

# What Made Lot a Righteous Man?

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Let's begin by taking a brief look at and review of the life of Lot. We want to look at his conduct.

Let's go to Genesis 13 and begin in verse 1. We know some about Lot, but not a whole lot about him. I'll be reading from the New King James. Lot, if you recall, is the nephew of Abraham.

**Genesis 13:1.** *Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the South.*

*2) Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.*

...

*5) Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. (NKJV)*

He had obviously received his inheritance, so he was wealthy, but probably not as wealthy as Abraham.

*6) Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together.*

*8) So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren.*

*9) Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left." (NKJV)*

We have to remember that Abraham is the patriarch. There was a very strict system in those days. The fact is, you see, Lot should have yielded to the patriarch. Lot should have said, "No, no, you're the patriarch; you are the head of our family. You choose and I'll be happy to take what's left." He didn't do that, and in that sense, Lot disrespected the position that Abraham had as head of the clan, the family.

*10) And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD [Garden of Eden] like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar.*

*11) Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. (NKJV)*

So we see here again that Lot made a selfish choice. Rather than let his uncle, the patriarch of the family, have the best piece of land, he took it for himself.

Now let's turn to Genesis 19 and begin in verse 1. Lot is now married and settled in Sodom and Gomorrah. Two angels came in the appearance of men, which they can do.

**Genesis 19:1.** *Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground.*

2) *And he said, "Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." And they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the open square."*

3) *But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house...*  
(NKJV)

Why did he insist strongly? He knew the people of Sodom. He knew their morals and what would happen to them if they spent the night out in the open in the square.

4) *Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house.* (NKJV)

This isn't just part of the city. This is representative of every area of the city, young and old, all types. They had the same mind. They surrounded the house.

5) *And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally."* (NKJV)

Their intentions were not good. You have to ask: Why on earth would you live in a place like this? What's going on? Why didn't he move? Was he there because of his wife, to please her? We're not told. We don't know anything about his wife, so that's a question that comes to mind. Some day we will find out. We just don't know. Notice what happens in verse 8. It's stunning.

8) *See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof."* (NKJV)

I cannot imagine a father offering up his two young virgin daughters to be used and abused by a crowd of men. If he was bluffing, it's still horrible because you're running such a risk, but thankfully, as we know, the angels blinded those around the house. They started stumbling around and they couldn't come in.

15) *When the morning dawned, the angels [notice what they did] urged Lot to hurry, saying, "Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city."*

16) *And while he lingered ...* (NKJV)

It's amazing, but he was lingering; the family was lingering.

*16b) ... the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. (NKJV)*

They literally had to drag the family out. The Hebrew word for "lingered" is Strong's 4102 and it means *to question or to hesitate, and by implication, to be reluctant*. Why was he hesitating? Why was he reluctant? Why did he have a hard time leaving? We don't know. Maybe it was his wife who didn't want to leave. Maybe he was trying to liquidate his assets quickly and turn it into cash so they could leave and flee. We just don't know. But he lingered.

*26) But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. (NKJV)*

Now to verse 30.

*30) Then Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountains, and his two daughters were with him; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar. And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave.*

*31) Now the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no man on the earth to come in to us as is the custom of all the earth. (NKJV)*

It could be, after these two girls saw fire and brimstone coming down and destroying everything in the plain, that they thought it was the end of the world. They thought that all humanity except the three of them were completely wiped off the face of the earth. You could understand how that could be. No one left. Because of this ...

*32) Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father."*

*33) So they made ... (NKJV)*

This is the translation in the New King James. In the Hebrew it means *to furnish a portion to*. In other words, they gave him a portion of wine; or it can mean *to give*. They gave him some wine. I doubt that these two girls could force Lot to do anything he didn't want to do, but the fact is that they gave him wine. They made wine available to him and he got drunk that night.

*33) So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. (NKJV)*

The following night, the youngest daughter did exactly the same thing.

So here Lot becomes drunk and commits two acts of incest. So this is really all we know about Lot, at least in the history of Genesis. We see that he was selfish, he was

disrespectful of Abraham. He was a horrific father, offering up his two daughters. He committed incest with both of them and became drunk. When you put those together, it doesn't get much worse than that about this man.

Now let's turn to the New Testament in 2 Peter, chapter 2, and see a scripture that has caused some confusion and uncertainty because it seems to contradict what we just read. The context is false teachers in verse 1.

**2 Peter 2:4.** *For if God did not spare the angels who sinned [He certainly didn't], but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; (NKJV)*

He didn't spare the angels.

*5) and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; (NKJV)*

Then turning to the situation with Lot.

*6) and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; 7) and delivered righteous Lot ... (NKJV)*

Woe! What's happening here? In the King James, it's translated, *just Lot*. If you look at that word that's translated either "just" or "righteous", it's Strong's 1342 and it's the Greek word "dikaios." It means, *by implication, innocent, holy, absolutely or relatively holy*. So we're told here that this man who did all the things that we just read is called innocent, holy, righteous. So you can see why it's caused such confusion. What's going on here that we don't know about?

I can think of a lot of descriptions about Lot, but righteous is not one of those descriptions. But in fairness to him, which one of us has not done equally or worse, at least in our minds?

The point is though, why does the Apostle Peter say that Lot is righteous? Why is that? If we can learn of a characteristic that Lot had that made him righteous in spite of all the evil that he did; if we can learn what that characteristic is and develop that characteristic in our lives, then we could be called righteous also.

So during the sermon, we're going to investigate that and we're going to see that this same characteristic saved numerous Israelites in a vision in the Old Testament, and we're going to see that the same attribute is prophesied to save spiritual Israelites in the New Testament. The title of the sermon is:

What Made Lot a Righteous Man?

## 1. We're going to answer that question directly. What made Lot a righteous man in God's eyes?

Let's go back to Genesis, chapter 19 and we get a hint ... a little more than a hint. These evil men are ready to break down the door, storm in and drag these angels out.

**Genesis 19:9.** *And they said, "Stand back!" ... (NKJV)*

Meaning, "Stand aside, get out of the way. Let us have these men." Then notice what the Sodomites said.

*9b) ... Then they said, "This one [referring to Lot] came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them." ... (NKJV)*

They were not happy with Lot because he was acting as a judge. The Hebrew word "judge" is 8199, and is the Hebrew word "shaphat" and it means *to pronounce sentence against*. They're saying, "You're pronouncing a sentence against us, Lot." It can also mean, by implication, *to condemn*. So it's obvious that Lot was appalled at what was going on in Sodom and Gomorrah. His heart was rent by their sins and of the society around them and he was not silent in telling them what they were doing and the fact that it was wrong, and the Sodomites knew it. That's why they wanted to treat him worse than the angels.

So we see here that he didn't keep his mouth shut and they knew how he felt about their lifestyle and the way that they were behaving.

Now let's go back to 2 Peter 2:7 and see that Peter adds some information that we need to consider.

**2 Peter 2:7.** *and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked. (NKJV)*

The Greek word for "delivered" can also mean *rescued*, and when you read Lot's account, he was obviously rescued.

*8) (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)— (NKJV)*

The Complete Jewish Bible translates this:

**2 Peter 2:7.** *But he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the debauchery of those unprincipled people.*

*8) For the wicked deeds which the righteous man saw and heard as he lived among them, tormented his righteous heart day after day. (CJB)*

So you put these two scriptures together and look into this. Despite living in this horrible situation, Lot groaned and agonized about the sins of the people that were around him. As a result, because he was in agony about it and was tormented about it because he saw their sins and knew it was so evil and wrong, guess what God did. God rescued him. God pulled him out of the fire at the last minute.

Before we are done, we're going to see that we are in a similar situation. We live in a similar time. We want to be rescued at the last minute too.

Okay, that's the first point. Moaning and crying and groaning and agonizing over the sins of those around him and in the world made Lot righteous in God's eyes.

**2. We will examine another example of how God wants us to mourn the condition of the world, and we're going to see that a handful did and, once again, God rescued them. In doing so, their mourning actually saved lives.**

We're going back to the book of Ezekiel. The context is that Ezekiel was in captivity in Babylon. He had a vision of Israel and Judah who had strayed from the truth, but he also saw those who remained faithful to the truth during that time. It is instructive to us when we look at this vision, because we are going to see the reaction God wants from us in a situation like this. What God is going to do in this vision is to show Ezekiel four blasphemous things that the nation of Israel had been doing, and each one is worse than the previous one. This is a demonstration of why God had to divorce Israel because of their conduct.

With that in mind, turn to Ezekiel 8:1. We will be coming back to chapters 8 and 9 before we finish this example. A lot is going on related to today as we go through this.

**Ezekiel 8:1.** *And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell upon me there.*

*2) Then I looked, and there was a likeness, like the appearance of fire—from the appearance of His waist and downward, fire; and from His waist and upward, like the appearance of brightness, like the color of amber.*

*3) He stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my hair; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions ...*

*(NKJV)*

This is important. It's a vision.

3b) ... of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the north gate of the inner *court* [of the temple] ... (NKJV)

The north gate of the inner court is also called the Altar Gate because sacrifices were killed in the vicinity of this north side of the altar. So God is taking Ezekiel right into the center of religious worship, at the temple. He's going to show him some things. They're at the north gate of the inner court ...

*3 continued) ... where the seat of the image of jealousy was, which provokes to jealousy.*

*4) And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the plain.*

*5) Then He said to me, "Son of man, lift your eyes now toward the north."  
(NKJV)*

Right there on the temple mount, right there in the court.

*5b) ... So I lifted my eyes toward the north, and there, north of the altar gate, was this image of jealousy in the entrance. (NKJV)*

It's in the entrance, a prominent place. The New International translates this, instead of *the image of jealousy, the idol of jealousy*. That's what it was.

Let's see why it was called an image of jealousy. Turn to Exodus 34 and we'll read verses 12 through 14. Notice this. Moses is saying:

**Exodus 34:12.** *Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst.*

*13) But you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images*

*14) (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), (NKJV)*

That's why this is called the idol of jealousy. So, you see, not only had the Israelites not torn down the pagan images, here they built their own right on the temple grounds and right in the middle of the gate. Can you imagine that? We are unsure exactly what this image was. It could be one of two possibilities, if you read all the commentaries and do the research. The first is that it could have been an image of Tammuz, and that image could have been a large cross. Let me read from Vine's Expository Dictionary.

"The modern cross had its origin from ancient Chaldea and was used as the symbol of the god, Tammuz, being in the shape of the mystic Tau, the initial of his name, a 'T.'"

That's one explanation of what it could be.

The second possibility, and probably more likely, was that it was an asherah, or what the Bible calls a grove, and that is a Babylonian phalanx symbol. King Manasseh of Judah carved an image of an Ashura in the temple of God. You can check that out in 2 Kings 21. So most likely it was an asherah or a grove.

Turn back to Ezekiel 8:6.

**Ezekiel 8:6.** *Furthermore He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary? ... (NKJV)*

We know that sin causes separation from God. We can read that in Isaiah 59:2. Your sins separate you from God. God is reminding them, "Is that what you want?"

*6b) ... Now turn again, you will see greater abominations."*

*7) So He brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, there was a hole in the wall.*

*8) Then He said to me, "Son of man, dig into the wall"; and when I dug into the wall, there was a door.*

...

*10) So I went in and saw, and there—every sort of creeping thing, abominable beasts, and all the [Now we get to the second abomination] idols of the house of Israel, portrayed all around on the walls. (NKJV)*

Likely these are the walls of the priests' dwelling places, where they could go worship in secret. They are paintings of the animal gods of Egypt and have idolatrous shrines to these gods of Egypt.

*11) And there stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and in their midst stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan. Each man had a censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up.*

*12) Then He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark [in secret], every man in the room of his idols? For they say, 'The LORD does not see us, the LORD has forsaken the land.'" (NKJV)*

These seventy elders assist in governing God's people. They have a great deal of responsibility. They originated at the time of Moses.

**Numbers 11:16.** *So the LORD said to Moses: "Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you.*

*17) Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone. (NKJV)*



But here, you see, the worshipping of idols was done privately in the elder's chambers. This tells us that this was their personal conviction because they did it privately when no one was watching. They were worshipping all the pagan gods.

**Ezekiel 8:13.** *And He said to me, "Turn again, and you will see greater abominations that they are doing."*

*14) So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the LORD's house; and to my dismay... (NKJV)*

Notice, this is the third.

*14b) ... women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz. (NKJV)*

Many believe that the name Tammuz was the name of the reincarnated Nimrod, and there was a pagan custom of weeping for Nimrod. This was occurring on the temple mount!

I'm going to quote now from the book, Babylon Mystery Religion.

Legend has it that Tammuz was killed by a wild boar when he was 40 years old. Hislop in his book, The Two Babylons, points out that forty days, a day for each year that Tammuz had lived on earth, were set aside to weep for Tammuz.

That is quoted widely in all manner of historical books. Going on:

In olden times, these forty days were observed with weeping, fasting and self-chastisement to gain anew Tammuz's favor. So he would come forth from the underworld and cause spring to begin and bless the crops. This observance was known not only at Babylon, but also among the Phoenicians, the Egyptians, the Mexicans and, for a time, even among the Israelites.

To this day, guess what we have. We have the forty days of lent that is a continuation of that evil practice.

Now recalling that the symbol for Tammuz was a cross, which may have been the image of jealousy mentioned earlier, the idea of women in Ezekiel's vision, weeping before the symbol, mourning the death and awaiting the resurrection of Tammuz is disturbingly familiar or similar to what we see today going on by the name of Christianity in the manner of sunrise services. It's the same thing. As they say, there is nothing new under the sun.

*15) Then He said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these." (NKJV)*

We're progressing up a ladder. It gets worse and worse.

*16) So He brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house; and there ... (NKJV)*

Now we come to the fourth abomination.

*16b) ... at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, and they were worshipping the sun toward the east. (NKJV)*

This was right in the presence of God's temple, if you could imagine.

Remember, Daniel prayed toward Jerusalem three times a day where the temple was. These men had their backs toward the temple, to show you how bad it got. These priests were facing to the east, their backs to the temple and, as we're going to see, they were worshipping the sun. When is the sun in the east? It's obviously in the early morning. It sounds just like Easter sunrise services. There is nothing new under the sun.

These twenty-five men had to be Levites, because temple regulations, if they were followed, no non-Levite could come that close to the temple. The area was forbidden to non-Levites. The significance of the twenty-five in Expositor's Bible Commentary notes that likely of the twenty-five, twenty-four were the twenty-four courses of the priesthood. You can read about that in 1 Chronicles 23, plus the high priest. That adds up to twenty-five, and they were all facing east worshipping the sun on the temple grounds, if you can imagine.

*17) And He said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence; ... (NKJV)*

This concept will come up again later.

*17b) ... then they have returned to provoke Me to anger. Indeed, they put the branch to their nose. (NKJV)*

What does that mean? The word "branch" is the asherah that we just talked about. It's a phalinx symbol, an object of worship. Trees were cut into that shape in the groves, and worship was introduced into the area of the temple and in the temple courts by these evil priests.

The evil here is putting the asherah to the nose of God Himself. This is open disrespect to God. If you can imagine that. They're supposed to be priests of God and they're worshipping this symbol right in front of God, and in essence, putting it in front of God's nose.

18) *Therefore ... (NKJV)*

Because of what they're doing; these four abominations ...

*18b) ... I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them." (NKJV)*

So, to summarize, we have God's chosen people, but the leaders and the priesthood who represent all of the people are rejecting God and embracing paganism right on the temple mount, doing it at the temple themselves.

Now let's go to Ezekiel 9. There is a group that didn't follow this, as we are going to see.

***Ezekiel 9:1.*** *Then He called out in my hearing with a loud voice, saying, "Let those who have charge over the city draw near, each with a deadly weapon in his hand." (NKJV)*

We're going to see these are angels.

*2) And suddenly six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his battle-ax in his hand. [But] One man among them was clothed with linen and had a writer's inkhorn at his side .... (NKJV)*

So with the five, there was a sixth that was clothed in white linen and had a writer's inkhorn. Both Daniel and Revelation tell us that linen is symbolic of a holy servant of God when worn by someone. These six are apparently angels, because they were here to render God's judgment. They're not human beings.

*2b) ... They went in and stood beside the bronze altar. (NKJV)*

The altar of sacrifice symbolizing that there is going to be a sacrifice all right. It's not going to be animals, but it's going to be a sacrifice of those who have been disobedient. Blood would run as a result of the sins of the people. We know that happened in due course.

*3) Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub ... (NKJV)*

This is likely one of the two that covers the mercy seat.

*3b) ... where it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer's inkhorn at his side;*

*4) and the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark [This is the reason for the inkhorn] on the foreheads of the men [and women] who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it." (NKJV)*

Let's stop here and look at this. The Hebrew word "sigh" is Strong's 584. It means *to groan or to mourn*. The Hebrew word for "cry" is only used four times in the Bible in the Old Testament. It's Strong's 602, and it means *to actually shriek*. This word conveys a great deal of emotion. It has a great emotional meaning that it looks into peoples' innermost personal feelings.

So God is giving the message to this angel, in essence saying, "Go through the streets of Jerusalem, put a mark on the foreheads of everyone that mourns, that sighs, that cries over the outrageous obscenities that are done in my city. Go do that."

Of course, there's going to come a time in the future when that will happen again.

*5) To the others ... (NKJV)*

To the other five with the battle axes.

*5b) ... He said in my hearing, "Go after him [the one with the inkhorn] through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity.*

*6) Utterly slay ... (NKJV)*

The Complete Jewish Bible says, "*Slaughter them all.*"

*6b) ... old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark [they are spared]; and begin at My sanctuary [the center of My religion]." So they began with the elders who were before the temple. (NKJV)*

These are the ones that were worshipping towards the east. So God says to begin with His sanctuary, because the place to begin correction is with those who are in authority and should know better. They were the ones leading in this perversion.

Today the church is the sanctuary of God. Remember Peter said, "Judgment must begin at the house of God." So we see here that leaders are dealt with first. They are held to a higher standard. It's very apparent here that they paid a heavy price. This is all a vision understand, but there will be a heavy price to pay for those who face to the east and worship, so to speak.

*7) Then He said to them, "Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out! [Get going!]" And they went out and killed in the city.*

*8) So it was, that while they were killing them, I was left alone; and I fell on my face and cried out, and said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Will You destroy all the remnant of Israel in pouring out Your fury on Jerusalem?"*

*9) Then He said to me, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great, and the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of perversity ... (NKJV)*

Can we say that of modern-day Israel today? You betcha.

*9b) ... for they say, 'The LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see!'*

*10) And as for Me also, My eye will neither spare, nor will I have pity, but I will recompense their deeds on their own head." (NKJV)*

It was true then. It will be true in the future. There is a price to pay for sin, and modern Israel will pay that price. It's true today.

To summarize the second point, sin and rejection of God leads to death. However, like Lot, who was sealed and saved, there was a group that were sealed and saved from the destruction of these other five angels. They were the ones who sigh and cry for the evil that is done in the land. That ends the second point.

### **3. Where is our society today in this process? What about our society today?**

As we were told, our land is full of bloodshed and the city full of perversity. We're exactly in the same situation, as in verse 9, bloodshed and perversity.

Let's look at war. We're going to look at some categories to compare these scriptures. Let's just take one example of war. World War I, near the Somme River in France in 1916. There was a battle between the British and the Germans near that river. It was one hundred years ago on July 1st. The British were advancing toward the Germans. The Germans were in trenches. They had machine guns. The British with their rifles, their infantry got up out of their trenches and started marching toward the Germans. In the first several hours, every second, eight British soldiers fell. By nightfall, there were over 19,000 British soldiers dead and there were over 38,000 wounded. Remember, back then they had no penicillin, no medivac helicopters. Many died. The battle lasted until September. When it was over, on both sides, there were over one million casualties, dead and wounded, if you can imagine that. To this day, it was the worst man-made disaster in human experience (outside of the flood, obviously). It didn't have to be. It was man made.

Then when you consider World War II, somewhere between 55 and 65 million died. We'll never know how many died in World War II.

Today, has anything changed? Look at what ISIS is doing in the Middle East with beheadings, all of the evil that's going on, with drownings and butchery. Nothing has changed. It never ceases.

Now let's look at violent crimes just here in the U.S. Violent crime by definition is murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Guess how many violent crimes were committed in the U.S. in 2015. We'll never know the exact number, but the estimate is 1,165,000 violent crimes in the U.S.

What about property crimes in the U.S.? That means burglaries, larceny, thefts, auto thefts. It just boggles the mind; 8.3 million occurred last year in the United States.

What about drug abuse in the United States? How many arrests for drug abuse? Of course, the vast majority never get arrested, but there were over 1.5 million arrests last year for drug abuse in this country.

Then we see the unspeakable violence in movies, television, video games. Nielson Research did a survey for the first ninety days of this year, 2016. They found that the average person watches a screen; that could be a phone, i-pad, computer or television screen. The average person in the U.S. watches a screen, how many hours a day? The average is 10-1/2 hours a day per person! Those who watch violence on these screens, guess what. It's no surprise. They're twice as likely to commit violence themselves as compared to somebody who doesn't watch violence. Of course, there's a message there for parents with children.

Rape statistics in the United States; 2013 is the latest year we have data, but we know that the vast majority of rapes go unreported. People don't want to go through that again with the police and the public in a trial etc., so the vast majority are not reported. However, of the ones that were reported, there were 174,000 rapes and assaults on young women over the age of twelve.

What about families? Realize that last year 41 percent of first births are to unmarried women. Among African-Americans it is 71 percent of all births that are to unmarried women.

Over 50 percent of all mothers under 30 (this is critical) are not living with the father of their child. We wonder what is going on in our society and why it is the way it is. We read about parents who beat their children, who burn their children, who stab their children. Recently a woman stabbed four of her kids to death. A demon has to be involved in there somewhere.

The prison population in the United States just boggles the mind. In 1930 entering the depression, people are out of work. You would think people would be stealing and doing all this mischief just to get by. Granted, the population back then was a lot less than now, but the prison population in 1930 in the whole country was 100,000 people. Guess what it was in 2014; over 2,400,000. We have the highest prison population in the world by capita. We have 716 people in jail for every 100,000 people. It's just an abomination.

Look at the promotion of homosexuality in media and schools. It is rubbed in our face every day. You can't watch a news program without someone rubbing homosexuality in our faces.

Promotion of sexual promiscuity is in every piece of media, even from the White House during the Clinton administration, the Kennedy administration, the Johnson administration, promiscuity (adultery) went on in the White House. As a result of those examples and others, there is gross promiscuity across this land.

What about pornography? Do you know that one in ten households have access to pornography through cable or internet or whatever? Forty percent of the movies that are rented in hotels are pornographic.

Then what about persecution of Christians worldwide? The Pew Research Center recently declared that Christians are the most persecuted group in the world. The next group are Muslims, but Christians are the most persecuted. They are harassed in 108 countries, up from 102 the previous year. I say "Christians" in quotes, but people who profess Christ. They're not called, but they profess Christ, and they are dying for it by the way. How many Christians are martyred each year? Over 8,000 a year are martyred because they say they believe in Jesus Christ. That is one per hour, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, Christians are martyred.

Here's what grieves me the most personally. No one will forget 9/11. Over three thousand were killed in New York on 9/11. But guess what. Every day in the United States we kill more than three thousand innocent unborn babies a day through abortion. That is every day of every year.

The other astounding fact is, for every death in World War II, the most catastrophic war that ever existed in the history of man, we have killed over one hundred babies, and it's increasing. For every death in World War II, in this country, we have killed one hundred babies, if you can imagine that.

We are a nation of liars. Our former president said, in front of the camera and the world, "I did not have sex with that woman." That was a lie. The two that are currently running for president, Hillary was just caught in a bunch of lies by the FBI. Donald Trump is not far behind. They are repeatedly caught in lies and it doesn't bother either one of them. They just keep on sailing along.

In our courts, people routinely lie. They put their hand on the Bible and raise their hand and they will lie, because it doesn't mean anything to them. Scientists lie. They fudge their research to fit an agenda, to get a grant, to get money and get notoriety. It happens all the time.

We have to ask the question: Why is nobody outraged at this? Why isn't the country up in arms at our leaders doing this? Politicians, scientists, military people; why isn't there outrage? It's simple if you think about it. Do you know what the average weekly church attendance is in the United States? What percent of the people actually attend church every week? If you looked at it fifty years ago, it would be the vast majority, but of Catholic, mainstream Evangelical Christians today only 18 percent attend regularly. In Canada, United Kingdom and France, it's 10 percent. So we shouldn't be shocked that

there's no morality. We shouldn't be shocked why people do what they do. You see, this nation does not have the same values it had 240 years ago when it was founded. We are quickly becoming a Godless nation. It's happening very quickly. It's getting worse by the day.

So my point is: Do we, as God's people, sigh and cry over this as those in Jerusalem did in that vision or as Lot did when he lived in Sodom and Gomorrah? Do we groan because our children and grandchildren have to live and grow up in a society like this where morals and ethics and proper values are almost nonexistent?

As God is no longer with the Worldwide Church of God; He withdrew from that. God made it plain that He withdrew from the Worldwide Church of God, so He is no longer with the United States, Canada, Australia, Great Britain because we are no longer His chosen people. This is worth sighing and crying about. God watches us to see ... are we going to sigh and cry for the sins of the nations around us, for the sins of our own nation? Are we going to do that? That's the third point.

#### **4. What did Christ say about this important quality of sighing and crying for the sins of those around us and the pollution and corruption of morals and ethics all over the world?**

Let's turn to Matthew 5. Here's Christ's first recorded sermon. He got right to the point.

***Matthew 5:1.** And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. (NKJV)*

He's talking to His disciples. He's not talking to the general public.

*2) He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:*

*3) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (NKJV)*

He says: "Blessed are those that don't exalt themselves, but look to Me."

Notice verse 4.

*4) Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (NKJV)*

The Greek word for "mourn" is Strong's 3996, and means *to grieve*, but it can also mean *to wail*, to just cry out because of the sins of those around us.

We look at Jesus Christ and say that He walked the earth and was sinless, and rightly so. However, He did more than just avoid sin. He mourned for the state of the society of Israel, Judah, of Jerusalem. He mourned for that when He walked the earth. Let's turn to Luke 13. He's looking down at Jerusalem from one of the hills.



**Luke 13:34.** *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings ... (NKJV)*

He said, “I wanted to do that. I groaned to do that.”

*34b) ... but you were not willing! (NKJV)*

“You would not do that. You would not allow Me to do that.”

I can remember shortly after Worldwide broke up. We had a conference with Global at the time. I was talking to a minister who had served in Canada. He said, “I was flying out of Calgary and I looked down as the plane pulled out and I could see the city and thought to myself, ‘Good bye suckers!’” My mouth dropped open. You see Christ wanted to gather them together and He wanted to comfort them and help them, but all too often in the Worldwide Church of God, the attitude was: “They’re getting what they deserve. Let them have it.” The fact is, we were all there at one time. We were ignorant. We weren’t called. Christ said, “If you only knew. If you only understood.”

Turn to Luke 19. We’re talking about Christ.

**Luke 19:41.** *Now as He [Christ] drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, (NKJV)*

We would say in the past, “Those dirty rotten unconverted people.” But Christ wept over it.

*42) saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! ... (NKJV)*

“If you had just followed my way.”

*42b) ... But now they are hidden from your eyes. (NKJV)*

We understand that not everyone is called right now.

*43) For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, (NKJV)*

The Roman army did that in 70 A.D.

*44) and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another [70 A.D. it happened. Why?], because you did not know the time of your visitation.” (NKJV)*

The question for us is, when is the time of our visitation? We know it's now, so we need to develop those characteristics that will allow us to be in God's kingdom, each and every one.

Let's conclude now. Today we've seen several examples of people who were saved or somehow were sealed. In these cases, it was because they sighed and they cried, because their heart was rent over the state of the world, the sins of the world and the direction the world was going. Lot was called a righteous man because his heart was tormented over what he saw going on around him.

In Ezekiel's vision, there was a group of Israelites who were saved because Ezekiel said that they sighed and cried when they were confronted with these four abominations that were going on, some in secret and some openly in Jerusalem.

Christ sighed and He cried and He lamented over Jerusalem because of their refusal to repent and accept Him as the Messiah. He told us all that if we mourn, we will be blessed. If we sigh and cry, we will be blessed.

The Bible speaks of a sealing or salvation that is yet to come. Let's turn to Revelation 7. This has yet to happen, but it will.

***Revelation 7:2.*** Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God ... (NKJV)

This is kind of like the angel that had the inkhorn in Ezekiel's vision.

*2b) ... And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,  
3) saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."* (NKJV)

Just like the angel did with the inkhorn.

Why is this group sealed? I think that's an easy speculation. If mourning over the sins of the world and our society, the sighing and the crying led to the salvation of Lot, led to the salvation of a group in Ezekiel's vision, and was taught and practiced by Jesus Christ, (Christ Himself wept and moaned over the sins of Jerusalem), then that characteristic will, at least in part, lead to the salvation of a group who are called the servants of God. That is us, if we have this characteristic of sighing and crying for the sins of the world.

Let's close in Psalms 119. In Psalm 119, we're not exactly sure who the author is, but we know ultimately it is God. Notice this one sentence. It kind of says it all.

***Psalms 119:136.*** Rivers of water run down from my eyes, because men do not keep Your law. (NKJV)

That is what God wants from us, to sigh and to cry because of the state of this world, to sigh and to cry that Jesus Christ comes soon.

We need to ask ourselves as we just read in this verse; is it simply enough just to avoid sin? Is that all God wants of us, to avoid sin? Is it enough to have some academic knowledge that the world is bad and the world needs to change? Or should the world's sins and what is going on in this world rend our hearts, tear our hearts, to make us sigh and cry as the Psalmist just expressed so eloquently?

Yes, we know salvation comes to those who overcome, but also salvation comes, as we've just seen, to those who sigh and cry, whose heart is rent because of the state of this world, who sigh and cry about the abominations of this world.

Once we understand this, let's be sure that we follow the example of Lot. Let's ensure that we follow the example of those in Jerusalem who were sealed from the horrible things that were going to come. Furthermore, let's follow the example and teaching of Jesus Christ. Christ wept over the city. He just didn't say, "Good bye, suckers." He wept over the city and we need to follow that example to mourn, to have our hearts rent, to sigh and cry, and to use that motivation to daily pray to God ... "Your kingdom come."