

Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 23rd October 2022 10 am

What a right mess you have gotten me into

Genesis 13 Abram and Lot

Welcome to all.

Opening Scripture

Hymn MP 385 Jesus the Name high over all (3:43m)

Scripture Psalm 112

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Children's talk

Chorus MP 351 It's your blood

Notices Joyce C. CAP course, 'pray at the time'.

Mission focus Brother Andrew Video

Prayer time

Reading Genesis 14:1-24 (page 14)

Hymn MP 1209 My heart is filled with thankfulness

Sermon Rescued from the mess

Hymn MP 372 Jesus lover of my soul. (2:49m)

Closing Prayer

Close

Exordium and Prayer

- Who was it who said: "another fine mess you have got me into" Laurel & Hardy. Yes Ollie said to Stan many times: "This is a fine mess you've gotten us into."
- It'd be truer to say "what a fine mess I have got myself into!"

So it was for Lot as he headed for Sodom. There he ended up in a mess he'd never bargained for.

1a

On 18th Sept we considered the parting of Abram and Lot. Both had large flocks and the land could not support them both. So Abram, the senior partner graciously gave his nephew Lot the choice as to where to go. And what did Lot do? He chose for himself. He saw that the grass was green (literally) and thought 'with all my flocks that will suite me fine'. Yet that green pastureland was near the wicked city of Sodom. 'Is that a wise move Lot?' He did not pray, he did not seek the Lord's wisdom, he was not concerned for the wisest course of action = the best and right cause of action, no he chose for his own personal short-term gain. He did not look ahead, he did not consider the consequences.

He let his heart govern his mind, He took the gain now and to hell with later. He became blind to anything else, he had tunnel vision.

✚ There are many who foolishly swap eternity for time, who foolishly exchange their Bible for their TV, and their soul for material gain now.

Lot thought "I can manage, I am able, I am in control of my life", he was like the prodigal son who left home to a foreign land thinking "I'll be fine" – and what happened? There was a famine in the land, he hadn't bargained on a famine. No food, no work and he became destitute.

Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him. Proverbs 26:12

When the Lord made this world has built into it governing principles. Many of these are laid out in black and white in the book of proverbs. They show the connection between heart motive - and hard consequences. x2

The wealth of the greedy slips through their fingers **A greedy man brings trouble to his family.** Proverbs 15:27

There are short term consequences – but also long term consequences. The Lord has ordained that sin and folly will bear its ugly fruit.

Today most people deny this "cause and effect". It is not fashionably to think in those terms.

Why? because it puts back onto me responsibility for my actions – and we don't like that.

- A mother was telling me the other day how her daughter has anger problems. Her thought is psychotherapy and counselling. She does not bat an eyelid when she explained that she had no husband and her several children have different fathers. Is there a connection? Of course x2 we can't see it directly – so we don't want to see it.

1b

I have met so many families over the years who disregard God's good law and live with an almost daily string of disasters.

Drink too much, Eat too much, speak too much, live immorally, live unfaithfully, disregard the law of the road or the law of the land, be driven by greed, live selfishly and proudly – and things will go wrong. **The fool is quick to quarrel**, and how much quarrelling is there. **Hatred stirs up dissention and the mouth of the fool invites ruin. And a cruel man brings trouble on himself. He who sows wickedness reaps trouble** and so on x2 – **for himself, his family and his children and on Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.** Gal 6:7

What about Christians? we can rightly enjoy God's world because we use things rightly and in moderation and under the Lord's guidance.

Yet Christians living in the world will as Jesus said have trouble. Christians who sin will find there are the same consequences, whether it is being greedy, lazy, looking at pornography, etc Yes the consequences are there.

When Kings David committed adultery with Bathsheba, he had it all worked out, yet their son died as a baby. David quickly saw it as the Lord's right anger against his sin. And he confessed and repented of his ways.

Yes when Christians sin we have consequences. Is there a difference? Yes the Lord will use the resultant suffering to discipline his children. And in his mercy sometimes brings a way out, he may well rescue – or he may not. He will ultimately rescue later, because His honour is at stake. Lot was rescued later and escaped through the flames. That's no way to enter heaven.

✚ So let us consider three things: **The mess Lot found himself in, the gracious rescue God provided, and the gracious rescue that the Lord offers today.**

1. The mess Lot found himself in

Lot is drawn gradually from being near Sodom, to being in Sodom, to becoming part of Sodom's society. He hadn't watched out and forgot that sin creeps up slowly. **A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.** Proverbs 22:3, 27:12 Lot ended up in a mess, and by that time it was too late, the die had been set, he was too far in to see the trouble and come out.

Lot had known from the beginning that Sodom was a wicked city ...

But I wonder when he realised that Sodom was a city captive to a foreign power, it was a city under the control of another state. It was a subjugated city, not free at all.

The way the world works is a history of oppression and subjugation. Kings against kings, city states constantly trying to prey, overrun and exploit their neighbours, - this is how the world has been – and always will be.

Large empires can bring widespread devastation, but they can also bring peace by suppressing the small town oppressors. Large empires import - and impose culture, language, taxes and depending on the empire's religion either tyranny or justice, either violence or peace.

So what is the political landscape here?

Here we have the oppressors. **“1 At this time Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Kedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of Goiim**

The invaders were four kings, two of them no less than kings of Shinar (Chaldea) and Elam (Persia), yet not the emperors of those great kingdoms but district leaders who had come and settled themselves near Sodom.

Like many cities, Sodom sought safety in a local confederation **2 Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the unnamed king of nearby Bela.** Four kings against five kings. You don't have to remember their names BTW

3 All these latter kings joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (the Salt Sea).

We had the first murder in Gen 4, now in Gen 14 the first account of war.

4 For twelve years they had been subject to Kedorlaomer,

This had been predicted back in Gen 9:29, the Sodomites came from Canaan whom Noah had prophesied would serve Shem, from whom Elam descended.

The Sodomites, weary of their subjection rebelled **in the thirteenth year.**

They denied tribute, attempted to shake off the yoke and sought their freedoms. Gen 9:26 So what happened?

5 In the fourteenth year, Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him went out and defeated ... and here is the list of large territories. Chedorlaomer, inflamed with ambition was the torch of this evil coalition, and went on the rampage to satisfy his desire to conquer.

8 Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, and others fearing their cities would be next in line for destruction marched out and drew up their

battle lines in the Valley of Siddim against Kedorlaomer and his attacking armies.

It didn't go well for them, however, **10 Now the Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, and when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some of the men fell into them and the rest fled to the hills.**

The city was left to be taken and **11 The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food; then they went away.**

Here was a city of people that had become debauched in gluttony and excess and together slid into gross sexual perversion. No wonder God's judgments came – the result is that Sodom is sacked (see Ho 2:8,9)

What of Lot? Was he safe? No.. **12 They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom.**

'All things come alike to all' - Despite being a righteous man, and Abram's brother's son Lot shared with his neighbours in their common disaster. Ec 9:2. Being a Christian does not exempt you from the great troubles in this life when God's judgments come.

This city of sin is a cursed city. Sin destroys for it brings on the curse of God - be aware **the wrath of God** not only will be - but IS now - **being revealed against the wickedness of mankind.** God had **"turned this... fruitful land into a salt waste, because of the wickedness of those who lived there."**

Psalms 107:34

Sin one way or another always results in suppression, misery, bitterness, and puts those guilty under a yoke.

Lot is paying the price for the foolish choice he made in settling there. So near a relation of Abram shouldn't he have been a companion and disciple of Abram? God's holy people are out, separate from the ways of the world. Lot would have been better off in his tents alongside Abraham.

Note they took his 'goods' – it was these 'goods' and his love of them, his thoughts for them, his protection over them that had lead him blindly into the city.

God took away that which he loved –

Both the Christian and the non-Christian, share in these common calamities. Yet when Christians do wrong, live without fearing the Lord who bought us, and we do not correct our behaviour **That is why** x2 we are told **many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.** 1 Cor 11. James

links sin and sickness for the Christian, physical healing comes with forgiveness.

✚ **The medicine is to examine ourselves, to judge ourselves.**

It does not mean that every sickness can be traced back to a particular sin, but there is a connection between sin and sickness.

2. The Gracious rescue God provided

13 One who had escaped came and reported this to Abram, he thought "I will appeal to Abram, here is the man who can help, He's an upright man. If you are an upright man or woman people will come to you when they need help

It's not the foolish who rescue the wise no, it is the wise rescuing the foolish

God had, in his grace provided an instrument of rescue, the rescuer Abram.

Abram the Hebrew, he is the descendant of **eber**, Gen 11:16 hence a 'Hebrew'

14 When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan. retro-addition compilation 'Dan'

Abram had only 318 men, did they have weapons? Probably few. Yet Abram trusted in the Lord and the Lord gave him victory. Upright Abram chose to help the one who had brought it upon himself and deserved to reap what he had sown. **As some say today....**

- Lepers in an Indian mission were taunted by the local Hindus "you are getting your just deserts for what you have done wrong". Graham Stains a Christian Missionary and his family had spent 30 years looking after, caring for them, and relieving their suffering.
- What happened to Graham Stains? A local mob of more than fifty surrounded his car and burnt him alive along with his two children.
- The former president of India K.R. Narayanan said "That someone who spent years caring for patients of leprosy, instead of being thanked and appreciated as a role model should be done to death is a monumental aberration of tolerance and harmony. The killings belong to the world's inventory of black deeds."

Abram showed himself **a great man**, he had many servants but did not use them for his own glory and honour, but he used them - unlike those other kings - for doing good.

And **Abram was a good man**, in serving God he sought the good of others.

Abram was a wise man: for, though he was a man of peace, yet he disciplined his servants for war, not knowing what situation he would find

himself in – in this world. A Christian is a peacemaker yet we are not pacifists we are to provide strength and protection to the weak and those in need in this sinful, suffering world.

Yes **Abram was wise man** - 15 **During the night Abram divided his men - He divided his men like a master strategist - to attack them - and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus.** That's a long way north. Abram was faced with a huge task, yet he did not give up part the way through, he did not make excuses, he had resolve, he was a man of courage. A man of backbone.

■ Do you remember what Brother Andrew said: "Of course it is dangerous, but it is much more dangerous for us all if we don't. Don't say "take care" say "take risks!""

16 **He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.** Without loss it seems to himself. That is because what he did was of God, and so he saw the protection and success the Lord brought.

Lot was family; twice here he is called his *brother Lot*. The first sign of faith is that we care for our family. How often do I see people just leave members of their family to the social services, or to others, "let them do it". **If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.** 1 Tim 5:8

Now Abram is before the two kings

17 **After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him ... Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine.**

Abraham is before two kings: King of Sodom - and King of Salem; that is Jerusalem as it was to become. **He was priest of God Most High.**

What is going on here? - The king of Sodom, the king of the world wants to pay him, No Abram will not take a penny. He is saying "No I trusted God for everything and [^]He brought deliverance. I will not say my victory was helped by you or motivated by a reward of money and personal gain". No.

✚ How different from Lot.

To pay is to buy into, beware when people want to pay you for things. We are told Abram said to him **not even a thread or the thong of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.'** If you have a lively faith then you will look upon the wealth of this world with a holy contempt, 1Jo 5:4.

4a

Like when leprose Naaman was healed by Elisha in 2 Kings 5, Gehazi ran after him to accept the offer of valuable goods. *'This is not the way'*

However, the King of Salem brought the blessing of God 19 **and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand."**

Give God the most high glory for every victory, without him we can do nothing!

This King received from Abram who **gave him a tenth of everything.**

This priest, known as Melchizedek is a picture of Jesus Christ, our great high priest. Heb 7:4 Abram knew it was He who had been with him and enabled him to save his nephew Lot. Now he publicly thanks him.

Abram was saying "I am with you", it was a bit like paying the sanctuary shekel as the Israelites entered the wilderness, they were buying into God and His honour, and His way, and His protection. Now we don't pay money - we receive him by faith. It is by faith that Christ will be your saviour.

Doing good to all - It is God's good pleasure to save others through the presence of one of His people. He rescued the rest of the captives of Sodom for Lot's sake. They were Sodomites and were sinners before the Lord - and strangers to Abram – who had no obligation to any of them.

God is generous to all. For the sake of one man the many are saved. How often as the Lord watched over and protects His people are the lives of others rescued. - Paul in the ship to Rome with 276 on board.

Our unbelieving families, wives and children are considered "sanctified" (not saved) because they belong to one of God's people.

3. The Gracious rescue that the Lord offers today.

Abram is a man of Grace. He risked his life to save one of his own family. Lot underserving as he was – was saved through no effort on his part. He was awaiting death. Here is a picture of what Christ does. The Lord is the great rescuer of the underserving. Has he rescued you?

✚ **He suffered gladly, and suffered greatly, to rescue others from God's anger against your sin and from the day of God's wrath. Repent and turn.**

If you have ended up in a mess then use that to humble yourself and turn to the Lord while you can. Sodom was later completely destroyed – and one day this world and all who sin will be destroyed. Now is the time to seek the saviour.

End

4b