

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume X

Issue 23

Published occasionally for Zion's mourners

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. *Hebrews 12:12-13*

RIGHTEOUS LOT

And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation 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. *II Peter 2:7-9*

Samuel was charged by the LORD to anoint one of the sons of Jesse as the king of Israel. However the LORD did not tell him which one of those sons it was to be. So he lined up all of the sons which Jesse presented to him, and beginning at the eldest, progressed through them but none of them was the chosen one. He was somewhat dumbfounded and asked Jesse if he had any other sons. Jesse responded that he did have one other son but he was just a lad who was keeping the sheep, as if to say that surely, out of all of his fine sons, he would not be the one to be anointed.

The LORD had instructed Samuel concerning the criteria by which the anointed one was to be manifested. *"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."* (1Sam 16:7) And so it was that the one whom the LORD had chosen as the next king of Israel was the youngest and least likely in the eyes of men to be the anointed one. Yet King David was a man after GOD's own heart, (see 1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22) anointed and prepared to fulfill the purpose of GOD as the King of Israel in the flesh, and a type of the TRUE KING which should rule over Israel in an everlasting kingdom. This seemed good in the LORD's eyes and it was done accordingly.

It is totally outside of the scope of the natural man's ability to look at Lot, Abraham's brother, and judge him as a godly and righteous man. Here was a man who could not dwell peaceably with Abraham and desired the city life. He dwelt not just in any city but in one (Sodom) which was renowned for its debauchery and wickedness. When he was visited by the Angels (see Gen.19:1) he offered up his own two virgin daughters to the men of the city in order to allay their wicked desires. (see Gen.19:8) Then having fled the city of Sodom he drank enough wine to fall into a drunken stupor and committed incest with both of his daughters. (see Gen 19:31-36)

Yet we read that Lot was a just man. The natural man recoils at this notion. Even as they do against what Paul said *"a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."* (Gal 2:16) *"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."* (Gal 2:21) This is the offence of the cross and the death knell of self-righteousness.

Lot is not counted as just and righteous in the sight of GOD because of any deeds which he had done anymore than he could be counted unjust for any sin which he might be guilty of. Those who are just in the sight of GOD are those who have had the righteousness of CHRIST imputed to them. This is done by the decree of GOD based on the complete fulfillment of the law by the

obedience of JESUS CHRIST in their behalf, and the exact payment in full for all of their sins by the shedding of CHRIST's own precious blood. It makes no difference what the judgment of man may be for the LORD *"seeth not as man seeth"*. HE makes righteous judgment based upon HIS own purpose to justify the ungodly and to save sinners. *"And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* (Luke 5:31-32)

The gospel is good news indeed, To sinners deep in debt;
The man who has no works to plead, Will thankful be for it.
To know that when he's nought to pay, His debts are all discharged,
Will make him blooming look as May, And set his soul at large.
No news can be compared with this, To men oppressed with sin;
Who know what legal bondage is, And labour but in vain.
Freedom from sin and Satan's chains, And legal toil as well,
The gospel sweetly now proclaims; Which tidings suit them well.
How gladly does the prisoner hear What gospel has to tell!
'Tis perfect love that casts out fear, And brings him from his cell.
The man that feels his guilt abound, And knows himself unclean,
Will find the gospel's joyful sound Is welcome news to him.

#528 Gadsby's Hymns by William Gadsby

The LORD is pleased in time to manifest those HE has chosen as the objects of HIS mercy by performing a work of grace in them which is known as the new birth. According to HIS timetable, they are awakened by HIS SPIRIT to see themselves as unworthy sinners with no hope of saving themselves and caused to hear the sweet sound of the gospel which becomes in their ears a sweet savor of life. The continued operation of this same SPIRIT in them causes them to see sin in a completely different light than they could ever before view it.

It is this operation which caused Lot to be "vexed" with the wickedness that was around him and I might add that was still very much present in him. The apostle Paul describes this phenomenon in Romans. *"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."* (Rom 7:14-23)

Those that despised the gospel of grace, accused Paul of promoting unrighteousness. *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"* (Rom 6:1-2) Then he goes on to show that the very vexation of the souls of those, in whom the SPIRIT works, is evidence of the work of the SPIRIT in them. He said that when they *"were the servants of sin, (they) were free from righteousness."* (Rom 6:20) Yet now having been born again by the SPIRIT of GOD they despise unrighteousness, most especially when it is manifested in themselves. *"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* (Rom.7:24)

Carnal men can never identify those who are just in GOD's sight though they may use various seemingly appropriate criteria to evaluate them and surely disqualify the majority of them by their own standards. Yet those who know themselves to be wicked sinners of the worst sort will find great comfort in knowing that the LORD is the FRIEND of *"publicans and sinners"*.