

Title: **GOD’S PORTRAYAL
OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN**

Text: 2 Peter 2:7-9

Date: Sunday Morning — June 3, 2007

Reading: *Genesis 19:1-38*

Subject: *Lessons from the Life of Lot*

Introduction:

In recent months I have been studying the matter of righteousness a good bit, both the righteousness of God that is imputed to us in justification and the righteousness of God that is imparted to us in regeneration. Today, and again tonight, I want to talk to you about righteousness as God describes it. I am going to do so by holding before you two of the most well known men in the Bible, who are distinctly declared to be righteous men. By these two men, I pray that God the Holy Spirit will teach us something about what true righteousness is. Our Savior declares, “*Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*” Without righteousness, perfect righteousness, we must forever perish under the wrath of God.

But what is righteousness? As we look at **GOD’S PORTRAYAL OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN**, it will, I hope, become obvious that righteousness before God is not what men call righteousness and has nothing to do with those things by which men and women go about to establish righteousness.

- Righteousness is something God imputes to men.
- And righteousness is something God puts in men.
- And in both cases, the Lord Jesus Christ is made of God unto us Righteousness.
- All of God’s people in this world are truly righteous: — “*Saints*” — Sanctified people.

Yet, God’s saints are often vilified as wicked men. The ungodly of this world, those who do not know our God, do not know us, and do not no the gospel of Christ try to appease their own consciences by trying to convince themselves and others that God’s saints are really wicked,

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hypocritical people. That kind of slander, hard as it is to bear, is to be expected from wicked men. But sometimes saints are vilified by other saints as terribly as by wicked people. Horrible as that is to think about, it does happen. May God forgive us the evil of participating in such wickedness against his chosen! May he teach us and give us grace to bridle our tongues!

Of all the men in history who have been unjustly maligned by those who ought to highly esteem them, one man stands out in a most extraordinary way. I can think of no one, other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who has been so unjustly, yet universally, misrepresented as Abraham's nephew, God's servant, and our brother, whom the Holy Spirit distinctly calls "*just Lot.*" Lot has been constantly repudiated. Theologians, commentators, and preachers have, throughout history, represented Bro. Lot in a very bad way. The ancient Jewish writers denounced him as a vile reprobate. And most of the very best commentators have treated him only a little better.

I want us to see what God the Holy Spirit tells us about this remarkable man. I want us to learn the lessons that the Bible's record of his life is intended to teach us. Let's begin by reading Peter's account of Lot's life in...

(2 Peter 2:7-9) God "delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (8) (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;) (9) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

Proposition: Here the Holy Spirit identifies Lot as a truly righteous man, a godly man, who lived among wicked men, and in their midst "*vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.*"

ABRAHAM AND LOT

You are all familiar with the story of Abraham and Lot. You will remember that they parted company when strife arose between their herdsmen. They did not part company in bitterness, but as friends and brothers. The reason why they parted company was that the strife

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between their herdsmen might cease. Abraham, being a man of magnanimous character, offered Lot the choice of the land.

(Genesis 13:10-13) “And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, *even* as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. (11) Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. (12) Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched *his* tent toward Sodom. (13) But the men of Sodom *were* wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.”

About fourteen years later, when the kings of the plain were taken captive, along with the inhabitants and possessions of Sodom, Lot and his family were taken into captivity, but not for long. Abraham took three hundred men and delivered Lot, the kings, and the people of Sodom from the hands of their enemies.

After that, Lot and his family continued to dwell in Sodom until God sent his angels to destroy the wicked cities of the plain along with all their inhabitants, except for “*just Lot*” and two of his daughters. They were delivered from the cities of destruction by the direct intervention of God.

Then, after being delivered from the cities and from the impending judgment of God upon them, Lot was twice enticed by his daughters into a drunken stupor and into incest. As a result, he sired the wicked, cursed nations of Moab and Ammon. Yet, this is how God the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Peter to describe this man Lot. Read it again.

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SEVEN LESSONS

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What lessons are we to learn from this man? Why has the Spirit of God caused the life of Lot to be written in such broad, plain terms upon the pages of Holy Scripture? Listen carefully, as I tell you seven things about our brother Lot and try to apply them to us. May God the Holy Spirit now speak to your hearts by his Word, through the voice of his servant, or the glory of Christ.

A RIGHTEOUS MAN

The *first* lesson for us to learn is this: Bro. Lot was a righteous man. This is not something we have to guess about or surmise for ourselves. Our text plainly calls him “*that righteous man.*” **Obviously, he was not a naturally righteous man.** He was a man who was made righteous by the grace of God. But he truly was a righteous man. He was righteous in exactly the same way, in the same sense, and to the same degree as Abraham was or any of us are.

He was justified and made righteous before God by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to him (Rom. 5:19).

(Romans 5:12) “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”

(Romans 5:18-21) “Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. (19) For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. (20) Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: (21) That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

There is no other way for a sinner to get righteousness before God.

He was made righteous in regeneration, having the righteousness of Christ imparted to him in the new creation of grace (2 Cor. 5:17; 1

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John 3:5-10). As a child of God, being taught of God by “*the grace of God that bringeth salvation,*” Lot lived soberly, righteously, and godly in Sodom and among the Sodomites.

God’s saints are by no means perfect in this world. Not one of them makes any pretense to sinlessness. Believers know the evil of their own hearts and lives. But in the tenor of their lives, all believers live in righteousness. Grace makes men gracious. Those who walk in the Spirit, those who live by faith in Christ, no longer live according to the lusts of the flesh. In the habit of their lives they live as godly men and women in a crooked and perverse generation.

Galatians 5:16 “*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*”

Galatians 5:22-24 “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (24) And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*”

Bro. Lot was just such a man. Peter calls him, no God the Holy Spirit calls him a just man, a righteous man, and a godly man. He was a sinner with shamefully sinful weaknesses, inconsistencies, and failures. But Lot was a righteous man, righteous because Jesus Christ was and is to him Jehovah-sidkenu, THE LORD HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS!

AN EVIL WORLD

Second, Lot was a righteous man who lived in a terribly evil society. The Sodomites among whom Lot lived, worked, and raised his family were people whose lives were beyond wicked and abominable. Their lives were filthy! Lot, we are told, was “*vexed with the filthy conversation (manner of life) of the wicked*” who lived around him in Sodom.

Lot lived among filthy men who openly practiced and promoted the filth of homosexuality and the various perversities it spawns. I cannot find words suitable to denounce that form of wickedness, at least not words that are suitable for me to use in public. And I will not waste your time talking about it here. I mention it in this context only to give emphasis to Lot’s godly character. — **He is truly a righteous man who lives alone in**

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righteousness among unrighteous men. The filthy men and women of Sodom did not corrupt this righteous man. He persevered in the way of faith and righteousness.

GREAT TROUBLES

Third, Lot was a righteous man who endured great troubles and sorrows all the days of his life. Faith in Christ, righteousness, and godliness do not exempt believers from trouble and sorrow. *“In the world you shall have tribulation.”*

Frequently, our trials, troubles tribulations, and sorrows as believers come as a direct result of our own sinful behavior. My friend, **Bro. Harry Graham,** used say, “Sometimes, the way God chastens his children and corrects their sin is to give us what we think we want, and then make us experience and live with the consequences of our disobedience.”

Certainly, that was the case with Lot. Once he moved to Sodom, he could not extricate himself from the place, though he grew to despise it. We are not told why he would not or could not leave. But there was something holding him in that abominable place which he could not leave until God destroyed it.

Be warned, my brothers and sisters. Everything we do, every choice we make, be it good or bad, has its consequences upon us and upon those we influence. **Lot made a bad choice early in his adult years for which he suffered until he died.** It was a choice that resulted in the destruction of his wife, his sons-in-law, and his daughters. You cannot take fire to your bosom and not get burned.

A PRESERVER OF OTHERS

Fourth, Lot was a righteous man for whose sake a wicked, cursed people were temporarily preserved from destruction and given space for repentance.

When the kings of the plain and the Sodomites were carried away into captivity, they were delivered from their captors because Lot was among the captives. The angels of judgment were not allowed to pour out the fire

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and brimstone of God's wrath upon that reprobate society until Lot had been delivered from the city.

If only they had known who Lot was and what mercies they enjoyed because of him, they should have thanked him every day they lived for living among them. As long as Lot was there they were spared. As long as Lot was there they had space for repentance. As long as Lot was there they were out of hell!

Even so, today, God spares the world and holds back his utter wrath from the ungodly for the sake of his elect.

(2 Peter 3:9) “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

(2 Peter 3:15) “And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;”

God's longsuffering is not an indication that he will not judge the wicked, though many foolish imagine that that is the case. God tolerates the ungodly and spares them for a season only because of his determined mercy upon his elect.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE

Fifth, Lot was a righteous man whose life was absolutely ruled by his God for his everlasting, spiritual good, the good of all God's elect, and the glory of God in the accomplishment of his sovereign, eternal purpose of grace in Christ.

I cannot spend much time here, or I will not get done with my message. But I cannot fail to show you this marvelous display of God's sovereign providence, by which he rules the world and overrules even the evil actions of men, even the sins of his own people for their spiritual, eternal good and the glory of his name. **If ever there was a man whose life was a commentary upon Psalm 76:10, it is Bro. Lot.**

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(Psalms 76:10) “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.”

I told you at the beginning of my message that Lot's drunken, incestuous act with his firstborn daughter was the beginning of that cursed race of people called Moabites (Gen. 19:37-38). **Did you ever notice that though they were a cursed people, the Moabites were under special, divine protection when Israel was commanded to destroy other pagan nations?**

(Deuteronomy 2:8-9) “And when we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, through the way of the plain from Elath, and from Eziongaber, we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab. (9) And the LORD said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land *for* a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot *for* a possession.”

Considering the origin of that nation, the wickedness of it, and the destiny of it, why do you suppose God protected it? Turn to Matthew chapter one, and I will show you.

(Matthew 1:1) “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”

(Matthew 1:5-6) “And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; (6) And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias;”

(Matthew 1:16) “And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.”

That very thing which is the most abhorrent of all Lot's abhorrent deeds was overruled by our God to accomplish his salvation and ours! In fact, had Lot not gone to Sodom, he would not have been brought to such a low position, Moab would never have existed, Ruth would never have been born, our Lord Jesus Christ would never have come into the world, we would never have been redeemed, and God's purpose of grace would have

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been destroyed. But such suppositions are totally absurd because our God rules! Now, read Romans 8:28, and understand what it declares.

(Romans 8:28-30) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Blessed be his name, nothing comes to pass but that which our God has purposed and brings to pass for our good and his glory! Oh, for grace to trust him!

A VEXED SOUL

Sixth, Lot was a righteous man who “*vexed his righteous soul from day to day*” with the ungodly deeds of the people among whom he lived. The exact word here translated “*vexed*” is only used one other time in the entire Bible. In Acts 7:24 it is translated “*oppressed*.” This is one of those words that has many shades of meaning. In order to get some idea of what the Holy Spirit is here telling us about Lot’s attitude toward the ungodly of his day, we must understand the meaning of this word - “*vexed*.” **It means...**

- Oppressed!
- Tormented!
- Distressed!
- Sick!
- Miserable!
- Pained!
- Exhausted!
- Worn Down with Toil!

I don’t know about you, but that pretty well describes the shape I am in in our generation. What about you? Are you a vexed soul in this reprobate age? I am fairly certain that those things which vex me today are the very things that vexed Lot in Sodom.

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Lot was vexed by the idolatrous religions of Sodom. — He knew what Paul later wrote in Romans chapter one, that the root cause of the filthy, unnatural, beastly behavior we call homosexuality is idolatrous, man-centered religion.

Bro. Lot was vexed by the utter immorality of the society in which he lived. — He was weary, worn-out, pained, sick, and exhausted with the evil around him. Seeing them and hearing them constantly, everywhere he went, everywhere he turned, simply ate away at his soul! I think I know exactly what he felt.

I have no doubt that Bro. Lot was vexed by the impending wrath of God upon his family, his neighbors, and the world in which he lived. — Lot was a man, a righteous man. As such, he was a caring, sensitive, compassionate man. As a man, our Savior had compassion upon the city of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel. As a man, he looked upon that rich young ruler as he walked away to hell, and loved him. Like his Redeemer, Lot was vexed by the wrath of God that would soon fall upon the inhabitants of Sodom.

I am sure he was also vexed by the indifference of professed believers. — I have no idea how many there were. I suspect that his daughters, sons-in-law, and some of his neighbors at least professed to believe God. I know that his wife did. But no one, not one person in Sodom was aroused by the message he had received from the Lord. They were all indifferent! He seemed as one who mocked, as one who made a big deal about nothing!

And I am certain that Bro. Lot was vexed, perhaps above everything else, with the sin, callousness, and indifference of his own heart. — I know I am! Nothing so pains me as I pain myself. Nothing so distresses me as I distress myself. Nothing vexes me like me!

(Romans 7:18) “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.”

(Romans 7:24) “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

A DELIVERED MAN

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Let me tell to one more thing, and I will send you home, I trust, with these seven lessons from the life of Lot burning in your heart and driving you to Christ. — *Seventh*, Lot was a righteous man delivered from sin, and sorrow, and wrath by the grace of God.

The Lord brought him out of Sodom and at last brought him up to glory. And, blessed be his name, soon, we too shall be delivered!

- Redemption — Deliverance from the curse of sin!
- Regeneration — Deliverance from the dominion and condemning guilt of sin!
- Resurrection Glory — Deliverance from all the evil consequences of sin!

APPLICATION

1. Take heart, my friends. - “*The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation!*”
2. But I warn you who foolishly imagine that God will overlook your sin—The Lord also knows how “*to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.*”

Amen.