

REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE

One significant event that happened in the time of old that has been recorded to serve as a guide and a warning to those who have undertaken to serve God Almighty is the story of Lot's wife. So outstanding was it as an object lesson to worshipers of God that Jesus Christ underscored it with a terse admonition – "Remember Lot's wife." Luke 17:32.

Who was Lot's wife? What things did she do that brought her into the purview of Christ's teachings? What lessons are there to learn from this woman whose character has forever acquired the badge of infamy?

The Bible does not give her name; rather she is seen from the perspective of her husband, a nephew of the Patriarch Abraham. The faith in Jehovah shared by Abraham and Lot made his wife to partake of God's blessings on the Patriarch.

The decision of Abraham and his nephew to part ways to ease the friction between their herdsmen over grazing rights for their cattle, caused the movement of Lot and his family to the rich city of Sodom and Gomorrah. These cities were located in the plain of Jordan, an area described as being 'well watered everywhere', as the "garden of the Lord". But despite the abundance, the men of the city were "wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly" – Genesis 13:9-13. The inhabitants of Sodom were given to the vice of homosexuality – the practice of men co-habiting with men contrary to the law of God. (Leviticus 18:22;20:13) So corrupt were the inhabitants of the city that when the Lord sent two angels to destroy the place, they could not find ten righteous people in these cities.

As in Sodom, homosexuality is a vice that has deeply permeated various parts of the world especially the Western world where homosexuals now constitute a significant segment of the population. It goes without saying that homosexuality is one of the deadly sins for which God Almighty will destroy this world – (Luke 17:28-30 1 Corinthians 6:9; Romans 1:27; Isaiah 24:1-6) Lot having found favor with God was instructed by the angels saying, "Hast thou here any besides? Son-in-law and thy sons and thy daughters and whatsoever thou hast in the city bring them out of this place. For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it" – Genesis 19:12, 13

In obedience to the angels' instructions, Lot went to his sons-in-law to alert them of the impending calamity. But they mocked and scoffed at him, thinking he was raising a false alarm. While Lot lingered, the angels took him, his wife and two daughters by the hand to the outskirts of the city and instructed them to "escape for thy life; look not behind thee...escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." – verses 13-17.

No sooner had they left the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah than God rained fire from heaven to destroy the inhabitants thereof. But on the way, as they were moving away from the cities that were being destroyed, Lot's wife flouted the angels' instructions by looking back. She was killed instantly in a manner that was strange, unusual, unprecedented and never heard of again in human history. Verses 25 and 26 of the same Chapter 19 states thus: "And he overthrew those cities and all the plain and all the inhabitants of the cities and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him and became a pillar of salt."

Writing on the strange death of Lot's wife, William Nicholson in *The Bible Student's Companion* notes that "the expression 'pillar of salt' may signify no more in this case than an *everlasting* monument against criminal curiosity, disbelief and disobedience". It is obvious from the incident that obedience to the Lord must be total, continuous and unconditional.

In the picture thus presented, Lot and his family represented or foreshadowed those persons of

goodwill who hear the warning which is now being given to all nations, concerning the impending destruction at the Battle of Armageddon. The “mountains” they fled to for safety symbolize God’s Kingdom Organization in the last days where people of God will find safety, protection and salvation which belongs only to Jehovah (Psalm 3:8) Lot and his two daughters received the warning to flee, and they fled before destruction fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Likewise, will those who make up the “Other Sheep” receive the warning to flee, and they must flee to the Lord’s Kingdom before Armageddon begins. Such people of goodwill must abide under the Lord’s protection until the “fire” of Armageddon has completely burned out. Lot’s wife symbolized those who have received the warning to flee but who are unable to remain steadfast to the end due to faithlessness and carnality. -See Matthew 24:12,13; Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23.

That this wicked world is foreshadowed by Sodom is evident in St John’s account in Revelation 11:8 “That great city called Sodom, where Christ was crucified.” Many people in the world today are obsessed with materialism and persist in their pernicious ways totally indifferent to the Lord’s requirements exactly as the Lord foretold. “For as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.” Luke 17:28-30

That salvation is an individual matter that goes beyond family ties or bond was demonstrated by Lot and his two daughters who continued their march to safety without minding the demise of an important family member. Had they turned away from their mission to sympathize with their dead, the same fate would have befallen them. In Ezekiel 14:13,14,16,18 God warned: “Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it: Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate”

When Christ came, he showed that one’s salvation is more than blood affinity when he said: “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. – Matthew 10:37; That apart, St. Paul charged Christians thus: “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”-Philippians 2:12.

OBJECT LESSONS

First, Lot’s wife showed herself to be an ingrate who treated with levity God’s wonderful provision of a place of safety for them. Having brought them out of the cities, the angels’ message was “escape for they life...escape to the mountain.” But she made light of the grace of salvation given them and so lost her life.

Second, she was stubborn, disloyal, rebellious and faithless – in other words disobedient – to God hence she flouted a simple command that led to her death. She serves as a warning to those living in this last day that is like minded. In 2 Peter 2:6-7 St Peter recalled that God turned the, “cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly”

Third, she was guilty of running after worldly or material possessions, cares of this life and worrying over the fate of the people in the cities, an attitude which Nicholson called “criminal curiosity”. Material possessions in the world are vanity and they cannot be compared to one’s life. The Lord Jesus had declared that “a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15-21) And St John warned: “Love not the world neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that

doeth the will of the Father abideth forever.” – 1 John 2:15-17.

Fourth, the incident reminds us that God’s day of reckoning is real and imminent, though the exact “day and hour knoweth no man”- Matthew 24:36.

Fifth, the justice of God can be swift on some evil doers, despite God’s longsuffering.

Sixth, we can see that a single mistake or error can attract dire consequences on one which sometimes can lead to death as in the case of Lot’s wife. This is why it is dangerous to commit deliberate sins or do things to tempt God simply because “sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily” It pays to heed God’s word always; obedience to the word of God brings prosperity, blessings and life. – Psalm 106:3; Proverbs 22:4.

True worshippers of God should not emulate Lot’s wife rather they should take warning and serve God seriously and steadfastly without looking back to the evil world they had fled from so as to obtain salvation. And Jesus said: “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” Luke 9:62.