

Remember Lot's Wife

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Do you remember the account of Lot and his wife in the book of Genesis? Many of us probably learned of Lot and his wife as youngsters in bible class. Lot was Abraham's nephew. In Genesis chapter 13 we remember conflict arose between Abraham's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen. To resolve the conflict, Abraham suggested he and Lot should separate. Lot was given first choice as to where he would dwell and he chose the well-watered plain of Jordan. Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom (Gen. 13:12) and dwelled there. We know the city of Sodom was consumed with wickedness (Gen.13:13) and in Genesis chapter 18 the Lord decided to destroy Sodom and the cities of the plain because of their sins. God chose to save Lot from the destruction of Sodom and sent two angels to get Lot and his family out of Sodom.

Studying Lot and his removal from Sodom as a child, I remember being taught that as Lot, his wife and two of his daughters were taken out of the city by the angels of God they were given instructions to follow – (Genesis 19:17) “**And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.**”. We remember the instruction “look not behind thee” because Lot's wife violated that command and was turned into a pillar of salt. (Genesis 19:26) “**But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.**”

For a long time, I believed Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt for simply “glancing over her shoulder” for a look at the city.

Certainly there are many examples of those in the Bible who committed seemingly small infractions (in the eyes of man) against God's commands and paid a high price for doing so – Nadab and Abihu in Lev. Chapter 10 by offering strange fire, Uzzah in II Sam. 6 by touching the ark, and Moses in Num. 20 by striking the rock.

God's justice demands accountability for sin, even for what man may consider “a small thing”. God would, therefore, be just in punishing Lot's wife for her disobedience even if it were something as simple as a “glance” backwards, but after further study of the scriptures her “looking back” likely involved more than just a quick look.

In Luke chapter 17, Jesus was teaching his disciples concerning the suddenness of the judgment to come. He used the example of Noah and the flood to show how sudden and unexpected the flood was to those who were unprepared

for it. Jesus also used the example of Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Lot. The people of the cities were likewise going about their usual business when sudden destruction came upon them (Luke 17:26-29). It is in this context of teaching that Jesus uses the example of Lot's wife to give a warning concerning salvation. Notice Luke 17:31-33

“31 In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

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33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.”.

Jesus was teaching his disciples that judgment would come suddenly and it was necessary to always be ready. He gave a warning against putting material things or other cares of this life before salvation and was telling his disciples that their salvation depended on them being willing to leave their worldly things behind. Failing to do so or turning back to them after leaving them would deny them salvation. Jesus' use of Lot's wife as an example of this indicates she was guilty of more than just a “glance over her shoulder”. Lot's wife apparently turned back in her heart (and maybe even physically) to the city, rather than focusing on her life being saved from the destruction promised by God.

When we consider Lot's wife looking back, what reasons might have caused her to not want to leave the city?

We know that Lot and his wife came to dwell among the plain cities for somewhat selfish reasons in that he chose the area seeing it was “well-watered everywhere” (Gen. 13:10), rather than insisting his uncle dwell in the land that looked more prosperous. The area around Sodom being good for herdsmen, probably allowed Lot and his wife to earn a better than average salary. Perhaps Lot's wife had grown accustomed to a “comfortable” lifestyle and did not want to give it up.

Lot “sat in the gate of Sodom” (Gen. 19:1). This would indicate Lot had some position of responsibility and respect. (Probably as a result of his uncle Abraham's defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him Gen. 14:15-17). Perhaps Lot's wife enjoyed living in a place where they were respected and looked up to. One would have to be willing to give up a certain amount of pride to leave such a place for one where you would be just the new folks in town. Perhaps Lot's wife hated to give up this position of respect that her husband enjoyed in Sodom.

Lot and his wife probably had many friends in the city of Sodom. In Gen. 19:7 Lot refers to some of the people of Sodom as “brethren”. These men may or

may not have been close friends but it is probable they had friends there. Perhaps Lot's wife did not want to leave her friends behind in the city.

In Genesis 19:14 we see that Lot and his wife had other children in the city besides the two daughters who left with them. There were other daughters that had married and were living in the city. Perhaps even grandchildren were in the city resulting from these marriages. Certainly having to leave family behind must have been difficult for Lot and his wife. Maybe Lot's wife turned back toward the city because of her family and failed to put her salvation before them.

There are many lessons we can learn from Lot and his family, but from Lot's wife, Jesus intends for us to learn from her example the necessity of not allowing anything to cause us to look back to the world from salvation.

Concerning earthly possessions, notice Matthew 6:20-21 **“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”**

Concerning pride, notice James 4:6b **“... Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”**

Concerning our companions, notice 2 Corinthians 6:14 **“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”**

Concerning family, notice Matthew 10:37 **“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”**

Today, are we heeding the warning given us by our Lord and Savior concerning Lot's wife? Are we living in a modern day Sodom seeking salvation and yet putting worldly things before it? Perhaps we cannot know exactly what was involved in Lot's wife “looking back”, but from Jesus' teaching we can be certain she allowed something to come between her and salvation. We must be ever careful to not fall into the same trap! In James 4:4 we find **“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”** We cannot allow material possessions, pride, friends, or family to cause us to compromise in our service to the Lord. Let us heed the warning of Jesus - **“Remember Lot's Wife”**