

lived, they met Lot at the gate. He invited the angels to spend the night in his home.

The heavenly messengers told Lot that the Lord had sent them to destroy Sodom. They told Lot to take all his family out of the city. "And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed (Genesis 19:14-17).

Lot's wife couldn't bear the thought of giving up all they were leaving behind in Sodom. No doubt her heart clung to her home, her possessions and her friends. As she walked behind her husband, perhaps her mind was filled with the good memories of the life they had enjoyed. As she thought on the many things they had left, she stopped walking to look back, longingly, at the city. And as she turned around, her body was turned into a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26).

God made fire to rain down on Sodom and three other cities. Every person, animal and plant was destroyed. Their destruction was complete. There may have been an earthquake or explosion too, as the Apostle Peter writes in II Peter 2:6: "Turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly."

As Sodom, this wicked world is doomed. The nations and cities are growing more evil than ever. We hear of shocking sins and too many people are not stirred about them or the judgment to come (II Peter 2:6).

In the Epistle of Jude we read warnings of evil men, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication [sexual sins], and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an *example*, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities (Jude 7, 8).

Why did Jesus say, "Remember Lot's wife"? He was warning people everywhere to forsake everything necessary to answer His call to repentance of sin, accepting salvation, and to live a life of fruitful obedience to Him and His Word, the New Testament. The writer of the Book of Hebrews says, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1, 2). We can see from this scripture that Jesus wants us to separate ourselves from the life of the sinner and follow Him faithfully to the end of life.

The Apostle Paul wrote of his own experience in Philippians 3:13, 14: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Lot's wife did not press forward, fleeing from Sodom, and forgetting the things behind her. But she slowed, stopped, and turned and looked

around behind her. Perhaps this has happened in the lives of people you know. They may have responded to God's call, repented of their sins, received forgiveness and received the Holy Spirit in their lives and lived in victory over sin. Then they may have cooled in their obedience to the Bible's teaching, and drifted back toward the life they were saved from. The Bible calls this *backsliding*. "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways (Proverbs 14:14).

The Apostle Peter writes about people who turn back after they have left the life of sin. "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (II Peter 2:20-22).

What a pitiful, sickening picture! But it is more unthinkable for one who has experienced God's blessing in their life to return to a life of sin under Satan's bondage, than for a dog to eat his own vomit. The Apostle Paul asked a church group in his letter: "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the *weak* and *beggerly* elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" (Galatians 4:9).

Let's think about some reasons why people stop following Jesus and return to a life of sin. *One* reason is a cooling in their hatred of sin. After a person is a Christian, the devil may come and tempt him to do wrong things, the things he did before he was saved. When one yields to the temptation, because of the dulling effect that sin has, it is easy to make sinning a practice again.