



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

Christians bearing the consequences of compromise

Genesis 19

Given the Saviour's words in Luke 17:28-30 - "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed," we cannot but take note as we see the same evil atmosphere that characterised the evil cities of the plain springing up around us.

What believers may tolerate, God cannot. Lot lived amongst these evil citizens and raised his family there and seemed bent on continuing in the city had not God's judgment fallen upon it and the other wicked cities.

A BELIEVER

That Lot was a believer there can be no doubt. God says he was. "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked," 2 Peter 2:7. Lot was a justified man. Our Westminster Shorter Catechism tells us what 'justification' means. "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone."

Though he undoubtedly was in a backslidden state, he was accepted of God as righteous, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and received by faith alone.

WHAT TOOK HIM THERE?

As a believer he should not have been in Sodom. It was his greed and worldly avarice which brought him there. Recall how he left Abraham's company and took the area around Sodom as a place for his flocks.

"And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; 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," Genesis 13:7-12.

Greed and a reliance upon his own judgment rather than a looking to the Lord for guidance brought Lot to Sodom.

Let us heed Proverbs 3:5-7.

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil."

Leaning upon the Lord will see us fleeing from evil. Leaning on our own understanding will see us fellowshiping with it.

While Sodom's wickedness vexed or wearied Lot, yet he was ready to put up with it for the sake of the profit he gained from living there.

But God's view of that which Lot convinced himself was tolerable, was very different indeed. Woe unto us when we form views of the world and its ways that differ as did Lot's view of Sodom with that of God's!



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God's wrath boiled over and hellfire was poured out upon the cities of the plain. How different a backsliding Christian's views may be from God's view! Lot was prepared to live amongst the citizens of the cities which God could no longer suffer to live. The angels tell us just how God felt about the sin of the cities, amongst which Lot was able to live and work and keep his family. "For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it," Genesis 19:13.

The cry of Sodom aroused the wrath of God but it merely vexed or wearied Lot.

TODAY

So it is today with all too many believers. They do not have God's feelings regarding sodomy. There are those in Stormont who can justify their working with sodomites, paying them money in order that they may pursue their wicked lifestyles. Mr Mervyn Storey, an elder in Ballymoney Free Presbyterian Church has presided over a government department which has provided just such funding. It would appear that he sees no reason why he should not do so. He has moved on to a new government department and another Free Presbyterian elder has taken his place: Mr Maurice Morrow or Lord Morrow as he is known in political circles. He is an elder in Dungannon Free Presbyterian Church. I cannot imagine that he is ignorant of what his office entails regarding the funding of the likes of sodomites. I can only surmise that he is content to engage in such business.

Sadly, few seem to see anything wrong with this! No Presbytery office-bearer to my knowledge has raised this issue as being incompatible with the Bible's teaching on what a Christian should avoid.

A PAST GENERATION

Of course, I come from a generation that saw the leadership of Dr Ian Paisley in his heyday. I KNOW what would have been the reaction of the Free Presbyterian Church under his leadership back then, if such a situation arose as presently exists. It would have immediately been deemed that such behaviour was incompatible with the Bible's requirements of an elder.

Sadly, of course, the precedent was set back in 2007 when the DUP, under Dr Paisley's latter-day leadership, entered power-sharing with Sinn Fein/IRA. Dr Paisley assumed the office of First Minister and part of the remit of that office was the continuation of a series of payments to sodomite organisations which had begun under the regime of the last Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Hain, MP. When this was pointed out at the time, it was stoutly denied, though subsequently had to be acknowledged that such funding was provided, latterly through the office of the First Minister. Back in 2011, Mr Jonathan Bell, a junior Stormont minister, told Mr Jim Allister in response to a question from Mr Allister that: "Peter Hain announced the funding package under direct rule. It amounted to £230,000, which OFMDFM administered to the sector."

Regrettably, that practice was acceded to by many believers since it was sanctioned by Dr Paisley and so the standards dropped. Thus today, the actions of Christians who administer funds to sodomites and other ungodly groups, are deemed acceptable or at least lamely excused by the time-worn expression "What else can they do?"

Free Presbyterianism was born out of battle against those who would deny freedom to preach the gospel. How can involvement in funding of sodomites be considered less of a reason for separating from such activities?

CHOICE

The choice given to Lot by the Lord was simple. Get out of Sodom or perish under the wrath of God!

I cannot think but that the folly being enacted in Stormont and in those congregations which support or condone such activity, will end in the judgment of God!

It is terrible thought, but one which cannot be denied or ignored. There is a slippage taking place. We no



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longer stand where once our Church stood. Slowly, standards have been eroded and the positions once occupied abandoned. This cannot continue without that coming upon us which has come on so many before us - the removing of the candlestick!

What happened to Lot was not an exception but rather recorded as an example from which we should learn.

Doubtless, Lot countered the thoughts that "vexed" him regarding the people he was amongst with arguments akin to those employed by those who justify the activities of Christians in Stormont. I have had it said to me: "I have never signed a cheque for sodomites." "I have never given any funding directly to sodomite organisations." What a civil servant underling does on behalf of a minister is deemed by God the action of the minister!

The following passages show that to be so. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain," Acts 2:23. "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses," Acts 3:14-15.

The Jewish people and leaders to whom these words were directed, could very correctly say: "We never laid a hand on Jesus. It was the Roman soldiers who drove in the nails!"

However, the God of Heaven held them guilty of the crucifixion of the Saviour.

In like fashion, excuse-making DUP ministers may seek to wash their hands of the guilt of funding sodomites but it will no more work for them than it did for Pilate!

Lot escaped the fiery judgment of God, but the long term consequences of his backsliding he did not escape. He lost all his family, his sons, his married daughters and their husbands and his wife because of the sin and worldliness in which he indulged. His warning about God's judgment was a mere joke, a laughing matter to his family, verse 14. The actions of his two remaining daughters and the consequences of their unspeakable immorality has lived on to blight the name of Lot to this day and also prove to be a curse to Israel.

Oh how fearful a thing it is to ignore God's Word and go on defying Him!

May the Lord in mercy turn us back from the folly that has gripped so many hearts and raise up men to lift again the banner of Christ's truth in this age of compromise and apostasy.

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah," Psalms 60:4.

Ivan Foster.

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