

Sent: Wednesday, January 9, 2019 2:49 PM  
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Genesis 18:16-19:38

"And if He (God) rescued 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 unrighteous 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 passions and despise authority!" (2 Peter 2:7-10)

Remember how we left our last study of Genesis (covering Genesis 17:1-18:15) way back on December 11 (before Christmas)? God had appeared to Abraham for a fifth, and then a sixth time (along with two angels the sixth time), to "announce," and then to "re-affirm," that Sarah would indeed have a son--whose name would be called Isaac! Impossible! Even laughable! According to Sarah! But, "Is anything too difficult with God?" interposed the Lord? The same God who would later promise, through the prophet Isaiah, that "a virgin would be with child and bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel, meaning "God with us"! (Isaiah 7:14) And so our last lesson ended, with perfect timing, on a Christmas note!

But, as we learned from our study last nite (covering Genesis 18:16-19:38), there was actually another reason for that sixth visit! The two angels were on their way to Sodom to carry out a sobering "heavenly mission"! We now know it as the "destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah"! And as strange as it sounds, Genesis 19:17 indicates that God was pondering whether He should "hide from Abraham what He was about to do"! Was there ever a doubt? Abraham needed to know! "The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave!"

So why did God share with Abraham what He was about to do? Genesis 19:19 says: "For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He had spoken"! It would be a kind of "object lesson" for Abraham, and his descendants--and for us, and our world! Jesse Johnson put it this way: Abraham had something more he needed to know about God! God is a "judge"! The Judge! And He cares about sin! Sin is serious, and He will (must!) judge it!

We next see Abraham "interceding" with God with a remarkable plea on behalf of the people of Sodom (where Lot and his family reside!) "Will God judge the righteous with the wicked?" Will God spare the city for the sake of "fifty righteous within the city"? How about forty-five? Forty? Thirty? Twenty? How about ten? Wow! Genesis 18:33 states that God actually agreed that He would "not destroy the city on account of finding ten righteous"! And with that, "God departs"!

We next see Abraham (in Genesis 19:27) "early in the morning...looking down toward Sodom and Gomorrah...beholding the smoke of the land ascended like the smoke of a furnace"! Obviously God didn't find ten righteous people there! In his commentary, Dr. Constable includes a quote: "By a master-stroke of narrative, Abraham...is shown standing at his place of intercession, a silent witness of the catastrophe he has striven to avert!"

What Abraham supposedly didn't know was that God "rescued Lot"! Obviously not because of his righteous deeds! And obviously requiring some amazing grace!

In contrast with the legacy of Abraham, the legacy of Lot is a sad one! From a series of lessons we have seen his downward (backward) slide! Given a choice, he chose for himself the "well-watered" valley of Jordan, "pitching his tent toward Sodom" (Gen 13:12). Then in Genesis 14 getting caught up in the "war of the kings" and having to be rescued by Abraham! Then actually returning to Sodom, taking up residence, and seen in our lesson last nite "sitting in the gate of Sodom" with the arrival of the two angels--suggesting he might actually have risen to become a city official! Perhaps a judge (but with little or no influence)! He tried frantically to save the two angels from the maliciously intended "sodomy" by the men of the city, even offering his two "virgin" daughters as an alternative (apparently considering his duty to his guests more important--more sacred?--than his duty to his daughters)! All to no avail! And yet he was "rescued," taken out bodily by the angels, while kicking and screaming all the way--although he obeyed God's instruction in "not looking back" to Sodom! Unlike his wife who looked back and was turned into a "pillar of salt"! His two daughters later committed incest with him (showing, as someone has said, that while they were taken out of Sodom, Sodom was not taken out of them)!

What a tragic ending! And yet we have Peter's account of how "his righteous soul was tormented by the unrighteous deeds which he saw and heard" and how God "rescued" him, and that he was "declared righteous" (certainly not by any righteousness of his own!)

This lesson illustrates that it's possible for a man (or a woman) who is mercifully rescued by God--a true believer, declared righteous before God and headed for heaven--to live life in this world in such a way that he (or she) ultimately loses his family, his influence, and his testimony! How sad! May it never be for any of us! May God help us to live a "lot" more like Abraham than Lot!

In the final analysis, this lesson has more to say about God than anything else! As Jesse pointed out--a "lot" to say about God! We see again the gradual unveiling of His great plan of salvation for mankind! The call of Abraham, eventually a people and a nation, Israel, through whom He would send His Son to become the all-sufficient sacrifice for sin! The Savior! How God would be both Just and the Justifier of sinners! We'll be continuing on that track as we continue our study of Genesis! Next week another "blip" along the way as we follow the amazing life of Abraham (and Sarah)!

Well, go with God this week and be a blessing!

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