

Jeremiah 48

Lot's Legacy

Read Jeremiah 48:1-2: Like any chapter in the Bible; there is the lesson in history. Behind that is the significance and application to us. It's like playing Where's Waldo? Where am I in this story? This chapter is specifically about the **judgement against Moab**. Moab and Ammon are the two nations who descended from Lot. There seems to be a correlation between the origins and the destiny of nations. Lot was described as a compromising believer. He was unhappy, because he had too much worldly influence.

...and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked ⁸(for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)—⁹then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, (2 Peter 2)

Lot moved his family into a terrible neighborhood to make more money. Lot even put himself into a strategic position (like a city councilman). He may have been offended at the behavior of the locals, but he was yoked to these unbelievers.

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. (Matthew 5)

Lot is our example of an end times believer who fits in too well with local customs. He is no longer distinct from the rotting culture. He has become somewhat complicit. He has tried to comfort himself in this disagreeable lifestyle. He has traded away his soul for things of this world.

“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—¹⁸I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. ¹⁹As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. (Revelation 3)

Abram had to keep intervening for Lot. Lot became a hostage situation when Sodom and Gomorrah were sacked by outsiders. Later, when Abram prayed for Lot's deliverance the responding angels were more comfortable sleeping in the city streets than in his house. Conversely, God and his angels enjoyed a meal and fellowship with Abram. Abram was a friend of God. Lot believed, but his treasure was in this world. He was torn in two directions between his spirit and his flesh.

Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. ² And he said, "Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." And they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the open square." (Genesis 19)

Lot was averse to returning to Abram, after he lost everything. We tend to want to wait an extra inning to see if things turn around to vindicate our risks. Lot had become a rich man who lost everything. Even most of his family. Perhaps he said something to Abram after his first rescue...about why he was still staying in that den of sin. Lot was undoubtedly ashamed.

The Moabites became very independent people; wanting nothing to do with outsiders. Sinners do not like public visibility. The Moabites became full of pride. Over time, compromising believers become embittered against zealous believers. I can recall going to church camp as a kid. There was a group of zealous and enthusiastic kids who talked a lot about Jesus. I thought they were either goofy, or that they were just showing off. I was a corrupting influence by trying to inject too much worldly fun.

So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed." ¹⁸ Then Lot said to them, "Please, no, my lords! ¹⁹ Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. ²⁰ See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one; please let me escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live." ²¹ And he said to him, "See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. ²² Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. (Genesis 13)

Over the long run the descendants of Lot became full-blown enemies to God's people.

There is a descending ladder described in Psalm 1. It begins with being complicit to our pop culture. Then it includes our participation. In the end, we adopt their worldly position.

Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; (Psalm 1)

You can tell a lot about a person by what they build. Idols are defined as a work of men's hands. Moab's idol was Chemosh. Chemosh was described as a destroyer and subduer. That means that the Moabites considered those to be virtues for their society. They were loners who were spoiling for a fight. The Moabites likewise had a serious chip on their shoulder. It was like they were living out a country song, by fulfilling their critics expectations. It is fitting that their judgement came in a way that subdued them and overpowered them, so that the best they could do was to run away. In a sense, they were their own god; by living life on their own terms.

Christian Living on the Fringe

We can ask ourselves if it is good enough to merely get our fire insurance for heaven; without any gems in our crown. That is not God's plan for our life, as evidenced by Lot. If you are not going forward in your faith, you are going backwards. For me it is very easy. I am such natural sinner, that I have to move forward. My old man is still present...and tapping on the window; and he will pull me backwards if I turn off my motor. You really should not be in a position where you are questioning where you stand with God. Being a minimalist is the closest thing to being a non-believer. Certainly, the legacy of faith did not get handed down from Lot.

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. (1 John 2:19)

We can fool ourselves into thinking that we do not need other believers. We can stay away from church if it suits us; but this is living without any sacrifice whatsoever. It does not feel very good for good reasons. Our fulfillment is in fixing people...not getting a perfect arrangement in our own life.

Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, (Galatians 5)

The Path of Compromising Christians

Read Jeremiah 48 3-8: If we read the bible as a history lesson alone, we are missing the point.

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. (Romans 15)

This is not just a precautionary tale. Moab was destined to fail. It is a case study (for us) of what not to do. Why? Because we do it too! I've done it. Moab's philosophy was based on a *custom-made* faith. "I did it my way" ...and failed repeatedly. A lot of main line denominations similarly take select elements of biblical faith and replace fervency with patterns and boundaries for good measure. Not good.

Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. (Revelation 2)

There is no need to accuse a guilty conscience. Lot did not really want to fellowship with Abraham anymore. It was more about a loss of love than the optics. Once you step off of the yellow brick road it is like you don't see it anymore. I can feel estranged from God so quickly.

I spent a few years as a Christian who made my own rules and my self-imposed boundaries. It involved over-indulging this world's pleasures, as long as I did not cross certain hard lines. After I repeatedly crossed those lines, I became depressed. I had an internal reconciliation issue; that would not settle. The hard part of repentance was that my appetite for spiritual things became fainter as I drifted, so it seemed more like a forced exercise. Going to church in college was as much of a commitment than full-blown worship. It was partially fear-driven, so I did not slip any further. I was creating evidence for my professed faith. I was more or less already ruined for this world, because God's Spirit was in me. Everything had a bad aftertaste. Welcome to the life of Lot!

This is how the future plays out for compromising faith. This is the direction of the church in the end times. Lot is our end-times example. A world full of Lot-type Christians will have certain aspects to it. Why is this chapter in scripture?

Because it is the gateway to what Revelation is all about. We know what happens when people act less like Lot, and more like Abram.

if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7)

The tribulation is about when God's people stop humbling themselves and stop sincerely praying. They become a religious group who really does not follow God; but they resent others who claim to know God. The next step is that they step way out into sin; thinking that good works can erase it.

Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. ² They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. ³ So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel. ⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the LORD, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel.” (Numbers 25)

They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. (John 16)

I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. (Revelation 17)

Mt. Nebo

Mount Nebo is the first place in Moab that is addressed. Perhaps it is the most notable. Mount Nebo is where Moses died. Mount Nebo has a view of Israel. You could say it is a place to see everything that you missed in your life. It is a place of awareness of God's will; while separated.

Nebo means “prophet”. This is as far as Moses could get. Joshua was more fitting for holy land phase. Moses is synonymous with the law and its difficult standards of living. It is man-powered. Moab was all about personal glory.

Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, ² all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, ³ the South, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. ⁴ Then the LORD said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your

descendants. 'I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.' (Deuteronomy 34)

Moses did a great job: but nobody is perfect (except Jesus). Moses was reminded more than once to hand off what he could not handle (in prayer). We are just messengers. When we confuse our role, we misrepresent God.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ⁸ "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals." ⁹ So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him. ¹⁰ And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" ¹¹ Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. ¹² Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." ¹³ This was the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel contended with the LORD, and He was hallowed among them. (Numbers 20)

The Law (Moses' teachings) can bring us to the border of the place of abundant life, but we have to cross the Jordan (The Descender/death to flesh). Human greatness is exemplified in John the Baptist and Moses; but that is still not the same as being 'in Christ' (with our Joshua). Moabites were fierce warriors, but they had no help from God.



Hell is a place of regret and complete awareness of missed opportunities. Mt Nebo is to see all that we could have had.



Read Jeremiah 48:9-47: Now Moab is compared to a vineyard and the process of wine making. Moab today is southern Jordan. It was agricultural land known for grazing and wine. God uses their national wine identity to explain why they are not a good wine. The bible compares us to wine grapes that get stomped in life; and we either produce sweetness or bitterness. The life in the holy Spirit is very sweet and delicate. Life outside of Christ is a bitter experience.

Jesus said that he came for the good wine (sweet), but he was served vinegar on a sponge on a pole, with a hallucinogenic pain killer.

they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink. (Matthew 27)

Jordanian wine is produced today by two wineries, with an annual production of nearly a million bottles a year. Jordan has a long tradition of wine making, dating as far back as Nabatean times. There is evidence that Nabateans kept wine in dark caves in order to keep it in cool locations before consumption.

Archaeological digs near Petra have uncovered at least 82 wine presses of industrial scale dating back to Nabatean times. **Several sources suggest that the wine served to Jesus during the Last Supper came from Umm Qais in Northern Jordan.**

God describes why the Moabites did not become a good wine (so to speak). Verses 11 and 12 allude to the wine making practice of transferring fermenting and settling juice and dregs. This must be done to produce a good wine:

Racking is the process of transferring wine from one vessel to another, such as from tank to barrel. There are two main reasons why winemakers rack their wines. The first is to remove sediment. An initial racking is done typically after malolactic fermentation is complete, to separate the wine from what is referred to as gross lees. These are dead yeast cells and other solids leftover from fermentation that settle over time. “You’ll have a lot of solids down at the bottom of the barrel, and you can start to get this kind of yogury or leesy taste,” says Chris Peterson, partner and winemaker at Avennia in Woodinville, Washington. After the first racking, winemakers might then rack additional times to remove what is referred to as fine lees. “Those things are lending flavor and texture to the wine, but also possibly reducing focus or detail,” says Peterson.

What is the spiritual application? When we are proud; we are good enough how we are. We do not want to change or be changed by anything or anyone. “Leave me be”.

Verse 11 says that his distinct taste has been left unchanged. That is great if you are born perfect. In effect they are also like a wild grape that has not been cultivated. Wine grown from untended vineyards is not good. Wild (natural) grapes are too bitter to even eat.

Now let me sing to my Well-beloved A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard On a very fruitful hill. ² He dug it up and cleared out its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, And also made a winepress in it; So He expected it to bring forth good grapes, But it brought forth wild grapes. (Isaiah 5)

We all believe that we are doing fine, on some level, because we are somewhat nose blind. We are not fully aware of our effect on others or on God. To resist our farmer is to miss our purpose in life.