

## **The Three Eternal Destinies #198**

### ***That Man Might Not Say in His Heart...***

To preserve the image of God in man as Noah did (Gen 6:9) is to do the good in Gen 3:22. And so he was considered by God by the proof of his life to be found righteous (Rev 20:12; 22:11). He was not as all those of Gen 6:5, who will be found to be the unjust and filthy. The only way Noah or any one from the nations can be righteous is to “hang on to it” as an heir (Heb 11:7). This is what Noah did by “the faith” or persuasion that came from his conscience, God’s only voice to man in his day. It was God’s oracle to man.

Noah saw the way the world was going, just as Lot did (2 Pet 2:7-9) and was grieved in his righteous soul due to the lives of the unjust or unrighteous people of his day, by the “filthy lives of the unjust” (2 Pet 2:7). Noah was perfect, or blameless, as far as the standard for the nations was concerned, according to God’s expectation for fallen man to live up to. But Abraham was to be blameless on a higher standard, which was necessary to be the light to the righteous of the nations (Gen 17:1; Mt 5:14). God never expected for fallen man to be perfect or blameless or sinless – not even the holy – for He knew Rom 3:23 before Paul wrote it. And He knew Rom 6:23 also, as Heb 9:27 is speaking of the nations.

The judgment in Heb 9:27 is described in Rev 20:12-15 and is based on how they walked in this life. That is to say, on the deeds they did, whether they were good or evil (Gen 3:22). Rev 20:12 and Gen 3:22 go together for the nations. On this knowledge of good and evil they will be judged worthy of a second life or a second death.

Lot had a righteous soul (2 Pet 2:8). This was his inborn, inherent righteousness. It was not a righteousness imputed to him by faith or persuasion as was Abraham’s (#539 in Gen 15:6), but a righteousness that he kept as his own by faith. God persuades natural man through his conscience as seen in Gen 6:5 and 2 Pet 2:8, in contrast to

others at those times, as Rom 2:6-10 shows the contrast among the nations. So, in 2 Pet 2:8, if Lot had a righteous soul, where did he get it from? If all mankind was depraved after the Fall, where did Lot come from 2,000 years later? Was the “only heaven or hell” concept alive back then, that “none was righteous, no, not one, as it is written...” (Rom 3:10)? And where was it written? (Ps 14:1; 53:1). Does Ps 14:3 mean, “There is none who does good, not even Noah?”

It is true that no one can be justified or can atone for his own sins on the grounds of his own righteousness before God (Rom 3:10-18 or Acts 10:35). But does this mean all those who are righteous in their own righteousness go to the lake of fire when they die because they were not of the same faith as Abraham, or of Jesus? It is true, no one can be justified by the faith that comes from his own conscience since it is appointed for all mankind, outside of the Body of Messiah, to die once, and then face judgment. Only by his own death and by his suffering in death can a man pay for his own sins (Rom 6:23), or be justified by his own death for the payment for his sins.

Noah, although he was a righteous man, had to pay the wages of his own sins by his own death, but this was the *first* death sentence of Gen 2:17 and Heb 9:27. All his good deeds by which he retained his own righteousness could not justify or atone for his own sins (Rom 3:23), but as we see he had human worth and could pay (atone for) the wages of his own sins by his own death. His human worth or righteousness was still evident in his character, showing he retained his own righteousness according to the standards of good and evil found in Gen 3:16-19,22. He kept, or held onto his inheritance of a second life after his first death (Gen 2:17; Rev 20:12-15), as Heb 11:7 says.

### **Definition of Conscience**

Noah was the “heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Heb 11:7), meaning he was a possessor of his own righteousness and kept it by the persuasion of his own

conscience. He was one who held onto his human worth by obedience to Gen 3:22 and 3:16-19. He did not give his human worth up, in contrast to the kind of wrongdoing that all the rest of the people of the world were doing (Gen 6:5-9; Rom 2:7-10). Noah was persuaded by his own desire to do the good he knew to do, just as God or the Creator would do, since they both knew together the good to do. “Co-know” is the definition of *co-science* (conscience), so *conscience* means, “to know together with God,” which is to walk with Him, for can two walk together if they don’t agree together? (Amos 3:3). This is what it meant to “walk with God” — to live or walk in a way worthy of God, as His witness or representation. This, the good people of the world can still be — a witness to give testimony to God’s likeness.

Rom 3:8-9 — Their condemnation is just, since Paul was speaking of a people whom Ps 14:1 describes “as it is written...” Those who manifest Ps 14:1 are described in Rom 3:10-18. Rom 3:12 — “They have all turned aside...” Well, turned aside from what? Evidently they were not at one time “turned aside,” so Ps 14:1 speaks of those who have “turned aside” from Gen 3:22 and are no longer like God. By their deeds you will know them (Gen 9:1-7; Rom 1:18 - 2:16).

“They have all become unprofitable to their Creator” and “No, not one of them does ‘good’...” who has *turned aside*, which means *perverted* – turned aside from the straight way of being persuaded by his conscience (Gen 3:22), which is “faith” for them.

“There is no ‘fear of God’ before their eyes” (Isa 24:5-6; Pr 3:32). Pr 3:32-33 is the demarcation between two kinds of people (apart from the holy) in Rev 22:11. His secret counsel for the nations is *their conscience* — a conscience that has been kept clean of defilement and corruption, which would make it insensitive to other’s feelings, as an unjust used car salesman, lawyer, or businessman, etc., is — or even a neighbor. A curse is upon the unjust and the filthy, but as Pr 26:2 says, a curse would not come (light) upon a person without cause (Mt 27:25).

*Perverted* simply means to go off of the way God intended man to on after the Fall (Gen 3:16-19; 9:1-7). There are, of course, different degrees of going off. But God's vice-regent keeps a person in the world from going off this path, which He set for the upright after the Fall — since mankind was too precious to their Creator to leave them without hope. He could not leave them without the knowledge of good and evil in order that they could still walk with Him and hear His voice in their conscience to maintain their human worth and not say in their heart, "There is no God" (Ps 14:1-3). Have they no knowledge of God? Yes, they do — if they are still human beings and have not cast off all restraint and turned aside from the way in which they should walk.