

Righteous Lot - Genesis 19

God sent two angels to warn Lot and his family of the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was evening when the angels arrived at the city of Sodom and found Lot at the city gate. Upon their arrival Lot, not knowing that they were angels from God, invited the strangers to to his home.

Before going to sleep that night men from all over the city of Sodom came and surrounded Lot's house. They called to Lot instructing him to release his guests to them so they could commit terrible sins with the strangers. Lot refused and advised them against their wickedness.

Then something happened that absolutely stings the mind to even think about it. As a parent it is unbelievable and shocking.

Lot called back to the men of the city and . . . Offered them his own daughters for their sexual exploits . . . *Was he out of his mind!?!*

The Mighty Warrior Jephthah - Judges 11

Jephthah was an outcast among the Israelites; his mother, a prostitute. So he had been driven away.

However, when Israel found herself facing a war against the nation of Ammon, she needed a strong warrior to lead her. The elders of Israel called on Jephthah to lead them in battle.

Jephthah, still bitter over the way he had been treated, agreed to lead Israel in battle with one condition: He would become their head. The elders agreed and Jephthah became the general of their armies and the leader of Israel.

The Bible says that the Spirit of God came upon Jephthah as he led Israel, and he made a vow to God. Jephthah vowed that if he was victorious, he would offer as a burnt offering whatever came out of his house upon his return.

It is doubtful that Jephthah could have imagined what would happen upon his return. Most likely he imagined that an animal would exit his house and that he would joyfully sacrifice the animal to God as thanks.

God gave Jephthah success in battle, however, upon his return home it was not an animal that exited the doors of his house. Jephthah was devastated as he saw his daughter rush out of his house greet him. He knew that he had made a vow to God that could not be taken back.

The scene is mind numbing. How could a man be so foolish? How could he have overlooked this possibility? How could he possibly keep this vow? How could he not keep it?

One's mind races with thoughts of horror, but the broken hearted warrior kept his promise and . . . Offered his own daughter as a sacrifice. . . *Was he out of his mind!?!*

An Offering

Years beyond the days of Lot and Jephthah, yet many years in our past, the world was in turmoil. The power of sin reigned and there was no hope for mankind. But Deity looked down with compassion hearing our cry and . . .

Many agree that it is the most well-known verse in the Bible: "For God so loved the world...." You see it on homemade signs held up in football and basketball stadiums. Our children recite it and we are proud and often entertained. It rolls off our lips so easily: "For God so loved the world...."

Does it sting our minds more to think of Lot's offering or the Jephthah's sacrifice than the offering and sacrifice of Jesus?

God offered as a sacrifice his only begotten Son...

Was He . . . !?!

Mark Stinnett

Did you make a New Year's Resolution in 2014? If so, how did you do?
Were you 'resolute'?

I do not get excited about New Year resolutions. However, as a school teacher I made new resolutions prior to each school year. I guess it is not that important *when* a resolution is made. For some folks the end of calendar year is the end of a cycle. For others it might be some kind of cycle at work. For some, there are no regular cycles, but times of transition.

Resolutions mark a beginning, and often an end. Looking forward to the future, anticipating better things, a resolution comes from a desire for change. It may be that you want to do something you have never done before. Or, you may have a desire to put negative habits or experiences in the past.

Resolutions come after genuine reflection. Naturally, the ending of some sort of cycle in life is a perfect time for reflection on the past and the formulation of future goals. I would guess that resolutions that are little more than passing whims or impromptu thoughts are the most difficult to keep.

Every year articles are written a month or two into the new year describing broken resolutions. Perhaps this occurs because many people are not *resolute* when making resolutions. Let's take a peek at Webster's definition:

res·o·lute (rez'ə loot') *adj.* having or showing a fixed, firm purpose; determined; resolved; unwavering —*SYN.* See FAITHFUL.

These are strong words. Each begs the use of 'all caps':

FIRM PURPOSE.

DETERMINED.

UNWAVERING.

A synonym for *resolute* is FAITHFUL.

Have you ever considered your Christianity a *resolution*? Was your decision RESOLUTE?

Resolution: God's will, not mine.

He knelt down and began to pray, saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." (Luke 22:41-42 NASB)

Resolution: Die to self, Follow Jesus.

"If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23 NASB)

Resolution: Living Sacrifice, Holy Sacrifice.

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. (Romans 12:1-2 NASB)
Whether you make a New Year's resolution or not, be RESOLUTE in your Christian walk.