

Truth for Today

The Bible teaching radio programme

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Memorable Choices: Lot - Genesis 13:10-12

Moving house is a traumatic experience at the best of times. The sorting out, discarding and packing are time-consuming. Making the arrangements for the move can often be frustrating as times need to be synchronised with the families moving out of the property to which you are moving while another also moves into your old home. So it was with Tereh who moved from Ur of the Chaldees to a place called Haran. He took with him Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran (his son's son), and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife. Imagine the organisation needed for that change!

Some while later came another move. Can you imagine your father coming home one day announcing that his brother was leaving his wealthy estate and going to where God leads him? You would think that your uncle is either one hundred percent sure of God or absolutely barmy! However, that's not all - your father says that all your family are going to go with him. The case with Abram and his nephew Lot was similar to this.

God had spoken to Abram saying, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Let's take a brief look at these promises. God's word is certain. Abram is indeed the source of a great nation - the Hebrew nation. Those who bless the Hebrews have been blessed down through history. Those who have cursed them have been cursed. Abram's name has become great. However, the climax of these promises will be seen only when Christ returns as King of kings and Jerusalem will be the metropolis of the earth during His millennial reign. Then shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

We know from Hebrews 11:8-10 that Abraham obeyed through faith not knowing where he was going. Yet he knew that God had an inheritance for him and looked for a city whose builder and maker was God Himself. We read, "So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came."

But why did he take Lot with him? After all, Abram was told to leave his kindred and father's house behind. Now although scripture is silent as to why Lot wanted to go with Abram, we may assume that he shared his uncle's faith in El Shaddai, the Almighty God. If this is the case, Lot chose well. He was intent on sharing the blessing that God intended for Abram. In fact, he is called by the Holy Spirit through Peter "just Lot" (2 Peter 2:7). While in verse 8 of the same chapter, he is called "that righteous man". This would support the case that he was a believer in Abram's God.

They journeyed southwards. Abram stopped at Sichem where God promised, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." (Genesis 12:6) Abram's response was to build an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him. He continued south and was then driven by famine into Egypt. There Abram's own human wisdom brought him into conflict with Pharaoh and he was forced to leave.

By the time Lot and his uncle, Abram, came out of Egypt they had acquired great possessions. In fact, Genesis 13:2 tells us that Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold and verse 5 tells us that Lot had his flocks and herds and tents also. As is so often the case, wealth and substance led to trouble. When they returned to a place between Bethel and Hai there was strife between the herdsmen of Lot and those of Abram because the region was not able to accommodate them both.

This led to Lot making a disastrous choice. We read of it in Genesis 13:8-13: "And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. 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. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.”

The graciousness of Abram is marked here along with his faith. As the elder, he had the right of first choice. However, he left the choice to Lot. He was, in truth, leaving his way to God by allowing Lot to make this selection. The choice of Lot was without God. It was motivated by the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. No doubt, he saw Jordan's plain's potential for gaining riches through his cattle and flocks as well as the opportunity of gaining respect and even power in the region. So, as one has put it, he looked toward Sodom and he leaned toward Sodom which was a city of evil people who continually sinned against the Lord.

If we were to compare Lot to a Christian today, it would be one who has not separated himself from the world. That is, the fads, fashions, aspirations and opinions of this world that leaves God out. Lot was also fleshly, in that he desired those things that lead to self-glory and self-gratification. His faith was dead because he failed to do as God would have him do. Works of faith are those done selflessly and in obedience to God.

Today, the Christian is commanded by the Spirit through the apostle John: “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 of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” (1 John 2:15-17).

Many a Christian's witness for Christ is ruined, not because he is living in the world, but the world is living in him. In John 17:14-16, the Son of God prays about His own to His Father, “I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

Imagine an old-fashioned deep-sea diver. He dresses in such a way that he is protected from the alien environment that he enters. A life-line attaches him to the ship above in case of emergencies. It also acts as a simple communication system. Air is pumped down to his helmet through a stout tube. Thus clothed, he is able to survive on the sea bed.

In the same way, the Christian lives in an environment that is alien to him - this world. He is protected from its pressures and attacks by the word of God. His life-line is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. His communication is prayer. The air of his life is faith - for the just shall live by faith.

Abram looked to God and leaned towards the inheritance that God had promised. As soon as Lot had separated himself from his uncle, Abram moved eastward where the Lord assured Abram of His previous promise: “And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.”

True Christians look up to the Author and Finisher of faith, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is their example. Christians are to follow in His footsteps. In any decision, they may first ask themselves the question, “What would Jesus do?” Furthermore, they lean upon His breast. This is figurative language for seeking to know Him fully and to gauge His will for their lives. This they do knowing that there is an eternal inheritance waiting for them in heaven. One that cannot be defiled. One that cannot fade away.

In his book “*All the Men of the Bible*”, Herbert Lockyer states the following in regard to Lot, “In spite of his general righteousness, Lot must have had a vein of great selfishness within. In one of his unique speeches - *The Subject of Salaries* - Benjamin Franklin said, “There are two passions which have a powerful influence in the affairs of men. These are *Ambition* and *Avarice*: the love of power and the love of money. Separately, each of these has great force in prompting man to action: but when united in view of the same object they have in many minds the most violent effects.” It was thus that Lot became “a bad lot”. In his choice *ambition* and *avarice* became one.”

The Lord Jesus Christ said that we *cannot* love God and mammon (riches). The scripture also records that the *love* of money is the root of all evil.

The next time we read of Lot is in Genesis 14:12 where it says, "And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed." Chedorlaomer the king of Elam and his allies had attacked and defeated the armies of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Vale of Siddim (which is the salt sea). One of the results was that Lot was taken captive and his goods were spoiled. When Abram heard what had happened, he gathered and armed three hundred of his trained servants and pursued Chedorlaomer as far as Dan. There he made a night attack that resulted in the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the retrieval of all the captives and goods that were taken - including Lot.

Abram returned all to the king of Sodom refusing any reward. Lot stayed at Sodom while Abram was assured by God with the words, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." The LORD also promised that his seed would be as many as the stars of heaven he could see. He also told Abram of the future affliction of his offspring in a foreign land for four hundred years. While in Chapter 17, Abram is informed by God that his name should be Abraham (meaning, "father of many nations"). To Abraham and his descendants, God promised the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. He also promised that Abraham would have a son (Isaac) through his wife Sarai even though they were so old. Sarai's name was changed to Sarah. It means "princess".

In the next chapter, the Lord appears to Abram in human form along with two angels. The reason they were there was to deal with the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. Ezekiel 16:49-50 describe the iniquity of Sodom as being pride, fullness of bread, abundant idleness, lack of care for the poor, haughtiness and committing of abominations. The two angels left to go to Sodom and the LORD remained with Abram. Abram pleaded for the salvation of the cities asking as his final prayer that Sodom would not be destroyed if there were ten righteous people found there. The LORD accepted his plea and left Abraham..

The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening. Lot saw them and pressed them to stay at his house. A little later, a crowd of men gathered outside the house. They demanded that the two men be sent out so that they could have their way with them sexually. Lot went out to them and told them not to be so wicked. Knowing the lust of homosexuality among them, Lot even offered his two virgin daughters to them instead. The offer was refused in that the instigators of the riot wanted men. In fact, they said, "This one fellow came to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge; now we will deal worse with thee than with them." So saying they sought to take and abuse Lot, but the angels opened the door and pulled him in at the same time striking the men outside with blindness.

The courage of Lot is marked here in that he faced this crowd of lustful men in order to protect his guests (not knowing they were angels). His righteousness also shines out as he condemns the acts of these homosexual men as wicked. How Christians today should have the courage to stand up and say that the practice of homosexuality is wrong. It is an abomination in the sight of God. Those who claim to be Christians and are active homosexuals should be excommunicated from the church with a view to repentance and restoration if they are genuine believers.

However, Lot's wisdom is merely human as he offers his virgin daughters to them. To Lot, it was a diversionary tactic that could so easily have backfired had the offer been accepted.

Once inside the house, it soon became clear to Lot that his two guests were not ordinary men. They took the situation in hand. Lot was ordered to persuade his relatives to leave the city with them because the angels were going to destroy it. Lot went and gave the news of impending judgement to his sons-in-law. They treated his message as mockery.

Today God warns us that it is appointed unto men once to die and after death the judgement. There is judgement coming to all who refuse God and His way of salvation. That final judgement is called Hell. It was originally prepared for the devil and his angels, but is now gaping wide to receive godless people. Jesus said that we are to fear God who is able to ruin both body and soul in hell. This is not a loss of being, but a loss of well-being. It is a separation from God for eternity. At present, in Him we live and move and have our being while on earth. That will not be the case for eternity. In fact, another way in which Hell is described is as a lake of fire where there is torment forever. Please, do not go that way. God would rather have you repent and trust in His Son. He alone is the way, the truth and the life. Nobody can come to the Father except through Him. He alone has taken the full judgement of God for your sin when He died on the cross at Golgotha. He alone was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

Also, note that Hell follows the resurrection of the body. There will be a new body for living there. But a body that is subjected to suffering. Why would a God of love allow people to go to Hell? Because He is also a God of light and must punish sin. On the other hand, the Christian looks forward to the Father's house on high. He will have a new body which is described as glorious, spiritual, heavenly, incorruptible, powerful and immortal in 1 Corinthians 15. The choice is yours. In the light of God's word, I pray that it will be the right choice.

Returning to our subject, the angels commanded Lot to escape with his wife and two daughters. But even in the face of all this we read that Lot lingered. Please do not put off the time of repentance and faith in Christ. We do not know what a day will bring forth. We may enter eternity today.

The angels forcibly took Lot, his wife and daughters out of the city. There they must have met the LORD in human form because we read, "And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that HE said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain lest thou be consumed."

The unbelief of Lot showed itself again. "Oh, not so, my Lord" he said. Can you believe it! He argues with God while facing a dire situation. In His mercy, the LORD allows him to escape to a little city nearby. It was dawn when Lot reached Zoar and the LORD rained brimstone and fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah as well as the other cities of the plain. God's judgement was full. It appears there had only been four righteous people in Sodom. They were removed before the judgement fell. Lot was saved because of Abraham. It is written, "And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt."

However, one of these did not obey the word of the LORD. Lot's wife looked back to see what was happening. She was immediately turned into a pillar of salt. This reminds us that obedience is better than sacrifice. If we have faith in God, then we should obey Him implicitly. You say that this is ridiculous! Then put that to the Son of God who is recorded to have said concerning the coming of the Son of man, "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all." (Luke 17:28-29). He goes on to say in relation to the urgency of judgement that there should be no turning back and that we should remember Lot's wife.

One day, this world will be judged in righteousness by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a day when the wrath of God and the Lamb will be poured out on the earth. This will occur before the millennial reign of Christ. It will take place after living Christians will have been snatched out of this world by the Lord Himself (1 Thessalonians 4). In Genesis 19:22 the LORD spoke to Lot saying, "Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither." Judgement could not fall upon the cities of the plain until Lot was safe. So it is that Christian will be kept out from that time of judgement that is called the Great Tribulation. They will be taken to be with the Lord before that terrible event occurs.

Lot was safe, but his arguing with the LORD brought its own consequences. Abraham had learned that God knows best. Lot had still wanted his own way. He ended up living in a cave outside of Zoar because he was afraid to live in the city. In order to preserve the offspring of their father, the two daughters conspired to make him drunk and commit incest with him. Their plan worked. Lot was made drunk and one evening after another he was unaware that his daughters had sexual intercourse with him. The result was two sons who were to become the enemies of the people of God - Moab and Ben-Ammi.

Let us take careful note of this passage from 2 Peter 2 where false prophets and false teachers are warned about God's judgement. "God spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; 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 from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgement to be punished..."

In conclusion, hear the wisdom of John Whittier in his poem about Sodom:

*"Get ye up from the wrath of God's terrible day!
Ungirded, unsandalled, arise and away!
'Tis the vintage of blood, 'tis the fullness of time,
And vengeance shall gather the harvest of crime!"*

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