

# Lot's Wife



by

**L. Steven Cheairs, Ph.D.**

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This booklet is dedicated to the LORD, the One who provides for the needs of His people.

## **Lot's Wife**

In the early pages of the Bible we are introduced to a man named Abraham, the great man of faith. Abraham, the son of Terah, had two brothers (Nahor and Haron). Haron had a son named Lot. When Abraham left Ur both Terah and Lot went with him. Sarah (Abraham's wife) also left Ur and journeyed with him. At this point in time, Abraham was known as Abram and Sarah was called Sarai. This group of travelers moved to the city of Haran (the original plan had been to move to the land of Canaan). While at Haran, Terah died. Terah was two hundred and five years old when he died.

In Haran the LORD tells Abram to leave his country, relatives, and his father's house. Abram is told to go to the land that God would show to him. Abram, Sarai, Lot, and all their possessions (along with servants) left Haran and set out for the land of Canaan. When they arrive at Canaan the LORD told Abram that his descendants would be given this land. The group stayed in Canaan for a time but later moved on to Egypt because of a famine in the land of Canaan.

Later when this group left Egypt they were very wealthy (due to the Pharaoh's attraction to Sarai, whom Abram passed off as his sister). Both Abram and Lot left Egypt

wealthy men. Their flocks and herds were so great that when combined they could not share the same pastures. There was also strife between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. In order to prevent this strife from growing to the point where it affected the relationship of Abram and Lot it was decided that the two herds and men would separate. Lot chose the rich lands of the valley of the Jordan River. Lot moved to the city of Sodom, east of Abram. Abram went to Hebron, where he dwelt by the oaks of Mamre.

"Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD." A number of years after Abram and Lot had separated, three angels came and presented themselves to Abram. One of the angels was the "angel of the LORD"; i.e. the pre-incarnate form of Jesus. At the end of this visit "the angel of the LORD" tells Abram that the two angels with him are going to Sodom to see if the people are as wicked as the outcry has proclaimed (an outcry that had ascended into heaven, to the throne of God). The two angels depart while "the angel of the LORD" stays with Abram and Sarai, whom the angel renames Abraham and Sarah. Abraham bargains with the LORD on the quantity of righteous people required to spare the two cities. Finally, the number of ten righteous people is agreed upon.

Lot was sitting in the gate of the city of Sodom in the evening, when the angels came into the city. Lot invited the angels to his home, they declined (preferring the city square). He urged them strongly to come to his home to spend the night. Lot offered to prepare a feast for them. They accepted the offer, and followed him to his home.

Before they lay down to sleep (after they had consumed the evening meal), the men of the city surrounded the house. There were both young and old men, men of every rank and level of the city. They wanted Lot to send the men (angels) out to have homosexual relations with them. Lot tried to talk the men of the city of Sodom out of this act. Lot even offered his own two virgin daughters to these men. They ordered Lot to stand aside and accused him of judging them (how often I have found this to be the response of the wicked: It is a quite common event when you are speaking the truth to the unrighteous, when they feel the condemnation by the Holy Spirit, they yell: you are judging me). The angels then reached out of the house and pulled Lot back inside. Next, all the people outside of the house were blinded.

One of the angels then tells Lot to gather those of his household and informs him that the city is to be destroyed. His daughters' fiancées thought Lot was jesting when he warned them. They refused to leave the

city. When morning came, the angels urged Lot to leave the city, "saying, 'Up, take your wife and your daughters, who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city'." Lot hesitated. Then like Abraham with "the angel of the LORD", Lot tried to strike a bargain with the angels. Lot suggested that a near-by city be spared since the mountains were to far away. The angels granted this request. Lot and his family fled the city, to the near-by town of Zoar. Later after the destruction of the valley floor, Lot and his daughters went to the mountains as originally instructed.

"The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar." The angel who had sent Lot to Zoar had said that he could do nothing until Lot reached Zoar. Then upon Lot arriving at Zoar "the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven, and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew out of the ground." So much for the theory of some scholars that oil and sulfur deposits below the land ignited, causing an explosion. This fire came from the LORD, right out of heaven, not from the earth below the city. Beside, both oil and sulfur are fuels. For an explosion one needs a fuel and an oxidizer, not two fuels. Just as silly are the more recent claims that they were destroyed by a natural earthquake. No, it was fire from heaven: I can read.

Now we are at the verse, which is the topic of this booklet. "But his, wife, from behind him, looked back; and she became a pillar of salt." In verse 17 we read that the angel had told Lot "... Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, least you be swept away." Then Lot struck the bargain to go to the city of Zoar instead of the mountains. Lot's wife, who had left with him, lingered behind him. She went along for the exercise, but her heart was not in the trip. She really did not believe that the destruction would overtake her. Whether it was that she just did not believe that the message was to be taken literally or that she really only had a mental assent to God's order, is not defined. The angel had warned that no action would occur until Lot reached the town, she should have been by his side.

The reason that I am drawn to this verse is that other miracles in the Old Testament always have a New Testament meaning or some message at a much deeper level. For example:

1. The crossing of the sea during the Exodus is a picture of water baptism. The water is a symbol of death. The pre-nation of Israel people entered the sea; there they died or ceased to exist. Out of this sea came a new nation.

Likewise, water baptism denotes the old self being put away with the acknowledgment of one as being a sinner and a new person being born (born again, i.e. a new creation in Christ).

2. The water from the rock, which Moses struck, in the desert is another example. The desert is a symbol of the world (a dry world in need of the Spirit of God). The rock is the rock of ages, i.e. Jesus. We ask this Rock (Jesus) for water (the Holy Spirit) and He provides us a river. This river is for us, all our companions, and anyone who wants it.

3. The plague of snakes in the wilderness, with the pole and the copper serpent that Moses had erected in the midst of the camp is one more example. This is a picture of the crucifixion. The pole is the cross, the copper serpent is the Christ with all the worlds sin upon Him, and the snake bitten people who were healed when looking at the pole with the copper serpent were the people of earth, who are forgiven of their sin (snake bit) when they look to the Messiah on the cross.

4. Abraham offering Isaac as the sacrifice is a picture of the Father of heaven offering His son on an altar (the cross) in order to pay the price required by sin.



5. Noah's boat ride is a picture of the Spirit (symbolized as water) lifting God's people above the troubles and judgment, to safety and protection.

6. The ten plagues of Egypt during the pre-Exodus days in Egypt were designed to show that the false gods of Egypt were inferior to the one true God. Egypt's gods were impotent and powerless when faced by the real God of creation.

There are dozens upon dozens of other examples that I could have cited. The point is that these miracles were not just arbitrary use of some holy magic, they were interventions by God to provide some lesson to show what He planned to do in His major undertaking of the redemption of mankind.

Back in the early eighties I was studying the symbolism of the tabernacle. I looked at each element of the tabernacle as a symbol to be decoded. When I studied the pillars I came to the above passage of Lot's wife. But as I worked out the meanings of these symbols this passage was a problem. A pillar is used as the symbol of a mature person of God. Not to mention that salt is used to represent the state of the people of God (Jesus called His followers the salt of the earth). Therefore, I could not understand why Lot's wife would be turned into a

pillar of salt. Why not a heap of dung? This is the God of creation; He can pull off a miracle any way He wants? He does not have to use natural processes as the liberal scholars often try to mold the acts of God into (He can use natural processes, but He can go beyond these processes as well). The symbol of pillar of salt is 180 degrees out of phase with the way God normally performs miracles. I don't doubt for a moment that He could turn someone into a lump of salt, but I don't see why He would. Our LORD is not some mount Olympus god who performs senseless or needless acts of magic. However, it is true that He is the very force of creation; He provides laws and order. He is the expression of creation and in His four faces we see expressed the four forces of nature (for in Him all things are held together).

God's patterns are very intricate, complex, and beautiful. God wouldn't punish a woman's disobedience in such a way as to confuse His greater patterns (He punished Moses for messing up the pattern of asking the rock for water). The utter depth of meaning in the Bible is such that I think there is more here. As it turned out, like most Americans I tend to study using an English translation. When I used a Hebrew text (without vowel points) it was clear as to what the problem was, a mistranslation. This was not a problem, which occurred when the Hebrew was translated to English, but when the vowels were added to the Hebrew.

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