

GENESIS 13 - 14

Introduction

I want to remind you that Lot was a saved man. I can say with the utmost certainty that he was saved because *God* says he was saved. God the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Peter to write the following commentary on Lot's life:

2 Peter 2:7-8 "...[God] ... delivered righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)"

Peter calls Lot "righteous" no less than *three times*. Perhaps God the Holy Spirit *knew* that the emphasis would be necessary to convince you that Lot really was a child of God! There is very little in his behavior to suggest that he believed in the Lord. Nevertheless you must accept God's testimony: Lot was declared righteous.

If you look at Lot's conduct, then listen to Peter's commentary, you have to conclude that it is possible for a Christian to be carnal. "Carnal" is a word that describes a Christian who continues to yield to the desires of the old sin nature. "Fleshly" or "worldly" are other words commonly used to describe such a person. Even though born-again, the carnal Christian continues to be dominated by his or her old nature.

The Apostle Paul describes the Corinthian Christians as being carnal:

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it*, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere* men? "

Paul describes two possibilities in your Christian walk: You can be spiritual, or you can be carnal. This word "spiritual," when applied to men and women, is used of your relationship to God in one of two ways: positionally and practically. Christians are spiritual in their position before God, but they can be carnal in their practices.

Since it is possible for a Christian to be spiritual or to be carnal it is of some importance that you discover the criteria by which spirituality can be maintained and by which carnality can be identified. In our text in Genesis, Lot is carnal but Abraham is spiritual. Given the exact same circumstances, one man maintained his spirituality while the other can be identified as carnal. As you follow their story, four principles come into focus:

- #1 Whether You Are Carnal Or Spiritual Is Revealed By Your Worship

- #2 Whether You Are Carnal Or Spiritual
Is Revealed By Your Walk
- #3 Whether You Are Carnal Or Spiritual
Is Revealed By Your Warfare
- #4 Whether You Are Carnal Or Spiritual
Is Revealed By Your Wealth

#1 Whether You Are Carnal Or Spiritual
Is Revealed By Your Worship
(13:1-5)

Peter identified Lot as being saved. Paul was able to identify the Christians at Corinth as being carnal. While you may not always be able to say with certainty whether or not a person is saved, you certainly can see whether or not they are carnal. As you look at Abraham and Lot, the first criteria that comes into focus is their worship.

Genesis 13:1 Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the South.

Genesis 13:2 Abram *was* very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.

Genesis 13:3 And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai,

Genesis 13:4 to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

Genesis 13:5 Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents.

Abraham went up from Egypt to the south. Abraham was a wealthy man. Abraham pitched his tent. In verse five you read, "Lot *also*..."

^ Lot *also* went up from Egypt to the South.

^ Lot *also* was a wealthy man.

^ Lot *also* pitched his tent.

Abraham, though, went to the altar to worship; Lot did not. In fact, Lot is *never* depicted as building or worshipping at an altar in any of the Genesis records of his life.

This is the testimony of Abraham's spirituality: Regular devotions redirected his desires resulting in right decisions.

This is the tragedy of Lot's carnality: Weak devotions left him with worldly desires which resulted in wrong decisions.

Your worship ought to be like Abraham's, and it ought to be both closet and corporate.

= Closet Worship

Jesus spoke of worshipping God in the privacy of a closet -

Matthew 6:6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Strong's concordance defines closet as "a chamber on the ground-floor or interior of an Oriental house (generally used for storage or privacy, a spot for retirement) [A] secret chamber, closet, storehouse."

The particular room is not important. What is important is the idea of regular, personal worship. The Bible tells you to "pray without ceasing," indicating that your whole lifestyle should be worshipful. At the same time, there is no substitute for setting aside specific time for private worship.

= Corporate Worship

The individual New Testament Christian is always portrayed as an important member of a larger, local, corporate worshipping community. A Christian who is not meeting regularly with other believers in a sovereignly established fellowship would be categorized as carnal by the apostles.

Abraham and Lot both faced the same difficult circumstances; both were presented with difficult decisions. Worship made the difference.

You can be like Abraham - spiritual, not carnal. Establish or reestablish your closet...Make corporate worship a high priority.

#2 Whether You Are Carnal Or Spiritual
Is Revealed By Your Walk
(13:6-18)

Abraham and Lot were about to be faced with a difficult decision. Abraham's time at the altar redirected his desires. Lot's time away from the altar left him in the grip of worldly desires. One chose rightly; the other chose wrongly.

Genesis 13:6 Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together.

Genesis 13:7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.

Strife among brethren is a symptom of carnality. When describing the Corinthians as carnal, Paul said, (1 Corinthians 3:3) "for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere* men?" Carnality affected the fellowship of the herdsmen and was witnessed by the unbelieving Canaanites and Perizzites.

Genesis 13:8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we *are* brethren.

Genesis 13:9 "Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If *you take* the left, then I will go to the right; or, if *you go* to the right, then I will go to the left."

Abraham took the initiative to resolve the strife. He spoke frankly about the problem to the person that was responsible.

Genesis 13:10 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar.

Genesis 13:11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other.

Genesis 13:12 Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched *his* tent even as far as Sodom.

Genesis 13:13 But the men of Sodom *were* exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.

As you follow Lot through Genesis, you can identify a downward progression into sin. First he looked longingly at the plain before Sodom. Then he pitched his tent as far as Sodom. In Chapter 14 he was living in Sodom. By Chapter Nineteen he was one of the leaders in Sodom. It seems that the carnal Christian deceives himself about the weaknesses of his or her own sin nature and thinks he or she can approach the world without danger of defilement. Listen to these warnings - given, interestingly, to the carnal Christians at Corinth:

v 1 Corinthians 5:9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.

v 1 Corinthians 5:11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; not even to eat with such a person.

v 1 Corinthians 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

Genesis 13:14 And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are; northward, southward, eastward, and westward;

Genesis 13:15 "for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.

Genesis 13:16 "And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, *then* your descendants also could be numbered.

Genesis 13:17 "Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."

Genesis 13:18 Then Abram moved *his* tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which *are* in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.

The spiritual man must be content with spiritual blessings. He may enjoy some of the wealth and comforts of this world, as Abraham did. But he is living each day in the light of an eternal inheritance that is far greater than anything the world can offer.

Both men, Abraham and Lot, "lift up their eyes" and "walk" in the land.

The look that each one takes determines the character of their walk. One, Lot, looks out in the flesh; the other, Abraham, looks up with faith. You have those same two choices as well!

= Looking out in the Flesh

Genesis 13:10 "And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere..."

Lot was concerned mostly about water - the physical need he had at the moment. In the New Testament water becomes a symbol of the abundant spiritual provision of God to His faithful children as they walk with Him in obedience. When you are looking out in the flesh, physical needs dominate spiritual desires.

Genesis 13:10 "...like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar."

Lot compared Egypt to Eden! Eden had been Eden because of fellowship with God - *not* because of its water and vegetation! Lot thought of fellowship in terms of immediate material blessings.

= Looking up in Faith

Abraham had been looking up the whole time! He had been looking up when he had first approached Lot - his major concern was how the strife between them was reflecting on the testimony of his God. He had been looking up when he offered Lot the choice - trusting in God to provide for him regardless of Lot's decision. Now, as God directs him to "lift up his eyes," he is enabled to see by faith God's wondrous plan for his life.

Looking out in the flesh directed Lot to "walk" towards captivity in Sodom. Looking up in faith directed Abraham to "walk" towards communion in Salem. Your walk is towards one of those two cities, towards one of those two experiences.

#3 **Whether You Are Carnal Or Spiritual
Is Revealed By Your Warfare
(14:1-15)**

Genesis 14:1 And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations,

Genesis 14:2 *that* they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).

Genesis 14:3 All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).

Genesis 14:4 Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

Genesis 14:5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that *were* with him came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim,

Genesis 14:6 and the Horites in their mountain of Seir, as far as El Paran, which *is* by the wilderness.

Genesis 14:7 Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that *is*, Kadesh), and attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazon Tamar.

Genesis 14:8 And the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that *is*, Zoar) went out and joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim

Genesis 14:9 against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings against five.

Genesis 14:10 Now the Valley of Siddim *was full of* asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; *some* fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains.

Genesis 14:11 Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way.

Genesis 14:12 They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

Those who are captivated by the world are easily taken captive.

Genesis 14:13 Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they *were* allies with Abram.

The one who had escaped was undoubtedly a godless Sodomite. He sought out Abraham. It is always a tribute to your witness for Jesus when the ungodly seek you out in their times of crises!

Genesis 14:14 Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained *servants* who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

Genesis 14:15 He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which *is* north of Damascus.

Abraham went after his brother. You and I are called upon to do the same:

James 5:19-20 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

Lot was a victim; Abraham was victorious. Lot was a captive; Abraham was a conqueror. The difference was in their preparation. The carnal man was unprepared for warfare. The spiritual man, on the other hand, had been preparing. Abraham had "trained" 318 men from his household. While Lot had been indulging himself, Abraham had been disciplining himself and disciplining others.

^ Fleshly indulgence is the mark of the carnal man or woman.

^ Faithful discipline is the mark of the spiritual man or woman. In 2Timothy 2:4 you read, "No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier."

#4 Whether You Are Carnal Or Spiritual Is Revealed By Your Wealth (14:16-24)

Melchizedek is an interesting Bible character. It is best to study him in the context of the book of Hebrews, where you learn that Jesus is a High Priest in the order of Melchizedek. For our purposes today we see he is the King of Salem. Abraham was returning with great wealth and was met by both the King of Salem and the King of Sodom. The wealth he had been blessed with could either be an occasion of stumbling or an opportunity for sacrifice.

Genesis 14:16 So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.

Genesis 14:17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that *is*, the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who *were* with him.

Genesis 14:18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he *was* the priest of God Most High.

Genesis 14:19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;

Genesis 14:20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.

Genesis 14:21 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself."

Genesis 14:22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth,

Genesis 14:23 "that I *will take* nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that *is* yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich';

Genesis 14:24 "except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

Abraham took the opportunity to sacrifice. In the book of Hebrews you are told that Abraham gave the King of Salem "a tithe," or "a tenth." Here begins the Bible's teaching on the sacrificial giving of your wealth. Whether 10% is a law or not has been greatly debated. When you look at all of the relevant Scriptures it seems that the Christian is to give joyfully, regularly, generously, and sacrificially to the work of the

Lord. For some, 10% might be a reasonable amount; for others it may either be too little or too much. The important thing in our text in Genesis is that Abraham was more interested in giving to the Lord's work than in gaining the world.

Notice what the King of Sodom says: (Genesis 14:21) Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." In the King James it reads, "Give me the souls..." A person more interested in substance than in souls is carnal. In giving to God's work, He allows you the privilege of being a partner in reaching men and women and children - "souls" - with the message of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

The spiritual man sacrificed. Abraham risked everything to restore his erring brother. What did the carnal man do? Lot, as you learn in a few chapters, went right back to Sodom! Was Abraham a fool? Yes - he was God's fool!

What you do with your wealth reveals whether you are carnal or spiritual.

Conclusion

You can't help but see that the refreshment that Melchizedek brought to Abraham, the bread and the wine, are the elements of communion. Abraham looked forward in communion to the Cross of Jesus Christ even as you and I look back upon it.

While we observe communion as an ordinance in the Church, in the broader sense, having immediate, intimate, daily communion with God is the life and joy of the spiritual Christian. Those who are carnal may *take* communion in the Church but they do not have immediate, intimate, daily communion with God. The carnal Christian is taken captive in Sodom; the spiritual Christian takes communion in Salem.

The King of Sodom is a type of Satan. He offers you the substance and the spoils of this world. The King of Salem is a type of Jesus Christ. He offers you the sacrifice of

His life, and He calls you to a sacrificial life of service that can affect the eternal souls of other men, women, and children.

Let *your* life reveal a person who is spiritual.