

Genesis

Creation, Covenants, All Grace – study 19



VINDICATION

SODOM (and SIN) LIVES ON in the SAINTS (19:30-20:18)

19:30-38 How is it that the compromise of Lot comes back to haunt both him and the descendants of Abraham? (Zeph. 2:8-10)

(1) But here is the cry of two girls who have been deprived of everything they had a right to expect from life, because their father had followed his own will instead of God's will. If he had gone God's way, he would have lived in peace with Abraham and would have found husbands for his daughters among the many servants of Abraham. -- **Donald Grey Barnhouse**, Genesis pp. 171,172

(2) Drunkenness and impurity are once more seen in association. It perhaps says one thing for Lot that it was only by means of the sin of drunkenness that his daughters could accomplish their ends. Yet this is but an infinitesimal point by comparison, for we cannot forget that Moab and Ammon (though they were kinsmen to Abraham) were in after years among the most implacable foes of Abraham's descendants. As for Lot he had sounded the lowest depths of shame, and passes away into the darkness and oblivion that were his due. -- **W.H. Griffith Thomas**, Genesis 1-25 p. 230

(3) Lot's cave (30) is a bitter sequel to the house (3) which had dwarfed his uncle's tent, and the little trio is pathetic after the teeming crowd of 13:5ff. The end of choosing to carve out his career was to lose even the custody of his body. His legacy, Moab and Ammon (37f.), was destined to provide the worst carnal seduction in the history of Israel (that of Baal-Peor, Nu. 25) and the cruellest

religious perversion (that of Molech, Lv. 18:21). So much stemmed from a self-regarding choice (13:10ff.) and persistence in it. -- **Derek Kidner**, Genesis p. 136

20:1-7 Abraham, despite his feeble faith, needs no intercessor; but Abimelech can only be forgiven by what means? (WHO is Abraham's intercessor? cf. 15:1; 17:1-3; 18:22)

(4) It is regrettable that judged by human standards, many unregenerate people are more honorable than some believers. The name, Abimelech, means "father of a king." He is but the first of a long line of pagan moralists that include Plato, Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius, and a host of others. Their moral height is so great that we are almost tempted to think of them as believers, but there is a great gulf fixed between them and us. They stand in another land, but they look across the abyss into our land and see truths that never belonged to them by nature and which are ours only through grace. -- **Donald Grey Barnhouse**, Genesis p. 177

(5) Yet, while God allows that his excuse is true, He nevertheless chastises him. Let us hence learn, that even they who are pure, according to human judgment, are not entirely free from blame. For no error may be deemed so excusable, as to be without some deteriorating admixture. Whencefore, it is not for any one to absolve himself by his own judgment; rather let us learn to bring all our conduct to the standard of God. For Solomon does not say in vain, that 'the ways of men seem right to themselves, but the Lord pondereth the hearts,' (Prov. xxi.2). -- **John Calvin**, The Book of Genesis p. 525

20:8-18 How is Sarah and Abraham's vindication not a total victory?

(6) Abraham's experience proves New Testament truth that the old nature abides in the believer to the very end. Nowhere in Scripture is there any warrant for the idea that the root of sin is taken out in this life. ... The believer's standing before God is one thing; his state is quite another. While God's people are all 'accepted in the Beloved,' they are not all equally *acceptable to* the Beloved, and the question of protection against indwelling sin is vital for Christian living. This protection God has provided in abundant sufficiency for every need. The promise is clear: 'Sin shall not have dominion over you.' God's provision of power is in union with the death of Christ, and this, by the power of the Spirit, affords the guarantee of perpetual protection and victory. This provision must,



Self-interest's slippery slope: From the suburbs of Sodom, to Baal Peor, to Molech

however, be used. We are to 'live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit' (Gal. v.25). 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus' is the law, not of eradication, but of counteraction. If we will live and walk in the Spirit we shall not yield to and fulfil the lusts of the flesh (Gal. v.16). Full surrender to the Holy Spirit will keep the inner being sensitive to the approaches of sin. -- **W.H. Griffith Thomas**, *op. cit.*, pp. 240,241

(7) For long years an evil may lurk in our hearts, permitted and unjudged, breeding failure and sorrow in our lives, as some unnoticed and forgotten sewer may secretly undermine the health of an entire household. ... We are not bound to tell the whole truth to gratify an idle curiosity; but we are bound not to withhold the one item, which another should know before completing a bargain, if the knowledge of it would materially alter the result. A lie consists in the motive quite as much as in the actual words. We may unwittingly say that which is actually false, meaning above all things to speak the truth, and, though a lie in form, there is no lie in fact. On the other hand, like Abraham, we may utter true words, meaning them to convey a false impression, and, in the sight of Heaven we are guilty of a deliberate and shameful falsehood. -- **F.B. Meyer**, *Abraham* pp. 144,145

The VINDICATION of YAHWEH (21:1-34)

21:1-3 How is Yahweh's faithfulness vindicated? (17:19,21; 18:10,14; Deut. 18:21,22)

(8) God has His set times. It is not for us to know them; indeed, we cannot know them; we must wait for them. If God had told Abraham in Haran that he must wait for thirty years until he pressed the promised child to his bosom, his heart would have failed him. -- **F.B. Meyer**, *op.cit.*, p. 154

Abraham's "other" children often lived "the good life" long before the children of promise. Are we willing to wait?

21:4-13 What is the significance of this passage for rebuttal of Islam's claims?

(9) Thus a quartet of infamy plagued the children of God through all their history: Abraham's Ishmael; Isaac's Esau; and Lot's Moab and Ammon. From these comes the Arab race of today and the religion of Islam, the greatest barrier in the progress of Christian missions and to Israel's possession of the land. Thus the fruit of our flesh opposes the fruit of the Spirit. -- **Donald Grey Barnhouse**, *op.cit.*, p. 174

21:14-21 Who hears the voice of Hagar's child? (Ex. 6:1-7)

(10) Isaac lived his life near wells. Ishmael lived in the desert and did not know there was a well nearby until God showed it to Hagar. Even then he drank only from skins, for Ishmael represents the legalist; he can never have the joy of the

child of grace, who draws water from the wells of salvation (Isaiah 12:3). Whether or not Ishmael will be in heaven, we do not know, but there are multitudes of professing Christians like him. They live in a dry land, they cannot draw for themselves, and when their skins of water are empty, they are faint, until someone else fills it up for them. -- **Donald Grey Barnhouse**, *op. cit.*, p. 192

21:22-34 Must the believer be in continual warfare with his unbelieving neighbours? (John 15:18-25; 17:14; cf. Prov. 16:7)

(11) But now there came a new revelation of the meaning of his relation to God. In the course of his prayer and communion he learnt a new Name of God, and the new Name was no mere additional title, but contained a new truth about God; 'the Everlasting God' (*EI Olam*). He was thus reminded of God's unchangeableness and his dependableness. -- **W.H. Griffith Thomas**, *op. cit.*, p. 254

(12) It hence appears that more rest was granted to Abraham, after the covenant was entered into, that he had hitherto enjoyed; for now he begins to plant trees, which is a sign of a tranquil and fixed habitation; for we never before read that he planted a single shrub. Wherefore, we see how far his condition was improved, because he was permitted to lead (as I may say) a settled life. The assertion, that he "called on the name of the Lord," I thus interpret; he instituted anew the solemn worship of God, in order to testify his gratitude. Therefore God, after he had led his servant through continually winding paths, gave to him some relaxation in his extreme old age. And he sometimes so deals with his faithful people, that when they have been tossed by various storms, he at length permits them to breathe freely. As it respects calling upon God, we know that Abraham, wherever he went, never neglected this religious duty. Nor was he deterred by dangers from professing himself a worshipper of the true God; although, on this account, he was hateful to his neighbours. But as his conveniences for dwelling in the land increased, he became the more courageous in professing the worship of God. -- **John Calvin**, *op. cit.*, pp. 556, 557

Abraham
in his old age:
If not "possessing"
the land, at least
finding some
peace in it