



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

2nd Peter 2:4-10

“Noah, Lot and the Deliverance of God”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] We are grateful to Thee, Lord, for another opportunity to study the word and we pray Thy blessing upon us as we look into the Scriptures. We thank Thee that they are living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, and that they pierce even to the dividing asunder of soul and the spirit. They are a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart and it is with them that we have to do. We pray as we consider again another difficult portion from Thy word, that Thou wilt guide and direct us and enable us to understand it and to learn the lessons that Thou wouldst have us to learn from it. We ask Thy blessing upon this church, upon its leadership, and upon those who are in this auditorium particularly. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] We are turning again tonight to 2nd Peter chapter 2 and our subject tonight is “Noah, Lot and the Deliverance of God.” And so for our Scripture reading I want to read verses 4 through 10 of 2nd Peter chapter 2. 2nd Peter chapter two, verse 4 through verse 10,

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old

world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the manner of life 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: But chiefly, (or especially,) them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government.”

Now I'm going to stop in the middle of that 10th verse because that is where the 11th verse should have begun because that preceding section is one section. Now you'll remember that last week we considered the angels that sinned and I tried to point out on the basis of a series of arguments that the Apostle Peter has made reference to the angelic beings that sinned in Genesis chapter 6. We tried to argue this from Genesis chapter 6 and from Jude verses 6 and 7, from 1st Peter chapter 3, verse 19, as well as 2nd Peter chapter 2, and verse 4, and tried to show that what is referred to there is the descent of some of the angelic beings to the earth to possess the bodies of men and through the bodies of men carry out an illicit relationship with some of the women thereby, perhaps, attempting to thwart the incarnation of the Lord Jesus. I did not mean to suggest, I may have been misunderstood, I did not mean to suggest that angels came and as spirit beings united with men who are of flesh and blood. But they possessed the bodies of individuals, they cohabited with men and carried out their nefarious scheme in that way.

Now I thought that these arguments were very important from the Bible and very clear and plain and I do not see how it is possible to argue against the teaching of Scripture. There are a number of other reasons that could have been given in support of that particular thing. But as I mentioned last time it is a subject that is almost weird and

consequently many shy away from it for the very reason that it seems so strange. But there are many reasons to believe that that is the teaching of holy Scripture.

Reminds me of a story of a young man who appeared in court once and he was supposed to have appeared with his father. And the judge thundered at him, “What’s the reason your father is not here, he should have been here two weeks ago.” The young man replied, “Your Honor, there are seventeen reasons why my father is not here.” The judge said, “What are they?” He said, “Well number one is that my father died a little more than two weeks ago.” And the judge said, “Well I don’t guess, then, we’ll need to hear the other sixteen.”

So the point I’m trying to make is that we have had a number of good reasons for this interpretation, there is no reason for me to elaborate and give you further reasons. Now tonight we want to continue our study of these judgments that Peter is setting forth and so we’re going to concentrate our attention upon the deliverance of the flood at the time of the flood and the deliverance of Lot from Sodom and Gomorrah.

We might write over this section the words of Romans chapter 11, and verse 22, “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God.” There is a well-known Edinburgh teacher by the name of G. N. M. Collins. For many years Mr. Collins was the pastor of a church of a Presbyterian type in the city of Edinburgh and that church was located not too far from downtown Edinburgh. He had a friend in the city of Edinburgh whom he knew quite well because he was his neighbor. He wasn’t sure whether he was a Christian or not but the time came when he had occasion to visit the friend on a business matter. It was in 1940 just after the beginning of World War II and he went in to transact his peace of business with his friend and he noticed that his friend was very much upset and finally the friend said, “Well what have you preachers to say about the love of God now? A God of love, bah, a strange love that allows war.” And it turned out that this man’s only son had just been drafted by the British for service in the war.

Now I think this illustrates for us a principle that we need to keep before us constantly, modern theology with its universalism has practically eliminated divine judgment from the vocabulary of professing Christians. And it is a popular idea that a God, if he is a God of love, could not possibly allow evil to exist in his universe. And he certainly could not allow a war to exist. And if we do have such things as wars and if we do have such things as a God of love then we must assume that there is some means by which God is going to save all men ultimately and the evil that we see is not a permanent thing at all. But it's inevitable that God should exercise judgment because sin, according to Scripture, is this abominable thing which I hate, so God says.

Many men frequently cite the text of Scripture, “God is love.” And I don't want to debate that passage, it certainly is true, God is love. And it surely is one of the greatest affirmations of the Christian religion, if we may speak of Christianity as a religion for just a moment. It is one of the greatest revelations of God, that we do have a God of love. But to say that this is an adequate definition of God is to misunderstand the divine revelation. The text of Scriptures in 1st John chapter 4, and verse 8, which says, “God is love,” does not say, “God is only love.” There are other passages of Scripture. There are passages which say that, “God is light.” There are passages of Scripture which speak of him as, “An avenging fire.” There are passages that speak of the fact that he hates sin and that, “He surely shall judge.” So when we think of God we should think of a God of love but we also have to think of a God of justice. And we have to have some understanding of God which satisfies both of these aspects of his character.

We have one of the great illustrations of judgment in the word of God in this passage that we are going to look at tonight. God's judgment upon Sodom. Joseph Parker, a great English preacher, speaking on this text at one time and about the judgment of Sodom specifically said, “Should God remonstrate with Sodom because of their evil? Absurd. Should he threaten Sodom because of the evil that they have been committing? What a feeble response. What, then, should God do? Reign fire and brimstone upon it?”

Yes. Conscience says yes. Justice says yes. Concern for other cities, says yes. Nothing but fire will disinfect so foul an air, nothing but burning brimstone should succeed the cup of devils.” And Mr. Parker was absolutely right. There is a time when it is necessary for God to judge in order to purify the air, and that is what happened at Sodom. That’s why the angels were judged and that’s why there was the great deluge or the flood.

Now Peter has argued that the apostolic testimony is reliable but he has prophesied in the 2nd chapter that there are coming false teachers. And these false teachers are going to bring in heresies of destruction or heresies that lead those who accept them to perdition. Twice he uses the term perdition; in verse 1 of chapter two, and then again in verse 3. He speaks about destructive heresies or heresies of perdition. And then we read in the end of verse 3, “And their destruction, (or their perdition,) slumbereth not.”

So he is saying, then, that this false teaching that is being brought in by the false teachers is designed or is ultimately to bring those who accept it to an eternal separation from God, to what we call the hell fire of eternal damnation. Now someone might immediately say, “But is it possible that God should judge in this way?” So Peter has introduced three great illustrations of judgment -- the angels, the flood, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah -- to prove that God is well able to damn those who do not respond to the divine revelation.

Now we’ve spoken of the angels that sinned and so tonight we’re turning to the judgment upon the old world described for us in the 5th verse. This is the second of the judgments upon a situation that demanded punitive action, “And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person.” Now that statement, “Saved Noah,” is not a reference to the eternal salvation of Noah. Noah had already built the ark and by that had given testimony to the fact that he had been justified by faith. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the 11th chapter of his book, and the 7th verse, writes, “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the

saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”

So Noah was a man who responded in faith, who believed the word of God, and built the ark and became heir of the righteousness which was by faith. And that ark, the writer of the Hebrews says, was an ark that was instrumental in the saving of his house. Now that’s the force of the word in verse 5, “And spared not the old world, but saved Noah.” The Greek word is actually a word that means to guard or to keep or preserve. So the idea is that God preserved Noah and seven other people, for he’s the eighth, seven other people through the flood judgment.

Now this, of course, was designed to impress upon the readers of the epistle that it is often true that there are just a few people who survive the judgment of God. I am sure that it must have had quite an influence on the people who read this epistle for the first time, “Spared not the old world, but saved Noah and seven, and only seven, other people.” Noah is the eighth and that’s all.

Over in 1st Peter chapter 3, and verse 20, Peter again says something about this very thing. He says, “Who at one time were disobedient when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, in which few, (that is eight souls,) were saved by water.” So one of the points that Peter would want to get over by naming Noah as the eighth person is that there were very few people who survived this judgment of God. And I don’t think that we should pass that by without making some application to us. I think it has probably always been true that when we think of the salvation of God we are thinking of the salvation of a remnant. It is always a remnant. It was remnant in the Old Testament, it was a remnant in the New Testament. The Lord Jesus speaks of the genuine Christians as a little flock. So we should not be surprised if there are relatively few people that are saved.

Now we know that according to the biblical revelation we are moving toward the time when the whole world is to be saved, but that is in the future. And I must say that I

think that we would be, I would be, derelict in my duty if I did not impress upon you in this auditorium that there are going to be few people in the present society, evidently, who are going to be saved. The Lord Jesus speaks about this way being narrow and very straight. And consequently we should always be very sure to ask ourselves, examine ourselves to use Paul's words, to see that we are in the faith. Few, or saved the eighth person, only seven others. Now that had relevance for them, I hope it has relevance for us too. It's a serious thing to read the word of God, and it's a serious thing to have the preaching of the gospel and to receive that ministry. And to treat that lightly is not the kind of approach that is pleasing to God and it may not be very healthy for our eternal salvation.

Now he, of course, wished to make certain or make the point of the certainty of judgment as well but the fewness of the saved is undoubtedly one of his points. So I ask you, are you a part of the little flock? Are you a part of the remnant? Are you a part of this small company of people called the true church of Jesus Christ? Have you really believed in him? Or have you made simply a profession of faith? I don't ask you have you attended an evangelical church, or do you attend one, or whether you have been baptized, or whether you sit at the Lord's table, or whether you have a lot of good friends who are evangelical Christians. I'm asking you the question, have you responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Noah is called a preacher of righteousness, did you notice that? Now you can search the Old Testament through and you will not find any reference to Noah as a preacher. And yet it is said here that he is a preacher of righteousness. Now if we look at the Old Testament we discover these things about Noah. The text of Genesis chapter 6 says that he was a just man and a perfect man, which I think means something like mature. And then it says that he was a man who walked with God. Enoch, his father, walked with God. And Noah, the son of Enoch, also walked with God. Here are two men who walked with God. And he's a just man and a perfect man.

And furthermore, the Old Testament says that he found grace with the Lord. Now putting all of this together since the Old Testament does not say that he preached we must assume that he primarily preached by the things that he did. That is, his life was his message. And there is no better way to preach than to preach that way. Lots of people think it's great to be able to get up and stand behind the pulpit and exhort a crowd such as this. My wife occasionally says to me in moments when she is not at her best [Laughter] she frequently says to me, “You like to get up and hear the sound of your voice.” And perhaps there is something to that, I don't know whether there is or not, but I listen to what she has to say. There may be a number of preachers who do love to get up and just hear their voice but that's not really the best way to preach. The best way to preach is to preach by a manner of life. That's the most affective means of preaching.

There is an old story about G. Campbell Morgan, supposedly a true story. He had about five or six children and all of them went into the ministry, and some of them are still living, well-known preachers, a couple in this country. There was a discussion one time in the presence of Dr. Morgan and someone asked him what was the best translation of the Bible, and he named a certain translation. And then I think one of the boys spoke up, I may have this story a little wrong but I have the punch-line right anyway [Laughter], and one of the boys said, “The best translation is mother's translation,” laying great stress upon the fact that it was Mrs. Morgan who really was a shining testimony for Jesus Christ.

Now Noah did not preach in the way that other preachers preach, but he preached by his life. He built that ark, that was a great message. He gave testimony to the fact that he was a responder to the message of God. Now if I look at this word a little more carefully, this expression, “A preacher of righteousness,” I would gather that since this really means something like a proclaimer of righteousness that Noah's message was primarily a message of judgment. That is, as he built the ark he announced the fact that the flood was coming and he warned those who were listening to him to flee from the judgment that was to come. So he was a proclaimer of righteousness in that sense.

Now I do not think, however, that we must exclude grace from his preaching since in the Old Testament it says he found grace with the Lord. I am sure that Noah tempered grace with his message of judgment. Now Noah's work, then, was a kind of sermon. Every tree that fell in the forest which was designed to be a part of that ark that he constructed, every time that one of those boys, his sons, yelled, “Timber!” every time that happened a message was given. Every time an axe stroke was swung, a message was given. Every time a plank was laid on the deck of the ark, a message was given. Every time a hammer hit a nail, there was a message that was given.

I'm sure that there was a lot of laughter. So far as we know at that time there was no rain, there had been no rain. There is no evidence of the kind of water necessary to float a giant ship like that. I am sure that he was the subject of a great deal of mockery. I don't think that there was ever a bigger disaster naturally speaking than that to build this giant ark out on dry land when we have no record that they had even known of rain. And we don't have any record that it was built on a lake or by the ocean or even a large river. In fact, I don't know of any disaster like that except I understand that some years ago the United States Navy built one of their vessels in the Philadelphia Navy Yard and built it so wide that it was unable to go down the ship canal to the Atlantic ocean and they had to widen the channel in order to get the ship out. But that's to be expected from our governmental workers [Laughter].

In Noah's case there was no evidence whatsoever that this was going to be able to be used at all. And so I can just hear the laughter and the scorn that was heaped upon Noah but as is so often the case men laughed but God's man had the last laugh. And Noah surely had the last laugh. He was a preacher of righteousness and since only seven people beside himself got on that ark, he didn't have such great statistics to send back to denominational headquarters either [Laughter]. Perhaps one of the reasons is that he was not afraid to say exactly what God was saying. And since he didn't temper his message with nice, sweet words he didn't have a whole lot of response.

I heard another story about a preacher who was preaching and after he had preached for a long time he said to some other preachers, he said, “I have been preaching for twenty years and I have never had anyone get angry with me from my message, and I’ve never even had someone to come up after the message and challenge me over anything that I’ve said.” He thought that was great. Another older preacher said, “Well who would ever think of challenging an echo?” [Laughter]

He was a preacher of righteousness. And you’ll notice also that it says in this 5th verse that, “God saved Noah, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.” Now a lot of people think that if they had lived in the days of Noah it wouldn’t be so bad and one could be a great Christian in those years because people thought about God then. And after all, when people are thinking about God and talking about God it’s a whole lot easier to be talking about him too. Many of us think that, we think that life would have been a whole lot easier if we were not living in 1976 but things are a whole lot different now because we have all of these professors who are in our colleges and universities and theological seminaries and they are very wise and intelligent and they have made fun of our Christian faith and people believe them, and so it’s very difficult in our day to preach the gospel. I don’t think that at all.

I think it was a very difficult task to preach the gospel in the days of Noah, and in the days of Enoch. In fact, the Bible seems to specialize in the use of the term ungodly through the days of Enoch and Noah. In Jude, verse 14 and verse 15, we read, “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

So in Enoch’s day the society that was described here is described by a fourfold use of the adverb ungodly, or the adjective ungodly. And then in verse 5 of 2nd Peter chapter 2 we have it again in the case of Noah, “Bringing in the flood upon the world of

the ungodly.” So it’s evident that this society in which Enoch lived, in this society in which Noah lived was a very ungodly society but these men, both of them, walked with God in the midst of it. Now that’s a challenge for us in 1976; no easy generation to live in.

Well God saved Noah but he judged the world and only eight souls were delivered. Now having given us that judgment which illustrates the fewness of those that survived as well as the certainty of divine judgment upon ungodliness, Peter then turns to discuss the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, one of the most scintillating illustrations of divine judgment in the Bible. In fact, it’s doubtful if there is any illustration of divine judgment that is more striking than the destruction of the cities of the plain. There were at least five cities which were destroyed at the same time. Admah, and Zeboim, and Zoar most likely together with Sodom and Gomorrah were all destroyed in the destruction that is referred to here.

Now this is the third of the examples and it is designed to bring his readers to a choice between the apostolic orthodoxy and the contemporary heresies that they face. And I think today as we go through this section God, through the Holy Spirit, is asking us, too, to make a choice between the apostolic orthodoxy found in the Holy Scriptures and the contemporary heresies which are so frequently proclaimed about us.

Well let’s look and see how Peter describes this. It is interesting, I think, to see that the destruction by fire succeeds that by water and we thus anticipate what shall be given us in chapter 3 and verse 7 and following, “And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes.” What a description of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Incidentally archeological discovery has largely confirmed all that is found in the Book of Genesis concerning the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. That land was a very fertile land we now know. Just as we learn from Genesis chapter 13 when Lot chose that land because it was like the garden of the Lord. We not only know that but we know that what is now the place where these cities were is a burnt out region of oil and

asphalt, exactly what one might suspect and expect to find if there had been such a destruction as is described in Genesis chapter 19.

Furthermore, in Genesis chapter 19 we read that Abraham who was sixteen miles away at Hebron looked out and saw the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. And today if you were to stand where ancient Hebron was and take a look out towards Sodom and Gomorrah you could see the land where the cities were just as the Scriptures have set it forth. We know probably the exact location of these cities in the southern end of the Dead Sea. And the possibility of Lot's wife actually being turned into a pillar of salt is so easily seen today that it is most likely that it occurred literally. That as she hesitated, not wanting to leave Sodom because her possessions were there and her friends were there and she hesitated and she looked back and while she did when this tremendous explosion took place there is a whole lot of oil and sulfur and salt in that area, this tremendous explosion took place which went up into the sky so that as the salt began to fall down, burning red hot as a result of this explosion, she literally was caught in the fall out and became a literal pillar of salt. The Lord Jesus, remember, speaking about judgment says, “Remember Lot's wife.” An illustration of the fact that the possessions of this world are of no matter when God calls us out of it.

“Turn the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes and condemn them with an overthrow.” Now why should God wish to condemn Sodom and Gomorrah with a judgment such as this? I want you to take your Bibles now and turn back with me to the Book of Genesis and we want to note the outlines of the story of the destruction of these cities.

Back in chapter 13, and verse 13, when remember Lot and Abraham separated we read in verse 5, “And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents, and the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.” And in verse 17 we read, “There was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's

cattle.” Did I say 17? I meant to say 7, chapter 13, verse 7, “And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle.”

I have a good friend who is Southern Baptist preacher and he says about, “And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s cattle and the herdsmen of Lot’s cattle,” that that is the first Baptist church in Scripture [Laughter]. I imagine there are lots of others who could say similar things about their own particular type of church.

“And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. (What a vivid expression that is. There are many evangelical Christians today that pitch their tents towards Sodom. Now notice the 13th verse,) But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.”

Now we come over to Genesis chapter 18. Here we have this remarkable incident in which Abraham is visited by three men. We read in verse 1 of chapter 18,

“And the LORD appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My LORD, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not

away, I pray thee, from thy servant, (now notice that these three men appeared but evidently one of them has such a commanding look about him that Abraham immediately senses that he is the important one of the three. And so he addresses him,) Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hastened to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, who am old? Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. (Now have you noticed that this individual who is speaking to Abraham now is not one of three men, but he has suddenly become the Lord, did you notice that? What we have here is a theophany. We have an appearance of God. We have the Lord Jesus appearing with the two men who we will see in chapter 19 turn out to be two other types of persons, that he is appearing before the time of his incarnation. These appearances of our Lord, these theophanies, appearances of God before the time of the incarnation, are designed to prepare Israel for the incarnation so that they will not be shocked that there is an incarnation of God.) Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not;

for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh, and the men rose up from there, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?”

And incidentally I want you to notice, I don't have time to talk about this tonight, I want you to notice that the chief reason that Sodom is destroyed is not simply to execute judgment so that people might say, “The true God is a judgment executing God.” But the chief reason is that it bares on the eternal purposes that God has for Abraham and his seed, that's the ultimate reason why Sodom and Gomorrah and those wicked cities must be destroyed. Well now we need not read about the intercession of Abraham with the Lord for Sodom. We know that intercession was of great significance but Abraham stopped before he asked for the whole of the city.

Now we read in chapter 19, and verse 1,

“And there came two angels, (now you see, the two men who went on, the Lord being left with Abraham, the two men have now turned out to be two angels. So actually, Abraham had entertained the Son of God with two angelic beings.) And there came two angels to Sodom at evening; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; and he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat. But before they lay down, the men of the city, (now notice it says the men of the city,) the men of the city, even the men of Sodom,

compassed the house round, both old and young, (now notice that. Not simply the old men, not simply the dirty old men of the city of Sodom, but their wickedness has even touched the youth of the city now,) both old and young, all the people from every quarter, and they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men who came in to thee this night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them. (Now they were not asking for an introduction. This word know is the Old Testament word for sexual relationship. Adam knew Eve his wife and she conceived and brought forth a son. These men, the men of the city of Sodom, both old and young, were asking Lot to bring those men out, that they carnally know them. That they might have homosexual relations with them. Now the evidence for that is very plain. We read,) And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him; And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. (And then Lot to show that when a man pitches his tent toward Sodom he always is affected, says,) Behold now, I have two daughters who have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is it is good in your eyes.”

So here is a man named Lot who had known the fellowship of Abraham, and who in the New Testament is called just Lot, a righteous man. A man, who according to the description in 2nd Peter chapter 2, vexed his righteous soul by the deeds of the Sodomites who now has himself become embroiled in the wickedness of that city in which he went to dwell.

It's no wonder that Sodom was destroyed. One of the vilest words in the English language is the word sodomy. It has reference to unnatural sexual relations. In almost every edition of our newspapers today it is found. If the word specifically is not there the actions are found because this society of which we are a part is a wicked society, sodomy. There are people who wonder how a loving God could execute such vengeance upon the cities of the plains as is described in holy Scripture. I agree with Mr. Parker. Any other

kind of judgment would have been totally inadequate. The kind of judgment that is found in the Old Testament is the kind of judgment that should have been executed upon these people.

We know now from archeological discoveries that the Canaanites of whom they were a part practiced human sacrifice. As a matter of fact, you can find a little cemetery of infants about their temple areas. Infants that were put in jars and passed through fires because of the religion of the Canaanites. The things that they did were so vile that it is hard to speak of them in a public audience such as this, therefore, when preachers today say that it is morally pernicious for us to read and believe the Old Testament Scriptures as is frequently said, we can only say, “You do not understand the first thing about the nature of our God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“Who is a God like unto thee,” the Scriptures say, “glorious in holiness.” And we must never forget that the Old Testament was the only Bible that our Lord Jesus Christ knew and studied as the word of God. And it was the Scripture for the Apostle Paul and for Steven and others. How can we explain the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah? Someone has said, “It was surgery, not butchery.” It was necessary if the children of Israel were to come into the land of Canaan and grow in accordance with the purposes of God, and if the messianic plan and program should be carried out to its fruition it was necessary that these vile peoples represented in those cities should be destroyed.

Amputation is sometimes necessary to preserve life and the amputation of those aspects of the life of Canaanitish society was necessary for the children of Israel to enter into the land and carry out the purposes of God. Now we must not think for one moment that God did this in a way that would be dishonoring to him. He was very, very careful about this. And even in Scripture itself we are given indications of the fact that he took this judgment extremely seriously. I want you to notice the words of Scripture in chapter 18, verse 20 and 21, of the Book of Genesis. You must not think that God arbitrarily executes this judgment. He enters into the feeling of the judgment more than

anyone in this auditorium ever could. We read, “And the LORD said, (to Abraham,) 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.”

In other words, he engages in human language. This is anthropomorphic language, God didn't have to go down there and take a look around to see what the conditions were, he knew that. But he puts it in human language so that we will sense that he is very much concerned about what is happening down there and he is not going to do one thing that is not in perfect accord with his righteous nature. And so he says he's going down to investigate it, to be sure that it's exactly as it ought to be to call forth this judgment. Painstaking inquiries suggested by this.

Anne of Austria once said to Richlieu, “God does not pay at the end of every day, my lord Cardinal, but at the end he pays.” And Sodom had to pay. And you can be sure that if you disregard the word of God, and disregard holy Scripture, you too must ultimately pay. There is no way to escape it.

The message of Sodom is so appropriate to us today because we are living in a society in which is full of the actions of the Sodomites. Unnatural sex relationship is not only with us, it has always, of course, been with us. We are living in a society now in which unnatural sex relationship, homosexuality, is being accepted in our society. Not only accepted in our society but actually accepted in our churches. Some of the greatest struggles are going on in churches over the acceptance of homosexuality.

Now let me say that homosexuality, according to Scripture, is sin. Now, it is a sin such as other sins and we should remember that as Christians we must respond to all sin with the compassion and love and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must seek to win homosexuals. They can be won. But in seeking to win them we do not countenance the sin. And the sin is sin.

I have before me a couple of articles, they are related. These appeared in one of our religious journals. There are a number of different things that are stated within them but I was most shocked by this one because it has to do with a man who is a minister in the state of Massachusetts. He is a minister of a congregational church there. Last fall he announced to his congregation that he would preach on homosexuality, his own. He stated, “That it is important for respectable people like myself to come out. The only way a hostile environment can be changed is for people in leadership roles to come out.” Although several members of his congregation expressed shock at the disclosure, Mr. So and so’s wife said she is not jealous of his relationships with men and vowed to remain with him.

Then in the second of the articles related to it a week or two later, also last fall, this one appearing in November, further word was given. “In this home, this minister of a congregational church in the state of Massachusetts, men come to visit the pastor and men also come to visit the wife. And the wife speaks out and says that she has no objections to her husband having his men as she has her men come.” And then the article says, “And while the children of the reverend and Mrs. So and so are beginning to ask questions about, ‘Our friends who visit us at home we have tried to be honest with them.’ About the male visitors who come to the household, some to visit Mrs. So and so and other to visit the reverend Mr. the couple explain, ‘Ours represents an alternative marriage style within the context of the Christian faith.’”

These are the things that are happening in our society. It is sometimes said that people who harp on homosexuality have latent tendencies. I rather think that the explanation is the other way around. I think that the reason that homosexuals are asking so much for the acceptance, demanding the acceptance of our society, the simple reason is that they cannot accept themselves. And the reason they cannot accept themselves is because, “There is no peace,” saith my God, “to the wicked.”

In other words, Peter's statements here are just as modern as 1976. Now fortunately this passage not only gives us God's ability to judge but also describes his ability to deliver. And so we read in verse 7, “And delivered just Lot.” I rather like that statement for several reasons. Not only that God is shown to be an individual who is able to deliver Lot as well as to judge Sodom and Gomorrah and to spare Noah, as well as able to judge the whole world. But did you notice that description of Lot, and twice we read that, in the 8th verse we read, “For that righteous man dwelling among them.” Now isn't that striking? That word “just”, that word “righteous” used with reference to Lot is very striking because, you see, in the New Testament in spite of Lot's worldliness, in spite of Lot's final involvement in the fleshly sin of Sodom, in spite of that Lot was a man who had believed in the redeemer to come and had been justified by faith, and it's very striking to me that Lot's failures are overlooked in the New Testament account and he is described as a righteous man who was greatly disturbed over what was happening in that city, although he himself was involved in the sin. Do you know what that illustrates? That illustrates the truth that no Christian who is living a worldly, fleshly kind of life can ever be a happy Christian. Lot vexed his righteous soul over the things that were happening. It also illustrates for us that it is true that there is such a thing as a carnal Christian. Now a carnal Christian can only be a carnal Christian temporarily, he cannot persist in it. If he lives his whole life in carnality the Bible says he's not a true Christian. The Bible says that the man who has been born of God does not practice sin. His life is not characterized by sin. But we know that believers can fall into sin and become enmeshed in sin. But when they do they become subject to the disciplines of God. And those disciplines have careful degrees, for this caused some are weak, some are sickly, and the ultimate discipline for a Christian is for the life to be taken from the earth, and some sleep the sleep of death.

So it's a word of warning for us who are Christians as well. Just Lot, what a word of grace that is, it's almost as if what has intervened between the Old Testament and the New Testament, why the cross of Jesus Christ. And the cross of Jesus Christ is that which

cleanses us from sin. And worldly Lot, fleshly Lot, appears in the New Testament as just and righteous Lot, vexed over the filthy manner of life of the people of Sodom.

Well one final point, I have one minute according to the clock, in the 9th verse we read the Lord knows, if this is so, “The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” In the Greek text that word for punishment is in the present tense and should be rendered, “Under punishment.” That is, they are being punished now so that those who have passed out of this earthly existence and into the life beyond this life without having believed in the Lord Jesus are now undergoing punishment and are being reserved, kept, for the great white throne judgment when the great judgment of eternal punishment is inflicted.

If there is someone in this audience who has never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus, I call upon you to come to Christ who died for sinners. He has made it possible for the sinful, for the wicked, the worldly, the fleshly, the vile, to have their sins forgiven through the blood of the cross. And tonight you may come out of sin and be cleansed through the finished work of the Lord Jesus. Come, come to the fountain which washes away all sin. Now if you're sitting in the audience wondering whether you're one of the elect or not, this is the way to prove it. If you come that's the evidence that you're one of the elect. If you don't come well we don't know yet, but if you don't come you cannot stand back and say, “I don't know whether I'm one of the elect or not so I won't come.” If you won't come you're getting exactly what you wish and so you have no complaint. May you come and believe and have life. Let's bow...