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Not to put too fine a point on it, Abraham's nephew Lot was a classic clot - selfish, foolish, weak and dithery.

Lot chose to live in the Jordan valley, where he "pitched his tent as far as Sodom. And the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before Jehovah – exceedingly so" (from Genesis 13.11-13, Literal). By this careless spiritual naivety the scene was now set: picking up on last week's theme, here was a very silly grain of wheat choosing to dwell nonchalantly among the tares.

In Chapter 18 we have the beautiful account of the Lord and two angels, on their visit to (named by then, in anticipation of Isaac's birth) Abraham and Sarah, warning Abraham of the impending judgement upon Sodom (vv 16-33). We read that "the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin is exceedingly heavy (v 20, Lit), this particular Hebrew word for "cry" denoting a cry of blatant guilt. Abraham pleads with the Lord, repeatedly "chancing his arm", for he knows that Lot and his people are in Sodom. We are given the amazing truth that God withholds His full judgement for the sake of His righteous ones still being present; (this incidentally is a strong pointer to what is termed the "Rapture" of the Church of I Thessalonians 4 being set to occur before the seven years of the great tribulation rather than at its end).

The events of Chapter 19 are well-known, and horrific. Lot behaved correctly in offering the two visitors hospitality, but then, to save them and himself, offered up his two betrothed virgin daughters to the Sodomite mob. The Lord even now was merciful to this fool – "But the men (the angelic visitors) put out their hands and pulled Lot to them, into the house, and shut the door. And they struck the men with blindness (from vv 10-11). Lot was later sent out to warn his

future sons-in-law to join in the impending escape, but they assumed he was having a joke (v 14).

At dawn it was time to get moving, and fast, but what do we hear of Lot? – “And he lingered” (v16a). Talk about the mercy and the patience of the Lord! – the angels grabbed the hands of him, his wife and his daughters, “the Lord having mercy on him”, and got them out of the city, telling them not to look behind them but to escape to the mountains (v 16b-17). But Lot asked to go only to Zoar nearby, and the Lord (v 21, “he”) mercifully granted even this request. “The sun had risen on the earth” by the time they reached Zoar (v 23). Then came the terrible destruction, and the end of Lot’s wife – when she was already safe in Zoar (vv 24-26).

Next we hear of Abraham: he “started up early in the morning, going to the place where he had stood before the Lord. And he gazed And he saw” (vv 27-28). He saw the warned-of, final, fearful judgement of the Lord on wickedness.

There is much for the Lord’s people of today to ponder in these solemn events. Among the many other manifestations of sin and wickedness these days is the ceaseless promotion of homosexual activity as being entirely normal and acceptable, and woe betide anyone, under force of the law, who dares to think otherwise. Yet God’s Word still stands firm and clear on such matters, (quite apart from on all other matters too), whatever may be the arguments that the current “movers-and-shakers” insist shall prevail. (For help concerning our Christian pastoral response to homosexual issues please see TWR 67 on the website, in the Faith and Topicals Subfolder, via the “Our Publications” button).

Unlike Lot, it is not for us to escape physically from a place of wide-ranging wickedness, (this will only occur at the Rapture), but we can do much to escape from it, and to keep escaped from it, spiritually and practically, right now. We do well to monitor closely our involvement with radio, television and the internet; with newspapers and magazines; and with “the arts” and our “social set”. Whenever necessary, we are to “flee”: lingering is forbidden!

“And be not conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12.2). If Lot had heeded such instruction, (he didn’t have that text but he did have his conscience and the patriarchs’ teachings for guidance), he would have saved the Lord and those two angels, and his family and himself, a great deal of danger and trouble.

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