

Shadows Of Christ & His Bride

Lesson #46

Compare 2 Righteous Men: Faithful Believer

Dec. 11, 2024

Rev. 3: 4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments;
and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

Question: Can 2 people both be Christians, born again, but have different outcomes in this life and in the life to come? A carnal Christian versus a committed and faithful Christian
One who defiles his garment; One who doesn't defile his garment

Belief: There are believers who will enter heaven and His kingdom with no rewards.

They are saved but will enter through a wall of flames.

I Cor. 3:15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss:
but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Contrast & Compare: Faithful Christian & Carnal Christian

Question: Are both Abram and Lot called Righteous men? Yes

Gen. 15:6 And he, Abram, believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

II Pet. 2:7 and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked.

Heb. 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. [70 yrs.]

Heb. 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, [~135-137 yrs. old] [~65-67 years have passed]

Consider: If you did not know the account of Abraham in Genesis, you might come to the conclusion: He was a man of giant faith who trusted God implicitly and obeyed Him immediately.

Faith, A Gift From God, Is A Journey.

A. W. Tozer: "Faith is not merely a journey for the feet. It is a journey for the heart.

The godly life is neither automatic nor instantaneous. We are to grow in godliness and faith as we wait for the fulfillment of God's promises. It would be complacency for us to make no plan and effort to grow in godliness." [II Pet. 3:18 Grow in Grace & Knowledge of Jesus Christ]

It is vital that God builds our patience. We need it to successfully run our race and finish well.

- God sends us trials, gives us a promise and tells us to trust Him.

Abraham's life's story reveals the very secrets by which the Spirit of God intends to transform us from faltering pilgrims to men & women of stalwart faith.

- *By the end of his life, he says, "The LORD before whom I walk."*
- *His walk of faith, the journey of sanctification, is a walk we must all take.*

His Spiritual Transformation: His growth from Paganism to Faith

- His first faltering steps of obedience to his complete surrender to: the will and purposes of God.
- This transformation will certainly not be an overnight occurrence but will take a lifetime to accomplish.

Spiritual Transformation: Achieved through the on-going process of Revelation and Testing.

- Abraham will have an Encounter with God: God will reveal more of His plans and purposes.
- Abraham will undergo a Period of Testing designed to reveal how faithful he has been with the revelations he has received thus far.

God chose Abram and initiated a relationship with him while he was still a sinner, living in a family of idol worshipers, and living in a culture completely given over to idolatry.

To get Abram to the place where He wanted him to be, both physically and spiritually, God met with him 3 times during this one episode—each time revealing a more expansive view of His Will and Purpose for Abram's life.

Rev. #1: 1st Meeting: Gen. 12:1 Now the Lord Had Said unto Abram, Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land [inheritance] that I will SHOW YOU.

1. The verb tense looks back to an incident referred to by Stephen and recorded in:

Acts 7:2-3 And he [Stephen] said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken:

The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, ³ and said to him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

What is the Land God would show Abram? It is living in the fullness of the Spirit.

It is life controlled by the Spirit of God, reflecting the glory of Christ.

2. This call demanded absolute confidence in and obedience to the word of Jehovah.

Oswald Chambers: Faith is deliberate confidence in the character of God whose ways you may not understand at the time.

Be obedient with one small step and God will give you the next step and the next and...

Revelation #1:1st Meeting: God gave Abraham a very specific set of instructions and an incredible set of promises.

Instructions	Promises
To Leave Your Country	I Will Make a Great Nation From You
To Leave Your Immediate Family	I Will Bless Your Name & Make It Great
To Leave Your Extended Family	I Will Make You a Blessing & Through You Bless All the Nations of the World
To Go To A Land Unknown To You	I Will Bless Those Who Bless You & Curse Those Who Curse You

These Instructions were actually God's Short-Term Goals for Abram.

- They were meant to move him from where he was to the place where God would begin fulfilling His Promises—or His Long-Term Goals for Abraham.

For these Long-Term Goals to be realized in his life, Abram would have to learn...

- To live a life of Separation—from the evil influences that he had known in his homeland, influences which would hinder him from living a holy life.
- To Wander, To Walk by Faith: Become totally dependent upon God
- It would take a great deal of faith on his part to meet the challenges that would be waiting for him in the future
- To Worship: no record of him worshipping while he was in his homeland
- To become a Witness of God's Grace and Mercy to the people already living in the land.

Test #1 When called to a Life of Separation, Wandering, Faith, Worship, and Witness, what was Abram's Response?

While he succeeded in separating himself from his country and his extended family, he failed to leave his immediate family behind—a decision that delayed his arrival in the land, the beginning of his worship and witness, and the Fulfillment of God's Promises to him, and one that revealed how immature his faith was at this point in his journey.

Note: Instead of journeying to Canaan, Abram tarried at Haran.

It was not until after Terah's death that Abram left Haran and came into Canaan.

- Terah = delay - Having Terah resulted in a delay of at least 5 years in Haran
- Haran = parched
 - Born again; Delay Sanctification; Sparse Abundant Life

Note: It was DEATH which broke the link which bound Abram to Haran.

Acts 7:4 "Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran.

And from there when his father was dead, God moved him to this land in which you now dwell.

Consider: True for God's children! It is death which separates a believer from that which by nature unites him with the old creation.

Gal. 6:14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Gen. 12:4 "So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him; and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran."

Note #1: There is no record of Abram receiving any further revelation from God until His call had been fully obeyed. Now that he had left Ur and Haran behind him and actually arrived in the land, Jehovah appeared once more unto him.

Life In The Land Shows The Beginning Of A Spirit-filled Life

Gen. 12:5b-6 and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

⁶And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the plain of Moreh.

1. Abram first halted at Shechem which signifies "shoulder" - the place of strength.

2. As far as the oak of Moreh which means "instruction or teaching."

Only as we are taught the Word of God by the Spirit of God do we find strength to live.

Consider: How significant! It is only as we separate ourselves from the world and walk in the path marked out for us by God that we reach the place where STRENGTH is to be found.

It is only then we can enter into fellowship with Him and learn from Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!!!

Life In the Land is Full Of Continual Conflict

12:6c And the Canaanites were then in the land.

They are there to challenge and contest the occupation of the Promised Land.

Hosts of wickedness presently occupy the heavenlies to wrestle with those who are partakers of the heavenly calling. Manifestations of our flesh: lust, envy, jealousy, impatience, intemperance, irritability, touchiness, etc.

These manifestations of self which make our existence a life of continual conflict.

Revelation #2: Despite his initial failure, once Abram arrived in the Land of Promise, he was blessed by another visit from God.

➤ This encounter confirmed he had indeed arrived in the place of God's choosing.

➤ It was also an opportunity for God to add to His earlier Revelation to Abram.

Gen. 12:7 And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there built he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him. [continual cleansing]

The Newer Revelation: Despite the fact that the Canaanites were already occupying the Land, God promised to give it to Abram's descendants. This surely must have come as a shock to Abram. At 75 years of age—he didn't have one son to carry his name forward into the future or the hope of ever having one! This would require a great deal of faith for Abram to believe this promise. His faith, still so immature, would require further testing.

Test #2 What was Abram's Response when promised Descendants to possess the Land?

His immediate response was to build an Altar and Worship God, [Gen. 12:6]

➤ 1st at Shechem [shoulder; support] to the plains of Moreh [teacher; instruction]

Consider: Abram needed a teacher to guide him, support him, enlighten him, teach him.

➤ This first altar is associated with the Proof Of Obedience.

Life In The Land is a Life Of Unending Choice

Gen. 12:8 And he proceeds from there unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Ai on the east: and there he built an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord.

Note #1: How significant! Bethel means "the house of God" while Ai signifies "a heap of ruin."

Note #2: He pitched his tent between them.

This is just where we must live the Christian life, ever looking either to the things of God, or to the ruin of the flesh. We can choose to go to Bethel or to Ai, to Christ or self -- it can never be both. I must continually choose.

Life In The Land Requires Continual Cleansing.

An altar is first a place of cleansing, which provides the basis for worship.

The reason for a daily altar is the urgent need for cleansing in the pilgrim life.

Note: 2 objects which symbolize a walk in separation with God

➤ Tent = Our Pilgrim Life

Altar = Dependency Upon & Worship of God

Note: Order of mention: We must first be strangers and pilgrims on earth before acceptable worship is possible.

In The Land Is A Life Of Continual Progress, A Never-Ending Journey.

How can we identify true pilgrims? By a tent and an altar.

1. Hold material things loosely; aware of the fleeting, temporary values that the world thinks important.
 - There is a discontent with what the earth offers and a hunger for something more.
2. The altar > the place of self-judgment where true worship is found.
 - Having a low opinion of one's own abilities and a high opinion of God's.
Aware of the constant need of cleansing and a dependence upon a power greater than self.

Consider: Abram is in the land, but he is still learning the conditions of life in the land.

He is like any new Christian who is now "in the Spirit" [Rom. 8:9] but has not yet learned to "walk in the Spirit," [Gal. 5:25].

Common at this stage: The Failure Of Faith: Famine & Trials In The Land Of Promise

The famine was sent as a trial of Abram's faith.

Question: Will the famine shake Abram's confidence in God's goodness? Will it shake his faith?

Consider: Abram had journeyed all the way from Chaldea to Canaan on the bare word of Jehovah and was now afraid to trust Him in the time of famine.

Consider: Did Abram seek counsel from the LORD? Abram took counsel from his fears alone.

Abram was prompted by the WISDOM OF THE FLESH > Relief in human help > ANYTHING but from the living God.

The flesh is the leading enemy frustrating us from our going on with the Lord.

Ridout: "Alas, Abram did as we are all prone to do, he sought relief from all his difficulties, rather than profit by the trial.

He could not yet trust God enough to stay in Canaan with the famine."

Leaving Canaan And Going Down Into Egypt

Gen. 12:9-10 So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South. Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land.

- When the famine overtook Abram, his face was already toward Egypt.

Going down to Egypt = adopting the attitudes, expectations and resources of the world >
drinking from a dry cistern

This proved to be a Costly Decision:

- Out of FEAR, he jeopardized everything he had gained to this point.
- Caused him to break fellowship with God and to cease worshiping.
- Caused him to jeopardize his relationship with Sarai, but more importantly her life.
- Destroyed any witness he may have had to Pharaoh and the Egyptians.
- Brought him so much wealth that it later created strife and division within his household.

Foolishness of Egypt: When Abram lost his faith, he also lost his courage!

Even before he got into Egypt, he grew afraid and acted cowardly.

- In Egypt, he relied on his own resources to defend Sarai. He lied in order to deceive.
- In Egypt, the old man will rise up and assume control.

Egypt is a place of rebuke and humiliation.

Abram, the man of God, stood before a pagan king who had better morals than he.

- He was publicly rebuked for his folly.
- Abram became a curse instead of a blessing. "His life of hypocrisy and weakness was a stumbling block and a plague upon the hearts of those who were watching him."

Remember: The land is a symbol for the Spirit-filled life.

A famine in the land is any circumstance that threatens our dependence upon him.

It is any circumstance that makes faith difficult to maintain.

Have you been "living and walking in the Spirit" knowing God is your strength... suddenly,

A circumstance beyond your control threatens to shake your faith and your dependence on God?

There is a famine in your land! Tempted to flee rather than yield to God's purpose in the trial?

SAD: We have Faith In God with regard to our eternal destination, but we are afraid to confide in Him for the supply of our temporal needs.

William Gurnall wrote these words over 350 years ago, but they are as relevant today as when they were first published. "Count on the strength of your own godly attributes, and you will grow lax in your duties for Christ. Knowing you are weak keeps you from wandering too far from Him. When you see that your own cupboard is bare and everything you need is in His, you will go often to Him for supplies. But a soul who thinks he can take care of himself will say, 'I have plenty and to spare for a long time. Let the doubting soul pray; my faith is strong. Let the weak go to God for help; I can manage fine on my own.' What a sad state of affairs, to suppose we no longer need the moment by moment sustaining Grace of God."

Steadman: But now God terminates the painful lesson of Egypt in Abram's life.

"Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they set him on the way, with his wife and all that he had." What a price to pay for the release from pressure that Egypt affords.

At the deepest moment of his agony, crushed with humiliation and sick at heart, Abram comes out of Egypt, tarred and feathered and riding on a rail, back into the land of Canaan.

After being booted out of Egypt, Abram chose to go back to Bethel and start over again.

Gen. 13:1-4 And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.

² And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

³ And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai; ⁴ Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD. [Tent & Altar]

Question: How many times have you returned to your "Ai" - your heap of ruin?

Note #1: His journey in Egypt was so much lost time!

Note #2: He returned to the very place he had left.

He repented and "DID THE FIRST WORKS."

Back in the land, he finds the fullness of supply that was his all along! As soon as Abram is back in the land, there is the tent and the altar again and he calls upon the name of the Lord.

Wiersbe: Bethel represents a place of encounter with God and his promises. By journeying to Bethel, Abram is seeking a deeper connection with God and a reaffirmation of the promises that have been made to him. It serves as a reminder of the importance of faith, obedience, and seeking a deeper connection with God.

Wiersbe: Even though Abram's Relationship with God was restored at Bethel, his problems didn't automatically disappear. In fact, they only increased. Everything Abram gained in Egypt cost him later. Among the servants was a young girl named Hagar who would be the source of much heartache & pain.

Gen. 13:12-13 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

¹³But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

➤ The verse captures a pivotal moment in their relationship, as they part ways and choose different paths for their future.

➤ Key theme: The contrast between righteous living and worldly indulgence.

Canaan is the land that God promised to Abram and his descendants. By choosing to dwell there, Abram, portrayed as a man of faith and integrity, aligns himself with God's plan for his life.

This shows his commitment to God's promises and his willingness to trust in God's providence.

Revelation #3: The decision to separate from Lot turned out to be a blessing for Abram, as it resulted in a third visitation from God. God expanded on His earlier Revelations. Gen. 13:14 And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, God marked out the boundaries of the Land He was giving to Abram: as far as his eye could see in all directions. God increased his descendants to more than could ever be numbered.

Test #3: What was Abram's response to this latest Revelation?

- He packed up and left Bethel, the place of repentance and restoration.
- He moved on to Hebron, the place of Fellowship with God.

Gen. 13:18 Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron and built there an altar unto the Lord.

- Abram represents a heart of humility and a heart of worship.
- Represents Abram's commitment to seek and worship God in all circumstances.
- Pivotal moment in Abram's journey of faith. It illustrates his willingness to follow God's leading, even when it means relinquishing control and trusting in God's promises.

Gen. 17 Circumcise yourself. [17:10]

- ❖ Abraham circumcised himself and every male in his household that day.

Gen. 17:1, 5 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect.

Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

Gen. 20 God tested his fear of God when Abimelech took Sarah.

- ❖ Abraham failed in his fear of God by lying that Sarah was his sister.

Gen. 21 God required Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away.

- ❖ Abraham obeyed. Model of humility and obedience to God.

Over the years, God stripped Abraham of his schemes and efforts to help bring about God's promises. This reached an apex when Abraham painfully sent away Hagar and Ishmael. Ishmael was the result of the flesh taking over. When Isaac is weaned, the Flesh must be "Cast out!" The spirit, Isaac, cannot mature when the flesh is present. Reckon our flesh dead.

Abraham enrolled in "The School of Faith" at age 70. [left Haran @ 75]

At age 100 -136 or so, he is still going through soul-stretching experiences.

Gen. 22:1 And it came to pass after these things [events from Gen. 12-21],

that God tested Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

- ~20 years have elapsed between Gen. 21 & 22.
- Abraham, dwelling in a tent by the well of Beer-sheba in the wilderness with his son Isaac, built an altar, worshiped and called on the name of the Eternal God.
- Isaac, growing into young man, has been the delight of his parents' hearts.
- Suddenly like a thunderbolt from the sky comes this word from God.

Abraham Is Called To the Mountain Of Absolute Surrender

Gen. 22:2 Then He [God] said, "Take now your son, Your Only Son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

Note: While this new trial of faith hit Abraham suddenly, it also was the culmination of years of God's dealings with him. Abraham's life was a process of God stripping him of all that he clung to, until finally he held to God alone.

Gen. 22:3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

Key: Focus on Promises - Not Explanations

God's will NEVER Contradicts God's Promise.

He HELD ON to the promise "in Isaac shall thy seed be called." [Gen. 21:12]. [Heb. 10:23]

Heb. 11:19a Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead;

Abraham's Response: No doubt or delay, no reluctance or hesitation; instead, he "rose up early in the morning." There was no opposition either from natural affection or unbelief. He bowed in absolute submission to the will of God.

Gen. 22:4-5 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off.

[Notice on the third day Abraham saw the place where he was to sacrifice His son? Coincidence]

⁵ And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and WE will come back to you."

Gen. 22:9-10 "Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and [1] Abraham built the altar there, [2] and arranged the wood, [3] and bound his son Isaac, [4] and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. [5] And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son." Can you feel the tremendous spiritual, mental, and emotional pressure he must have experienced as he carried out in faith, trust and obedience, what God called him to do?

- He trusted God implicitly, was committed to the death versus giving in to his fear, disbelief and carnal compromises as in his earlier years as a believer.
- His Rock-Solid Faith triumphed over natural affection, over reason and over self-will.

His Rock-Solid Faith is a result of God's sanctifying discipline in his life for ~60-65 years.

It is the fruit of God's sanctifying work of brokenness and repentance in Abraham's life.

This was a most striking demonstration of the efficacy of Divine grace which can subdue every passion of the human heart and every imagination of the carnal mind, bringing all into "unrepining acquiescence to God."

Gen. 22:11-12 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said,
Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

¹² And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

This is the result of years of growth in the Lord through failure and subsequent brokenness and repentance, whereby God, through His loving discipline, brings us to a place where "we may share His holiness." [Heb. 12:10] One central and essential aspect of that "holiness" is believing and trusting in the Lord to the death, which is fully beyond our natural ability.

Truth: There is always an "afterward" to the tests of life.

Heb. 12:11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been Trained By It.
Gen. 22:13-14a And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh:

Consider: Where does God provide my needs? In the place of His assignment!

I cannot expect God's provision in my life if I am not in His will.

When does God provide my need? Heb. 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Why does God provide my need? For the great glory of His Name!

Our God is the God of resurrection. When it looks as though we are throwing away every chance of blessing, God transforms in a moment the very thing we give up into the most richly rewarding and meaningful experience we have ever had.

Heb. 10:23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;

(for He is faithful that promised;)

Heb. 10:35-36 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. ³⁶ For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

³⁷ For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Heb. 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;

who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.