

Lot's Tent
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
August 23, 2020

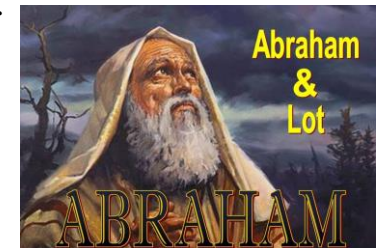
Diaspora XIII – The Church Scattered, Twenty-third
Sunday

Text: Genesis 13:1, 6-13

Purpose: Abraham's nephew, Lot, chose the best of the world instead of the best of God. He placed his tent facing Sodom and moved closer over time. The lure of the world destroyed his family. Which way will you choose?

I. Background

Last week we discussed the life of Abraham. This man's influence, the father of nations, is still affecting our world today. Today, we want to look at a man by the name of Lot. Lot was the nephew of Abraham. When Terah died, Abram took his family and led them to a place that God would show them. Included in that family group was Lot.



Lot and Abram traveled through the various areas of Canaan with their flocks and families. On their way, Abram built several altars to the Lord. One was at Shechem at the Oaks of Moreh and another just west of Bethel and

east of Ai. Abram's journey took a side trip through Egypt, (Chapter 12) where the Pharaoh gave them a great supply of sheep, oxen, donkeys, and servants as payment for the pharaoh almost marrying Sarai, Abram's wife.

As Abram traveled in the region, he became prosperous and wealthy. Lot also had accumulated flocks, herds and tents. Because they became so prosperous, the land could not sustain them traveling together. There was not enough water or grass land in one region to support them both. The conflict between each of their servants grew greater every day as they traveled together.

II. Lot's Choice

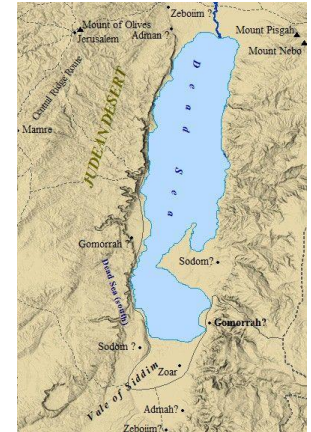
Abram and Lot decided to go in different directions. Abram gave Lot the first choice of areas in which to go. From where they were, there were two directions. The first choice was in the valley of the Jordan. We call it the Trans-Jordan Valley today. During Lot's day, it was a well-watered area, beautiful lush place similar to the Garden of Eden. The other area was in the region of Canaan. This area was a little more rugged, difficult, and not as fertile as the first area.



Abram yielded the first choice to Lot and he chose the area in the valley of the Jordan. It was in this valley where the town of Sodom was situated.



If you were to look on a map of Israel today and find the Dead Sea, it was located at the southern most tip of that salty water. Gomorrah was adjacent to Sodom. Today, the Dead Sea covers both towns. Today that area is desolate, but during Abram and Lot's day, it was a beautiful region.



III. Lot's Consequences

After Lot made his choice, he pitched his tent towards Sodom. As the story of Lot unfolds, you will see how the evil influence of that society transformed almost everyone. At one point during Lot's stay in the region, there was a war between the various kings in that region and Lot was taken captive. Abram heard of Lot's kidnapping and went along with 318 of his men, and chased the enemy as far as the area of Dan which is located in Northern Israel. Abram came to the rescue of Lot from the evil in the Jordan Valley.

Lot's problem was he had succumbed to the influence of the world.

- First, there is attraction.
- Then there is identification.
- Lastly, there is saturation.

Lot saw with his eyes the lush beauty of the valley. The Biblical text does not tell us exactly how Lot became entangled in the society of Sodom, but I can imagine it happened something like this.

On the first week, Lot and his men ventured towards those lush green valleys. They were happy with their choice. During the day, they led their sheep and goats to the various watering holes and green pastures. But during the evenings, they pitched their tents facing the city of Sodom. I am sure they could hear the music of the city and heard of the stories of fun and adventure there. There was an attraction because they had taken their eyes off the source of their blessing, God.



The next week, I can see Lot telling his men to move over to the next hill a little closer to Sodom and see what they will find there. They find more lush grass and abundant water. At night, the sounds of the city become louder and more attractive. As he gives his heart and mind to that other way of life, Lot becomes identified with their way of “enjoying themselves.”

Over the course of time, I can see Lot venturing into the city and trading his sheep and goats for other goods and services. In the process, he becomes more influential in that town. He becomes a respected businessman and probably sits in the gate to give advice and settle disputes among citizens. His wife probably is enjoying the finer things of life. She probably had the first choice of the finest clothes, food, and possessions. They find that living in and around Sodom has provided them the “good life” – status, wealth, recognition, and possessions. Ahhh! Sounds like the setting for a beer commercial.

IV. Abram’s Visitors

Meanwhile, over in the barren dry land of Canaan, Abram continued to walk with God and took on the new name, Abraham. His wife took on the name of Sarah. In chapter 17 of Genesis, we see three visitors came to see Abraham by the terebinth trees of Mamre. These visitors were the Lord and two angels. The Lord had come down to see the great sin of Sodom and Gomorrah and to judge them.



When they arrived, Abraham immediately offered them a place to rest and had bread prepared, a calf dressed and prepared to eat, and offered them milk and cheese. Abraham knew who his visitors were and was willing to extend everything he had to meet their needs.

The Lord told Abraham that within one year, Sarah would have their promised child. Abraham and Sarah laughed at the thought that a man 100 years old and a woman 90 years old would have a child. Because of this, they would name their child “Isaac” which means “laughter.” One year later, she did give birth to Isaac which turned their sorrow into laughter.

The Lord revealed to Abraham another purpose of their visit was to go and see the wickedness of Sodom. Abraham was concerned about Sodom primarily because his nephew Lot was living there. The Lord told Abraham that the cities in the valley would be judged. Abraham knew that would

mean the destruction of the people, buildings, possessions, and livestock – all would be annihilated.

V. The Bold Negotiation

Quickly Abraham knew that if the Lord implemented this plan, then his nephew Lot would be swept away in the judgment.

Abraham turned to the Lord and said “Surely you wouldn’t destroy the good with the evil in that area. What if there were 50 righteous men there? Would you destroy them then?” The Lord said, “If there are 50 there, I will not destroy the town.”

Abraham said, “What if there were 45?”

God said, “No, I will not destroy the town for 45.”

Abraham said, “What if there were 40?”

God said, “No, I will not destroy the town for 40.”

Abraham said, “What if there were 30?”

God said, “No, I will not destroy the town for 30.”

Abraham said, “What if there were 20?”

God said, “No, I will not destroy the town for 20.”

Abraham said, “What if there were 10?”

God said, “No, I will not destroy the town even if there are 10.”



With that, the Lord left and the two angels went to visit the city of Sodom and witness first hand their sin. While Lot was enjoying the “good life” in Sodom, Abraham was interceding on his behalf.

How many of us have a family member caught up in the sins of Sodom? They are out chasing the attractions of the world, caught up in all the world deems “good and acceptable.” Are you interceding on their behalf?

VI. Lot’s Escape

The two angels arrived in the city of Sodom to find Lot sitting at the gate of the city. Now he had arrived in a position of status among the evil, sinful people. I am unsure if this was a judge’s position or simply a respected position in the community. Either way, he was now fully identified with those in the city.

As these two angels approached the town, Lot met them and invited them into his house. Lot must have known who these people were. The people of the town knew who these visitors were. The evil people in the town saw them coming and wanted to molest them and have sexual relations with them. They pressed upon Lot’s front door and attempted to take them forcefully. Lot offered his daughters to the crowd to appease their lust but they insisted in taking the two angles and molesting them. The angel’s blinded the crowd which stopped their attempts at taking them by force. The evil that permeated the town was unquenchable. Their lust had no end.

In the morning, Lot pleaded with his extended family to come out of the city, but they refused. Lot knew these angels were going to destroy the city, but his family was now hopelessly lost in the sinful ways of the city. They were blinded to the coming judgment.

The two angels took Lot, his wife, and his two daughters by the hand and led them out of the city.



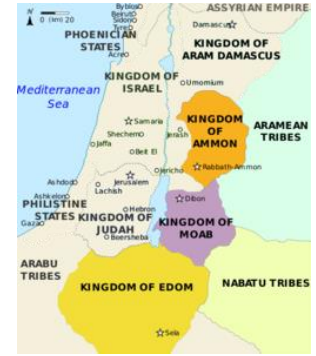
They were instructed not to look back. The angels waited until they reached the city of Zoar before fire and brimstone rained upon the city. Even Abraham could see the smoke rise from God's judgment of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

You would think if you saw an angel rescue you from the judgment that you would want to leave your former life and not look back. But Lot's wife was more concerned with the past than her future. As she looked back, she probably was thinking of her status, her wealth, her clothes, her food, her security, her comfort. She was like the Israelites wandering in the desert wishing to return to their former slavery status in Egypt. When she turned around to see what she was losing and to long for her past, she turned her back on God's command and future security and provision. In an instant, she was turned into a pillar of salt.

VII. Lot's Legacy

One of the last words on Lot in the Bible is found in Genesis 19. Lot's two daughters were so corrupted by the people they had lived with, that they chose to get their

father drunk and they laid with him while he was drunk. They both conceived and had children by their father which later became known as the Moabites and Ammonites. Years later, these two people groups hounded and sought to destroy the children of Israel. The legacy of Lot is awful. He lost his wealth in an afternoon of destruction and judgment. His wife was judged by looking back to the former life of ease and pleasure. His daughters gave birth to two children that would attempt to destroy God's chosen people, Israel. Lot's legacy was sealed when he chose to pitch his tent towards the good life of Sodom.



VIII. Top 10 Lessons Learned

I believe there is a lesson to be learned here. He who has ears to hear, let them hear. We have all seen various top ten lists. I have my top ten lessons learned from the life of Lot and Abraham. We will start with ten and work our way backwards to the number one lesson learned.



10. Don't pitch your tent towards sin. When you associate yourself with the ways of the world, it eventually will be your destruction.

9. The righteous always attempt to rescue the weak around them. Abraham rescued Lot when he was kidnapped. Lot still wanted to continue in the ways of the

world until he was destroyed. Even when Abraham could not directly influence Lot, he continued to intercede for him before the Lord. When the Lord appeared to Abraham, he pleaded for the righteous. Apparently, Lot was the only righteous man in that unrighteous town. We too can pray and intercede for others in the midst of rebellion.

8. Sometimes God waits till you are very old to answer your prayer. In Abraham's case, Abraham was 100 years old, and Sarah was 90 years old when Isaac was born.

7. When making choices in life, choose God's way, not the world's way. Abraham was a blessing to the nations while the offspring of Lot's daughters were a curse to Israel. When you are at life's crossroads, open God's word and search it diligently for an answer from the Lord. He will direct you if you only seek to be honest and truthful in applying God's word to your situation.

6. The green grass on the other side of the fence may have evil strings attached. Lot chose the lush grass of the Jordan Valley and inherited the evil of Sodom and Gomorrah. In the end, he lost everything.



5. Don't become so consumed by the world that you forget God. Do not pitch your tent towards the allure of the world. If you do, the world will eventually own you and consume you. We as followers of Jesus Christ are called to be "in the world, but not of the world." We are called to be "innocent as doves, but as wise as serpents." Keep your eyes focused on God and His word. God and His word will never fail you.

4. When God calls you to come out of sin, you had better listen – because judgment is coming. If Lot's family would have turned away from that area the first time Lot was rescued, things may not have turned out the way they did. If Lot's family would have listened to his plea to leave the city, they would have been saved. If Lot's wife would have listened to the angels and not turned back, she would not have become a pillar of salt. If Lot's daughters were not so corrupted by the sin they were exposed to, they could have been a blessing instead of a curse.

3. When you answer the call of God, don't look back to the old way of life or your life will become like salt – worthless.



Lot's wife was transformed by her surroundings and she could not let it go. Don't let your surroundings transform you.

2. Evil, debauchery, homosexuality, licentiousness, fornication, were the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. Even today the word Sodomy refers to a sexual act that was once illegal in most states. The last Sodomy laws here in the United States were struck down by the Supreme Court in 2003.

Some individuals would claim that the sin of Sodom was a lack of hospitality. I strongly disagree. It was sin – and homosexuality was one of those sins – that resulted in judgment. God still hates sin. God WILL judge our nation if we continue to approve of sinful behavior in our nation.

The current push in our society is to normalize a new definition of marriage. Over the past few years, there have been great strides in ridiculing traditional marriage and praising alternate definitions of marriage. All areas of social media as well as every television station, glorifies this as normal and wholesome. In 2012, 61 percent of North Carolina voters affirmed the traditional definition of marriage. This made NC the 31st state to pass such an amendment.

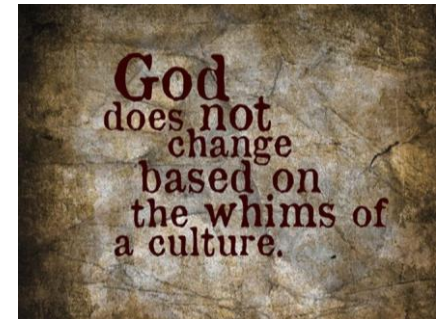


A few years later, the United States Supreme Court overturned the vote of the people and legalized same sex marriage. I still stand with God's word and affirm that marriage is for one man and one woman.

I must be found standing faithful to the clear revealed word of God. If I preach any other gospel, if I preach sin is acceptable to God, then I might as well place that millstone around my neck and jump in the creek. Affirming ANY sinful behavior as acceptable to God puts our nation in the direct path of destruction just as Sodom was judged and destroyed.

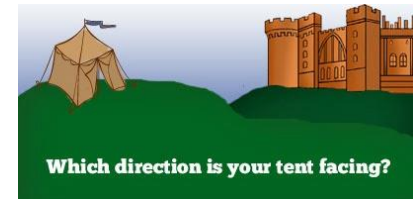
There are many things attacking our nation, but none will have a greater destructive force than the erosion of the family. We as God's people need to continue to be a good positive influence in our nation. Pray that God either heals our land or rescues us from the coming destruction.

- 1. God has not changed –**
He is immutable.
God is eternal.
God is omniscient
– all knowing.
God is omnipresent
– always present everywhere.
God is omnipotent
– all powerful.
God is sovereign over
His creation.



The lesson is clear, are you captivated by the lure of the world – the wealth, the power, the position or do you trust in the provision of the Lord?

Are you going with the shifting tide of moral degradation and embracing sin which is unacceptable to God? Or are you placing your foundation on the unchanging Word of God?



Which way have you pitched your tent?

Towards Sodom ... Or Canaan Land?

LET US PRAY