

**Living Righteously
in a Wicked World**Lesson
8
Summary

Genesis 13-14; Abram returns from Egypt—He and Lot part—The Lord will make Abram's seed as the dust of the earth in number—Abram settles in Hebron.

Genesis 18; Abraham entertains three holy men—They promise that Sarah shall have a son—Abraham will command his children to do justice and judgment—The Lord appears to him—They discuss the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Genesis 19; Lot entertains holy men—The men of Sodom seek to abuse Lot's guests, and are smitten with blindness—Lot sent out of Sodom—The Lord rains brimstone and fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah—Lot's daughters preserve his seed in the land.

**Supplemental
Holy Land and
Jewish
insights:**

Dead Sea Scroll People Move Away: Through the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we find the motivation of those many call the Essenes was to move away from wickedness and establish a singular community of righteousness. Their organization had a shadow of biblical organization. Their leader was called the “Teacher of Righteousness” and he had two assistants. There was also a council of “Twelve Overseers.” They had an order following the ‘righteous king’, which is said in Hebrew, “Melech Zedek.” The Dead Sea sect shunned others, and probably evoked one of the Savior’s comments in the Sermon on the Mount.

Savior Teaches “Love Your Enemies” in the Beatitudes: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?” (*Matthew 5:43-46*)

Jewish Thought on “Free Will:” The following thoughts on personal righteousness, involvement and influence in the world may also be of interest: “Most Jewish philosophers considered the idea of free will essential to moral responsibility.” “The most common argument brought to support the idea of free will was expressed by Maimonides: every person may choose to be good or evil. God does not determine in advance whether a particular man will be righteous or wicked.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Prayer Alone is Not Enough, Needs to be Connected with Works: “Prayer begins when we sense the beauty and mystery of the world and when we yearn to be close to its Creator. Communal prayer opens the worshiper to the needs of others, it “takes the mind out of the narrowness of self interest.” “Prayer is a way to master what is inferior in us . . . it helps us discover our true aspirations . . . Prayer teaches us what to aspire to . . .” “However, prayer is no substitute for action.” Through prayer we deepen our commitment to righteous living.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Jewish Tradition of a Special Society of Righteous People: “The rabbis of the Talmud described the righteous as individuals whose behavior went beyond merely fulfilling the letter of the law, and as those who were scrupulous in monetary matters. They praised the righteousness of zaddikim as being greater than that of the ministering angels and attributed the continued existence of the world to them. According to an aggadah in the Babylonian Talmud, in each generation there are exactly 36 righteous men -- Lamed Vav Zaddikim -- who received the Divine Presence and whose righteousness sustains the world. In the folklore of the Kabbalah and later that of Hasidism, the idea of these lamedvavniks, as they were commonly called, assumed great significance. They were believed to be anonymous saints who remained unnoticed by other men because of their humble nature and vocations.”

(*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Name of Priesthood, Name of God: The Hebrew word “Zaddik” is reflected in one of the names of the Lord, “Melech Zaddik,” which means King of Righteousness. That is said, Melchizedek, today.

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