

TWO TYPES OF FRUIT

"GOLD, SILVER, PRECIOUS STONES"

OR

"WOOD, HAY, STUBBLE"

By Arlen L. Chirwood

Two lands are contrasted in Heb. 6:7, 8. *The first* (v. 7) brings forth "herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed," and this land "receiveth blessings from God." *The second* (v. 8) beareth "thorns and briers," and this land is "rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned."

The land of Canaan and *the land of Egypt* are set forth after a similar contrast in Scripture.

The land of Canaan is set forth, on the one hand, corresponding to the land of Heb. 6:7, associated with blessings from God; then it is set forth, on the other hand, as being sharply contrasted with the land of Egypt, which corresponds to the earth under a curse. And though the curse will be lifted for one thousand years (during the coming Messianic Era), at the end of this time "the earth...and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (cf. II Peter 3:10-13).

It is *the land of Egypt* which corresponds to the land in Heb. 6:8 — that which bears "thorns and briers... whose end is to be burned [set in sharp contrast to the land and its related fruit in v. 7]." And "the land of Egypt" is *a type of the world in which man presently lives* — a world under a curse, which brings forth "thorns also and thistles" (Gen. 3:17, 18).

Whether it be the earth under a curse or natural man connected with the earth, insofar as God is concerned, there can only be *total, complete rejection*. "That which beareth thorns and briers is *rejected*."

The reference in Hebrews though is not to unre-

deemed man on the earth (although he has been rejected). The reference is to redeemed man who looks to that land which bears "thorns and briers" (v. 8) rather than to that land which brings forth "herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed" (v. 7). The reference is to the antitype of those Israelites under Moses at Kadesh-Barnea who believed the evil report of the ten spies concerning the land of Canaan, causing them to look back to Egypt rather than out ahead to the land of their calling (Num. 13:31-14:4).

These Israelites looked back to a land which bore "thorns and briers" rather than out ahead to a land which brought forth "herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed." And their subsequent overthrow in the wilderness was completely in line with that which God had to say about Egypt, the land to which they had sought to return. Relative to their calling and the land set before them (*called out of Egypt to dwell in the land of Canaan as God's firstborn son, within a theocracy*), they were "rejected." They were overthrown in the wilderness, short of this goal.

And the warning to Christians is that they can, by following the same example, only suffer the same fate. Eternally saved? Yes! But, just as the Israelites under Moses were overthrown on the right side of the blood at a place short of the goal of their calling, so can Christians under Christ be overthrown at the same place, for the same reason, after the identical fashion (cf. I Cor. 9:24-10:11).

Righteous Lot

The experiences of "righteous" Lot (II Peter 2:7, 8) form another Old Testament type — from a different perspective — concerning redeemed man's calling from the world to a land removed from the world. And, within this account, the type is quite instructive concerning the inability of a carnal, worldly person (though redeemed) to act in any depth at all within the "spiritual" realm.

Lot was among those whom Abraham rescued in the battle of the kings in Genesis chapter fourteen. And, from the record, it seems apparent that Lot was with Abraham when Melchizedek came forth with bread and wine following this battle.

However, it was Abraham alone who was blessed by Melchizedek and was allowed to understand enough

about that which was happening to make him lose all interest in the things which the world had to offer (Gen. 14:18-24).

(One aspect of the preceding type would prevent Lot from entering into these experiences, for he was not of Abraham's seed. But the aspect of the type being viewed is that of two saved individuals in Melchizedek's presence, not God's covenant dealings and promises to Abraham and his seed.)

Note one facet of teaching from this aspect of the type relative to Christians in the coming kingdom. *All will be present when Christ exercises the Melchizedek priesthood, but not all will be blessed.*)

Abraham and Lot, in this respect, would fit within the framework of Heb. 6:1-6. One was allowed to go on into an understanding of the things surrounding Melchizedek, but not so with the other. Viewing their individual backgrounds, the reason becomes evident; and viewing that which occurred in the lives of these two men in subsequent years, the end result is quite instructive.

Abraham lived in "the plains of Mamre," near Hebron, located *in the mountainous terrain of the high country* (Gen. 13:18; 14:13; 18:1; 23:17-19; 35:27). Lot, on the other hand, lived in Sodom, in "the plain of Jordan," *in the low-lying country* (Gen. 13:10-12; 14:12; 19:1).

The difference in these two places would be similar to the difference between Jerusalem and Jericho. Jerusalem was located *in the mountainous terrain of the high country*, but Jericho was located *near the lowest point in the land* (actually, on earth), near the Dead Sea at the southern end of the Jordan plain (where Sodom and the other cities of the plain are believed to have once existed).

Jerusalem and Jericho are set in sharp contrast to one another in Scripture. One is "the city of the great King," from which blessings for the nations of the earth will flow during the coming age (Ps. 48:2; Zech. 14:1-21); but "a curse" rests upon the other (Joshua 6:18, 26). And the two places where Abraham and Lot lived are set in similar sharp contrast.

Lot's downward path can be seen in different places from Gen. 13:10 to Gen. 19:1, and the results

of his downward path can be seen in Gen. 14:12-24; 19:1-38.

Lot “lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere...” He then “chose him all the plain of Jordan...dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.” And in the process of doing this, *he separated himself from Abraham* (13:10-12). That is, *the carnal believer separated himself from the spiritual believer.*

The day came when Lot got into trouble and had to be rescued by Abraham (14:12-16). But his long association with the cities of the plain could only have prevented him from seeing beyond the “letter” when Melchizedek subsequently appeared, following the battle of the kings (14:18-24); and his failure to see beyond the “letter,” coupled with his long prior association with the cities of the plain, eventually resulted in his not only again living in Sodom but also in his being actively involved within the affairs of the city (19:1 [affairs of a city were carried on by men seated at the gate, as was Lot]).

Abraham though, during this same time, dwelled in the high country, removed from the cities of the plain. And, apart from instances such as his rescue of Lot and his intercession on behalf of the righteous in Sodom (14:14-16; 18:23-33), the affairs of the people in the Jordan plain were of no moment to him.

Thus, when the day arrived for the destruction of the cities of the plain — as the day will arrive for the destruction of the present world system — two completely contrasting saved individuals can be seen.

And that’s what is in view in Heb. 6:7, 8, along with fruit bearing in each sphere — *one of value, the other worthless* (cf. I Cor. 3:12).

Some Christians have been allowed to go on and see that which is taught concerning Melchizedek. Consequently, their interest doesn’t lie in the things of the Jordan plain but in the things of the high country. *And they dwell where their interest lies.*

Other Christians though, as Lot, have not been allowed to go on and see that which is taught concerning Melchizedek (and, invariably, for the same reason set forth in Lot’s life). Consequently, their interest doesn’t lie in the things of the high country but in those things of the valley instead. *And they too dwell where their interest lies.*

Escape from Sodom

The Jordan plain with four of its cities was destroyed during Abraham and Lot’s day by “brimstone and fire” from heaven (Gen. 19:24, 25; cf. Deut. 29:23). And though Lot was delivered from Sodom prior to this destruction, his deliverance was, as in the words of I Cor. 3:15, “so as by [‘through’] fire.”

Prior to this destruction, Lot was placed outside Sodom and commanded,

“Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed” (19:17).

Note what’s involved in this four-part command. First, “Escape for thy life [‘soul’].” This is the saving of the soul/life. Physical life in this instance? Yes! But far more than just the physical is involved, as becomes evident from the remainder of the command.

The next three parts relate how the soul/life can be saved:

1) “Look not behind thee” (cf. Luke 9:62; Heb. 12:1, 2)

2) “Neither stay thou in all the plain” (don’t remain in the low-lying country [equivalent to Egypt]).

3) “Escape to the mountain” (a “mountain” is used in Scripture symbolizing a *kingdom*, particularly *Christ’s coming Kingdom* [cf. Isa. 2:1-5; Dan. 2:35, 44, 45; Matt. 17:1-5]).

(Note: Contrary to some English translations, the word “mountain” in the Hebrew text of Gen. 19:17 is singular, as in the KJV. The reference is to a “mountain” symbolizing a *kingdom*, not to “mountains” symbolizing *kingdoms*. A distinction between “mountain” and “mountains” in this respect can be seen in Isa. 2:2, 3:

“...the mountain of the Lord’s house [the kingdom of Christ] shall be established at the top of the mountains [all the individual earthly kingdoms]...”)

The escape *from the plain to the mountain* is an escape *from Egypt to Canaan* — to that land associated

with the coming kingdom. This is where one’s attention is to be centered. This is where he is to dwell.

Then this four-part command is followed by that which will happen to a person *should he not follow that which the Lord has to say in this respect*: “lest thou be consumed.” That is, *he will be consumed by that which will itself be consumed; and, as a consequence, he will lose his soul/life.*

Lot though had no concept of that which was being stated; and, in reality, even though the Lord had given him this four-part command, he couldn’t follow it.

His spiritual senses had not been sufficiently developed or exercised. He could do no more than act after a carnal fashion, which he did (19:19, 20). And this is the apparent reason why the Lord, apart from remonstrance, honored his request to be allowed to go to Zoar instead of the mountain (19:21-23).

However, Zoar — a city in the plain, spared for Lot — wasn’t the last stop. After the destruction of the other cities of the plain, Lot became afraid to dwell in Zoar and moved out into the mountain to which he had previously been commanded to escape.

But, unlike Abraham, Lot dwelled on the mountain in “a cave” (19:30) rather than standing in a place “before the Lord” (19:27; cf. 18:22). He, in effect, dwelled in a place of *shame* rather than in a place of *honor*.

And therein is the account of two pilgrims who governed their lives after two entirely different fashions, one day arriving at the same destination and finding themselves occupying *diametrically opposed positions, completely commensurate with the fashion in which they had governed their lives during their previous pilgrim journey.*

Thus will it be with Christians *on the Mountain* in that coming day.

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