



Lot Does Not Listen to God

Genesis 13, 18, 19

Abraham's nephew, Lot, received many blessings because of his association with Abraham. He was treated well and had come to own abundant herds of livestock. Lot could have determined to learn from the obedience of his uncle, but instead Lot made poor decisions, and he and his family paid a great price.



Note: At this point in Scripture, God had not yet changed Abram's name to Abraham. The change occurs in Genesis 17.

Day #1: Decisions

Pretend you won your class spelling bee at school. The prize was a bag of candy. When you took it home, you felt sorry for your brother or sister that didn't have any candy, so you wanted to share your prize. How would you divide it? Would you say, "Here is the bag. Take whatever you want, and I will have what's left"? How do you think your sibling would respond? Abram did something similar for his nephew, Lot, and Lot had a very human response.

As Abram and his wife traveled, Lot went with them. When it was time to settle down, Abram and Lot had so many possessions - flocks, herds, tents, herdsmen, servants - that there was not enough room for them to stay together. Their herdsmen began to argue over the land. Seeking peace, Abram graciously told Lot to choose whatever land he wanted and Abram would take what remained. Because Abram was the older of the two, he actually deserved to choose his land first. The fact that Abram offered first choice to Lot was another example of Abram's faith. He surrendered his "right" to choose, knowing God would take care of him.

Because Lot had been traveling under Abram's leadership and was blessed because of it, and out of respect for Abram's age, Lot should have insisted that Abram choose his land first. But what did Lot do?

+ *Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. - Genesis 13:10-12 (NIV)*

Lot saw what he thought was the best portion of the land, and he took it. He relied on his own understanding and did not consult God about what would be best for the future of his family. We will see that this was a tragic choice.

***** God sometimes asks Christians to lay down our "rights," as Abram did. Have you ever given up something you thought you deserved, and found that God blessed you beyond what you gave up?

Day #2: Pitching His Tents

Yesterday we looked at Lot's method of choosing where to live. He looked over the land and saw that the area was fertile for crops, good for his livestock, and there were cities nearby. So Lot chose what looked good in his eyes, and "pitched his tents near Sodom." What does the very next verse say?

Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord. - Genesis 13:13 (NIV)

Lot chose to settle right in the midst of wickedness! This was where he chose to make his home and raise his family. It seemed to Lot that this place had everything he needed - good soil, great living conditions, culture. But Lot's priority should have been godliness. He did not consider the sinfulness his family would be exposed to daily. The Bible is very clear. What seems good to man - to "the world" - is not what is good in God's eyes.

+ *Do not love the world or anything in it. If you love the world, love for the Father is not in you. Here is what people who belong to this world do. They try to satisfy what their sinful natures want to do. They long for what their sinful eyes look at. They brag about what they have and what they do. All of this comes from the world. It doesn't come from the Father. The world and its evil longings are passing away. But those who do what God wants them to do live forever. - 1 John 2:15-17*

Lot pitched his tent **near** Sodom. He may have thought he could be just close enough to get the city culture but stay clear of the really evil behavior. We will see this was not possible. In time, Lot and his family were completely engulfed in the city, its people, and its wickedness.

***** Is there anything or anyone that you have chosen to place yourself **near** that you should remain far from? You cannot straddle the fence on sin! Do not be tricked! We must always be on guard so we will not give in to sin's temptation (Matthew 26:41). God instructs us to run away from evil (2 Timothy 2:22, 1 Corinthians 10:14). Do not wonder how close you can get to sin, but rather how far you can stay away from it.

Day #3: Lot's Loss

God revealed to Abraham that He intended to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because the people there were so full of sin, and were proud of their wicked ways (Isaiah 3:9). They thought only of their instant pleasure and never helped anyone in need (Ezekiel 16:49). Abraham boldly asked God to spare the town for the sake of any righteous people there. Abraham must have been thinking of his nephew, whom he loved. Sadly, God said there were not even ten righteous people in those cities.

Because of Abraham (Genesis 19:29), God sent two angels to warn Lot of the cities' destruction. When the angels arrived, Lot was sitting at the city gate. This is where elders and noblemen sat. Lot had become important in Sodom's society. The angels told Lot to take his family and go immediately to the mountains. Lot ran to warn the two men who were pledged to marry his daughters. But the men did not take Lot seriously. Obviously, Lot had not shown himself to be a messenger from God in the past, so why would they listen to him now?

Day #3 continued:

 *The sun was coming up. So the angels tried to get Lot to leave. They said, "Hurry up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here. Get out! If you don't, you will be swept away when the city is punished." Lot didn't move right away. So the men grabbed him by the hand. They also took hold of the hands of his wife and two daughters. They led all of them safely out of the city. The Lord had mercy on them.* - Genesis 19:15-16

Lot hesitated! Could he have been so attached to the things that surrounded him that he almost died with them? Because of God's mercy, the angels dragged them out of the doomed city. The angels warned them to run and not to look back as God rained burning sulfur down from heaven and destroyed the cities. Lot's wife did not listen! Genesis 19:26 says, "But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt." Just like Lot, his wife was attached to the things she had surrounded herself with. Even in the midst of judgment, they clung to their ungodly way of life.

The Bible later tells us that Lot knew what was right and was very sad in his heart when he saw the wickedness of the people in Sodom (2 Peter 2:7-8). So why did he remain in this dreadful city? Consider Jesus' parable of the sower and the seed:

The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. - Matthew 13:22 (NIV)

Lot was consumed with worldly things, and this desire choked out the truth that he knew. His life was spared, but he lost everything he tried so hard to gain, and he produced no fruit for God's kingdom.

 Discuss what Lot could have done differently in order to live a fruitful life.

Day #4: Abraham's Gain

In Genesis 13, it was probably very hard for Abram to send Lot away, since Abram and Sarai did not yet have children. Lot, being Abram's nephew, was the closest thing Abram had to a son of his own at that time. Yet, Abram did the right thing. He **sought peace**, and he **humbled himself** by giving Lot his choice of land. What are God's promises concerning these things?

 *There is a future for the man of peace.* - Psalm 37:37b (NIV)

There is joy for those who work to bring peace. - Proverbs 12:20b

Bow down to the Lord. He will lift you up. - James 4:10

God always keeps His promises! When Lot left Abram, God came to Abram and gave him another blessing.

The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." - Genesis 13:14-17

God told Abram that all the land he could see in all directions would be given to his descendants to own forever. And God further explained the promise He had made about Abram becoming a great nation. He told Abram he would have as many offspring as there are grains of dust on the earth. By faith, Abram moved onto that land (Hebrews 11:8), and built an altar to God.

So Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of

Day #4 continued:

Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD. - Genesis 13:18 (NIV)

Lot chose what looked good in this life, but lost the blessings God would have had for him. Abram gave up what seemed important in this life, but inherited great and everlasting rewards from God.

 Discuss the quote by martyred missionary Jim Elliot, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Day #5: Judgment/Provision

Have you ever watched a movie with a trial scene? There is a courtroom, a defendant (someone who is accused of doing something wrong), lawyers, and a jury. Sitting in the center of the action, lifted up high, is the judge. If the person who is accused is found guilty, he must be punished. The judge usually sets the sentence, or punishment. What if the person was found to be guilty, and the judge did not punish him? What if the judge punished sometimes, and chose not to punish at other times? We would all agree this was not fair. We would say he is not a "just" judge. The word **just** means *proper, right, fair*. To be just, a judge would have to punish the guilty, every time.

 *He (God) is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He.* - Deuteronomy 32:4 (NIV)

The God we serve is perfect and just. He must punish sin, every time (Isaiah 13:11). The Bible tells us that we are all sinners and have been found guilty.

There isn't anyone on earth who does only what is right and never sins. - Ecclesiastes 7:20

The Bible also tells us that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is an **example** of the punishment waiting for sinners.

The people of Sodom and Gomorrah and the towns around them also did evil things... They committed sins of the worst possible kind. They are an example of those who are punished with fire. The fire never goes out. - Jude 1:7

That is serious and sad news. But there is GREAT news, too! Just as God made a way for Noah during the flood, and a way for Lot during the fire, God has made a way for us to escape the punishment we deserve for our sin.

When you sin, the pay you get is death. But God gives you the gift of eternal life because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done. - Romans 6:23

Those who belong to Christ Jesus are no longer under God's sentence. - Romans 8:1

We have been set free because of what Christ has done. Through his blood our sins have been forgiven. We have been set free because God's grace is so rich. - Ephesians 1:7

God provided His own Son to be the escape route for us - when we place our faith in Him. Because Jesus had no sin, He was able to pay the price for our sin. The Bible calls Jesus, *"the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* - John 1:29 (NIV)

 If you have placed your faith in Jesus, thank God for His provision! If you have not yet placed your faith in Jesus, or are just beginning to learn about God and His plan, ask God to draw you to Himself (John 6:44) and teach you His ways (Exodus 33:13, Psalm 25:4-5).