

IN THE BEGINNING - PART 11

- ❖ In our last lesson, we had seen how God had changed Abram's name to Abraham, marking a delineation between the man of the flesh and the man of the spirit.
 - We also saw God's response to Abraham who was suggesting that Ishmael should be the son of promise. God emphatically refused and indicated that Sarah was going to bear a son who would be named Isaac and it was Isaac and his descendants after him that God was going to make His everlasting covenant with. That which God has purposed is the only possibility: **There's never a plan B with GOD!**
 - It was Abram, the man of the flesh, who was the father of Ishmael, conceived by his own efforts, but it would be Abraham, the man of the spirit, who would be the father of Isaac, the son of promise, conceived by Divine intervention.
- ❖ The next 2 Chapters in Genesis, Chapters 18 and 19 are rich beyond measure in the spiritual truth they teach us.

Gen.18:1 *Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. 2 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, 3 and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. 4 Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said."*

- Does this scripture come to mind?

Heb.13:2 *"Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!"*

- ❖ It is with Abraham by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron that God appears in bodily form to eat and drink by Abraham's tent and to reaffirm the son of promise.

Gen. 18:9 *Then they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" So he said, "Here, in the tent." 10 And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.) 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. 12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" 13 And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?' 14 "Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the*

IN THE BEGINNING - PART 11

appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." (Does this echo other miraculous births that come to mind?)

- ❖ And it is Abraham who stood before the Lord and questioned Him concerning the righteous in Sodom.

Gen 18:22 *Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. 23 And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"*

- But let's be clear here that Abraham did not change God's mind, this is not Abraham being a shrewd negotiator, but rather what Abraham says is completely in line with God's nature and character and therefore Abraham speaks in agreement with the Lord giving corroboration to that which God had said. If we go to the scriptures we can find out why this is so in –

Num 23:19 *"God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent [Lit. Change His mind]. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"*

Gen 18:17 *And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, 18 "since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?"*

- God did not hide what He was doing from Abraham, and this included how He would act with respect to the righteous in Sodom. This would be a revelation brought forth from above.

Psalms 5:12 *For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as with a shield.*

Psalms 18:24 *Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness, According to the cleanness of my hands in His sight. 25 With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; 26 With the pure You will show Yourself pure; And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd. 27 For You will save the humble people, But will bring down haughty looks.*

- What we can see here is that the man of the spirit while standing in the presence of God through His Word, can speak and act in accordance with the nature and character of God and God will hide nothing from him with respect to His plans and purposes.

IN THE BEGINNING - PART 11

- That which is God's nature and character can never be changed, but we can, through our submission to the Word, be in complete harmony with them. And through our submission to the Word, God will not hide from us what He has done, what He is doing and what He is about to do.
- ❖ Abraham's original question which began his conversation with the Lord is very specific.
Gen 18:23 And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"
 - In other words, would You also destroy the eternally saved with the eternally lost? And this is something that will never happen, as again, the scriptures clearly show that the eternally saved and the eternally lost can never appear together in Judgment.
 - From the foundational type of Enoch onwards we see the Judgment of the eternally saved at the end of this dispensation at the Judgment Seat of Christ and the judgment of the eternally lost at the end of the Millennial Kingdom at the Great White Throne – 1000 years beyond Christ's Judgment Seat(JSOC)
 - Both these Judgments, for the eternally saved and the eternally lost, have to do with participation in the purpose of God with respect to the specific period of time to which the salvation on offer points – ***2Cor 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.***
 - For the eternally saved, our appearance at Christ's Judgment Seat has to do with participating in God's purpose for the Millennial Kingdom or not, depending upon our acceptance of or rejection of the salvation of the soul which is on offer - ***1Pet 1:9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.***
 - Although the salvation of the soul is still not ours yet, the very fact of our eternal salvation, the salvation we presently possess, makes certain our participation in God's purpose for the endless ages of what we call, eternity, irrespective of the outcome for us at the Judgment Seat.
John 3:18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
- For the eternally lost however, they, by rejecting the free-gift of eternal life, not choosing to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, can have no part in God's purpose for the endless ages, the eternity to which this salvation applies;
Rev 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another

IN THE BEGINNING - PART 11

*book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. **13** The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. **14** Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. **15** And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

❖ And then to see yet another facet from this same picture, the destruction of the wicked in Sodom and Gomorrah forms a type of the complete overthrow of Gentile world power at the end of the tribulation, characterized here in Genesis as, ‘the wicked’, – a destruction that all ‘the righteous’, the eternally saved, will have been removed from before it happens.

- Again, we can go to the foundational types seeing Enoch removed from the earth before Noah goes through the flood, giving us the picture of the resurrection/rapture of the church before the tribulation begins.

- And if we go to the Book of the Revelation we can see all the eternally saved from this dispensation standing before the Lord in Judgment following the resurrection/rapture of the church, before the first seal on the 7 sealed scroll is opened, which marks the beginning of the tribulation –

***Rev 1:20** "The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.*

***Rev 6:1** Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." **2** And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.*

- Well, all of that to say this, the answer to Abraham’s question, ‘[Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?](#)’ was already predetermined before the question was asked; and all that followed provided affirmation of that which had already been decided before the world began.

❖ But, from our standpoint, what is really exciting in this whole incident is that it shows that the spiritual man can be fully engaged in the purpose of God even now.

***1Cor 2:14** But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

***15** But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.*

IN THE BEGINNING - PART 11

16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

1Cor 2:9 But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." **10** But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. **11** For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. **12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. **13** These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

- The Lord says to Abraham, the man of the spirit - **Gen 18:17** And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing...?"
- All that God is doing, past, present and future is revealed to the spiritual man as it is brought forth from above by the Spirit through the Word and if this is our experience, then we, like Abraham, know exactly what is coming next –
Gen 18:20 And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, **21** "I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know."
1Thes 5:4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

❖ That which then follows with the destruction of the cities of the plain, with respect to the experience of Abraham and Lot, gives a clear picture of that which awaits the Kingdom minded Christian and the carnally minded Christian at the end of this dispensation –

Gen 18:33 So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.....**19:1** 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.

- Notice where we find our 2 protagonists – Abraham ‘returned to his place’, on the high ground, by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron and Lot ‘was sitting in the gate of Sodom’ and we might note that it is evening, towards the end of the day.
- Now these are 2 diametrically opposed positions.
-One is seen focused on that which lies ahead, on an inheritance and the promise of God

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IN THE BEGINNING - PART 11

Heb 11:9 *By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; **10** for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

-The other is actively engaged in the affairs of the cities of the plain, the things of this world, sitting in the gate where all the governance of the city would take place –

Rom 8:5 *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. **6** For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Col 3:2 *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

Ge 19:12 *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! **13** "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." **14** 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. **15** 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." **16** 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. **17** 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 mountain, lest you be destroyed."*

- ❖ The total destruction of Gentile world power ushering in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, seen in the destruction of the cities of the plain, has also been foreshadowed in the flood of Noah, in the destruction of Babel, in Abraham's victory over the kings, in the Exodus from Egypt etc. And given the certainty of this impending outcome, the message to the eternally saved is the same as that given to Lot, 'Escape to the mountain lest you be destroyed.'
- ❖ This is the same as the cry concerning 'midnight' [judgment] in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins - **Mat 25:6** *"And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'"*
 - Escaping to the mountain and going out to meet the Bridegroom are synonymous and speak of a continuously active pursuit of that which Christ has promised His co-heirs-**Phil 3:12** *Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.*

IN THE BEGINNING - PART 11

- In the account of Lot that we have just read we see that Lot's sons-in law and his married daughters heard his warning, but thought he was joking.
 - Not only does this point to the natural man who cannot receive spiritual truth as it is foolishness to him, but also the total disregard among so many Christians of the warnings scripture gives.
 - To look at this another way – Lot's time in the plain, and his time in Sodom, marrying some of his daughters to the men of Sodom, did not suggest that he thought there was anything else beyond that experience. If Lot's focus was on the world and the things of the world, why would his sons-in-law and daughters be any different?
- ❖ And then the continuing account of Lot adds more to this picture of the Christian who is dull of hearing – we see that when the 'morning dawned' ***that 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."***
- Quite simply, if we cannot take our eyes off of 'the city', if we become so entangled with the world that we cannot see ourselves apart from it, then we will be consumed, we will be overthrown, by the very thing that is the object of our fixation, the things of the world. ***2Pet 2:20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.***
 - Even though Lot, the type of the carnal Christian, is confronted by angels and receives a direct command from God Himself through the angels, his spiritual senses are so dull that he had to be dragged from the city, the Lord being merciful to him, he did not leave willingly.
Gen 19:18 Then Lot said to them, "Please, no, my lords! 19 "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. 20 "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."
 - For Lot then fleeing to the mountain, leaving behind that on which he had depended, had been actively engaged with and comfortable with, could only be perceived in the negative, 'lest some evil overtake me and I die' – that pictured through the mountain, the coming Kingdom, is the one place where 'life' is to be found, but this is beyond Lot's comprehension as his spiritual senses are so dull.

IN THE BEGINNING - PART 11

- Instead of fleeing to the mountain, he asks to stay in the environment with which he is familiar, ‘See now, this city is near enough to flee to’, believing that if he escapes there his ‘soul shall live’.
 - His thinking of course is completely backward – it is staying in the city where he would be overtaken by evil and die and on the mountain where his soul would live.
- ❖ Ultimately Lot cannot be allowed to stay in the city of Zoar.
- Gen 19:29 And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt. 30 Then Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountain, 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.***
- And as Lot ‘went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountain’ we find the picture of the resurrection/rapture of the church, presenting a type for the experience of the carnal Christian when this event takes place.
 - That said, we will come to realize that the preceding events, the warning from the angels, the command to flee to the mountain, the escape to Zoar, all typify the experience of countless Christians during this dispensation.
 - The cry concerning ‘midnight’ has been proclaimed, the warnings contained in the scriptures have been heard, the command to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness has been given – but many have failed to heed any of it and have instead headed for Zoar.
- Heb 2:1 Therefore, we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.***
- ❖ And here is Orpah once again. The accounts of Orpah and Lot provide the detail of the experience of the non-Kingdom focused, carnally minded, unfaithful Christian in the present and that which awaits them following the Judgment Seat of Christ.
- ❖ The accounts of Ruth and Abraham provide the experience of the faithful, Kingdom focused Christian and their practice in the present and that which awaits them following the Judgment Seat of Christ.
- And again, the contrast between Abraham and Lot brings all into focus.
- Gen 19:27 And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. 28 Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace.***

IN THE BEGINNING - PART 11

- Here is Abraham, ‘early in the morning’, in the ‘place where he stood before the Lord’ – on the top of the mountain, completely removed from the events in the plain as he has had no association with that which had previously taken place there.
- But, for Lot, he has embraced that which has taken place in the plain, and he finds himself at the very same time that Abraham is standing on top of the mountain, on the mountain, but, And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave. Rather than standing before the Lord in the light of the new day, he is in a cave, hidden from the light, in a place of darkness and shame.
- ❖ The picture could not be any more obvious – The faithful Christian will stand in the presence of his Lord, will be enswathed in the glory that had been lost in the Garden as the 7th Day dawns, ready to reign as a coheir with Christ. But not so, the unfaithful Christian – he will not stand in the presence of his Lord, there will be no covering of glory and although the 7th Day dawns, there will be no position of rulership, only a place associated with darkness and shame.

Mat 25:30 'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting [Lit. 'life for the age'] life.

Heb 10:35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

Let us, in a figurative sense, pitch our tent by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron. The mountain remains and beckons to us to come and all the while we have breath, until the trumpet sounds, we have the opportunity. Don't miss this.

1Thes 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?

- **We will continue from here the Lord willing. The time to remain diligent is now!**

IN THE BEGINNING - PART 11

Questions:

1. Read Genesis 18:1-2 – What is significant about what we see in these verses?
 - a) What does the Lord reaffirm in these 2 verses and what do we learn from Genesis 18:14?

2. Read Genesis 18:22-23 – What is going on in these verses and those which follow?
 - a) How can we know from the scriptures that Abraham is not changing God's mind during this conversation?

 - b) How can we know that Abraham's original question already has a predetermined answer?

 - c) What is particularly interesting and exciting about this conversation with respect to us?

IN THE BEGINNING - PART 11

3. Read John 3:18. How should we understand this scripture?
 - a) What are the two judgments that we looked at in answering Abraham's original question?

4. Read Genesis 18:33-19:1 – What do we learn from the location of Abraham and Lot in these verses and which scripture did we look at connected with this?
 - b) How should we understand what this looks like in our own experience?

5. Read Genesis 19:12-17 – Why is the last sentence of v17 as pertinent today as when the angels spoke to Lot?
 - a) Where have we seen this same thing elsewhere in the scriptures?

IN THE BEGINNING - PART 11

6. Read Genesis 19:18-20 – Why does Lot ask what he does in these verses and how do we know that his thinking is completely wrong?
 - a) Read Matthew 16:25-26 – What do these verses add to what Lot says in the verses we just read?
 - b) Read Luke 17:32 – Why does the Lord say this?
7. Read Genesis 19:29-30 – How can we tell from these verses that we are looking at a picture of the resurrection/rapture of the church?

IN THE BEGINNING - PART 11

8. What contrast can we draw between Abraham's experience and Lot's experience?

a) Which Book can we go to, to find a parallel experience to that of Abraham and Lot?

- *Brethren, let us continue to believe in what the Lord continues to teach us as without Faith it is impossible to please Him (Heb.11:6). Remain diligent (2Tim.2:15). Blessings!!*