

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

Evangelist W. Paul Redmond Sr.

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What Are You Doing In Your Seat? (Part 5)

Genesis 19:1; Daniel 2:49

Last month we focused on some striking parallels between ancient Sodom and the modern United States of America. Now we turn our attention back to Lot and the events recorded in Genesis. Following the separation of Abram and Lot and the description of Sodom, in the final verses of Genesis 13 God reminds Abram of His promise to give Abram much land and a great number of descendants. Genesis 14 opens with a summary of the history of various cities near Sodom. Some of those cities had ruled over the other cities, one of which was Sodom, until a rebellion took place. As the rulers took back their cities, Lot was captured. Abram was concerned for Lot and gathered his servants to fight the kings that had captured Lot. Abram's servants are "trained" according to verse 14, but the greatest reason for their victory was because God was on their side. With Abram's victory, Lot was released.

I cannot help but think that God was being merciful to Lot. He literally brought Lot out of this city of wickedness and into the protective hand of his uncle. There is no way to know for certain how long Lot was in Sodom, but I would say that it was no more than five years. That is the time frame in the notes in my Bible and seems reasonable. In that period of time, Lot surely noticed the wickedness of Sodom. It did not suddenly become that way, but as we pointed out from chapter 13, it was that way when Lot looked at it and desired to be there. In spite of his wrong decision, God brought him out. But this is where we see The Continuation in this Tragedy of Lot. He could have been spared of the impact of the wickedness of the city. His family would not have been influenced by the abominations being committed throughout that city. The testimony of Lot as we know it could have been changed if only he would have remained out

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of Sodom. Could God have been using this battle to remove Lot and his family out of Sodom? I really believe that is what is taking place here. God, in His mercy and grace, is giving Lot a second chance. Lot should have realized the opportunity that he had and never went back to Sodom. The rest of this message about Lot would never have to be preached. We could have read about Lot's usefulness for God and how faithful he was. But instead we read about his continuation in the place that God would judge and the terrible results that occurred because he went back. God offered Lot a second chance, and he rejected it.

Many could tell about people they have known who went away from God, were seemingly offered a second chance by God, but in the end, rejected that offer, and lived a wasted life. I can think of one now. A young man and I went to school together. We talked of ministering together—he would sing and I would preach. He went to a couple of colleges but could not seem to finish. After losing contact for a couple of years, I saw him at a gas station, and he said that he was going to get married. He pointed to his fiancée, a young lady that I had just crossed paths with a few minutes earlier. She was dressed immodestly—in a fashion that he would have opposed a few years earlier. For some reason, the marriage did not take place. Within a few months, I received news that this young man had been in a car wreck and suffered a broken neck. Thankfully, he was not paralyzed, and another friend and I went to see him. While lying in the hospital bed, he testified that God was trying to get his attention. He had been away from God, and God was trying to tell him that he needed to get right. He said that he would get right with the Lord and start serving Him when he got out of the hospital. Unfortunately, I do not know that he ever did get right and serve God. The last contact I had with him was when he called me after joining the Air Force. He met a woman who ended up stealing from him. I often think of what this young man could have done for God. He had a wonderful singing voice. He could have been faithful in church and used his voice to magnify the Lord, but he got out of church, and as far as I know, has never served God faithfully. He even admitted that God

was warning him through the car wreck and broken neck, but he never took advantage of the second chance. Like Lot, this young man experienced God's mercy of being granted a second chance, but neither one of them took advantage of it. What could have been lives of usefulness for God turned instead into wasted lives.

The next time we see Lot is in Genesis 19. As we know from what we have just discussed, he returns to Sodom. Now he is not only a resident of the town, but because he "*sat in the gate,*" he is a leader in the town. In that position, he should have fought against the wickedness of the city. He should have and perhaps could have turned the city away from its wickedness, but in the approximately 20 years that he is there, he does nothing. He personally may not have liked what was going on, and may have even said something at home, but there is no record of Lot's opposition to the wickedness of Sodom. The wickedness became worse, but Lot just seemed to ignore it.

May that never be said of us. We live in a time of wickedness as well. But may we not just ignore it or say that nothing can be done. It may not change. Society may have gone too far, and God's judgment may be unleashed, but may we never give in to the thought that standing up for right will not do any good. Proclaiming righteousness and holiness is still the right thing to do even if no one listens. We have many examples in the Bible of men who still preached in spite of hopeless situations. Noah saw no converts outside of his own family, but he was still called "*a preacher of righteousness*" in II Peter 2:5. Isaiah saw Judah turn to God for a little while under Hezekiah, but then history tells us that Manasseh had him sawn asunder. Jeremiah saw similar things in that Josiah led Judah back to God, but the succeeding kings rebelled against God and the nation was taken into captivity by Babylon. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah had very difficult ministries; they had very stern messages to deliver; they could have quit on God and refused to do it because no one would listen to them anyway. But they remained faithful to the end of their lives. May we do the same in our generation as well.

The final part of Lot's tragedy is The Cost. Disobedience to God always bears a terrible cost. If only people would realize this, maybe they would make a different choice. In thinking of the terrible price that Lot paid, if he had known what would happen, surely he would have made a different choice. When we finish Genesis 19, Lot is never mentioned again in detail in the Old Testament. His descendants are mentioned a couple of times in relation to the land that they inherited, but the impact of his life and the end of his life are not recounted. He is mentioned in Luke and II Peter, but obviously not as a hero. At the end of the message we will look at what II Peter says concerning Lot's example of a life devoted to selfish pleasures. Lot did pay a terrible cost for looking at and staying in Sodom. If I could have him testify, I know that he would tell all of us to stay away from the pleasures of this world and serve God faithfully. Lot thought that he would have everything that the world could offer. But in the end he lost everything.

In reading through the remainder of Genesis 19, three thoughts stand out as to the cost of sin in Lot's life. First, Lot's desire for the world cost him *The Destruction of his Witness*. God in his mercy is going to bring Lot out of Sodom before he destroys it. He sends two angels to physically remove Lot and his family. There are two occasions when Lot tries to witness to some degree. The first is to the men of Sodom, and the second is to his own family.

When the angels are in Lot's house, the men of Sodom come and demand that Lot give the men to them that they may commit abomination with them. Lot thankfully refuses to turn the men over. He atrociously offers his own daughters in exchange, but the men of Sodom refuse the offer and mock Lot. They say in Genesis 19:9, "*This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge.*" From their reaction, the men apparently think that Lot is telling them that they are doing wrong and should want to be with a woman and not a man. But the men have no use for what Lot is saying. They even threaten him, but Lot is rescued by the angels. Lot tries to reason with the people of Sodom, but they have

no use for his witness.

The second occasion is even more tragic. After being told by the angels that they will destroy Sodom, Lot tries to warn his sons in law. He told them in Genesis 19:14, *“Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city.”* The words that follow are among the most tragic in all of Scripture. The reaction of the sons in law is summed up in the last sentence of verse 14, *“But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.”* The word mocked means to laugh, to play, to make sport. Lot’s sons in law did not take him serious. They thought he was joking around. Perhaps Lot in the past had made some joke about Sodom deserving God’s judgment. Whatever had happened in the past, when Lot told them for sure what was going to happen, the sons in law paid no attention. Lot had lost his witness. Lot had become so entangled with Sodom that no one believed what he was saying. The men of Sodom did not believe, nor did his own sons in law. People today say, “Become like the world, and you will win the world.” That is a lie! Lot is proof of that. We will pick up with that thought next month.