

## Steps to Spiritual Ruin

### *The Life of Lot*

**Text:** Gen. 13:10-18

#### **Introduction:**

1. In our last message, we considered the separation that took place between Abraham and Lot. The lives of Abraham and Lot stand in stark contrast to each other. "Throughout the biographical portions of Scripture, we find the Holy Spirit frequently brings together two men of widely different character and placing them in juxtaposition so that we might the better learn the salutary (useful, helpful) lessons He would teach us. Abel and Cain, Moses and Aaron, Samuel and Saul, David and Solomon, are well known examples of this principle." (Pink)
2. If it were not for the New Testament reference to the fact Lot was a "righteous" man (2 Pet. 2:8) we would be strongly inclined to view Lot as an unregenerate professor. But in reality, he presents a sobering warning to us of the kind of carnal life a true believer can lead apart from the grace of God.
3. In this message we will briefly review what we covered in the last message and then continue on with tracing Lot's spiritual drift downwards. We will also see the contrast in Abraham's life and how God blessed him after this separation.

#### **I. THE CONTEXT OF THE SEPARATION (Vs. 1-5)**

- A. The Recent Sojourn in Egypt (Vs. 1-4)
- B. The Riches Secured in Egypt (Vs. 5)

#### **II. THE CATALYST FOR THE SEPARATION (VS. 5-7)**

There were three issues at play here. There was:

- A. The Presenting Issue (Vs. 5-6)
- B. The Underlying Issue (Vs. 7a)
- C. The Resulting Issues (Vs. 7b)

#### **III. THE CONDESCENSION IN THE SEPARATION (VS. 8-9)**

Observe two qualities about Abraham's response. It was:

- A. A Spiritual Response (Vs. 8)
- B. A Selfless Response (Vs. 9)

#### **IV. THE CHOICE IN THE SEPARATION (VS. 10-13)**

There is a real contrast between the choices Abraham and Lot made at this time and the consequences that came as a result of those choices. We can trace 7 steps in Lot's life from this point that led to his spiritual ruin.

- A. Lot's Desire for Sodom (Vs. 10, 13)
  1. The Deceitful Illusions of Sodom (Vs. 10)

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Deceit is at the heart and soul of temptation. Things are not as they appear! Sodom was deceitful in at least two areas and pictures the character of the world and its temptations.

- a. Deceitful in its Assurances – Sodom’s plain appeared to offer a solution to Lot’s needs as it was “well-watered”. It seemed they would be refreshed down there near Sodom!
    - i. Remember, the world can never satisfy the thirst of your heart, only Christ (John 4:13-14; 7:37-39).
    - ii. Remember, the devil and the world’s promises are lies. The devil promised Eve, “ye shall not surely die” (Gen. 3:4), the complete opposite of what God had said and “ye shall be as gods” (Gen. 3:5) which was something she could never attain.
  - b. Deceitful in its Appearances – everything looked so incredibly attractive and good down on Sodom’s plain!
    - i. It looked like Eden – “as the garden of the LORD”.
    - ii. It looked like Egypt – “like the land of Egypt”. Sadly, this highlights that while Abraham may have gotten Lot out of Egypt, he was not able to remove Egypt out of Lot.
    - iii. How the devil and the world have a way of making sin looks so wonderful and attractive. It just looks so good on the surface! But it is all a lie and a deception.
  - c. “Sadly, Lot had been infected with the luxury and excitement of Egypt, and was no longer content to be a “stranger and pilgrim in the land”. He looked down to the plain of the Jordan River, as it flows into the Salt Sea, where there were five prosperous, exciting cities, and decided that was where he would like to be. No doubt he knew something of the wicked reputation of those cities but still chose that was where he wanted to be. Perhaps he also, like many believers today who make similar choices, rationalized that he could be a witness for the Lord there, while at the same time, enjoying the creature comforts they offered.” (Henry Morris)
2. The Depraved Iniquities of Sodom (Vs. 13)
- God’s Divine perspective was very different to that of Lot’s. God saw the dark underbelly of the cities of the plain. It was a place renown for the darkest depravities known to man. Sodom would go down in Biblical history as an example and warning to those who would pursue depraved perversion – “making them an **ensample** unto those that after should live ungodly” (2 Pet. 2:6); “are set forth for an **example**, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 1:7). What were the sins of Sodom? Sodom was:
- a. Prideful – “Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, **pride**, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.” (Ez. 16:49)
  - b. Pleasure driven (hedonistic) - “Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, **fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters,**” (Ez. 16:49) A

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society that makes pleasure the chief end of man's existence is a society that slides very rapidly into depraved perversion.

- c. Pitiless – "...neither did she strengthen the hand of **the poor and needy**." (Ez. 16:49) A society that becomes taken over with the pursuit of the fulfilment of fleshly lusts will become cruel and uncaring towards the vulnerable and needy. We see this very thing happening in our own country. While there is much rhetoric about compassion and care of the vulnerable, we now have state sanctioned murder of societies most vulnerable.
- d. Perverse – "And delivered just Lot, vexed with **the filthy conversation** (means lascivious lifestyle) of the wicked:" (2 Pet. 2:7) "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." (Jude 1:7) Sodom was given over to the pursuit of sexual depravity. It was:
  - i. Sold out to Immorality.
  - ii. Sold out to Sodomy.

### B. Lot's Decision for Sodom (Vs. 11-12a)

Consider the choice that Lot made at this time. It was:

1. A significant choice – this was the first real choice that Lot made in his life independent of Abraham. Up till this point, he has been a follower of Abraham. There is nothing like a crossroads in one's life where they can no longer lean on a spiritual figure in their lives to reveal the state of their heart. Lot "seems to have been one of those men who take right steps, not because they are prompted by obedience to God, but because their friends are taking them. Around him was the inspiration of a heroic faith, the fascination of the untried and unknown; the stir of a great religious movement: and Lot was swept into the current, and resolved to go too. He was like Pliable of the Pilgrim's Progress." (F.B. Meyer)
2. A sinful choice – Lot "chose" to walk by sight rather than by faith. Notice the sequence – Lot lifted up his eyes, beheld, desired and then chose. The wisest thing for us to do is to choose God's choice for us rather than our own way.
3. A separation choice – Lot chose more than just geographical distance between himself and Abraham; he chose spiritual distance as well. The carnal man makes a choice to separate himself from the spiritual man. Remember, **your decisions determine your destiny**. F.B. Meyer notes, "How many have stood upon those Bethel heights, intent on the same errand as took Lot thither! Age after age has poured forth its crowds of young hearts, to stand upon an exceeding high mountain, whilst before them have been spread all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; the tempter whispering, that for one act of obeisance all shall be theirs. In assurance and self-confidence; eager to do the very best for themselves; prepared to consider the moralities only in so far as these did not interfere with what they held to be the main chance of life – thus have succeeding generations looked towards the plains of Sodom from afar. And, alas! Like Lot, they have tried to make

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stones into bread; they have cast themselves down from the mountain side, for angels to catch; they have knelt before the tempter, to find his promise broken, the vision of power an illusion, and the soul beggared for ever – whilst the tempter, with hollow laugh, has disappeared, leaving his dupe standing alone in the midst of a desolate wilderness.”

### C. Lot's Direction towards Sodom (Vs. 12b)

1. Lot journeyed east from Bethel (Vs. 11a). This was in the direction of Hai (same as Ai) which means ruin or heap of ruins. We all are constantly faced with a choice of direction in our lives. Either we move towards Bethel (house of God) representing fellowship with God and spiritual blessing or we move towards Hai and the spiritual ruin and breakage that comes with compromise with the world.
2. Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom (Vs. 12b). Lot did not take up residence in Sodom straight away. He simply shifted his family in the direction of Sodom. The path of compromise usually starts out with subtle changes to begin with. Like a boat being carried along by the gentle movement of a river to begin with, the drift appears slow and gradual until it is suddenly seized in the powerful undertow of an approaching waterfall and plunged to destruction. Beware of getting caught in the world's vortex! The journey in the direction of compromise can seem exciting to begin with but it will end in devastation. “Like leprosy, sin has often a seemingly small beginning, but how rapid its spread, how loathsome its issue, how dreadful its end.” (Pink)
3. “Lot “pitched his tent toward Sodom”. He dwelled “in the cities of the plain” – not actually within the cities, since he still lived in his tent, but in their orbit, as it were, near enough to enjoy their advantages but not yet actually a part of their life. Christians today often follow the same path, hoping to have both the spiritual blessings of a separated walk with God and the carnal advantages of fellowship with the world. Sooner or later, however, one has to decide which it will be. He cannot have it both ways. Neither God nor the world will allow it.” (Morris)
4. “Lot is a type and illustration of the Christian who is not fully consecrated – one who is trying to make the best of both worlds, endeavouring to stand well with God, while pushing to the full his own earthly interests.” (Griffith Thomas)

### D. Lot's Dwelling in Sodom (14:12).

1. With what started as a seemingly innocent move in Sodom's direction soon led to actually dwelling in Sodom. Remember, **sin will always take you farther than you want to go and keep you longer than you want to stay.**
2. The New Testament reveals that Lot was vexed by the sights and sounds of Sodom as he dwelt there. Underneath, Lot was a righteous man as only a saved person will truly feel vexed by sin. 2 Peter 2:7 says, “And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man **dwelling among them**, in **seeing** and **hearing**, **vexed** his righteous soul

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from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;)" The word 'vexed' means to wear down, to oppress. The same word is translated 'oppressed' concerning Moses' defense of the Hebrew man who was being 'oppressed' by the Egyptian (Acts 7:24). This is a reference to the incident when Moses saw "an Egyptian **smiting** an Hebrew" (Ex. 2:11-12). The verse then highlights the two specific areas in which Lot's soul was vexed. He was vexed by:

- a. **The sights of Sodom** (through the eye gate) – "in **seeing**". As we live in this sinful world, we will be confronted at times with vexing things through the eye gate that we will need God's grace and power to deal with. But being confronted by something through no fault of our own as we seek to fulfill God's will each day is totally different to making a conscious choice to place ourselves in a compromised situation where we know we are going to be sorely tempted. Many believers today, like Lot of old, make choices to place themselves in compromised situations where their inner spiritual life will be distressed and worn down through the eye gate by the world. For example:
  - i. Compromised events such as parties, school & work social functions, sensual weddings etc...
  - ii. Compromised media such as
    - Television.
    - Hollywood movies and movie theatres.
    - YouTube, TikTok, online streaming services such as Netflix.
    - Video gaming.
    - Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. The saturation of these platforms with vile, pornographic, violent and depraved imagery **cannot be overstated**. For example, Instagram has been nicknamed 'Instaporn' by some due to the accessibility of pornographic material. Family Zone found that it took less than 30 seconds on Instagram to find "thousands of pornographic images and videos, with links to pornographic websites and various users to search for on other social media platforms who will provide even more porn."<sup>1</sup> It is also widely documented that Instagram is the number 1 social media platform used by pedophiles.
    - Unwholesome literature such as thrillers and novels that stimulate wicked imaginations and fantasies.  
Note: This includes much within the Christian fiction genre (e.g., Francine Rivers book "Redeeming Love").
- b. **The Sounds of Sodom** (through the ear gate) – "and **hearing**". Lot was also vexed by the sounds of Sodom. No doubt the daily conversations on the streets of Sodom were largely focused on

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<https://www.familyzone.com/anz/families/blog/instaporn#:~:text=After%20testing%20the%20theory%2C%20we,who%20will%20provide%20more%20porn.>

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evil things. The sounds of Sodom's parties could be heard at night. And the sad thing is that Lot didn't have to be there! He could have returned to the separated walk which keeps the believer spiritually safe from so many of the world's defilements. Like Lot, many believers make foolish choices to vex their righteous souls with the world's sounds. E.g., the world's music. iTunes offers a staggering 75 million songs for streaming and download, the vast majority of which are wicked and evil. Spotify has a similar number at 70 million. We have more access to the sights and sounds of this wicked world than at any other time in human history. If ever there was a day to be separated and circumspect in what we allow through the eye gate and ear gate, it is today!

### **E. Lot's Determination to stay in Sodom (Gen. 14)**

1. We will cover this chapter in our next message but to comment briefly, Lot was captured by the army of the four kings invading Sodom and its ally cities. It took the intervention of godly Abraham to see him rescued.
2. Despite this sobering chastisement, when it was all over, Lot returned to Sodom. The carnal believer often despises the chastening of the Lord and stubbornly continues in his backslidden ways.

### **F. Lot's Development within Sodom (Gen. 19:1)**

1. We now find Lot sitting in the gate, implying he has attained a position of leadership in Sodom. Lot had reached a level of success in the city but what a price he would pay in the long run for that "success".
2. Remember, things can appear to go very well for the backslider for a season. Sometimes they go on in apparent prosperity for years but the law of sowing and reaping will always come into play.
3. Lot may have been on the ascent materially but he was on the descent spiritually. Do not make the mistake of equating worldly success with spiritual success.

### **G. Lot's Devastation from Sodom (Gen. 19)**

What appeared to be gain for Lot initially turned into total loss. He lost just about everything! Consider Lot's loss:

1. He lost his daughters. It appears Lot had a family of girls and only two of them left Sodom with him. The daughters that had married men in Sodom stayed behind and were lost along with their husbands.
2. He lost his house, position and material wealth. All the things that motivated Lot initially as a man of the flesh ultimately came to nothing. There are many examples like this of backslidden believers who have made a success of themselves in a worldly sense only to have it all unravel with the passing of time. Even if you are able to be a success from the world's point of view till the end of your life, remember that it will all go up in smoke at the Judgment Seat of Christ!
3. He lost his wife. He finally tried to get his wife out of Sodom but he couldn't get Sodom out of his wife. She looked back with a longing

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gaze, delayed her escape from the doomed city and was overcome by the judgment of God.

4. He lost his purity and any final trace of testimony for the Lord he may still have had.

### V. THE CONTRAST IN THE SEPARATION (VS. 14-18)

Abraham's choice and its results stand in stark contrast to that of Lot. Living for God is the life of true blessing! Abraham was blessed with:

#### A. The Promises of God (Vs. 14-16)

Undoubtedly there was pain for Abraham in this separation from Lot and also a renewed test of faith given the fact from the human perspective it appeared that Lot had got the better end of the deal. God in His love and grace comforts and re-assures Abraham after this ordeal.

1. The promise of a land (Vs. 14-15)
  - a. The significant timing of the promise (Vs. 14a).
    - i. This promise had special significance in light of what had just taken place in Abraham's life. God speaks to Abraham "after that Lot was separated from him". This separation, though painful, brought further blessing in Abraham's life. Sometimes the carnal Christian has to be removed so that there can be blessing.
    - ii. "Sometimes when a person does the will of God, it does not look at first like he did the right thing. The blessed results of doing the will of God do not always come quickly. The good seeds that have been planted do not always spring up as speedily as other seeds oftentimes do. This frequently discourages the faithful soul, and there are plenty of critics around who will add to the discouragement by pointing out the apparent lack of success in the life of the obedient one compared to the worldling. But be patient; truth will be vindicated; righteousness will be exonerated; and doing the will of God will be confirmed in due season." (John Butler)
    - iii. We are reminded of the principle that "them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2:30) and that "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." (Ps. 84:11)
  - b. The scope of the promise (Vs. 14b-15).
    - i. God instructs Abraham to "lift up now thine eyes" and to look upon the inheritance he would receive from His God. What a contrast between what the man of faith and the man of the flesh saw. Lot also "lifted up his eyes" (Vs. 10) and chose the world. Abraham let God choose for him. God calls on Abraham to see the dimensions of his spiritual inheritance. May God give us the spiritual eyes of faith to see all that we have in Christ compared to the shallow offers of the world's temporal, fleeting joys.

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- ii. We are reminded of the dimensions of God's love that we have entered into through saving grace. Eph. 3:17-19 "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what **is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height**; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."
  - iii. F.B. Meyer writes, "The words "northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward," remind us of the length, breadth, depth and height of the love of Christ that passeth knowledge. Much of the land of Canaan was yet unexplored territory for Abraham but enough was seen to give him a sense of the magnitude of God's blessing. Now it was his blessed privilege to explore all that God had provided. So, it is with our salvation! Similarly, we may not be able to comprehend the love of God in Christ, but the higher we climb the more we behold. The upper cliffs of the separated life command the fullest view of that measureless expanse."
2. The promise of a seed (Vs. 16)

Lot lost his family, but Abraham was promised a family so large it could not be counted. There would be:

    - a. Abraham's natural seed. God had promised Abraham that he would make of him "a great nation" (Gen. 12:2). Later, God would add that he would be a father of many nations. Genesis 17:5 "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for **a father of many nations** have I made thee." This was fulfilled in the nation of Israel and also the other nations that came from Abraham's seed (e.g., Ishmael's descendants).
    - b. Abraham's spiritual seed. The New Testament makes it clear that this promise extends to believers who become spiritual seed of Abraham by faith. Galatians 3:29 "And if ye *be* Christ's, **then are ye Abraham's seed**, and heirs according to the promise." See also Romans 4:16-18

### B. The Plenty of God (Vs. 17)

1. Abraham is invited to not only look in each direction at the magnitude of his inheritance but also to explore and enjoy it. Abraham is to "walk up and down," and, as it were, appropriate and claim for himself in detail that which God gives.
2. What a picture of the believer's inheritance. The Christian life from beginning to end is a quest to enter into a deeper and broader understanding of all we have in Christ. It is the heart's happy exploration of all our salvation riches.
3. We have been blessed with a truly abundant life in Christ (John 10:10).

### C. The Presence of God (Vs. 18)

1. Abraham obeys the Lord and commences the exploration, moving to Mamre near Hebron and building a new altar. "Hebron means



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“fellowship” and we may apply the thought by saying that prompt whole-hearted obedience always leads to fellowship with God.”  
(Griffith Thomas) God draws near to his separated ones.

2. 2 Cor. 6:17-18 “Wherefore come out from among them, and **be ye separate**, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and **I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you**, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

### Conclusion:

1. What crossroad are you standing at in your life? What choices are you making in your life right now? Where will those decisions ultimately lead you?
2. Have you already commenced similar steps to that of Lot? God’s grace is available to restore you before it is too late.
3. Do you struggle with a separation that has taken place in your walk of faith within the will of God (i.e., a close family member or Christian friend)? Trust in God! His presence will comfort you and His promises will undergird you.