

... A Pillar Of Salt

by William J. Stewart

On the western shore of the Dead Sea, on Jebel Usdum (the Hill of Sodom), is a salt pillar known as Lot's wife. Is it her? I don't know. What I know is that there is a lesson about faith and obedience to learn from her.

Lot's family was warned,

Escape for your Life! Do not look behind you... (Genesis 19:17)

Why Lot's wife looked back, we can only speculate. Did she long for the life she had enjoyed in Sodom? Was she just curious about what was happening behind her. Whatever it was, she disregarded God's word and was destroyed for it.

She Didn't Know The Penalty

Some might think it was unfair, since Mrs. Lot did not know what would happen if she looked back. If she had been told that she would be turned into a pillar of salt, surely she'd have obeyed.

Must God tell us what will happen if we do not obey Him? Is He wrong simply to expect us to heed His word? Do parents tell their children what the punishment will be for every disobedience? Should a child's obedience depend upon knowing what happens if he chooses to disobey? It is neither unjust for a parent or for God to not disclose what the punishment for disobedience will be. It is right for children to obey their parents in everything (Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20) and for all humanity to obey God in all things (Acts 5:29; Hebrews 3:18).

Flee Fornication!

I have on my shelf a book called Bible Trivia & Fun Facts. In it, the question is asked, "What's the smallest sin in the Bible?" The answer: "Flea fornication!"

All joking aside, the Bible in many places commands us to make haste to depart from sexual immorality. Notice just a few:

Flee sexual immorality. (fornication, KJV) Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. (1 Corinthians 6:18) ...flee these things (foolish and harmful lusts, v 9) and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. (1 Timothy 2:22)

In addition to these direct commands for us to stay away from sexual sins, God has given examples of such in the Old Testament: Joseph fleeing Potiphar's wife; David's failure to turn away when he saw Bathsheba bathing; and yes, Lot's family fleeing from the sexual wickedness which characterized the city of Sodom.

It can be at times that God's people get too comfortable with sin. Had Israel purged the land of Canaan of all the wicked nations whom they were to destroy and displace, we might read a much different history for God's people in the Old Testament. They permitted the wickedness of the nations to remain, and eventually began to intermarry with them and worship their gods. Israel was guilty of spiritual fornication and would suffer the consequences of such.

We must be careful too, that we do not become at ease with sin. We must be in the world, but not of the world (1 Corinthians 5:9-10). We must interact with folks if we are to affect them for the gospel's sake, but must distinguish ourselves from them in the media you allow in your home. Many TV shows, movies, magazines, books, songs, etc. have no rightful place in the Christian home.

Lot's wife failed to flee from sinful Sodom as she ought to, even Lot and his daughters did not leave with urgency. Let us not make the same mistake!

Remember Lot's Wife!

Jesus warned an audience that the impending judgment will be like the days of Noah (Luke 17:27). Life continues as it had always, until after the door of the ark was shut. Then the Lord opened the windows of heaven and the fountains from below, and the entire world was destroyed in a flood.

He gave yet another illustration. He said, ...as it was also in the days of Lot: they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed (Luke 17:28-30).

He would then compel us to not have a longing for the things of

this life, but to prepare ourselves for the day of the Lord and to stand in judgment. The lord spoke:

...he who is on the housetop, and his good are in the house, let him not come down to take them away.

And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back (Luke 17:31)

Lest we be captivated by the fancies of the world, the Lord, upon warning us to not turn back gives three simple words:

Remember Lot's Wife! (Luke 17:32)

The tragedy of turning or looking back, even for a moment, was capsulized and crystalized in Lot's wife forever. Why she looked back is really not important – that she did is all we need to focus upon. She was told not to, but she did. Friend, we need to heed the Lord when He speaks!

The apostle John also cautions us about having undue desire for things of this world. He said:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever (1 John 2:15-17).

Let us learn the lesson of Lot's wife. The pillar of salt was a temporal judgment – destruction in hell is the eternal judgment. If we want no part in the devil's hell, then let us have no desire to look back or grope for the things of this world. Eyes straight ahead, friends!