

## The Tragic End to a Backslidden Life

**Text:** Gen. 19:1-38

### Introduction:

1. This chapter documents the fearful judgment of God upon Sodom and its sister cities. It also records the sad conclusion to Lot's life; a warning to the backslidden believer of the kind of dishonour one can bring to the Name of Christ through living a defeated, worldly life, yielded to the dictates of the flesh.
2. In this message we will focus on the central character Lot and his sad end. Lot's life is a warning of the potential we have, even as saved individuals, to bring shame and dishonour upon the name of Christ. Lot is not an example of a false professor but of a defeated believer. We know from 2 Peter 2:8 that he was a "righteous man".
3. 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 places 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)
4. The final chapter of Lot's life is a reminder of what we lose when we walk out of fellowship with God. Let's seek to answer the question, "**What did Lot lose?**" There are at least **four areas** of loss we can discern in this final record of Lot's life.

### I. THE LOSS OF HIS SPIRITUAL POSITION (VS. 1-3)

We find Lot sitting in the gate of Sodom. How did he get here and what did this position represent?

#### A. The Steps that led to this Position

We can trace **7 steps** in Lot's life from this point that led to his spiritual ruin. We covered these in a previous message but let us briefly review:

1. Lot's Desire for Sodom (Gen. 13:10) "And Lot **lifted up his eyes**, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, *even* as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar." Walking by sight rather than by faith is a dangerous game as the world's mirages look so convincing. Everything looked so right down there in the plain!
2. Lot's Decision for Sodom (Gen. 13:11) "Then Lot **chose** him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other."
3. Lot's Direction towards Sodom (Gen. 13:12) "Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and **pitched his tent toward Sodom.**" Remember, your decisions determine your destiny. Learn to ask yourself the question, "which

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direction is this decision taking me? Is it taking me nearer to God and the separated walk or nearer the world and compromise?"

4. Lot's Dwelling in Sodom (Gen. 14:12) "And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, **who dwelt in Sodom**, and his goods, and departed." Lot's righteous soul was vexed by the **sights** and **sounds** of Sodom as he dwelt there (2 Pet. 2:7).
5. Lot's Determination to stay in Sodom (Gen. 14). Lot despised the chastening hand of God and despite the sobering experience of capture by Chedorlaomer's confederacy, chose to return there after God miraculously delivered him through Abraham's intervention.
6. Lot's Development within Sodom (Gen. 19:1)
7. Lot's Devastation in Sodom (Gen. 19)

### **B. The Success represented in this Position**

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". Concerning the "gate", Henry Morris writes, "The "gate" of the city was the place where the business and commercial activities centred and also where the judicial councils took place. Evidently Lot himself was now some kind of magistrate of the place." (Note Vs. 9)
2. Morris adds, "What a perfect picture Lot exhibits of a modern-day carnal Christian! He thinks he has the best of both worlds – the eternal benefit of knowing the Lord as Saviour, but also all the temporal benefits that result from worldly influence and possessions, together with acceptance by and fellowship with men of the world. Their gross wickedness may vex his soul a bit, and he may not wish to enter into quite all of their activities, but in general he gets along with them just fine, and is quite pleased with himself that he does. A day of reckoning will come, however."
3. 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. 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.
4. The fact that Lot was in a compromised place is highlighted by the reluctance of the angels to accept his offer of hospitality. Quite a contrast to their response to Abraham's hospitality just a few hours earlier. Is the Lord at home at your home?

## **II. THE LOSS OF HIS SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION (Vs. 4-11; 15-22)**

Sodom had clearly caused Lot to lose his spiritual sharpness. Allowing oneself to be conformed to the world results in the believer's moral compass being off target in many areas. We see this illustrated with Lot in several areas:

### **A. In Reference to the Depraved Sodomites (Vs. 4-7)**

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1. That Lot's moral sharpness has been blunted is evidenced by the title he used of the Sodomites – 'brethren'. To call such vile men 'brethren' shows that Lot's morals had been dumbed down. He didn't see sin as seriously anymore.
2. This is a prominent feature of the backslider. They haven't given up all morality but their moral standards have been dumbed down. You will invariably go soft on sin when you have allowed sin and the world's influence to make inroads into your life.
3. In short, Lot had been 'conformed' to the world rather than 'transformed' for godliness (See Rom. 12:1-2).
  - a. Trench defines the world as, "All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world...being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale."
  - b. The word 'conformed' in Romans 12:2 means 'molded', 'fashioned' and is the same word translated 'fashioning' in 1 Peter 1:14. We are not to allow our lives to be shaped by the values, philosophies, fashions, attitudes, culture, ideals and priorities of this world's system. Rather, we are to allow God's Word to shape our whole person and worldview.
4. Lot was having an adulterous love affair with the world.
  - a. James 4:4 "Ye **adulterers** and **adulteresses**, know ye not that **the friendship of the world is enmity with God**? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Today the bride of Christ broadly speaking is having an adulterous affair with the world rather than staying pure for her Heavenly husband the Lord Jesus Christ."
  - b. 1 John 2:15-17 "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
5. Illustration: A ship in the water is perfectly right but water in the ship is perfectly wrong. A Christian is to be in the world but not of it.

### B. In Reference to his Daughters (Vs. 8)

1. Lot then makes the unthinkable offer of his daughters to this perverted mob. Thankfully for them they didn't take Lot up on the offer!
2. That Lot could suggest such a thing reveals how mixed up his thinking and priorities had become. Can you imagine a godly man like Abraham suggesting such a thing? Some backslidden parents seem willing to surrender their children's morals on the streets of Sodom.

### C. In Reference to his Delay (Vs. 15-22)

Clearly in his heart, Lot didn't really want to leave Sodom. Though warned by the angels of the impending doom of the city, Lot lacked a sense of godly urgency. His worldliness had taken away his spiritual earnestness.

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1. The lingering of Lot (Vs. 15-16a). The word 'lingered' means to hesitate, be reluctant. How hard it can be to get the backslider out of the world even when they begin to see the danger; the tendrils of the flesh life have become so intertwined with the world system under whose sway the backslider has lived for some time.
2. The laying hold of Lot (Vs. 16b). Lot's inclination to procrastinate is further highlighted by the fact the angels had to physically grab the hands of Lot, his wife and two daughters and pull them out of the city. The mercy of God was the motivation behind this action.
3. The laxness of Lot (Vs. 17-23). We note this by observing:
  - a. His Attitude towards the Angels Instruction (Vs. 17-18)  
The angel's instruction was clear and unequivocal:
    - i. Escape for your life. Run! Get out! Flee! Your spiritual and even your physical life is at risk in Sodom!
    - ii. Don't look back. Take steps away from the world towards spiritual victory and don't look back.
    - iii. Don't stay in the valley. Notice the little word 'all'. None of Sodom's plain was safe. The safest position for the believer is one of zero compromise with this world's wicked system.
    - iv. Escape to the mountain. Higher ground is the place of safety. Scriptural standards should not be viewed negatively as a form of bondage but positively as providing spiritual safety. In reality, the higher ground of truth is the place of true freedom and liberty.
  - b. His Attitude towards the Coming Destruction.
    - i. Lot refused the instruction, pleading with the angel to not send him so far away – "Behold now, this city is **near** to flee unto."
    - ii. Lot seemed to think that a little compromise would be acceptable "and it is a **little** one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a **little** one?)." How often this is our excuse also but in reality, it is the "little foxes, that spoil the vines" (Song 2:15). Hudson Taylor writes, "The enemies may be small, but the mischief done great. A little spray of blossom, so tiny as to be scarcely perceived, is easily spoiled, but thereby the fruitfulness of a whole branch may be for ever destroyed. And how numerous the little foxes are! Little compromises with the world; disobedience to the still small voice in little things; little indulgences of the flesh to the neglect of duty; little strokes of policy; doing evil in little things that good may come; and the beauty and the fruitfulness of the vine are sacrificed."
    - iii. How strange that Lot felt he would somehow be safer if he stayed nearer to Sodom than if he fled further away! He preferred the half way point between what God had said and what he wanted.

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- iv. In reality, the closer you are to the world, the more spiritual danger you are in. The safest thing for the Christian is the separated life, away from the world.

### III. THE LOSS OF HIS SPIRITUAL POWER (Vs. 14, 26)

Lot's compromise meant his testimony was tarnished with his family and his influence for good and godliness severely diminished. This powerlessness is demonstrated in his lack of influence over:

#### A. His Sons in Law (Vs. 14)

1. It appears Lot had a family of daughters. There is no clear mention of a son. Evidently, he had at least four daughters as two were unmarried and the text mentions "sons in law" so he would have had at least two married daughters, maybe more.
2. Sadly, his sons in law and married daughters didn't take his warning seriously. Why should they? Lot had worked his way up the corporate ladder in Sodom and built a home there. Now he was saying God was going to destroy it! The word 'mocked' means to "laugh outright (in merriment or scorn)" (Strong). It is frequently translated 'laugh' in the Old Testament. For example, "Sarah laughed within herself" (Gen. 18:12).
3. Can you imagine what this scene might have looked like? Lot comes to one of his daughters houses and knocks on the door. His son in law answers the door and Lot warns him "Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city." His son in law and daughter, who have seen Lot a bit tipsy on other occasions on wine from Sodom's Sip and Save, think he is joking! After Lot leaves after trying to no avail to reason with them, they look at each other. "What do you make of all that" says Lot's son in law to his daughter. "No idea. Dad's been so full of grace for so many years since we moved here to Sodom. It must be a flash back to the Bible bashing days he had at Canaan Baptist Church with Uncle Abraham years back. The poor man is obviously still suffering some of the mental scars from all that fire and brimstone theology he was taught. We left the Independent Baptist Church up there because it had too many rules."
4. Lot is now trying to save his children from Sodom but he led them there in the first place and is still reluctant to leave himself. Lot was trying to get his family out of Sodom but sadly he couldn't get Sodom out of his family. **Why on earth did he take his family there in the first place?!** Sodom (the world) is NOT a safe spiritual place for your family! Things may seem to go so well for years for you there but by the time you realize the danger it may be too late.
5. F.B. Meyer warns, "An inconsistent life cannot arrest the wanderer, or startle the sleeper into wide-awakeness about his soul."

#### B. His Spouse (Vs. 26)

1. Sadly, Lot's wife was another casualty of Lot's compromise. The idea is not that she took a quick glance back at Sodom but that she indulged in a lingering gaze. Her delay meant she got overtaken in the overthrow and perished.

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2. Warning to husbands: To take the line of least resistance and drift out into the world with your wife is a very treacherous game. It may bring superficial peace to your home for a time to give in to the pressure of the world's temptations but in the long run you will pay dearly for it and may even lose your marriage.

### IV. THE LOSS OF HIS SPIRITUAL PURITY (Vs. 30-38)

Lot ends up contradicting himself and going to the mountain. Backsliders are often inconsistent, reflecting the truth of James 1:8 that "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." There the inspired record of his life comes to an end. How did his life end? Lot's life ended with:

#### A. Drunkenness (Vs. 32-35)

1. Isn't it amazing that despite losing everything in the overthrow of Sodom, they still managed to bring some wine with them to the cave! Lot may have left Sodom, but he took Sodom's drink with him. They probably bought it in Zoar, the town that would have been destroyed had it not been for God's mercy and longsuffering towards Lot in his spiritually dull state.
2. When the believer stops drawing on the Lord and His Word for joy and happiness, he turns to the world's substitute joys and wine is one of them. Casual drinking is a sure symbol of a backslidden life.
3. The Word of God shows us plainly that fermented, alcoholic wine produces drunkenness which in turn promotes sinful behaviour. Take wine out of the picture and Lot would never have consented to such a wicked thing. Drunkenness and depravity are Siamese twins. The Bible makes the mind of God clear on the question of alcoholic wine with its plain denunciations as well as its plain accounts such as these that show it for what it really is.
  - a. Isaiah 5:22 "**Woe** unto *them that are* mighty to drink **wine**, and men of strength to mingle **strong drink**:"
  - b. Prov. 20:1 "**Wine** is a mocker, **strong drink** is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."
  - c. Prov. 23:31-32 "**Look not thou upon the wine** when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."
  - d. Hab. 2:15 "**Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink**, that putteth thy bottle to *him*, and maketh *him* **drunken** also, that thou mayest look on their **nakedness!**"
  - e. Eph. 5:18 "**And be not drunk with wine**, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"
4. Billy Sunday, the firebrand Evangelist, preached against liquor in the strongest of language. Concerning the saloon, he said this, "The saloon is the sum of all villainies. It is worse than war or pestilence. It is the crime of crimes. It is the parent of crimes and the mother of sins. It is the appalling source of misery and crime in the land. And to license such an incarnate fiend of hell is the dirtiest, low-down, damnable business on top of this old earth. There is nothing to be compared to it... The saloon is a liar. It promises good cheer and sends sorrow. It promises health and causes disease. It promises prosperity and sends adversity. It promises happiness and sends

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misery. Yes, it sends the husband home with a lie on his lips to his wife; and the boy home with a lie on his lips to his mother; and it causes the employee to lie to his employer. It degrades. It is God's worst enemy and the devil's best friend. It spares neither youth nor old age. It is waiting with a dirty blanket for the baby to crawl into the world. It lies in wait for the unborn. It cocks the highwayman's pistol. It puts the rope in the hands of the mob. It is the anarchist of the world and its dirty red flag is dyed with the blood of women and children."

### **B. Debauchery (Vs. 33, 35-38)**

1. The plan Lot's daughters came up with was a depraved and diabolical one but don't forget, not too long before this time they had heard their dad offer them to the immoral whims of the enflamed Sodomites. Could this really be any worse? It almost seemed tame in comparison. Clearly Lot's daughters had lost all respect for their father.
2. The elder of the two girls made the proposal to the younger sister. Never underestimate the influence of an older sibling for good or evil!
  - a. If you are in that position of influence, use it for God and godliness.
  - b. If you a younger sibling, determine to follow God even if your older sibling (s) don't.
3. What was Lot's legacy? The Moabites and the Ammonites who would be source of constant temptation and trouble to God's chosen people. The fruit of the flesh is always corrupt and wretched.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Have you commenced a similar downward direction to Lot? Turn back to the Lord now before the damage is great.
2. Have you been a Lot in your life and wonder if it is too late to return to the Lord? Remember, it is never too late to surrender your life to God afresh.
3. The solution for you is: Escape, don't look back, get back to higher ground!