**Reading: 2Peter 2:1-9**

**How do you live in the path of the Lord’s blessing? Blessed by God?**

* Clue: /sending money to an “evangelist” in a sharp suit and $1000 shoes.

**18:19** I have chosen him [Ab], so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.

* Promised him? Abundant blessing.
  + How get it? …keep the way of the LORD
  + Mean? by doing what is right and just
    - Saying: chosen Ab – out of everyone else – this man & family – for blessing.
    - Get that blessing: teaching children: keep the way of the LORD by pursuing justice & righteousness[[1]](#endnote-1).
* All want that for our families: abundantly blessed by God. Even ppl /church - /specific belief in God of the B – want their families to walk in the path of blessing – blessed by God.
  + Teach them to pursue God’s ways: justice & righteousness.
  + No more impt thing to teach children: do what is right & good.
    - As a parent, teach them all kinds of things: wash hands – get dressed – later: play a musical instrument – plait your hair - study hard – pass exams - make money – pay bills – find a spouse – drive a car – cook a great meal.
    - Can have great success in all those things -> be on wrong path -> grow up far from God. Jesus called it the broad road that leads to destruction[[2]](#endnote-2).
  + Most impt: live by God’s ways: justice & righteousness. Jesus called that the narrow road that leads to life – and only a few find it[[3]](#endnote-3).
    - Do they stick up for the kid who gets picked on at school? Do they have a heart of compassion for the least – last - lost? Do they tell the truth? Do they strive to do the right thing, even when it’s hard?
  + Parents: are you encouraging your kids in the way of the LORD? Read B to them? When they fail, do you encourage them to come to J with it?
    - /Delegate to SS 45mins/wk. /Enough to counter values of our world from school and internet.
* Hold that idea of righteousness & justice -> blessing.

**Sodom was the opposite!**

* Next verse: **18:20** The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous… result -> destruction.
  + Stuff in S&G – opposite of justice & righteousness – comparison.
    - Ab on one side: S&G on other. One is path of blessing. One is path of destruction.
  + Pick up on 1 word, outcry – where’s that come from? Who is crying out against S&G?
    - Those who have been mistreated of course. Victims – suffered injustice & unrighteousness.
    - Enc you: Victim? Lord hears – sees. **Exodus 22:22** Do not take advantage of the widow or the fatherless. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you…[[4]](#endnote-4)
  + We have a God who is passionate abt justice & righteousness.
    - Those who abuse, manipulate, coerce vulnerable ppl – God: dead.
    - You today? Here or online: Only hope – only – flee to J let the wrath of God be poured out on him instead of you. Only hope. Else: eternity in hell. Path of destruction.
    - Say: harsh? /Glorious! Means even foulest & most wretched of sinners – absolutely deserve death – can be forgiven – changed – cleansed – renewed.

So what happens? Lot = Ab’s nephew:

* **19:1** sitting in the gateway of the city – think back to Ab sitting at entrance of his tent back in ch18.
  + Sees the 2 men – angels – approaching. Just like Ab did.
  + Gets up to meet them – just like Ab
  + Bowed down to ground – just like Ab did.
  + Asks them to stay – repeatedly. Just like Ab
  + Makes a meal for them – just like Ab.
    - Righteous Lot – learned from uncle Ab.
* But here’s what Sodom is like: that night: **19:4** all the men from every part of the city of Sodom – young and old – covering all bases – surround the house – make it clear they want to rape Lot’s visitors.
  + Meant to see: about as far from justice & righteousness as you can get.
    - That’s why there’s outcry against the city. Stuff like this[[5]](#endnote-5). /Think: God destroyed Sodom b/c of this 1 event. Outcry!
    - Wonder how many victims of this abomination of a city? Opposite of walking in path of blessing. Walking – running headlong towards judgement.
  + Worth remembering: this is how low a culture can go. S/t despair of our world – can get a lot worse.
    - Human heart -> greater depths -> darker horrors than most of us have ever seen.
  + Need theology – understanding: help us deal with depravity – unrighteousness – injustice.
    - /Bury heads in sand – pretend world is all sweetness & light and Instagram opportunities.
* So, happens? Judgement falls -> immediate rescue: Angels literally grab Lot - drag him inside the house -> blindness – trying to get in (v11)
  + Just beginning: going to destroy this place - The outcry to the LORD against its people is so great (v13)
  + Angels help Lot’s family escape: chilling words **v17** Flee for your lives! Don’t look back, and don’t stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!
  + On the city: LORD rained down burning sulphur (v24) – cities of S&G destroyed – everything gone – even vegetation. (v25)
    - Mention that: interesting paper: scientific journal Nature[[6]](#endnote-6): new research shows “an extremely hot explosive event levelled an area of almost 200 sq miles…wiping out all the middle-bronze age cities and towns and stripping agricultural soils from once-fertile fields”
    - Science points to an airburst meteor explosion. Shockwave: covered some of the area in superheated brine from Dead Sea. Took 600yrs for land to recover.

Briefly consider each family member:

* **SiL**: tragic scene – Lot trying to convince his future SiL – engaged to his daughters – need to flee – end come.
  + **v14** Hurry and get out of this place, because the Lord is about to destroy the city! But his sons-in-law thought he was joking. Wind-up.
  + Speculate a bit here: from their POV, here’s Lot:
    - In our reading: Lot – righteous man - tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard – and yet, he’s also living in Sodom – sitting in the city gate – suggests he was a leader of the city – a man of position – clearly settled.
    - /Outside like Ab – inside the city.
    - Inconsistency: telling us it’s doom & gloom and disaster – but you seem so settled Lot. And if you have this great internal struggle – tormented in righteous soul - /how come /seen that before? Ignore him. Die.
  + Immediately wonder if same could be levelled at us?
    - Are we so settled – so comfortable – so at peace w life in our city – that if we mentioned judgement – ppl would see that as inconsistent w the way we live?
    - I want to be s/o loves this city – loyal to this city – stand up for justice & righteousness.
    - But also honest abt it – about the depravity here too – poverty – abuse - #children in care system.
    - /Go round being doom-merchants – negative and gloomy abt everything.
    - But honest: deserve judgement of God – this city – and every other. Qn: /why did God destroy Sodom – qn: why does he have mercy on Stoke?
    - /Impression: fully settled here - /impression: home. This is a place that will one day be destroyed just like Sodom. Honest abt that.
* **Lot’s wife (v26) – middle of fleeing city** – Lot’s wife looked back and became a pillar of salt.
  + /Think means: glanced backward for a moment – miracle: salt - weird.
  + Think: stopped running – looked back to her city – her life – all her precious possessions – her home – her heart was in Sodom.
    - And while the others escaped – she was killed by the blast wave – encrusted in a layer of superheated vaporised salts.
    - So close. So far.
  + Jesus calls to us today to see those events as a warning for the future: **Luke 17:28-32** It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulphur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. “It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. On that day no one who is on the housetop, with possessions inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. Remember Lot’s wife!
    - IOW: judgement day is coming.
      * B desc: long time coming – patient – but when he comes – quick.
      * So forget your worldly goods – forget home – possessions – all be vaporised in a moment.
      * Instead: flee to the one who can grab you by the hand and drag you away to safety: Lord Jesus. Put your ultimate hope in him to save you. /Else can.

**Thought abt Lot’s wife, SiL. Lot?**

* Righteous Lot. When trying to fight off the crowds of men come to attack his visitors: some of most horrendous words in B: **end v7** Don’t do this wicked thing. Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.
  + Think: how?
    - Maybe honour of male visitors >> honour of female daughters. Implied in text.
    - Maybe lived so long in Sodom: values of Sodom worn off on him.
  + Whatever Lot’s reason: see now why when Ab – pleading for mercy for Sodom – 10 righteous ppl. Clear now: less than 10 – and even those are pretty wretched.
    - But God in his great mercy, saves Lot. In spite of his terrible priorities.
    - So he and his two daughters are saved as Sodom is destroyed.
* Epilogue at end of story: v30-38.
  + Whole area devastated. Lot & daughters now living in a cave (v30) in the mountains.
  + And one day – daughters realise: /ride out on a white horse to whisk them away. /Husbands - /future.
  + Get Lot incredibly drunk – sleep with him – both get pregnant from their dad. Which in our day: rape – certainly incest.
    - Just see: /fully escaped Sodom at all - brought Sodom with them – Sodom lives on still in hearts of all 3 of them.
  + Reflect on this scene: Lot gone from a life of influence – luxury – vast herds – great wealth -> cave. Lost everything:
    - Home – wealth – wife – security – dignity – respect of his own daughters – lost all credibility as a believer – lost legacy.
    - Only legacy from Lot is 2 boys born from his daughters -> Moabites, Ammonites. All kinds of problems for Ab’s children generations afterwards. That’s his life’s work: a lot of trouble for other people.
* Stark reminder to us: a person can be saved by the skin of their teeth. Saved – catastrophic mess of Xn life.
  + **1Cor 3** Judgement Day will bring it all to light – burn up all the rubbish – see what’s left of lasting value.
    - Some: invested in righteousness & justice – path of blessing: great reward.
    - Others: everything burned up - the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames. Might well be saved. Get into heaven through the grace & mercy of Jesus.
  + But what a waste. Eternal loss - consequences.
    - So, here to say: learn from Lot’s example. Some ppl in B: just there to warn us.
    - Need to be so careful how we live in our ungodly city. Pursue righteousness & justice - /absorb the values of the world around us. Follow the narrow way.
  + And for all our failures – run to Jesus – the only one who is truly righteous and just.

*Pr: Want to hear those words, good and faithful servant. Live: pursuing righteousness and justice at every level. Ultimately looking to Jesus, the only one who is truly perfectly righteous and just.*

Benediction: **Ephesians 5:15** Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

1. Although this promise is specifically made to Abraham, it’s a principle that’s repeated all over scripture, hundreds of times. Eg: Psalm 1:6; Proverbs 11:5; Proverbs 10:6; Matthew 5:6; Psalm 5:12; Luke 14:14 etc etc. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Matthew 7:13 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Matthew 7:14 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Jesus picks up on the same theme in Matthew 18:6 If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Cut for space: **Jude**: Sodom: place of sexual immorality and perversion

   /Just that. Just one example. **Ezekiel 16:49** arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty [proud] and did detestable things.

   **Isaiah 3:9** desc ppl of Sodom as parading their sin. /Ashamed of it - /hidden. Proud of their behaviour.

   /Too much focus on homosexuality. Defo in there. Just one example of their many sins. A Sodomite: arrogant, proud, overfed, unconcerned for poor & needy – as well as sexually immoral. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Read the actual paper here: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-021-97778-3> or a brief precis here: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ericmack/2018/12/04/new-science-suggests-biblical-city-of-sodom-was-smote-by-an-exploding-meteor/?sh=2283a7065c67> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)