

Abraham (Part Ten)

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Let us go back to Genesis chapter 19 and we will continue the story here with Abraham and Lot. I am going to read the first eleven verses so that we have some sort of a background.

Genesis 19:1-11 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. And he said, “Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant’s house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way.” And they said, “No, but we will spend the night in the open square.” But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house.

Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot and said to him, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally.”

So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, and said, “Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly! See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof.”

And they said, “Stand back!” Then they said, “This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them.” So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door. But the men reached

out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door.

These two chapters provide us with interesting comparisons between Abraham and Lot. Now both of these men are called righteous, yet one is looked upon in the Bible with a great deal of respect, and the other is looked at, if not biblically, by almost all commentators and almost every one of us who I am sure who has read the story somewhat askance. We see in II Peter that he is called righteous, but we wonder how in the world a righteous man can do the things that he did.

Was he really righteous? Well, many commentators say that there are quite a number of old biblical manuscripts that leave the definite article that precedes the word righteous out. In other words, they omit it. Some manuscripts have it in, others do not. Now what that means in terms of the way it would be interpreted is this: That if the definite article is in there then it would indicate someone who is righteous as Abraham is righteous. That is someone who had righteousness imputed to him, someone who really was righteous in a biblical sense. If the definite article is not in there, then it indicates that he was a good man. That he was upright, but he was not righteous, that is, with God's righteousness. So you can take it either way, either way you would have to call at the very least an upstanding citizen.

He was not someone who was involved in the perversions of Sodom and Gomorrah. He was someone that ordinarily you and I would want to have living as a next-door neighbor. A helpful fellow, a generally kind person, the kind of person that you would like to fellowship with. The kind of person that would be your normal, good, social citizen of a community. He was not someone who had a big rap sheet with all kinds of offenses against him. He was not somebody who was involved in any of the evils of His day. But was he righteous in the way that Abraham was righteous?

Well, the story seems to tell the tale. Now if he was righteous by God's Spirit, then it makes the things that he did here far more serious than they would be if he was just an ordinary good joe, good citizen, whose calling still lies in the future.

It is interesting here that the commentators seem to take it both ways. They cannot make up their minds as to which way he actually was. However, most of them seem to feel that he was what you and I would call, a converted man. Now I will leave that to your own devices because I do not know. I do not think there is enough information given for us to know.

It is interesting to note that Abraham, the one who is highly respected, apparently did nothing within the community. The nearest community to him was Sodom and Gomorrah. But he was not doing anything within the community. Now it is very clear that Lot was troubled by the things that were going on, and as we are going to see going through this, making the contrast in a little bit more detail, that he was apparently deeply involved in what was going on in the community. Indeed, he may have been preaching in the community that these people should turn, that they should cease and desist, that they should break off from this evil that they were involved in and yet he is the one that is looked at askance. And there are questions regarding whether or not he was righteous.

Abraham, we see, separated himself from the community virtually completely. The one occasion we see him involved with the community of Sodom and Gomorrah was the time that he rose to their defense when Lot was taken captive by the Assyrian kings, and Abraham joined himself with the kings of the valley and went off and fought that war.

Now Abraham apparently restricted his enforcement of law and his instruction within his own community. That is, his family, the servants that he hired, the servants that had been born into his family. We find there in Genesis 18 and 19, that he was instructed to do so. He kept his activities within the parameters of what God had instructed him to do, and as we can see, I think we can come to the conclusion that he did not try to convert Sodom and Gomorrah. He did not apparently try to preach in Sodom and Gomorrah and make some kind of a verbal witness there.

Genesis 19:1 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom.

The gate of the city was normally the place where they conducted business, where court cases were heard, and where public forums were held. Now why was he there? There is an indication there of his involvement within the community. Was he there just to conduct business? Well, we have to ask, how much business is conducted in the evening? When the sun goes down, I think generally at that time business would stop. But it was a place where public forums were held where a person could possibly preach. Maybe he was doing that there.

Now by contrast, where was Abraham when his spiritual guests showed up? He was sitting in the doorway of his tent, apparently minding his own business, maybe contemplating things, mediating, maybe even judging himself. I bring up the word judging because of what it says there in verse 9.

Genesis 19:9 And they said, “Stand back!” Then they said, “This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge.”

They are referring here to Lot. Now what in the world was Lot doing there acting as a judge? Again, I bring this up to show indication of how deep his involvement was in the community. Was he sitting as a judge in terms of judging appeals in court? Or was he sitting as a judge in terms of preaching about the circumstances that were going on in the community? Either one would apply. I think verse 9 seems to indicate that they felt a measure of anger, at the very least, of resentment toward him standing there in judgment of them. This outsider who came in and condemns them about their lifestyle, the things that they were practicing.

Before going on, I have to remind you that it was *he* who chose to go there. Remember when he and Abraham had the tiff, and Abraham said, take your pick, and Lot chose to go into this very sinful place, but what was the reasoning for doing that? Was his reasoning something like, well I will go down there and I will try and change these people and at the same time it will give me the opportunity to live there and enjoy the kind of live that those people in the city have. Was he trying to balance one thing against the other? Was that his justification for living in the city where all that sin was abounding, and he compensated by preaching against the sin he found himself living within?

Well, if it was, this is nothing more than self-love despite his attempt to convict them of sin. I think I can confidently reach that conclusion because of what Abraham did. Abraham in this case did what was right. He withdrew himself; he did not involve himself in that. Let us go back to the New Testament.

II Corinthians 6:14-18 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

Now, establish a contrast between Abraham and Lot. Which did what? Did Lot establish a relationship with these people? Now what is God’s instruction? Undoubtedly, why this story of Lot and Abraham is in the Bible is so that conclusion of what we just read could be very clearly seen and reached, and we are to understand what we are to do with this world.

Circumstances were not quite the same in those days as they are for you and me. Our coming out of the world is a spiritual matter. But God illustrated it by having these people back here either living in it or being completely separated from it, so that the principle could be very clearly seen. For you and me, though we have to live within the world, and we are not separated away as if we were in a monastery or in a separate community out away from civilization as some people have tried to do, we are nonetheless to separate ourselves in terms of the conduct of our life in terms of religion, in terms of attitude, in terms of obedience to God.

I Corinthians 5:9-10 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the

covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

In Abraham's world, there was still space, and there was still opportunity for God to do what He did with Abraham, to have him completely separated away. Again, the reason for that is, not that he did not think that Abraham could not resist what was going on in Sodom and Gomorrah. The reason was to illustrate to me and you that we must be separate spiritually as Abraham was physically. There should be as wide a gap between us and the world spiritually as there was between Abraham and the world physically.

Lot did not separate himself; he went right into the mess. We find that he could not keep himself or his loved ones separated from that, and because he was so close, it began to be absorbed.

I Corinthians 5:12 For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?

This is interesting considering what Lot did. Lot sat as judge of these people. It is *inside* where evaluations have to be made, within our own community and specifically within ourselves. Let us go back to Genesis 19, because there is an indication here of how close the relationship is with Lot and these people.

Genesis 19:7 and said, "Please, my brethren, . . .

Lot is not saying that to the angels, he is saying that to those evil men who are outside the door. On the one hand, we might judge that by saying, well, what he meant was his fellow townsmen. He might, if there was not so much indication otherwise in the rest of the story that the fellowship was fairly close. Again, I do not mean that he was involved in what they were doing, but rather there was a closeness of spirit in the way that he was thinking. If there was not a closeness of spirit in the way that he was thinking, he would have never chosen to go in there.

So, the contrast between Abraham and Lot is very distinctive, and there are quite a number, and we are just beginning to scratch the surface here. Notice also the contrast between Abraham and Lot in regard of their reception of the

guests. I drew a bit of attention to this when we were in Genesis 18. When Abraham became aware that the three spirit beings were coming toward him, what did he do? He got up and he ran to meet them. What did Lot do? Well, his respect went as far as him rising.

Now there is an indication here that Abraham immediately recognized someone of a kindred spirit, and was very happy to have fellowship with them and ran to serve them. Lot on the other hand did not recognize. See, that is an indication his spirit and attitude was not on the same plain, or level, or he was not having the same vibes as these two spirit beings who came to see him.

When Abraham ran to meet these men, the three spirit beings, he invited them and come in and eat with them, and his request was immediately granted, which is an indication that a fellowship was immediately established and entered into. On the other hand, when Lot asked these men to turn in, they refused. They said, we will spend the night in the open square. But Lot insisted strongly, he had to press quite hard apparently until the spirit beings were able to ascertain a little bit more of his attitude.

So we see a contrast. In Abraham's case the fellowship is quickly established. In Lot's case it was reached only through a great deal of struggle. What you are seeing here is the difference of one who was close to God and is attuned to Him, another is far from God and he was having trouble getting through. It is like someone whose prayers are bouncing off the ceiling and they cannot seem to get through. You really have to fight it through.

There is something else here in regard to the fellowship. In Abraham's case once the fellowship is established, it is unbroken until the visit is finished. In Lot's case, it was constantly interrupted by disturbances that were outside the place where they were to such an extent that Lot had to leave the room to try and quiet things down. Now there is a lesson there. That is, with Abraham, it seems to show a man with only one master, and he was able to stand before that master in peace. With Lot, he had two masters, himself and the world, at the very least, and possibly God. But in any case, he can satisfy

neither of them. He cannot satisfy himself either. No man can serve two masters, and there is a struggle there always. Like Jesus said, you are going to serve one and ignore the other.

There is something interesting here in regard to the women as well. Abraham, when asked where Sarah was, can confidently say, "She is in the tent." In other words, she is there taking care of her responsibilities. But Lot's women, on the other hand, are constantly in jeopardy, and being offered to these men in hopes of averting a worse calamity. It is a terrible situation.

Now, women are very interesting in regard to this situation. What does a woman represent in symbol? A church. Is it possible that women might represent something besides a church? Remember in Galatians 4:26, Paul used Sarah and Hagar as types of something. He said that in one place that Hagar represented Sinai, and she represented the Old Covenant. And that Sarah represented the New Covenant and she represented the Jerusalem above, the mother of us all. The conclusion of this is that women also represent the principles that are contained within those two groupings. That they represent the principles contained in the New Covenant and the principles contained in the Old Covenant.

So, what is a principle? Well, a principle is a broad or a fundamental law, it is a code or a rule of conduct, it is a code by which one conducts his life, or a standard we might put in regard to the way one conducts his life. See, Sarah, the free woman, represented the way, or the code of conduct of the New Covenant. She gendered to life, to liberty, to freedom. Whereas Hagar represented a code of conduct, a way of life that led to slavery, to bondage.

Now let us funnel that into this situation here. What happened here when Lot offered these two daughters, who were virgins, they never married, apparently they were promised to someone because sons-in-law are mentioned later in context to the story, but he offers these two ladies who represent principles, to these carnal men who are involved in the sin of Sodom. What happens? Well, they were rejected. In this case these principles of Lot's were rejected by the world. They are rejected in favor of a perversion.

Let us look at Lot in regard to what he did with these young ladies representing principles. Does not the context indicate that when one is tempted by the world in the way Lot was, that there is a very strong pressure of temptation for someone of that mind to prostitute his principles. Now if he was indeed what we would call a Christian today, a worldly Christian, you can find then in this a lesson that anyone who is that close to the world is going to be invariably led to prostitute the principles that constitute the New Covenant, and he will do it in order to save himself from what he feels the world will do to him if he continues to hang on to the principles of the New Covenant. It is very sad to contemplate that.

Now, if indeed, Lot was trying to change the world, this story indicates that it is hopeless. What is very likely is that the world is either going to change the Lots, or the Lots, in an effort to save themselves, are going to prostitute their principles.

Abraham prayed for Sodom, but he did nothing to change it, which is interesting. On the other hand, Lot may have tried to change it, but there is not one record of him praying for it. Abraham stood in calm communion with his Guest. By contrast, I do not know whether you have ever noticed it, but not one recorded word is in the Bible as passing from Lot to his visitors while they were in his house. They spoke to him, but there is no record of a communion from him back to them. A lot of interesting things here.

Genesis 19:12-20 Then the men said to Lot, “Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take them out of this place! For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it.”

So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, “Get up, get out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city!” But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking. When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, “Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city.” And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife’s hand, and the

hands of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.

So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed.” Then Lot said to them, “Please, no, my lords! Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one; please let me escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.”

Notice again, Lot’s approach at the very beginning, how he subtly changed what he was told to do. The angels said, take them out! Now Lot changed that to preaching to them. I get the very distinct impression that they told him, “grabbed them by the hand and take them out.” It is a difference between come and go. That is, come with me. In the same way that the angels had to do with Lot. They did not preach to him. They grabbed him by the hand and yanked him out of town. That is what the angels expected Lot to do.

Apparently Lot thought that his preaching was going to have some good occur as a result of it, and yet there is a difference. He preaches to them “get out,” but what does he do? He lingers. Lot does not follow directions very good, does he?

Now brethren, are you going to do this when the message comes to flee? Are you somehow or another going to change the orders that are given, to make some form of equivocation, to say that, I have to do this before I can do that? Is there going to be enough faith in God, that when He says “go,” and your family is not all around you, are you going to trust Him to get the rest of your family out, even as He got you out? It may come to that, you know.

You can see that Lot, though he was a man of great faith, there was not enough faith, not living faith, not faith that really trusted God, but faith that he equivocated all the time and interpreted what was said in way that he felt was best for himself.

Notice the difference in their prayers. Abraham appeals to God to spare the people of the city, Lot on the other hand, not considering the saving of his life is enough, request that he be able to continue to live in the valley, in the plain, and that they spare a small city. Would you call that trading on the mercy of God? Would you call that tempting God, pushing Him to the very limit? Well, I would. Abraham's prayer was an appeal for mercy and grace for others. Lot's is an appeal for self-indulgence. He pleads for his own way, right to the very end.

Now I do not know what it was that was motivating Lot. Maybe it was his feelings for his wife, because she, from every indication, was very deeply involved in the city, much more than Lot was. Whatever his motivations were, God is showing very clearly that they were not entirely devoted to God, and I think that we can say, that they were carnal.

Luke 17:28-33 “Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

A very solemn and sobering warning from Jesus Christ regarding the time of the end. That there is going to come a time that God is going to rain destruction down on this earth and we have to be prepared to forsake it without question. Even though we might leave behind everything physically that we might hold dear. I think that there is even an indication here that we

are going to have to trust God and leave family behind, and trust Him that in His mercy for them and for you, that He will get them out even as He is getting you out.

That is going to take some faith to do, and I do not believe that we should kid ourselves into thinking that we can walk away from these things easily. I hope it will be easy for us because our heart will be so set on God and pleasing Him, that our reaction will just be automatic, and we will turn on our heel and go. I hope that I am of that mind, and I hope that you are as well.

But remember Lot's wife. She apparently looked back longingly at what she was leaving behind and thus revealing where her heart really was. If the angels had not yanked her out of the city, she would have gladly remained there, because she did not believe what they were saying. She did not believe that God would require them to leave all their possessions and the good life that they were living there in that very corrupt and vile place.

It just goes to show that if one is involved in that kind of a system, it is very likely [unclear]. We have to be extremely careful about that.

Back in Genesis 19. Now I think that Lot to a lesser degree, his wife to a greater degree, indicate by their actions that they believed that their future was somehow bound up in Sodom, this world. That somehow or another that this evil would just blow away. Another thing about Lot's wife is that her intimacy, her being physically one with Lot did not save her.

Genesis 19:30-38 Then Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountains, and his two daughters were with him; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar. And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave.

Now the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no man on the earth to come in to us as is the custom of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father." So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

It happened on the next day that the firstborn said to the younger, “Indeed I lay with my father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father.” Then they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the people of Ammon to this day.

At the beginning of this paragraph in verse 30, what Lot did sort of reminds me of what Israel did when they were in the wilderness, when they were approaching the second year from Egypt, and the spies went out and spied the land, and then they came back with horror stories about the land, and two of them gave a good report. So the people based on the report of the ten and decided that they would not go up into the land, they would not leave the comfort of the wilderness they were in and go up into a land where there were frightening trials to overcome. So they made the decision that they would not do as God said, but they would stay in the wilderness. Then God chastised them and the people wept, then made the decision that they were going to go where God told them to go in the first place.

That is exactly what Lot did here. They told him to go up to the mountain, and then he pleaded to be allowed to stay in the plain there in the little city. So God granted him that favor, and then after the awesomeness of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah he repents, and just like the Israelites, he decided to go up into the place where God told him to go in the first place. Now he was frightened.

When the Israelites went to go up into the land, they met with a very severe defeat at the hands of the people of the land, and here we have Lot, he finally does what God told him to do in the first place and he goes up to the higher ground and what does he do? He falls before another corruption.

Again, here we have these two young ladies, they are representing, in type, principles, and now they are *defiled* principles. Before they were virgins, they were pure. But now they are defiled, and out of these defiled principles, Lot keeps on producing less than pure results. So, God allows him to continue, to continue on earth, but, if you will remember, He refused these people as part of the congregation. Do you remember that? Where He made that law in Deuteronomy? The Moabites were not allowed to come into the congregation of Israel, they were not accepted.

I think what the daughters did shows how affected they were by Sodom. You see, their thinking was twisted, it was perverted. They were willing to involve themselves in incest rather than go through the normal course of being given in marriage by their father and producing children by the husbands that they marry.

You might think by what they said here, “that there was no man on earth to come in to us as is the custom of all the earth,” That they were justifying what they were doing by saying that there was nobody left on earth, and that Lot was the only man and that they were the only women. No, that is not true. Remember, they had just come from Zoar which was well-inhabited with men and women. There were people that they could have married, but their justification was that because they were the only ones to escape wicked Sodom, that the stench and the violence and the filth of everything that Sodom represented clung to them, and that no young men would marry them because of where they were from. That was their justification. Talk about someone being from the other side of the tracks. That is the way they felt.

But brethren, Sodom and Gomorrah were not the only places that were perverted, there were other perverted people that would have married them too.

You can see what happens whenever people give up on their principles. They make justifications and sinned. That is a major part of the lesson that is here. They were deeply affected. The daughters had so little feeling of shame about what they did that they actually immortalized the illicit paternity that resulted from the incest with their father.

Do you know what Moab means? Moab means, from the father. You can tell they were twisted in their thinking. Do you know what Ammon means? Well, it shows here that it is an analogous to Ben Ammi, which means son of my people. It is very similar to “from the father.” Ammon, which is derived from that, seems to indicate, sprout of the nation, or beginning of the nation, or pertaining to the nation. All three of those are given by either a dictionary or one of the commentaries. So they immortalized the incest by naming their children after it. It would seem to me that only someone that was perverted would do such a thing and then naming their children after it.

Someone asked the question, does this indicate that Lot was alcoholic? I do not know. He certainly had a problem with it. He certainly was easily led into the drinking of it. We might justify it by the fact that he had just gone through a very terrible experience, a shocking experience. That maybe he would have wanted to block it out of his mind. I do not know how much time had passed from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the going up into the mountains. It does not appear to have been very long. Maybe he needed time to get over the shocking experience, but nonetheless, you can see that he was not a man that was of stern will that we would have expected of someone who was righteous.

Now this is the last we see of Lot in the Bible until we get to the New Testament, so I want to summarize some things in regard to him because God seems to have given his story because Lot was a representative man, even as Abraham. You see Abraham is a prototype of a man living by faith. Perhaps we might say that there is no other Bible figure that is represented by so many people today. For every Abraham or David or Joshua, there are thousands, perhaps, of Lots. Good people, upright citizens as we might say, but people who are willing to compromise their principles if the occasion demands it of them, rather than hanging on to those things they hold dear and pure right to the very end.

The world has a lot of people who are morally good, until the right occasion comes along and reveals they are part and parcel of the world. They are not separated from it the way that Abraham was.

Lot seems to have started reasonably well, but it is interesting that his downfall seems to begin either in Egypt or shortly after they go out of Egypt.

The experience in Egypt seems to have added a great deal of wealth both to Abraham and to Lot, and for Abraham, things continued to ascend as far as his spirituality is concerned. But with Lot, things went downhill fast, because when their herds grew great, it was Lot who separated himself from Abraham and chose to go down into the valley, to Sodom and Gomorrah. I think in doing that, he probably made the single greatest mistake of his life.

First of all, Lot should have asked Abraham to choose. Abraham was the elder of the two, Abraham was the patriarch of the family. Instead, the indication is from Genesis 13, that Lot seemed to lust after what the plains had to offer. Lot's choice was bad, a selfish one, and it ended in disaster. On the other hand, Abraham's choice was lofty, and it was above any of the petty considerations that Lot showed. What that did was show the tenor of both men's lives. In spite of Lot's general uprightness, Lot must have had a vein of self-centeredness, of selfishness within him, and in the choice, God is showing that Lot is guided by lust and selfishness rather than a spirit of sacrifice and generosity.

Lot had a house; Abraham had a tent. I think the conclusion there, that God seems to be showing us, again that Lot, despite being a good man, that he was not a pilgrim. His roots were in the world. The Bible says that Lot was righteous, but he did many things that were inconsistent with true character and were dishonoring to God. For example, he entertained angels, but he also sat with the ungodly. He believed the angels' message, but twisted their commands to avoid any privations that might have come with his carrying them out.

Lot narrowly escaped with his life. Sodom was destroyed, he lost his wife, he lost his wealth, he lost his influence, his relatives, remember his sons-in-laws mocked him, and his daughters shamed him. He offered no prayer for Sodom and he manifested no desire for its people. That is quite an interesting conclusion for a man the Bible calls righteous. Now you decide what he was. Was he righteous in the way that Abraham was righteous, or was he righteous in the way that the morally upright of this world are righteous?

Now for chapter 20. Remember as we progress through each chapter that we are seeing stages in a life lived by faith as it progresses through a fulfillment of God's promise. In this case, the promise was the promised seed through

Isaac. Now Isaac is born in chapter 21. So, there is one more major hurdle, a trial that remains before the son, that is, before the promise is given.

Remember, Terah is behind, Egypt is behind, Lot is gone, and Sodom is judged. Now at this point, a trial that has a very familiar ring to it comes back into the picture. You will recall that Abraham was saved from Egypt, he was saved from Sodom, and when he and Sarah come into the Philistine's land, there through fear he is once again tempted to deny his true relations with Sarah.

What do women represent? They represent principles. In this case, the principles are good. Sarah is good, let us remember that. Now in the story, Abimelech, the king of Gerar, when he realized that Abraham was in the area, he sent for Sarah, and he took her. But God interfered and He made known to the Philistine that Sarah belonged to another and that he was not allowed to touch her. Sarah is then restored to Abraham untouched, and Abraham receives a considerable present from Abimelech.

There must be an important lesson here because this is recorded three times. Once with Abraham in Egypt, once with Abraham in the land of the Philistines, and once with Isaac in the land of the Philistines. Now, is this three occurrences of the same thing, or is it three recordings of the same event with just a change in location? No, it really did happen three times. There is a lesson here that God wants to get across. Now, what is it? Does it have something to do with deceit? Does it have something to do with adultery? Does it have something to do with fear? Is it something that is rather subtle? Yes, it is. But it does involve fear.

Now God is showing through this section, not just Genesis 20, but in the whole thing with Abraham here, in great bold strokes, and sometimes with a great bit of detail in others. But what I am interested in right here are the big picture, the bold strokes that He is making in that there is a very strong and important lesson for you and me. In order to get this, we have to remember that these things and people represent things, they symbolize something. Remember, Abraham represents the man of faith. Lot represents either a worldly Christian or he represents a good man, a moral person from the world. Now what about Egypt? That represents something as well. Sarah represents principles, does she not, according to Galatians 4. What about

Abimelech? What about the Philistines? Is it possible that they represent something? Yes, it is. I think that they do.

I have had a hard time figuring this out. It has taken me thirty years in the church and I think that I have finally latched on to it. Why is this story here three times?

I remember reading one time in Mr. Armstrong's autobiography about him meeting with one of the outstanding personalities of the early 1900s, a man by the name of Elbert Hubbard. Mr. Armstrong described Elbert Hubbard as being no shrinking violet, meaning he was really stuck on himself. He was in love with himself, he paraded himself, he bragged about himself. He bragged about himself having the largest vocabulary that any man had had since Shakespeare. He rated himself as being the best writer in America since Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin. Now what intrigued me about this man is that he published a magazine called "The Philistine." And I have been scratching my head about that ever since I read the autobiography about twenty or twenty-five years ago when Mr. Armstrong was bringing it out a chapter at a time.

I can remember thinking, that is a funny name for a magazine. And I can remember through the years from time to time looking in one dictionary and another trying to find out what Philistine meant. The dictionaries kept telling me that they were a tribe, a family of people that lived near the Israelites when they were in the land of Canaan. Well, that did not tell me a thing. So, what does it mean? Is it possible that Elbert Hubbard's magazine has anything at all to do with the Bible? Mr. Hubbard himself was agnostic. But I think that he understood what Philistine represented. It was something that was better known back in those days when people were generally a little better educated in the Bible.

Now listen to this quote from Mr. Armstrong about a biography of Elbert Hubbard at age 82.

For a few years now I have been reading Elbert Hubbard regularly. I read his stuff on my Uncle Frank's advice for style, for flare, for vocabulary and for ideas in philosophy, though my uncle had cautioned me about absorbing his ideas and philosophy regarding

religion. Hubbard was an agnostic. He seemed to possess a deal of wisdom about men and methods and things, but he was utterly devoid of spiritual knowledge.

What we are going to do here is trace the ancestry of the Philistines. Now at the beginning of the chapter we have the sons of Noah listed, of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Genesis 10:6 The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

Genesis 10:13-14 Mizraim begot Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, and Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines and Caphtorim).

Do you know who Mizraim is? What is their modern name? Egypt, right? The Philistines are derived from, descended from the Egyptians. Now what does Egypt represent? Let us chase the type here. Egypt represents, in the Scriptures, the world apart from God gathering, analyzing, and using knowledge on a carnal basis, using the senses and not using God's Word by faith to direct their lives.

Now the Philistines, being derived, descended from them are of the same spirit but of a somewhat different aspect. Egypt then, figures or represents worldly wisdom and all that worldly wisdom establishes by way of civilization. So, Egypt figures or represents worldly wisdom, that knowledge through the senses that cannot really know God. God is not discerned by the senses. That is why scientists say there is no proof of God's existence, because He cannot be measured, weighed, observed in the way that the senses would do those things. Egypt then, represents worldly wisdom and the civilization that was produced by that, and it is a knowledge or wisdom that cannot really know God.

Now, the Philistine represents even a further attainment of the same thing, and much closer to the Promised Land and in fact, even reaching out and striving to enter into it. All you have to do is look where the Egyptians settled in relation to the Promised Land and where the Philistines settled in relation to the Promised Land. The Philistine representing a further

attainment of worldly wisdom and even striving to enter into the Promised Land, trying to intrude in it.

Let us go to I Samuel, just to show you something that is shown in many, many scriptures in regard to the way the Israelites thought of the Philistines. In chapter 17, David fights Goliath. Goliath was a Philistine.

I Samuel 17:26 Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, “What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?”

For a very long time in biblical history, uncircumcised was almost invariably synonymous with Philistine. The Philistine wants the promise of God, the Philistine wants the Promised Land, but he wants them without circumcision. He wants God to accept him on the basis of his carnal knowledge, which indeed may be tremendous.

Again, secular history as well as some indications from the Bible, give us insight that of all the people adjacent to the Promised Land, the Philistines were by far the most technically advanced. They were the ones who knew how to do things with iron. They were the ones who made the fearsome war chariots. They were the ones who had the awesome war horses, and the fearsome armies, and the giants. Everything about them was advanced, in the Bible’s way of showing things.

So, they are a race of people, famed for bigness, technologically that is, for giants racially. But with all their might, they cannot attain the Promised Land because, as God is showing, they do not want to live by faith.

Knowledge derived from the senses has its place, but with it, man cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, though the Philistine seeks to intrude into it.

We have in the 20th chapter the final test before the promised seed is given. Now who is it given to? It is given to the man of faith, but he was also a man, as we have been given to see, a man of great intellectual capacity as

well, as Josephus and others indicate. But we find this man of faith, with a great deal of intellectual capacity, very severely tempted by the knowledge of this world represented by the Philistines.

Now we are getting around to the crux of this issue as to why this thing appears three different times very early in the foundational parts of the Bible. God is sending you and me a message not to let our minds be turned away from faith by technical knowledge from this world and all its material advances that seem to be so alluring.

Instead, we are shown by this example that we are to hang on to the principles of faith—Sarah. God once again mercifully intervened and gave Abraham some help. That in itself is a lesson to you and me as to how powerful this influence from technology is. I am using technology as a catchall word here for all of the carnal advances of this world. Because even Abraham, a man that was so close to God that he became the prototype of all men of faith, was so severely tested by it God had to intervene to keep that man from being lost. He had to plague the world in order to keep Sarah, the pure principles, from being defiled.

Spiritual faith, brethren, or spiritual truths belong in a realm of spiritual faith. Now you will find in the story that once Abraham owned up to the truth of his relationship with Sarah, that is, the principles of God, and did not give up his principles, then the knowledge of the world became a great gift to him, and is shown to even strengthened and enhanced his faith.

But you see, the problem is to keep the world's technological advances from impacting so greatly that it causes us to give up the principles of God.

God then shows that if one of true spiritual faith holds to the principles of God's Word, that is, His truth, then it can also possess the things that carnal knowledge gives. But the other side of that coin is that carnal knowledge cannot enter into spiritual truth. It is a one-way street.

So who do the Philistines represent then? They represent those who are worldly-wise. That is what Elbert Hubbard was. He was worldly-wise. Even Mr. Armstrong admitted it. And that is why Hubbard called his magazine, *The Philistine*. It was for those who were wise in the world.

Now what was it that caused Abraham to be ready to give up on his principles? It was fear. Brethren, we either fear them out there, the worldly-wise, those who hold the positions of power in this world, those who control employment for example. We fear that they are going to hurt us in some way, economically, socially, or physically. Sometimes we even fear that we are going to offend them. But we have to understand that they cannot have what we have been given, and that they cannot fully understand why we would want to hold on to our principles.

Eventually, brethren, it is going to come down to possibly a life and death matter whenever the beast gets control in Europe. People who do not have the mark are going to be severely tried to give up on their principles. And people who do have the mark are going to be astounded that anybody would hang on to that which they cannot understand.

That is the lesson here and that is why it appears three times. God is warning us here through symbol, “Don’t you dare give up your principles,” the purity of a Sarah for worldly wisdom, or something that seems right at the moment out of fear that they are in some going to strike us economically, socially, or physically. Because if you give up on those principles, you are probably going to end up like Lot, instead of ending up like Abraham.

Now I will tell you there is something wonderful here and that is God mercifully intervened and rescued Lot. God shows that without His intervention, even someone as strong as Abraham would have lost. It is a sobering thing to understand how powerful the influence from the worldly-wise is. Of course, they are spreading their influence everywhere, in business, in education, they are doing it in religion.

So, do not allow yourself to equivocate, because it is extremely likely, that had Abraham not equivocated and simply told Abimelech no, that nothing would have happened, that everything would have been ok.