

Jeremiah 48

Read Jeremiah 48:1-13: The recorded history of men is archived for our learning. Human nature does not change. There are causes and effects resulting from all of our life choices. We cannot live in compromise like Lot; and then end up like Abraham. It does not work that way. We are all signposts for our accumulation of choices. The Bible gives us hints where our choices will lead us. We need to find Biblical characters that resonate with us. The Holy Spirit will reveal the destiny of that mind set. Go find someone who walks like you do; and see where that trail is leading.

-For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. (Romans 15:4)

Lot and his descendants serve as a source of both hope and warning to us today. He was a man with minimal spiritual fruit; yet God saved him. If you want to incorporate a little of this world's comforts in your life at the cost of holiness then you are reading the right chapter. The first account of Lot's influence on others involved his sheep herders fighting with Abraham's over grass and water. Respect for others and humility comes from the top. The strife seemed to carry through to his descendants. The Moabites worshiped Chemosh (the destroyer). This is not a position of humility or intellectual honesty.

And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example to those that after should live ungodly; -And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: -(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) -The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: (2 Peter 2:6-9)

Lot's legacy is our warning to not walk in his steps. Lot had two sons: Moab and Ammon. This chapter is about the judgement against Moab. Isaiah 15 and Ezekiel 25 also share details of Moab's destruction. Obadiah also includes information on the destruction of Edom, which is also in current Jordan. This area is like a natural fort. The imagery of Moab is of a seemingly-safe eagle's nest being brought down. We can never orchestrate our own safety. There is no such thing as karma; but we do make our own beds to sleep in. It is only in the LORD's hands.

We will jump back and forth between the people of Moab; and the lesson to us who follow that same 'Moabite' lifestyle. Moab was where southern Jordan currently exists. It is a land of terraced limestone and fertile rolling hills. Even the topography can reinforce the message. The steep rock chasms in the barren limestone are up to 1,700 feet deep and narrow. It was a highly-defensible place to retreat. Some of us feel that we can safely dwell in places where nothing can touch our lives. Confidence, indifference and pride can come from a feeling of being beyond reach of danger. That kind of confidence usually comes from our circumstances. Moab's sheer and high cliffs are like those surrounding isolated parts of the Colorado River. The study of Moab is somewhat like the *P-K Syndrome* (pastor's kids). Moab represents those with a faith history in their extended family; but develops a personal contempt for everything that represents in following direction from others. They have an arm's-length knowledge of God; yet they feel they can judge those who are sincerely-seeking God.

Moab and Ammon were settled by Lot's grandsons. Lot chose not to go the way of Abraham. We have all been told to not be *too religious*; or to get *carried away* with our faith. Moab is a case study in the lives of those who don't go all-in for Christ. Being fearful of God is the opposite of loving and trusting God. The opposite of Biblical love is not hate. It's fear (distrust). Love extends us beyond ourselves. Fear shrinks us back.

-For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.
-And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and then left on his journey… Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew you that you are an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where you have not strawed: -And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the earth: lo, there you have that is yours. -His lord answered and said to him, You wicked and slothful servant, thou knew that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: -You ought therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. -Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which has ten talents. (Matthew 25:14,15…24-28)

What does it really mean to be afraid of committing your life into the LORD's hands? It means that you have not tasted his fellowship by practicing his presence. It means that you think there is more hope in retaining the control over your life. It means that you are not 100% repentant.

Some self-reliant men manufacture and defend *their own form of honor* and live according to *a hybrid code that suits them*. Some of the former generation hang their hat on their years of service to country and family for an eternal impact. It is good; but has nothing to do with salvation and fellowship with God. This is similar to what is known in the Bible as *strange fire*. Strange fire is doing things our way instead of God's way. We substitute what we esteem over God's prescribed path. That only exists as a possibility in our imagination. This is why it is harder to reach moral people than sinners.

And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. -And

there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. (Leviticus 10:1-2)

The piercing thing about people who develop an extra-Biblical honor code does not put them beyond culpability. Moab is taken in a confounding, sudden way. Most people feel that God will recognize their good works. Those semi self-righteous beliefs are really subconscious attempts to honor ourselves, not God. The expectations we place upon our neighbors (our own man made law) is what will actually judge those who substitute manmade rules for the scriptures. If our code is: 'Don't tread on me' then we darn-well better not step on anyone else's toes! The more we complain about others sins against us - the more unattainable our own law becomes to ourselves.

For there is no respect of persons with God. -For as many as have sinned outside of the law shall also perish outside of the law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; -(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. -For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: -Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) -In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. (Romans 2:11-16)

We are called hypocrites because our lives are below the standard we advocate. We are supposed to turn people to Jesus; not to our own image. Idols and individualistic codes are completely different than faith in God. Idols are unashamedly pleasure-oriented, self-seeking and without honor. Their followers are there for the benefits (personal glory, lust, a license to destroy and steal from others); but they are not good at receiving instruction that goes against the grain of their own flesh. Lot is known for advancing his own status. Lot did not build up his family or protect them. Even the angels who visited Sodom kept a little distance from Lot. They were

sent to protect him, but it may not have been a cherished assignment.

Lot was miserable. Once we are saved, we cannot be happy in sin. Lot was unhappy because he did not live according to his calling. We become ruined for this world. We still lust; but we cannot be happy to remain there. Sometimes when we go our own way, our pride causes us to double-down and view all who advise that we turn around as being excessive or weak. Depression and anger come from not living according to what we know deep down to be true. We think that we are mad at others; but deep down we are mad at ourselves. Lot prescribed his own path; which was different than the angels instructed. How do you take constructive criticism? Do you strike back with an insult; or a fault in the critic?

Do you see a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him. (Proverbs 26:12)

Lot would not turn back from what he wanted. His plans were wiped out by foreign invasion, and a collapsing society. He remained undeterred. God paves the road heading in the wrong direction with increasing motivation to make a U-turn.

Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. (Hosea 2:6)

He remained in a bad place. He fought with the Holy Spirit. That is why he was miserable. Which appetite is greater? An appetite for the things of God or the things of this world?

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that listens to counsel is wise. (Proverbs 12:15)

-And put a knife to thy throat, if you be a man given to appetite. -Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful food. -Labor not to

be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. -Will you set your eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven. -Don't eat the bread of him that has an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: -For as he thinks in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, says he to thee; but his heart is not with you. -The morsel which you have eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words. -Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words. (Proverbs 23:2-9)

Our lives have repeating patterns relating to the consequences of our mistakes. Lot refused to follow the steps of his Uncle Abraham. Lot insisted on his own path; and retreated to Zoar (a small place); instead of joining Abraham on the high ground. This was a pattern for the future. Moab was destroyed later. When this happened the descendants of Lot once again found themselves to retreating to this small obscure place. The pattern of fleeing to Zoar (a little place) repeats itself. Lot's legacy of being a compromising believer resulted in descendants with a form of religion; but having no real faith. Even the story of Ruth (Moabitess) was associated with a marginal existence living off of the fringe of others fields. The depressed and self-loathing of the Moabites turned into contempt for God's people. They won't humble themselves; and yet they secretly envy those who do. In the last days it is partially the religious and unsaved people who martyr the saints.

-They shall put you out of the synagogues: yes, the time comes, that whosoever kills you will think that he does God a service. (John 16:2)

Moab trusted in their riches. Lot took a moral risk to obtain the prime grazing areas. Perhaps he thought that somehow he could earn his way above the fray of the collateral damage and surrounding challenges. Lot did make it into local leadership. Even so, Sodom resented him and remained purely wicked. We will be a light in a dark place if we are stationed in obedience. We will not affect societal changes if we are blending in. Moab was prophesied to be spoiled

and invaded. Lot had the same thing happen previously back in in Sodom; but Abraham saved him. Abraham's rescue was Lot's wake up call, and logical point to change direction. He did not. His descendants even attempted to bring down those with pure faith. We cannot expect changed lives if we hang on to old ways of doing things. When you attempt to fabricate righteousness you end up with some weird and unsustainable situations. Lot's daughters impregnated themselves by their father while he slept in a drunken hangover. Later on sexual relations were continued to be misused.

While Israel was staying at Shittim, the people began to have sexual relations with the women of Moab. These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. (Numbers 25:1-2)

Why would his descendants make up an idol called Chemosh/The Destroyer? Lot saw God destroy Sodom and Gomorrah...and ran from God instead of to him. Creating an alternate worship system with Chemosh is similar to what Jeroboam did at Bethel with the golden calves. Doing our own thing is a common way that prideful people with hurt feelings isolate themselves from further rejection. Christianity brings us to realize that we are not our own; and we have to engage people who we dislike.

Every man secretly wants to control his own destiny and to be independent and successful. Faith breaks down those aspirations for greater goals. Moab is described in the Bible as being: self-confident, prideful, angry, rich, full of lies. Our idols reflect our hearts.

The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that says in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? (Obadiah 3)

Self-assuredness amidst repeating failure is a common theme behind some of the old country music. A person who has made bad decisions in life is now stuck in a hard lifestyle. They take pride in

this identity. Moab represents compromise and only being partially committed to what is right. Oddly that makes some people commit even more to what is wrong; because that has become his identity. Compromise becomes a snare to us. Moab was neighbor to Edom and Ammon. Bad people find themselves surrounded by worse neighbors. God's poetic justice is designed to drive us all to repentance.

Moab had conflicts with Israel. Moab's defining moment was when they did not grant passage to the wandering Jews exiting Egypt. Moab became known for attempting blocking the entrance to the holy land. We never want to be in a position of stopping God's people from stepping forward in faith. We do not have to like them; but we better help them when we can. Envy is destructive. Moab also subsequently plotted and collaborated against Jews attempting to escape the Babylonian invasion. Ironically the Jews will find asylum in Petra during the tribulation.

Wine making was a big business in Moab. Moab is described like fermenting wine that is not turned. People of faith are like wine. They are supposed to improve with age if they go through the right process. There is a process of transformation that we must go through. That particular process is God's determination; not ours. It often involves losses and setbacks. Moab did not change or repent. Staying in our rut is not good. Moab was described like a wine maker's bad batch. Moab has not been transferred from vessel to vessel; and sits on its lees. We all need to conform to God's urging to change our circumstances.

We drink our own medicine. The grace we extend or lack of it comes back to us.

Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. (Revelation 18:6)

The children of Israel defeated Moab to gain access to the holy land. That territory was re-settled by the tribe of Ruben. It was known

for good grazing land. King David must have been in an awkward position with Moab. David's grandmother Ruth was a Moabite. David committed his parents to the protection of Moab when his life was in peril. Moab paid tribute to Israel until they broke free.

Read Jeremiah 48:14-47: Jordan is known for its red rock walls and carved buildings in the mountain. One day during the tribulation the Jews will flee to Petra, Jordan and wait for the LORD to rescue them. These cliffs are protection when God determines. They offer no protection when the plan is not God-ordained.

-I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men. -The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of them. (Micah 2:12-13)

-And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. (Revelation 12:6)

Petra is another name for Sela (rock), or Bozrah (rock). Bozrah means sheep pen. Petra means rock.

The nations around Israel will escape from the antichrist taking them over; including Jordan.

-He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. (Daniel 11:41)

The second coming involves the LORD taking what is his; and punishing what is against his people. The LORD will smite Jordan:

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness

of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.
-Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treads in the wine vat? -I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. -For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. -And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. -And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth. (Isaiah 63:1-6)

-I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. (Numbers 24:17)

Therefore, behold, the days come, says the LORD, that I will cause an alarm of war to be heard in Rabbah of the Ammonites; and it shall be a desolate heap, and her daughters shall be burned with fire: then shall Israel be heir unto them that were his heirs, says the LORD. (Jeremiah 49:2)

It sounds as though the LORD makes his first stop in Jerusalem when he returns, and then goes to Bozrah, Jordan.

-The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah. -In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. -And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. (Zechariah 12:7-9)

God will bring destruction to nations when he returns. The fire only consumes the wood, hay and stubble of men's inventions.

Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; -A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. -A fire devours before them; and behind them a flame burns: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. (Joel 2:1-3)

God will wipe out Jordan.

Verse 40 speaks about the LORD flying like an eagle over Jordan. The LORD is the eagle who soars, not Lot's family.