

# Texarkana Reformed Baptist Church

Lot's Sad Legacy  
(Genesis 19:30-38)

-Martin Rizley-

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**T**he passage before us this morning is unquestionably one of the most shocking passages that we find in all of Scripture. It is a portion of the Bible that, in times past, would never have been read in church, much less preached from the pulpit on a Sunday morning. Even today, I suspect that many preachers would avoid ever preaching on a passage like this; and I myself would probably never choose to preach on it if I were a guest speaker at another church. Nevertheless, when a passage like this up comes up naturally in a sermon series, those who are want to minister God's truth to others must be very careful not to think themselves wiser than God by editing His truth. Who are we to censor the Bible by eliminating from consideration matters that God has revealed in His Word? Although the content of this passage is very dark and sordid, the surprising fact is that it contain not only a sober warning which is of great benefit to us, but also a gospel message for our encouragement, if only we have ears to hear what God is saying.

The events recorded here took place sometime after Lot and his two daughters had fled for refuge to the city of Zoar, which was the only one of five cities located on the plain of the river Jordan that God spared when He rained fire and brimstone on the wicked inhabitants of that region.

There are four things we find in this passage to which I wish to draw your attention this morning. The first is a surprising move that Lot and his daughters make in verse 30. The second is, the sinful plan that Lot's daughters conceived in verse 31 and 32. The third is Lot's sad fall recorded in verses 33-35. That in turn leads to a sad ending to the story of Lot in verses 36-38.

I. A Surprising Move-- Let us consider first the surprising move that Lot and his daughters make to the mountains outside of Zoar in verse 30. What makes this move surprising is that Lot had earlier pleaded with the Lord to let him dwell in Zoar. He expressed fear that if he fled to the mountains, some evil would overtake him and he would die there. I pointed out how irrational that fear was. If God had loved him so much as to bring him out of Sodom by a supernatural intervention

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through the ministry of angels, how would He abandon him once he was in the mountains? Lot's fears were totally irrational; but the Lord granted his request by sparing the city of Zoar and allowing Lot and his daughters to take refuge there.

What we find, however, is that when someone is given to irrational fears, those fears follow them wherever they go. Once Lot was settled in the city of Zoar, fear gripped his heart once again, and he didn't feel safe there. We read that "he was afraid to dwell in Zoar." What was he afraid of? The text doesn't tell us explicitly, but based on what we know about Zoar and about Lot himself, it seems likely that one of two things was true: 1) On the one hand, Lot may have been afraid of the men of Zoar themselves-- that they might seek to harm him or his daughters. Since they had fled to Zoar from a city that had been cursed by God, the inhabitants of Zoar might fear that Lot would bring the same curse on them by his presence there; so they might kill him to prevent that from happening; 2) On the other hand, Lot may have been afraid that God was about to judge Zoar as He had judged Sodom. Seeing that the men of Zoar were just as wicked as the men of Sodom, Lot may have feared that the same thing would happen to them that had happened to the men of Sodom. Like a soldier who suffers from PTSD, Lot couldn't get out of his mind the horrifying memory of what had occurred. He may also have felt a sense of "survivor's guilt," for he knew that he himself was a sinner deserving of judgment. He knew that he did not merit the great mercy the Lord had showered on him, so perhaps he feared that there was a limit to God's mercy, and that limit might be reached more quickly if he remained in a city that was given over to wickedness.

So Lot, the man who thought who could never live without the company of people around him, suddenly could not bear to live in the midst of people. Fleeing to the hills, he became a paranoid hermit, or so it appears, afraid to be around men. He became a cave dweller; yet even there, in his isolated, barren hideout in the hills, he found no peace. He found no relief from the sense of remorse that tore at his heart daily. He had lost so much-- his wife, his house, his possessions, his herds and flocks, the community to which he had belonged for so many years. Yet instead of allowing his grief to draw him closer to God and to seek the solace that can only come from the Lord, it seems that he tried to find solace from a bottle instead. That is, he sought to drown his sorrows with drink, and to forget the pain of the past. In other words, instead of maturing spiritually through the things he

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suffered, he seemed to experience decay in his spiritual life. If he had been a weak believer before, he succumbed now to even greater weakness living in that dark hole up there in the hills.

In his grief, Lot seems to have become self-absorbed and inattentive to the needs of his daughters, whom you can imagine were not exactly thrilled to live with a paranoid old man in a cave high up in the hills, far away from any eligible young bachelors. This whole scene, born out of fear and leading to isolation and poverty and self-imposed exile from society, was an extremely unhealthy one. That gloomy cave was about the worst place for any man to be raising his family; and for a family that was as dysfunctional as Lot's, it was even worse. To drag one's daughters into such inhuman conditions was a recipe for disaster. How would you like to have to share your home with bats and spiders and wild animals? -- to have no pillow but a rock on which to lay your head, no mattress but the cold ground, no light but the weak beams filtering through the entrance to your home, no running water but the water that drips from your ceiling on rainy days, and no air conditioning but the icy wind that blows through the stone corridors of your house in the depth of winter? It was a miserable setting, and it proved to be fertile ground for the growth of evil. By allowing his eccentricities to drive him to such a place, Lot had set the stage for tragedy.

What ought Lot ought to have done, if he was afraid to live in Zoar? Instead of hiding out in a cave, he should have gone looking for his uncle Abraham and humbly begged to live in close proximity to him. He could have confessed the mistakes of the past and expressed a desire to be his neighbor and to worship the Lord together with him. Surely Abraham would have warmly welcomed his nephew with open arms. But Lot did not do that; instead, he went to live in a cave. Why didn't Lot seek to reestablish ties with his uncle? We don't know. Perhaps it was a sense of false pride, an unwillingness to admit the mistakes of the past. Perhaps it was a spirit of fierce independence, that made him refuse any course of action that would involve depending on the charity of another. He was committed to self-reliance; but his self-reliance made him to live in isolation from other people, and that was not a good thing.

It was certainly not good for his daughters. They were totally frustrated by their living conditions; but more than that, they feared for their future. They were afraid of growing old without having any children of their own to care for them in their old age. Keep in mind

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that, in that day, children were a woman's source of security. Elderly women without children lived in dire poverty, as a general rule, and had to beg bread, since they had no one to take care of them. But if a woman had children, then even if her husband died and she became a widow, she could count on her children to provide her with food and clothing and shelter; that was universally understood to be the duty that children owed to their aged parents.

No doubt, as Lot's two daughters saw their father grow older with each passing day, they grew resentful of the fact that he had taken them away from all contact with society. Here they were living in a bleak and desolate hole in the middle of nowhere, while other girls their age had ample opportunity to meet young eligible bachelors. They saw little prospect of marrying anyone as long as their eccentric father kept them under his rule; so as they thought about their present circumstances, and looked at the future through the lens of unbelief, a spirit of anger and despair kindled a fire of hatred in their hearts that led them to concoct a sinful plan involving their father. They thought to themselves, "If our father will not let us get married or take us to where we have the opportunity to meet eligible young men, we are determined not to die as virgins. We will find another way to have children who will care for us in our old age."

II. A Sinful Plan-- It was the eldest sister who seems to have taken the lead in devising this evil plan. In verse 31, we read "Now the firstborn said to the younger, 'Our father is old, and there is no man on earth to come to us as is the custom of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father.'"

We are shocked to read these words of the eldest sister, because they represent a complete rejection of the order of nature. When God graciously determined at the outset of history to provide for man's need of companionship, He created one woman for one man, and He shaped their bodies to complement to each other so that the man and the woman could enjoy a sense of mutual belonging through the intimacy of the 'one flesh' relationship in marriage. God made it clear that this 'one flesh' relationship was reserved exclusively for marriage, and that marriage involves the establishment of a new home and a change in the relationship of the married partners to their parents. As God says in Genesis 2:24, "A man shall leave his

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father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

So when Lot's oldest daughter proposed that she and her sister have relations with their father in order to carry on the family line, her plan represented a complete rejection of God's plan-- for He never intended the 'one flesh' relationship to exist between a parent and child, but only between a husband and wife in the sacred bonds of marriage

What a deplorable thing it is to overthrow the order of nature by rejecting God's design for marriage. The action of Lot's daughters is appalling, but no less appalling is what we see taking place in our own society at the present time; for if it is contrary to the order of creation for children to have intimate relations with their parents, it is no less contrary to the order of creation for men to have intimate relations with other men or women with other women. All of these deviant acts represent a rejection of the God's plan for human sexuality, and an overthrow of the created order; but that is what happens when societies turn their backs on God. Why so? Because you cannot reject the God of order and still hold on to the moral order that God has ordained. You cannot reject the God who is the source of stability and still hope to retain a stable society. You cannot do that, for God will not allow it. When societies decisively turn their back on God, therefore, God in His righteous wrath hands those societies over to increasing moral chaos, social fragmentation, cultural disintegration, and even insanity.

Did Lot's daughters know that what they were planning to do was wrong? They must have known it was wrong, for two reasons:

1) First, because it violated all the social mores of the ancient world. The ancient Babylonian document called the Code of Hammurabi forbade incest. Likewise, the laws of the Hittites also forbade incest and made it an act punishable either by death or by banishment. The Babylonians and the Hittites were pagan peoples, yet they knew that incest was wrong; so I suspect the people of Sodom knew it was wrong, as well.

2) Second, Lot's daughters knew that their father would never consent to their plan as long as he was sober; they would have to get him roaring drunk first before he would yield to their advances. That also tells me that they knew that what they were planning to do was wrong. They knew they were not only violating a social taboo, but rejecting the law of God.

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If that is so, if they knew their actions were sinful, how could they go through with such a dastardly deed? How could they abuse their own father in this way?

1) No doubt, they justified their actions by saying to themselves that their father owed this to them, since he had deprived them of the opportunity to marry. When the eldest daughter says, "There is no man on earth to come to us," she is not denying the existence of eligible bachelors in the world; she is saying, rather, that in the district to which they had fled, there were no young men to be found. They were cut off from civilization; all the young men of Sodom had been burned to a crisp, and their father was not of a mind to take them elsewhere to meet potential husbands. Perhaps he wanted to cling to them selfishly, since they were all he had left in the world. So they had little hope of ever marrying. Because they regarded their father as responsible for this lamentable situation, they thought, "He will have to pay for our singleness, by supplying us with that we would ordinarily get from our husbands-- namely, offspring."

2) A second thing to keep in mind is that Lot's daughters had grown up in Sodom, and had been desensitized to the horrific nature of sexual immorality through constant exposure to the lawless conduct of the men of Sodom. Their minds and hearts had been polluted from childhood by a constant barrage of demoralizing influences, and Lot had failed to provide a corrective by taking a strong stand against the evil in the culture. It is true that he personally rejected idol worship, and had not participated in the gross acts of immorality and debauchery that others committed. In fact, he was distressed by what he saw, as Peter tells us in his second epistle. But instead of publicly confronting evil by rebuking it, for the most part, he had turned a blind eye to evil, so as not to provoke the antagonism of the people of Sodom. Consequently, his daughters did not learn from him to have a passionate hatred for evil, as they ought to have had.

In essence, Lot had failed to be a strong spiritual leader of his family. He did a very poor job of modeling for his daughters a life of uncompromising commitment to the things of God. He was too focused on material pursuits to provide the example they needed of someone who was willing to swim against the stream of the culture by his own faithful living. He was too concerned about making a buck and maintaining good customer relations with his pagan clients to speak out when he should have done so.

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No doubt, Lot's daughters saw many inconsistencies in his walk. They saw that he was unwilling to bear the cross of rejection for an outspoken witness; consequently, they were not led to embrace his faith. Having grown up in a home in which spiritual concerns had taken a back seat to other priorities, they were not about to refrain from evil owing to the fear of God.

3) A third factor that may have emboldened them to commit this evil deed was a heart full of bitterness-- bitterness toward God and toward their earthly father. The Bible warns of the polluting effect that bitterness can have when it is allowed to flourish in the heart. Hebrews 12:15 tells us that when we let a root of bitterness spring up in hearts, it "causes trouble," for by it "many hearts become defiled." Lot's daughters, I believe, were full of bitterness. They were bitter toward God for destroying their home town. Instead of thanking Him for His mercy in sparing their lives, they were angry at Him for visiting judgment on their friends and neighbors. They were also bitter toward their father for isolating them from society; and they may well have been bitter over his lack of concern for their moral purity which he demonstrated when he offered them to the lustful mob in order to protect his house guests from violence. They probably thought to themselves, "If our own father is not concerned about our moral purity, why should we be?"

### III. A Sorry Fall--

So the two girls conspired to carry out this wicked deed, and they did so over two successive evenings. They succeeded in getting their father drunk two nights in a row, which suggests to me that Lot have been prone, in the aftermath of his wife's death, to drink excessively out of a desire to forget his sorrows. We don't know that for sure, but it seems likely that Lot's daughters expected to have no trouble in getting their father drunk, because they had seen him drink to excess before. In any event, we know that Lot's daughters had probably learned a great deal in Sodom about the connection between drinking and moral laxity. They had seen how these two things always go together. We see it in our own day, as well. When people intend to give themselves over to moral debauchery, they often dull their conscience beforehand by consuming great amounts of alcohol that will remove all inhibitions and make them more inclined to throw caution to the wind. Excessive drink is the doorway to moral ruin. That is why believers must be so very careful in their use of alcoholic beverages such as wine. The Bible does not forbid the use of wine, but

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it warns us sternly against the danger of abusing wine. Drunkenness robs a man of all self-control, so that he yields to every corrupt impulse of the flesh. Lot's daughters knew that, and that is why two nights in a row, they deliberately set out to get their father drunk by urging him to drink one glass of wine after another.

The sad thing is that they succeeded in their evil scheme-- twice they succeeded in getting their father so drunk, that he didn't fully realize what was happening when they seduced him. We read in verse 33 that "the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose." We read the same thing about the second daughter in verse 35. Lot was not completely unconscious or 'dead drunk' as we say-- otherwise, he would not have been able to impregnate his daughters-- but he was so intoxicated that his sense of moral judgment and self-control had left him completely, and he didn't fully realize what he was doing until his daughters had carried their plan through to completion. Apparently Lot experienced a black out and did not realize the next morning what had happened. It was only later when his daughters were both found with child, that he realized the evil he had committed, and the evil that had been done to him by his daughters. To add insult to injury, the two daughters gave their sons names that announced to all the world that their own father was the father of their children. The firstborn daughter named her son Moab, which means in Hebrew "from my father." And the second daughter named her son Ben-ammi, which means "son of my kinsman"-- her kinsman being, in this case, her own father. Far from hanging their heads in shame over what they had done, they seemed to boast of their deed by means of the names they gave their sons.

It is hard not to feel a sense of compassion for Lot, for he never would have done this awful deed had he not be tricked by his daughters. He is not without blame for what he did, however, because the fact a man does something under the influence of drink does not absolve him of the guilt of his actions. Lot's drunken stupor only brought out the corruptions that were in his own heart. But his daughters seem to have the greater guilt in this matter, because of the malice they expressed toward their father by what they did. They violated not only the moral principle enshrined in the seventh commandment, which forbids adultery, but the fifth commandment, as well, which commands children to honor their father and their mother. Their sin was therefore exceedingly great; but Lot himself fell

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into sin, and there is no positive aftermath to his story. Everything we know about Lot ends here-- with Lot in a state of disgrace. How would you like this to be the epitaph on your grave: "Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father"?

IV. Sad Ending-- What a sad ending this is to the story of Lot! What an ignoble end to anyone's life-- but especially to the life of one who professes to know and love the true and living God. How we all hope that our epitaph will read, "Here lies one who loved God to the very end of his life and sought the interests of God's kingdom, the salvation of His fellow men, and the glory of His Savior, to His dying day." In Lot's case, however, we read as his final achievement that he impregnated his daughters while he was in a drunken stupor in a dark, dingy cave. It is a pitiful ending to what in many ways must be regarded as a pitifully wasted life. Lot could have done so much more than he did, but his heart was focused on the wrong things-- on material riches that perish, instead of on the imperishable riches of God's kingdom that do not fade away. Jesus warned us in the Sermon on the Mount that if we make the temporal riches of this present life our chief pursuit, we will end up an impoverished and miserable soul. Only those who store up treasures in heaven by loving God with all their hearts and their neighbor as themselves and who seek daily the interests of God's kingdom and His righteousness-- only they will be truly blessed.

Now Lot was a true believer, so we cannot say that he did not lay up any treasures in heaven at all-- he did, otherwise we could not regard him as a regenerate soul, and the Scripture tells us that he was a righteous man; but his life seemed to have produced very little fruit in comparison to someone like Abraham. Lot's life illustrates the danger of allowing one's heart to become distracted by worldly pursuits to such a degree that one's priorities gradually become inverted. When that happens the cares and wealth and pleasures begin to choke the Word of God in our hearts so that it becomes unfruitful. We may maintain a religious profession and continue going through the motions of worship, but we lose our first love, and so our lives fail to make the spiritual impact on others including our children?

## CONCLUSION

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I want to conclude by drawing out certain lessons from the story of Lot's life. We learn from this conflicted character certain valuable lessons that are both sobering and encouraging.

## A. Sobering Lessons--

1) The importance of the moral choices we make in life-- The first sobering lesson we learn concerns the importance of the moral choice we make in life. Our daily decisions are so important, because by those decisions we are establishing a pattern of life that our children will see and copy after us. The moral choices we make in every sphere of life are tremendously important, because those choice will reap consequences, not in our life only, but in the lives of our children and grandchildren, as well-- whether for good or for ill. If we are careless in the way we live, or self-indulgent, or spiritually sluggish and lazy, we are setting a pattern of negativity for our children that will cause them grief later in life. That is why Scripture warns us that God will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. What a sobering thought, and one that should move us to plead with God for a great outpouring of grace on our lives, that we may sow blessing, not cursing, into the lives of our descendants after us.

2) the importance of taking an inventory of our life, to see whether we may be setting a bad example for our children in some area--If the choices we make in life have such serious consequences for ourselves and for those we love, that leads us to another sobering conclusion-- that we must be diligent to take an inventory of our life, in order to whether we may be setting a bad example for others in some area of our life. Lot was a believer, but life in Sodom took a toll on his spiritual life, so that more and more, he came to adopt ways of thinking that were characteristic of the people of Sodom. For example, he was reluctant to leave the city when the angels warned him of imminent destruction; why so? Perhaps he had grown overly attached to his material possessions, and was loathe to leave them. He also seems to have been far too tolerant of the pagan values of his neighbors, for otherwise, how would he have allowed his daughters to marry men in that city who were no doubt pagan idolaters? He desired to get along with people, and that sometimes led him to show greater concern for pleasing men rather than God, as evidenced by Lot's willingness to offer the men of Sodom his daughters to use however they pleased, in order to protect his guests from abuse.

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The reason Lot failed to detect the inconsistencies in his walk with God is that he apparently failed to take an inventory of his life, to see where he was becoming conformed to the worldly values of Sodom, and setting a bad example for his children.

I wonder if we fall into the same error? Do we fail to take a spiritual inventory of our life to see whether we are putting God first in all the decisions we make about everything in our life--the decisions we make about how to invest our time and resources, the entertainments we enjoy, the hobbies we pursue, the way we dress, the way we speak to and about others, the priority we give to prayer, and to the duties of public and private worship, the centrality of God's word in our life. Are you setting an example for your children that you want them to emulate? Because whatever lifestyle pattern you establish, you establish not just for yourself, but for your children and grandchildren after you. If we are falling down in some area, do we make that a matter of prayer before the Lord? If we detect the world encroaching on our hearts, robbing us of our joy in the Lord, do we cry to our Heavenly Father and say to Him, "Father,, save me from the corruptions of my own heart and the corrupting influence of the culture? "

There is one other sobering reality we see illustrated in Lot's experience:

3) The reality of indwelling sin in every believer, which calls us to constant watchfulness--

Lot was a believer, but he was man with much corruption still in his heart; and because that is true of every believer, we must all be on constant guard against the wiles of the devil and the deceitfulness of our own hearts. No matter how godly a man may be, he always has the potential of falling into great sin if he lets his guard down. Noah, like Lot, fell into the sin of drunkenness after being delivered from a catastrophic judgment of God. It is not unusual for godly men to be tempted to evil in the aftermath of a great deliverance. That it is because the experience of deliverance lulls them into thinking that danger is past. But the Bible tells us plainly that, as long as we are in this mortal body and the devil is actively pursuing the destruction of men, danger is never past. That is why we must be on guard at all times against him: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith, knowing that the same sufferings are

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experienced by your brotherhood in the world." Are you being sober and vigilant, as Peter commands?

The terrible decisions that were made in that dark cave had negative repercussions for centuries. That's because the sons of Lot's two daughters, Moab and Ben-Ammi, became the patriarchs of two pagan peoples who proved to be a snare and source of woe to the children of Israel. The Moabites and the Ammonites both showed inhospitality to the Jews during the days of their wilderness wanderings. The king of Moab enlisted Balaam to curse Israel, and later on, the women of Moab seduced the Israelite men and persuaded them to join in sexual immorality and pagan worship. So it is amazing to see the terrible consequences that a single night of sin can reap for generations to come.

## B. Encouragement

There is an encouraging note to this story, however, because years after Lot's eldest daughter gave birth to Moab, a descendant of Moab named Ruth came to faith in the God of Israel and married a Hebrew man named Boaz. Ruth and Boaz had a son named Obed, who turned out to be the grandfather of King David, from whom our Lord Jesus Christ was descended according to the flesh.

So here is the amazing thing-- that God was able to overrule the evil deed that took place in that dark cave for good-- I say that because, ultimately, Jesus Himself came into the world through a lineage that included a descendant of Moab. Ruth. So Jesus inherited genes in his DNA that were from the line of Moab, a bloodline that came into being through an illicit act of sexual perversion. Is it not amazing how God overrules evil for good?

Perhaps there is some awful deed in the past that you have committed, and you have confessed it to the Lord and set things right with any people you have wronged, you have nevertheless carried a burden of guilt over that grievous act for years. You don't see how you can ever be set free of that burden of guilt. But here is the amazing thing about the grace of God-- He can overrule evil for good. That is true even of the most dark, filthy, sinful deed you can conceive. There are few things as vile as what took place in that cave outside of Zoar; but God overruled that dark deed for good, by bringing Jesus out of that tragic event. If an awful deed you committed in the past causes you to be more humble and dependent on God's redeeming grace, don't you see how He is already overruling evil for good? Let Him have his way with you. Receive God's forgiveness and be cleanse

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completely of the past. Rejoice in the freshness and newness that God is able to work in you through the blood of Jesus. Christ shed His blood not only so that your sins might be pardoned, but that you might be drawn out of the gutter all the way to glory. Take refuge in His wounds, and give Him thanks for the grace that saves you. Amen.