

# Pitching Our Tents Toward Sodom

**Introduction.** About 4,000 years ago, an account is recorded with such important implications and examples that we would be remiss if we did not properly consider them. In Genesis 13:1-18, Lot and Abraham separated from one another. Because both had sizable herds, the land would not support them dwelling together. Abraham gave Lot the opportunity to select his land first and he chose the rich and fertile plain of Jordan which contained the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 13:12 states that he “pitched his tent toward Sodom.”

Now the inhabitants of these cities were extremely wicked. Not only were they given to homosexuality, but other sins prevailed there making the city deeply depraved (Ezekiel 16:46-50). God determined that the cities would be destroyed (Genesis 18:20-21). In the events surrounding their destruction, some powerful perils can be exposed to prevent us from “pitching our tents toward Sodom.”

## ***I. A Peril To Ourselves***

- A. In Sodom, Lot was greatly distressed daily by the lawless deeds of his neighbors (2 Peter 2:6-8). We do not know why he remained there, but it could have been the same worldly ambition that lead him to choose the well-watered plain of Jordan (Genesis 13:10).
- B. This was Lot’s character flaw. Idolatry was the first sin condemned in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3) and Paul said that covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3:5-7). Like so many, he seemed to have been attracted to carnality and lacked the courage to get away from it for his own good. We will face constant pressures from television, the Internet, movies, and music. Can we be exposed to this environment and prevail like Joseph or Daniel?
- C. Along with losing his earthly possessions and almost losing his life (Genesis 19:16), Lot also lost his companion.
  1. Lot’s wife was delivered by Sodom because of him, but her heart remained in the wicked city (Luke 17:32). In Genesis 19:26, she looked back or considered what was being left behind and was turned into a pillar of salt after God’s direct warning (Genesis 19:17).
  2. Christians are delivered from the world by the gospel, but the love of the world can reclaim them if they desire its evil ways (Luke 9:62).
  3. Although Lot’s wife made her own decision for her own reasons (wealth or family left behind), Lot bares part of the responsibility for placing his wife in an environment of temptation.

## ***II. A Peril To Our Children***

- A. The compromise Lot made to live in Sodom left its mark on his daughters. Their character suffered in that they learned the power of alcohol to destroy morality and they learned to compromise to achieve their desired end (Genesis 19:30-38). Their behavior toward Lot was without shame.
- B. There is a strong implication that Lot would not have committed incest if he had been sober (cp. Romans 12:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; Titus 2:2, 4, 6, 12). But that does not excuse him of guilt because he allowed himself to become drunk,

knowing that people act wickedly under the influence of alcohol. The sons of his incest, Moab and Ben-ammi, became the founders of two nations, the Moabites and the Ammonites, that later continually harassed the Israelites.

- C. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah reflects the importance of proper training. The greatest concern of any parent should be the spiritual training and discipline of their children (Proverbs 4:1-4). It is not that we should forget or be unconcerned with secular training, but we should keep spiritual training in its proper place.
- D. Children also need a great example from their parents (John 12:10-11; 2 Corinthians 9:2; Hebrews 11:4; 1 Peter 2:12). One act of obedience is better than one hundred sermons. William Barclay said, "A saint is someone whose life makes it easier to believe in God."

### **III. A Peril To The Church**

- A. The example of Lot's wife demonstrates the danger of worldliness, particularly within the church. In the absence of any external persecution, worldliness is one of the most dangerous obstacles the church faces. We lose so many good people because they are overcome by covetousness, materialism, or sensuality. Have you ever wondered what good Achan (Joshua 7:21), Judas (Matthew 26:15), Simon (Acts 8:20), and Demas (2 Timothy 4:10) could have accomplished if they were not tied up with the world?
- B. James and John give stern warnings about worldliness (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17). A ship will not sink in the water unless the water manages to enter the ship. It is the same way with a Christian. We can be fine living in this world as long as we do not get too close to the world (John 15:19; 17:14-16).
- C. The Bible gives several ways to deal with worldliness:
  - 1. Be on guard against it (Luke 21:34).
  - 2. Do not be conformed to the world (1 Peter 1:14).
  - 3. Crucify yourself to the world (Galatians 6:14; 1 Peter 4:1-3).
  - 4. Set your mind on heavenly realities (Colossians 3:1-2).
  - 5. Avoid the unnecessary entanglements of life (2 Timothy 2:4).
  - 6. Overcome the world through God's power and your faith (1 John 4:4; 5:4-5).
- D. What we think is safe really is not safe at all (Matthew 13:22; James 5:1-5). If we could solve the problem of worldliness in a congregation, you would have a strong group. When people tell you that they have a good congregation, do you know what they are saying? They are saying these people have defeated worldliness. The treasures in Heaven will be ours if we can beat this mortal enemy (Matthew 6:19-21).

**Conclusion.** You have to violently resist the tides of the world. Give up all that holds you back from God. The deliverance of Lot assures us that God knows how to deliver the godly from temptations (2 Peter 2:9). He will deliver all those who turn to Him in obedient faith. Let us not "pitch our tents toward Sodom," but sacrifice our bodies to service to God and present ourselves as alive from the death of sin (Romans 6:12-23).