**A Righteous Man**

*2 Peter 2:7-9*

What is righteousness? What is a truly righteous person? Our Lord Jesus declares, “*Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven*.” Without righteousness, perfect righteousness, we must forever perish under the wrath of God. But what is righteousness? Were you asked to name just one example of a righteous person, who would you choose?

 Righteousness before God is not what men call righteousness and has nothing to do with those things by which men and women go about to establish righteousness. Righteousness is something God imputes to chosen, redeemed sinners in free justification because he has made us “*the righteousness of God*” in Christ. And righteousness is something God imparts, or puts into his elect, something God creates in men and women in sanctification, in the new birth, in regeneration, creating in us a new man “*in righteousness and true holiness*” (Ephesians 4:24). In both cases, the Lord Jesus Christ is made of God unto us Righteousness. All of God’s people in this world are truly righteous. All are “*saints,*” sanctified people. Christ is made of God unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30).

**Wrongly Vilified**

Yet, God’s saints are often vilified as wicked men. The ungodly of this world, those who do not know our God, do not know us, and do not know the gospel of Christ, try to appease their own consciences by trying to convince themselves and others that God’s saints are really wicked, hypocritical people. That kind of slander, hard as it is to bear, is to be expected from wicked men. But sometimes saints are vilified by other saints as terribly as by wicked people. Horrible as that is to think about, it does happen. May God forgive us the evil of participating in such wickedness against his chosen! May he teach us and give us grace to bridle our tongues!

 Of all the men in history who have been unjustly maligned by those who ought to highly esteem them, one man stands out in a most extraordinary way. I can think of no one, other than our dear Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has been so unjustly, yet universally, misrepresented as Abraham’s nephew, God’s servant and our brother, whom God the Holy Ghost distinctly calls *“just Lot.”* Lot has been constantly repudiated. Theologians, commentators, and preachers have, throughout history, represented Bro. Lot in a very bad way. The ancient Jewish writers denounced him as a vile reprobate. And most of the very best commentators have treated him only a little better.

**Made Righteous**

But God the Holy Ghost here identifies Lot as a truly righteous man, a godly man, who lived among wicked men, and in their midst “*vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds*.”

 Obviously, Lot was not a naturally righteous man. He was a man who was made righteous by the grace of God. But he truly was a righteous man. He was righteous in exactly the same way, in the same sense, and to the same degree as Abraham was or any of us are. He was justified and made righteous before God by the righteousness of Christ made his, imputed to him and imparted to him. Lot was made righteous in justification; and he was made righteous in regeneration, having the righteousness of Christ imparted to him in the new creation of grace (Romans 5:19; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24; Hebrews 12:14; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:5-10). There is no other way for a sinner to get righteousness before God.

**Sinner Still**

Though he was a righteous man, like all other righteous men and women, Bro. Lot was a sinner still. Like you and me, he was a two people in one, a saint and a sinner, godly and ungodly, righteous and wicked. As a child of God, being taught of God by “*the grace of God that bringeth salvation,*” Lot lived soberly, righteously, and godly in Sodom and among the Sodomites. Day and night, he “*vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds*.”

 God’s saints are by no means perfect in this world. Not one of them makes any pretense to sinlessness. Believers know the evil of their own hearts and lives. But all believers live in righteousness. Grace makes men gracious. Those who walk in the Spirit, those who live by faith in Christ, no longer live according to the lusts of the flesh. In the habit of their lives God’s elect live as godly men and women in a crooked and perverse generation (Galatians 5:16, 22-24.

 Bro. Lot was just such a man. Peter calls him, no God the Holy Ghost calls him a just man, a righteous man, and a godly man. He was a sinner with shamefully sinful weaknesses, inconsistencies, and failures. But Lot was a righteous man, righteous because Jesus Christ was and is to him exactly what he is to all who believe — Jehovah-tsidkenu, the Lord our Righteousness.