

The Righteous Man Lot

The background of story:

- Gen.11:31 – 12:3; the *call* of and *promises* to Abram;
- cp. Gen.15:7; Acts 7:2-3 (Neh.9:7); to clear up any possible confusion regarding *where* the original call was made;
- Gen.12:1-9; Abram's obedience;
- Gen.12:10; why Abram went to Egypt; and,
- Gen.12: - 13:1; why Abram returned to Canaan.

The basis of the story:

- Gen.13:2-6; because of the (specified) wealth of Abram, v.2, and the size of his and Lot's herds, the land could not support them both;
- Gen.13:7-10; to prevent *family* strife, Abram gave Lot *choice* of the land: the *well-watered Jordan valley* (that was comparable to the *Garden of Eden*) to the east, or the land of *Canaan* to the west;
- Gen.13:11-12; Lot chose the *well-watered Jordan Valley*, and thus Abram went *westward* toward Canaan;
- Gen.14:1-24; Abram rescues and restores Lot and *all the goods* and *captives of Sodom and Gomorrah*, and is *blessed by Melchizadek*, but *refuses the spoils*;
- Gen.18:16-33; Abraham (whose name was changed, cf.17:5) *bargains* with God; if the *angels* can find *ten righteous men* (presumably including Lot and his family), Sodom will be spared from destruction;

The basics of the story: (from Gen.19)

- vv.1-3; Lot was *sitting* *at the gate* when the angels came to Sodom (the gate was a place where *judgments* were made by leaders, cf.v.9); he greeted them with *honor*, and offered *the hospitality of food/lodging of his house*;
- vv.4-5; *before they lay down*, the men of the city *surrounded the house* and called to Lot to *bring out* the visitors "*that we may have relations with them*"- this is the type of sin for which the cities of the Jordan valley will be destroyed, rather than being *inhospitable* as some erroneously claim, cf. Jude 7 (it was a problem in the area, cf. Judges 19:22; and an *abomination* to God, Lev.18:22);
- vv.6-8; Lot begged the men *not to act so wickedly*, and *offered his virgin daughters* instead; while the customs of hospitality required one to protect guests even with his own life, this *offer* is hard for us to comprehend; it *may* be that since his daughters were already *betrothed to men of Sodom*, cf. v.14, that he assumed they would not be harmed;
- v.9; the *offer* was *rejected*, Lot was also *threatened*, and the men of the city *pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door* (and gain access to the guests);
- vv.10-11; the *angels* reached out and *brought Lot inside*, and then *struck the men of the city with blindness* (the Hebrew word may indicate a *mental blindness* in which the eyes see, but the *mind* is not allowed to "see" the right thing, cf. 2Kings 6:18);
- vv.12-14; Lot attempted to save his (future) sons-in-law, no doubt at great risk to himself, but they *refused* as they *thought him to be jesting*;
- vv.15-22; Lot, his wife, and his two daughters were rescued despite Lot's *hesitation* and *request* to be allowed to go to *Zoar* instead of the mountains

(which likely saved that *small city* from destruction); they were told *not to look back*, v.17;

- vv.24-29; the Lord destroyed the *cities of all the valley of Siddim* (Sodom and Gomorrah, but also *Admah, Zeboim*, {except *Zoar*, vv.19-22}, cf.14:2-3; Deut.29:23); but Lot's wife *looked back*- perhaps in *longing* for what was left behind, and "*became*" a *pillar of salt* (perhaps killed by the *fire and brimstone* which *rained* from heaven, and was eventually *encrusted with salt* as occurs to things near the Salt/Dead Sea);
- vv.30-38; Lot's daughter's desired to "*preserve our family through our father*" and assumed that as the *only survivors* of the destruction (and thus potentially be held accountable for it), no "*man on earth*" would have them as wives; on successive nights, they got their father drunk and both became pregnant by him; *Moab* (meaning, *off/from the father*) and *Ben-Ammi* (meaning, *son of my people*) were born of this and in turn became the fathers of the Moabites and Ammonites (cf. Deut.2:9,19 were these were considered *brethren* to Israel and given lands by God, but were *excluded* from Israel because they did *welcome* and *help* Israel when they came out of Egypt to enter Canaan, Deut.23:4-5).

Lessons for Us:

1. Man's judgments are not God's judgments.

We judge Lot harshly (and likely *unfairly*) for his *choice of land*, cf.13:10, but there is no indication Lot knew of the *sinfulness* of Sodom and Gomorrah- the text says he saw a *well-watered land*, not a sinful and licentious one, and there is no (recorded) condemnation from God; we judge/condemn him for the *offer* of his daughters- perhaps fairly, but there is no (recorded) condemnation from God; we condemn him along with his daughters for drunkenness and incest, but there is no (recorded) condemnation from God; **while I'm not suggesting that any of these decisions or actions were wise and righteous, I am acknowledging God's overall assessment through Peter of Lot's righteousness for the reasons therein stated, 2Pet.2:6-8**. We need to be careful with *our* judgments, 1Sam.16:7.

2. God's grace is abundant for the righteous.

Even if it was bestowed for reasons we cannot comprehend, God's grace was applied to Lot for his salvation. While the *messengers* of God obviously could **not** find "*ten righteous men*" in a whole valley, **Lot was graciously regarded as worthy of salvation, 2Pet.2:7-8!** Is this not comparable to the salvation of Noah, cp. Gen.6:8ff; 2Pet.2:5? Why do we laud Noah while condemning Lot when both are described in the same ways (as "*righteous*," 2Pet.2:5,7; but see also Gen.9:20-27 where Noah likewise became *drunk*). **Let's admit that we need all of God's grace for our own sins-** whatever their nature, and **strive for righteousness** even as we live among "*the ungodly*" and "*the sensual conduct of unprincipled men*," 2Pet.2:5,7.

3. There's never a "right way" to do the "wrong thing."

Both the *men of Sodom* and the *daughter's of Noah* illustrate well-illustrate this point. It **wasn't** that either of them "just went about it wrong"- the actions themselves were wrong regardless of the method chosen, Lev.18:1-18,22; Jude 7. *Consensual* incest is just as wrong as *non-consensual* incest (for the offender), and *consensual* homosexuality is as wrong as *non-consensual* homosexuality (again, for the offender). **When we decide to do "wrong" things- regardless of what they may be, there is never a "right" way to do them, 1Thess.4:2-6**.