

THE EXAMPLE OF LOT

An excerpt from "By Faith," by Arlen Chitwood

THE DAYS OF LOT

"Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot...Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:28-30).

Events surrounding God's judgment upon the cities of the plain during Lot's day constitute a clear type of the events which will surround God's judgment upon the earth during the days of the coming of the Son of Man. During the days of Lot wickedness reached a pinnacle in Sodom, Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain – a wickedness which, to this day, four millenniums later, still bears the name of Sodom (sodomy). Immediately before judgment fell, Lot, his wife, and his two virgin daughters were removed from Sodom. This sets forth the truth once again that the righteous (*cf.* II Peter 2:8) will be removed before judgment falls upon the earth (note Gen. 19:22). This also sets forth a truth concerning carnal Christians, denied by many: There is no such thing as a partial or selective rapture, leaving carnal Christians behind to go through the Tribulation. They are part of the body of Christ, and the *complete* body will be removed *before* the Tribulation.

LOT'S DOWNWARD PATH

After Abraham came out of Ur and entered into the land of Canaan with his wife, Sarah, and his nephew, Lot, there arose a famine in the land. To escape the famine, Abraham took Sarah and Lot and went down into Egypt. During their stay in Egypt both Abraham and Lot became wealthy in cattle and other possessions, and upon their return to the land of Canaan their individual possessions were so great that "the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together." Attempting to dwell together produced strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle. And in order to separate the herdsmen and stop the strife, Abraham magnanimously offered Lot his choice of any part of the land of Canaan in which to dwell. Lot was a man who walked by sight, and as he lifted up his eyes and saw all the well-watered plain throughout the Jordan Valley he chose this site (Gen. 11:31; 12:5, 10; 13:1-11).

Lot, thus, began his long walk by sight, which led down into what appeared to be the best which the world had to offer. "Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom." Eventually the day arrived when Lot moved into Sodom, and Lot later found himself seated in the "gate of Sodom" (Gen. 13:12, 13; 19:1). Those who sat in the gate of a city in that day transacted business on behalf of the city. Lot, through his

association with the people of the plain, eventually became interested enough in the affairs of Sodom that he took up a position among the ones who controlled these affairs. From the day Lot lifted up his eyes, saw, and chose the well-watered plain in the Jordan Valley until the day he sat in the gate of Sodom constitutes one long, downward path; and these experiences have been placed in the Word of God as a warning to Christians in the present dispensation.

Lot's desire to dwell in the well-watered plain in the Jordan Valley caused his downfall. His long walk by sight, eventually resulting in grave consequences, began when he chose this area. He lived in the plain, availed himself of what the plain had to offer, and eventually found himself recognized as a man of the world among men, but spiritually deficient toward God.

Immediately before the destruction of the cities of the plain, the Lord provided Lot with a final opportunity to disassociate himself from the things of Sodom, commanding him to leave the *plain* and dwell in the *mountain*. But Lot, because of his carnality, wrought through a long association with Sodom, refused to heed the Lord's command. Lot desired to move into another city of the plain rather than ascend into the mountain as the Lord commanded (Gen. 19:17- 20).

The *plain* set in opposition to the *mountain* in Gen. 19:17 has to do with the things surrounding the *present world system under Satan* (kingdom of Satan) set in opposition to the things surrounding the *coming world system under Christ* (kingdom of Christ). Note the image of gold which Nebuchadnezzar set up "in the *plain* of Dura, in the province of Babylon [an event reflecting upon the kingdom of Antichrist, under Satan, during the coming Great Tribulation]," and the destruction of the image of gold, silver, brass, iron, and iron mixed with clay in Nebuchadnezzar's dream by the "Stone" which became "a great *mountain*, and filled the whole earth [an event reflecting upon the destruction of the kingdom of Antichrist, under Satan, and the establishment of the kingdom of Christ]" (Dan. 3:1; 2:31-35).

CHRISTIANS TODAY

Lot has his counterpart in Christians who look to and involve themselves in the things of the present world system, and, in so doing, become very interested in seeking to exercise some measure of control over the affairs of the present dispensation. Christians, many times, have the mistaken idea that they can dwell in the *plain* (involve themselves in the affairs of the present world system under Satan) and, at the same time, also reside in the *mountain* (involve themselves in the things having to do with the coming kingdom of Christ). One brief look at the life of Lot will reveal that such an attitude is completely foreign to the Word of God.

Possibly the best illustration in all Scripture to show the folly of such reasoning is seen in the experiences of David and his faithful men in the Books of I, II Samuel. David, anointed king over Israel, but in a place of exile (removed from the throne, in the cave of Adullam), typifies Christ, anointed King over the earth, but in a place of exile (removed from the throne, in heaven). Saul, the anointed, ruling king over Israel, typifies Satan, the anointed, ruling king over the earth. David's faithful men remained with him out in the hills and had nothing to do with the kingdom under Saul. That is to say, they dwelled in the *mountain*, not in the *plain*. It was not possible to be faithful to David and at the same time be involved in the kingdom under Saul. That is to say, it is not possible to avail oneself of the things of the *mountain* and the things of the *plain* at the same time. Those who were faithful to David remained with him, awaiting a change in administration; and those who are faithful to Christ will, likewise, remain with Him, awaiting a change in administration.

Christians are to leave the affairs of this present world system alone. The final, recorded act in Lot's long walk by sight, preceding the announced destruction of the cities of the plain, was his involvement in the governmental affairs of Sodom. And Christians, in like manner, can only defile their high calling by such an involvement. This is the day of Christ's rejection by the world, and any Christian faithfully serving Christ will also be rejected by the world. The "care of this world ['age']" will *choke* the "word of the kingdom" (Matt. 13:19, 22). One is diametrically opposed to the other, and, the Christian *MUST* choose between the two. He *CANNOT* have both!

One of the greatest hindrances to the spread of the gospel among the unsaved in the world and the teaching of the Word of God among the saved in the Churches of the land is the great number of Christians who concern themselves with the things of the *plain* rather than the things of the *mountain*. If Satan can keep a minister of the gospel or any other Christian busy in the things of the present world system – reform movements, political structure, etc. – he will have accomplished his purpose in seeking to involve the believer in things associated with the Jordan Plain, which are *ALL* one day to go up in smoke. A close study in the life of our Lord will reveal that He spent no time whatsoever in these areas.

The day is coming when the government of this earth will be changed and righteousness will be the order of the day, but events surrounding the ushering in of that day and Christians involved in the affairs of the present day have nothing in common. The coming day will be ushered in *in toto* by the Stone smiting the image – a sudden, complete, and final smiting. In that day Christ, along with Christians under Christ, *will* exercise governmental authority over the earth, but that day is future. Christ specifically said that His kingdom was "not of this world [present world system]." If it were "of this world," His servants would "fight" (John 18:36). Since it is not of this world, and the present system is under the control of Satan, the servants of Christ are to

wait, bide their time (I Cor. 4:1-5). David's faithful men *waited* until Saul was put down and David moved in and took the government. Those faithful to Christ will, likewise, *wait* until Satan has been put down and Christ moves in and takes the government.

The experiences of Lot and those associated with him have forever been set forth in the Word of God to warn Christians concerning where the cares of this present age will lead. Lot lost his testimony through his association with the things of Sodom. Neither his married daughters nor his sons-in-law would believe him concerning the impending destruction (Gen. 19:14). Everything Lot had sought to accomplish during his stay in Sodom went up in smoke with the destruction of the cities of the plain. Then Lot is finally seen dwelling in a cave on the *mountain* and fathering children by his own daughters — pointing to a place of shame which Christians, who follow the example set by Lot, will occupy in the coming *kingdom* of our Lord.

The greatest tragedy that can come to a Christian is to place himself in a comparable position to Lot in the world. Not only will he lose his testimony among those in the world and have an ineffective ministry, but he will enter into the presence of the Lord naked and ashamed at the end of this dispensation. Christians are to direct their attention, not to the things of the *plain*, but to the things of the *mountain*. They are to “live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:12, 13, ASV).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:

“By faith Enoch was translated...”

He was not translated *because* he believed God. That is not at all what the Record states. He simply believed what God had to say about the matter, and he was subsequently removed from the earth before judgment fell. Lot, on the other hand, as Enoch, was also removed to a place of safety before judgment fell; but the words “by faith” could never be used relative to Lot's removal from Sodom. One will search in vain for any mention of Lot in Hebrews, chapter eleven. Lot walked by sight, and it was in this manner that he was removed. In actuality it was, “By faith Enoch...” And “By sight Lot...” But the truth of Scripture remains: They were *both* removed to a place of safety *before* judgment fell.

The separation of Christians — the faithful separated from the unfaithful — occurs at the judgment seat of Christ in heaven alone, not here on earth via a partial or selective removal of certain Christians, both living and dead. Such an act would leave the bodies of the unfaithful dead in their graves and the unfaithful who are living behind to go through part or all of the Tribulation. The simple truth of Scripture is that every

Christian is “in Christ,” a part of the “one new man” (cf. II Cor. 5:17-21; Eph. 2:11-16). And it is “the dead *in Christ*” who will be raised and be caught up together with the ones who are “alive and remain [the living *in Christ*]” (I Thess. 4:16, 17). The only selection in the rapture of Christians taught here, and elsewhere when Scripture is compared with Scripture, is a distinction between those *in Christ* (saved) and those *outside of Christ* (unsaved).

However, Christians appearing before the judgment seat of Christ is an entirely different matter, for here a separation does occur; here a selection does take place; here there is an “out-resurrection [*lit. ‘a standing up out’*]” from among those who have been raised from among the dead (Phil. 3:11). The issues of *this judgment* will then determine *every Christian’s position* in the coming kingdom of our Lord.