

The Lord Knows How to Deliver

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: Discernment for the Last Days

Text: 2 Peter 2:7-9 (NLT)

When the Apostle Peter was dealing with the issue of individuals and leaders who get off track morally and scripturally, he used Lot as a textbook example of how that happens. Peter was addressing the fact that false spiritual leaders will emerge at the end of the age. Lot's **choice** to gradually lay aside his convictions and to convince himself over time that it was alright to go in the wrong direction led to a great deal of personal tragedy.

We learn in Genesis that Abraham had a brother who died. His brother had a son named Lot. **Genesis 11:26-28** Abraham and Sarah were still living in Ur of the Chaldeans (Modern day Iraq part of the fertile crescent) when Haran died. Abraham and Sarah assumed the parental role for Lot before they were called to their walk of **faith**. **Acts 7:2-3** This is important because Lot would have been around to see what God was doing in Abram's life. **Before** Abram heard God speak to him he would have been a pagan by tradition. He would have been raised to worship the moon god, which many connect to the Muslim god Allah. One online commentary said this:

~ When God called Abraham (then called Abram) in Genesis 12:1, He told Abraham to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house. Everything familiar was to be left behind, and that included his religion. We do not know what Abraham knew about the true God at that point, but it is likely that he had received some instruction from his father, as each generation passed down their history to the next. As a worshiper of other gods, Abraham must have been surprised to receive a direct revelation from Yahweh. The moon god and other deities were distant objects of worship, and they did not personally interact with men. Abraham obeyed God's call and, when he arrived in the land of Canaan, he built an altar to Yahweh at Shechem **Genesis 12:7** The text indicates that God's appearance to Abraham was a deciding factor in his choosing to worship Him. Hebrews 11:8 says that Abraham's departure from Ur was an example of faith in action.

Hebrews 11:8

For Abram to declare that he was departing from his ancient pagan roots to follow the voice of a God no one knew would have sent waves through the family and community. Lot was there to **observe** Abram's first steps of faith. The Bible also tells us that Lot went with him so he was a part of Abram's journey and transformation to Abraham. Lot understood conversion, **repentance** and the importance of obedience to the voice of God. He knew that living a life of surrender and consecration was what God required. Abraham's faith became his faith.

What is amazing is that when given the opportunity, Lot chose to part ways with Abraham and to **settle** and make his home in one of the most wicked cities ever known to man.

Genesis 13:10-13 Lot convinced himself that he could live in compromise and not be affected by it.

Although Lot had physically left Ur of the Chaldeans, the pagan culture of his homeland had never left him. When he faced a crossroads moment, when he had a choice to make, he was drawn to an environment that was similar and familiar to the one he knew. Over time Lot's decision meant his wife, daughters and sons-in-law, the entire family, would be affected by the corrupt environment. The wickedness of that city got so into the family that even Lot's wife could no longer obey a simple command given by God. **Genesis 19:15-26, Luke 17:28-33** The Bible warns us that the last days will be as in the days of lot. We are instructed to remember Lot's wife.

The story of Lot is the story of a man who had a great beginning but departed from the faith that had been imparted to him. When Lot chose to relocate to Sodom, he was actually returning to culture that he had left. **Proverbs 26:11** This is a powerful reminder to those of us living in the last days.

It is important to note that Lot was not forced to live in Sodom. When he first saw the wickedness of the city he could have turned and left. Lot put aside his convictions and made his home there knowing it was not a place for a righteous man. Even though Lot walked in faith with Abraham for years it seems that Ur of the Chaldeans remained alive in his soul. We must never forget that if we do not deal with issues at the root, they will remain alive and will reactivate at a critical moment in life. The city was a draw to his flesh because he was still comfortable with his past.

Lot's wandering began gradually. This is true of any Christian or spiritual leader who backslides. Lot's story is one of the clearest in scripture of how a departure from God and His word progressively takes place in the life of a Christian. This is what Peter was talking about.

The walk of faith that Abram and Lot had was one that blessed and prospered them but it was not easy. **Genesis 13:5-13** The walk of faith is never an easy one or a comfortable one. Sometimes people grow weary of the faith journey and want to stop and settle down. Sodom and Gomorrah were known for their luxury and were full of financial opportunity. How many people have followed the will of God for a season but for various reasons, gradually, over a period of time, came to believe that an "easier" route was better for their families. **Matthew 13:18-23** Lot slowly moved closer and closer to Sodom until he moved right into the environment that he knew was wrong.

Peter used this illustration of Lot as an example of spiritual leaders and Christians who deviate from the faith. Many of these people start out strong, make the sacrifices of obedience and follow God's will. Somewhere along the way, for different reasons, these people give into weariness, disappointment or discouragement and yield to the temptation of believing that life would be easier if they would just relax their standards. It seems that life could be less complicated and demanding.

The truth is no one just wakes up one day and decides to stop walking by faith. No one just decides that they are going to cast aside the strong standards of the Bible. It happens by inches one day at a time. Lot initially stayed in the plain but he “pitched his tent toward Sodom”. He kept it in his sight. He allowed his thoughts to be drawn towards its activities. Eventually he just moved right in. Sodom became home in his **mind** before he actually moved in.

2 Corinthians 10:5

❖ **If we don’t take our thoughts captive, they will captivate us and become our reality.**

Lot chose to live in a city that was destined for judgement. The Bible tells us that God **delivered** or rescued Lot and his family before judgement was poured out. Just like Noah before the flood, just like Lot before the fire, God will **rescue** His righteous people out of the world BEFORE He pours out His redemptive wrath on the earth. This is called the **Pre**-Tribulation Rapture of the church.

This word ‘delivered’ speaks to a last-ditch effort to save someone on the brink of destruction. Lot’s soul had become so seared and spiritually calloused by what had invaded his heart and soul that an **intervention** was needed to save him and his family. If not, he would have stayed too long. Peter describes Lot as being tormented or vexed by what he saw daily. This torment was wearing him down, tiring him out and bringing him to a place of exhaustion. The wickedness was eating away at his **resolve**. This is the power and process of sin. When you choose to live near and with sin, it eventually breaks you down until you succumb to the culture around you. **Daniel 7:25 (AMP)** This is one of Satan’s many and most effective tactics... to wear the saints down and to wear them out.

We do not know to what extent Lot had become like his environment. What we do know is that when the angels came they found him sitting in the gate of the city. **Genesis 19:1** To sit in the gates of a city meant that you were among the influential and in a place of **leadership**. This man who once walked by faith was now so accepted that he **blended** right in. He was considered not just one of them but someone that they looked up to. Lot chose to stay and participate in the culture even if he did not adopt the lifestyle of sinfulness. While Abraham stayed set apart, Lot became accepted. **2 Timothy 2:22, 2 Corinthians 6:16-17**

The Progression of Sin – James 1:14-16

When Balaam tried to curse the people of God, he found out that he could not do it. When his sorcery failed, Balaam **seduced** them into unbridled, sensual living with the prostitutes of Moab. **Numbers 25:1-3** The men of Israel did **exactly** what Lot had done to himself. They played with danger until danger began to play with them. Remember that the sins we entertain today will have an impact on those who follow us. Most people don’t even realize who the Moabites are descended from. **Genesis 19:30-36**

What we see with Lot and the men of Israel with the Moabites is the SAME **progression** of how sin draws us in. Remember – “Sin will take you farther than you ever intended to go, it will cost you more than you ever expected to pay, and it will keep you longer than you ever intended to stay.”

- First – Sin **called** unto Lot and the Moabite women called unto the men. It causes you to **look**. Lot saw the plains and the city and liked what he saw. The Israelite men looked at the prostitutes as they called and seduced them. Lot moved his tent to the plains and placed the opening looking right at the city.
- Second – Sin **kept** calling to Lot. Eventually Lot left the plains and moved into the city. The Moabite women kept enticing the men of Israel until they first gave into the ungodly relationship. **Numbers 25:1 (NLT)**
- Third – Once the Israelite men had relationship with the people, that relationship caused them to then be **seduced** into a relationship with demons. **Numbers 25:2 (NLT)** Lot was so taken in that he actually sat in the gates and became one of them.

Peter helps us to see three key **mistakes** that Lot made. **2 Peter 2:8**

First we must make clear that Peter makes sure we know that Lot was a **righteous** man. He was still a man who honored God enough that God went to great lengths to deliver him.

Yet he made three mistakes:

- 1) He chose the wrong place to live. The Bible says that Lot dwelt with them. That word means to settle into a home and feel comfortable there – he grew **comfortable** living among wickedness. He was comfortably uncomfortable.
- 2) He chose the wrong **friends**. **1 Corinthians 15:33** Like most believers and spiritual leaders who falter spiritually do so because they choose the wrong spiritual friends, advisors, mentors and associates. The decision to dwell among wrong spiritual friends is always a dangerous step down the road of deception.
- 3) He kept seeing and hearing. (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) This is the power of continual **influence**. What we watch and hear determines what we eventually become. Eventually Lot became numb and hardened to the evil that he was exposed to.

The children’s song is true – oh, **be careful** little eyes and ears what you see and hear. Lot made the repeated mistake of regularly hearing and seeing what was detrimental to his soul.

What made the difference for Lot is that he had an **intercessor** by the name of Abraham. **Genesis 18:20-22, Ezekiel 22:30** God is looking for people who will stand in the gap. Those who will close the areas where the enemy can get in. When we see Christians or leaders in the grip of deception, we must intercede for them in prayer and make an intervention when we can by warning them and making a way out. We would want others to do the same for us. Even if we got ourselves into the situation. Notice that Abraham **boldly** spoke to God until he was certain God would grant Lot deliverance. **Genesis 18:23-33**

When we come to God in prayer, we can always speak our mind. **Hebrews 4:16** When we approach God, we should never feel that we are too bold, too frank, too honest, too blunt or too outspoken. When we forcibly lay hold of God's grace and help, we will discover that God desires to help and deliver. We acquire help for ourselves and those we pray for. When we stand in the gap for others, Jesus then begins to fight for them.

Notice what Abraham did after he interceded for Lot. **Genesis 18:33** Abraham returned to his place. Notice the place of the intercessor was his **home**. God didn't send Abraham to rescue Lot. The battle and deliverance belonged to God. He used angels to do that part of the work. Know your **place** and your part. **Genesis 19:15-16**

It is interesting to note that Lot had to be forcibly **removed** from Sodom. He had a hard time parting from it. Those who have been deceived will need **divine** intervention to leave the place they become comfortable with. It will be a fight. Notice the fight was not Abrahams. **Ephesians 6:12** The fight will not be ours. Our job is to intercede, it is God's position to deliver. Abraham interceded and slept in peace while the entire valley was destroyed. **Genesis 19:24-29**

Just like Abraham, we must pray for those who are caught up in deception. Those we are praying for may not even realize just how much danger they are in. They are not only deceived about what they believe but also about their **safety**. Remember the Lord knows how to deliver. God expects us to stand in the gap through intercession and through warning others.

If you were caught in deception, wouldn't you want someone to intercede for you?