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# Righteous Lot

## Genesis 19

Let us begin this morning by reading **2 Peter 2:6-10**. This will give us the lens through which we will approach Genesis 19. 2 Peter 2:6–10

<sup>6</sup>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; <sup>7</sup>and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked <sup>8</sup>(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); <sup>9</sup>then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, <sup>10</sup>and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.

Political correctness in our culture has partnered with the homosexual agenda to bring radical change in morality. Today preaching as I will today may become construed to be hate speech and thus illegal. May God give us the grace to speak truly and kindly and the courage to stand when it is dangerous to do so.

Nevertheless, we have still have a sure and unchanging Word that transcends the accepted norms of whatever culture believers find themselves in. Homosexuality has been accepted in almost every declining culture in history. Romans 1 tells us that the practice of this sin and the cultural approval of it are the signs of a culture spinning down toward judgment. Yet it is precisely into that world that the gospel comes.

So, a word of caution. God has declared that sexual intimacy is only to be between a man and woman within a God-sanctioned marriage. All other intimacy is sin. However, we must have grace to stand with both Biblical courage and with spiritual kindness. So, while we must condemn the sin and the sinner practicing it, let us be careful that the way we speak does not destroy our opportunities to witness. The gospel comes as good news; good news that God delivers from the enslaving power of all sin including the sin of homosexuality. Praise God, even in the church of the New Testament, we find former homosexuals for Paul said such *were* some of you.

From this text, we may learn how great the sins of homosexuality and incest are. Yet, this is not the primary point. 2 Peter 2:6-10 interprets this text for us, giving us the authorized applications. Genesis 19 is about God delivering the righteous and destroying the wicked. It is about how we look and long for the deliverance of God when we are living in world gone sinfully mad and descending into dark depravity.

## Lot's Wonderful Deliverance (v.1-22)

We open with considering Lot's wonderful deliverance, his rescue from destruction.

### A Hospitable Provision (v.1-3)

This opening paragraph is meant to tie chapters 18 and 19 together. Abraham is under the Oaks of Mamre, Lot is lounging in the gates of Sodom. Here is all the difference.

**19** 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 <sup>2</sup>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." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square." <sup>3</sup>But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

Yet, Lot, like Abraham, discerns that these guests, these two men, are not just any travelers. They are guests from heaven. He first offers then insists on the hospitality of his home. Because he knows what the streets and town square of Sodom are like, he presses them strongly so that they will be safe from the denizens of Sodom.

How do we know that he is aware that they are not just men? He offers them unleavened bread. This may not mean too much to us, but it meant a lot to an Israelite. In a movie, the composer creates themes associated with characters. You know that a character is about to enter because of the theme. Think of the Elven song or the Hobbit theme from *Lord of the Rings*. Unleavened bread functions the same way: it announces that here is something or someone from heaven.

### A Terrible Perversion (v.4-11)

<sup>4</sup>But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. <sup>5</sup>And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them." <sup>6</sup>Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, <sup>7</sup>and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. <sup>8</sup>Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." <sup>9</sup>But they said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down. <sup>10</sup>But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door. <sup>11</sup>And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.

Some today want to change what the great sin of Sodom was. In order to make this not about the perversion of homosexuality, they say that the sin of Sodom's men was that of inhospitality. Rather than receiving the visitors and treating them well, they attacked them. Thus, Sodom is destroyed because its inhabitants were inhospitable. Yet, verses 4-5 say clearly that the men of the city demanded that Lot deliver over these men so that they could "know" them; that is, commit homosexual rape. It is not just a few men. Moses makes a point young and old, all the men to the last man surrounds the house and demands that the angels be shared.

Lot steps outside the door to deal with the lustful mob of men. He pleads with them not to do so wickedly. And he makes a counteroffer. The plea makes sense. The offer does not. It is a testimony of Lot's own relationship with his daughters that he offers them to the mob as a substitute. These are his full-grown daughters. They are betrothed (v.14). But all of them are so callused by the corruption around them that they can engage in other wicked actions seemingly with little conscience. That he would offer them this way sets the stage for their own actions at the end of the book. Further, it is a foolish offer: he is offering women to homosexuals!

Their lustful passion enrages them against Lot's resistance. They are threatening to break the door down. The whole household here is in grave danger. So, the angels open the door, drag Lot inside and strike the men at the door with blindness. In spite of this, they continue to grope around for the door, seeking to satisfy their perverted lust. This is what sin does. This is what God's people are to understand about sin: it energizes, it enslaves, it ruins. These men, stuck blind, will still not relent in their pursuit of their pleasure.

### **A Disregarded Pronouncement (v.12-14)**

Here is the result of the compromise in Sodom. Lot has lost his credibility.

<sup>12</sup> Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. <sup>13</sup> For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it." <sup>14</sup> So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, "Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city." But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.

The angels now warn Lot that the destruction of the city is imminent. In spite of there not being ten righteous, God will now move to rescue any who will respond to the warning. Lot goes, not to his daughters, but to his future sons-in-laws.<sup>i</sup> He warns them that the city is about to be destroyed and exhorts them get ready to flee.

But now the sad comment on Lot's compromise. They think he is joking. There is little visible in Lot's daily life that gives credence to what he says. They disregard the warning. They laugh. In contrast to Sarah's laugh at the promise of God, here is a derisive laugh at the punishment by God. This attempt to warn and exhort seems to be going on all night. Verse 15, the sun dawns on the feeble and failing attempts to get

### **A Fleeting Protection (v.15-22)**

Frankly, this paragraph amazes me about as much as any. Here God rescues Lot even when Lot resists!

<sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> And as they brought them out, one said, "Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away." <sup>18</sup> And Lot said to them, "Oh, no, my lords. <sup>19</sup> Behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life. But I cannot escape to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die. <sup>20</sup> Behold, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there—is it not a little one?—and my life will be saved!" <sup>21</sup> He said to him, "Behold, I grant you this favor also, that I will not overthrow the city of which

you have spoken. <sup>22</sup> Escape there quickly, for I can do nothing till you arrive there.”  
Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

Look at the quality of God’s mercies. The angels, here called men, finally have to grab Lot, his wife and daughters and drag them out of the house and outside the city. They keep saying, “Run, run for your life. Don’t stop. Don’t look back. Run to high ground lest you be swept away!” Ah, here is another connection to chapter 18. God will not sweep away the righteous with the wicked. He will rescue the righteous.

Lot lingers even while the danger is great. He pulls back against his rescuers. We can see how much Sodom has become a part of the way he thinks. He begs to go to a small town nearby instead of fleeing to the hills. He obviously does not understand the massive nature of the coming destruction. Instead becoming the pilgrim and wanderer he is supposed to be, he longs again for the comforts of the city. He wins a concession from the angels. He isn’t asking for much! O won’t they say OK? And they do.

Israel should have heard this with a wry humor over themselves. God had rescued them from the plagues and the wrath poured out on Egypt. But how easy it was and how they did long for the pleasures of Egypt. Lot is a witness against them and against us at how easily we are infected with seemingly inconsequential values of our culture. Righteous Lot is so infected with world love that his cravings and choices are not changed even by the warning of the destruction to come.

Lot ought to cause some sober reflection and examination. He is righteous before God because he has, by faith, been declared righteous. And, he is disturbed by all that he sees. But he is also terribly shaped by the world and culture in which he lives. We have to think about this. Would Lot have recognized his own trouble? Would he have simply lived there in Sodom and later in Zoar and not seen what was the big deal? Is this possibly where we are, what is happening to us? We may have a right standing before God by faith. We may even be disturbed by the sin we see all around us. But how many of our deep desires, our real beliefs, our day to day choices are not much different than Lot’s? We do not recognize where we are worldly because we don’t think deeply about the choices we are making.

I want to challenge you again to think deeply about what is actually at the center of your life. What organizes your decisions and directions? Why do you choose to get involved in things that will take you away from serving the Lord as you can? Why do you spend all your discretionary money on yourself? What will you give up in order to gain what can’t be lost? What can you just not live without? Will you set aside whatever you have planned to do tonight in order to come to the Lord’s Table and share in worship and prayer? How many of you are irritated that in order to hear the Facility Expansion presentation you will have to change your holiday plans for next Sunday? How many would even do that? Listen, we can talk about Lot being infected by his culture and talk about our being infected by ours in theory, in principle and not really see how it is working out. It is in decisions like these that what you really believe and what you really want are revealed.

## **Sodom's Mighty Destruction (v.23-29)**

Here is Sodom with all its glitz and all its sin about to be destroyed. The angels could not destroy Sodom until Lot arrived safely in Zoar.

### **With Lot's Wife's Penalty (v.23-26)**

<sup>23</sup>The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar. <sup>24</sup>Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven. <sup>25</sup>And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. <sup>26</sup>But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

It was high morning when Lot came into Zoar. The Lord rained down sulfur and fire down on the city from the heavens. This is what Moses recorded. Some have speculated over the natural means that God may have used to accomplish this destruction. Others, more insidiously, have said that a natural event (volcano, asteroid, etc.) were attributed to God after the fact. Moses does not do that. He intends for us to see the direct and active hand of God in the destruction of Sodom. Yes, it is still something real in the physical world. Just as the water that destroyed the earth at the Flood was still water on the earth, so the fire and brimstone were physical things. Yet, in both, it is God who causes and directs what happened. This is no accident of nature. This is the very wrath of God poured out on the wicked.

Now, we need to revise a bit of our thinking about Lot's wife. The angels, in their warning to flee, told them not to even look back. Any looking back would arise from a longing to go back. This is not a severe punishment for an idle curiosity. Lot's wife is continuing to long and linger. She has trailed along behind him. Note that the text says that Lot had arrived at Zoar. Whether he has entered the city or is in its immediate vicinity, we do not know. Sadly, Lot's wife looks back and is turned into a pillar of salt. The point here is that she becomes a monument to what longing after and lingering near what is to be destroyed may do.

Jesus in his kingdom parables reminds us of this narrative and its application to us. Listen to Luke 17:28-33.

Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all—so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it. [ESV]

Until Jesus comes at His return, the warning of Lot's wife needs ring in our hearts. For, if you try to preserve your life and all that is precious to you, you will lose it in the judgment. But if you are willing to give up your life for the sake of Jesus and His kingdom, then you will gain what is really life. So, with Jesus' coming in view and remembering Lot's wife, will you give up your life?

### **From Abraham's Perspective (v.27-28)**

We also see the destruction of Sodom through Abraham's eyes.

<sup>27</sup>And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. <sup>28</sup>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.

He arises early in the morning and goes to where he stood before the Lord. He is returned to the place of his intercession. From that hilltop, he can look out over the valley of Sodom and Gomorrah. He sees the billowing smoke arising from the fierce furnace of Sodom's destruction. The only thing comparable for most of us would be movies of the bombing of Dresden during WWII. Or maybe you have seen some of the forest fire or disaster movies. Abraham knows now that God has swept away the wicked. His judgment is swift, terrible and just.

### **By God's Power (v.29)**

The power of God has destroyed Sodom.

It was not just the one city, but the system of cities making up the city state of Sodom and Gomorrah, the whole valley. Many believe that the present day Dead Sea is location of this valley. It is possible that the ruins of those cities lie buried under the still deeps of that Sea.

But God does not sweep away the righteous with the wicked. He knows how to rescue the righteous. And so he destroys the wicked and delivers the righteous. He rescues Lot. And Abraham's prayers are involved. Our prayers are not nothing. God has woven them into His plan and providence. Moses intends for God's people to be heartened in their praying. God "remembers" Abraham and He attends to our prayers. And He will rescue the righteous even in the very midst of destroying the wicked.

<sup>29</sup> 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.

### **Daughter's Terrible Depravity (v.30-38)**

Some of this chapter has been sad and some has been sordid. The narrative now comes to a shocking end. The last word on Lot is that of incestually fathering some of the greatest enemies of Israel.

### **Their Wicked Plan (v.30-35)**

The two daughters of Lot have left Zoar with their father and are now living in a cave above the valley.

<sup>30</sup> Now Lot went up out of Zoar and lived in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to live in Zoar. So he lived in a cave with his two daughters. <sup>31</sup> And the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth. <sup>32</sup> Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father." <sup>33</sup> So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father. He did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

<sup>34</sup> The next day, the firstborn said to the younger, "Behold, I lay last night with my father. Let us make him drink wine tonight also. Then you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father." <sup>35</sup> So they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

They know their future husbands are now dead. They are despairing of ever marrying and having children to carry on the family line. It is hard to conceive that it is their living conditions

that cause them to think this. Rather, in their own eyes, they are now widows and not good candidates for marriage. Their father is destitute having lost everything in Sodom. They have no dowry.

So they hatch a plot. It seems to me that they recognize that Lot would not have participated in this willingly. But they also know that he will drink to excess. They get him drunk enough so that his will to resist is lowered. He doesn't know when they came in and when they left as he sleeps off his drink. They go in to him and commit incest with him. And they become pregnant, both of them, each as a result of their night with him.

Moses clearly intends to connect this story with Noah. Both of them, after coming through the deliverance from destruction, get drunk and are sinned against by their children. This stands as a warning against drunkenness, but more importantly, against being vulnerable to temptation and sin after a hand of God has moved on our behalf.

### **Their Lasting Progeny (v.36-38)**

Moses records this, not as a diatribe against incest, but primarily to remind Israel and the nations around them how Moab and Ammon came to be.

<sup>36</sup> Thus both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father. <sup>37</sup> The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab. He is the father of the Moabites to this day. <sup>38</sup> The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-ammi. He is the father of the Ammonites to this day.

Their names, Moab and Ammon, are a play on their parentage. The descendants of these two sons of Lot will become terrible enemies of Israel. They will pollute the land, tempt Israel to worship idols and regularly invade, pillage and destroy.

So, Lot, who had grown comfortable in Sodom, now reaps the harvest of the corruption of his daughters. The consequences would range long past his own lifetime down long years past the days of the writing of Genesis. He does not end well at all. This is all that is said of Lot.

But all is not lost with these two sons. For long in the future, a Moabite lady would marry a Jewish man. So Boaz would take Ruth to be his wife. She would marry into the Davidic line and become an ancestor of Jesus.

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## **Reflect and Respond**

There are some very important lessons for us here:

First, Ross points out, "The point was clear to Israel; it should be clear today. No good can come of loving a society so morally bankrupt that it awaits the swift judgment of God – if not in a temporal judgment, certainly at the end of the age." (Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, p. 365.)

We must be warned about the dire effects of sexual sins. Whether homosexuality or incest, whether adultery or fornication, these are all sins in God's eyes. Professing Christians cannot keep on committing them. They will destroy your life. You must turn away from them. Young people, in our casual and carnal day, you must uphold righteousness. You must resist temptation. And you must stand for right even when it is not popular.

If you are struggling with homosexuality, whether you have acted upon it or not, seek counsel. The power of the Word and Spirit through grace can break the bonds of the worst of sins. Repent today. Turn from your sin. Seek mercy and help from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Have you found yourself struggling with the world, with its values and treasures? Have you been slowly boiled in the pot so that you do not even realize, maybe until today, that your choices are organized and oriented mostly by our culture? You also need to repent. You need to repent in principle, to reject the world and seek God's will and Word. You need to change in the particulars. Where will you give up your life so as to gain life eternal. Remember Lot's wife.

We are living in a befouled world. It is spiraling down into depravity and debauchery. But, except for brief periods in history, this is the way it has always been. And God will judge this world. Even when it feels normal to us. Even when all the decaying depravity is overlaid with pretty tinsel and sustained by exotic technologies. But all this will disappear one day in flame and fire. God will judge this world, make no mistake.

God knows how to rescue the righteous. This has been a melody running through my heart this week. If God saved Noah, of God delivered Lot, then God will deliver us. He can deliver us from being swept under by the slime of this age. And He will deliver us from the wrath that is to come.

Will you be one of those He will deliver from destruction? Have you turned away from your sin to the Savior? Will you bow to Him today? Or will you be like Lot's wife - only going halfway in a halfhearted way, longing for what you are being asked to leave and looking back to it. Destruction awaits those who will not repent and be converted. Believe in Him today. Trust in Him today.

God knows how to punish the wicked. And He will. And, God knows how to rescue the righteous. And He will.

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<sup>i</sup> Note: In the culture of the Bible, being betrothed was the beginning of marriage, even when physical union had not taken place. The wedding feast inaugurated that part of the usually weeks long wedding celebration culminating in the "honeymoon".