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For Grandparents, Parents and Seniors

By Rick Shrader

Walking in Darkness

October is the month for Halloween, that sad old tradition on “Hallows’ Eve” when ghosts and goblins are thought to be traveling around. It is an unbiblical and unholy tradition that the church ought to discard. However, there is a lot of darkness in this world, some of it from Satan himself, some of it from man’s own heart, and some of it from God.

The Darkness of Satan

We don’t wrestle against flesh and blood, the apostle wrote, “but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age” (Eph 6:12). Satan is the god of this age who blinds the minds of unbelievers so that they will not see the light of the gospel (2 Cor 4:4). Lucifer became Satan when he desired to be higher than God and sit on the throne of God (Isa 14:12-15). We don’t have to look far to see his effect on the current world system. One transhumanist wrote, “We seek, therefore, to bless ourselves with perfect knowledge and perfect will, to become as gods, take the universe in hand, and transform it in our own image” (Mark Pesce, 2013, at the *Global Future 2045 International Congress*). Satan is still a liar and the father of those who reject God as their spiritual Father (John 8:44).

The Darkness of Sin

Jesus, the Light of God, came into this world of sin and darkness, but the darkness did not “comprehend” Him (John 1:5). In fact, sinners loved their spiritual darkness so much that they willingly refuse the light and accept condemnation instead (John 3:18-19). The apostle Paul wrote that “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in

unrighteousness” (Rom 1:18). At the end of that chapter, after listing 23 human sins, Paul concludes, “who knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them” (vs. 32).

The Darkness of God

It seems odd to talk of the darkness of God, but I am referring to the silence of God in this age of grace. The most common accusation against God these days is that He doesn’t put a stop to all the terrible things that happen in the world. “Either God does not care about the plight of human beings or He is not able to do anything about it.” Such blame reveals a depraved and unbiblical knowledge of God. God does not reveal Himself by miraculous intrusions into history in the age of grace as He has in times past. Today, it is His creation that declares the glory of God and His attributes (see Psa 19:1-6; Rom 1:18-21). When skeptics ask to see God step in, stop sin, and judge the world, they are asking for something they will regret.

The Darkness of Tribulation

God will step in one day! After He takes His church away, He will cast the world into a time of judgment and wrath for their sin. It will be a time both of “Jacob’s trouble” (Jer 30:7) as well as for “all tribes of the earth” (Rev 1:7). Those who would not “receive the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” will “believe the lie” (2 Thes 2:11-12) of Satan himself and be eternally lost. Now is no time to play around with trivial games of darkness and debauchery. Today is the day of salvation, now is the accepted time to believe in the light of the gospel (2 Cor 6:2).

Righteous Lot

Turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live godly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed with the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds). (2 Peter 2:6-8)

If ever a believer lived and walked among the darkness of this world, it was Lot, the nephew of the great patriarch Abraham. He is called “righteous” and Genesis 12-14 tells the story. Lot chose to travel with Abram from Haran to Canaan, a decision that showed his faith in Abram’s God. But when the land could not hold the growing herds of Abram and Lot because of God’s blessing on both, Abram gave Lot the first choice saying, “Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left” (13:9). When Lot saw the plain of Jordan that looked like the garden of God, he “dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.”

Perhaps Lot never intended to actually live in Sodom. At first he only lived in the “plain” which was “toward” (KJV) Sodom, and for a while, continued to live in his tent. Believers can never live in the vicinity of sin, trying to enjoy its pleasures from afar without eventually being overtaken by the flesh. When Chedorlaomer and his cohorts came to plunder Sodom, “They also took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son, who dwelt in Sodom” (14:12). Sin draws us in. We are a poor match against the lusts of the flesh and of the eyes and of the pride of life. Later, “the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom” (19:1). Quickly, the outskirts of sin do not satisfy and we ascend to its very gates.

However, the story doesn’t end there although Lot’s so-called influence did. The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was homosexuality taken to extreme. Modern defenders of the practice have tried but failed to show that to “know” (from Heb. *yoda*) means anything less. The practice was so pervasive that God would use it as an “example of eternal fire” (Jude 7). Lot knew the danger of his two visitors (angels) sleeping in a public place. The men of the city, “both old and young” (19:4), were given to this sexual sin openly and violently. At this point Lot’s feigned authority in Sod-

om was totally ignored and he knew it. The shocking and sad offer of his two virgin daughters to the wishes of the men show how trying to live among such darkness can warp even a father’s thinking. John Phillips, writing in 1980, astutely observed of Sodom,

“No longer were their shameful sins tolerated by a permissive society as something people had a right to practice if they pleased. It had gone far beyond that. Now the people were an open, aggressive, insistent force in the city with which none dared interfere. For their behavior was not looked upon by the Sodomites as criminal but as constitutional. They had the constitutional right to indulge their passion when and where they wished and any attempt to thwart them could be expected to lead to open riot in the city.” *Exploring Genesis*, p. 161.

Perhaps a few good things can be said of Lot. He is called “righteous” by Peter. He did have two virgin daughters still living in his house. And, most importantly in the story, he had uncle Abraham praying for him—the only thing that actually spared his life.

Yet the list of negatives shows a more sad legacy of a man who tried to walk with God and the darkness of this world at the same time. He eventually lost all of his family including his wife who wanted one more glimpse of the “wonderful” city life. His married daughters and their husbands merely laughed at his suggestion to flee the city and perished in the flames. He was commanded to flee to the mountains where he lived in a cave—quite the contrast from the big city. His two virgin daughters there seduced him, using his own weakness for wine and, giving birth to Lot’s children/grandchildren, produced the nations of Moab and Ammon. These nations later would produce such sinful practices as Baal-Peor and Molech.

We can reflect back on Peter’s description of Lot whose soul was tormented (or vexed, 2 Pet 2:8) by the life-style of Sodom. God gave us all a conscience and the believer’s conscience is informed by the indwelling Holy Spirit. But Lot did not listen to it. He did not learn anything from Abraham nor did he return to Abraham in his darkest hour. From the beginning Lot cast his eyes upon the lush plain of Sodom and the bright lights of the city. How different from Moses who, “when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt” (Heb 11:24-25).