

Lot of Sodom

Listed Scriptures

Gen 11:27,31; 12:4; 13-14; 18:20-33; 19; 1 Jn 2:15-17; 5:1-4; 1 Pet 2:11-12

Lesson Aim

- 1) To know the importance of guarding our faith and resisting temptation
- 2) To have correct biblical values.

Memory Verse

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 Jn 2:15)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Isaiah 36-40

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



Sodom and Gomorrah

Sodom and Gomorrah were cities of the patriarchal age located in the plain or "valley of the Jordan" (Gen 13:11-12). Their other sister cities were Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar. The Bible states that the district of the Jordan where these cities were located was exceedingly fertile and well populated (c.2065 B.C.). Scholars have now generally agreed that these cities were situated in "the valley of Siddim" (Gen 14:3). Sometime around the twenty-first century B.C. this region with its cities was overwhelmed by a great fire due to its great wickedness and moral depravity (Gen 19:23-28; Rom 9:29; Rev 11:8). In the New Testament the Lord Jesus also refers to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Mt 10:15).

Herding needs and lifestyle

The primary requirements for a successful herding group were pasturage and water

sources. The hot dry months from April through September required movement of herds to higher elevations where grass remained and streams and springs could be found. In the colder, wet months of October through March, the animals were brought back to the plains for grazing. This seasonal movement necessitated long separations of herders from their villages or the establishments of an unconnected, semi-nomadic lifestyle in which the whole families travel with the herds. Disputes over grazing land and water rights would have been the most frequent cause of quarrels among herdsmen.

W A R M U P



- Does making choices come easily for you?
- Have you ever had to make a difficult choice?
- Why was it so difficult?
- Are you generally happy with your choices?
- What is one of the most regrettable choices that you made? Why?

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

Lot Follows Abraham

Lot is a character that is often associated with Abraham. Lot's name means "envelope" or "covering." He was the son of Haran, Abraham's younger brother. Although it is not explicitly recorded in the Bible, it is believed that Lot lost his father at a young age, therefore, when God called Abraham out of the land of Ur, Lot departed with his uncle Abraham for the Promised Land. Later when famine arose, Lot also moved down to Egypt with Abraham. Living with Abraham, Lot observed and learned from Abraham's many virtues. He saw how Abraham feared and worshiped God (Gen 12:7,8) and how God protected those who feared Him (Gen 12:10-20). Lot further learned about showing hospitality and taking the initiative to greet strangers (Gen 19:1-3).

Despite having a good environment and role model, Lot failed towards the latter part of his life. Lot's faith is similar to that of many Christians today. We start off with great zeal and fervency but unfortunately our faith fizzles out towards the end. Lot did not commit any great sin throughout his life. In fact 2 Peter even

describes Lot as being a righteous man. However, what led to his final downfall was his gradual lack of vigilance. As youths we need to observe closely and learn from the faith and merits of the older generation (Ps 37:37). We need to learn from their experiences, observe how God has worked in their lives and imitate their steadfast faith.



Part 2

Lot Departs from Abraham and Settles in Sodom



A • He Sought Comfort and Luxury

Read Genesis 13:10-12. As Abraham's and Lot's possessions and herds increased, the land could not support them dwelling together and there was strife between the herdsman of Abraham and the herdsman of Lot. Tensions often became worse in the dry season when grazing land became minimal and water sources few. Their tension may have been compounded by the presence of Canaanite and Perrizite flocks in the same general area (Gen 13:7). To preserve the peace and harmony between them, Abraham asked Lot to select first from the land. Lot chose the more prosperous and populated valley areas; Abraham was left with the less-populated hill country. Slowly Lot moved his tent closer and closer to Sodom (Gen 13:10-13). From this incident we see that Lot's choice and behavior exemplifies the characteristics of the people of the world:

When Lot saw that the Jordan valley was well-watered like the garden of the Lord, his heart was set on it. In the Bible, the valley symbolizes the comfort, prosperity and pleasures of the world. The mountains, on the other hand represents spiritual matters and close communion with God. Lot's choice demonstrated how his priorities were based on the physical life rather than the spiritual. Genesis 11:11-12 mentions that Lot pitched his tent slowly towards Sodom until he finally settled there. Even in the face of disaster, Lot was reluctant to leave. The tent represents our hearts or intentions. When Lot departed from Abraham he was able initially to maintain the faith and virtues that were instilled in him. He probably recognized the dangers of the world, and dared not move immediately to Sodom. As time passed, however, Lot began to let down his guard and allowed his heart to gradually incline towards the world.

Are our hearts drawn to the world? In our decision making do we think of ourselves and our own enjoyment above God (2 Tim 3:2)? What would we have chosen if

we were Lot? Abraham, on the other hand, had his sights on things above; therefore he placed God in the center of his decisions. Let us examine ourselves to see if our tent is facing God or Sodom. A simple way to gauge our hearts is to reflect on how much time we spend on the things of the world, and how much time we spend on God.

B. He Sought Success and Power

Genesis 19:1 records that Lot was sitting at the gates of Sodom. The gate was the place for city officials and men of importance to gather and talk, conduct business, and settle disputes. It was the focus of city life and a place of authority and status where you could see and be seen. Evidently Lot held an important position. He had made it. Over time, power, status and wealth entangled Lot and made him stay on in Sodom despite the sins in the city. Jesus Christ once said, "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful" (Mt 13:22). Here the Lord depicts those who rejoice at the word of God, but eventually become choked up by the success and things of the world. Are we allowing the achievements and things of the world to draw us away from God? Sometimes, this occurs in small and subtle ways. We skip a Sabbath to finish up an important assignment due the following Monday. The school body has elected us as president but this means activities and engagements on Saturdays. While we know it's important to observe Sabbath, we feel drawn to it because it's too great an opportunity to miss and it will look good on our resume. Let us be watchful that we are not distracted by the world and become unfruitful.

C. He Compromised With the World

Living in Sodom, Lot's faith became weak and he began to lose spiritual discernment. Many of his actions reflect the state of his faith:

1. In Genesis 19:7, Lot addressed the wicked and violent men of Sodom as "my brothers." He had befriended the world (Jc 4:4).
2. Lot failed in bringing up his family in the Lord.
3. Lot was willing to betroth his daughters to the wicked men of Sodom.
4. Lot had lost his credibility as a witness of God. When he warned his sons-in-law of the imminent disaster, they simply laughed at him.

Over time, Lot had compromised his principles. He had allowed his environment to shape him. Instead of removing himself from wickedness, he drew closer to it and adapted to that way of life. There may be times where we have foolishly cho-

sen to remain in certain situations or environments that cause us to fall into temptation or compromise our principles. We often deceive ourselves thinking that our faith is strong enough to resist temptation. Revelation 18:4 however, cautions us to depart from the Great Babylon, which is the world. We need to "Come out of her, lest we share in her sins and lest we receive of her plagues."

D. Unrest and Strife

Genesis 14 records how the five kings of cities including Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Zoar, formed an alliance and rebelled against Chedorlaomer. After paying 12 years of taxes, these kings refused to pay any more. Chedorlaomer reacted swiftly and called upon three other cities (Shinar, Ellasar and Goiim) to fight against the five rebel cities. The four kings re-conquered the five cities and captured all the people and possessions within them (Gen 14:1-10). When it was told to Abraham that his kinsmen had been taken captive, he and his 318 mighty men chased Chedorlaomer's army and with God's help rescued Lot and all that he had.

This incident teaches us that if we indulge in the flesh and the things of the world, we will be easily captured by Satan. While living in Sodom, Lot had gotten used to the comforts of life and had lost vigilance. Through this experience, God wanted Lot to examine his life and faith. Similarly, God may use the environment, and the people around us to get us back on track. Sadly, Lot did not learn from the experience and instead of returning with Abraham or moving out of Sodom, he returned to that very city to continue to pursue his dreams.

E. He Neglected the Family's Spiritual Upbringing

Lot's pursuit of pleasures brought a tragic end to his family. His love of the world caused him to neglect his family's spiritual welfare and resulted in individuals who did not know God. Living amidst all the corruption in Sodom, his daughters became desensitized to sin and did not think twice about committing incest with their father. Consequently, they gave birth to Moab and Benammi, the fathers of two of Israel's greatest enemies. Meanwhile, his wife, unwilling to leave the pleasures of the world was changed to a pillar of salt. His sons-in-law were destroyed with the city because they did not take Lot seriously.

Malachi 2:15 tells us that what the Lord wants from us is to produce godly offspring. God does not want us to focus on making a name for ourselves in this world, but to train up godly children to glorify Him. Deuteronomy also speaks of

the importance of impressing the word of God upon our children (Deut 6:6-7). Sadly, many parents have strayed from this principle. Rather than bringing up their children's faith, they have focused on their own careers or on the worldly education and achievements of their children. Such children grow up with a shallow faith and with very little knowledge and fear of God.



Part 3

Lot Flees From Sodom

Read Genesis Chapter 19. The sins and wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah had reached such proportions that God resolved to destroy them. The inhabitants did not believe in God (19:14), they were filled with violence (19:4-9; Is 1:10-15) and committed all kinds of immorality (19:5-8; Jude 7; 2 Pet 2:6-8). And so God rained down brimstone and wiped out the entire valley and everything in the cities save Lot and his two daughters. The plain of Sodom and Gomorrah that once looked like the garden of God, was now reduced to ashes. The very things that Lot desired and spent much of his life pursuing were destroyed. He was left with nothing. 1 John says, "Do not love the world or the things of the world ... the world is passing away and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1 Jn 2:15-17). Since we know that one day this world will be overthrown by fire (2 Pet 3:10), we need to use our time wisely. If we spend our time pursuing after fleeting pleasures, we will be left empty handed on the day of disaster. Let us therefore pursue the things that are imperishable and lead to eternal life (2 Pet 3:11-14).

Reflection:

1. Compare Lot's and Abraham's outlook on life and how it reflects their choices.
2. How are Lot's choices reflective of the people of this world?
3. Reflect on your own life and think how effective a witness you are.
4. Knowing that the Last Day is near, how should we live our lives?
5. Would it be difficult for you to remove yourself from company or environments that are not beneficial to your faith? Why?

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING



Due to the nature of this lesson, the Check For Understanding questions can be found after each Bible Study section under the heading "Reflection".

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Our Values

Ask your students the following questions:

Why am I living?

For what purpose or goal am I here in this world?

What is meaningful to me in this world?

What is it that I'm seeking for?

What is it that makes me happy?

What is the most memorable experience I have had?

All the above questions are related to our values. What does one's value system mean? Basically our value system consists of all the things that we think is "right" or "wrong." Through the course of time and varying experiences, whatever we believe is right, necessary, or important becomes part of our value system. Once our values are established, they will affect our decisions and actions. It will reflect on how we live our lives, spend our money, use our time (including spare time) and our energy. It will also determine what thoughts and memories we hold on to and cherish. Let's examine our own value system to see how it compares with the Bible's value system.

1. From the list below, circle five things that you feel to be of value:
 - a. Money
 - b. Acceptance from peers
 - c. High school diploma
 - d. Health
 - e. Faith
 - f. Friends
 - g. Love
 - h. Freedom
 - i. Life
 - j. Equality
 - k. Safety
 - l. Self-conviction
 - m. Wisdom
 - n. Leadership qualities
 - o. Doing holy work
 - p. Independence

2. Which of the following things would you invest most of your time and energy on? (Please check one)
 - a. Clubs and organizations
 - b. Field trips
 - c. Youth fellowship in church
 - d. Homework
 - e. Exercise
 - f. Arts classes

3. If you had a lot of money how would you spend it? (List according to 1,2,3 preference)
 - a. A car
 - b. Food
 - c. Clothes/ make-up
 - d. In helping the church and others
 - e. Entertainment such as books, magazines, videos, games
 - f. Music
 - g. Going on vacations
 - h. Others (please specify)

4. Life consists of many aspects. Below is just a selection. Where would you place most of your time, money and energy? (List according to 1,2,3 preference)
 - a. Entertainment
 - b. Faith
 - c. Education
 - d. Family
 - e. Friendships
 - f. Love
 - g. Career

5. If you were choosing a marriage partner, which criteria would be most important to you? (List according to 1,2,3 preference)
 - a. Faith
 - b. Appearance
 - c. Job
 - d. Education
 - e. Character/personality
 - f. Interests
 - g. Life goals

6. In selecting a college major, what things will influence your decision most?
 - a. It's something I am interested in.
 - b. I am guaranteed a good job and good pay in future.
 - c. It's something that I can use to serve God and utilize the gifts that God has given me.
 - d. It gives me the opportunity to be most creative.
 - e. It's what my parents want me to do.
 - f. Others (please specify)

7. In shopping for clothes, what things would you look for? (List according to 1,2,3 preference)
 - a. The brand name
 - b. Good quality
 - c. In fashion
 - d. Practicality
 - e. Within my budget
 - f. Style

Discussion:

In many instances, the Bible does not give us specific details concerning how we should live our lives and the choices we should make. However, the Bible does provide us with the principles and values a follower of Christ should adhere to. Look up the following Bible verses to learn how a true disciple of Christ should live his life.

- a. Philippians 3:7-8
- b. Acts 20:24
- c. Hebrews 11:25-26
- d. 1 Peter 1:7
- e. Matthew 6:19-21
- f. 2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4
- g. 1 Peter 3:3-4

Suggested Reading: "Making Choices," *Manna* Issue 32, July-Sept 2000



The apostle Paul in Romans 14:8 says, If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. Our time and energy are limited. With these limited factors, we can choose to invest them in the things of the world, or the things of God. Yet, the result of our investment will be drastically different; one will leave us empty-handed while the other leads to eternal life and blessings. The choice is ours.