

LOT, THE MAN WHO LOVED TO LINGER

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Lot was one of the most indecisive men mentioned in the Bible. He was seldom in a hurry and, except for one notable occasion, dragged his feet! When strife began to exist between his workers and those of Abraham, he could have tried to solve the problem—but did not. As the trouble increased, he could have sought Abram's assistance—but did not. When he became a resident of Sodom, his conscience troubled him, but he refused to leave. When the city was about to be destroyed, the angels told him to flee, but he hesitated until God's messengers enforced departure. Lot was instructed to flee to the mountain, but he argued and chose another city in which to live. He and his wife were informed not to look back, but his wife disobeyed and died. The man was always procrastinating. He believed there would be a tomorrow, so why rush today?

The Man Who Lost His Father... Distressing

"Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees" (Gen. 11:27-28). The death of Haran possibly explains why the younger man became dependent upon his uncle, Abram. The ages of the two men remain unknown, but the Bible states Abram was seventy-five years of age when he left the city of Haran (see Gen. 12:4). Considering that people lived for great periods of time, he was, relatively speaking, a young man when he heard the call of God. Lot, the son of Abram's brother, would have been at least twenty to thirty years younger. His mother was never mentioned by the ancient writer, but if she were already dead, the orphaned son would instinctively welcome any affection shown by his nearest relative. The childless Abram and the parentless Lot were attracted to each other. One found a son; the other discovered fatherly affection of which he had been deprived.

Probably the young man became increasingly dependent upon Abram, and when his uncle announced his intention to leave Ur, Lot decided to accompany him. Abram supervised the affairs of

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his nephew and helped as the bereaved young man faced his future. Any separation at that time would have been unthinkable. "And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there" (Gen. 11:31).

The fact that Lot's possessions increased tremendously suggests the association with his uncle returned excellent dividends, but, unfortunately, success inflated his ego.

The Man Who Lost His Fellowship. . . Dangerous

"And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle. . . . 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" (Gen. 13:7-8). Although there is evidence the area was populated, the abundance of water in the Jordan River guaranteed adequate supplies for everybody. That the herds had been grazing in the lower parts of

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hills implies that competition had arisen regarding water rights and the time when the animals could drink at the wells or mountain streams. When the workmen insisted on their privileges, the camp was filled with hostility. Apparently this did not annoy Lot, for he intended to support his men at any cost. Yet Abram was grieved to see discord among brethren; he knew it was difficult to live at peace with God and be at war with relatives.

"And Abram said unto Lot Is not the whole land before thee?... 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 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" (Gen. 13:8-12).

It might be assumed that Lot would have recognized the value of Abram's presence, fellowship, and business expertise. His uncle had forgotten more than he would ever learn. If a modern definition may be used, Lot had grown too big for his britches! Success had

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changed him. When he looked upon the plains of Jordan, his eyes shone with pleasure as he contemplated ways to become wealthy. Unfortunately, the man never considered what might happen to his soul. Many years later the Savior spoke about a prodigal son who made a similar mistake. Despising the fellowship of his father, the son went into a far country to seek his fortune. There the boy discovered that fools and their money were soon parted. To live among pigs was a poor substitute for an armchair close to a warm fire and a father's affection. People continue to make the same mistake; they never miss the water of fellowship until the well has gone dry!

The Man Who Lost His Faithfulness... Destructive

Lot exchanged his uncle's embrace for the taunts and sneers of homosexuals. The cattle increased, but his spirituality declined. Increasing popularity became evident, for "he sat in the gate." His men toiled in the sunlit plains while he listened to the filthy conversation of the Sodomites. Many years later, the apostle Peter described how 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). It is difficult to understand how any righteous man could grieve without making an attempt to escape from the circumstances which threatened his existence. Lot consented to the wedding of his two daughters even though he knew the bridegrooms were homosexuals. When he offered to deliver his daughters to a lustful mob, it was said the young women were virgins (see Gen. 19:8). Those filthy men only desired slaves who could cook and clean houses. They satisfied their lustful desires by cohabiting with men. All those sickening events grieved Lot, but he made no effort to leave the city and renew the fellowship which earlier had enriched his soul.

During the ministry of the Savior, a wealthy young ruler came to enquire about receiving eternal life but, when he knew the cost of discipleship, went away sorrowful. Lot's condemnation was greater; he could have taken his herds as he left the city of Sodom. Probably, he would have increased his wealth had he moved along the shores of the Sea of Galilee where serenity was at least possible. It was said that "By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to

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be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer

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affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Heb. 11:24-26). The glorious example provided by the patriarch was a striking contrast to the actions of the disappointing nephew of Abram. It is doubtful whether Lot ever pleased God, but any spiritual influence he possessed was lost in Sodom. Even Simon Peter discovered it was dangerous to remain at the enemy's fire.

The Man Who Lost His Fortune... Devastating

"And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they 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. And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord" (Gen. 19:15-18).

Many years ago I was entertained in the home of an Australian, Walter Beasley, who at that time financially supported much of the archaeological work being done around the world. We were speaking about liberal theologians who deny the accuracy of certain Bible stories. My friend said, "Yes. They criticized the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, but we know now how it happened. Beneath the ground upon which those cities stood, a burned-out oil field had been discovered, and on either end vertical faults were found in the strata of the earth. Throughout the area enormous amounts of rock salt exist deep in the earth, but around the sites of the ancient cities the salt is on the surface. The Dead Sea is a notable example of that fact. The countryside was shaken by an earthquake; Sodom and Gomorrah slipped between the faults placing enormous pressure upon the oil field. The tremendous upsurge pushed the salt into the atmosphere where it disintegrated and fell as a gigantic snowstorm. The cities were destroyed by the oil-fed fires, but when Lot's wife turned to see her home, the earth began to split. and she was unable to proceed or retreat. The poor woman was overwhelmed and died of suffocation—she became a pillar of salt My Australian friend

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concluded his remarks by saying, "Scholars no longer deny the accuracy of that ancient story; they know how it happened."

Within moments Lot's cattle disappeared, and their owner was left with nothing but haunting memories. When his father died, the son had little if any wealth, but after the destruction of Sodom, he had nothing! What might have happened had he remained with Abram, close to God?

The Man Who Lost His Future... Disastrous

"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 dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters" (Gen. 19:30). He had left God's hills a very wealthy man; he returned a pauper. His dwelling place became a cavern of memories. The final details concerning this desperate man related to nocturnal visits made by his anxious daughters. The man who might have been a friend of God became

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so drunk he was unable to recognize the women who shared his bed (see Gen. 19:31-36). Lot stained the pages of history with debauchery and lust. Things would have been different had he spoken with God instead of the men of Sodom.

Yet one brilliant star shone during his nights of failure; his uncle Abram continued to love him, and when enemies carried Lot into slavery, Abram rescued him and restored all that had been confiscated. When the cities of the plain were about to be destroyed, it was the same faithful friend who interceded for his safety. "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 (Gen. 19:29).

It has often been claimed that nothing is new! Even in the Garden of Eden, Jehovah demonstrated there were two directions in which people could travel. They could obey God or please themselves. The story of Abraham and his nephew revealed that men can remain in the everlasting hills or waste their lives among evil associates in the plains of illicit pleasure. Solomon said, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). The Lord said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14). Joshua, believing these facts neces-

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sitated choice, said to his people, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve (Josh. 24:15). The air is always cleaner on a mountain top than in a valley filled with smog! Mrs. Rhea F. Miller was inspired when she wrote:

I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold,
I'd rather be His, than have riches untold;
I'd rather have Jesus than houses or land:
I'd rather be led by His nail pierced hand.
Than to be the king of a vast domain,
Or be held in sin's dread sway.
I'd rather have Jesus than anything
This world affords today.

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