

Vol.2
Genesis 12-25:10

The Lives of
Abraham and Isaac

By Mary M. Bodie

*"The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by
understanding hath He established the heavens."*

Proverb 3:29

PREFACE

In 1922, the author of this book gave a series of Bible Lessons on Genesis. These were embodied in book form and published in 1933. These lessons have been issued in 4 different books (volumes):

<i>"The First Creation"</i>	—	Covers Genesis 1-11
<i>"The New Creation"</i>	—	Embraces the life of Abraham
<i>"The Two Creations Illustrated"</i>	—	An illustration of the 2 creations from the lives of Jacob and Esau
<i>"The New Creation Crowned"</i>	—	The life of Joseph

In Jesus' dear Name, we commend this precious treatise to hungry saints and commit it to God to be used to His glory.

The Publishers (1955)

REFERENCES USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

- **American Standard Version** (ASV or AV) is a version of the Bible that was released in 1901. It soon came to have other names, such as the American Revised Version, the American Standard Revision, the American Standard Revised Bible, and the American Standard Edition. By the time its copyright was renewed in 1929, it had come to be known by its present name, the American Standard Version.
- **Diaglott** is a two-language polyglot translation, of the New Testament by Benjamin Wilson, first published in 1864. It is an interlinear translation with the original Greek text and a word-for-word English translation in the left column, and a full English translation in the right column.
- **King James Version** (KJV) references are used throughout this publication unless otherwise noted.
- **Revised Version** (RV) (or English Revised Version) of the Bible is a late 19th-century British revision of the King James Version of 1611. It was the first and remains the only officially authorized and recognized revision of the King James Bible.
- **Wuest**: Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893–1962) was a noted New Testament Greek (Κοινή) scholar of the mid-20th century...produced his own English translation of the New Testament (the Wuest Expanded Translation – abbreviated WET) based on Nestle's critical text.

Note: Definitions of references pulled from Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, January 2013.

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THE PRE-VIEW

Genesis (*"the beginning"*), the first book in the Bible, is also the first of the Pentateuch (includes the first 5 books of Moses). It is the beginning of God's revelation to man. All the truth that is later unfolded in the history, prophecy, and doctrine of the Bible is here in "seed" form. It is truly the "Seed Plot of God's Word," as someone has named it. I would call it the "Counsel Chamber of the Almighty God". All God's counsels concerning man are in this book, some hidden in type and shadow, but here nevertheless; man's creation, his fall, his redemption, his discipline, his exaltation; and counsels which have been in state of development for 6,000 years are not finished yet. All are found in Genesis. We are here let into the secret of Divine Plans and Purposes, the ordained counsel of God, before the foundation of the world.

BREAKDOWN OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS

There are several sections in the book of Genesis:

Vol. 1	The Creation The Ruin	Genesis 1-2 Genesis 3-11
Vol. 2	A New Creation—Abraham & Isaac's Lives	Genesis 12-25:10
Vol. 3	The 2 Creations Illustrated—Jacob & Esau's Lives	Genesis 25:11-30:24
Vol. 4	The New Creation Crowned—Joseph's Life	Genesis 30:25-50

This study book covers Genesis 12-25:10 and could be subtitled "*Separation from sin and the consequent result*".

A NEW CREATION – THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM

We have now arrived in our study of this book of beginnings at the 3rd section. This is the longest, most varied and interesting portion. In the former sections we were shown the creation of the first man, Adam, coming from his Creator's hands sinless and good, but not holy. Then the entrance of sin and its dire results were unveiled to our gaze; while now we are to view a separation from the above condition. While this was only a partial and figurative severance, yet the truth herein contained is most wonderful and instructive. We find in these men and women, who really lived and died even as their history records, marvelous types and shadows of that great body of truth that was committed to the Apostle Paul and which he calls his Gospel.

ABRAHAM'S BIOGRAPHY

"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nachor, and they served others gods: and I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood and led him throughout all the land of Canaan and multiplied his seed and gave him Isaac." [Jos.21:2-3]

This section deals only with Abraham. Jacob, Esau, and Joseph will be dealt with in 2 later sections. We would know nothing of this man of destiny, Abraham, if it were not for the sacred writings. The Bible contains the oldest history. It takes us back to the eternity past and discloses the secrets of the why and the wherefore of the creation of the world. And how much else we would have missed had God not guarded these treasures of inspiration.

Abraham's genealogy is given to us at the outset. He is found to be a descendant of the line of Shem, the chosen son of Noah, through **Arphaxad** (*"I shall fail as the beast"*). Arphaxad's name is expressive of the root cause of all man's failure, being symbolic of the source of life. This failure is manifested in even the very best of that which springs from man. When God called Abram he was an idolater dwelling in Mesopotamia [Jos.24:2]. Alas, how quickly man degenerates. God must again and again come upon the scene and revive him or there would be nothing in this world in harmony with heaven. And yet, at the same time men are religious. They will have their gods and their idols, even as Abram and his father in the land of their choice. He was not seeking God; yet, God sought and found him.

"And Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abraham's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan. And they came unto Haran and dwelt there." [Gen.11:31]

Here it appears as though it was Terah who was called to go out; but we see later that such was not the case. Abram, which was then our patriarch's name, was God's choice [Act.7:1-2]. But even in us at the first, the flesh takes the lead and orders and controls the spirit if possible. And as always in this connection they did not get very far. They came to **Haran** (*"a parched place"*) and dwelt there. Is this not significant of our experience when the old man is having his way? We arrive at a dry place and dwell there until the old man dies; or, in the Apostle Paul's language, loses his power over the believer when the latter reckons him off the scene, he having been crucified with Christ 1,900 years ago. Therefore when **Terah** (*"delay"*) is gone, Abram rises up to obey God's word which had been spoken to him, not Terah, while as yet he was in the land of Chaldea. He now quickly leaves the parched place where he had loitered for the green pastures and cool streams of Canaan whereunto Jehovah had called him. He was under no law to leave Haran. It was a privilege. He desired to do the will of the Lord. He was tired of the dry and thirsty land. His heart and his flesh cried out for the living God. He was under absolute grace, which was the enabling of his obedient life. Furthermore he did not question God's leading. He just walked out at the bidding of the Master, leaving home, friends, country, and all that the flesh counts dear. Grace alone will make men obey God; law makes them rebel.

The Lord took the initiative all the way. He was the Master. Abram followed His leading. He was ordered just where he was to go. God said, *"Get thee out,"* and it was enough. He held not "post-mortem" either, over paring with his relatives. He never uttered one regret that we know of; never told how much he suffered, etc., when he left them. Maybe if he had been testifying to them, they were glad to get rid of him, and he was just as glad to go. It is often so. Anyway, he went out. It is good to go out at the Word of Jehovah. We are called to separation from the world even as the father of the faithful, as Abram

is named. He is a pattern for the faithful children of God. We can make no mistake in following him when we understand the lessons that his life is meant to teach in the light of the New Testament.

To some it may appear extreme that we are to follow Abram's example and leave all for Jesus' sake. It may seem fanatical, foolish, and hard-hearted. Anyway the flesh will so judge; Jesus took this same attitude toward His people. He said to His mother, on one occasion, "*Woman, what have I to do with thee?*" [Joh.2:4]. She was giving him orders at the time; but Jesus never obeyed the flesh. When it came to the matter of God's will for Him, He did not recognize His mother...He took His orders from God only. It was not that He did not love her, neither was He inhuman, but rather, He was the perfect human. When Jesus came to die, His work, as the servant of God, being almost over, He lovingly turned to His mother and put her in the care of the Apostle John, whom He also dearly loved. He simply gave God the first place in His life; all others came second. Most saints love their families more than they love God. If we give God His place He will take care of our families and we will be saved much trouble and sorrow. Yes, Abram was extreme in his obedience to God. He went to the uttermost in his faithfulness; therefore he receives an uttermost reward. Listen to Jehovah's words to him,

"I will make thee a great nation; I will bless thee and make thy name great and thou shalt be a blessing." [Gen.12:2]

He is promised fruitfulness, prosperity, and fame for himself; and more than all, he is to be the channel of Divine Favor to others. See what that man obtains that believes and obeys God; for they mean the same thing. We obey God when we believe Him. Abram did not come into all this blessing immediately, but his name lives today and it will live eternally because he believed God. You say, "That was Abram. We cannot do as he did." Oh yes we can! The principle remains the same. The Lord does not change. He rewards us according to our works, though we acknowledge it must be a work of faith and a labor of love. His grace is the compelling power of both; yet He does not forget even a drink of cold water given in His Name. The man that goes all the way is made a blessing in every age and any time. His name is remembered, while the careless, indifferent, and slothful is forgotten. God said, "*I will bless thee.*" What can compensate for His blessing? And when He says, "*I will bless*" it is surely coming. He does not forget; though it tarry, wait for it.

"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." [Gen.12:3]

This is not all. God tells Abram that He will bless them that bless him and curse him that curses His friend. Notice it is many who are blessed but the one who is cursed. Men do not naturally curse God's people. It is the devil who is the author and instigator of all evil. Do you notice that Abram's blessing is 7-fold? A perfect reward for perfect obedience. And there is no punishment mentioned for disobedience. Absolutely none. Jehovah promised to bless him and make him a blessing if he heeded His words; but He did not say He would curse him, or make him a curse if he disobeyed. And Abram was constrained by His grace, "*He went out, not knowing whither he went*" [Heb.11:8].

*"And Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son and all their substance which they had gathered and all the souls that they had gotten in Haran and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan and into the land of Canaan they came."
[Gen.12:5]*

We observe that Abram became prosperous and won some souls even while down in Haran. The one who believes God is always a blessing. And though he had not gone all the way, yet it was not deliberate disobedience. He probably did not understand God at the outset. He yielded to his father, as being the elder, giving him the precedence until the latter was taken out of the way. So it is with us. We may not have gone all the way and entered Canaan immediately after being called, because of ignorance or false teaching; but the Lord looks on the heart. Our attitude of will, purpose of heart toward Him is that with which He is concerned. There are lessons also by the way that we must learn, precious lessons which are necessary and profitable; and some are more years in school than others. Perhaps because we are dull of hearing.

Note on your map that Ur of the Chaldees is some distance from Canaan, with Haran in between, so we need not be discouraged if we have not traveled it in a day. The experiences, as we journey, have yielded profit which we bring with us as we enter the Promised Land. We are enriched thereby, for all things are working good for the believer who is walking in obedience. And as we follow on to know the Lord we are going to constrain others to come with us. We are blessed and made a blessing even as Abram, the pioneer of progress in the path of the Lord.

Shechem was the first stop-over allowed Abram after leaving Haran. And there is significance in even such a trivial thing. **Shechem** ("shoulder") foretells the strength of Jehovah which is a most necessary adjunct to a successful stay in Canaan. In fact we cannot even remain there for a short stay without learning the value of leaning hard on the everlasting arms. **Moreh** ("instruction") affords him a shelter next and it was close to Shechem. The one leads on to the other. Strength and instruction go hand in hand. Even of Christ, it is prophesied,

"The Lord God hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I may know how to sustain with words him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning; He wakeneth mine ear to hear as a learner (or a disciple)." [Isa.50:4 RV]

If He could humble Himself and first be a learner before He could teach others; how much more should you and I. How sad when saints get so lifted up that they refuse instruction from those who are spiritually qualified. These who will not take instruction, refuse to be taught by others, will not have the tongue of them that are taught. That is, they will never be God-given instructors though they may appoint and deceive themselves.

"And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD." [Gen.12:7-8]

The Lord appeared to Abram at this place and it is here that he first built an altar and became a worshipper. It proves that he has profited by his stay at Shechem and the oak of Moreh. It is especially significant when we consider that Canaan figures the heavenlies where in God's provision, the Church has been seated in Christ. And though is ensconced there too and holds the place as his own; yet we are entreated to take our seat or rather our claim there in the face of his opposition and priority of possession, as one might say. Abram must do this, for we read, "*And the Canaanite was there in the land*" [Gen.12:6]; but he acted as though the land was actually his own. He worshipped God in the face of his foes. He saw the Lord and not the Canaanite; therefore he was a worshipper. It is only after we enter Canaan and learn of its sufficiency that we truly worship God. The majority of believers do not worship Him. They are just beggars; only come to Him when they need Him, always asking God for something, but never praising Him. Worship is a different matter from prayer. We will one day cease our praying, for all things will be ours; but we will never cease our worship of the gracious One who has given us the all things.

Observe, after he builds his altar and worships it is here God appears to Abram. He has spoken to him before but now there is greater intimacy. He appears to him and reiterates His promise regarding the land. He encourages Abram right in the face of his enemies. It was simply a matter of faith; for to sight the Canaanites had the land. So in like manner we are to hold our possessions by faith, take our place in the heavenlies, and maintain the position which Calvary has purchased and which God's word assures us is ours.

Although it is a good place to stay, Abram does not abide here. He is now ready for greater victory. He believes in a going-on life and desires to possess his possessions. He moves on until he arrives at a mountain east of **Bethel** ("*the house of God*") and west of **Ai** ("*a ruin*"). There, just between the 2 cities he built an altar. Bethel, speaks of the new creation—the house of God; while Ai refers to the old Adamic ruin, of which we were formerly a part. It is here that we also build our altar and truly worship God when we have been taught by the Spirit the truth of the 2 creations. On the one hand, we gaze at the hold of the pit from whence we have been taken and then beholding the vision — what we are now in Christ — we are constrained to praise our Great Redeemer's Name. We are never to forget that we have been brought out of a ruin into the abiding city of God. "*Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*" [2Co.5:17]. Yet, here is a strange thing. We may know the truth and in some measure enjoy the victory of it and yet have a failure, which answers to Abram's later history even as type to antitype. We must hold our place on the resurrection side of Calvary and not be moved away by any power of the enemy.

ABRAM IN EGYPT

"And Abram removed, journeying and moving on toward the south country. And there was a famine in the land; and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land." [Gen.12:9-10]

It is here, this leader in the faith line, made a mistake. He should have held the vantage place where he had built his altar and called upon Jehovah.

Note: We must always remember when reading these recorded happenings that they are inspired writings; therefore they have spiritual value. Their significance is not on the surface; and while we may readily see some great lesson and aptly apply it, yet there is a hidden wisdom in all these narratives. We should always seek to understand the typical interpretation. The latter is of the utmost importance.

All these noted Old Testament characters have a figurative significance which, when understood, form a halo of sacred interest around them. We are loath to ascribe failure to these worthies of faith, even as in this case. However, as we intimated, it appears as though Abram could not as yet hold his place between Bethel and Ai. The south country, with its soft winds, attracts him and he moves on toward Egypt. It reminds us of the balmy winds which deceived most of those on the ship with the Apostle Paul, who was sailing to Rome [Act.27:13]. South winds are not to be trusted in; they speak of good fortune and ease that often cause the unstable to vacillate and waver. The north winds are preferable for spirituality. As in Abram's case, God made even this to work for good. He taught His dear servant some valuable lessons through his visit to Egypt and left us, because of this happening, a veritable treasure box of truth, waiting only on the Divine Hand to unlock and allow us to gaze upon its jewels.

"And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land." [Gen.12:10]

The apparent cause of Abram's departure was a famine in the land of Canaan; but this is only on the surface. The true reason is that he did not hold the place of victory to which he had come; the place where he had pitched his tent and built this strategic point (a constant view of the 2 creations, their death on the one side and their life on the other and so they lose out in their experience). Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, because he was moving that way and there was a famine in his own land. Spiritual famine always follows when we are looking longingly toward Egypt, a figure of the world.

"And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee." [Gen.12:11-13]

Now, notice the further decline of our bold warrior of faith. He begins to fear. *"Perfect love casts out fear"*; but Abram's love is not perfect; nor does he see the perfect love of the Lord who has chosen and called him. He is afraid that he will lose his princess, Sarai, his wife. As they were drawing near to Egypt, he warns her not to declare their relationship to the Egyptians. Although already past middle age, Sarai was still a beautiful woman. He feared Pharaoh would covet her for his own and that it would fare ill with him if it was known that he was her husband. Sarai yields to him and declares he is her brother, which in a sense, is the truth. They were children of the same father, she being his half-sister; the marriage of such being not yet forbidden by the command of

the Lord. Behold to what subterfuge the saint is driven who seeks the fellowship of the world.

Abram has no faith to declare the truth; no faith to witness of the Lord or his calling him out of Ur of the Chaldees to Canaan. He is fearful, afraid of the face of men, because he is out of the perfect will of God. There is far more in this interesting story than the fact of Abram's failure. He was a typical character and this actually happened to him; but it was written for our admonition. Abram is not only acting out the history of the Jew, the nation of whom he is the father after the flesh, but he is also prophesying by his apparent yielding to circumstances as to the path of the Church and the life story of almost every individual that has trod the pilgrim way. The teaching here is wonderful and bears searching out.

Sarai being in the house of Pharaoh is the commencement of that which finds its full development and final consummation in Babylon the Great, the guilty union of the Harlot with the kings of the earth [Rev.17]. But the beginning is yet very different from the completion and Sarai has nothing whatever in common with the wicked woman of the Apocalypse. She is rather the gracious and beautiful figure of the covenant of grace, which was given unconditionally by Jehovah to Abram. In the epistle to the Galatians, Sarai (personifying the covenant of Grace) is contrasted with Hagar (the figure of the Sinaitic covenant that is of the Law [Gal.4:22-31]). God linked the Grace in which we stand with Faith and with faith alone...it does not belong to the world. Pharaoh and Egypt have no claim upon Sarai. We know that *"we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness"* [1Jo.5:19].

Sarai (typical of grace) in the Egyptian court is a denial of the above. She is Abram's exclusive possession and so must be nourished and cherished by him. He must not yield up his claim upon her for an instant. She is his and his alone. God has joined them together and He says to Pharaoh, "Hands off!" Let no man put asunder what God has united. The world may covet Sarai, but apart from faith they cannot have her. They will promise Abram wealth and honors if he will only claim a secondary place with Sarai. He may be the king's brother-in-law...Pharaoh wanted her himself. Oh she was a fair woman, this Princess, very desirable and lovely.

"Abram, don't be so narrow and selfish, keeping her all for yourself. Let Pharaoh have some claim on her too." So it is today. The world insists that all men have some good in them. They go on to say that God loves everybody, even the old man, whether the person believes or not. Grace belongs to all men. The Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is the maxim of the hour; but the Word of God gives no warrant to such an assumption. God is the Father of all those who believe; they are then of Abram's household and Sarai is mistress there.

"And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues, because of Sarai, Abram's wife." [Gen.12:17]

Abram feared a fear and it came upon him. In denying his true relationship with Sarai, he left the way open for Pharaoh's presumption in claiming her. But notice this striking fact; though the man of faith fails to assert his claim of Sarai and witness to his rights, Jehovah does not fail. He testifies in his

behalf. He insists that Sarai is Abram's wife. He so names her and upholds their relationship. And though Abram virtually gives her up while he is in Egypt, the Lord protects and defends her all the time she is in Pharaoh's house. He makes Pharaoh to know His displeasure which is the cause of the plagues. He is glad therefore to send Abram away. He gives him his wife and a free passport out of the country.

In all of this history, we have a most graphic pen-picture, although on a miniature scale, of the end time. The union of the church and world-empire, which is sure to come, is seen here in the fact that Pharaoh insists on a union with Sarai. The world rulers would take and enjoy the grace of God without the attitude of heart toward Him which accompanies it. That is, they do not want Abram. They will insist that faith in Christ's death, as penalty for sin, is not necessary for a right life. They will unite their religious, moral, and humanitarian forces and by their words and actions endeavor to make good their boast in their own integrity. They will assert that, "We will live right, not because we fear God or the lake of fire, but for right's sake."

How good it is that God is still at the helm, still at the head of affairs. He is not asleep nor off on a journey. Because of Sarai and their claim of being the people of God, He will send plagues upon the nations; especially the place of the seat of the world powers. This will continue until the Jew (Abram) is given recognition; until there is an exodus of this people of destiny from the four quarters of the earth. Like the whale which swallowed Jonah, but could not digest him, the world will be glad to get rid of Abram. They will let the Jew go with all his family, materially enriched by his stay in Egypt and spiritually enriched by having Sarai (the covenant of grace) in his possession. When God gets through with His judgment of the nations for their usurpation of the Jew's place, they will be glad to acknowledge The Jew's claim of being the people of God; the world cannot have the blessing upon them until Abram's Seed has the throne. They will come into blessings through the Jew. The latter must first appropriate and become fruitful by Sarai (grace), before the other people have a claim.

In the present age, God is only visiting the Gentiles, taking out of them a people for His Name. He is not saving the world. The latter purpose will come to pass in the next age, after Abram and all his family have come out of Egypt. They must first return to Canaan, the land of promise, from whence they have wandered. They must come back to Bethel where they had pitched their tent and built their altar in the beginning. Then come blessings, peace, and prosperity to the world. Do you not see why we are loath to ascribe failure to these typical characters? They are prophesying even by their history.

LOT AND HIS CAREER

"And Abram went up out of Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had; and Lot went with him into the south." [Gen.13:1]

We are now informed of another character in the scene. Lot enters the stage of action; for we have read of him before, yet is was never as doing anything. He was only following Abram [Gen.12:4]; but here he becomes a more important factor. He insists on taking a leading part in the play. **Lot** ("cover");

the meaning of his name fitly describes the man. He was always under cover; concealed one way or the other. He was not transparent. We never read that God ever spoke to him. He lived in the shadow of his uncle, sheltered by his faith, as it were. He does not appear to have had any definite dealings with God. He just came over into Canaan because Abram moved in that direction, even as he left Haran for the same reason. Later he follows him down to Egypt and now he comes up with him. He is still following on, never leading.

Lot is figurative of Christians who never have any dealings with God for themselves. Their parents were Christians and they learned to pray at mother's knee. They never really know when they came into the fold. It seems as though they were always children of God, being converted so young, and yet they are never exercised about Divine Things. As a matter of course they go to meeting at the scheduled time. Their parents and friends all go. It is plain duty (habit) not enjoyment or privilege. Yet, they are trusting Jesus. They believe He is truly the Son of God and that He died for them. But they are not deeply concerned about the matter, although they are glad that they are numbered among the elect. The Lot type of Christian goes along the way with the Abrahamic type; but never in his own experience do they get anywhere in the race course.

Finally, we see that there comes a separation. Observe at what point this happens; when Abram comes up out of Egypt, having renounced the world with all its allurements and pleasures. He has learned some great lessons but he is getting too zealous and extreme for Lot. Lot had a good taste of the world and he is not satisfied with following Abram any longer. Lot, whose name (in New Testament language) is Demas, has become enriched with goods and does not need his uncle to shelter him anymore. He is lifted up with worldly prosperity and believes he can go alone now. He feels as big as his uncle and insists on having equal rights with him.

Abram too "*was very rich in cattle, in silver and gold,*" richer than when he went down to Egypt. All things worked good for him. He was enriched spiritually as well as materially which is manifest in his conduct with Lot. It is plainly seen that he is not lifted up but rather humble and broken. Every test and trial ought to add to our spiritual strength. We ought to be richer every day (month/year) than we were before. The only true riches, far greater than rubies, is to know God and His ways better.

Abram is richer than when he left Canaan. He comes back with renewed faith, to which he has added courage [2Pe.1:5] to possess all his possessions, even though it meant the withdrawal of Lot from his company. Yet, he may not have known that his nephew was out of harmony with his increased zeal and fervor. Lot, according to his name, may have covered it up. Abram may have thought, as we ourselves have often foolishly imagined, that all the people of God, especially those with whom we fellowship were even as we, desirous of going all the way with the Lord. Alas, how many times we have been shocked to learn of our mistake by the attitude of the lukewarm and world-loving to the Truth which they pretend to receive. That which stirred our heart into burning, fiery zeal and caused every atom of our being to respond to the uttermost call of God, only made them turn away from us as Lot turned away from Abram.

Oh yes, there was another cause, but it was only on the surface. The real cause was Abram's whole-hearted surrender to the grace of God and its enabling. He will be an overcomer and take all the land that is given to him. His inheritance will be not only be gazed upon but actually appropriated. Now, Lot discloses his real character. He is uncovered for a moment and we get a glimpse of the real fellow that was heretofore standing in the strength and power of Abram. We read that the land is not able to bear them together because they both had become so great. But oh the difference in their wealth, as is plainly manifest to them, being displayed in the after conduct of each. Notice the difference between these 2 men. They are in decided contrast here.

"And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land."
[Gen.13:7]

The cattle (the flesh) became the cause of the trouble. It is always so. Do we not read of the same manifestations of the flesh in the church at Corinth, when the Apostle Paul was forced to write, *"Whereas there is among you envying, strife and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men?"* [1Co.3:3]. The worst part of such trouble between brethren is that it is an occasion for the mockery, ridicule, and scoffing of the unbeliever who is always in the land; even as we read here of the Canaanite and Perizzite. They were looking on at the strife and later saw the division it caused. What was Abram to do in such a case? Give up his stand in Canaan and compromise with Lot to keep him in fellowship? No, indeed. Abram is the aggressor in the matter. He goes to Lot.

"And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren." [Gen.13:8]

Here is the secret of Abram's tender attitude to his ungrateful nephew; he is of his own family, the family of faith. Hence Abram says, "Do not quarrel with me. If you cannot dwell in harmony with me, then separate from me. It is better so. We must be in one accord if we dwell together; there is not strife between brethren." Let us do likewise. If we cannot agree with the brethren, let us leave them rather than criticize, strive, and backbite. Let us seek more congenial fellowship, even as Abram suggests to Lot, and thus we will all be better for the change.

Lot is all ready for the separation. He has been waiting for Abram's move. The way has become too narrow and he longs to get away. He desires to be independent; to go away by himself and prove to Abram, by his success (as he vainly imagines) that it is not necessary to be so separated from the world. He is assured that the Lord loves him, and is as well-pleased with him as with Abram. He will bless him in the place of his choice. He means to do well; he is a righteous man that is justified [2Pe.2:7]. But alas, he is going in his own way and God cannot acknowledge or bless the flesh even in his own children. The man of faith gives Lot the opportunity for which he has been desirous for some time and he gladly avails himself for the opportunity to escape the fiery zeal of his uncle which puts him under conviction. As we read later, Lot runs away from Abram but he does not escape the fire; he falls into another kind.

"Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." [Gen.13:9]

Abram allows Lot to choose where he will locate by giving him first choice and stating that he will take whatever is left.

"And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other." [Gen.13:10-11]

Selfish and covetous express Lot's condition. He is looking with carnal greed, seeing as man sees, and consequently made the wrong choice. The land which he looks upon with delight is well-watered, but how? It was watered by the Jordan River, the water of death. It looks green and fruitful in tears, sorrow, and trial. Later, its true character is disclosed when God destroys the cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah.

Observe also that Lot's country looks much like the land of Egypt. He noticed the similarity and was thus swayed in its direction. The world is filling his vision; so he separates from the unworldly, godly man Abram. He moved his tent in the direction of Sodom and pitched its door toward the wicked city. He no doubt longs to clean up its inhabitants, correct their morals, and convert the city; which would be good work if it was the will of God for him but it was not. He was going in the way of self-choosing and the Lord cannot bless his carnal zeal.

Abram is God's choice. He waits upon the Lord and lets the Lord choose for him thus getting the best. Lot had lifted up his eyes in self-will and Jehovah saw it. After his nephew separates from him, and while he was still suffering over the rupture: God tells Abram...

"And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." [Gen.13:14-15]

He assures the man of faith that his seed shall be multiplied as the dust of the earth; that he will become such a great people that they cannot be numbered. He urges Abram to arise and step out upon his inheritance; not to limit the promise in any measure, but to take all the ground he desires—"to thee will I give it." Notice, there are no conditions attached, no IF's or AND's; simple appropriation makes the inheritance sure to Abram. Hallelujah! God is just as liberal a Giver today and His conditions are the same. Faith makes the all things mine.

Then we read these expressive words: *"And Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre ("fatness"), which are in Hebron ("fellowship")".* Of course; he moved upward and onward. There is no stopping place when we see the wonderful, vast, and glorious inheritance which lies before the eyes of faith. We too, like Abram, come to the place of strength and fatness which is

found in fellowship with God. We pitch our tent and build our altar there. The Lord is magnified and praised to the uttermost by those who dwell in Hebron. They are fat and flourishing even in times of spiritual drought; yea even to hoar hairs they are found in glorious victory.

Notice the contrast. Although he was religious, Lot has no altar. He had much cattle and well-watered land that he had chosen for himself. It was a lovely place, just like the garden of the Lord, he said, and was satisfied. He endeavored to convince himself and everyone else that he was in the will of God. "The Lord led me to separate from Abram. We can hear him saying, "I do not approve of all he says and does. The Lord told me to come to this place. It just suits me. I am having such a good time. The Lord is with me." He insists it is like the garden of the Lord. Yes, so it reads; but it is like Egypt too. Lot wants to keep in fellowship with Jehovah and the world also. He figures worldly minded Christians. They would keep one hand on the things of God and with the other grasp the world. They want no talk as to the truth of overcoming, no strenuous way of victory, no death route for them. Therefore the Lord lets them choose the lesser place; but oh, the sadness, the loss, the ruin which accompanies such self-will. They never appear to be aware that they have lost anything. They will not acknowledge it even if they realize it. They continue to justify themselves. "Look at my cattle," they exclaim, even as Lot, *"I am rich and prosperous. God is just as well pleased with me as with Abram."*

However, notice the sequel and be warned. Lot left no record of victory, no history of anything but failure for us to read. He might have left his mark on the roll of God's worthies and his footsteps on eternity's table ground had he so chosen. But he wanted his portion here. He made his choice. If Peter had not so informed us, by the record here no one would ever know that Lot was a just man.

"And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." [2Pe.2:7]

WAR OF 2 FACTIONS

When Lot separated from Abram, he pitched his tent in the direction of Sodom; but shortly afterwards he moved into that wicked city, *"...Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom..."* [Gen.14:12]. He surrendered his tent life, the life of a stranger, for city life and became a dweller on the earth. No doubt he intended to convert the wicked people; for we are told that *"For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds"* [2Pe.2:8]. But how many did he influence for good? Not one. The pull was all the other way. He was carried in the downward current like any other dead fish. He himself was only *"saved so as by fire"* [1Co.3:15]. As has been well said, "A Christian cannot toy with the world and play with sin. It is like blood to a tiger. You may flee too late; for though your life may be secure in Christ you lose all reward."

Remember, Lot chose that place. It was not Jehovah's will for him; therefore, he got into trouble. War was in the vicinity and he was soon mixed up in its vortex. Four kings (the world number) were in a combination against another group of 5 kings (5, the number of the senses, the merely sensual man). We are confronted here with a most marvelous type. In these first named 4 kings

we have a figure of the religious element of the world (note that one was king of Shinar, better known as Babylon). These are arrayed together to put down the outwardly wicked element of the world; the man who lives in his appetites and the feelings. There is constant strife between the two; one insists that man must have a religion even if it has to be forced upon him. Let us look at the meaning of the names of these 4 kings who speak of the religious world powers banded together to clean up the world:

1. **Amraphel** ("*darkness*"), the first of these religious fellows, represents the devil that is transformed into an angel of light to deceive even the elect, if possible.
2. **Arioch** ("*lion-like*") tells of his power...the power of darkness.
3. **Chedorlaomer** ("*binding the sheaves*") speaks of the end of this combination of wickedness. The tares shall be bound together in bundles and burned.
4. **Tidal** ("*cast out from above*"), king of nations, emphasizes the end of the wicked enemy, Satan. He it is who has been the source of the sowing of the seed which will be manifested later as the tares, the counterfeit of the good seed...the wheat.

Next the 5 kings and their respective cities:

1. **Bera** ("*in the evil*") the king of **Sodom** ("*fetter*").
2. **Birsha** ("*wickedness*") the king of **Gomorrah** ("*bondage*") was the twin brother of Bera. Together, they tell us of the mastery of sin in the natural man. He is held captive in its meshes and does not want deliverance from its powers. In fact, he hugs his chains and resists the one who would deliver him.
3. **Shinab** ("*father's tooth*") is also significant. His name tells us of the biting and devouring of the old man. He is king of the city of **Admah** ("*earthly*"), which adds to the marvel of inspiration. Is it not wonderful how true-to-fact these figurative characters answer?
4. **Shemeber** ("*the name of the wing*") refers to the speed of sin's operations and increase. He was the king of **Zeboiim** ("*splendor*" as being conspicuous, "*a gazelle*" [as beautiful]).
5. **Zeboim** ("*hyenas*") speaks of the cruelty of sin; its wages are death. He was the king of the city of **Bela** ("*swallowing*" or "*bringing low*") which emphasizes the fact that death is not all; but after death is the judgment. "*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God*" [Psa.9:17]. They will be brought low. The yawning pit will shut its mouth upon them. Sin shall be swallowed up forever in the fiery furnace; eventually cast into the lake of fire.

Now, we want to emphasize the fact that these 2 different factions are both of Satan and both are opposed to God and the truth; nevertheless, they are at war with each other. The first coalition of 4 kings appears to gain the victory and put down the 2nd coalition of 5 kings. We read that the 5 kings served

Chedorlaomer for 12 years; however, he began to take more authority and claim greater power—then the 5 kings rebelled. In typical language, they refused to yield to this cleaning-up process. The whitewashing was going too far. They were being forced to clean up too much; so they resisted the efforts of the reformers which resulted in a clash. There was a battle, but the 5 kings were defeated. The 4, who represent the religious element, those who stand for cleaning up, won the victory. The 5, those who represent the unclean, wicked element, were defeated.

The antitype of the above conditions is surely in our midst today. Observe the present world effort to clean up the morals of man. The world is putting on a sanctified veneer. They are getting whitewashed by going to Sunday school and religious services. “Everybody ought to go to Church on Sunday” is the slogan of the day. Oh yes, this looks good to the carnal, worldly-minded Christians. They would purify the politics, clean up the city and country by putting Christian men into office, and so forth. According to the Scriptures, the religious element will succeed for a while. Christians who are lukewarm will be taken captive in this very snare. They will endeavor, like Lot, to clean up the wicked world that God himself does not make any effort to reform. He will burn it up in His own good time, even as He burned Sodom. In the meantime, according to the type, the world is cleaned up. Religion wins in the struggle.

“And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their victuals and went their way.” [Gen.14:11]

In the language of our day, the wet world becomes dry; the immoral world becomes moral. Everything that appears wicked is hidden. Men will have to be good whether they want to or not. Force will be used; law and order will prevail. Their garments (habits) of unrighteousness are changed; while their victuals (provisions), which delighted their soul, are gone. They will have to dress up in religious garb and no more feed upon the husks of sin, the refuse which the swine did eat. However, they are not feeding on the fatted calf with their feet under the Father’s table. Rather, the elder son (mentioned in the Prodigal Son proverb of Luke 15) represents them. He was a good boy, clean and nice; but his father never made a feast for him. He never fitted him with new clothes; he had clean clothes of his own which he claimed were just as good as those the father gave to the prodigal son. In the soon coming day, when the world will have been made safe not only from war but from every apparent evil thing, there will be very few who will acknowledge any need of God and His righteousness. They will be reformed, but not regenerated.

Well, poor old Lot was taken captive in the melee. He took his place with the clean folks. The influence of the reformers overpowered him and he liked it. No doubt, he rather judged Abram for living in such separation from all the sin of the world and not coming right down there to help. We can almost hear his extravagant talk which sounds so religious and enthusiastic to the carnal believer:

“We ought to be doing something for the people. They are all going to hell. And here is Abram living up there enjoying himself in peace and

quietness, not a wit neither concerned nor vexed at the awful condition of the people. They are so wicked and ungodly and he ought to help."

But, Abram was in the will of God. Lot was unnecessarily grieving himself about these conditions. His place never was in Sodom. He went there in self-will and got mixed up in its reformatory methods; while his uncle was in the place of fatness (Mamre), where he had his altar and his tent, enjoying himself with the Lord. He was not vexed with anything. There was no complaining on his street. All Jehovah's paths were dropping fatness for him. Why should he worry? Why indeed? The Lord had the care. He did not even know anything about the great battle that was in progress. Oh, he may have heard a little tinkling of the ammunition, a little firing of the guns; but it did not impress him very much. He was far away from it. He was having a good time and he did not care which side would win. It was a matter of perfect indifference to him. He had not voted once; but when he heard that Lot is taken captive; then his unconcern vanished. He took an interest in his kinsman, his brother in the Lord.

"And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram." [Gen.14:13]

Ah, now we have the secret of his attitude, Abram the **Hebrew** ("one passing through"). He was a pilgrim and a stranger; this world was not his home. He looked for another city, "...which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" [Heb.11:10]. In Canaan, he was a witness there that there is a living God. He believed God; so truly believed Him that he obeyed Him. The secret of obedience is faith. He is a wonderful figure of the overcomer, one that we may truly imitate with profit. He was a pioneer of progress in Divine Things. He cut down the timber and made a way in the woods of doubt and uncertainty that the weak and wavering might walk with ease.

"And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan." [Gen.14:14]

Notice this point; he delivers his nephew Lot from the captivity in which he was taken. He was a pilgrim on the earth; therefore, he had power with God. He ran to the help of Lot. He takes with him the servants born in his house (tells us of the fruitfulness of faith) who were all ready for the battle. They went to the help of Lot who probably did not even know he was a captive. We know that the lukewarm Christians, typified by Lot, do not know that they are captive to the mind of the flesh, religious, but nevertheless, the flesh. They think they are free and are doing what they want to do. Such is not the case, they are really influenced, intoxicated, by the religious spirit of the evil age that is dominated by the devil. Carnal saints are unable to tell the truth of the conditions as they are revealed to them; for many cannot bear it. They are deeply offended if we declare that God has not sent us to declare war on whiskey, tobacco, or any of these other so-called evils; nor are we here to advance prohibition, neither to elect good men to office. In fact, as soldiers of Jesus Christ we are not to vote or take any part in the politics of the land [2Ti.2:4]. Abram was no reformer, he was separated from all humanitarian endeavors, and he was the one whom God ordered to the rescue of Lot.

Abram pursued the conquering kings and overcame them. It seems that the pilgrim and stranger Christian will yet have the privilege of delivering his worldly brother from captivity. We read,

"And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people." [Gen.14:16]

In type, this is what truly happened. Abram and his warriors are victors and Lot is brought back to his home. However, Lot does not come to Bethel. The possibility of entering into Abram's inheritance is denied him. He probably does not even desire it. Spirituality is not attained in a day. It is a growth, a daily going on with God, a daily judging the flesh and all that comes of the old creation. Here is where Lot failed and lost his great opportunity. Oh how sad! And yet how long is the list of those who refuse to live on the resurrection side of the cross. It means a hidden, persecuted, obscure life to which they are not inclined. Again, we do not believe they are cognizant of their condition. They do not seem to be aware that they are rejecting the narrow way of the cross and choosing to save their life in this world rather than lose it and gain it hereafter. But the day will come when they awaken to the fact that the people they judged as wrong and despised, as cranks and fanatics, are those whom the Lord loves and truly uses. They are the overcomers who live a separated life; they are in the world but not of it.

ABRAM'S TEMPTATION

Now, the sequel. Satan was the same old wily foe of the people then as at the present time. He comes immediately to Abram with a severe temptation; for Abram just had a great victory. This is always his manner. It is when we have accomplished a bidden task, done a great service; obtained a good report, borne a good witness, that we have a great temptation. It is at such a time that we are the weakest and an easy prey to Satan's blandishments (alluring). We feel good; elated with the progress we have made, with the work done, the battle won, the victory achieved.

So Satan, in the person of Sodom's king, comes out to meet Abram upon his return after the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the kings. Here we are informed of the magnitude of the result of the battle. It was no little victory and Abram has reason to glory. But not the Lord's wonderful care for His dear friend. Before the king of Sodom arrives to tempt Abram, while he is yet on the way, Melchizedek, king of Salem, meets him with bread and wine. It should be carefully noted that Melchizedek was the "*priest of the Most High God*" [Gen.14:18] and is typical of Jesus Christ, our great High Priest. This is not our own reasoning nor is it imagination of our own heart. We have the absolute word to this fact.

"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God." [Gen.14:18]

We read about this Melchizedek in Hebrews 7:1-3:

"For this Melchizedek king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him; without father, without

mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the son of God, abideth a priest forever."

Melchizedek met Abram, at that critical point and blessed him saying,

"And he blessed him, and said, blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all." [Gen.14:19-20]

Is this not most wonderful? The priest strengthens him with bread and wine, a figure of Christ's death and resurrection and with the mighty power-filling Word. The man who is blessed by the most high God needs no favors of man. Happy indeed is the one who is so conscious of God's favor upon him that without any regrets he can turn away from all the bribes and rewards of Satan. Such a man acknowledges God in all His ways, hence is independent of men. His faith makes him invulnerable to all the seductions of Satan. If he has won a great victory; if he has gathered great spoil; if he has delivered the poor and the needy from the enemy; God gets all the glory. He continually boasts in the enabling of grace, taking no honor to himself.

It is the absence of faith in God's Word, unbelief in His protection and power that makes the saints scramble after the things of the world and bow down to the folks that have money, although many of the latter are not even the people of God. But not so Abram, the pioneer of faith. He acknowledges the high priest and His superior place by giving Him tithes of all he possesses. We read in Hebrews 7:9 of this circumstance *"And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham."*

Here, surely God is calling the things that be not as though they were because Levi was not yet born. In fact, he was one of the sons of Jacob, the grandson of Abram; yet Jehovah counts him as giving a 10th of the spoils of conquest to Melchizedek. Later, Israel was bidden to pay tithes to the Levites. We are taught that the priesthood of Melchizedek, a figure of Christ, is greater than the priesthood of Aaron. **Salem** ("peace"), the city over which he was also king, is later named **Jerusalem** ("founded in peace"); the city over which Christ will have His throne. Wondrous typical views of future realities into which we are privileged to gaze.

Now, Abram is ready for the king of Sodom. He is proof against temptation; for he has heard from Jehovah and been strengthened by Him. Although he is given the privilege of keeping all the goods which he has taken from the enemy; yet he refuses the offer. He is not afraid to tell the reason either. He boldly declares his faith,

"...I have lifted up my hand unto Jehovah, the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread nor a shoe-latchet, nor aught that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich." [Gen.14:22-23]

Ah, this is victory indeed! He will owe the flesh nothing. God is his backer and he desires that no man may be able to say that Abram was enriched by the king of Sodom. The Mighty God is filling his vision and the greatest of kings has no power over him. We admire his stand. He has the courage of faith. He is learning God and going from strength to strength. May we imitate

him. He had the victory of Christ, “*the author and finisher of faith*” [Heb.12:2]. He refused the kingdoms of the world at the hands of Satan. He will take no honor save from His Father’s hand.

ABRAM’S REWARD

“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.” [Gen.15:1]

Here, we have a new beginning. Abram is now ready for a greater revelation of Jehovah’s will and purposes. There are crisis times in every overcomer’s life, even such as Abram finds himself here. Times when...

- they come up against some great temptation,
- when they achieve some great victory, and
- times when they hear a mighty commendatory, assuring word from Jehovah.

Such was Abram’s experience here. Now, for the first time, he is pronounced righteous by faith; although this was not the beginning of his faith life. The latter commenced when he left Ur of the Chaldees at the command of Jehovah; now, the Lord witnesses to his justification by faith. Note at what point in his career this happens; it is after his unconditional surrender of all Sodom’s goods. He gives up the riches of the world, openly manifests his victory over all the reward of the wicked, and acknowledges God as his enabling. And now he gets his reward. The Lord openly witnesses of His good pleasure in His dear servant. Oh, we can never get ahead of the Lord; for one testimony to Him and for Him He will give us a double measure even as in the case of Abram.

Two special things confront us in Genesis 15. They come in the form of Jehovah’s answer to 2 questions of Abram’s which have been drawn out of him by 2 marvelous assurances on God’s part. These latter are of immense importance, as well as of unspeakable comfort to every believer.

THE FIRST ASSURANCE

“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.” [Gen.15:1]

Our worthy man of faith, Abram, must have been fearful. After we have won a great victory in a great battle, it is often the case that there comes a sudden revulsion of feeling. The ecstasy and joy having subsided, the enemy takes advantage of the occasion to discourage us...he makes us fearful. We begin to wonder if we were not too rigid about the circumstance. Maybe we were a little hasty or extreme in the stand we took as to the truth and in the separation from the world that it entailed. It is then, after these moments of great religious fervor and unlimited renunciations are passed, that Satan comes to tempt us with fear. But, praise the Lord, God is there also! Abram had spoken and acted in the power of the Spirit, strengthened by the bread and wine with which Melchizedek served him. He had obtained a great victory, not over the king of Sodom, but what is much more essential, over

himself. God's grace had been his enabling in both cases. Now, shall God forsake him? Never! He finds the same grace for this further need. He, who had shielded others in their need, now finds the Lord as his reward. Happy exchange. God is his defense! What dart of the enemy need be feared? It cannot pierce him. God his recompense! What are Sodom's riches as compared to such wealth? What can the world give that equals this reward? Abram finds God a place of shelter and of unsearchable riches.

"And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?" [Gen.15:2]

Abram is comforted and his heart is assured by his fears being allayed through such grace. He believes this is a propitious moment for the question which trembles on his lips.

1st Question: *"What wilt thou give me?"* he cries.

He wants one supreme boon from Jehovah and he can wait no longer to voice the cry of his heart. God had said that He was his reward; but Abram desires one thing, a special reward. He wanted a son. Otherwise, he could not be fruitful. As the Lord had previously promised him a seed, as the dust of the earth in multitude, we see that Abram is in Divine Order in asking on this wise.

Some would argue that Abram's faith failed here; but we cannot admit this. Although it fell short of God's wondrous promise, it was in perfect harmony with his growth in grace. He was not up to such marvelous disclosures and could not yet have taken in all God's purposes in grace for him. His faith was not perfect but he was on the way to that happy consummation. Such is the case with every Abrahamic pilgrim. His faith develops as he walks and talks with God. The immensity of this promise to Abram is enough to stagger anyone. God his portion! Do we grasp such grace? It is for us also. It takes years of experience on this overcoming path to take it in; yet Jehovah condescends to our little faith. He has patience, yes, tender patience and comes down to meet the slightest hint of our appropriation of His promise. So with Abram, His compassions fail not. When Abraham asked for a son, He brought him forth and said, *"Look now toward heaven and tell the stars if thou be able to number them; so shall thy seed be."* It must have been at night when Abram beheld this wondrous vision; the stars were dotting the sky in multitude, so many he could not count them. For the first time it is written that *"Abraham believed in the LORD and He counted it to him for righteousness"* [Gen.15:6]. The marvelous doctrine of justification by faith, which is especially Pauline, is backed up here and confirmed by this verse [Rom.4:3].

Abram's one seed, Isaac, was but a figure of that greater Seed, Jesus Christ. *"He saith not, and to seeds as of many; but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is Christ"* [Gal.3:16]. Here is some more of the Apostle Paul's doctrine confirmed and witnessed to by the type of Abram's seed. Note, that Jehovah is here concerned with the heavenly seed not the earthly. Yet, as we have seen, there is the earthly line also; but the heavenly is the greater, yea the more exalted because it is an upward calling. Until these are taken home; filling the heavens, their eternal abode, to the uttermost, the earthly seed cannot enter into their inheritance. Every blessing to Israel and the world depends upon

these saints; God cannot consummate any of His purposes until Christ has His bride, as well as His body, the Church, with Him.

THE SECOND ASSURANCE

Abram is now given another positive assurance that he shall inherit Canaan. The LORD said unto him,

"I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it." [Gen.15:7]

2nd Question: *"He said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" [Gen.15:8].* The Lord is pleased to give him an answer by deeds, not by words. He put the symbols of Christ before him, as the pledge of his inheritance.

"Take me an heifer of three years old, a she goat of three years old and a ram of three years old and a turtledove and a young pigeon." [Gen.15:9]

These are all types of Christ and His precious, fragrant death for us. Their significance, so various and many sided, are unfolded more distinctly later in the Scriptures.

- The 3 beasts are domestic animals, not wild or fierce, not resisting efforts to capture them, but rather the gentle, willing servants of man.
- That they were each 3 years old is also significant. It is a hint of the Divine Mystery in Christ's personality; God manifest in flesh.
- Two were females, a type of fruitfulness.
- The heifer also suggests Christ as the patient servant of Jehovah, ox-like in His obedience, never swerving from the path of duty marked out for Him.
- The goat vividly portrays Him as the substitute for sinners.
- The ram, afterwards noted as the ram of consecration and the ram of the trespass offering, figures Him, not in His meek surrender, but as the aggressive, energetic holy Man, who had come to do His Father's will; and in the full consciousness of what it meant to Him, He went deliberately to the cross and laid down His life. He insisted that no man took His life from Him, but that He laid it down of Himself [Joh.10:18].
- The birds, of which there were 2, figure Jesus as the heavenly One, in 2 different phases. The turtle dove images Him as dwelling with man; a pilgrim and a stranger, and a man of sorrows in a foreign land. The typical phase of the pigeon supplies the other side of Christ's life. It makes it home in the rock (this bird of sacrifice is often called the rock-pigeon), which emphasizes the fact that although He came down to earth, identifying Himself with men; yet at the same time His home was in God, safe and secure from all alarm.

Thus we have here a 5-fold view of one perfect man, the man Christ Jesus and His perfect, complete work of redemption; the basis of every blessing to mankind. He who came down to our level can alone lift us up to His level. It was not only His duty to obey God, the creature must obey the Creator, but He was the Creator; yet He voluntarily chose the place of subjection. No human obedience, even though perfect, could have the value of Christ's

obedience. Adam's disobedience lost us an earthly paradise, a human righteousness, and fellowship with God. Christ's obedience finds us a heavenly paradise, a Divine Righteousness, Divine Life, which has fellowship with God. He has lifted us up to a much higher place than that we lost, even the same place before God that He enjoys. This is the essence of the gospel as preached by the Apostle Paul; the immense good tidings, which it is our privilege to hear and appropriate in this age.

This is the answer to Abram's second question, "*Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit the land?*" All the wondrous fullness of Christ and His obedience unto death is set before Abram as the positive guarantee that his faith should be rewarded. It was all secured to Abram by promise on the grounds of sacrifice. It is of promise, as contrasted with the Law [Gal.3:18]. Abram believes, but does not yet know the contrast because the Law has not yet been given.

According to the word of the Lord, Abram divided the animals in the midst and laid each piece over against another; but the birds he did not divide. Here we, as well as Abram, are taught by the type, that our great Kinsman Redeemer, having been laid open on the cross, His body broken for us, is the basis of all the promises of God. He is thus displayed by the Word of God; set forth crucified, even as the Apostle Paul emphasized in his letter to the Galatians [Gal.3:1]. Timothy was admonished to rightly divide the Word of truth [2Ti.2:15] for the instruction and edification of the people of God. They are to enter into and understand all the moral, as well as the Divine Beauty of Christ, and the purposes of God concerning Him. The birds not being divided also has Divine Significance in that as a man, we may understand Christ; but as the heavenly one, the Son of God, He cannot be laid open to our gaze. He said, "*No man knoweth the Son.*" He is hidden from us.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION – IN TYPE

"And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him." [Gen.15:12]

As we have noted, Abram is a wonderful typical man. Here, he figures the nation of destiny, the Jews, and the tribulation which they are yet to pass through in the awful night of darkness when the sun will indeed be going down. It will appear as though all faith is gone with the sun. We read that gross darkness will cover the earth [Isa.60:2]; darkness that is physical, moral, and spiritual. The fowls are typical of wicked, satanic powers that will have it all their own way for a time when deep sleep will have fallen upon the man of faith. They will pick the work of Christ to pieces and thus make void the promises given to Abram. But, at that very moment the Lord speaks to His servant and assures him that even though he is viewing his seed in tribulation, afflicted, and persecuted, yet His promise holds good nevertheless. He will deliver them out of the hand of their enemies, bring them back to the land, and bless them. Apparently He is speaking of their sojourn in Egypt out of which they were taken. All this, in a measure, has been fulfilled which was only a miniature exodus of the Jew, a partial and feeble fulfillment of the promise to Abram; even as that bondage and affliction in Egypt was but a little tribulation compared to that great one which is yet to come upon the Jew.

"And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces."
[Gen.15:17]

God Himself, under the symbol of the "*smoking furnace and burning lamp*," passes between the pieces; pledging Himself, by sacrifice, to perform His promise to Abram of his inheritance. God makes the covenant; He is the only party to this covenant of promise which is founded upon sacrifice, the basis of our faith today.

Note: I want to emphasize this fact; it is too little known, that God alone was the party of the second part to this covenant. They say it takes 2 to make a covenant. Well, they are both here: the Father and the Son, in the power of the Spirit, are taking upon themselves the responsibility of man's redemption and blessing.

Abram the man of faith just looks on and acquiesces to all that God says and does. His responsibility was to believe God, yield to His Word, and accept the scepter of mercy extended to him. God did it all. However, by comparison, in the Sinaitic covenant (that of the Law) the children of Israel made themselves a party, the party of the second part, God being the party of the first part. Hence, they were responsible to carry out their contract to the uttermost. No doubt, they imitated the custom established here as to the ratifying of agreements between two parties; dividing several animals in two, both parties then passing between. A Scripture in Jeremiah appears to indicate that this was the procedure:

"I will give the men which transgressed my covenant (into the hands of their enemies), which have not performed the words of the covenant which they made before Me, when they cut the calf in twain and passed between the parts thereof."
[Jer.34:18]

Whether the above refers primarily to Sinai or not, we do not say; but we learn what is meant by passing between the parts of a divided animal. We also learn that man is weak. He is powerless when it comes to obeying God and redeeming this promise. He cannot fulfill his part of the contract. Blessed be God, he does not have to! The covenant with Abram, which we read was altogether of promise [Gal.3:18], God alone being party to it, comes before the covenant of Law. The Law was added to multiply transgressions not to control man [Rom.5:20, Gal.3:19]. It came in after the covenant of promise; that man might learn his need of the covenant of promise, that of grace. This was its office — the handmaid to grace.

The answer to this covenant is simply faith on our part; dependence upon another is the essence of faith. Everything is assured to us by this covenant to Abram without condition and to take freely what is freely given is the secret of a happy, mighty, victorious life. Faith in one's self is the opposite of all this. It is the secret of all failure, discouragement, and gloom in a believer's life. Grace secures holiness and is itself the power of it. When man acknowledges his need, God, the covenant-keeping God, acts from Himself and glorifies Himself in helping man.

HAGAR ON THE SCENE

"Now Sarai, Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar." [Gen.16:1]

Another figure now enters the stage of action. We have not heard of her before: and as all these characters have spiritual value, we must enquire into Hagar's signification at this place. The Apostle Paul again comes to our rescue in this respect, and informs us that she represents the covenant of law, even as Sarai represents the covenant of grace. *"For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia and answers to Jerusalem, which now is and is in bondage with her children: but Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all"* [Gal.4:25-26].

Hagar was an Egyptian. Abram brought her up out of Egypt after his sojourn there; even as the children of Israel (whom he so wonderfully portrays) brought up the principle of law with them when they were delivered out of the land of Egypt. God undertook for them upon the ground of absolute grace, *"He remembered His covenant to Abram, Isaac and Jacob"* that of promise [Exo.3:25]. He appeared to Moses in the wilderness in recognition of that covenant of grace and said, *"I have surely seen the afflictions of My people that are in Egypt,...and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians"* [Exo.4:7-8].

Later, after the wonderful victory of the Red Sea, when they saw Jehovah's mighty outstretched arm in their defense; after they had eaten manna rained down from heaven; after they had drunk water gushing from the rock at His command; after all this grace, they virtually asked for the Law so that they might do the will of God. They were still ignorant of their own weakness; yea, more, they vainly imagined themselves strong. Instead of falling back upon that wonderful covenant of promise to Abram, pleading His grace alone, they boldly said to Moses, *"All that Jehovah hath spoken, we will do."* They failed to hear his tender wooing words of love, *"You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bare you on eagle's wings and brought you unto myself"* [Exo.19:4, 8]. This was all His doings; all in grace. They did nothing but follow on at His leading, and yet here they insisted that they would do their part, etc.

As we said, they brought Hagar, the covenant of law, up out of Egypt with them. God was perforce obliged to let them have the Law if they would not take grace. When they refused to accept His doing for them, He allowed them to do for themselves. When they might have reveled in the glory upon the mount of grace, instead, they took their place under the dark sinister shadow of Mt. Sinai. They desired to merit Jehovah's favor, to earn salvation and be fruitful by their own works; they were given the opportunity. So much for the dispensational side of the picture; there is another view...the personal side of this picture.

THE PERSONAL VIEW

Sarai is the principle of grace and when joined to faith is the very essence of fruitfulness in a believer's life; but strange to say, Sarai is barren. It surely is an enigma that the very principle which assures of fertility in life should fail to conceive. It is written, *"Sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are not under*

the Law but under grace" [Rom.6:14]; yet at the same time, the believer may be crying out,

"When I would do good, evil is present."

Or

"Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

The explanation of Abram's inability to beget a son by Sarai is found in Romans 7. The struggle depicted there is not a striving after peace or forgiveness of sins, but a struggle for a holy life; not a seeking deliverance from the guilt of sins but from the power of sin. Those are two vastly different stages of experiences; the latter cannot be known until the first is a fact. It is only a justified man, a believer, who longs to be fruitful in holiness; however, he too must learn by repeated failures that he is just as unable in himself to attain sanctification as he is justification. The fact that man has no standing whatever before God and that all his efforts to obtain one are fruitless, is difficult enough to understand; but this is a still harder fact to grasp. It is Sarai's barrenness that is puzzling. It is she herself that finally persuades Abram to leave her and seek fruitage through her handmaid. Sarai hopes to be built up thereby.

"And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee." [Gen.16:4-5]

Abram hearkens to the voice of Sarai and he takes Hagar (who represents the covenant of Law) that he may be fruitful, even as present day believers take up the Law, not as a means of sanctification. Today, many thousands are zealous for the Law [Act.21:20]. They know they are saved by grace yet they cannot grasp the immensity of the salvation to which they are heir; neither do they grasp the grace which is its basis. And the first effect of appropriating Hagar appears to be all that can be desired; fruit is at once in evidence. It is only when God speaks and repudiates the son of Hagar that there is any question. In the meantime, the handmaid is jubilant. Her mistress (grace) is thus made dependent upon the bondwoman (the Law) for fruit; and immediately Hagar is elated. *"When she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes."* That is ever the way. When once we admit the principle of the Law in the very least measure, as relating to salvation, grace must take a back seat. *"And if by grace, then it is no more of works"* [Rom.11:6]. That is, salvation, entire, complete, and eternal is either all of grace or all of works. You cannot mix them in the least measure. They are separate and distinct, even as Sarai and Hagar were 2 different personalities and could not be mistaken the one for the other. Faith (Abram) may endeavor to be fruitful by Hagar (the Law) and yet at the same time cling to Sarai (grace) and claim her as his very own; nevertheless, the principles are totally at variance. In fact, they are absolutely opposed to each other as is manifest in the type.

"But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face." [Gen.16:6]

Sarai refuses to yield her place to her handmaiden. She blames Abram for appropriating Hagar instead of herself. She asserts her authority, informing Abram of the handmaid's attitude of superiority toward her. He stands with Sarai. That is, in the Apostle Paul's language, faith acknowledges that grace is sovereign; that she is mistress in his house, saying, "*Behold thy maid is in thy hand; do unto her as is good in thine eyes.*" **Hagar** (*fugitive*) is but the servant and Sarai deals roughly with her; no doubt slaps her in the face for presuming to be the lady of the house. "*And she fled from her face.*" She is true to the meaning of her name "*fugitive.*" We actually give grace the place which is hers in the purpose of God; the Law must take a back seat or flee. The two cannot reign at the same time.

DISPENSATIONAL LESSON

"The angel of the Lord said to Hagar, Return to thy mistress and submit thyself under her hands." [Gen.16:9]

In the remaining portion of this interesting "love triangle," as many would name it today. We have an instructive lesson of the time between the promise of the seed and its fulfillment. It is the instruction, not of experience; of Divine History. Hagar, as representing the Law, teaches us of God's connection with the Law. It came in 430 years after the promise was given; and it was added until the seed should come to whom the promise was made [Gal.3:19]. Furthermore, it was not the Lord who first gave Hagar to Abram; Abram took Hagar. God only sends her back to Sarai after she flees from her so that the experiment may be fully worked out. Abram must learn by his own experience the difference between the 2 sons, the one by a bondwoman and the other by a freewoman. God does not own the one born after the flesh (of Hagar) but the one born of promise (of Sarai). Herein are some deep, fundamental principles that the children of Israel have yet to learn.

"And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." [Gen.16:10-12]

He informs her that she shall bear a son, and He names the baby. He shall be called **Ishmael** ("*God shall hear*"); for his hand shall be against every man. He gives us the character of that which is born of the flesh (selfish and self-willed) which, even under the Law, cannot be curbed. It can only bring forth the fruit of the flesh, never the fruit of the Spirit. Under the Covenant of Law, Israel gave full proof that they were flesh, even though moral and religious. Hagar goes back to Sarai and allows her to be the mistress in Abram's house.

Thus, the lesson which Israel must yet learn is that the Law came upon the scene in their history years after faith and grace had been joined as the way of fruitfulness. Furthermore, that it was they themselves that first sought Hagar. God just took her up and used her for His own purpose of education, as a tutor [Gal.3:25]. He finds her by the fountain of water, which is convenient to the spiritual truth of which the fountain is the symbol, and He thus joins

them together; but thus, law is not law. It is rather, the necessary means to an end. Hagar being sent back to Sarai foretells of the second giving of the Law, when Israel was apparently under the Law and grace also, even as Abram had both Sarai and Hagar in his house. Note that it is to Hagar and not to Abram that God appears in this connection; in fact for 13 years we read of no further intercourse between God and Abram.

CIRCUMCISION

"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram and said, I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect." [Gen.17:1]

Here we have a new beginning. And it is striking to note that all the years that intervene, from the time of Abram's taking Hagar until this time, are counted as a loss. The Apostle Paul refers to this period in the patriarch's life when he says that his body was dead; but being not weak in faith he considered not his own body; that is, he did not take it into account, neither the deadness of Sarai's womb. *"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform; and therefore his faith was imputed to him for righteousness"* [Rom.4:19-24].

It would appear as if the Apostle Paul had confounded times far apart by the above statement as to Abram being counted righteous. It was at least 14 years before that it was written, that *"Abram believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness"* [Gen.15:6]. Now while it is true that Abram was justified at the very moment when he first believed, yet he did not consider his body dead at that time, for Ishmael was born later. His birth was in the energy of nature merely, in contrast with the power of God that was later demonstrated in the birth of Isaac. It is to this after-time that the Apostle refers in his panegyric of Abram's life-bringing faith. All the intervening time is thus covered and the 2 periods are brought together.

Abram had to come to the end of his own strength before the power of Jehovah could be displayed. He was now called to walk before the Almighty God. He had been acquainted with Him as the Mighty One, his Helper, his Shield, and his Reward, which is all good; but there is more for him to know of God. He must know Him as the Almighty God; the God who is not only necessary but who is enough. He had not until now reached the limits of his own strength. Just in the measure that we think we are strong, just in that degree we limit God. He can only work in the fullest sense when we quit. The apprehension of power in ourselves hinders God; but this, sad to say, is a lesson that we are slow to learn. We think we know it when we assent to the truth of it; but afterwards we are a lifetime making it practical. Generally all the tests and trails of our Christian life are for the purpose of weakening our natural strength or withering up our natural resources, so that we may be entirely dependent upon God. And thus, as He said to the Apostle Paul, *"My strength is made perfect in weakness"* [2Co.12:9].

It is in this way we learn the grace of God even as our father Abram. We too must receive the sentence of death in ourselves that we may not trust in our natural strength; but in God that raises the dead. The Lord now reiterates His promise to Abram; but notice that it is upon the ground of circumcision that

they are established to him. What does this mean? It means that only as a new creation will Abram's seed inherit the blessings of the covenant of grace. Circumcision signifies a cutting around, a cutting away. In the literal, the knife was put upon the very body of the man, to teach in the most powerful way the truth of the death of the old man. God could not have spoken in plainer language, and yet how few have ears to hear. Or if they hear, with many it is only a theory. They refuse to have it literally carried out; for it hurts us, hurts our pride, that we are not able to bring forth anything acceptable to God, as identified with the old creation. Surely it hurts, even as in the natural; that cutting off was a painful ordeal. It made them unable to work; temporarily incapacitated them for service in every sense; but the suffering was soon over. And in the spiritual, it is then that we truly rejoice. *"We are the circumcision, who worship God in Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh"* [Phi.3:3]. We have put off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; for the cross was where the antitypical circumcision was carried out. Here was where, in the purpose of God, the old creation was cut off. The ax was laid at the root of the bad tree and it fell with all its boasted pomp and power; all the glory of the old Adamic race passed away. There was our finish, as we may say. Christians are not counted as men in the flesh by the reckoning of God. We are counted in Christ. As we have received Him by faith, so we should walk in Him, even as Abram was admonished to walk perfect before the Almighty God, who promised to back him up. He would stand behind him, and as he stepped out to walk in faith, the Almighty would be right there to see that he made good. He would be his strength and power; therefore, to be really weak practically is to be really strong practically. These two principles go arm in arm. Hallelujah!

And then what does the Apostle Paul say as to the result of the faith of such a weak fellow? Listen:

"Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude and as the sand of the sky in multitude and as the sand of the seashore innumerable." [Heb.11:12]

Abram and his sentence of death are just a foreshadowing of Christ's death on the cross, which is the basis of the covenant of promise. It surely teaches us emphatically the need of death as the means of life. The corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or else it abides alone [Joh.12:24].

And so in this rite of circumcision (which God enjoined upon Abram), we see the very condition upon which any man may call him "Father"; they must be of the circumcision, the natural being only a symbol of the spiritual. And the Jew even today carries in his flesh the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which Abram had before he was circumcised; and that any Gentile, in spite of the middle wall of division between them, could freely appropriate the sign of such righteousness and sit down in peace with the Jew to the feast of redemption, the Passover feast.

"And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed." [Gen.17:12]

Here we have another precious hint of a new creation and God's delight in the Second Man. Only the circumcision could dwell in Abram's house. Every one who has been born again has also been bought with a price, not of silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without blemish or spot. The 8th day, the 1st day of a new week, tells us again of the new creation, a new beginning, also of the fair inheritance that is the destiny of those who have stepped out of the first Adam, having counted him cut off at the cross and have stepped into Christ, the Last Adam, who is alive forever more. It is only in the power of His resurrection life that true circumcision can be practically realized. When Israel wandered around in the wilderness they failed to observe the rite of circumcision; but upon reaching Canaan before they could even dispossess their enemies and enjoy their portion in the goodly land, they must all be circumcised. Here is certainly food for reflection for those who would enjoy the heavenlies. In Christ alone is qualification to walk in His steps.

IMPORTANT CHANGE OF NAMES

Observe also that it is in this connection that **Abram's** name is changed. "The high father" by circumcision (the death of the flesh) becomes **Abraham** (*"the father of a multitude"*). His progeny, the children of faith are all counted as a new creation. **Sarai's** name is also changed from *"my princesses"* (the plural) she becomes **Sarah** *"the princess"* (singled out by the definite pronoun). She is not one among many, but the one through whom the promised son shall come; for God now, the first time, positively announces that Sarah shall have a son. He thus declares Himself the God of resurrection and on no other ground does He promise to bless and multiply humanity. It is preposterous to suppose that a holy, sin hating God would bless men in their sins and excuse their wrong-doing. No indeed! He does not bless the old creation. It is Sarah, the heretofore barren unfruitful woman who is to bring forth the seed through whom all nations are to be blessed. But some may say that he also blessed and promised to multiply the son of the handmaid. Yes; but this too was in this connection and because of the spiritual seed; for there must first be that which is natural and then that which is spiritual. The one must come before the other. Jehovah must have his 12 tribes for His kingdom or government of heaven on earth and they must first be born of the flesh that later they may be born of the Spirit. These 2 sons of Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, figure the natural and supernatural seed of Abram; figure I say; they are not the reality. We will see more of this in our further studies.

ABRAHAM AND LOT CONTRASTED

"And the Lord appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day." [Gen.18:1]

Abraham is now ready for a full revelation of the Almighty God who has called him out of Ur of the Chaldees unto a land which he is afterwards to inherit. He has been learning to know Him, getting better acquainted day by day as he walked in the light. God revealed Himself to this pattern man of faith by degrees, even as his spiritual growth warranted. We do not learn God in a day; neither do we get a full revelation of Him at conversion. We merely get

an introduction into the grace of God when we accept Christ. It takes years of overcoming before we know Him in the unmeasured depth which was Abraham's privilege at that time.

We learned previously that Abraham obeyed the mandate of the Lord, as to circumcision, for his whole house. That was a crisis period in his life; it marked him out as one cut off: therefore we need not be surprised that he now receives a visit from the Lord. Abraham had acknowledged his absolute dependence upon Him for his fruitful life; hence He is under obligation to appear in his behalf and make good to him His promise that Sarah should have a son. What follows is communion with God in a fuller sense than we have ever experienced. We affirm that this is one of the first results of counting our old man dead.

THE TENT OF ABRAHAM

We would emphasize at this point that this tent of Abraham's is not a little thing in his life. It is wonderfully suggestive of the position that he maintained all his life. He is now found sitting in his tent door; a deep settled peace in his heart. The soreness consequent upon the circumcision was all gone when the Lord appeared to him. He is glad that he has learned his helplessness: glad that God does not look to him for strength; but for weakness. He desires to display His own Almightyness. The latter glorifies Him, not us: therefore the reason is obvious as to why man is slow to let God weaken him.

Abraham is sitting. He has ceased from his own works as God ceased from His and is resting in his tent door. He is taking it easy, as we would say. He is not fretted nor cumbered with care. God has the care. The government is on His shoulders. Why should he worry about that son? God has said that he should have a son by Sarah and he is just standing on His promise. Nothing for him to do in such a case but believe and praise God for the answer which is on the way.

Faith is now for the first time really appropriating Grace. See the victory manifest in this chapter. Abraham is living in **Mamre** (the "*place of fatness*"). He had lived here previously to his day of cutting off; but now he appreciates his place. It is real. He enjoys his happy home. It is a tent which is a symbol of the pilgrim life. When the Lord appears to him, he is resting at noonday in the full blaze of light. He has passed out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light and has no fear of meeting God. Why should he?

These 3 men, in which form the Lord appeared to him, were old acquaintances of his. They figure the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead. Abraham salutes all 3 of them as Lord. He uses the plural pronoun in addressing them, never the singular. We read that he runs to meet them and bows himself to the ground. He worships them. He is in full favor with the Lord and so acts out the terms of intimacy he enjoys. He stands on no ceremony with Him. Come to and rest with me, he entreats his Friend. He desires Him to tarry with him. Let me fetch a little water and wash your feet. Let me fetch a little bread and comfort your hearts, the man of faith speaks. He wants to have a feast with the Lord, who has condescended to pay him a visit. He is an honored Guest and is so acknowledged. Faith will always recognize the Lord in whatever guise it meets Him. It was so in the case of

the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. She knew Him in the house of Simon the leper. While the latter, blinded by his own self-righteousness, failed to recognize the Lord, she instantly did so and sought fellowship with Him. Abraham is not disappointed. They said, "*so do as thou hast said*" [Gen.18:5].

ABRAHAM'S BANQUET

"And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat." [Gen.18:6-8]

Let us observe closely what the man of faith prepares for his visitors. And he loses no time. He hastens into the tent and talks to Sarah about it. He had 3 guests; hence he must have 3 measures; for the whole Trinity is represented here. The meal is representative of Christ, in whom the 3 Persons of the Godhead were imaged. But this was not all the feast. The meal would not be complete without an offering from the herd or from the flock. Calvary, the basis of fellowship, must be represented. The holy humanity of Christ is not enough for faith to rest upon. There must be the shed blood in evidence. So Abraham was in harmony with the will and purpose of God. He hastens, note the energy and faith, and brings the fatted calf and gives it to a young man (hint of Christ as the High Priest offering up Himself) to kill and dress it. Soon the feast is ready and he bids his guests to partake of his hospitality. That invitation is quickly accepted. They did eat, we read. Yes indeed, God can have fellowship any time with the man of faith upon such grounds.

And now the LORD asks a question, "*Where is Sarah, thy wife?*" Notice the emphasis is on thy wife. The Lord insists that this union must never be dissolved. He does not enquire as to Hagar. Then He says, "*I will certainly return unto thee when the season cometh round, and lo, Sarah, thy wife, shall have a son*" [Gen.18:10 RV].

Sarah was overwhelmed with such a promise. She could scarce believe such good tidings. Then at this point we read again that Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age, as though the Lord would call attention to the supernatural birth of Isaac. The parents were both dead as far as being able to bring forth a son. God must certainly come upon the scene if Sarah is to conceive. She had always been barren; the Abraham did have some strength, as witnesses the son of Hagar; but now he too is helpless. God has His chance at last. It is His opportunity and He takes advantage of it. Sarah laughed, more in anticipation than in unbelief, and the Lord asked, "Wherefore did Sarah laugh?" when she said, Shall I have a son when I am old? The Lord assured her that she should, by asking her a question, "*Is anything too hard for the LORD?*" [Gen.18:14]. Now Sarah was laughing with delight that she was to have a child, but she thought it was too good to believe. Grace laughs, no matter how much she denies it. Grace is still laughing, and the people who are born of her laugh too.

ABRAHAM'S PRAYER

"And the men rose up from thence and looked toward Sodom; and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way." [Gen.18:16]

The time of fellowship and feasting is over. The Lord rises up to depart; but Abraham is loath to let his Friend go. And the LORD said, "*Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?*" The 3 hold a council together. This man is an important personage, made so by God's own sovereign choice, and the Lord decides to reveal His present purpose to him. He tells Abraham that He is on His way to investigate matters which have reached Him concerning Sodom and Gomorrah. Judgment is ready to fall upon those wicked cities because their sin is very grievous in the sight of the Lord. Immediately Abraham is deeply interested (as the Lord knew that he would be); for he remembers Lot. Observe the tactful way in which he addresses Jehovah. He draws near and says, "*Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?*" Why Lord, you surely will not stay the righteous with the wicked. You surely will make a difference between these two classes. At once he has a leverage on the Lord, and then commences a most realistic, a striking illustration of effective intercession. After a glorious time of fellowship, feeding on Christ (the tender calf with the unleavened bread being the figure), we are in just the right condition for intercession. And it is only then that Abraham is told of the destruction that is threatened on Sodom; and thus given the opportunity to intercede. The majority of saints are always asking God for something, in other words praying, but it is so rarely effective because they never worship Him. Worship leads to prayer even as in this case.

Abraham continues his speaking to God. After he uses this leverage of His justice, he says,

"Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" [Gen.18:24-25]

Ah, Abraham is wise indeed. His intercession is in keeping with Jehovah's sovereignty, power, and character. He gives Him His place, has faith in his power, but trusts His grace. That is Divine Diplomacy, the wisdom that cometh from above.

The answer from the LORD follows,

"If I find in Sodom fifty righteous...then I will spare the place for their sakes." [Gen.18:26]

But Abraham is not satisfied yet. He wants that city spared because Lot is there. Although the latter had gone away from him, yet he bears no malice; rather his thoughts are good toward him and not of evil. He is praying for Sodom for Lot's sake. That is the manner of grace. It makes us gracious in our ways toward men and bold in our faith toward God, as witness Abraham here. He takes hold of the grace displayed heretofore by the Lord and says,

"And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it." [Gen.18:27-28]

Then the Lord tenderly answers, "If I find there forty and five I will not destroy it." Abraham continues his prayer. He is somewhat dubious himself as to there being that many righteous men in that wicked city. He had no doubt heard of some of its doings and wanted to save Lot. He comes down with his plea of 40, 30, 20, and finally 10. And the Lord graciously answers him each time. He will spare the city for that number. Abraham now leaves off. He is sure Sodom with its people is safe; for surely there are 10 righteous folks in the city. Lot's own family, counting the "in-laws," would almost make that number. He is content. He has implicit confidence in the Word of the Lord. What an illustration of faith! Also observe the mighty preservative power of the righteous, 10 such holy ones would have been enough to save Sodom from destruction. Alas! Even that number could not be found.

Just so it will be in the end of this present evil age, comparatively speaking. Jesus Himself applied it to the end time [Luk.19:28]. Sodom and Gomorrah picture the whole world just before the coming of the Son of Man to judge the wicked living. Gomorrah may refer to the Gentile world, while we have Scripture proof that Jerusalem is likened to Sodom [Rev.11:8]. And yet for the saints who are in the earth. He will not utterly destroy it. He will remember Abraham and send Lot out of the midst of the overthrow. He will care for His own in that time even as He does now, although some of them, like Lot, are worldly and carnal, merely justified as to their standing, but not as to their state.

We cannot understand how anyone can read this narrative and not see the difference between spiritual and carnal believers; or, as some have dared to say, that Abraham failed. Instead, we say that he did not fail. He was a typical man. His apparent digressions, if any, were all in the order of God. Yes, we dare to declare it. God wanted him to go and do the very things that he did. There was a lesson for Israel (he was their type, as well as their father); and there is instruction for us in every step of his way.

There is a most striking, as well as suggestive contrast between these 2 men, Abraham and Lot. We see it most powerfully expressed in Genesis 18 and 19. Here Lot, for the last time, comes before us, the type of those who shall be saved, yet so as by fire [1Co.3:15]. The lessons contained herein are of intense and practical import and are worthy of deep and prayerful study.

We have been permitted to see the intimacy which Abraham enjoyed with the Lord. He not only appears to him in His fullness, but associates Himself with the man of faith as with one of whom He is not ashamed. Abraham was sitting in his tent door, while Lot sat in the gate of Sodom, which different positions express the character of these 2 men. In the one is shown the persistent pilgrim; in the other, one who has settled down in this world and is untrue to his heavenly calling. He is more interested in making the earth a good place in which to live, than in getting out of it.

There in Bethl ehem, in manger,
Child of noble birth we see.
Yea, to all He was a stranger,
But the Son of Destiny.
He's the Center of the ages –
The Beginning and the End,
The Salvation of the sages.
Heav'n and earth on Him depend.

THE HOUSE OF LOT

*"And there came tow angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom.
And Lot seeing them rose up to meet them and he bowed himself to the ground."
[Gen.19:1]*

As we intimated we have a decided contrast between the man of this chapter and that of the preceding. And this difference is most designedly emphatic. First, observe the manner of Jehovah's approach to Lot. He came under the form of two angels, disguised as it were; for Lot had always been under cover, even as his name signifies. God is called the God of Abraham, but never the God of Lot. If we confess Him, not only by our words, but by our life, He will acknowledge us, even as it is written *"Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord and touch not the unclean. I will receive you; and be a Father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters"* [2Co.6:18]. A life of separation unto the Lord, tells the whole story. Are we living in Canaan or Sodom?

The reason therefore that the Lord makes Himself strange to Lot is that he is living in Sodom. His governmental ways require Him to so display Himself. Sodom is at a distance from Him. He is rejected there; hence it is not that Lot had taken part in the city's government that had displeased the Lord; but simply the fact that he was living there. In like manner it was the tent life of Abraham that marked him out for Divine Approval, not something which he had done. It was his faith that made him a stranger in the earth, and it is by faith that we please God; but if we believe God we will act like it.

*"And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom:
and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face
toward the ground; And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your
servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early,
and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.
And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his
house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did
eat. [Gen.19:1-3]*

The angels, as we noted, speak of distance, not intimacy. Evening too is fallen. They come in gloom and darkness in contrast with the noonday, the blaze of light in which they greeted Abraham. Again, Lot is under cover. His life is not open and above board. He is a pretender in a great measure. Although he rises to meet his supernatural visitors, there is no hastening to greet them, no display of gladness or emotion in his demeanor. While his hospitality is as real as Abraham's, yet his response to it is lacking. Lot is obliged to constrain them to come in. They finally however yield to his solicitation. *"He pressed upon them greatly and they turned in unto him and entered in*

unto his house.” His uncle had only a tent. And now observe the marked difference in the provision for the feast. “He did bake unleavened bread and they did eat.” No fatted calf killed and roasted for them; they have simply city fare. Lot has not provided the basis for fellowship; the blood has not been shed, hence there is little communion. He has simply brought a meal offering which could not be offered without a sacrifice animal, except in cases of great poverty [Lev.5:11]. The above figures spiritual lack and is the condition of many believers today. They have faith in Christ and believe that He died for them; however, if you ask them what is the basis of God’s favor toward them and acceptance of them they do not know. They are ignorant of the absolute need of the atonement provided by the Holy Son of God. And yet they are bringing Christ as a meal-offering (His Holy humanity) to God for their sin; and He accepts them even as Lot. His feast is meager: It figures one who has little conception of the sufficiency of Calvary; consequently the fellowship and rest of such is soon disturbed. How full of instruction is the narrative at this point. The men of Sodom rudely break in upon Lot and his heavenly guests. The very attempt to entertain them provokes an outbreak of the flesh. And instead of the blessing which Abraham hears, he gets a message of judgment; judgment which is to fall immediately upon all those with whom he has chosen to associate himself. It is surely evident to any one, not willfully blind, that there is a vast difference between these 2 men, Abraham and Lot, and their several positions. And yet they were both, as we would say, believers; but out of the path of faith and the will of God, even a believer is not master of his circumstances. They master him. He is helpless before the power of the enemy to hinder fellowship with God in even a little measure.

There is deep instruction for us in these recorded happenings; for there are Christians today who count it no shame at all to be yoked up in benevolent, political, social, and even religious schemes with unbelievers. They go to the polls with the hope of electing good men to office; fight the wicked, unscrupulous politicians with their own weapons, and generally lose, instead of living in separation from the world and trust God to clear it up in his own good time. They allow that heaven is the future abiding home of the saint; but in no wise his present abiding place. They cannot understand how he can practically live there, while, as to his body, he is still on earth. They forget that it is by faith we understand and by faith we walk; not by sight or feelings. The real motive with such is that they want to sit as judges in the gate of Sodom now instead of waiting for Christ, who is the Judge, and having part with Him then in judging the world. But this is too narrow a way for some. They say, “I do not see it that way”, even though the Word is unmistakably plain on this point. Not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers is the one condition that God insists upon, whereby He can be a Father to us; that is practically prove Himself a Father [2Co.6:17]. Furthermore to be purged from vessels of dishonor is the only state which has attached to it the promise, “*He shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master’s use and prepared unto every good work*” [2Ti.2:21].

Well, Lot sacrificed his fellowship with heaven for his fleshly endeavors on earth; and so do those who follow his example instead of Abraham’s manner of life. God has little communion with them. Oh yes, they have substitutes, religious meetings, Sunday school work, Church work, etc., whereby they endeavor to deceive themselves and others as to their sincerity and reality. They succeed with all but the spiritual. The latter know; they discern all

things. The Lot type of Christian is the carnal believer of whom we read in the Apostle Paul's epistles [1Co.3:1]. They walk and talk as men because their heart is divided. It is not true in its allegiance to God. Their communion with Him is so seldom enjoyed that they never grow to know Him. And when they, in moments of special devotion seek His face, because He has sought them, how seldom is their fellowship unhindered. Thoughts, if nothing else, as unwelcome as Lot's visitors, crowd in to mar the intimacy. Someone may say, "Well we cannot help our thoughts." As well assert that Lot was not responsible for the intrusions of the men of Sodom. If being unwelcome settles the whole matter, there is no doubt that they were unwelcome; but why was Lot found in such associations? Abraham had no such disturbers of his peace. There is a cause.

"But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them." [Gen.19:4-5]

Observe that in the narrative, the men of Belial, who compassed Lot's dwelling, are clamoring for the men who had come to visit him. They call them men, not angels. Their desire is altogether in the flesh. They insist on knowing them. Do you see the meaning? Men, the wicked and defiled, would dare to claim fellowship with God. Lot's life among them had put no conviction upon them. They insisted that they know God too. He was their Father too, they claimed. Lot had not taught them anything of a new birth, an overcoming life, or a heavenly home. He had been one of them; therefore we can understand why they insist on the company of these visitors. Although Lot seeks to quiet and send them away, he has no influence. See the multiple lessons here. He had quieted his conscience by saying that he was staying in Sodom because of the good influence he exerted.

"Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door." [Gen.19:8-9]

Well here we see the weakness of his subterfuge. Lot had no influence whatever and neither has any worldly Christian. He offers his 2 daughters to those evil men if they will leave his guests unmolested. Is it not a sad and solemn lesson? He realizes that his daughters are more in harmony with them, than his holy visitors; but no, the men at the door insist otherwise. They cried to him, "Stand back." And again, "*This fellow came in to sojourn and he will needs be a judge.*" Their anger is aroused now against Lot and it had fared badly with him if the angels had not interfered. They pressed sore upon him; but "*the men put forth their hands and pulled Lot into the house unto them.*" Notice that the angels are now called men. They are taking the part of Lot against the men of Sodom, and showing a difference between them. The world may claim fellowship with God, insist on an equal share at any rate, with a carnal believer; but God makes a separation even here. Lot was a just man as to his standing and the Lord so treats him, if his state is low. The wicked crowd

at his door is smitten with blindness, which fact is also full of instruction. If men insist on knowing the Lord without new birth; they become blind, and weary themselves in vain to find the door into His presence.

The angels now enquire of Lot as to his household,

"Hast thou here any besides?...bring them out of this place; for we will destroy this place." [Gen.19:12]

We are taught by the above how tender is the care and consideration of the Lord for His people. He includes all of Lot's relations in His offer of mercy: even the "in-laws" are given the chance to escape the coming judgment. Like Rahab, in a latter day, all that Lot has in his house have a chance to flee from the wrath of God; but alas how few avail themselves of the opportunity. And the reason is not hard to find, Lot's testimony was in word only. He has not evidenced any fear of God before their faces. They had seen no reality in his life; but had shown just the same desire for the money, fame, and earthly gain as had any of them. He appeared no different. He was not heavenly minded nor sincere as to his life toward God. His testimony was simply a wick, not a light, yet he was a righteous man. And this ought not to be a hard matter to understand, as some believers claim it to be. And indeed some of these very ones who make the loudest clamor, as to finding the above difficult to reconcile with God holiness, are not far removed from being in the same boat with Lot. Their testimony is not worth anything before their friends and neighbors, either. They do not pay their debts, do not fulfill their contracts. They endeavor to get ahead or get the best of the other fellow in a bargain: they are covetous, railers, etc., and yet at the same time condemn Lot and marvel at the mercy of God shown to him. And at the same time if the same grace was not being extended to them and their family it would be worse with them than it was with Lot. The world is just as attractive to them as it was to him. They are buying and selling and getting gain, forgetting that it is written that God is again going to "*rain fire and brimstone upon the wicked*" [Luk.17:28]. And they too, when they witness of these things to their children, seem as those that mock, even as it is said of Lot; for their life is not in harmony therewith.

And here we are given a clearly, defined contrast with the encomium bestowed upon Abraham by the Lord. "*For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the LORD*" [Gen.18:19]. Nothing like that was said of Lot. His children proved the futility of his testimony. It had no weight with them. They did not believe it. If we train up our children in the way they should go, we have a promise for their old age at any rate: but if we train them up for the world we have none. They may never escape the judgment that is sure to fall upon it.

"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." [Gen.19:15]

Lot was able to induce only 3 members of his family to take one step of faith; the others all perished in the ruin of Sodom. And even those were no blessing; but rather otherwise. But in the midst of gloom, see the mercy shining out of this dark picture. The Lord can send no judgment upon Sodom

until Lot and those with him are in safety. Still they do not appreciate it. They are loath to leave. That wicked city looks good to them even to the last.

"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." [Gen.19:16]

The deliverance is altogether of the LORD. The deliverance is altogether of the LORD. He had come in and actually forced Lot out of the place of his choice. He loved it. All his ambitions were centered there. Oh what a warning for Christians in this little inspired story! What did Lot get for his reward? Nothing. His end was in defeat and disgrace. He lives today as a lasting memorial, even as his wife, who was turned to salt, a constant reminder of the danger to a believer seeking a path which the Lord has not ordered. He surrendered his tent; the life of a pilgrim for that of a settler upon the earth. No doubt, as we have said before, upon removing to the plain, Lot intended to live in his tent apart from the people. But he was gradually seduced from his seclusion, dwelt in the city and finally his children married among the Sodomites. He would quiet his conscience, even as saints do today, by saying, *"I can use my influence for good"*; but we see that he did not influence one person. With the exception of his 2 daughters (who brought lasting shame and contempt upon their father by their latter deed), even Lot's family was destroyed,.

"Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay in all the plain; escape to the mountains, lest thou be consumed" [Gen.19:17]. How much this Scripture reminds us of the words of Jesus, illustrative of the time just previous to His coming, when there shall be dire trouble upon the earth, of which he warns His people. *"Let them which be in Judea flee unto the mountain" [Mat.24:16].* This whole narrative concerning Lot's escape is redolent with the judgment of that time. The Word positively declares that some will be taken out of the burning judgment and some will not, even as in the case herein considered. We are also told to "remember Lot's wife", that is consider her. We are to be warned by her end, that we may not follow her example.

"Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight and thou hast magnified thy mercy which thou hast shewed to me in saving my life and I cannot escape to the mountain lest some evil take me and I die. Behold now this city is near to flee into. Oh let me escape thither and my soul shall live." [Gen.19:19]

We are impressed with the fact that Lot acknowledges the grace of God. He admits he deserved nothing at the hand of God, thus acknowledging his defeat as the reconstructor and judge of Sodom. Now he realizes that it was but a chimera of his own carnal reason that God had not sent him to Sodom nor authorized his stay there to clean up its politics, neither change its morals, or influence its inhabitants for good. His work was all in vain. Oh, how sad! And there are many among the people of God today who will wake up when it is too late to come to the same conclusion. They will see, even as Lot, all that for which they labored, goes up in smoke.

No doubt, Lot meant well. He was sincere but this was not enough. We may be sincerely wrong. Many people in natural things find this to be the truth. A man intending to go west got on the wrong train, took a train headed east.

He was sincere. He surely thought he was right; but that did not alter the fact that he was wrong. A boy aimed at his brother, then pulled the trigger of a pistol which he was sure was not loaded, but he was sincerely wrong; the shot killed his brother. He was sincere; but that did not help his brother. We could continue with one illustration after the other emphasizing the fact that we may be sincere in religious things and yet be wrong. The one and the only arbiter is the Word of God. Does the Book tell me to clean up the world? Does it admonish me to go to the polls and co-operate with the politicians and grafters of the cities, to reform its politics? If we have the "*Thus saith the LORD*" for our course, it is right; if not, it is wrong. Let us ascertain His mind upon the subject or else we will be rudely awakened one of these days and be forced to flee from the ruin without one thing to our credit.

OBSERVE SOME CONTRASTS

The history of these 2 men, Abraham and Lot, is a prolific subject. The very contrasts, as well as similarities between them, are interesting. They were both sitting down; one in his tent door in the full blaze of noonday in the oaks of Mamre, the other in the gate of the city, Sodom, at even time. Both had visitors; one received a promise of blessing; the other a message of judgment. The one prayed for the deliverance of the other from the ruin in which he had deliberately gone and out of which he had to be pulled. The flesh was silent in Abraham's case while he was feasting with his heavenly Friends; but in Lot's house there was trouble. Abraham was not a whit concerned with the ungodliness of Sodom, but on the contrary, he was occupied with worshipping the Lord; while Lot was more in sympathy with the earth's, or man's affairs, than with God's heart. He was more interested in the place where he lived; but he is forced to hear a message of judgment, which later was consummated upon the very people with whom he had associated. Where are you living, my friend? It signifies a great deal in the sight of God. He knows.

Whom did God remember, Lot or Abraham? "*God remembered Abraham*" [Gen.19:29]. He scarcely knew that Lot existed except by Abraham's prayer; but the latter reminded Him, by his intercession, it appears. That is wonderful! God remembers in a special way His people who are separated from the world; and because of their prayer, He delivers the carnal out of the troubles which they bring upon themselves. The man or woman who is in the perfect will of God, living apart from this evil world, religious or otherwise, has power with God. The only limit that bounds their horizons is the will of God. Lot had no power with God, neither with men. Lot lived just as did the people of Sodom; hence they did not believe his testimony. Abraham proved his faith by living afar off from the scene of judgment; hence did not have to be forced to flee at the last minute. If we do not live the life of faith before our family, they will laugh at us and say, "You do not believe that yourself, or you would live differently."

THE IMPUDENCE OF UNBELIEF

And even after God had pulled Lot out of Sodom, he would not obey Him. He did not want to go in the way of God's choosing. He said, "*Oh, let me stay in this little city. It is not so bad as Sodom, for there are just a few Sodomites*"

here." If we do not let God choose for us from the very first, it seems we never will. The best thing is to let God do the choosing for us. We will find that He does the very best for those who leave the choice with Him. Did Lot want his own way even at the last? Yes; he would not walk in God's path for him. He did not want to flee to the mountain where God told him, but wanted to remain in Zoar. The way of faith is narrow. It is a rough and rugged path, of which the mountain speaks. It is a lonely way, not many upon the mountain; climbing is too strenuous. The majority want the city, the multitude, the plain, the easy smooth way. And the Lord will let them have their own way, if they want it. He will not coerce them to get His best. He will only speak His Word, blessed be His Name. He will insist on saving us even as we see here in the case of Lot.

But alas, what a shipwreck of faith! Some would say, "Well, he did not have faith for that path." We cannot have for any path, but the path of God. Lot was walking in unbelief into Zoar, even in the way he had always chosen...his own way. Oh, yes, he may have said, "I asked the Lord and He said I could go this way. I feel fine. I know, yes, I am sure I am in the will of God because I put a fleece out and it happened just as I asked, etc. I am so happy now; much more so than I used to be." So these Lot-like Christians rattle on. They deceive no one but themselves and I wonder sometimes if they do not know that they are in the way of self-will; in the city of their own choosing. They refuse to follow the Lord with the whole heart.

Lot was not even a blessing to his own family. He figures the very lowest rank of justified men, although the principles exemplified in his life apply, in some measure, to all saints who are not overcomers. There are many degrees of attainment between these two men, Abraham and Lot. Many go no farther on the race-course than the latter, while a few go on to perfection, finish their course with joy, like Abraham.

Note the further grace extended to Lot. The little city, to which he fled, escapes destruction because he is there. He did that much good, saved Zoar, because the lord must take care of Lot for Abraham's sake.

And then the shameful story of the two daughters that fled there with him. We could scarcely believe it if we had not read it in the book of inspiration. He begets 2 sons one by each of these 2 girls; one called Moab, the other, Ammon. Were they friendly to Abraham's seed to whom they were related? No indeed. They were the bitterest enemies that Israel possessed; being continually at war, either singly or united against the chosen people of God. The same conditions obtain today in regard to the antitypical relations of Lot. The worldly Christian, after the pattern of Lot, brings forth that which is worse than himself. He is sometimes so little, so tricky, and so despicable that we often wonder whether he is a Christian or not; his children are worse yet. They are the enemies of the cross of Christ; consequently they are against the true circumcision, against those who boast in a cutting off by the cross.

Moab figures the worldly-minded professor; the careless, indifferent church member; who laughs and mocks at the reality of the true Christian. He has never been born again and merely has joined some denomination and then calls himself a Christian.

Ammon, Lot's other son, strikingly figures the higher critic, who is often a professor in some theological school, or else a so-called minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. Apparently he is deeply interested in Divine Things, but not being born again he endeavors to solve theological problems by his own carnal mind. He becomes a religious picker; he picks the Bible to pieces. I have heard it said, "Daniel is not in the lion's den today; but in the critic's den." How true, for his book is especially the battle ground of the higher critics. They would take away the power of the Word of God. They claim that Daniel never was in the lion's den. That this story is simply an allegory and that the book of Daniel was written many years after Christ. They know this book is a most powerful proof of the inspiration of the Bible because of the literal fulfillment of most of its prophecies. They have all, with but a few exceptions, become history and the others will shortly follow; therefore they would disclaim its Divine Origin.

I say the Ammonite in New Testament phraseology is a critic of God's eternal Word. The worldly professor, the Moabite, does not even develop sufficient interest in the Bible to tear it to pieces. He is contented to "*eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.*" He loves pleasure more than he loves god. His slogan is, "Live and let live." And both these classes are the enemies of the overcoming Church of God; they profess to be Christians but they do not believe God. And the sad part of it is that they are generally the offspring of justified people, who failed, like Lot, in not setting them an example of the reality of salvation. The end of Lot is not given to us. The last we read of him is in shame and dishonor. God records neither the day of his death nor his age; but we read much more of Abraham. The man of faith lives on. He leaves his foot prints on God's eternal ages, not on the shifting sands of time. He becomes the friend of God here and forever [Isa.41:8], and will reach the glorious city, which is the object of his hope [Heb.11:10].

ABRAHAM IN GERAR

"And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar." [Gen.20:1]

Now we are confronted with another apparent lapse of our mighty warrior of faith. The carnal, world-loving believer laughs at this and says, "See, no one overcomes;" but we must remind ourselves again, that this man is a wonderfully typical character, and we cannot judge him by our little 2x4 rule. He is so far beyond the measure of the carnal, the great majority of Christians, that they cannot understand him at all. But let us seek prayerfully to get the mind of God upon this chapter; for the Lord witnesses to the faith of this man in no uncertain terms.

The city, where Abraham now went to sojourn, was in the Philistines' land; but they were usurpers there, for that was part of the land of Canaan. Those people always represent the natural man coming into and claiming spiritual things in a natural way. There are many Philistines in Christendom; but the most perfect expression of them is the Catholic Church. This system with its claim to be in apostolic succession, therefore the only true church, aptly teaches us the signification of the Philistine. She claims, without a new birth, all the inheritance of the child of faith, takes right hold of the things which

belong to a new creation and refuses to yield them up. Abraham, in going to Gerar, was really putting his feet on his own inheritance. He was saying, "This is my land" and was in the will of God in so regarding it. The old creation has no part in Canaan.

The Philistines was not a native of this goodly land; but was the descendent of Ham, the ungodly son of Noah, through his offspring Mizraim who settled in Egypt, although now we find some of his children in Canaan. But according to God's edict, he did not belong there; nor did he get into that land by the way which God opened for Israel. The Philistine had a way of his own, (according to his church, as he would say today). It was not the long toilsome journey of the Red Sea and the wilderness, whereby Israel entered Canaan, the way that God endorses. The latter tells of the death of the old man and the coming up of another one in his stead of which the Philistine knows nothing. It is this supplanter, the new man, who enters Canaan, the heavenly land. The formal, religious old man may lay claim to faith's inheritance; but he cannot have it in reality without faith's way.

Abimelech ("*my father is king*") aptly figures the successional authority of Rome. He would speak of the pope and the infallibility of which he boasts. The popes are the descendants of St. Peter, the church will tell you. He was the first pope, they claim. How different does the Word speak of Peter and his authority. When he entered into the house of Cornelius, he refused to allow them to bow down to him, saying, "*Stand up, I myself also am a man.*" How contrary to these religious lords today. You can get down and kiss their toes, and they will foolishly imagine they are doing you honor in allowing you the privilege of so doing. In fact it takes some influence to even get audience with them. These are not the true successors of St. Peter. No, they are not even related to Abraham, but are the children of Ham, the sunburnt.

Note the sequel of our warrior's visit; immediately the king wants Sarah. Everyone wanted her. Abraham had a difficult time keeping his wife. Age seemed not to dim her luster nor impair her life. She still appears fair at 90 years of age. What would not the women of today pay for her "beauty secret"? A fabulous sum, I may safely say; and yet they may have the eternal youth she holds in her hand by the simple taking by faith. Well, Abimelech desires her. Abraham says of her, even as he said in Egypt, "*she is my sister,*" therefore the Philistine takes her into his house. But God takes a hand in this affair. He has joined Abraham and Sarah together and He will not allow her to be appropriated by any Philistine. Judgment comes upon them. They insist upon claiming grace apart from faith, even as Pharaoh, when Abraham went into Egypt. You get down among these people and they insist on sharing the grace with you; but there is this difference between Pharaoh and Abimelech. The former representation of the man of the world, lays claim to Sarah on the basis that God is the Father of all men. While the Philistine takes her from Abraham on the ground of his church affiliations, his character, or his works, etc. But God says, No you cannot have "My Princess," except by way of faith. Abraham has the exclusive right to Sarah. The Word says, "*Without faith it is impossible to please God.*"

But some may say, "Oh yes, but there are two sides to this." Did not the Apostle Paul and James differ on this important question? The Apostle Paul says that we are justified by faith while James declares we are justified by

works; and, they both bring Abraham on the scene as the witness to the truth of their statements. Now they are both uttering the truth, not fighting each other at all. If the Apostle Paul were to come on the scene he would say, "James, I am glad you told them just what you did. Faith can be just a theory and accomplish nothing." James says, "*You must show your faith by your works.*" Faith that never has anything to show for it is nothing. True faith moves things; it is active, aggressive. Faith in Abraham was active. God would rather we try to help him do something, than to sit down and say, "Yes, I believe God. I have the grace of God. It is all mine," and never do one thing to help others; but live for ourselves. Why, real faith enables us to take hold of God. There is faith's enabling through the grace of God to do the will of God. He has these 2 principles (faith and grace) locked arm-in-arm and we will never get anything from Him but by the way of faith. Grace is God's side and faith is our side. All the grace on God's part is there for my faith to appropriate the grace by which we may overcome; but, what we need is the faith to take it. The Apostle Paul wrote, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me*" [Phi.4:13]. People say, "Oh, for grace to trust Him more." That is really not scriptural. There is plenty of grace; just as much as we will take. When we do not like God's way, and we do not want to yield and believe Him, we cannot have His grace.

God comes on the scene and says to Abimelech, "*Behold thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife*" [Gen.20:3], and Abimelech is necessitated to give her up. God will not let the professed church have grace without faith, any more than He will allow the worldly, unregenerate man the privilege. In fact, Sarah being in the Philistine's land brings judgment. To appropriate grace without faith, is dangerous; for we must walk in the light which we profess to have, or we will be judged and suffer. But the lesson here especially is that it is so easy to compromise and allow the religious professor a part in Sarah. On every hand we hear, "Oh, he is such a good man," or, "Oh yes, he is a Christian; he belongs to the Church." Well, is he really saved? Is he born again? The Philistine has come into the land. We are considered too narrow or too extreme in our view on the subject; but we must be as extreme as God. There is only one way into His land and that is His way: the way of the sea leads home. Man has another way, *the broad way that leadeth unto destruction*" [Mat.7:13]. Twice the wise man gives warning against the seeming right way [Pro.14:12, 16:25].

It was God who withheld Abimelech from claiming Sarah for his own as He informs him. "*I withheld thee from sinning against me*" [Gen.20:6]. It is sin against God, not alone against Abraham, to appropriate grace without faith. At this point God calls his servant a prophet and makes it manifest to Abimelech that his safety from further judgment depends upon his attitude to Abraham. Abraham prays for the Philistines and they are healed. There is also a correspondence in this incident with that of the history of Israel. Sarah was in the house of the Philistines for many years because faith did not appropriate the covenant of grace. She did not belong there as the inspired history teaches. The Pharisee, which was the expression in that day of the Philistine, did not want God's blessing by the way of faith; he wanted it by the way of works.

At the end Abimelech and Abraham part friends. The latter is invited to dwell in the Philistine's land if he so pleases. He is also gives 1,000 pieces of silver

(the right to redemption); but Sarah is apparently chided by his reference to her “*brother*” whom she had proclaimed Abraham to be. In reference to the silver, He says to her...“*It is for thee a covering of the eyes to all that are with thee and in respect of all thou art righted*” [Gen.10:16 RV].

He acknowledges Abraham's exclusive claim to the grace of God...grace is for faith alone.

A NEW CREATION – THE LIFE OF ISAAC

ISAAC'S BIRTH

“And Jehovah visited Sarah, as He had said, and Jehovah did unto Sarah as He had spoken. And Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son in his old age at the set time of which God had spoken to him.” [Gen.21:1-2]

At last the promise is fulfilled. Abraham's ardently desired heir is born. Many weary trying years he waited faithfully for him: God could not lie, he argued. He believed God, although it is true, he endeavored to help God make His word good to him. And this was because he had faith; but his faith was not perfect. He had not yet learned that God desired no help from him and that He wanted to give Abraham a son...a supernatural son. He wanted to give Abraham something far better that he could have asked or thought. God's gift was so much greater, so far beyond his anticipations that he could not believe in its immensity. Hagar's son would have answered his purpose as to an heir; but oh, how far removed from Jehovah's purpose for him. How good that God gives us far more than our feeble desires warrant. He gives us according to His thoughts toward us. He gives us that for which we would have asked, if we had only known the future.

The promised son was born at the set time of which the Lord had spoken to Abraham. Sarah, symbolic of grace, conceives and bears a son. This is wonderful! How few of God's dear children have ears to hear salvation's story told in these Old Testament characters. We have the perfect explanation of this chapter in the Apostle Paul's letter to the Galatians, chapter four. In this child, Isaac, born in Abraham's house in his old age, we have a most positive type of Christ, born in the house of the Jew. The latter had already begotten a son by Hagar, figure of the covenant of law; but that was not the son that God had promised. Ishmael did not suit Him. Abraham's heir must be the child of barren Sarah (figure of the covenant of grace) to inherit the promises that he had made to the man of faith. They were promises, yea oath-bound promises, under the covenant of which Jehovah Himself was the only party; therefore Abraham was out of it altogether, except as to his faith. God did it all. When Abraham and Sarah were both old and there was no chance of them having a child, then was Jehovah's opportunity, even as with the nation whom they represent. The latter had been proven ungodly and without strength to do any better. They could not redeem themselves by the Law, although God gave them every opportunity to beget a son that suited Him. Finally, He Himself came in and Sarah bore a son, because she judged Him faithful that promised.

Abraham called His name **Isaac** (*"laughter"*) is a wonderfully significant name; freighted with joy and happiness, the child of Faith and Grace. Those who hear and understand, still laugh with Sarah, when Isaac is born; for this has a personal application also. We too, even as Abraham, have a time when Isaac is born in our house. We realize that Christ is born in our heart. We then begin to say with the Apostle Paul, *"It is no longer I that live; but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the son of God"* [Gal.2:20]. And this is (even as in the case of the Jew) after we have tried by our own efforts to satisfy the claims of God against us; after we have tried and tried to do that which was right, but failed on every hand. In other words, after we had endeavored to obtain a son by Hagar (The Law) and were disappointed with the result; we were turned to see the grace way of salvation and God's promise to us in Christ. Then we quit trying to save ourselves and trusted in the promise of God, and Christ was born in our house. He is the child of grace by faith. But we will look a little more at the dispensational meaning of which there is so much here.

Isaac, in Abraham's house when Sarah is mistress and after all the years of waiting, represents the birth of Christ and the beginning of the Christian era. That is, the covenant of grace is on the throne; the covenant of law is not even in the house of faith today; but alas, how few are aware of this great fact. The majority has coaxed Hagar in again and are busying themselves trying to beget a son by her that will please God; but their labor is in vain. Sarah insists on Hagar being cast out. They cannot both reign at the same time; in fact Sarah refuses to allow Hagar any place whatever. She had her place in the purpose of God in Abraham's house for a specified time; but that period ended at the cross. That is when the antitypical Isaac was circumcised—when Christ was cut off. His death marked the end of the old creation, for He was on the cross as their representative and substitute.

Isaac growing in the house of Abraham, nursed by his mother Sarah, fittingly speaks to us of the first halcyon days of the Church, in its infancy, triumphant and vigorous; although Hagar with her child was still in the house. At first there appears unity between Ishmael and Isaac: believers are still repairing to the temple, offering up sacrifices and otherwise still under the covenant of law; but there is coming a change. Jehovah spreads a great feast for Isaac, even as Abraham had done; for the child is getting beyond a milk diet. It is weaning time. He must separate these children. Isaac cannot, and must not, be confounded with Ishmael; therefore the Apostle Paul is taken captive by the Lord and given a revelation of marvelous blessings in the grace of God.

He was sent to tell the Church of the feast that was spread for them, the banqueting house to which they had come; and that they were invited to eat and drink to the full, without money and without price. But what happened? Ah, Ishmael was envious. Like the elder son (of whom we read in Luk.15), who complained that his father never gave him a kid, never made him a feast, Ishmael mocked Isaac. When the Apostle Paul came to Jerusalem to spread the table with his solid food, his strong meat of the Word, the Jews were stirred up, not only to persecute, but to kill him. Even the Christian Jews did not take kindly to the message which the Apostle Paul brought. It cast Hagar and her lusty son, Ishmael, outside and for this they were not willing. They refused to surrender the covenant of law and its issue. They would rather

give up Isaac; therefore they cried, "Away with this fellow". That was the nation talking.

What does the mistress say, when she views her son mocked and the feast refused? She commands Abraham to "*cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac*" [Gen.21:10]. Abraham was forced, as it were, to obey Sarah. God stood by her, and insisted that he hearken to Sarah, although it was grievous for him. He suffered; that is, the flesh suffers when mother Grace insists on her rights in the house of faith. When Isaac dons his baby food and baby clothes, the Law, with all that comes of her, is cast out. Ha! Ha! No marvel that the children of Sarah laugh. They are born free and they quickly assert their rights to laugh when they are well fed. When they find out that they are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ through the grace covenant, they soon kick off the bands, the swaddling clothes of infancy. "*But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster*" (Mr. Law) [Gal.3:25].

THE WEANING TIME

The believing Jews were finally weaned from the milk bottle by the Apostle Paul's letter to the Hebrews, although the weaning had commenced in some measure previously. We see in the history of the Church, the two sons of Abraham in the same house for a while; but there arose a persecution about the time of Stephen [Act.8]; and the separation began to be manifest. The bondwoman and her son were cast out by the edict of God, although on the surface it appeared as though it was the children of Sarah that were cast out. The latter, the Church, were scattered. God desired the separation; for it was written, "*The son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman*" [Gal.4:30].

Marvelous was the victory those Christian Jews experienced in those early days of this age. They stepped out from the faith of their fathers, grandfathers, etc., faith which had been bred in their bones, having never heard anything but the Law all their days. They cast out the bondwoman and yet it was not really so that they were leaving "the faith of the fathers." They were really coming into the understanding and enjoyment of the covenant, which had been given to the fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The covenant of Moses, the Law, was added later, when the nation came up out of Egypt. It was given for a specified time, not as a savior, but as a teacher, a tutor, to instruct them as to their ruined condition until Christ, the Savior should come. In the meantime Ishmael was born, child of Abraham, but alas, child of bondage, because born of Hagar, the legal covenant; born of the flesh.

As we intimated, it was the epistle written to the Hebrews which really opened the eyes of the child Isaac, the spiritual seed, to the truth. It was the Apostle Paul's teaching therein which loosed them from the bondwoman and her son and caused them to throw off its shackles. He taught them of the grace covenant, which was prior to that of the Law, and showed the loving care of their mother Grace all the way of their journeying, even the bondwoman, Hagar, was also dwelling the house of Abraham. He proved from the Old Testament Scriptures that the priesthood and the sacrifices were all pertaining to the grace covenant and that the legal covenant was only a

servant, a handmaid. Sarah was always the Mistress, the wife of Abraham. The Apostle Paul gave those Hebrew believers some strong meat; but he had to cut it up small, for as he exclaims, *"For when by this time, ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God"* [Heb.5:12]. Therefore, no one is eligible to teach until he is weaned from the milk bottle and able to eat the meat of the Word and thereby assert his liberty in Christ. Peter, writing to those same Hebrews, said in reference to the Apostle Paul's letter, that he, (Paul) wrote, *"some things hard to be understood, which ill taught or ignorant and unprincipled men, wrest or pervert to their own destruction"* [2Pe.3:19 RV]. The above words of the Apostle Peter prove that the Apostle Paul wrote the marvelous epistle to the Hebrews.

Abraham at first was shocked at the thought of casting out Hagar and her son. He did not like the idea. The flesh does not take kindly to the grace plan of God. It hurts the flesh to put away Hagar. We cling to our own work; our own efforts are dear to us. The cutting off, the separation from the flesh is painful; but it must be done. Grace cannot reign with law in the same house. Her son cannot reign with law in the same house. Her son cannot grow nor develop with Ishmael mocking, sneering, and persecuting. God tells Abraham to obey Sarah and do just what she commands. Grace has the throne. Therefore, as we said, Israel after the flesh, as the people of God, were cast out. The Isaac seed were separated from them. Hagar in the wilderness with her son is a picture the present condition of the Jew — cut off from fellowship, cast out of Abraham's house for a season.

The Jews of those days felt this severance deeply. Even though he saw the necessity and the purpose of God, the Apostle Paul wrote, *"I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh"* [Rom.9:3]. I say, the flesh suffered at the casting out of the bondwoman and her son. Abraham at first demurred; but God insisted. He encouraged him with a promise of prosperity and fruitfulness to Ishmael; and Abraham obeyed God.

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept." [Gen.21:14-16]

Have you noticed that this early rising is characteristic of Abraham, the man of faith?. Notice that after a time the water was spent and Hagar was weeping for her son who was about to die of thirst. This too is most significant of the condition of the Jew today. They are dry. The water of life is all spent for them; but are always craving something, never satisfied. They feel that they are not what children of Abraham, the great man of faith, ought to be; but they are powerless to change their condition. Hagar is there looking on; but she cannot help them either. God only can rescue them. In the wonderful figurative narrative here, Jehovah speaks to Hagar, asking her, why she weeps; and then assuring her that He has heard the voice of the lad. Her son shall yet have the promise to Abraham fulfilled in his case; for even the natural seed of Abraham shall come into the land of Palestine and be blessed

of Jehovah. Israel, as the nation, will have their eyes opened and they will see the well of life opened for them.

Hagar went and filled the pitcher with the water and gave the lad to drink; thereby teaching that the covenant of law will yet fulfill the office for which it was intended. She herself will be the means of blessing to them. They will understand God's purpose through Hagar. They, the Jews, will go back to their own land still under the covenant of the Law, the protection of Hagar; but God will bless them because of His covenant of grace. They will be born again and thus they will be both the natural and spiritual seed of Abraham. We cannot say that of ourselves. We do not know that we are of Israel, as some claim; but the Jews will know it and will rejoice in their great mother, Grace. They will let her give the orders and they will obey with delight. The laughing son of Abraham will be seen in the house. Christ will be received and worshipped. He will grow and increase; while Ishmael will decrease.

In the remainder of Genesis 21, we have a further view of the Jews and the place he will occupy when Christ is in their house. The religious world especially is featured by Abimelech, as we have noted previously in the book, and now **Phicol** (*"the voice of all"*) adds further positivity to this interpretation. The tongue of all men will be moved, their mouth opened to acknowledge the Jew. The God of the Jew...the faithful, covenant-keeping God of Abraham...will be known and honored because of the fulfillment of His promise. The Jew will reprove the Philistine for having taken away the well of water that belonged to him and he will acknowledge the wrong done and the rights of Abraham's seed to the well that was dug at **Beersheba** (*"the well of the oath"*). Then there is a covenant of friendship made between them and they swear to abide by its decrees. In a sense, Abraham took possession of all the land. He planted a grove there and acknowledged his God, Jehovah, the Everlasting God, who had indeed proved His faithfulness in fulfilling His Word and giving him a son.

THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains, which I will tell thee of."
[Gen.22:1-2]

How often, in the Scriptures, we come across this phrase *"And it came to pass."* Events are always transpiring; things are constantly coming to pass with those who are going on with God. So with Abraham and Isaac, there is more for them to learn of God and His ways.

In our previous lesson, we saw Isaac as the child born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age. We learned that he figured Christ, born in the house of faith (Israel), when it appeared all hope was taken away. In our present chapter we are to look to this laughing child of promise under far different circumstances. Isaac now is grown. He and his father it appears are dwelling at **Beersheba** (*"the well of the oath"*). Sarah does not appear on the scene; therefore from this point on Abraham figures God the Father. Herein is a marvelous fact in the Scriptures, that at one time, a man may figure a

certain person and later he may figure another. Abraham has been representing the principle of faith, and now he portrays the Father; but then in a sense, there is only a little change for it was God's faith that was in evidence in Abraham. And if God did not have faith in His own Word and His own ability to bring that Word to pass, no man could have had faith. Christ, the glorious, full-fledged antitype of Isaac, is the Son of God, the Child of His faith in Himself, born of His own grace toward man. On one occasion, Jesus said to His disciples, **"HAVE THE FAITH OF GOD"** [Mar.11:22, Greek].

Oh, this is a marvelous scene! God's ways with His people are so wonderfully portrayed, as well as His ways with His Son at Calvary. Abraham and Isaac are truly honored to be chosen to show forth such mighty far-reaching purposes of God. Yea, in fact to manifest in type the one great purpose, around which all other purposes, radiate and flow: The death and resurrection of Christ. It is here that Abraham is justified by works, of which James speaks [Jam.2:24]. God brought out and showed to others the faith of His friend, which He had and to which He had borne witness [Gen.15:6].

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him." [Gen.22:1-3]

Abraham is now called to the supreme test. God exacts an absolute obedience from him in a matter which called for greatest sacrifice and in which there was cause for great misgiving and doubt. He calls him to offer up his son as a burnt offering. Yea, more, Abraham's own hand must slay him. Note the answer: *"He arose early"*, as though in a hurry to obey the will of God. Never a murmur recorded. And yet all the promises of God, given to this man of faith, are bound up with and dependent upon the life of Isaac, even as all God's things depend upon Christ His Son.

What a troop of questions must have invaded Abraham's bosom; what doubts might have overwhelmed him; but we read of no delay nor reasoning. His obedience is perfect. God had spoken. The responsibility is on Him. He takes *"two young men and Isaac, his son and the wood for a burnt offering."* Here we have the journey to Calvary figured, from the moment that Christ offered Himself to God on the banks of the Jordan, until He cried out on Calvary, "It is finished". After the 3rd day, the young men can go no further with Abraham and Isaac. Likewise the disciples of Jesus were constantly with Him for the 3 years of His earthly ministry, even going into the garden of Gethsemane with Christ; but from that time on, He and His Father went alone together to the mount upon which He was crucified. The suffering of His Son was just as real and poignant to God as to Christ. He was the only One that could enter into the depths of its renunciation and self-abnegation.

Abraham's faith at this time was indeed like unto that of God. He did not question that Isaac must die; but he also knew he must be raised from the dead; for he could not be fruitful without his son. And God's promises must be fulfilled to him and these were all bound up in Isaac. He had already

proved God's Word and God proved Abraham's faith. Abraham had found that there is nothing impossible with God. Isaac was already a supernatural child, born out of barrenness and impotence. He was given to him in his old age when there was no hope of him or of Sarah having a child; and now He calls upon Abraham to surrender him to death.

Abraham said, "*We will go yonder and worship and come again*". Again I exclaim, what faith! We will come again. He knew his son would rise from the dead and that he would come back with him when he returned to the young men. The wood is now laid upon Isaac; representative of the cross which Jesus carried up to the mount of Calvary. The knife and fire, which Abraham carried, speak of death and judgment which are both in the hand of God. Jesus suffered the eternal judgment for sin first and then He died; but in the sinner's case, the order is reversed. His suffering is not over when he dies, eternal death, separation from God, comes afterward. "It is appointed unto men once to die and after death the judgment."

Isaac could not quite understand why there was no burnt offering with them when his father said they were going to worship. Think of calling the slaying of his son, worship; but the greater marvel still is the fact that he entered into the mind of God as to Calvary. And Isaac too, how wonderfully he figures Christ in his meek surrender to his father's will. Jesus was not ignorant as to the whereabouts of the burnt offering when He went up that rugged hill of Calvary. He was as a Lamb led to the slaughter; but He was perfectly cognizant of the fact and in perfect accord with the justice of it all. He had offered Himself as the Lamb of sacrifice, to take away the sins of the world and He had offered Himself as the Lamb of sacrifice, to take away the sins of the world and he had been accepted. He had yielded Himself to His Father's will; therefore the sheep before the shearers is dumb. "*He opened not His mouth*" [Isa.53:7]. But Isaac did not understand. He enquires, "*My father, behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?*" [Gen.22:7]. Then that wonderfully significant answer of Abraham's in which the whole heart of the Gospel is revealed, "*My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering*" [Gen.22:8]. You can read this in 2 ways:

- the one, that God will provide the lamb;
- the other, that God will provide Himself—the lamb, and both are true.

I believe this is the first time that the word "*lamb*" is mentioned in the Scriptures. Sacrifice has been spoken of; but the manner of animal was not specified. Again it is written, "*So they went both of them together*" [Gen.22:6]. The Father suffered in the pain and anguish of His Son; but there was no other way righteously to justify a sinner. This Mt. Moriah, on which Isaac was figuratively offered, was afterwards chosen for the site of the temple which Solomon built. It will be again the place on which the greater than Solomon will enter.

"And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood." [Gen.22:9]

When they finally came to the ordained place of the sacrifice Abraham builds the altar and lays the wood in order upon it. He then binds Isaac his son and

lays him on the altar. Isaac says not one word. There is no more mystery as to the lamb. He understands and yields submissively to his father's will, although no doubt he is now a grown young man. Isaac being bound speaks of Jesus being nailed to the cross.

"And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me" [Gen.22:10-12]

Oh, yes, his obedience was real. He meant to do the will of God; but oh, what joy for Abraham when he hears a voice out of heaven. The angel of Jehovah, the son Himself, calls and tells him to "*not lay thy hand upon the lad.*" Here is where God absolutely proved Abraham. His faith is perfect. Words are good; but deeds are better.

"And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son." [Gen.22:13]

Here we have a change. There is a double figure from this point on. Isaac is a type of Christ, but now he becomes the figure of the Christian while the ram represents Christ. Isaac was sentenced to die, the knife was raised, ready to plunge into his heart; but God intervened and provided a substitute, and Isaac escaped. He was set free; but there was no escape for the ram. He had to die. He was caught by his horns. So, in like manner, Christ was caught by His horns—His power. "*The thicket*" speaks of the net in which He found Himself, the will of God. He could not fail to obey His Father. Oh, it is so marvelous! God's will was like a net in which He was caught and could not extricate Himself. No other man possessed this power to die for another. Moses had the Spirit of Christ in this respect when he said, "Blot me out", and took the place of the mediator between God and the children of Israel; but that was only representative; for it was not possible that he could actually die for them. He was sinful and needed a mediator himself. He just interposed his own life as a ransom and God accepted him for the time being as a type of Christ; but He was looking to Calvary and to His holy Son, the real, effectual Mediator. He was found in due time in the thicket, caught by His power, His ability to die for the ungodly. The ram was unable to get out of the thicket. He seemed to be waiting to be taken. Abraham went and took him and offered him up as a burnt offering in the place of his son, and Isaac was free. Thus we are free because Christ has died in our stead. It is as though we had died, in our substitute. Therefore, there is no death for a Christian. We may fall asleep; but we will waken in the morning when Christ comes.

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen." [Gen.22:14]

And Abraham called the name of the place of his altar, **Jehovah-jireh** ("*the Lord will provide*"); and we can say the same thing of our altar. The Lord did provide Himself an offering for sin at Calvary. Here we have the basis of all provision: salvation for all men, for spirit, soul, and body. As it is said to this day, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen," pointing to Calvary, **Golgotha**

("the place of the skull"). What is a skull, but a ruin? We were a ruin. Christ died in the place of the ruin; but now we are a building of God, a sure abiding place, the tabernacle of the most High God.

And now the promise of God is confirmed to Abraham by an oath. The angel of the Lord called out of heaven the second time (the first time he stopped Abraham from slaying his son), saying,

"And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." [Gen.22:11-12]

Abraham had done what God asked of him and had not withheld his son; he'd obeyed. See how real it was to Abraham, and also to the Lord. It was as though Isaac had been actually slain. How wonderful are the results of obedience. How deeply God appreciates our whole-hearted surrender to His will. How greatly He was glorified by this marvelous acting out of the death of His Beloved son. He had given these far-reaching and eternal promises to Abraham before; but now He swears to them. We read, God confirmed His Word with an oath; that by two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement who have fled for refuge to take hold of the hope set before us [Heb.6:17-18]. His Word was one immutable thing; His oath was another. Abraham had two, (the number of witness), sure, abiding things to strengthen his heart and hands. And these immutable things are for our consolation. "*The heirs of promise*" [Heb.6:17] are encouraged by the immutability of Jehovah's counsel. He has not only given us His Word that we, as well as Abraham, are counted righteous by faith, that is justified; but He has sworn to bless us in Abraham's Seed, which is Christ [Gal.3:16]. He swore by Himself, for He could find none greater; therefore none can make His Word void. All the people of the world will one day be blessed, because of Abraham's faith (which is likened to the faith of God); for he gave his son up to death and he was raised in a figure; but God actually gave Jesus up to the death of the cross and He was actually raised from the dead, for our justification. His seed shall be as the dust of the earth, that is, they will cover the earth. All nations shall be blessed in Jesus Christ.

"So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba." [Gen.22:19]

They all rose up and returned to **Beersheba** ("*well of an oath*"). This figures what happened after Calvary. Christ returned to His disciples in the Person of the Comforter. In fact, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit came to dwell with them, by the well of the oath...God's sure immutable Word. Faith is still standing on the promises of God. They have not yet all been realized in outward manifestation. Jehovah's wheel turns slowly; but it turns exceedingly sure. The promise is to wait, yet tarry for it.

THE FRUITFULNESS OF FAITH

Again we read, "*And it came to pass.*" It was told Abraham that Milcah, his brother Nahor's wife, hath borne children; and then follows their names. This answers to the present fruitfulness of the family of faith. Jesus said, "*go ye into*

all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" [Mar.16:15], and immediately, after the disciples were qualified and credentialed by the induement with power from on high, they went everywhere preaching the word. There were 8 children born to Nahor; 8 is the number of the new creation. **Nahor** ("queen") and **Milcah** ("snorter") give us a wondrous type of the union of Christ and His Church. The meaning of Nahor appears at first incongruous as relating to Christ. But I looked into the definition of "snorter" and then I understood its application. It means: "*One that laughs loudly*" or "*one that blows powerfully through his nostrils*;" both are suitable appellations of Christ in resurrection. He blew powerfully upon His Church on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit fell on the disciples gathered in that upper room. They became mighty through that dynamic blowing and three thousand were saved in one day. Isaac laughed quietly and constantly; but Nahor laughed loudly and begat 8 children, a large family, joined to **Milcah** (the "queen"). Bethuel, the 8th child is especially noted as being the father of Rebekah, who stands forth later as a most perfect and complete figure of the Bride of Christ, the select company taken out from the whole body of Christ. **Bethuel** ("*one that points out God*") stands for the true and faithful witness of God in the whole world. All the Church cannot claim this place or name. The majority of even true believers fall far short in this respect. They are afraid to bear witness for the Lord, before the mocking, sneering multitude; but observe it is this one Bethuel from whom Rebekah springs. This plainly teaches that the whole Church is not the Bride of Christ. She is begotten of Bethuel and this is especially notes and emphasized here.

THE DEATH OF SARAH

Now we have a new departure. Sarah dies at the age of 127 years. She is the only woman that has the honor of having her age recorded in the Scriptures. She is a wonderful typical character. In the first place during her life she figures the covenant of grace, whose headquarters is the Jerusalem above. She is the "*Mother of us all*" [Gal.4:26]. That is, all believers are born of the grace of God. They are a new creation.

But Sarah has also another place accorded her; for here in her death, she figures the putting away of the Jews for this present Church age. God has no dealings, nor fellowship, with them now as the nation; but as individuals, they, as well as all other men, are invited to the Gospel feast and the wedding in the air. And, as the natural seed of Abraham, they are buried out of his sight for the age. But we have more than this in this narrative. We have the fact figured that Jehovah has bought the field wherein they are buried. Abraham, type of the Lord, paid 400 shekels of silver for the field in which his dead was buried. Silver speaks of redemption; the number 4 of the whole earth, which has been purchased by the death of Christ. And yet, He is a stranger here, as note Abraham's words, a stranger in the world which His own hands have created and His own blood has bought.

The sons of **Heth** ("*terror*") are wonderfully significant of Satan and all his power to enslave and bind man. But God has loosed his chains at Calvary. He bought back this world, took it out of the hands of the devil, as it were, by paying the price of redemption. The world was under the power of death, the sword wielded by Satan, and in this man, **Ephron** ("*dust*"), who is prominent here, we have the wages of sin figured. Jehovah said to Adam after he had

sinned, "*Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return;*" but notice how Ephron, the curse of sin, yields to Abraham, type of death yielding to Christ. He delivers us from even the fear of the grave and terror of the tomb; for he stepped into the stronghold of Satan and robbed it of its power by coming out again. Though we may (not must) go into the tomb, fear gives way to faith; we enter in hope of the resurrection.

Abraham's purchase of a sepulcher brings with it a fruitful field. It speaks to us of the Garden of Eden. Paradise, from which man was expelled because of sin, but which has now been regained from man by Christ. Israel, the nation, is now buried in hopeful anticipation. Abraham's faith in the immutability of God's council secures it for them. It is opposite **Hebron** ("*communion*") where they will dwell in fellowship with God when they awaken from their long sleep. Their night of sorrow will flee away with the dawn of Christ's coming and the whole world will participate in the victory of their resurrection. The curse will be removed from all nature and the fruitful field will yield her increase to the Lord. The earth, as well as its inhabitants, will be regenerated and glorified and made beautiful for the people of God; suitable for a new creation. There will be no cemeteries then.

THE MARRIAGE OF ISAAC

"And Abraham was old and well stricken in age...And Abraham said unto his servant that ruled over all that he had, Put thy hand I pray thee under my thigh; and I will make thee swear by Jehovah, the God of heaven, that thou wilt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell. But thou shalt go unto my country and to my kindred and take a wife for my son, Isaac." [Gen.24:2-4]

We have now arrived at a most interesting point in the career of Isaac. Abraham is sending out his servant to find a wife for this supernatural son, twice given to him out of death. And the woman must be an unusual woman, therefore all the detail that is recorded here; for it could not be any woman that the servant could find. No indeed; she had to be prepared, qualified and willing to go all the way with her guide to meet her destined bridegroom. Here again we are confronted with more of this wonderful figurative teaching; and while we could not say, it is the most marvelous, yet it is certainly interesting and instructive. It is a pen picture of the Holy Spirit going out, after the cross and Pentecost, to seek a wife for Jesus Christ. The Father sent the Spirit for this very special purpose, even as Abraham here sends his servants for the one purpose of finding a help meet for Isaac. Observe at what time in the history of Divine Things that this supreme purpose of God begins to take prominence, it is after the burial of Sarah; in other words, the rejection of the Jew. It is the Apostle Paul who is the divinely chosen instrument for this great work—gathering the woman (as is clearly seen from the record in Acts). Now, I was never so filled with the thought of this before as I am today, that the Apostle Paul was the one who really began the gathering out of this Bride. In 2 Corinthians 11:2, he writes, "*I have espoused you to one husband, to present a chaste virgin to Christ.*" Weymouth's's interpretation here is beautiful:

"I am jealous over you with God's own jealousy; for I have betrothed you to Christ, to present you to Him as a faithful bride to her one husband."

The word **espoused** means “*to engage one*”. The Apostle Paul engaged this woman. He was the agent, as we might say, of the Holy Spirit, who was in the Apostle Paul, and was moving him, first of all, to preach the truth that would gather this woman; the truth that he afterward embodied in the letters, which he has written to the Church. By an understanding and appropriation of the grace which is contained in the writings of the Apostle Paul; this woman will be built up; this woman that is going to sit with Jesus Christ on the throne for 1,000 years and reign conjointly with Him. The Apostle Paul engaged her, and his words of truth alone can fit her for that exalted place, He said, “I have espoused you; I have engaged you; I have betrothed you.” He was the master of ceremonies on the scene in the power of the Holy Spirit; the antitype of the servant of Abraham going out in search of a bride for Isaac. I say again, that it is his writings alone which will build up the Bridal Company of saints. What place other saints will occupy, I cannot not say; but I do say, that only as we take hold of the writings of the Apostle Paul and maintain our oneness with Jesus Christ now will we sit and reign conjointly with Him.

First of all we see that Abraham, representing the Father, sent out this servant. He said, “Go unto my country and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.” That shows that Rebekah, as we would say, was already a Christian; because she figures the one born of God. Abraham said, “Do not take a wife from among the Canaanites, the unbelievers, but from among my kindred.” God does not take a woman for His Son from the world. They must already be saved when God speaks to them of this highest calling. Most people do not think there is anything more to being a Christian than just merely getting saved. Some say, “Just so I get inside the pearly gates. That is all I want.” Shame on us if we talk that way! We are not so easily satisfied with the things of this world. Why not esteem God’s things as of the greatest worth?

Hence, the servant started in obedience to his master’s behest. That is, the Holy Spirit has put Himself at the serve of the Father and the Son in this day. He is as the servant of Jehovah to do this work, to gather out the Bridal Company for Jesus Christ, through the preaching and writings of the Apostle Paul, because this Apostle came on the scene with a new message. I want you to get hold of this truth. If the Apostle Paul has not a different message from the 12 apostles, then for what purpose did God raise this man up, when He had 12 other men who had traveled with Jesus and who had preached for 3½ years, healed the sick and performed miracles? God began a new thing with the Apostle Paul. He was sovereignly chosen apart from the other apostles. He had a distinct message for a distinct people and it takes hold of my heart more than ever: this wonderful message to a wonderful people. It is a very significant thing when God does something sovereignly like that. Hallelujah! If there is a gold mine here, I want to be after it. If I knew there was a gold mine in my back yard, I would be there everyday trying to dig some of it out for the world of the Lord, and my greater usefulness. In like manner I am going to mine out some of the things of the Lord. These things have been given to me and I am going after them as any one in the natural is zealous for the things of this world. I am going to leave it with the saints to see in the eternal ages whether it paid us to dig after this gold of Ophir.

The Bride is going to be a great company of people; not only one but many people. But the Lord is pleased to use the figure of a woman to show the Bride off in all her beauty and loveliness.

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S EQUIPMENT

So the servant goes on his way. The first thing we see in this narrative is his commission by Abraham. Speaking of it in the spiritual sense, the Holy Spirit, the Servant, is commissioned by God. Then, we see His equipment. He has all the goods of His Master in His hands; all the things of God that are necessary to make us what the Father wants us to be; that is, fitted to be the Son's bride. He goes with the ten camels, which also belong to his master. Those camels speak of all the providences of God that come to us, whether they are unpleasant things or not. They generally are unpleasant. I have always heard it said that camels are peevish, fretful, ungrateful, and we know that they are ugly. They can go a long time without water. I have seen some of God's people that way too. They can go a long time without the Holy Spirit; and that is why some saints are peevish and always bearing burdens.

The camels especially emphasize the unpleasant providences of God. The Holy Spirit brings them along with Him because we need these things too. They speak of everything that comes to us in the will of God. The servant made all those ten camels kneel at the well, which suggests that all the providences that come to us are subject to the will of God; while their number would refer to their responsibility and ability to work good for us. The well of water speaks of Christ, who is our salvation. Jesus said to the woman at Jacob's well, *"Ask of me and I will give thee a well of living water"* [Joh.4:22 RV]. Eliezer put the responsibility on God. He said,

"Now Lord, you direct my way. I stand here by the well of water, and the woman to whom I say, Give me to drink, and she not only gives me to drink, but also waters the camels; let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant, Isaac."
[Gen.24:12-14]

Before he had done speaking, there came a fair woman, **Rebekah** ("ewe," a mother sheep, which speaks of being in the way of fruitfulness.), with a pitcher upon her shoulder, and she went down to the well and filled her pitcher. The servant ran to meet her and said,

"...Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink."
[Gen.24:17-18]

Notice that Rebekah hastened. She was anxious to serve him. Then she said, "I will draw water for thy camels also," and she ran to the well and did so. She got plenty of water for the camels, gave them to drink, and fully satisfied every one of them.

Rebekah figures that group of saints whom the Father chooses, because they walk in the light and cheerfully do His will. When the Holy Spirit comes to them they receive Him and are glad to obey His every request. He chooses only that one who is willing to do all the will of God. All saints, even as Rebekah here, are being tested, although they may be unconscious of it. The

Spirit comes and gives us opportunity to prove our yieldedness to God and all His providences. Some gladly avail themselves of the privilege of humbling themselves and serving in any capacity that they may do the will of God. They cry, "I will do anything, be anything, go anywhere." "I want the best," is their slogan.

The servant stands watching. Rebekah is qualifying. The servant is ecstatic. Have I found her already? Is she surely the one? It looks like it. She is really doing as I asked the Lord to make her do if she were the destined maiden. Now, this happens as an experience in the life of every saint. Some qualify and some do not. I remember when the Lord spoke thus to me. "Will you go anywhere I desire you to go? Will you give yourself up absolutely to Me?" I said, "Yes, Lord, I will do thy will. I will serve Thee. I will do the very least thing, or the greatest thing you desire, for Jesus' sake." I have not been sorry that I made this unreserved surrender. Some boldly declare, "I will do anything; serve anybody and everybody. I do not care how hard the way or the trial"; however, afterward they wish they had not said it quite so boldly. Some even ask for hard things when their pitcher is so filled with the joy of salvation. "Send the trial, Lord," they cry. But we do not need to call for trials. The camels were always with Eliezer. They went right along with him. Rebekah had their company all the time. If we just say, Amen, to all of God's sweet will, we shall have enough of all that will be necessary to make us meet to be partakers in this great company of saints.

Just as Rebekah served the camels, we serve the providences of God. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." My friends do it as unto the Lord and not unto men is the secret of the beginning of a victorious Christian life. If we look at the people whom we serve and all those unpleasant things and say, "I did not get any thanks from them. Look how they treated me;" it is a proof that we are looking for our reward from men. If we get our eyes on the people, we will get some hard blows. God will see that we do.

When I was first saved, I took advantage of every open door to do good. One day I was helping a poor woman that no one had any sympathy for any more. People had helped her so often that they were tired of it. I thought, "Well, if others do not help her, I will." One day I was in her home and she hurt my feelings. My feelings were not yet under the control of the Spirit. I did not say a word; but I was deeply hurt. I said to myself: "Now, look what I have done for her, and that is the way she treats me; I'll do no more for her." So the Lord spoke to me, "For whom did you do it?" He added, "If you did it for her that is the reward you get. If you did it for Me that is a different thing." Afterwards I did not look to the people. It does not matter to me now whether they are grateful or not; I am looking to a higher source for my reward.

Rebekah served the camels, but she did it for the man's sake. She was not expecting her reward from the camels. She might be a kick from them. So that is the way this Bridal Company begins to qualify. The servant looks on and says, "That is good; she is the one." He stood there wondering", the record says.

"And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold; and said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?." [Gen.24:22-23]

He took jewels for her forehead (the earring) and put bracelets on her arms. That speaks of the sealing of the saints. We read in Ephesians that "*we are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise unto the day of redemption.*" After Eliezer puts the bracelets on her, he asks her of her name. And she gives her genealogy; proving that she is related to Abraham, a child of God.

The servant then enquires, "*Is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?*". Is that not the way to talk to the Holy Spirit? Come in and fill me to the uttermost. There is room for thee and all that thou hast with thee. We say that there is room for all your providences and everything you have with you. I want to do everything you want me to do; fill me to the uttermost. He accepts our invitation, taking full possession of us. This is wonderfully redolent of the work of the Spirit of God. He goes out and seeks the Bride. She is His choice. He comes and dwells in her. We did not choose this way. It was not we that chose to receive the Holy Spirit any more than we chose to be saved. God sovereignly saves and fills with the Holy Spirit. He sovereignly brought you and me this way. I remember it well. I was not seeking Him. He sought me.

The servant was so delighted that he bowed down his head and worshipped the Lord and said,

"And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren. And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things." [Gen.24:27-28]

We see that Rebekah ran ahead and told her mother and those of her household. The Bride witnesses to other folks of her household and gets them stirred up to receive the Holy Spirit. The relatives come and when they see the earrings on her ears, ears tuned to hear, and the bracelets on her arms, yielded to serve, they begin to take notice. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, our friends note a difference. They see that we have something more than they.

"And it came to pass, when he (Laban, her brother) saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well. And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels." [Gen.24:30-31]

So the family invited the servant in. I thought when reading this that it is a little more than our families do today. Some do not even show any subjection to the Holy Spirit whatever, even sneer at the camels, etc. The people of Rebekah did not act so. That brother, no doubt, represents those of the faith-

way who do not go all the journey; but are in sympathy with those who do, even going so far as to receive the Spirit, being impressed with the yielded, humbled spirit of Rebekah.

The servant then gives his testimony to the family; that too agrees with the Holy Spirit's commission. He tells all that his master has, and that all the wealth of his master is in his son's hand and that his master has sent him to get a bride. He has servants and wealth untold. That is exactly what Jesus said the Holy Spirit would do:

- He would guide us into all the truth,
- He would take the things of Christ and reveal them unto us, and
- He would witness of Jesus and glorify Him.

We read all these different things that the Lord said of the Holy Spirit in John's gospel, and here we have them in type in this chapter which we are reading. The Holy Spirit says to us, even as the servant to Rebekah, "Here is your opportunity; but if you will not go with me, I am clear of my oath." Abraham had told the servant saying, "*If the woman be not willing to follow thee, thou shalt be clear from my oath.*"

So, the servant relates all the story; how he came to that well of water; how he talked to that woman and the manner in which she answered the test, in giving him and the camels water to drink. The family agrees to let her go saying, "*The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken.*" [Gen.24:50-51]

Then the servant brings forth more jewels and raiment. He proves the reality of the invitation. He has all the goods of his master in his hand, all that is needed to beautify the chosen woman. He adorns her. She knows that she is all beautiful; her clothing is of wrought gold, befitting her station, as the wife of such a great man. In like manner, the Holy Spirit makes this chosen company beautiful. He too, adorns her, crowning her with jewels in the day of her betrothal. Rare and gorgeous is the raiment of the woman of exalted destiny who shall sit as Queen and reign conjointly with the King of kings. There is a difference; her beauty is all on the inside. It is her golden words, her jewels of speech; her pearls of tender compassion; her shining face; all breathing of the character, the Divine, Heavenly Life within. You cannot live with these saints and not observe the difference. They show it clearly. You always know people better when you live with them. And those in whom the Holy Spirit abides and moves, directing all their ways and words, become a very heaven on earth. They glow and glisten, shine and radiate, and cheer and comfort on every hand.

SAINTS GROWING IN GRACE

As we let the Holy Spirit have His way with us more and more, God is more pleased with us. He is delighted when He sees the comeliness of His dear son put upon us by the Spirit as we yield to Him. Christ, the Man, yielded to the Spirit. He went wherever the Spirit guided Him, no matter how difficult the path. In fact, in Mark's Record it is written that the Spirit drove Him into the

wilderness, made Him to go that way. This is the way His Bride must go, even as He.

The jewels of gold and silver mentioned in this story speak of Divine Things. The silver speaks of redemption; the gold, of Divinity, and the raiment, the holy garments that befit a princess. She has to be made glorious, even as He. She is qualifying and dressing up as the companion and help-meet of the Lord Jesus Christ. Everybody is enriched, that lives with the Bride. That is, husbands that are not going on this way, are blessed by their wives who are; and wives are blessed by their husbands; children are blessed by their parents; and parents by their children. They are more prosperous when someone in the family is qualifying for this place. If there is only one in the family that is yielding, all the other are blessed for the sake of the one. God is interested in them. They are dear to the one He loves.

"And they did eat and drink" [Gen.24:54]. The servant had fellowship with Rebekah's family. But that was not all. He said, *"Send me away unto my master."* He wanted to take that woman on. He wanted to get ready for this journey immediately. There is no time to lose; no time to waste yielding to and coddling the flesh; no sitting around and having fellowship with the family. Rebekah had to go at a moment's notice. The servant is in a hurry. There is a long journey ahead. "Oh, let her stay awhile," her family cries. "Do not be in such haste. Let her stay 10 days," they urge. Likewise the relatives and friends of these chosen saints seek to keep them, hinder them, if possible, from going all the way. They urge them to stay. Why make yourself so different? They cry. Why separate from our company? We are of the same family. Anyway stay a while. But the Holy Spirit will not let us. We are yielding to Him and He urges us onward. We know we appear peculiar. We are sure that we are different. We admit it. We are a heavenly being and are on a journey to meet our heavenly Bridegroom. We are going to a wonderful city, and we must hie away.

I will admit it all sounds a little strange. Some laugh when we say that we are going to meet the Lord in the air...that is what the Lord says. We are already a heavenly company. We have already been raised up to sit with Christ in the heavenlies. Our citizenship is of another country. When a citizen of the United States goes to another country he is so different that often those people laugh at him and they appear strange to him. They cannot understand him. Is it no marvel that this company who is qualifying for the Bridehood are misunderstood, they do not always understand other saints, and do not have full fellowship with them either. Their hopes, interest, and wealth are over yonder; those of the world are not because they still like the world and its worldly, carnal ways. We admit that we are different and are glad to say it. We make no apologies for it at all. They say, "You are so peculiar." Yes, maybe we are; but we are peculiarly beautiful to the Lord...He loves us. We are a beautiful, glorious jewel to the Lord Jesus Christ; a pearl of great price.

"And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master." [Gen.24:56]

Eliezer tells this woman that he is going to take her right away from them that she is going off to meet his master's son and be married to him; that he has

already engaged her. She is his choice. Her friends could not hold her, and neither can ours. They laugh at us and say,

“Oh, now do come down from the clouds. Do not always be up there.”

“Oh, are you praying again?” (That is what I used to hear more than anything)

“Are you down on your knees? You are always there.”

“Do you not think the Lord ever gets tired? I would give Him a rest.”

They do not know that the Lord loves to be bothered in that way. He loves to have us come and intrude upon Him. He delights to have us take liberties with Him. We can move into His private sanctum. He has no sign on the door, “No admittance, not at liberty.” We just walk in and say, “Oh, Lord!” Immediately there He is and we know He is listening to us. It is a wonderful privilege and place that we have.

The family finally allows the woman to make her decision. *“And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go”* [Gen.25:58]. The Spirit keeps wooing us and calling us. It is not enough that we receive the Holy Spirit. Some people stop there. They say, “I am in the Bride. I have as great a place as any one because I have been filled with the Spirit.” But that was not the case with this woman in our narrative. She not only received the servant; but she went away with him. He led her all the way to meet Abraham’s son. Likewise the Spirit chooses us for the Bride of Christ; then we choose the Lord and His will. We say, “I will go with this man.” We yield to the choice. That means more than bringing Him into our house and having fellowship with Him. It means much more than that. It means we go with Him for better or worse. He comes to us and then we go with Him. “Where he leads me, I will follow”, we sing...and we mean it. We go on and on. We do not stop and say, “I do not like this way. This road is a bumpy road. We know that even a horse that has not broken into a pace is hard to ride; but that is pleasant to a camel’s back. The Bride has no soft snap in this scene; but she has the Comforter with her all the way. He talks to her of the Master’s Son and she is happy in anticipation of the bliss awaiting her.

“And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham’s servant, and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them. And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.”
[Gen.24:59-61]

Eliezer and Rebekah start away and the servant is so happy when Rebekah says she will go with him. Her father and brother bless her as she leaves them. They pray that she may be the mother of thousands of millions and that her seed may possess the gate of their enemy. This blessing is certainly significant. It is through the antitype of Rebekah (the Bride of Christ) that millions are to be saved. The world is not to be converted in this age. It is through the woman of His choice that the Lord Jesus Christ comes into His inheritance. He must be married before He will really be fruitful in the fullest sense. Just as a man in the natural cannot be fruitful until he has a wife; neither can the Lord Jesus Christ be fruitful and have the ends of the earth for His possessions until this woman of destiny graces His throne.

In type, all that we have here is taught doctrinally by the Apostle Paul's writings. The Bridal Company leaves all to follow Jesus; family, friends, and fame. All her interests are swallowed up in His. Everything that belongs to her is held subject to Him. He is her Lord. She says, "I will go with this man. Whatever anyone else does, I will ride on the camels. If I may but win Him, if Christ I may gain: I care not how hot is the fire," is the language of her heart. Observe this fact; it is those very ugly things to which Rebekah yields that help her on her way. The providences of God, the unpropitious circumstances in which we are environed are but means to an end. Rebekah gives the camels to drink and afterwards she rides on them. Just in measure as we yield to all of God's will for us, serve in any capacity the ugly things and carnal people which come our way, in that measure they work good for us. *"For we know that all things work together for good to them that love the Lord, to them that are the called according to His purpose"* [Rom.8:28]. Rebekah was overcoming the camels, was she not? She was reigning over them. They had to obey her. Let us overcome the hard things in our way, even the ugly things that are at hand. If difficulties come in our path and they are so big that we cannot get round them, let us get on and ride them; boss them around instead of allowing them to boss us. Then we have them. They are our servants and take us on our way. There is coming the end of the journey and we will be so glad we overcame instead of being overcome by the camels.

"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself." [Gen.24:63-65]

She had been looking for this man and she is not disappointed. Some women are always looking for a man. The Bride is looking for a glorious Man over yonder. She already knows this One who is coming out to meet her, even as Rebekah knew; for although she enquires, *"what man is this?"* yet she slipped off the camel the moment she looked upon him. The servant says, *"It is my master."* Oh, the glorious moment, when the Bride hears those words from her dear Guide and looks upon her beloved Bridegroom...then comes her compensation. No more hard ride for Rebekah; no more tears, groans, and sighs on the bumpy way; no more longing heart. She has seen her Lord and she is satisfied. She takes a veil and covers herself, thus acknowledging his headship. The Bride will be lost in her Lord, covered in His presence; it may be with a sparkling veil bedecked with all manner of gorgeous jewels given by her faithful Guide who has never left her since she walked out with Him.

"At the eventide." I think the Lord will come out to meet His Bride in the evening, when the day is done, in the fall of the year, before the night has come. You know how lovely it is at this time of year, when the sun is going down and the sky is all bathed in a soft, golden glow, merging into crimson at the lower edges, as it were. All are at rest at the close of the day.

"And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her..." [Gen.24:67]

Ah! How much is in this verse; its depths and heights unfathomed yet by finite man as it applies to Christ and His Bride. What will it mean to mortal man to be changed and caught away in a moment of time; out of distress, sorrow, and tears into the calm of eternal years? What will it mean to the woman, whose members have been, as the Apostle Paul so pungently expressed it, *“as the filth of the world, as the off scouring of all things”* [1Co.4:13]; defamed, maligned and ill-treated, having no certain dwelling place, to find themselves in the glory and grandeur of His presence? To be loved with the absorbing, unchanging love of the lovely Man who died for them? We cannot say that even yet we fathom all the wondrous bliss that awaits that matchless throng that will be known as the Bride of Christ, the promised son of Abraham; but we do know that we would not miss that great place, or fail to qualify for that exalted honor, through any fault of our own, for all the wealth, the fame, or the pleasure of the world. Sweeter to His ear than all the melody of heaven is the footfall in the desert ever growing nearer and sweeter and dearer as the days go by, are His words of love to her. Shall we not listen to them?

We close with these words. “Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her” [Gen.24:67]. This is all of heaven in them.

Isaiah's Tribute

Soon, shall arise out of Jacob a star,
 Gleaming and glist'ning in beauty afar.
 All dewy and dancing, He'll banish the night,
 Chase gloom from the earth, as He turns on the light
 For the dawn of the morning in radiance bright.
 David's scepter He'll wield and in pow'r will smite
 All the corners of Moab with divine – given right;
 And the kingdoms that be shall quickly come down,
 When the King of all nations comes for with renown,
 Triumphant and glorious with Deity's crown.
 The standard of Zion He'll lift up on high,
 Unfolding its banner far up in the sky.
 All the princes of earth shall come forth to sue,
 And give Him the throne, which is only His due.
 We hail the glad morning and conquering Jew!

EARTH-DWELLING SAINTS TYPIFIED

“Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah..”
 [Gen.25:1-2]

In our preceding lesson we were privileged to study one of the most striking and important types in the Oracles of Truth: The marriage of Isaac, and we desire again to emphasize its signification. And we know that we have the correct interpretation of its import. There are several reasons for this positive statement:

1st. Because of years of study, we have an accurate knowledge of the whole counsel of God as revealed in prophecy and doctrinal teaching,

therefore, we are qualified rightly to divide, or cut a straight course in the Word of Truth as revealed in type [2Ti.2:15].

2nd: We are depending absolutely upon the Holy Spirit for our enlightenment and seeking no honor or encomiums from men; therefore we know and are assured that He is faithful to His charge; for He has come to guide us into all the Truth. Having, therefore, this confidence, we can say boldly that our interpretation of the types are not fanciful, not far-fetched, as some may imagine; but harmonize perfectly with the other Scriptures, as revealed in other portions of the Word, and in right relations to them.

For instance, take the type of Isaac and Rebekah, which we positively affirm, marvelously figures Christ and His Bride. Note what immediately precedes it: The death of Isaac (in the ram) and afterwards, the burial of Sarah. Is this just a happenstance? No indeed! These types are all recorded here in Divine Order, even as they came to pass in His will, in due time. Isaac's death, beautiful, fragrant figure of Christ and Calvary, then Sarah's burial, type of the putting away of Israel, Jehovah's untrue wife (for the present Church Age), both preceded the gathering out of the Bride, the choice woman of destiny who is now being built for the Last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Man, Christ Jesus, shall have a wife to share His honors, a glorious, perfect companion, even as the first Adam and his Eve. The figure is in accord with the types which precede, and in harmony with that which follows, Abraham's marriage to **Keturah** ("*incense*"). Keturah is a figure the household of faith, even all the people of God that will remain upon the earth after the Bride has been raptured. In reality, She and Sarah are but one woman, even the same one that the Apostle John was privileged to behold (in vision form) in heaven and then on earth [Rev.12]. The time figured here, after the Church age has passed, is the same time into which the prophet was caught away in spirit, when he saw the woman; the time in which God will again be in covenant relationship with Israel, His divorced wife [Jer.3]. He will heal her backslidings, because of His covenant with Abraham. According to the covenant with Moses, He could never take her back again, for so the Law declares [Deu.24]; but grace declares otherwise. He will betroth her unto Himself forever. She shall no more be termed forsaken: neither shall the land be desolate; but she shall be called, "*My delight is in her.*" As the Bridegroom (Christ) rejoices over His bride, so shall her God rejoice over the nation Israel [Isa.62:4-5].

Keturah's children are a figure all the other nations, which God will bless through Israel according to His promise to Abraham. However, notice that her offspring did not share jointly with Isaac; for "*Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac,*" typical of God giving all to His Son. And in perfect accord with this, Abraham dies, "*an old man and full of years*" [Gen.25:8], which figures God, as it were, being off the scene while Christ reigns.

Then follows the record of Ishmael's progeny, which is a figure of the Jewish people (after the flesh) who are blessed because of God's promise to Abraham, which is in contrast with Isaac (his spiritual seed). Ishmael begat 12 princes, which speaks of the 12 tribes of Israel.

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