

The love of our God causes in us a strong personal desire to “serve Him . . . in holiness and righteousness” (vv. 74,75). Just as in the Garden of Eden, God has “visited us” through His tender mercies (v. 78). God’s visitation provides light to “guide our feet” so that we may walk with Him “into the way of peace” (v. 79).

We have positive and negative requirements in our walk with Yahweh. We have a need to be merciful like our God, and a requirement to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, free from its polluting immoral influences. Maybe the more we are involved in visiting the fatherless and the widows the less problem we will have with being polluted by the world.

#### **An urgency**

The message every day is urgent. How could any saint face the words of Matthew 7:22,23 and not be affected?—“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”.

There is little more satisfying than being in a strange place, looking around to find someone that you know and then spotting a familiar face. What a dreadful situation to be in: to be in the Lord’s company, whom you believe you know,

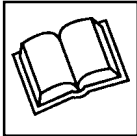
but he openly says, “I never knew you: depart from me”!

To walk with God is to make the Truth live in our lives now, to live as if God is walking by our side as our friend. This is what all believers are striving to do in their limited time of opportunity.

We do not have to be like Adam, who feared the sound of the Elohim in the Garden: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love” (1 Jno. 4:18).

Through the Father’s love we have opportunity to meet each week and renew our walk. As of old we constantly meet with the Father by appointment, but now through the Son:

“And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel” (Ex. 25:20-22).



## *Exposition*

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# Lot and Sodom (1)

Russell Ebbs

**A**T LEAST sixteen times in Scripture the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah is related as an example, and a warning against the abominations practised therein.

The main historical record is of course Genesis 19, but this chapter in fact also implies another destruction—namely that of Lot’s very large ecclesia, which was most likely destroyed spiritually by the “fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness” (Ezek. 16:49) in the cities of the plain.

Certainly, this is the warning to brethren and sisters emphasised by the Lord Jesus in Luke 17:28-30: “Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed”.

Jesus emphasises the unexpected suddenness of Sodom’s destruction as a lesson concerning

<b>Table 1: Noah and Lot compared</b>	
<b>Noah</b>	<b>Lot</b>
Heir of righteousness (Heb. 11:7)	Righteous Lot (2 Pet. 2:7,8)
Preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5)	Testifies against wickedness of Sodom (Gen. 19:7)
Sons of God married daughters of men (Gen. 6:2)	Less than ten righteous persons who had not been absorbed into Sodom (Gen. 18:32; 19:16)
Saving his household (Heb. 11:7)	Seeking to save his household (Gen. 19:14)
Yahweh shut the door (Gen. 7:16)	Angels shut the door (Gen. 19:10)
Found grace in eyes of Yahweh (Gen. 6:8)	Found grace in angel's "sight", Hebrew 'eyes' (Gen. 19:19)
World "overflowed" by water (2 Pet. 3:6)	The cities of the plain overthrown by fire (Gen. 19:24,25)
God remembered Noah (Gen. 8:1)	God remembered Abraham (Gen. 19:29)
Noah drunk (Gen. 9:21)	Lot drunk (Gen. 19:33,35)
Ham and Canaan mocked Noah's nakedness (Gen. 9:22,25)	Two daughters uncovered Lot's nakedness (Gen. 19:33,35)
A new creation, eight persons escape (Gen. 8:16,17)	A new creation, three persons escape (Gen. 19:37,38)

His return. Further, however, it must be noted that Jesus does not mention the abominations of the conduct of the men of Sodom, but describes what one might call 'everyday' events of eating and drinking, buying and selling, and planting and building. These things are not wrong in themselves, but when they become preoccupations, taking priority over the Truth, they are destructive of an individual's and an ecclesia's spiritual health (hence the above-mentioned conclusion that Lot's ecclesia was destroyed). The vital exhortation to each one of us is self-evident. Similar principles can be drawn from the preceding verses in Luke 17 concerning the days of Noah.

**The effect of a prosperous immoral society upon the ecclesia**

Certainly in the Western world there is a "fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness"; a preoccupation with eating and drinking (note the number of restaurants, public houses and fast-food outlets in towns and cities), leisure activities, and materialism in society. These things surround us

today. It is a matter for concern how easy it is for Christadelphians, the bondslaves of Jesus Christ, to become part of this culture of social eating and coveting. "Blessed art thou, O land, when . . . thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!" (Eccl. 10:17).

As for the preoccupation with "planting", it is easy, for example, for brethren and sisters to be giving time and attention to their gardens rather than to their Lord's vineyard. Indeed, it is sometimes worrying to behold the gardens of Christadelphians that obviously have had much care and attention lavished upon them. It is right that we examine our conduct in these matters to ensure our priorities are right. "Remember Lot's wife" (Lk. 17:32).

**Two important features**

Before looking at Genesis 19 in a measure of detail, it is worth taking an overview of the chapter to highlight two important structural features. Firstly, both Jesus and Peter link Noah and Lot. Table 1 shows some similarities in their histories. The table demonstrates that, just as Yahweh

<b>Table 2: Lot as a type of Israel</b>	
<b>Lot</b>	<b>Israel</b>
Name means 'veiled'	A veil upon their heart (2 Cor. 3:15)
Miraculously delivered out of hand of men of Sodom by means of blindness (Gen. 19:10,11)	Miraculously delivered out of the hand of Pharaoh's army through a cloud of darkness (Ex. 14:19,20)
Led away from furnace of affliction by angels (Gen. 19:16)	Led by angel out of Egypt (Ex. 3:2,12) the furnace of iron (Deut. 4:20) and affliction (Isa. 48:10)
Worried about dying in the wilderness (Gen. 19:19)	Thought they were going to perish in the wilderness (Ex. 14:11)
His children became like Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:31-36)	Became as Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa. 1:9,10)
King of the north takes him captive (Gen. 14:12)	Taken captive by king of the north (Ezek. 38:11,12)
Abraham and his trained servants defeat king of the north and rescue Lot (Gen. 14:14-16)	Christ and the saints defeat the king of the north and rescue Israel (Zech. 14:3,4)
Children of Lot given land as a possession (Deut. 2:9,19)	Seed of Abraham given land as an everlasting possession (Gen. 17:8)

was developing a new creation in the days of Noah, so there was a new creation out of the cities of the plain.

Secondly, it can be shown that Lot was a type of Israel, and therefore the gospel of the hope of Israel is another key feature of the chapter. Table 2 gives a few examples to show this.

#### **Righteous Lot**

It is also most important to consider the inspired commentary through Peter on Lot's escape from Sodom. Once more, it is pertinent to emphasise that Peter is writing in a context of the development of ungodliness in the ecclesia:

“. . . and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just [righteous] Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pet. 2:6-9).

Three times we are told that Lot was “righteous”, and, whilst he appears to be a man of like

passions to ourselves, our understanding of Genesis 19 must be from the standpoint of Lot's righteousness in a context of family and/or ecclesial problems.

Lot, together with his family and ecclesia, having separated from Abraham, moved from the mountain to the plain, pitching his tent toward Sodom (Gen. 13:12), and then moving into Sodom (14:12). Since Lot was daily vexed with the filthy conduct of the wicked, he must have been far from happy with his circumstances, and we may, in the light of the words of Jesus Christ, assume that Lot's wife, and therefore perhaps his family, were the motivating force behind this downward spiral.

#### **Delivering the godly out of trial**

Genesis 19 thus describes a trial for Lot, his wife and his family; his formerly large ecclesia having been lost to the world by this time, there was no trial for the latter. The events took place in the evening and in the middle of the night, even as Christ and his angels will soon come to the wicked world of Gentile darkness in which we live. As to why Lot was found in the gate, we can but speculate. It is unlikely that he, being righteous, volunteered himself to a position of eldership in Sodom, although he may have been placed there by the grateful king of

**Table 3: A comparison of Abraham and Lot in Genesis 18,19**

Abraham (ch. 18)	Lot (ch. 19)
In his tent (v. 1)	In the gate of Sodom (v. 1)
In the heat of the day (v. 1)	At even (v. 1)
Ran to meet the angels (v. 2)	Rose to meet the angels (v. 1)
Enlisted help of wife Sarah to prepare a meal (v. 6)	Prepared a feast on his own (v. 3)
Sarah called Abraham 'lord', having followed him out of Ur (v. 12)	Wife not subject to him—she looked back from behind him (v. 26)
Sarah promised a son (v. 14)	Lot's wife promised nothing
Commanded his household and children that they keep the way of Yahweh (v. 19)	Lot's family thought he was joking (v. 14)

Sodom,<sup>1</sup> who had been unable to reward, and thereby compromise, Lot's uncle Abraham, after the defeat of the king of the north as recorded in chapter 14. Perhaps he stationed himself there to protect unwary travellers from a dreadful fate in that city.

Certainly, as soon as he saw the two angel travellers,<sup>2</sup> Lot rose to meet them, and, after their initial decline of his offer of accommodation, "he pressed upon them greatly" (19:2,3). This insistence was courageous, as he knew full well the character of his neighbours. Their initial refusal could have salvaged the conscience of a lesser man, and likewise we need to take the lesson of not seeking to do the minimum possible in our work in the Truth.

"He made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat". So Lot entertained angels unawares (Heb. 13:2) in a meal of fellowship, for any conversation between the three would have been of a spiritually uplifting nature—something which Lot had been grievously missing. This is also the first mention in Scripture of unleavened bread, pointing to the issues of sincerity and truth (1 Cor. 5:8), which would have engaged the conversation.

There are two other facts about this meal that are interesting. Firstly, these angels had already partaken of a large meal that day with Abraham (Gen. 18:8), and therefore their partaking of this second meal was an opportunity for Lot to manifest to them his faith. Secondly, we have to ask, Where was Mrs Lot? Wherever she was, she, unlike Sarah (v. 6), was not there to assist her husband in entertaining angels unawares. Table

3 compares the responses of the two families to the visits of the angels.

#### Shutting the door

Genesis 19:4 is startling: "But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter". This description tells us that the whole of that society, from the elder to the younger, from one side of the city to the other, were truly 'sodomites'—"men with men working that which is unseemly" (Rom. 1:27). Genesis 19:11 adds: "both small and great".

Their call for the strangers to be brought out that they might "know them" (v. 5), and their subsequent words in verse 9, would have been the sad evidence sought by the angels,<sup>3</sup> who could thereby show that there were not even ten men to be found there for whose sake the cities could

1. This point, and one or two others in this and the concluding article, are taken from two recorded addresses by Brother John Roberts, entitled "Lessons from Lot", which the present writer recommends.
2. Implied in this record is the fact that the two angels were unrecognisable as angels. Therefore they would have been of differing features, height, etc.
3. Genesis 18:20,21 reads "And the LORD [Yahweh] said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know". It is likely that Lot would have been one of those who cried unto Yahweh about these matters.

<b>Table 4: Lot in Genesis 19 and the Levite in Judges 19</b>	
<b>Righteous Lot in Genesis 19</b>	<b>Faithless Levite in Judges 19</b>
Events take place at even and night (v. 1)	Events take place at even and night (vv. 14,25)
Entertains angels (v. 3)	Shown hospitality by an old man (vv. 20,21)
House compassed by Sodomites (v. 4)	House beset with Benjamite sons of Belial (v. 22)
Sodomites seek to "know" the men (v. 5)	Benjamites seek to "know" him (v. 22)
Testifies against the wickedness of the Sodomites (v. 7)	The old man, not the Levite, testifies against the wickedness of the Benjamites (v. 23)
Offers his two virgin daughters (v. 8)	The old man offers his virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine (v. 24)
Went out and shut the door behind him (v. 6)	Remains in the house throughout
Prepared to sacrifice himself for the travellers (v. 9)	Sacrifices his concubine, not being prepared to give his life for his bride (v. 25)
Leaves house a second time to invite his family to return to the house (v. 14)	Concubine denied access to the house (v. 26)
Lot's wife dies (v. 26)	Concubine dies
Lot's wife a warning (Lk. 17:32)	Concubine's divided body scattered to the borders of Israel as a memorial (v. 29)

be spared (18:32). Indeed, part of the reason that God engineered the events recorded in 19:1-11 may well have been to demonstrate that the people of the cities of the plain were beyond redemption.

In verse 6, Lot went out and shut the door behind him. This was indeed a brave act, for he thereby cut off any hope of making a speedy retreat to safety, as well as making an attempt to guard the door against a degenerate mob. In the following verse, in pleading with the men of Sodom that they "do not so wickedly", he testified that their deeds were evil, and, rather like Noah, revealed himself as a preacher of righteousness. Lot risked his own life in these actions for the sake of these strangers with whom he had enjoyed fellowship.

Verse 8, in which Lot offers up his two virgin daughters, certainly seems strange to us. Perhaps Lot thought that the Sodomites would not be interested in the girls, but would be sufficiently impressed with his attitude to be more reasonable and less inflamed with lust. The present writer would welcome comments from readers on this point.

There are many similarities between Lot's action and that of the faithless Levite in Judges 19, but also some very important differences. The Levite, who should have been a teacher in Israel, demonstrated a selfish self-interest, and sacrificed his bride rather than himself. Lot, on the other hand, was prepared to lose his own life in doing that which was right. Table 4 sets forward a few comparisons and contrasts between the two incidents.

As the men "pressed sore" upon Lot, the angels "put forth their hand". For the first of the two times recorded in the chapter they rescued righteous Lot and shut the door (v. 10), even as Yahweh shut the door of the ark before the Flood destroyed all life on the earth (7:16). On both occasions, and as at the time of the first Passover in Egypt, and as with Rahab's house when Jericho was destroyed, salvation from death was only available to those who were inside. Indeed, it will soon be the time when the bridegroom will come, they that are ready go in with him to the marriage, and the door will be shut against the foolish virgins (Mt. 25:10).

[\(To be concluded\)](#)