

LOT --- THE CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF

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And Lot sat in the gate of Sodom (Gen. 19:1).

And [God] 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) (2 Peter 2:7-8).

The title has always been a source of fascination, for it is difficult to understand why any cat would be content to remain on a hot tin roof when its paws seemed to be burning! Perhaps a mouse had made its home nearby, and in the hope of gaining a meal the cat was willing to endure pain. It is also difficult to comprehend why intelligent people remain in any place where life's greatest treasures are being destroyed. Perhaps they are willing to suffer in the hope of catching mice of another kind!

Poor Lot! He was a strange man, unable to escape from himself! Former experiences haunted him: he knew what needed to be done, but his feet would not cooperate with his heart. After the death of his father, the lad was an orphan with an uncertain future, but his uncle, Abraham, provided a home and a future for his nephew. The lad was not penniless, for he inherited whatever belonged to his deceased father. Under expert supervision, his flocks and herds increased enormously, and he was able to employ his own servants. The Bible reveals how the great increase in Lot's possessions led to strife regarding water rights. Eventually it became necessary for the two herds to be separated, and Abraham gave Lot permission to choose any direction in which to travel. The younger man saw the plains of Sodom were "like the garden of the Lord," and decided he would live in the lowlands. That decision proved to be the greatest mistake of his life. He was taken captive by warring kings, and but for Abraham's rescue, might have spent the rest of his life in captivity (see Gen. 14:1-16). Probably Lot was very excited when he took his herds to the plains of Sodom. He had become independent, could please himself; he was his own master. Unfortunately, he forgot to count the cost of his anticipated achievements.

Lot Compromised His Faith

It might be difficult to know what kind of faith he possessed. He had lived with Abraham, the friend of God, but there is no evidence that he ever loved the Lord. He never built an altar: he was too busy making money. Nevertheless, what he learned in childhood could not be easily forgotten. When Lot mingled with homosexuals and listened to their disgusting conversation, "he vexed his righteous soul." Their filthy topics were a terrible contrast to the inspired words of his uncle. It is thought-provoking that, whereas most nomads lived in their tents close to the herds, Lot became the owner of a house within the city.

The new citizen of Sodom knew that his life had been revolutionized. Earlier he sat and talked with a saint: now he was repelled by the company of abominable strangers. He remembered how Abraham knelt at God's altar to gain strength to overcome problems: the men of Sodom loved to reiterate their experiences when they exploited and manipulated each others' bodies. Apparently Lot desired to be important, and for that purpose abandoned his religious upbringing. He was able to sell his cattle in the cities of the plain and became a councillor, authorized "to sit in the gate" among the rulers of the city. He became the most miserable man in the area. He was truly like a cat on a hot tin roof, and the roof was getting hotter! Yet he did not leave, for he expected the mouse of his ambition to appear at

any moment.

Lot Compromised His Fellowship

Lot received a great welcome from the inhabitants of Sodom: his cattle assured the Sodomites of a continuing supply of fresh meat. It was not long before he took a seat among the elders to give counsel to people who sought legal advice. When the other men amused each other with descriptions of lustful behavior. Lot remained silent. He was afraid to denounce them. They were potential customers. He should have walked away. but his legs seemed to be paralyzed. His hot tin roof was now almost unbearable, but the mouse was getting fatter!

At the close of an evangelistic service in New Zealand. a man said to me: "Sir, you have surely landed me in a hell of a mess." He continued: "I am one of three brothers: we are in business together. The government caught us once for not paying enough

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income tax, but we outsmarted them by falsifying our books. But last night I came to hear you. After the meeting I went to the office where my partners were working late and asked them to buy me out, as I wanted to be clean! One brother locked the door, and then both of them beat me up. You surely landed me in a hell of a mess." It was evident he had discovered a disturbing truth. It is impossible to live in the smog of Sodom and still breathe the pure air of God's mountains.

Lot Compromised His Family

And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, and said. I pray you brethren, do not so wickedly. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man: let me, I pray you bring them out unto you. and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof (Gen. 19:6-8).

And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons-in-law, who married his daughters, and said, Up. get you out of this place: for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law (Gen. 19:14).

Why did this unhappy man give his daughters in marriage to two homosexual men? Why did he address the lustful mob as "brethren"? Was he so intent on retaining the favor of the citizens that he was willing to sacrifice his girls? When he said that his daughters had not known man, he revealed their marriages had never been consummated. The husbands were only interested in male companionship; the wives were only desired as house cleaners and cooks. Sodom was the classic example of the situation described by Paul.

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves. Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature. And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another: men with men working that which is unseemly. and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet (Rom. 1:24-27).

God ceased to strive with the sodomites. but Lot decided to

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live among them and welcomed two of their young men into his family. He sacrificed the happiness of his daughters to be more closely identified with potential customers. It is difficult to understand why this was done, but unfortunately the same kind of thing can be seen throughout the modern world. Men appear to be walking into quicksand. The more they proceed, the deeper they sink, and finally escape becomes impossible. Natives catch monkeys in Africa by placing an orange in a box or a tree. A small hole is left through which the animal can push its arm. When it grasps its prize and refuses to release it. it is impossible to pull the orange through the small aperture. To regain its freedom. the monkey must open its hand. The natives recognize this weakness and exploit it to trap the victim. Alas, people who once enjoyed freedom are now slaves because of their desire to hold and enjoy prohibited things.

Lot Compromised His Fortune

And it came to pass. when they [the angels] had brought them forth abroad, that he [the angel] said, Escape for thy life: look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed (Gen. 19:17).

The command given by the angels had been clear and precise; there was no time to lose; delay could be dangerous. Unfortunately, Lot's affections were still in Sodom. He was facing bankruptcy, and his outlook was appalling. Throughout the years he had worked unceasingly to increase his wealth, but now he was to be left with nothing. He had gambled and lost! Sodom was about to be destroyed by an earthquake and fire, and within a few hours the city would become ashes. Lot's cattle would disappear into gaping holes in the ground; his home and everything else would be destroyed by flames. He would be a homeless refugee with nothing to show for years of toil. Doubtless, Uncle Abraham would be willing to assist his impoverished nephew,

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but financial help, or the replacement of herds, could never remove the ache from his soul, nor the shame from his mind. He believed himself to be a failure, and that increased his vexation. Did he know that he was delivered from Sodom through the faithful intercession of the old saint who lived in the mountains?

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 the which Lot dwelt (Gen. 19:29).

Did Lot ever reminisce and review the events which had transpired since he left Abraham's camp? Did he ever suffer remorse and wish he could relive his life? When the man was left with unpleasant memories, he became a classic example of the type of people mentioned by Paul. Lot was saved "so as by fire." His life had been fruitless: he had nothing left of which to be proud. He could only enter into the eternal state with regret filling his soul. His mistakes should be a warning to every person acquainted with his story. The higher a man climbs, the more disastrous may be his fall.

Lot Compromised His Future

Abraham was a spiritual light that continued to burn brightly: Lot was a glimmer that quickly fizzled out in the darkness. He was so drunk that he lay on his bed utterly oblivious of his surroundings. He was unaware of the intention of his daughters, and would not have appreciated their scheme.

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And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the seed of our father (Gen. 19:30-32).

We were first introduced to Lot when he was adopted by Abraham. He became a regular member of the patriarch's family and was present when his benefactor knelt at the family altar. Now we see him lying in a drunken stupor, making possible the birth of the Moabites and Ammonites who became the deadly enemies of the Hebrews (see Gen. 19:37-38). Lot was a man who loved to travel downhill where progress was easy but costly. If a man were commissioned to write a list of the great men of the Bible, the writer would not include Lot. That name would be out of place among others such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, the prophets, and the apostles of the New Testament. Yet, the fact remains that Lot could have been included with distinction with those whose names are immortal. The writer to the Hebrews made such a list and said of Abraham: "By faith ... he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (see Heb. 11:9-10). Lot looked for a city that had business possibilities. Alas, it was a place built on unreliable foundations—it was called Sodom, a center of infamy and lust. No true believer could find peace in such surrounding. The future of this disappointing man went up in flames!

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