

# Beyond Believing

Roxborough Bible Chapel

January 29, 2017

# Agenda

- Today
  - WARNING: first half will focus on a secular case study to introduce a concept
  - Second half will focus on an example in the Bible where this concept appears to be evident
- Next time?
  - More examples of the concept in action in the Bible
  - Takeaways

# Sports Trivia

- On March 2, 1962 an “unbreakable” record was set
- Clues
  - Involved a Philly team
  - Sport was basketball
  - Local athlete (went to Overbrook High School)

Wilt Chamberlain of the Philadelphia Warriors set a single-game scoring record in the NBA by scoring 100 points

# Wilt Chamberlain

- Leagues had to change basketball rules because of his dominance
- The only way to play against him was to foul him
  - Turned out to be an effective strategy because he was an awful free throw shooter
  - Most seasons he made only 40% of free throws
- That 100 point game was different
  - Made 90% of his free throws

What most people don't know is that during that "special" game and that entire season he changed his free throw technique

# Why did he give up on the technique?

- He had every incentive to be a better free throw player
- He identified and tested out a solution to improve
  - Had his best season yet!

And yet he made a conscious decision to no longer shoot free throws underhanded in spite of the compelling benefits...

Huh??

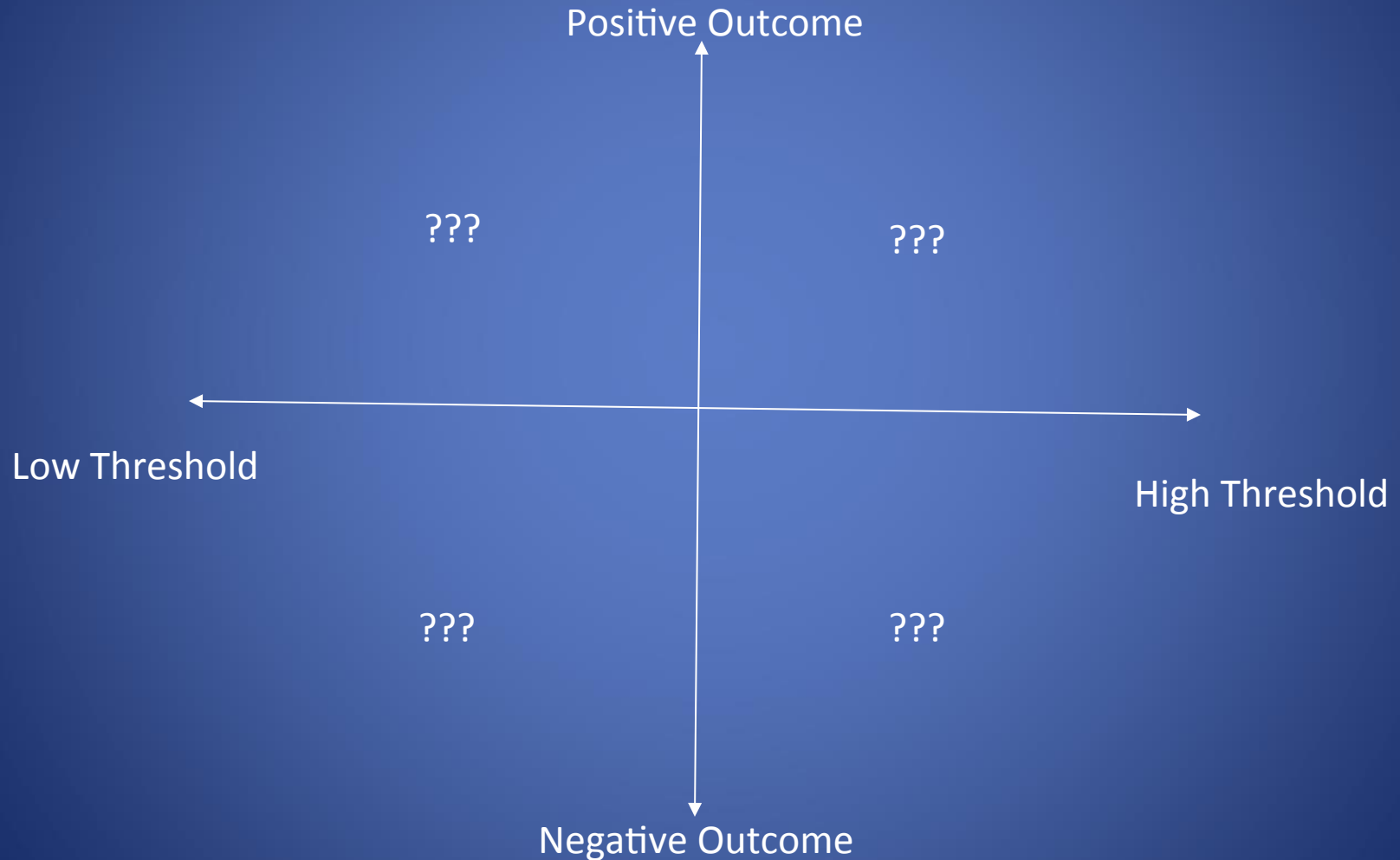
# Threshold Models of Collective Behavior

- Mark Granovetter, a famous sociologist developed the theory
- To understand how certain people behave the social context matters
  - Internally we have our beliefs
  - Externally we have these thresholds
- Threshold is the number of “other” people doing something in order to for you join in

# Threshold Models of Collective Behavior

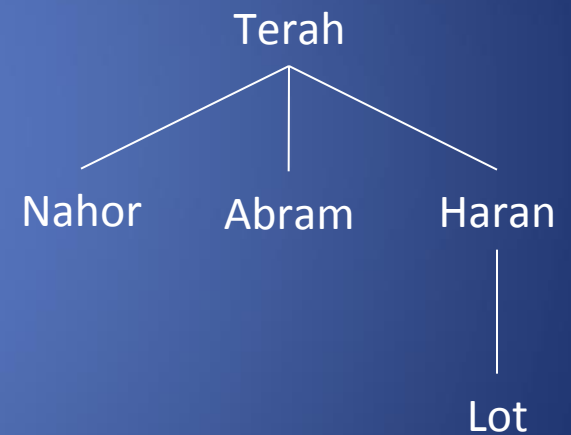
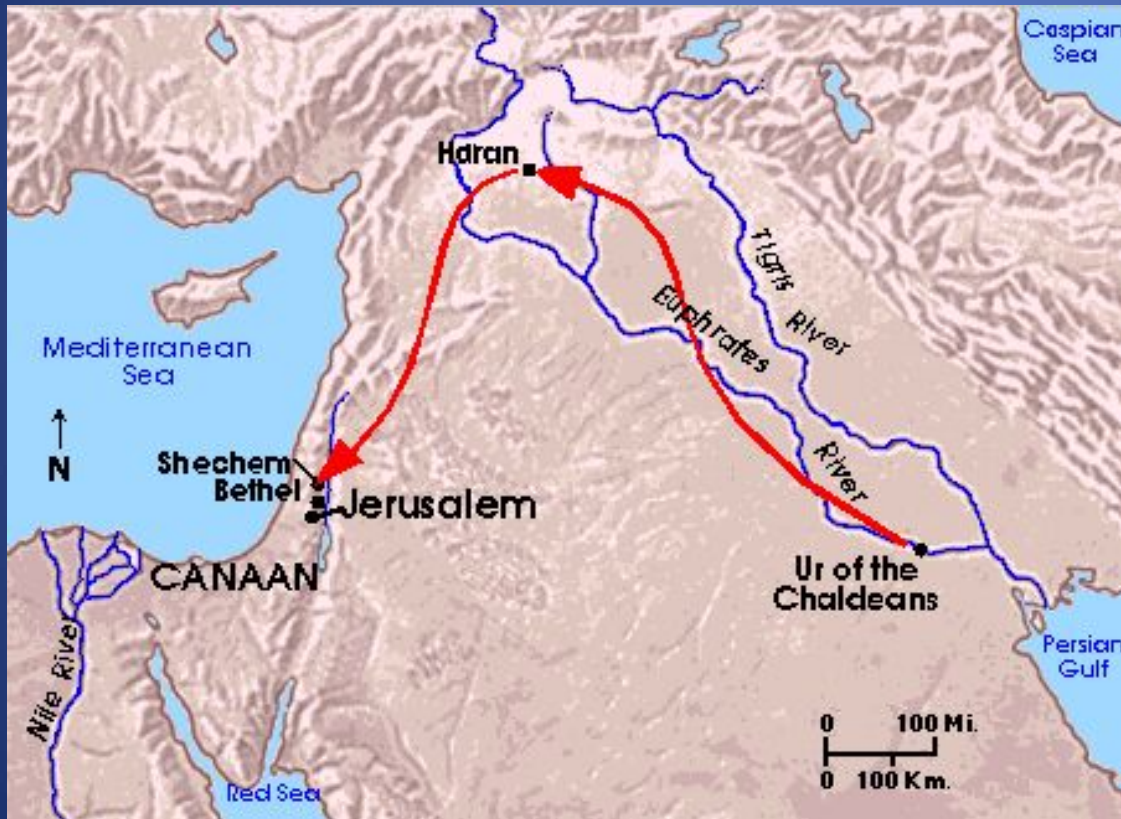
- Everybody's threshold is different
  - Varies from person to person and situation to situation
- Wilt Chamberlain was a high threshold guy
  - He needed to see a lot of other players shooting underhanded in order to not feel foolish
- What people believe may not help us much in understanding how people behave, and vice versa
  - Social context matters!

# Concept in action in the Bible





# The journey from Ur to Canaan



# Lot's Perspective

- He could've stayed in Haran and not continue on this mystery journey
- He could've gone back to Ur where he probably still had family
- He could've turned around and went back to Haran when he got to Canaan and realized there was nowhere to settle

But for some reason he decided to stay with Abraham in the Canaan area

# Did Lot believe in the God of Abraham?

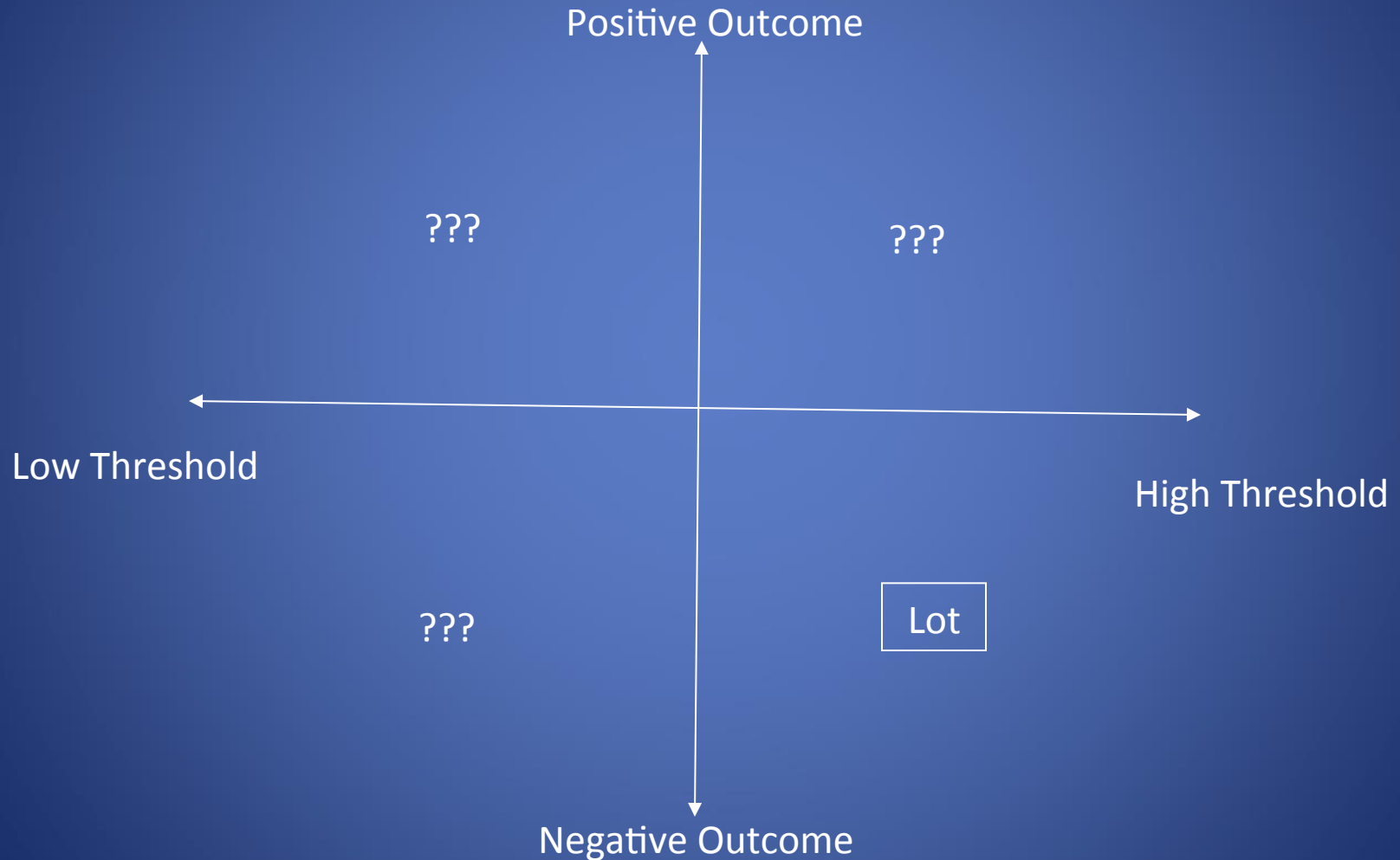
- If so, how do we explain the decision he made to become more and more immersed into the city of Sodom?
- Camped near the city (Genesis 13)
- Living in the city (Genesis 14)
  - Had a perfect opportunity to leave after being rescued by Abraham
- Had a prominent position at the city gate (Genesis 19)

# Lot seems to be a high threshold guy

- He would rather blend in with the masses even though he believes in the ways of Abraham
- Abraham was so isolated from the world around him
- Sad ending to the story of Lot contrasted against what was such a promising beginning

You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe – and shudder! (James 2:19)

# Concept in action in the Bible



# Homework

- Can you point to anything that you do (or have done) that's more due to the fact that you see (or saw) others doing it?
- For each of the above that you identify, is it consistent with what you believe in?
  - If not, is there a good reason why?