

99-03-14b

We're ready now to resume our investigation and summary of the episode concerning Lot in Genesis 19. We find ourselves in 2 Peter 2, where believers in the category of Lot are discussed in detail, especially with regard to our age. Those who seek out positions of leadership in the church, who put themselves forward as teachers, who not only commit errors themselves, but also lead others astray, are amply described and condemned in Scripture.

You need only go to the pastoral epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus to see these men and their end described. Jesus himself had something to say about this. Paul's final message to the Ephesian elders over in Acts.

He says, I know that after I'm gone, wolves will come in among the sheep and so forth. And he says, I'm warning you now and I'm telling you with tears in my eyes to hew to the word of truth. These men in 2 Peter 2, verse 18, they speak great swelling words of emptiness and allure through the lusts of the flesh.

This is not just dangling pictures of half-clad women in front of them, although you will see some of that on Christian television. There's a guy who is on late night TV and if you can manage to stay on that channel for any length of time while he's pouting and grimacing and doing one thing and another, he'll eventually start showing pictures of his collection of horses and he's got some nubile young ladies out of his congregation that he puts on these horses and then films them for hours on end, trotting around and around and around and around, jiggling and bouncing here and there. I guess nothing else will hold the audience.

Certainly nothing he's saying or teaching will hold them. They promise liberty in verse 19, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.

Here you've been set free by the Lord Jesus Christ, set free from the law of sin and death, and then go right back and are entangled again in a different kind of bondage, a bondage that uses as its hook into your soul the very things that Jesus died to deliver us from. It's not just the things that we associate with lewdness and alluring. It is the more subtle things like approval and the friendship of people who are willing to accept you and willing to have fellowship with you and who will provide social life for your kids and who will provide activities for your children and keep them off the street and out of the pool halls or worse.

They'll take them to retreats and miniature golf and all kinds of wonderful activities and people are drawn to this. It appeals to the desires of the flesh. People have a natural desire to keep their children out of harm's way.

They have a natural desire to be approved of by others. They have a natural desire to be accepted unconditionally and so forth. Well, you can provide all of those things apart from Christ.

Secular organizations, the YMCA will provide squeaky clean activities for you. The midnight basketball program will keep your kids off the street. God is not glorified inherently in those things and that's the measure.

We've talked a lot in recent weeks about what is the measure of a good decision, of a worthy walk, of a life before God. It is the extent to which God is honored, God is glorified, God's power is the source and the means by which things are accomplished. And even in the church, in fact sometimes because it's the church, God is conveniently subtracted out of the equation.

And the attraction is not the desire to serve God heartily. Things are not done as unto the Lord and not unto men. They are done entirely unto men.

The service is orchestrated to cater to people. It's designed to provide an emotional uplift. Music and instrumentation and praise and all of these other things are all orchestrated unto men.

But we can't have the traditional hymns, we can't have the old stodgy forms of worship because that doesn't attract people. No mention is made of whether or not it honors God, whether the words of the fine old hymns lift up Jesus Christ and couch the message of the word of God in words that are memorable and the tune will help us remember and be encouraged and built up and edified in the faith. That's not the measure.

People won't sit still and listen to that. We've got to have drums and guitars and modern forms of music and entertainment and a quick pace that's quick and choppy like the frenetic television that people are cutting their teeth watching now. And all of this dishonors God.

It appeals to the flesh. It is the allure of the flesh. And it would be better to not go to church than to go to church and be deceived.

That's what Paul is saying. You'd be better off not even exposing yourself to the word of truth than to begin to learn it and to begin to understand the calling and then fall away because you're hooked by these false forms of Christianity. A dog returns to its vomit.

A sow, having washed, returns to her wallowing in the mire. Peter continues in chapter 3, I write to you this second epistle, in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder. The idea is to be stirred up in the mind.

You get the chance to recover. You get the chance for the divine messenger to come and speak. You notice that the dog in verse 22 has been dragged away from its vomit.

Have you ever had to do this? Have you ever had a dog in the house? Some terrible thing happens on the carpet. You drag the animal away, don't you? You have to so you can get busy to clean it up. You drag it away.

You take the sow. Before you can wash it off, you've got to take it out of the wallow. You've got to take it out of the mud puddle.

So you remove it. You pull it away by force, as it were. Well, if it's got the instinct of a dog, if it's got the instinct of a sow, it's going to run right back over there into the mess that it was dragged from.

Peter says, look, this warning is your divine messenger, grabbing you by the wrist and dragging you out of Sodom. I am putting this before you by way of reminder. I'm stirring up your pure mind, your regenerate nature, that is a result of your salvation, so that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets.

That's what he began this discussion with, isn't it? The word has power, but it is only powerful to the extent that we receive it. These words were spoken before by the holy prophets and the commandments of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior. You'll notice that the Old Testament words of the prophets and the New Testament words of the apostles are on an equal par, because they are all inspired by God.

They are God-breathed. They are profitable. Sometimes there's a tendency in the church to ignore the Old Testament and think, oh well, that's old, over and done with, ignoring the scriptures that say that all these things were written for our instruction.

Peter says, I'm stirring up your pure minds, so that you won't forget the words of the prophets, as well as the words of the apostles of the Lord and Savior. Knowing this, that scoffers will come in in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of his coming? Ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. They willfully forget that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water, and in the water by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.

This to me is a wonderful description of what has happened in the realm of science, where people say, oh, the earth is so many billions of years old, look at these stalactites and stalagmites, this water has been dripping this way for millions of years, and there have been no catastrophes, there have been no radical changes. Carbon 14 is a reliable method of dating, because the creation and breakdown of carbon 14 has been constant over millions of years. It's all false.

Peter says they willfully forget that God has wreaked huge changes, that God has brought about cataclysms on the earth, and there are cataclysms that are responsible for things like the Grand Canyon. That Colorado River didn't start out as a little stream

on the surface of the ground, and over millions of years cut that chasm. That happened at the flood.

The mountain ranges, the layer upon layer upon layer of fossilized material, starting with the heaviest things that tend to sink first, and the sediments, they say, oh, look at these early forms of life, these shellfish and things that are down at the bottom, well, those are going to fall out of the sediment first. Flooded animals and things are going to take longer to sink and become fossilized in the earth. They say, oh, these primitive life forms, that's why in the earliest layers of sediments you only find these primitive early life forms, those are the heavy things that sunk first.

Your shellfish and your cretaceous and so forth, they're going to go to the bottom. Your fish and heavier forms of vegetation, other things are going to float around for a while. And every time you have the moon going around the earth and you have a tide, you get a fresh layer of sediment being laid down under the waters of the flood as they recede.

And people willfully forget that by the word of God, the heavens crashed down on the earth, the earth stood out of water and in the water, and the world that then existed perished being flooded with water. The heavens and earth, which are now preserved by that same word, are reserved for fire unto the day of judgment and the perdition of ungodly men. And there's a day of judgment coming, and this is what believers willfully forget.

Look at the way 2 Peter has been explained away. Look at the way the warning passages in Hebrews have been explained away. Look at the way the parables of the Lord Jesus Christ, looking out the door to a believer and saying, I never knew you.

The king at the feast in the parable who takes the man without the robe of righteousness, without the wedding garment, and casts him into the darkness which is outside, which is a believer. He couldn't be standing in the wedding feast if he had not been resurrected. And unbelievers are not resurrected until the end of the millennial kingdom.

So if there's a person standing there in the feast and he gets ejected, he's not destroyed, he's not burned, he's not cast into the lake of fire, he's ejected into the darkness which is outside because darkness is the penalty. It is the judgment upon believers who fail the grace of God, who cut themselves off from Christ, who ignore the warning passages of Scripture. And they are abundant.

Look at what's going to happen to Lot when he repeatedly rejects the warnings and the gracious deliverance of God time after time after time. The fruit of his life is the Moabites and the Ammonites, traditional enemies and thorns in the side of the people of God. That's his heritage and his legacy.

Where does he end up living? He chooses the riches and the well-watered plain of Sodom. He ends up living in a cave. You know what caves were used for in those days? People did not dwell in caves unless they were either a fugitive or a corpse.

Corpses were buried in caves. We're going to see just a chapter or two forward in Genesis. Abraham is going to purchase a cave for himself, a really nice, beautiful cave, Machpelah, from the sons of Heth.

And what's he going to do with it? Live in it? No, he's going to be buried in it. He's going to bury Sarah there. Abraham will be buried there.

Isaac will be buried there. Jacob will be buried there. Because caves are the place for the dead.

And that's where Lot lives out his days. That's where his daughters seduce and inflict incest on him in his drunken stupor. It's the most ignominious end you could imagine.

And this is the righteous Lot that Peter is talking about here in 2 Peter 2. What a tragedy for the life of a believer to end in the darkness of drunken stupor. The darkness of a cave. The darkness of incest with one's own daughters.

But the blackness of darkness is reserved for believers who forsake the right way and follow the way of Balaam, the son of Beor. Who err the error of Balaam, who go the way of Cain. It says over in Jude.

Scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts. Look at verse 8. Beloved, do not forget this one thing. With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness. But is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And this is another classic repentance passage.

Repentance is a change of mind for believers. There is no repentance involved in salvation. Repentance is a change of mind for believers who have been warned in divine grace to change their ways, and they either do or they don't.

God is not willing that any should perish. That any should receive the divine judgment of darkness in the eternal future. And this is the darkness which is outside.

It doesn't mean that they're going to be in the lake of fire. It doesn't mean that they're going to be in some sort of conscious torment. It's darkness.

What is the light of the eternal kingdom of the Father? There's no sun, there's no moon, there's no night there. Why? Because the Lamb is the light. Jesus Christ is the illumination of that kingdom.

So what does it mean to be in darkness? You're away from the light. You're distant. You're not walking with the Lord in white.

You're not sharing the white stone and the new name and the hidden manna and all the other wonderful blessings that are given to the faithful of Revelation 2 and 3. If you are an overcomer, those things are yours. If you choose to abandon the way of the flesh, the way of selfish desire, the way of Lot, the way of Balaam, the way of Cain, all of these wonderful things are open to us. But there is an alternative.

And people like to say, oh, that's the God of the Old Testament that rendered judgment. He doesn't do that in the New Testament. Well, somebody hasn't read Romans 2. They haven't read Hebrews 6. They haven't read 2 Peter 2 and 3. They haven't read about half of their New Testament that reminds us that whom the Lord loves, he chastens.

And those who fail the grace of God will receive judgment. There is no passage clearer than Romans 2. And it, like 2 Peter 2, has been explained away as either hypothetical or pertaining only to unbelievers. And it's wrong, wrong, wrong.

How can you get the chance for repentance when teachers teach the word of God falsely and don't give us the impact of the warning passages? The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise. The elements will melt with fervent heat. 2 Peter 3.10 Both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

All of the cathedrals, all of the churches, all of the parking lots, all of the baptisteries and steeples and pews and education buildings, all of the ministry outreach centers, all of the works of man, they're all going to get burned up when God burns up the earth. What is going to survive? It's the structure built in the soul. It's the work of God in the soul.

Those invisible spiritual things will survive. Earthly things will not. Don't let someone force the measure on you of some earthly accomplishment, some earthly endeavor.

The earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be? In holy conduct and godliness. That's the measure.

Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for the new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things.

A lot of believers are scared of the day of judgment. That's one of the reasons it gets explained away, rather than looking forward to it. If we know that we're going to stand on that day because we are products of God's grace, because we have followed the path of deliverance, we can look forward like Peter does.

Looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot, and blameless. We mentioned this passage when we were talking about Noah, who was blameless in his generation. David, who was a man after God's own heart, was in this category.

Why? Not because they never failed, but because they knew how to be cleansed and took advantage of it. We know those same things. Be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

The cleansing of God is perfect, it's complete, it's total. It's not like the paint you use on your ceiling when water spots appear, and you spray some Walmart white paint up there, and a couple of days later, you see that old dark stain reappearing again. The cleansing of God is better than kills, because it's not just a cover-up, it eliminates it, it goes away.

It is a pure, without spot, and blameless condition. We are purged, we are cleansed, our sins are separated from us as far as the East is from the West. Consider that the long-suffering of our Lord is deliverance, as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, also as in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things.

Peter and Paul are in harmony, because they are preaching the same message. He says, all these things. What are all these things? It's the message of judgment that he's been talking about in chapter 2 and chapter 3 of this letter.

He says, Paul says the very same things, and he does, doesn't he? Romans chapter 2 is a great example of that. But untaught and unstable people twist these things to their own destruction. And that's what has happened today.

Even among some very fine expositors of the Word of God, you get to the warning passages and they fall apart. You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness. Look at this.

This is the conclusion and the summary of chapter 2 and chapter 3. What is Peter saying? Watch out for those nasty unbelievers who are clouds without rain and wells without water and spots on your love feast. Separate from them. Expel the immoral brother.

This kind of thing. Is that what he's saying? He says, look to yourselves, lest you fall into that trap. He's talking to believers about what can happen to believers.

It's amazing to me that men who know a lot more Greek, know a lot more Bible than I do, can't see the plain sense of these passages. Beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked. Instead, grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen. To return now to Genesis chapter 19, we saw the ignominious departure of Lot from Sodom.

He has to be dragged away. He compromises. He tells the Lord no.

Let me just give you a few points of summary on Lot. Lot initially was the cause of the separation that took place back in Genesis chapter 13. You'll remember that the herdsmen of Lot couldn't get along with Abram's men.

There was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock in Genesis 13. So Abraham told Lot, let there be no strife between you and me. You have the whole land in front of you.

Separate from me. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right, and vice versa. Abram does the right thing.

When there's strife and division, and it is irreconcilable, then separation is in order. If you cannot associate with a believer without being drawn into sin, then separate. This is the consistent message of Scripture in the Old Testament and in the New.

Abram does this. He does it graciously without judgment. He doesn't say, your cantankerous, bilious old herdsmen can't get along with my wonderful, peaceful herdsmen.

He doesn't say, Lot, I'm sick and tired of all your mistakes and errors. I'm sick and tired of your bickering and your complaining. There's no judgment.

There's no rancor. There's no bitterness. But he says, look, let's go our separate ways.

He does it graciously. He gives Lot first choice as to where to go. He says, the whole land is before you.

God has given the whole land to Abram. And Abram says, Lot, take whatever parts you want. And so what does Lot do? Lot chooses the plain of Sodom.

So it is because of Lot that Abram and Lot have to separate. Lot, when given a choice, chooses Sodom over life with Abraham. He doesn't depart on his own, but when a decision point comes along, and this is what happens.

A lot of times, people in a certain environment will not fall, will not give reign to whatever weak points or vulnerabilities there are in the soul. Sometimes we're held in check just by people in our environment or circumstances in our environment, and it isn't until an opportunity arises. Somebody goes away for a while, or we wind up on our own for a while, or something changes.

Some association that was there is no longer there. Someone dies, whatever it may be.

Then suddenly this area of weakness is exposed.

We've sort of been protected because of an association with someone. And now, either temporarily or permanently, that check or balance is gone. Well, now it's just us and the Lord.

Is it going to be the power of God to deliver us, to strengthen us, to mend that crack or that flaw in our soul or not? And all of us find times when we are alone. And a great teaching that was imbued into me as a teenager is you really find out what you're like when you're on your own. You find out what you're like when you're alone, when you don't have the prop and the support of others around you.

Well, this is what happens to Lot. When he gets disconnected from Abram, zing, he makes a beeline for Sodom. He didn't depart willingly as far as just spontaneously coming to Abram and saying, you know, I think I'll head over to Sodom.

But on the occasion, when he is disconnected from Abraham, at Abram's behest, he heads straight for Sodom. You find out what you're like. You find out what you're really made of when it's just you and the Lord.

It's just you and whatever you have in your soul or what you lack in your soul. So we all get those tests from time to time. What do you do when accountability is no longer there? What do you do when you're without any external form of support? Christianity now, today, a lot of it is all about surrounding yourself with props so that those weaknesses never show themselves.

Let's mentor. Let's disciple. Let's get together.

Mutually, you know, blind lead the blind. That's what I would call it. But you find out with Lot that he goes straight to Sodom.

He suffers with those wicked men. They are captured by the Confederation of Kings. They are conquered.

They are taken captive. They are led as slaves back toward the land of the conquerors. Lot's right in there with them because he has associated with them.

And even as a believer, he is not delivered from that, is he? He's not delivered from being taken captive. He's not delivered when Sodom is conquered by the kings, Keter, Laomer, and the rest of them. He's right along in chains with the rest of them.

But God delivers him. And he gets another chance. He gets a chance to review his decision, the priorities that he has set.

What does he do? You go back to chapter 14, verse 16 of Genesis. When Abram comes, and Abram, the righteous man of God, is the agent by which Lot, the unheeding,

apathetic man of God, is delivered. Abram brings back all the goods and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods as well as the women and the people.

Lot gets another shot at association with Abram, at pursuing the things of God. But the end result is Lot's right back in Sodom once again. So he does not heed the warning of that gracious deliverance after bondage.

When the messengers come, both Abram and Lot are... There's a period of time before the actual purpose of the divine visit is announced. Isn't this interesting? God doesn't come to Abram in a dream at night and say, Abram, I'm about to destroy Sodom. What do you think about Lot? You have this visitation.

And for the better part of the day, there's this hospitality issue. What is the reception to the divine presence? Before the purpose and the revelation of what God's about to do is even made, it's as though there's a test here. There's a chance to demonstrate what the soul is made of.

So what happens? Abram knocks himself out on behalf of the divine visitors. You can tell he is just absolutely falling all over himself. He is so honored and thrilled at the divine presence.

He kills the calf. He has Sarah make bread. He stands there and is so anxious for the divine visitors to be made at home and to rest in comfort and to stay with him even in the heat of the day.

He's running around doing all these great preparations. Lot gets that same opportunity and there's a contrast there when you see Lot initially seems to make the same sort of overtures of hospitality but it kind of reminds you of the seed that falls into shallow soil. The plant springs up and it looks just like these fruitful plants over here that have taken root in good deep soil.

You've got a plant coming up out of the ground but when the pressure hits the plant wilts. And before the messengers have said anything about the destruction of Sodom you have the crowd gathering outside the house. You have Lot standing outside and he initially makes a show of trying to defend the visitors but then you find this really tacky offering of his daughters and he's calling these men brethren and he's trying to have an impact on them.

He's trying to change their minds by his words. He doesn't appeal to righteousness like Abraham does. He calls them brothers.

He says, based on our association do this for me guys. We're brothers here. Here take my daughters.

And you find out that he's really superficially righteous and inwardly he's full of dead

men's bones. But in both cases you have this period of expression of soul before the actual message of the impending destruction is given. And you have one reaction from Abraham you have another reaction in Lot.

And initially they both look the same. They both make overtures of hospitality. But Lot can't maintain this facade for very long.

And you find out that his positive attitude is very weak and very unstable. And as time goes on you do get the word of divine destruction. What is Abraham's response? Intercession.

He is thinking of someone beside himself. He doesn't say, Oh Lord, I'm sure glad I'm living up here in Mamre. I'm sure glad I'm well away from the source of destruction.

Thank you Lord for not destroying my area. There are a few wicked Canaanites around here but I'm glad you're doing it over in Sodom. His thought is for his nephew.

He's looking outward. He expresses love even for his wayward nephew. What is Lot's response to the actual word of impending destruction? Fear.

Apathy. Disobedience. Arguing with God.

Contradicting God. Compromising the divine deliverance. He won't go to the mountains where he's been told to go.

He'll only go to Zoar. Abraham thinks of others and intercedes for Lot. Lot thinks of himself and pleads for himself.

Oh, I can't make it to the mountains. Some evil will overtake me and I will die. He's pitiful.

But this is us. This is what we turn into when we are gripped by the impulses of our own flesh instead of faith in the reality that God puts before us in his word. When Abraham intercedes, he claims divine righteousness.

He says, Far be it from you, Lord, to sweep away the righteous with the wicked. What does Lot claim in his intercession? His fear. His inability.

I can't make it to the mountains. I will die. Some evil will overtake me.

He says nothing about righteousness. He doesn't claim because this isn't on his mind. It's not in his soul.

Although he's a believer, he's not attuned to the things of God. Lot has to be dragged from destruction. And even in the act of deliverance, he compromises the divine word.

He loses honor. He will ultimately lose all dignity in his drunken exploitation by his

daughters. Abraham, by way of contrast, is blessed and is a blessing to others.

And Lot is figuratively dead. When you see him in the cave, in the darkness of the cave, he's afraid even to live in the place that he pleaded for in his fear and his pitiful whining. He's afraid to live in Zohar and he ends up just like a corpse.

He's living in a cave. He's in a stoop where he doesn't know what is done to him when his daughters essentially rape him. His wife couldn't tear herself away and turns back and is so longing that she remains in that no man's land between the destruction and deliverance.

By the way, if you think about this, this foreshadows what's going to happen in later generations of Abraham's descendants, doesn't it? There is a great destruction that comes upon the nation of Egypt and Israel is delivered from it, is dragged out by the hand of the divine messenger. Moses leads them out of the destruction in Egypt, but like Lot's wife, that first generation keeps turning back to Egypt, longing for the leeks and garlics of Egypt. You brought us out here to die and they keep looking back and looking back and like Lot's wife, they wind up remaining forever in the wilderness.

They don't make it to deliverance. And it's the second generation that actually makes it. But ultimately, even that second generation, like Lot's daughters, he's got two daughters who are the mothers of Moab and Ammon by incest and you ultimately have the nation of Israel divided into two kingdoms, Judah and Israel, and God accuses them of adultery and fornication and playing the harlot with those around them and they fall into evil.

They forget their deliverance. They do not heed the divine warning. There's not a lasting repentance.

All they had to do was look back at the story of Lot. All they had to do was look back at their forefather Abraham to see what's possible instead of what happens to them. But they miss the impact of the warning.

They saw the plagues in Egypt. They saw the Red Sea. Lot and his daughters see the destruction of Sodom which is timed precisely and is predicted and is brought on by God.

The stuff comes down from heaven from the Lord. They see that and it doesn't wake them up. It's incredible.

You would think if you were an eyewitness of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, you saw the fire and brimstone that it would be a motivation. You'd think God is real. Life before God is a necessary part of my calling.

I have got to wake up and smell the coffee here and get on the road with Abraham. They wind up in a cave committing incest. You look at the daughters.

They say there's no man in all the area that can be our husband. Let's lie with our father so that we can have children. They're not really interested in a husband.

They want children. They want something that gratifies them. You have women today who want children without marriage, who want a family without adhering to the divine order.

You have lots of weird twistings and bendings of the divine design in modern day culture. I just saw an ad last night. Somebody is going to have some special on the news about these two homosexual men who have adopted two children and are going to bring them up.

This is not only tolerated and permitted in our society, it's extolled. It's set up on a pedestal as something that's wonderful. Go back and read 2 Peter 2 and 3 again and find out what the end of this sort of twisted thinking is going to be.

You look at the examples of divine judgment and we are not motivated. What is the matter with us? Well, it's the same thing that was the matter with Lot. It is a willful disregard of the word of God.

Willful disregard of the grace of God and the deliverance of God. We have been bought with a price. We are not our own and therefore we are to serve God.

Lot never gets that message. That first generation that came out of Egypt didn't get that message. But there is an alternative.

It is possible to live a life that pleases God and that glorifies Him. As we conclude our study of Genesis 19, if there is one thing we come away with in looking at Lot, it is not so much the destruction of the city as it is Lot's reaction in and around that episode. We tend to look back and remember Sodom and Gomorrah and how they must have been so wicked that God would come down and destroy them.

We saw that in the flood after where God in the covenant with the rainbow said I am no longer going to do universal destructions. Now it is your job to execute justice. If someone sheds blood, by man shall his blood be shed.

And God says now it is your responsibility. When you look at that rainbow you remember that now you have been tasked with maintaining righteousness. I am not going to come down with universal destruction.

And yet here you have God coming down in a more limited way and destroying an entire area because of its wickedness. And we are forced into comparing Noah and Lot. Noah and Abraham.

There is a choice there. If we are unwilling to choose the way of righteousness to uphold

righteousness then God is going to come down and make an issue. The judgment of God ought to motivate us.

It ought to strike us as something worth changing our ways over. And in that light to go back and read 2 Peter 2-3 one more time and remember that this is what we live in today. This is the Christianity that surrounds us.

Wells without water. Clouds and mist driven by a tempest. That is what we are being offered as an alternative to what the clear teaching of the Word of God tells us.

We have a wonderful opportunity. There is no reason for us to end up like Lot. There is every reason for us to follow the example of Abraham and to be children and heirs of Abraham by faith.

We just have to heed the warning. We just have to ensure that we have changed our minds and that we are not being led away by the ring in our nose of human frailty, human desire, human weakness that is so obvious in the life of Lot and his family and is somewhat more difficult for us to detect in our own souls. But it is there.

And the light of the Word of God, the sure word of prophecy that Peter speaks of, shines on our soul and illuminates these things. The Word of God is the sharp sword that divides asunder the soul and the spirit, the joints and the marrow. It is a critic or judge of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

And if we walk toward that light, if we live in that light, if we bring that light into the temple of our soul, that is when we fulfill our calling. That is when we find the genuine obedience that Peter is encouraging all of us to by reminding us of these negative examples in his letter and this example that we have so clearly communicated here in Genesis chapter 19. The funny thing is, when you get into Genesis chapter 20, Abraham himself, after a series of great victories of faith, and being the example of the righteous man, is not immune to failure, old failure.

An old habit comes back right after these things. You remember that the message in front of the tent flap is, about this time next year, I will return and Sarah will possess a son. Well, the human gestation period is nine months.

And the day after that warning to Abram is when Sodom is destroyed. Sometime between then and when Isaac comes on the scene, the episode in chapter 20 takes place. Abraham journeyed from there to the south and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur and stayed in Gerar.

Abraham said of Sarah his wife, she is my sister. Well, shades of Genesis chapter 12, when Abraham went down to Egypt and tried this play with Pharaoh. And we remember all the bad things that resulted from that.

Here is Abram, long years afterward, with the surety of divine promise, the incarnate presence of God having visited him, and within just a few weeks of this, he goes and commits this act, this old failure. Why would he say of Sarah, she is my sister? Why did he do it in chapter 12? He was afraid for his life. Well, this is what Lot, this is the substance of Lot's great failure.

He is afraid for his life. He is driven by these internal twists and pulls in his soul. And now here is Abraham, after this great literal mountaintop experience, falling victim.

And this is something we have to guard against. She is my sister. Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent and took Sarah.

But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, Indeed, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken. For she is a man's wife. Interesting, that phrase, she is a man's wife, is literally Baalat Baal.

Baal, or Baal, means Lord. And came later on in Canaanite theology to be, it's kind of like when we talk about the Lord, well, Baal was their Lord, literally. And Baal was used in the ancient world to refer to a man, sort of like the way we still use the word mister, which came from master.

You had a master of the house and a mistress of the house. Master and mistress, the same idea. So, basically, a more literal way of rendering this is, she is the mistress of a master, i.e., she is a husband's wife.

She belongs to, she is Baalat Baal. Abimelech had not come near her and said, Lord, will you slay a righteous nation also? This is another sort of backward look at Lot, because here's Abimelech, who is a pagan king in Gerar. His name means, my father is king, Abimelech, Milku, all these ancient Semitic languages are related.

Melech is the word for king in Hebrew. Milku in the ancient tongue of this region. So, Abi, Av, his father, E means my, Abimelech, he's the hereditary king of this region, this city state.

He had not come near her. He says to God, Lord, will you slay a righteous nation also? He makes the same type of argument that Abram does. Now, this pagan king has sort of switched places.

He's the intercessor claiming the righteousness of God in his conversation with God. What a come down for Abraham to so quickly revert and have his place of claiming the righteousness of God taken by a pagan king. How can this happen? What is the substance of this? This is where we'll pick up when we start next time in chapter 20.

But it's another reminder to us that we have to be vigilant. We just saw in Colossians on Friday night, Gregoreo, be watchful, be vigilant in your prayer. We are constantly called

to vigilance.

We're constantly called to watchfulness. We can't coast on some factor in life. We can't take it for granted that because we've been doing pretty well, everything's going to go great.

We've got to be watchful. We've got to be vigilant. We've got to be diligent in our prayer and in constantly reminding ourselves and refreshing in our minds the perspective of where we stand in God's plan because in the space of a moment, we can lose sight of these things and fail.

Abraham's going to do it in chapter 20. And that's where we'll pick up next time. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for the power of your deliverance. We thank you for the standing that you have given us in your plan through Jesus Christ, our Savior. We thank you that everything we need to exploit his victory on the cross has been given to us in your word and through your spirit.

We pray that these things will be a constant reminder to us in our souls. We pray that the promises and the principles and the doctrines of your word will constitute the reality by which we live and set our priorities and make our decisions, that we will ever be aware through the light of your word of where the pitfalls and the dangers lie, that we will be warned and we'll be in a position to respond properly to the warnings that we see in your word and the warnings that we see in the circumstances that surround us in this evil age. We pray that as a result, we will put on the new man.

We will live and think in a way that is pleasing in your sight, that constitutes a worthy walk, and that in so doing, we will reflect the glory of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray these things in his name. Amen.