

## THE righteousness OF LOT

We must always keep in mind that though a Bible writer may have recorded specific sins and foolish acts of an individual it does not mean that the person could not also have been “righteous.” Jesus was the only righteous and perfect man ever to live. Though Noah, Abraham, Moses, King David, etc. were counted faithful, they all had disobeyed God’s will and acted foolishly and even cowardly at times. However, God never blessed their disobedience, only their faithfulness.

That is an amazing distinction that we must always remember. Being righteous in the eyes of God has not much to do with what a person might have done throughout their life. Through all the great men and women of God throughout the Bible we will notice the same thing concerning every one of them. They were all far from being perfect and they all did sin – even, many times, after their encounters with God and with Jesus.

That is something that we all must recognize and most importantly be so very, very thankful and grateful to our God for. There is not one of us, not one of those who believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior, who was ever or is perfect and did not or even now sometimes “miss the mark” and sin. Do I hear a rising “Amen!!” from us all?

Consider the harlot Rahab. God never condoned her harlotry. However, we read in James 2:25 that she was, “...justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way.” In Hebrews 11:5 we also read, “By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.” We must realize that because God “saved” Rahab from the destruction of Jericho, it does not mean that God would have, nor did He ever, condone her past sexual sins or any of her sins for that matter.

It was what Rahab was doing and did “now” at that very moment of time when God needed her to help accomplish His mission at that very moment. She believed God at that very moment of time and for all we know for the rest of her life – we are not told. She is mentioned, however, by the New Testament writers which gives us a good indication that her heart did actually turn towards the Living God. This is or was a precursor for what Jesus would do for all believers in Him. We were all sinners who are now saved by His grace. God never holds our past against us. It is what we believe in and are trying to do unto Him - now.

As we read the lives of all the great men and women of God throughout the Bible, in both the New and Old Testaments, we see that they all had not so great lives before turning to God. Even after they had believed God and/or believed Jesus we read that they all had “missed the mark” at one time or another.

In the Old Testament we read of Noah, Abraham, Moses, and even King David. In the New Testament we read of Peter, Thomas and even the Apostle Paul had “missed the mark” even after they had accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. As we read their life stories we see that they all had their times of “missing the mark.” Yet, we see that God still used them mightily. Why? I believe it was because God knew their heart – even better than they knew their own heart. They each truly believed God but they were all still “not perfect.”

As we read in 2Peter we come across Lot. Now, if I was to ask anyone about what they knew of concerning Lot, the first thing that would come to mind would be the account we read of in Genesis. As we read, we know that he left Abram and took up residence in Sodom. We immediately think that Lot had missed it. After all, he chose to live in Sodom where sexual perverse sin and where homosexuality had abounded.

As we read of Lot's family's account in Genesis, we see that even they were not very "Godly" people. Yes, Lot had many problems. We read that when the angels came to Sodom they met Lot "at the gate." Lot was with Abram when they entered into the area. We know that there were issues between the families. Abram decided to give Lot whichever land he would want. We know that Lot chose Sodom. (Genesis 13:10-11)

At that time, before its destruction, Sodom and the surrounding area was "...well watered like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar." It would seem as if Lot took the best of what Abram had offered. He moved to the area. We know in Genesis 14 that there were problems in the area. Lot lost what he had to the neighboring kings. In short, Abram came and defeated the conquering kings and Lot chose to stay in Sodom.

Lot became the "gate keeper" in Sodom. The two angels that went in to check out Sodom met up with Lot. Lot had asked them to come to his home but the angels refused because their job was to "check out" Sodom. Lot however, prevailed and they went home with Lot. Did Lot ask them to come home with him because he thought it was the nice thing to do or did he know what the men of Sodom were like and he knew they would soon come after these two visitors. Hmm....

As soon as Lot got the angels in the door of his home, we read in Genesis 19:4-5 that the men of Sodom had heard about these "two men" who came into their city and they had demanded Lot to hand these two "men" over to them. We know that Lot offered his daughters to the men of Sodom. However, they did not want the ladies, they wanted what they thought were two "men." We know that the two angels pulled Lot back into the home, struck the men with blindness and then left – knowing their decision of what was to happen to Sodom. However, before they left they did tell Lot to take his family and get out of Sodom.

We see in Genesis what looks like a pretty bad account of Lot. Yet, we see in 2Peter that Lot was considered "righteous" in the eyes of God. Just because Peter called Lot "righteous," however, does not mean that Lot was perfect. The words "righteous" and "perfect" are not synonyms. They are different.

Even the apostle Peter was guilty at one time or another of having a "lack of faith." We know that it was three times in which he denied that he knew Jesus before the crucifixion while Jesus was with the Pharisees. Peter was also incorrect when he hypocritically withdrew himself from the Gentiles in the Book of Acts. We know that Paul took him to task about this and corrected Peter.

We must understand Peter's statements about Lot's "righteousness." His statements must be considered in their proper context. Similar to how Noah was "*an island of righteousness surrounded by a sea of iniquity*" (2 Peter 2:5), Lot was surrounded by extremely "wicked, filthy, and lawless" citizens of Sodom (2 Peter 2:7-8). Although Lot was far from perfect, he was not a wicked, lawless unrighteous citizen of Sodom. It would seem that he was considered "righteous." Lot separated himself from the unlawfulness of the inhabitants of Sodom and was even tormented "*day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds*" (2 Peter 2:8).

We see that Lot had taken the two angels home with him. Did he do this because he knew what the men of Sodom would do when they heard that there were "two men" who had entered the city? Did Lot know what the men in the city would do once they found out about these new "two men" who came to the gates of their city? Was Lot really trying to protect these two strangers who had come to Sodom because Lot knew what the men of Sodom would do?

Though Lot's offering of his daughters to the Sodomites seems to look incorrect, could it have been the only thing he could think of in trying to protect these "two men?" Even though we may think it was such an ungodly thing to do, could it have been Lot's last resource in trying to protect these "two men" who had come to the city?

Genesis 19 clearly indicates the distinction between the "righteousness" of Lot and the wickedness of the inhabitants of Sodom. The Sodomites even hinted at such when they declared that Lot "keeps acting as a judge" (Genesis 19:9).

We see that Abram did similar things before He totally turned to God. We see Abram's actions in Egypt and in Gerar when he allowed his wife to be taken by the king in order to preserve his own life. He did not act righteously or like a true man of God would. Yet God used Abram and ultimately entered into covenant with Abram and changed his name to Abraham.

This was the distinction Peter made—**not that Lot was perfect** (no one is) but that he remained uncontaminated by the intense iniquity that prevailed throughout Sodom. He never entered into their homosexual lifestyle or ways. Yes, Lot was imperfect. However, we see that the Word tells us believers do the same thing. In 1John 1:5-10 it tells us that we as believers desire and work towards "walking in the Light" though we are **imperfect**. Lot was a "righteous man" but he made some bad mistakes.

This may seem difficult for many of us to come to terms with. Many of us have a negative view of Lot. Yet God and His ways are much, much different than the way we may think. We really should be very thankful for this little glimpse we see that Peter gave us concerning God. This is a very good lesson for all of us to grasp and be thankful for.

Not just because we may get a different view of Lot but because how it relates to each of us as God's people. How many times do we make mistakes? How many times are we misjudged because others do not see the whole picture of what we may be thinking or what may be actually happening? It really doesn't matter what others may think or see. What is important is what God knows and is doing within our lives.

What really matters is that we all should desire to do the right thing because we desire to please and bless the heart of God - not our own heart. There are no perfect people in the Word of God other than Jesus. Every one of the writers, the Prophets, the Apostles – every one of them were imperfect people. God had miraculously intervened in their lives and He had allowed them to be used for His purpose.

That is what it should be within our own personal lives when it comes to serving the Lord. Many times people will not necessarily see the whole picture of what you may be doing. The main thing we must all remember is that whatever we do we must be doing it as an ambassador for Jesus and for God, the Father. Our own desires and agenda must be put out of our lives and out of the way.

Now, I am giving us all a warning. We must be sure that it is God who is leading and guiding you – in every situation and circumstance. I am not saying that we all have a "green light" to do whatever we may think is correct. As we see throughout the Bible the men and women who truly love and serve the Lord were all truly vindicated. We see this with Lot. If we just read of what he did in the Old Testament we would all have a negative picture of Him.

Yet, as we see in the New Testament, we get a very different understanding and picture of Lot. We read that He was "righteous." As we read in the Old Testament concerning the rest of Lot's life it may not be a "story book" life. However, we read in Peter that Lot was "righteous." To that I say, "Thank you, Lord."

Why? I say that because there are many things that I may do incorrectly even though now I love Jesus and call myself His disciple, a joint heir with Jesus and a child of the most High God. I just need to always be looking towards Him to lead and guide my life. The one thing that each of His true believers have today that His people in the Old Testament did not have is a "born-again" spirit that has been given to us because of our faith in Jesus. Along with that, we have been given the Holy Spirit to help lead and guide each of us.

I must always desire to do what God wants me to do and not what I think I should do or what I think needs to be done. I must always desire **His will** and not my own will to be accomplished. This is where the “rubber hits the road.” We must always desire **His will** no matter what we think we may want or desire in the midst of any and all situations. I must always, to the best that I can, be listening for and hearing God’s voice in my life and then **do what I hear Him telling me.**

This can be difficult but it must be where I am in my relationship with my God. I must desire His will and not my will. I must yield to His ways and how He desires things to end up and not anything that I may want or desire the situation to end up. It is truly all about Him. It is to be all about God and His ways. If Jesus is truly my Lord and Savior than my life is no longer my own – it is His.

We have hope because of people like Abraham, Lot, Rahab, Peter and Paul in the Bible. They were not perfect people. God knows that there never was, is and never will be anyone who is going to be “perfect.” Even Paul recognized this about himself. He mentions the things he falls short in. It is only our faith in God and His Son, Jesus that will ultimately reflect our “righteousness” in Him when it counts. We are all continually growing in our walk with the Lord. We are all still “not there” yet until we all, one day, will be there with Him in His Kingdom – the Kingdom of Heaven.