OF THEM, OBVIOUSLY, DID KNOW THAT "GAMLA" MEANT CAMEL AND SO TRANSLATED IT THAT WAY — AND, FROM THAT DAY ON, THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF PRIESTS, MINISTERS, AND PREACHERS HAVE MISQUOTED JESUS WITHOUT KNOWING THEY WERE DOING SO! THIS DISCREPANCY WAS FINALLY BROUGHT TO LIGHT IN THE 1920'S, IN A SERIES OF LECTURES BY PROF. GEORGE M. LAMSA, EMINENT ETHNOLOGIST AND ARAMAIC LANGUAGE EXPERT — WHICH HAPPENED TO BE HIS OWN MOTHER-TONGUE!

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