

Introduction

One of the incredible facets of life is the ability of humans to acclimate. Consider some of the places where humans have figured out to live. A while back I came across a video of some bears in the wilderness of Alaska and I was taken back by the vastness of the Alaskan wilderness. Some of you may not know, but Alaska is the size of Texas, California, and Montana combined.

After seeing this video, I got on Google maps to look at Alaska and I found the town of Wainwright, Alaska. Wainwright is a port town in the far north of Alaska where normal temperatures can get as low as negative 56 degrees. Now there aren't a lot of people who live there (roughly 650 to be precise), but it is still astounding that humans have learned to live in such extreme environments.

Not only that, but humans can acclimate to incredible physical feats. There is a genre of documentary that you can find where humans are accomplishing the most insane feats. Not too long ago I watched a documentary entitled 14 peaks, where a mountaineer from Nepal named Nirmal Purja ("Nims") endeavored to summit all 14 peaks over 26,000ft in 7 months. For context, the previous record was held by an Italian climber who took 16 years to summit all 14 peaks. Nims did it in 6 months and 6 days.

Humans can acclimate to all sorts of amazing things.

But this acclimation can also go in wrong directions as well. People who abuse substances like alcohol or drugs can acclimate to the substances in a very unhealthy way. People can become acclimated to violence and coarse language because they are around it regularly.

And as is the case with the people of Sodom, humans can become acclimated and used to terrible wickedness simply because it becomes normalized in their culture.

This is clear in [Genesis 19](#). Sodom had become a very wicked place. our 22 verses break down into two parts:

1. The inspection of Sodom is seen in verses 1-11.
2. The response to warning is seen in verses 12-22.

The Inspection of Sodom (vv. 1-11)

Abraham has just shown hospitality to three visitors, including the LORD Himself. [Genesis 18](#) ends with the LORD hanging back with Abraham while two angels head toward Sodom. God tells Abraham that that Sodom must be inspected and in verse 1 the two angles arrive in Sodom at dusk.

Two by Two

In the Bible inspections often take place in pairs of two. In the story of the Exodus, Moses and Aaron who are sent to Egypt as a pair. In [Joshua 2](#) when God's people are going to destroy Jericho, they send **two spies** into the city who are received by Rahab. In the gospels, Jesus sends out his disciples **two by two** to proclaim the kingdom throughout the land.

In each of these cases the two witnesses go forth to inspect a place in light of coming judgement. Judgement loomed for Egypt, Jericho, and the whole nation of Israel in Jesus' day. In this passage, judgement looms over Sodom. How will the inspection go?

Good Beginning

Things begin well in verse 1. Lot is in the gate of the city. The gate of the city is where city elders would stand to rule and judge in the city. This is a good sign that Lot is there. If Lot is an elder in Sodom, perhaps the city can pass the inspection of the two witnesses. Moreover, Lot bows down to the angels just Abraham did in ch. 18.

In verse 2 Lot asks them to come and stay with him and **pressed them strongly** to not stay in the town square. Again, just like Abraham, Lot prepares a feast for the angels and they eat. Things are looking good at this point but warning signs are appearing.

Warning Signs

Why is it that Lot doesn't want them to stay in the town square? The answers come in verses 4-11. The men of the city come and surround Lot's house in order to commit shameful acts upon the visitors. They call to Lot, "**Bring them out to us, that we may know them.**"

Lot responds by resisting the men in verse 7, "**I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.**" Again, Lot seems to be acting well and righteously in response to the wickedness of the men of Sodom.

Righteous Lot?

But in verse 8 things get confusing. Lot tells the men that he has two daughters that he will bring out to them instead of the men who he is sheltering under his roof.

The reason this passage is difficult is because of what the New Testament teaches about Lot. In [2 Peter 2](#) Peter writes to encourage Christians to remain steadfast in righteousness even in

the presence of wickedness. Peter gives a number of examples from the Old Testament of how God punished the wicked and preserved the righteous.

Peter writes

[2 Peter 2:6-9](#) (ESV)

if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes God condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and *if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard)*; then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,

According to Peter, Lot is “righteous Lot”. Lot was “greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked.” Moreover, Peter says that as a righteous man living among the Sodomites day after day, “he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard.”

How does this make sense with what we read in verse 8 of our passage where it looks as though Lot is offering his daughters to be raped by the men of the city?

I think the answer is that Lot was trying to deceive the men of the city. He did not actually intend to give them his daughters but rather he saw this as a way that he could get back inside and lock the door behind him.

In verse 9, the men of Sodom threaten to break into the house. I don't think Lot's offer is genuine, I believe it is another example of holy deception. He's seeking to buy some time.

Exodus Parallels

Thankfully for Lot, his visitors are more than mere men, they are angels and they are able to intervene. They bring Lot back into the house and strike the men of Sodom with blindness so they are unable to get into the house.

This whole scene has all sorts of parallels with the Exodus. You have two angels coming to inspect the city as darkness descends. You have a meal of unleavened bread. And here you have Lot needing to stay inside his home in order to be safe. This is like the passover that Israel partakes in before the angel of death descends upon Egypt to kill all the firstborns of the land. In the passover, you needed to put the blood of the sacrificial lamb on the doorposts of your house and to stay in your house in order to be safe.

Shelter From Judgement

Whenever there is impending judgement in the Bible, there is always a safe haven. In the Flood, there was the Ark, during the Exodus there were all the homes covered by the blood of the lamb. At Jericho there was Rehab's household. Here is Lot's household.

God provides a way of escape from the judgement. The same is true still. All that are outside of Christ are outside of the ark, outside of Lot's house, outside of Rehab's house and destined for judgement lest they turn. This is why the church is of such importance. The Bible teaches that it is in the church where Christ and His body are found. So my encouragement to you this day is to always treasure the church. Yes, she will have faults, but her faults should never drive you from her.

One of my favorite hymns is "The Church's One Foundation" and the third verse goes as follows: "Though with a scornful wonder, men see her sore oppressed, by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed, yet saints there watch are keeping, their cry goes up 'how long?', and soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song!"

The Response to Warning Signs (vv. 12-22)

Lot's house is the place of refuge but the question of chapter 18 is clearly being answered, there are **not** 10 righteous people in Sodom and therefore it is doomed for destruction. The angels ask Lot if he has any one else in the city because they are going to destroy the place.

Not Ten Righteous

In verse 14 Lot goes to his sons-in-law who were to marry his daughters and tells them what is about to happen to the city.

But they only thought that Lot was joking. They couldn't even fathom the idea of impending judgement.

Hardened Toward Evil

This is a danger to all who live in a godless society. As I mentioned earlier, it is very easy for humans to acclimate to various things and this includes sin and wickedness. Our own culture has adopted a tolerant and celebratory stance toward sexual wickedness ([Rom 1:32](#)). But it has happened in such a way that for many people, Christians included, such things just seem normal. The idea that things could be any other way can only be met with jest.

God's Word is the Standard

This is why it is so important for Christians to constantly be measuring all things in accord with God's Word. We want to call righteous what God calls righteous, and to call wicked what God calls wicked.

Grace Given to Lot

Ultimately, Lot is unable to convince his sons-in-law to escape the judgement with him and it is only Lot, his wife, and his two daughters who are to leave the city.

But there are some curious things going on in verses 16 through 22. Lot lingers, so ultimately the men seize him and his family and bring them outside the city.

In verse 17 they tell him to escape for his life to the hills lest they are swept away!

In verses 18-22 Lot asks if they can instead escape to the small city of Zoar and be spared there because they can't make it to the mountains.

Ultimately mercy is shown to Lot. The angels take him out of the city and allowing him to shelter in Zoar. However, we can see here how slow Lot is to respond to the warning signs.

Conclusion

I want to conclude by speaking to this a little more. Self deception is one of the profound realities of human life. And one of the ways that people most often deceive themselves is when they understand something. So often people think that because they've figured something out in their head, it is going to translate to a change in their life. But that just isn't the case. Just because we know judgement is coming doesn't mean that we will take the steps to avoid it.

We need more than just the information. We need God's mercy and grace. And often, God's mercy and grace comes to us through very normal means. It comes to us through the ministry of the church and other Christians. So I want to conclude by encouraging you all to speak words of life into one another's lives. Building one another up and spurring one another on toward godliness and to avoid the wrath of God!

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN!