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# **Stakes, Altars & Roadblocks**

**# 706-A**

**Series: God's Living Legends (Part 1)**



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# Stakes, Altars & Roadblocks

From far back in the annals of time we have seen emerge, like tender portraits painted by the hand of God Himself, photographic images of men and women whose lives He has selected to be placed in Scripture. We call them living legends. Why, of all the millions who have lived, did God select these? If we look carefully, I think we can answer that question. God, in eternity past, knew what kind of examples we would need, both good and bad, so that our walk with Him would be affected, not only by the principles of His word, but also by how those principles work when actually seen in lives. And so God reached down and engraved in His Holy Scripture, the lives of these special people, to teach us the truths we need to learn. It was the original audio-visual aid. The word of God. It is the original computer-generated book of character. The word of God.

We are continuing our study of one of those characters in this lesson, a man named Lot. We began by examining the words of Jesus Himself as He admonished us to remember Lot's wife. A flashback to Genesis 19 reminded us that her story was one of a woman who was so enamored with the world that even as God was about to destroy it, she could not keep from longing for its splendor. Jesus went on to add that as you try to save your life as she did, you will lose it. If you lose your life for Christ's sake, you will save it.

So we concluded that Lot's wife's real problem was that she was double-minded. She didn't mind being a believer so long as her allegiances need not change. She didn't mind being a believer so long as her behavior need not change. She didn't mind being a believer so long as her friendships need not change. Mrs. Lot was in love with the world. But then, in varying degrees, aren't we? Isn't there a measure to which most of us have sold out to the conveniences and pleasures of the world at the expense of spiritual things? Mrs. Lot ended up a very salty lady. But in essence, she and her children were natural products of decisions she and her husband had made. That is why the title of our last study was: "Remember Lot's Life". He was the one who made the

wrong choices. His were the decisions that ultimately affected his family.

Decisions. The direction each man's and each woman's life takes is simply the product of decisions. If we could just impress upon young people that dating is a choice, and who you date is who you marry. What a difference it might make in some of their dating practices. Who you date equals who you marry. Who you marry equals one-half your total personality. Think about it. What school you attend, what job you take, what city you move to, when you receive Christ, who you choose for your friends, what compromises you choose to make along the way are all decisions that affect your life. A sovereign God weaves them together so that all things *DO* work together for good; but He doesn't make the decisions, we do. Wrong decisions set patterns for the future.

Now Lot made a series of such decisions. They reflected the man he really was until he became the man that was reflected. But remember, Lot was not spiritually deprived. Though his father died early, his grandfather assumed responsibility for his life and graciously gave him to his Uncle Abram to nurture, protect and encourage. Granted, Lot did not have the kind of father Adam did, but he had the next best thing. He had the father of God's people. The saint of the century was his new adopted dad. What an opportunity to be a disciple of God's choicest servant. What a privilege to walk alongside Abram, to learn at his feet, to serve him, but not so with ambitious Lot.

We learned in our last lesson that two of Lot's weaknesses were ingratitude and presumption. Abram was called by God into one of the greatest ventures of faith ever recorded in Scripture. He was to leave his security and the familiarity of his surroundings. He was to go to a country he knew not of. In return, God was to make of him a mighty nation. His seed, even though at the time his wife was barren, was to one day be as the sand on the seashore. Through that seed, all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. We read that Abram obeyed God. Then we read that four-line conclusion, *Lot went with him*.

Lot's first decision was a good one. He agreed to accompany God's man on God's journey. But soon trouble set in. Lot's herdsmen and his uncle's herdsmen came into conflict. There wasn't room enough for Abram's flock and Lot's greed. So God's

man, Abram, did it God's way. He told Lot to take half of all they had, whatever he wanted and Abram would take whatever was left. Abram did not want any strife between them because they were brethren. God's man in the middle of God's will can always do that. But, presumptuous Lot saw the plain of Jordan and his head spun like a cash register. Here is where the pattern of the spiritual versus the carnal Christian crystallizes. Lot, representing the believer operating in the flesh, chooses the best the world has to offer, hoping to inject a little of God into the world. Abram represents the believer filled with the Spirit, and he chooses to relax, and give away whatever the world needs, trusting God to take care of his needs, and then he worships God for the privilege of doing so. Lot, having chosen to eye the world's best, pitched his tent toward Sodom.

Lot identified himself with the people of Sodom. Literally, he gave his heart to Sodom. We read that Sodom had already gained the reputation of being the garbage heap of the world. Sin City. Perversionville it might have been called. It was Satan's headquarters. Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom and soon followed the inevitable. Lot moved his tent to Sodom, to the permanence and the prosperity of city life. No more wandering about like a nomad braving the weather. Now his children could go to the finest of schools. They could make friends with those who were socially acceptable. They could have all the pleasures that money could buy. All they had to give up was the godly wisdom of Uncle Abram, the spiritual direction of godly leadership, the fellowship of other believers and the moral standards of a believer's society. All they had to give up was spiritual. All they had to gain was physical.

Have you ever made a decision like that? Most of us have. We get so enamored with the world and its glamour that Matthew 6:33 just blurs into insignificance and we begin to identify with Sodom. Let's look at Uncle Abram. He got left with what Lot didn't want. He just trusted God for it all. Where did that lead for Abram? We read about it in Genesis 13:

And the Lord said to Abram (after Lot was separated from him), Lift up now your eyes and look from the place from where you are, northward, southward, eastward and westward

for all the land which thou seest to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever.

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And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth so that if a man can number the sands of the earth, then shall thy seed be numbered.

Now arise, and walk through the land, the length of it and the breadth of it for I will give it all to thee.”

Then Abram removed his tent, came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre which is in Hebron and built there an altar to the Lord.  
(Genesis 13:14-18)

God says to Abram, “Lot is gone, now I can give you all that is yours.” While Abram and Lot were yoked together, there was strife, discord, contention and competition. They were, in essence, not walking together for they were not agreed. When Lot left, the blessings of the Lord tumbled down on Abram. That is why some business partnerships never blossom until one of the partners, even out of greed, takes his share and then some, and leaves God free to pour it out on the one who walks with Him by faith. The Scripture says that

no man that warreth entangles himself with the affairs of this world that he may please Him whom He has chosen him to be a soldier.  
(II Timothy 2:4)

Sometimes wrong relationships entangle the soldiers of the King and they have no freedom to train for the battle. So God gives the whole of it back to Abram. As far as he could see, the land was his.

Abram was limited only by two things: His vision of God’s provision and his willingness to possess his possessions. “As far as you can see, Abram, that is yours. How great is your vision?” God was asking. The definition of spiritual vision is “the magnitude of one’s concept of the Great Commission.” Vision. Study your prayer list. This is how you can tell the measure of your vision of God. Is He the God of your house? Is He the God of your block? Is He the God of your city? Is He the God of your nation? How far-reaching is your vision of God? Does your heart ache for those countries embroiled in battle or starvation, or is Cousin Joe in a nearby city the end of your earth? Do you weep over the Christians trapped in totalitarian societies? Do you pray with regularity for missionaries all over the world? Oh, for the vision of men like Dawson Trotman who wept and prayed and claimed lives for God using a map of the world. Today the fruit of his life is even yet being borne in every country for which he prayed. God told Abram to look to the north, south, east and

west. He wanted to know how far Abram was willing to look. It was all His and could all be Abram's. Vision.

God then gave Abram the second prerequisite. He said, "Get up and walk through the land which you have seen and I will give it to you. Possess your possessions." Here is prerequisite number two. By faith, Abram was going to possess what by knowledge he already had. This is a graphic picture of how to appropriate Christian character in your daily walk. You do not say, "God wants me to love my neighbor and as soon as I feel loving, I will." Negative. The land of love is yours to possess. You already have it. In Christ, the capacity to love is yours. How do you possess it? By faith, you begin to live and act as though you would if you were filled with God's love (for you are). You act on the premise that the possession is yours. As you *act* like you love, love begins to flow. That is the principle of possessing your possessions. You own it; now use it. You don't wait until you *feel* like you own it. For example, imagine that the title deed has been given to you to own a house. Somebody gives it to you and signs the title over to you and you sit in the title office and say, "Gee, this is wonderful, my very own house." But when the office gets ready to close that night, they say, "Aren't you going to go home?" "I don't have any place to go," you answer. "But you've just been given a house," they reply. "But I don't *feel* anything for that house yet." you respond, "I haven't lived in it. I will just stay here. But, boy, it is wonderful to own a house."

You may think that is far-fetched, but it is not. That is the way we live the Christian life. All of this land is ours to possess. God told Abram to look as far as he could see, and as he looked and believed it was his, God told him to walk over the land and it *would* be his. As you choose to tell the truth, you possess the land of truth, which has been yours since the moment of your conversion, for God *is* truth. The power to be pure is already yours, as well. But you possess the land of purity by choosing to act and think as though you wanted to be pure. Only then, do you gradually come to possess purity. If you want a generous spirit, you already have it, the One who gave it all lives within you. So begin to give as though you wanted to. The land of generosity will be yours experientially in time to come. Possess your possessions. This may be one of the most untaught truths in all of Christian experience.

Abram saw it all. His spiritual vision was 20/20. He also

possessed it all. He had the faith to believe God. The rest was up to God. So God emptied the windows of heaven upon Abram as He would have done to Lot had Lot just pitched his tent in a slightly different direction. Then Abram moved his tent and began to possess his new title deed. As soon as he stopped, the Scripture records, he built an altar to the Lord. That is getting a little familiar, isn't it? Every other verse seems to say that Abram stopped and built another altar to the Lord.

There is no measure of a man or woman more revealing of their inner character than this one. What does it take to make them worship? Some worship when others are looking. Some worship whenever there is a crisis. Some worship whenever they want something from God. Some worship when they feel guilty. Some worship when they feel good. God's man or woman worships every time they get the chance. It is the very expression of God's love. God's man or woman is so in love with God that he or she spends time adoring God and praising Him. This is more fulfilling than playing a game of golf, or watching a football game, or eating a good meal, or visiting friends or going shopping. Given a choice, with no audience or no restraint, God's man or woman would rather *be* with God than do anything else in the world. That is the measure of a real disciple. Like a magnet, it is a natural thing to be drawn to fellowship with the King.

Meanwhile in our story, trouble is brewing in the big city. Chapter 14 begins by picturing an international crisis which is soon to affect the two main characters of our story, Mr. Lot and Mr. Abram. Now if we were to sort through the first eleven verses of chapter 14 and put them in some kind of simple order, it would look like this: There are five kings over five cities, the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Zoar. These five kings had been under the domination of the King of Elam for twelve years. It says that in the thirteenth year they began to rebel because they just couldn't take it any longer. They withheld their taxes. Something had to give. They were under authority, but they rebelled. The king of Elam decided that he would get three other kings who were his friends together, and these four kings decided that they would try to crush this rebellion. They came in and subdued the kingdom. They took Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Zoar and all the men, all the soldiers, all the women and all the goods and...Lot.

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It is important that you realize that Lot was taken. He is the reason this war was listed in Scripture. This, incidentally, is the first war described in Scripture. The reason it was important to God was that God's man was in the middle of it. God's man was in rebellion, but he was still God's man. So the Scripture says that all the subdued people from the five kingdoms were taken away, but some perished because they had to pass many slime pits on the way. Some of them slipped into these slime pits to their death.

Lot had pitched his tent with the world, and now he was the victim of the world's conflicts. If you live your life on the edge of Sodom, sooner or later you will be taken captive by one of Sodom's pitfalls. You don't identify with the world without eventually bearing its brand. It is the part of the advertisements that you never see. Just one time I would like to see a picture of those happy-go-lucky men of the world canoeing down a beautiful stream giving it all the "gusto" they have as they drink their alcoholic brews, followed by a few scenes from the drunk ward at the local hospital. The caption may read, "They gave it all the gusto they had and this is what it cost them." This is the other side of Sodom. It could be one of those glamorous parties that seem so natural and fulfilling on television shows. Maybe at least one of them should be followed by a few shots of an innocent child being run down by a driver who left that party either drunk or stoned on drugs. It could also show the family broken up by the immorality that the party produced. This is what it is *really* like to live in Sodom. Heartache. Degradation. Suicide. Unbelief. The advertising world is not made to show us that side of it. Praise God the Bible tells us the *rest of the story*.

The picture we now have of Lot and his family is that they have been taken hostage into a strange country by invading forces bound to put down a rebellious uprising. Not only did they take Lot, but the Scriptures tell us that they took all of his possessions as well. That is the way Satan is. He gives you all these "goodies" and makes you prosperous, then takes it away just for kicks. You can't help but wonder what may have been passing through Lot's mind while he was on a mattress in a prison camp just beyond the slime pits. Surely he wondered about life with Uncle Abram. No parties. No dances. No drinking. No entertainment. No perversions. No filthy language. No gutter life. Just the simple life with Uncle Abram. The sheep. The kids.



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The Word. The altars. The prayer. Worshipping and serving the Living God. Blessed with all of the cattle, servants, and all that land was his. He remembers these in a flashback. “Let there be no strife, we be brethren,” he could hear his uncle say. Surely at some point, there must have raced through Lot’s warped mind, “God, if you will just get me out of this mess alive, I will give the rest of my life to serving you.”

Have you ever said anything like that? “Lord, when this war is over, things will be different. Lord, if you will save my baby, I will be yours forever. Lord, I have learned my lesson, if you would just keep me from being found out one more time.” “Lord, if...” (you fill in the blank). Just imagine the power of God’s people if we all had honored the promises made in fox holes in Korea, helicopters in Viet Nam, or in hospital waiting rooms. Lot, if only God would give you another chance, what would you do?

Now the scene fades and we see in verse thirteen Uncle Abram, perhaps seated by his tent. A bleeding, bedraggled messenger approaches, out of breath, a Sodomite who knew Lot had an uncle. He had escaped and had run to Abram for help. Have you ever noticed where the world turns when it needs *real* help? Those guys who taunt you at work for your faith. Who do they call when their marriage is falling apart or their world is in shambles? So often, like Nicodemus, they come by night, but so often they come to God’s men when the issues are real. The plastic answers of Satan’s society haven’t satisfied their questions. They don’t always want real help; they *do* want out of the mess they are in. They almost always come to the King’s children.

And there came one that had escaped and told Abram, the Hebrew, for he dwelt in the land of Mamre the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol, the brother of Aner.

When Abram heard that his brother, [that is his brother in the faith, Lot] was taken captive, he armed his trained servants who were born in his own house, 318 of them, and pursued them to Dan.

He divided himself against them, he and his servants by night and he smote them. He pursued them to Hobah.

And he brought back all the goods. He also brought back Lot and his goods and the women also and the people.

(Genesis 14:13-16)

Now here is God’s kind of man in a crisis.

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1- He is a man of forgiveness. Abram held no grudges against Lot. He could have wrung his hands in glee and said, “That’s what he deserved. I raised him, he forsook me, he took me. Let him suffer.” No, love suffers long and is kind. God’s man holds no grudges.

2- Abram was a man of compassion. When he heard about Lot’s situation, his heart broke. Remember what compassion is. It is “entering into the hurts of others until you are so moved that you show mercy”. You do something about it. God’s man’s heart breaks when someone else’s heart breaks. He was a man of compassion.

3- He was a man of responsibility. He had 318 servants and employees. But he was not a man of conflict; we have already seen that. He was a man of peace. But to keep the peace and defend his people, he had 318 men. The literal translation is that they were trained to be armed. This is the only recorded time in history that Abram ever engaged in warfare. But always he was prepared. He was not an ostrich with his head buried in the name of faith. He knew that the hostages had to be freed, whatever the cost, because he was God’s man and God’s reputation was at stake.

4- He was a man of courage. “The rejection of fear in the face of adversity” is one definition. Sure, his 318 men were trained and armed, but his confidence was not in *them*. They trained as though it were up to them, but they lived as though it were up to God. Here were 318 men who had never fought a *real* battle with a handful of confederates who were unskilled allies. They were fighting against the victorious armies of four kings who had just laid waste the empires of five other kings. Those were God’s kind of odds. Verse 15 tells us that Abram took that little band of men and divided them into yet smaller groups so that the enemy would think they were surrounded. He went in at night and caught them off-guard in Hobah, which is sixty miles from Damascus, and routed them.

In verse 16 we read that he brought back all the people, all the goods, and Lot. There is no record of even *one* of Abram’s men being killed or injured. Here is the reason. God still had His eye on Lot. Maybe now Lot would pitch his tent toward God, build an altar and worship Him. All Lot had to do was learn from Uncle Abram that the world was powerless against God’s man.

He was forgiving. He was compassionate. He was courageous.

But the story isn't finished. Abram was also a man of integrity. After being blessed by Melchizedek and worshipping God, he meets the king of Sodom. The king says, "Boy, that was a wonderful thing you did for us. I tell you what I am going to do. You give me back my people and you can keep the goods." The king offers Abram the world's spoils in exchange for God's blessings. What a test. This would have probably made Abram the richest, most powerful man in all the world. Oh, what he could do for God with all that money. But Abram answered, "I belong to the God of heaven and earth. I won't take a hair ribbon or a shoelace. If I did, you would say, oh king, Abram is rich and I gave it to him." No way. All they kept was the food they had eaten. In the same way, the church does not need the world to keep it afloat, even out of gratitude. That steals the glory from God. Let the world keep its spoils; just keep God on the throne of your life, and He will meet the needs of your life. Abram not only took nothing for himself, he stopped to worship and pay tithes and worship at the hands of Melchizedek.

Now, who was Melchizedek? Melchizedek is worthy of mention. Everyone in Scripture is worthy of mention, but here we see the insertion of a man and an experience in Abram's life in order to give us another God-painted portrait of His coming Son, Jesus Christ. The actual account goes like this:

And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine. He was the priest of the most high God.

And he blessed Abram and said, "Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth.

Blessed be the most high God which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand." And Abram gave Melchizedek tithes of oil. (Genesis 14:18-20)

Now the Scripture has much to say about Melchizedek. This will be a brief list of the facts. The passages to look at are: Hebrews 7:1-17; Genesis 14:16-24; and Psalm 110:4. This is what we know about Melchizedek.

1- He was the king of Salem which represented ancient Jerusalem.

2- He was a priest of God in Abram's day.

3- It was he who met Abram as he was returning from his victory.

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4- Abram gave him a tenth of the spoil.

5- He is called in Scripture “the king of righteousness”.

6- He is also called “the king of Salem” which means king of peace.

7- He had no one before him and no one after him. There is no recorded date of birth or death. There is no recorded genealogy that includes him.

8- He was greater than Abram.

9- He was a type of Christ so that Christ could later be revealed as a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

What does a *type* of Christ mean? A *type* is an imprint or a portrait of another. It means that one reason Melchizedek’s story was placed in Scripture was so that both from Abram of old to the present age, all might have a clear picture of the person of Jesus Christ. How is that confirmed in Scripture? Psalm 110:4, speaking of the Messiah, Jesus the coming one, says:

The Lord has sworn and will not repent, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. (Psalm 110:4)

Hebrews seals the issue in detail:

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into the veil whither the forerunner of us has entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 6:19)

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abram from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him,

To whom also Abram gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation, King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem which is the King of peace;

Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor ending of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abram gave a tenth of the spoil.

And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude [likeness] of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest,

Who is made, not after the carnal law of the commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

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For he testifieth, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”  
(Hebrews 7:1-4,15-17)

So here we have an incident resulting from a battle which never would have been necessary had Lot not been in disobedience; but the God who works all things together for good uses this incident to unfold a more beautiful picture of His coming son, Jesus Christ. In at least seven ways, Melchizedek is a type of Christ.

1- He is a type of Christ where genealogy is concerned.

2- He is a type of Christ where sacrifice is concerned.

3- He is a type of Christ where the endless priesthood is concerned.

4- He is a type of Christ where the combination of being both king and priest is concerned.

5- He is a type of Christ in that it was said of both men that they were greater than Abram.

6- He is a type of Christ in that both were called king of righteousness and king of peace.

7- He is a type of Christ in that both brought forth bread and wine, the evidence of the New Testament, both the body and the blood of Christ.

So Melchizedek, like Noah, like Abel, like all of God's portraits as revealed in Scripture, is a real person. This is a real event, yet it portrays an even more beautiful picture, for indeed all of Scripture has but one theme, Jesus. So Abram had worshipped and given a tenth to God. Now the victorious Abram stands before God, the source of the victory. The dialogue goes like this:

After these things, the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision saying, Fear not Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.  
(Genesis 15:1)

In verses two and three Abram reminds God of the promise of children that he doesn't have yet. God tells him that He understands, but to be patient. Then we read:

And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven...  
(Genesis 15:5a)

God had already told Abram that if he could count the sand on a seashore, he could envision what God was going to do through his life. Then later, God told him to envision dust and try to

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count the particles, then Abram would know how great his seed would be after him. Now, God takes Abram and tells him to look into the heavens to count the stars. If he could, God tells Abram, he would be able to number his seed. In verse 6 we read:

And he [Abram] believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:6)

There we have it. The second phase of Lot's life. He moves to Sodom and totally identifies with its lifestyle. He is taken captive along with all those he belongs with. It takes God's man and God's miracle to get him out. God got Lot's attention through trauma and gave him a warning through deliverance. It would only seem natural then to see Lot co-laboring with his uncle on the plains of Mamre, re-educating his children in the things of God, re-directing his priorities toward eternity. We all learn from our mistakes, don't we? Surely we don't expect God to deliver us again from the *same* wrong choices, do we?

The next time we will see Lot, he will be back in Sodom. He spun his wheels getting out of Mamre. He had invested so much of his life in the world that he couldn't even see that God wanted his attention in order to give him another chance. God, you see, is in the business of giving another chance; but Lot, like a magnet, was drawn back to Sodom. His deliverance was a coincidence in his mind, or it proved to him that God was still on his side. It never dawned on him that *he* was not on God's side. The sin of an unteachable spirit. God gets our attention and we thank Him for getting us out of the mess we are in. Then we promptly forget *why* we were in the mess we were in.

A few lessons ago, we discussed the will of God. We all know the will of God in one area. It is the will of God to learn from your mistakes. If left to ourselves, we often perpetuate our disobedience by repeating the same mistakes again and again. It is called the cycle of repetition. God wants to intervene in that cycle. So often He will bring about in your life and in mine, trauma, *real* life-changing trauma, which is designed to bring us to our knees and to arrest our attention. God wants to turn that cycle into a cycle of transformation. That is where the foxhole and the hospital-type promises are made. The key is that we are much more accountable after the foxhole, after the crisis. God has got our attention. We have experienced a deeper level of grace. Often we have made a deeper commitment to Him.

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It would be good to read Psalm 78. Psalm 78 gives you the pattern that many of our lives follow. First, God would bless the children of Israel. They would give Him token acknowledgment but not obedience. So into their lives He would bring trauma. He would give their enemies power to subdue them. Then they would cry out, "Lord, save us!" He would. Did they write it down? No. Did they worship? Seldom. Did they learn? Not often. Again and again in Psalm 78, God met their needs, and again and again they made the same mistakes. But that is not God's plan. That is Plan B or C. God has a Plan A.

God's Plan A goes like this: stakes, altars, and roadblocks.

Stakes - the driving of stakes in the ground saying, "I did this. God did that. God wants me to learn a lesson and never forget it." Some of you may need to take some time today after having been reminded of an experience you had during a traumatic time in your life when God really spoke to you and you said, "Lord, from this moment on by Your grace, I shall..." Some of you may need to drive a stake in the ground today. If you have a Book of Remembrance, take a page and write down before the Lord what happened to your commitment and agree before God that you will read this page on the first day of the month for the next two years. Or make a tape recording and talk to the Lord and play it back on the first day of the month for the next two years. As new things come into to your life, just add to the page or the tape. On the first day of every month, because God has so conveniently divided the year into months so that we can begin again each month, stop and play the tape or read the page. This is your stake in the ground. You could memorize a passage just to commemorate the power of God on that occasion. Stakes.

The second thing God calls us to do is build altars. Every time God did something for Abram, he stopped and built an altar. You may think that Abram wasted a lot of time building altars. No, he utilized a lot of his time building altars. That is God's plan. Every time God meets a need in your life or teaches you a lesson, pretend you are Abram and build an altar of remembrance. I don't mean a literal altar. You could build a wall in your back yard. You take some bricks or a piece of wood, and every time God does something meaningful in your life, take a new brick or piece of wood and write the date on it along with what He did, and add it to your wall. If that's too dramatic, find what you feel comfortable with and do it. Just do something to remember

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and make it a point of worship. You could go out in your back yard once a month and kneel down when no one is around and worship God for those miracles. You could make a plaque that would commemorate each of the miracles God has done in your life. When God provides a job for you, go out and make a plaque that would identify what He did and when. You could make a remembrance for when God provided a house, or God gave you a child you had prayed for, or God created that ministry you had longed for, or God gave that soul to Him that you had prayed for. Every time you pass your remembrance, it serves as an altar. You can begin to pray and thank Him.

Lastly, God's plan is for roadblocks. Once you travel down a country road and you find it is washed out, do you just disregard that experience or that bit of information and try again and again? Or do you not erect a sign that says, "Do Not Enter" or "Detour" lest you or others compound your losses by duplicating your mistakes? If God gets your attention and says, "Don't do that again!", find a way to erect a roadblock. Maybe you can make a vow, a daily vow to God so that you will never do that again. Maybe get a friend to help you. Maybe get some specific passages to meditate on. Maybe you can get special counseling to help you or a special agreement with God that deprives you of something you want anytime you are tempted to cross that bridge again. Erect a protective wall so that you don't become another Lot. That is God's way. *Stakes, altars and roadblocks*. These are reminders to stop, reminders to worship, reminders not to pass that way again. That was God's plan for Lot, but Lot forgot. We are a lot like Lot.

Some of you, like me, in the heat of deliverance in times past have told God some pretty heavy things. "Lord, if You will just... I will do this..." We may have said, "Lord, I will go to the mission field or I will give up this," or "Lord, I will never lie again," or "Lord, my thoughts will never be unfaithful again," or "Lord, if..." Is it any wonder that God's heart is broken when He looks down a few months or a few days later and there we are in Sodom again?

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