

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

# THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32

“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”

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## WHAT IF.....

*Jim Stauffer*

When I am trying to understand a difficult question, usually about a passage of scripture or some biblical or theological question, I play a sort of “what if” game. What if this passage means this? How does it harmonize with the remainder of God’s word? How does it affect my life?

**What if** the doctrine of salvation by faith only is accepted by many as a religious practice? An idea so controversial that Luther and other leaders of the Reformation movement had great difficulty answering our questions. How does it harmonize with the remainder of God’s word? Luther decided it did not harmonize with **James 2:21-24** and rather than discard the idea he loved so much he discarded the book of James, claiming it contradicted Paul’s writing to the Romans.

One of the details necessary to understand the scripture is the willingness to search the entire message of God for our conclusions. Not the message a very talented man tells us is from God. I will stand before my Lord in judgment for the things done in my life here, good or bad. (**2 Cor. 5:10; Acts 17:31**) Therefore, I am the one who must search this message diligently to be sure what I believe and teach is the truth.

Harmonizing difficult passages is obviously not always easy. When Paul speaks to the Romans in chapter 4, he uses Abraham as an example of faithfulness. He is teaching them the works of the law of Moses will not bring righteousness, but rather an unwavering faith in God. The portion of the law under consideration is the law of circumcision. To make the point clear he reminds them Abraham received the promise to himself and his seed because of his faith in God not through works of the law. (Abraham lived prior to the law) In fact Abraham received the promise before he was circumcised and his circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith. (**Rom. 4:9-13**)

Now what is very interesting James also uses Abraham as his example of one who is saved by his works. All through chapter 2 he emphasizes the necessity of action on one’s faith. First he uses the example of a person in need of the necessities of life. For one to have a living faith he must accompany this

faith by the action of providing those necessities. Feed a hungry man and clothe a naked one if your faith is not dead. (**James 2:14-17**) He follows this with the illustration of Abraham offering Isaac on the altar at Mount Moriah. The following passage explains how James defines faith. **James 2:21** *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; 23 and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. 24 Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith. 25 And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way? 26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.* James speaks of a living faith as one that leads us to obey the commands of God. Are we doing works of merit when we simply obey His commands? Are we earning our salvation when we live up to the details of the covenant, enacted by Christ and designed to redeem us from the bondage of sin? Of course not!

**What if** a person lives his life practicing salvation by faith only? Is this practice in harmony with scripture? The answer is a resounding no! We must recognize scripture clearly teaches us a man of faith acts on this faith by repenting of his sins and being baptized for their remission. (**Acts 2:38**) Knowing faith only leaves one without obedience to God’s commands helps us understand Jesus will not be the author of eternal salvation to those who practice such. (**Heb. 5:8,9**)

Jesus answers this clearly when he says in **Mat. 7:21-23**, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

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Doing something in the name of the Lord means by His authority or in response to His teaching or command. These people attempted to serve Him according to their concepts rather than by obeying His teaching. Such is the case of those who practice salvation by faith only. We then understand sincerity is not the final measure of obedience but submitting to *His* teaching overrides all the ideas men have.

## CRISIS IN THE HOME: SODOMY/ HOMOSEXUALITY

In the political and media environment of our society, the word “crisis” tends to be overused. Nearly every cultural or political event is deemed a crisis. One of the repercussions of overusing a word such as “crisis,” is the devaluing of the word or the “real” crisis. A crisis may be defined as “an emotionally significant event or radical change of status in a person's life; the decisive moment; an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending; a situation that has reached a critical phase” ([www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)). Sometimes the crisis that a person faces is not the “event itself,” but one's reaction to the event. For that reason, great faith and understanding in the majesty of God can help Christians to cope with the storms of life which test their faith (**Matt. 14:31; James 1:2-4**).

The current political and cultural climate has presented a moral crisis for the world, the church and the home through the homosexual agenda. Homosexuality is defined as “erotic activity with another of the same sex” ([www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)). For many years, Hollywood, the media and some political figures have been pushing this immoral agenda. Unfortunately, national leaders who resisted this movement have been replaced by sympathetic leaders who have taken steps to undermine the home and demoralize the nation. As a result, sodomy laws are being relaxed while others have been eliminated. Same-sex marriages are being sanctioned in a growing number of places. Society is in an identity crisis concerning our moral code. The home is under attack!

### OUR FIRST CHALLENGE IS TO SEE THINGS AS GOD SEES THEM

Speaking for Jehovah God, the prophet Hosea wrote, *“For I am God, and not man”* (**Hosea 11:9**). Isaiah wrote that God's ways and thoughts are higher than man's ways and thoughts (**Isa. 55:8-9**). Solomon warned, *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”* (**Prov. 14:12**). Man faces the challenge to see things as God sees them. To do so, one must remove prejudices, emotions, temptations to rationalize and one's own excuses.

God views homosexuality as a sin —deviate behavior, an abomination! *“Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination”* (**Lev. 18:22**). Under the law of Moses, written by the finger of God, *“If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them”* (**Lev. 20:13**). In **Romans 1:26-28**, the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul, condemned

homosexuality, *“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.”* Jude wrote of the ungodly Sodomites, *“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities”* (**Jude 7-8**).

Can one not see the politically correct crowd grimacing as these Scriptures are read and proclaimed? Can one hear objections like: “Do not use the word Sodomites. Do not say homosexual —use the word ‘gay’ or the phrase ‘alternate lifestyle’.” What a challenge to see things as God sees them!

The home was established by God when He observed His creation and found that it was not good that man should be alone. God made woman a helper, *“meet”* (suitable) for Adam (**Gen. 2:18**). This divine arrangement was affirmed by Jesus in **Matthew 19:1-9**. Paul confirmed that husbands are to love their wives *“as Christ loved the church”* (**Eph. 5:25**).

Lust and lasciviousness undermine the home. Peter spoke of men and women *“having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children”* (**2 Peter 2:14**).

The militant and aggressive homosexual movement is attacking our homes. Families are in crisis!

### TIMELINE OF LOT'S LIFE IN GENESIS

In order to establish the militant and aggressive behavior of the homosexual movement, let's discuss Lot and his family's experience with the homosexual attacks of his time. An examination of the timeline of Lot's life will reveal how his home was attacked despite his efforts to thwart their ungodly attempts. One of the definitions of crisis is “an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending; or a situation that has reached a critical phase.” Think about the numerous crises that faced Lot and his family in the following description from the book of Genesis.

Prior to Sodom. Lot leaves Ur of the Chaldees with his uncle Abram (**Gen. 12:5**). Abram and Lot separate to avoid strife. Lot pitches his tent toward Sodom (**13:12-13; 14:1**). He is captured by enemies and rescued by Abram (**14:12-17**).

**Intermission.** The Lord speaks to Abraham and three men (including the Lord) approach him (**Gen. 18:1-2**). The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is very grievous (**18:20**). God hears the cry of the city and investigates the activities of Sodom and Gomorrah (**18:21**). Their sin has ripened to the point of destruction as in the days of the flood (**Gen. 6:5**). Abraham pleads for Sodom. God agrees to spare the cities if ten righteous souls can be



found in that hedonistic place (18:23-33).

Lot's Series of Crises. Two angels (as men) visit Lot in Sodom (Gen. 19:1-3). He extends hospitality to them, but it is rejected. Lot insists they come into his house because the streets of Sodom are not safe (19:2). The Sodomites are aggressive and militant. They come to Lot's door with the desire to "know" these men sexually (Gen. 4:1,17,25 'knew') (19:5). Lot confronts these homosexuals and refuses to turn the men over to them (19:7). Faced with a crisis, Lot offers his daughters to the aggressors. Did he know the men of the city would refuse them? In a similar incident in Judges 19:22, the women were not refused. A concubine was abused to death. Did the law of hospitality override Lot's fatherhood? Were his daughters considered only possessions? Regardless, what a crisis for righteous Lot (cf. 2 Peter 2:8)! He did not ask for this event. He did not look for it. The homosexuals were militant, aggressive and abusive. But the confrontation continues. Lot is called a foreigner—a stranger even though he is a citizen of the community. He is scoffed. *"And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door"* (19:9). Does this sound familiar? You are not one of us! You do not belong here! You do not understand! Who are you to judge us? The men of the city (Sodomites), in turn, threatened Lot and his family. This is an ugly episode of human (sinful) behavior that proponents of homosexuality either ignore and/or deny. The Angels pulled Lot back into the house and blinded the Sodomites. They wearied themselves trying to find the door (19:10-11).

Judgment is determined. The investigation of the city ended (Gen. 19:13). It would be utterly destroyed! Lot's family is divided. His sons-in-law would not listen to Lot so they stayed behind (19:14). Lot lingered, what is a father to do? His family is torn asunder (19:16). The angels led Lot and his family to Zoar and let them go (19:17-23). Lot feared. When the sun came up, God rained down brimstone and fire upon the cities. Sodom and Gomorrah and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and all that grew upon the ground were destroyed (19:24-25). The smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace (19:28). Ignoring the angels' warning, Lot's wife looked back and was turned into a *"pillar of salt"* (19:26).

**A brief intermission.** Abraham watches from the plains (19:27-29) as God destroyed the cities as He promised to do. Sodom and Gomorrah did not have even ten righteous citizens to save the cities from the wrath of God. Collateral damage. Unfortunately the story is not over. The aftermath yields more heartache for Lot and his family. Lot was fearful of the city of Zoar, perhaps not wanting a repeat of the horrible event of Sodom. Lot and his daughters lived alone in the mountains, no doubt an overreaction to their crisis. The daughters, afraid they will not have children while dwelling in the mountains with their father, made Lot drunk. He commits incest with his daughters and they each bear a son whom they named Moab and Benammi. Centuries later, their descendants, the Moabites and Ammonites, were enemies of the Israelites. How often people make poor choices on the heels of crises! This episode shows the progressiveness of sin. Friends, Satan has a plan. He has an agenda. He has used television and music and movie themes to advance his plan of homosexuality. His evil influence has infiltrated so many institutions like the military, the NBA, the NFL, school systems, and on and on. He uses lawsuits. He stacks polls. He advances propaganda with regularity to urge people to tolerate and ultimately accept the homosexual/lesbian agenda. The ultimate goal is to gain the approval of citizens and

recruits among the innocent. He is having success in getting more and more to accept it, and those who don't, to keep their mouth silent.

### **CHALLENGES TO STAND AGAINST HOMOSEXUALITY**

We have the challenge to keep ourselves, our homes and the church pure. *"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world"* (Jas. 1:27). Paul wrote, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"* (Rom. 12:1-2). We also read, *"Abstain from all appearance of evil"* (1 Thess. 5:22).

We have the challenge to condemn the world by living and upholding righteousness. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God"* (John 3:16-21).

We have the challenge to remember our former state. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Paul reminded his readers of their previous status as sinners and enemies of God by their choices and conduct. *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"* (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

We have the challenge to withdraw from the disorderly (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Thess. 3:6,11,14-15; 2 John 9:11). *"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us"* (2 Thess. 3:6).

### **CONCLUSION**

There are so many lessons to learn from this crisis in Lot's home. Lot was outnumbered, so are we! The homosexual movement had an agenda, a plan. They have infiltrated so many institutions. They have national and political leaders. Friend, would you waive a rainbow flag in support of the homosexual movement? Would you march in the "pride parades?" Would you give your money to the homosexual cause? Then why do so many Christians still vote for national and local politicians who push the homosexual agenda? One day God will judge whether we encouraged this evil or fought against it (John 12:48; 2 Cor. 6:14-18).

How can we be sure of the outcome of this crisis? There is an investigation underway. God knows what mankind does to His wonderful creation. He will listen to the cries of His people. Do we grieve? Are we praying? Our homes are suffering. The church is embattled. We need God's help. Where are you in this crisis?

**by Ronnie Whittemore**

**Eph. 2:19** So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

**1Pet. 2:9** But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

## HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

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**Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer**

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## NEWS AND NOTES:

SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

IRENE HURD, MARY CZIRR, JAN PATRICK, GRANT CLOTHIER, J.R. DANIEL AND JESSIE GIBSON. PAT CLOTHIER IS UNDERGOING TREATMENTS FOR ESOPHAGEAL CANCER.

SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS: GOSPEL OF JOHN

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: PREMILLENNIALISM



## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10