

## THE STAIN OF SODOM ON THE SOUL OF LOT

It is not uncommon *for boys*—especially between the ages of 8 and 14—to have both *a fascination*—and *a fear*—of fires. How great is the *fascination*? So much so that they like to “*experiment*” with starting fires—even though they know *they shouldn’t!*

To the best of my recollection, *I did not* start any fires that I wasn’t supposed to when I was a kid. *My daughters* didn’t, either! *My sons*, on the other hand, *did!* They were at friends of ours *from church* who lived out in the country and had boys the same age as our two. Not sure *who* did the “*suggesting*”—or the actually “*lighting*”—but the fire that was started *got out of control* and burnt part of a field. I really don’t remember many of the details—mainly because I wasn’t there—but I did confirm with *one of the guilty parties* this past week that the fire department *did not have* to be called!

I do remember this, though! *No one got hurt*—thankfully—and *no buildings were burned!* But they certainly learned a very valuable lesson—“if you play with fire, you can get burned!” We know that is true in a *literal* sense, but it is also true in a *figurative* sense, isn’t it? We call that *an idiom*. When used as an idiom, it means something like: “if you do something dangerous, you will eventually get hurt.”

Where did the saying originally come from? We can’t be 100% sure, but it certainly *could have come from the Bible!* God used Solomon—king David’s son—to write the book of Proverbs around 950 B.C. Listen as I read what he wrote in Proverbs 6:27 “Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?”

The answer, of course, *is no!* You can’t carry fire next to *your chest*—or in *your lap*—and not have your clothes start on fire—unless, of course, you are Shadrach, Meshach, or Abed-nego!

He then added a similar question: Proverbs 6:28 “Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?”

Again, *humanly impossible*—unless God does a miracle and walks with you in the fire!

But...just like our *current day idiom*—we know *from the context* that Solomon used it in a *figurative* sense, not a *literal* one! *How* do we know? From the next verse! Proverbs 6:29 “So he that *goeth in to* [is intimate with] his neighbour’s wife; whosoever *toucheth her* shall not be innocent.”

And in Proverb 6:32, Solomon really drives the point home: “But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it *destroyeth his own soul.*”

So “getting burned” in Proverbs 6 has to do with the ramifications of *playing with sin*—not *fire!* And even though these words were written in roughly 950 B.C., many others experienced *the truth* of these words long before they were written! *One such person*—one of the men that we briefly looked at last week—was Abraham’s nephew, *Lot*. Let’s turn in our Bibles again to II Peter 2; please follow along as I read verse 4-10.

How did Lot “play with fire?” Did he take another man’s wife? No; he didn’t! But...he got way *too close to sin!*

Did he get *burned?* No; Lot was *delivered from Sodom* before it was turned to ashes! He did not come out *unscathed, though*, because we all know that *even if you don’t get burned* when you “play with fire,” you can’t avoid *smelling like smoke!* And that is exactly what *happened* to Lot!

Living too close to the wicked brought a *stain—and strain*—on Lot’s *soul*. It was *not helpful* to him—it was *harmful*. It was *not good* for him—it was *bad* for him. Lot, then, serves *as an example for us* in two ways.

*One*—the one we looked at last week—is an example of how God *delivers the godly*. The *second example* Lot sets for us—which is a *bad example* and serves as *a warning*—is the reminder of the *personal damage* that can happen to us if we “play” with sin. We should be convinced—after looking at Lot today—that if *we play with fire*, we will most certainly *smell like smoke!* And because associating too closely to the wicked will cause great harm to us, it should also motivate us *to separate from them*.

We looked at this last week, but I want to start off with: **1. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (vs 6).**

Vs 6 “And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes...”

*Who* did that? **God!** How do *we know?* After all, it doesn’t say *who* did it—in *this verse!*

But...vs 4 says that **God** spared not the angels...and the **same One** who spared not the angels in vs 4 spared not the old world in vs 5. And that same One—**God**—“turned the city of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes!”

#### A. The reality of the judgment

Did God **really turn** these two cities into ashes? **Yes, He did!** We read of it here—and we read of it in Gen 19.

I’m not going to have you turn there—**yet**—but notice on your outline **Gen 19:24** “**Then the Lord** rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire **from the Lord** out of heaven;”

Twice—in the same verse—it says **the Lord** did it.

**What** did the Lord do? Rained brimstone—and fire—upon the 2 cities!

And let’s not forget, Jesus Himself **confirmed the reality** of this destruction.

**Luke 17:29** “But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom **it rained fire and brimstone** from heaven, and **destroyed them all.**”

#### B. The reason for judgment

**Why** did God destroy these two cities? Won’t spend much time on this because we looked at it last week, but there are at least two reasons given in this verse for God turning these cities into ashes.

1) Because their actions and activities were ungodly! **Genesis 18:20** “And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because **their sin is very grievous;**”

**What** was their sin? We know from Gen 19:1 that two angels—in the form of men—came to visit Lot and stayed in his home. We know from Gen 19:4 that the men of the city—“both old and young”—from every part of the city—pounded on Lot’s door. **Gen 19:5** “And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are **the men** which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may **know** them.”

What does “**know**” mean? I’ll use **Genesis 4:1** to spell it out—without spelling it out! “And Adam **knew** Eve his wife, and **she conceived...**”

**What does God think** of men “knowing” other men? Leviticus 18:22 refers to it as an abomination; the end of vs 6 calls it ungodly. So God brought destruction to Sodom and Gomorrah because of their wickedness.

A second reason is this: 2) To serve as **an example**. To **whom?** “...those **that after** should live ungodly.” God was against this sin **in the past**—and this warning is for those who practice the same sin **in the present!** God was against **it then**—and is still against **it today!** He didn’t put **an expiration date** on calling homosexuality an abomination—and **public opinion doesn’t change** what God has declared!

We need to have a Biblical view of **this sin**—and **all sin!** We also need to have a Biblical view of the **forgiveness...and love...and mercy of God!** God can **save and transform anyone**—regardless of their sin—if they come to Him in humility...and repentance...and faith! Much more could be said, but we need to move on.

#### Next let’s consider... **2. The deliverance of Lot (vs 7)**

We see that in vs 7 “And delivered just Lot...” **Why** did God deliver Lot? Because he was “just”—meaning **righteous**. The word that “just” comes from is the Greek word “*dikaios*”—the same word that is translated “**righteous**”—twice—in verse 8. So, **three times** in these two verses God states that Lot is **righteous**.

As mentioned last week, if you are familiar with Genesis 18 and 19 it is **hard to imagine** God calling Lot a righteous person. There is very little—if any—evidence that Lot is “right with God” based on his behavior! But **we know** Lot is righteous because **God says** that he was!

**When** did Lot become righteous; meaning “right with God?” We don’t know because we aren’t told. But we know that Lot was **not born** righteous because no one is! **Eccl 7:20** “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.” **Romans 3:10** “As it is written, There is **none righteous**, no, not one:” **Romans 3:23** “For **all have sinned**, and come short of the glory of God;”

So not only do we know Lot was **not born** righteous, we also know that Lot did not **become righteous** by his **acts...deeds...or efforts**. In other words, **he did not work**—do things—to **become right** with God.

How do we know that? Because **no one gets right** with God by their efforts!

**Isaiah 64:6** reminds us that “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”

Titus 3:5 says, “**Not by works of righteousness which we have done**, but according to His mercy He saved us...” And Romans 10:3-4 reminds us that people can be ignorant **of God’s way** to become right with Him—and that Christ is God’s way for us to become right with Him!

But Lot lived **way before** Jesus came to earth to die as our substitute. **How did** Lot become right with God when next to nothing had been revealed about Jesus at that time? In other words, how was **Lot saved**?

The same way we are—by faith **in God**...and in what **God said**. So even though we don’t know the **details** of Lot’s faith in God, we do know that there was a time in his life when he **understood his need for forgiveness**—and came to God **for forgiveness**. And when he did that, God “counted it unto him for righteousness”—just like He did for Noah and Abraham!

Lastly, I want to consider... **3. The damage Lot suffered for dwelling among the ungodly**

What **difference did it make** that Lot lived among “the wicked”—like it says in verse 7? And what difference does it make that “day to day” Lot saw and heard “their unlawful deeds” as it says in verse 8?

After all, God **declared Lot** was righteous—and **delivered Lot** from being destroyed with the people of Sodom! Since Lot was righteous, he will be **in heaven**! And if he’ll be in heaven, **why does it matter** that some of the “smoke” of Sodom got on his “clothes?” There are probably more, but here are 4 things Lot lost out on:

#### A. Loss of peace

--In vs 7, we see that Lot was “**vexed** with the filthy conversation of the wicked:”

“Vexed” here means “exhaust by suffering, overpower, oppress, wear out...”

Lot had **no peace** in his heart from the filthy conversation—meaning **life-style**—of the wicked around him. It **grieved** him...it **oppressed** him...it **wore him out**.

--Now vs 8. Here it says that Lot’s **righteous soul**—his innermost being—**was vexed** “in seeing and hearing their unlawful deeds.” “Vexed” here comes from a **different** Greek word and means “tormented; tortured by grievous pains of body or mind.”

So Lot—by living in Sodom and seeing the wickedness all around him—was **negatively** affected. He had no **calmness of mind**—nor peace of heart. He was oppressed...and depressed...and wore out. He was tormented and tortured with what he was seeing and hearing. It brought pain to him—not peace or pleasure.

On the one hand, that is a **good thing**. **Why** do I say that? Because it indicates that Lot did indeed **belong to God**! Sin bothered him; it grieved and tormented him.

What about you? Are you bothered by evil? Does it grieve you? Does it cause **turmoil** in your soul?

--Do you live in a way that pleases God—or would you **be ashamed** if what you **do in private** was **known in public**?

--What kind of things do **you look at** on your **computer**—or phone—when nobody is around?

--Young people, what kind of things **do you talk about** when no adults are around?

**No one** can play with sin and have a peace-filled life! The two do not **co-exist**! God will **let you wander** if you are **bent on wandering**! But...Psalm 106:15 provides for us a very solemn reminder: “And He [God] gave them their request; **but sent leanness into their soul**.”

--Lot should have **left Sodom long** before the angels had to **drag him out**. But he didn’t! And just like Lot, **some of you**—for your own spiritual well-being—need to **part company** with those you are “hanging around with” to avoid any more **spiritual damage** than you have already experienced!

--Mark it down—if you have a steady diet of **seeing** wrong things and **hearing** wrong things, it will harm you—even if you **don’t join in and do** the wrong things!

Not only was there a loss of peace, there was also... B. Loss of persuasion

Let’s turn now to Genesis 19; notice vs 12-13.

God through the angels is saying, ‘Warn your family, Lot! God has sent us to destroy this place!’

**Did Lot** believe what the angels said? He certainly did! **How** do we know?

--Look at vs 14. "And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city."

What was their response? "But he seemed as one **that mocked** unto his sons in law."

I want to take a few minutes to really paint the picture of what is happening. The **men of Sodom** were so angry that Lot **would not turn his visitors** over to them, that they **threatened to do worse to Lot** than what they were going to do to these men! The angels **kept that from happening** by pulling Lot back into the house—then striking the men of Sodom **with blindness** so they couldn't break the door down!

Although we don't know exactly **how late it was**, we do know that it was after dark. Lot goes to their home, possibly having to wake them up, and says, 'Get up; we have to leave. God is going to destroy this city!'

And they think he is "messaging" with them. 'Sure Lot, we will come out of the door with a bag of our belongings, and you will laugh at us! We're not going to fall for your joke!'

Lot, of course, was **not joking**. Imagine the desperation in his voice! 'It's true; you've got to believe me. God is going to destroy this city and we must leave—**now!**'

But they didn't believe Lot—and they didn't leave with Lot! **Why** couldn't Lot persuade them to believe him? Pretty safe to say it was because **his life** did not back up **what he said he believed!** J.C. Ryle writes: "His life carried no weight; his words were not listened to; his religion drew none to follow him" (Holiness, pg 159).

What was the smell of smoke—the stain of sin—that Lot had from living in Sodom?

First, loss of **peace**. Second, loss of **persuasion**. Third... C. Loss of people

Lot wasn't the first one that God told about the pending judgment on Sodom. God told **Abraham** first. **How did Abraham** respond to this news? **In Chapter 18**, we read of Abraham pleading with God to spare the city of Sodom. He started out **with fifty**. Gen 18:24 "Peradventure there be **fifty** righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the **fifty** righteous that are therein?"

God's response—I'm paraphrasing—was that He would **not destroy the city** if there were 50 there. Abraham then asked God to spare Sodom if there were 45 righteous people...then 40...and 30...and 20.

And then we see Abraham's final request in Gen 18:32 "And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure **ten** shall be found there. And He [God] said, I will not destroy it for **ten's** sake." **Were ten** righteous people found in the city of Sodom?

Sadly, there **were not!** **How many escaped** Sodom? **Four:** Lot, his wife, and two daughters.

--That means Lot's **sons in law** that we talked about earlier **were destroyed** with the others.

--And even though Lot's wife **left Sodom with him** and was **initially delivered**, **her heart** was very much **in Sodom** and she looked back—even though the angels told her not to. What happened?

Gen 19:26 "But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." Do I believe that happened? I sure do! God said it here in Gen 19—and Jesus said in **Luke 17:32** "Remember Lot's wife."

Pretty sad reflection on Lot, isn't it? Lot influenced **no one outside** of his four walls—and didn't even influence **his own wife enough** for her to obey God and not look back!

**What about us?** Are we influencing anyone for heaven? Are neighbors...and relatives...and people within our homes going to heaven **with us**—if **we indeed** are going there ourselves? It is so easy to get caught up with the world and the "here-and-now" that we fail to **warn people**—and fail to **live a life** that shows **we believe what we warn them about!** We need to get serious **about rescuing the perishing**, don't we?!

Lastly, let's consider Lot's ... D. Loss of a positive legacy

What is the legacy of Lot? Did he **change his ways** and start living right because he was away from the influence of Sodom? Sadly, he did not. In fact, **shortly after this** Lot's daughters got him drunk and committed immorality with their own father!

Although this quote is a little longer than what I usually share with you, J.C. Ryle makes some fascinating observations regarding the legacy of Lot. **Ryle writes:**

*We know not how long he lived after his escape. We know not where he died, or when he died—whether he saw Abraham again—what was the matter of his death—what he said or what he thought. All these are hidden things. We are told of the last days of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David—but not one word about Lot....*

*The Scripture appears to draw a veil around him on purpose. There is a painful silence about his latter end. He seems to go out like an expiring lamp, and to leave an ill-savour [**meaning smell**] behind him. And had we not be specially told in the New Testament that Lot was “just” and “righteous,” I verily believe we should have doubted whether Lot was a saved soul at all. (Holiness, pg 160)*

Pretty sad legacy, isn't it? What **about us**? What will be said...or thought...or maybe even written about us after we are gone?

So what would God have us do in light of what we've heard this morning?

1. First, honestly evaluate your attitude toward sin in your life. Are you knowingly, purposely doing what you know is wrong to do? If so, you need to stop—now!

--If we play **with fire**, we might—or might not—get burned, but we definitely **will smell** like smoke!

--But if we play **with sin**, **there is no** “might” or “might not”—we **will suffer loss**!

--And we **don't get to pick** what that loss will be!

2. Second, you need to be honest about who you “hang around with.” Some of you need to separate from certain people in your lives. I'm not telling you that—God through Lot is telling you that!

3. Third, God knows whether or not you are saved; God knows whether or not you belong to Him. Do you belong to Him? If not, you will suffer a far worse fate than just dying.

Jesus said in **Luke 12:4-5** “And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.”

4. Lastly, are you impacting people for God—or are you like Lot? Are you warning people about their future judgment—and does your life back up what you are saying?