



**F**OR my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. **9** For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:7-9)

Most ministers of the Lord, and laypersons as well, will testify of the veracity of the above Scripture text. If God calls us to perform a thing, He will send His Guiding Light of the Holy Ghost to both direct and govern our hands in the doing of it. We sometimes get discouraged at the smallness of the Vineyard into which the Lord has led us to labor. Though He has hedged it about to keep the world out, we believe that we can enlarge the skirts of that hedge and just admit inside a little more of the world and her values in order for the Vineyard to be more prosperous. But contrary to days past when the labor was more joy and not labor, it is suddenly burdensome. That is because our trust was in the Lord, and we followed His wisdom and counsel; however, when we launch out into the deep sea of self-will to perform the Lord's work according to our feeble understanding, the work becomes akin to pushing a 100 ft. rope in the sand. Our thoughts are clearly not the thoughts of the Lord.

We have many examples in the Holy Bible in which men and women have begun a journey with the Lord, but somewhere along the way, ceased listening to His voice and began to act on their own knowledge. This has never led to a happy ending. The greatest contemporary example of this may be found in the mainline churches of America today. They have abandoned the Ancient Landmark of God's Word, and launched into the deep of the swirling cesspool of sin. *"Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set."* (Prov 22:28) I need not tell the surveyors of God's Word that every Word is pure, every Word is Holy. If we delete or change a single word or verse, we have moved the Ancient Landmark. The result? All property lines of understanding are shifted and thrown into

doubt. *“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Harken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.”* (Jer 6:16-17) Every God-called minister of the Lord can identify with these counsels. The time is now that the world has gone into gross sins and decadent society.

Let us consider a few who have failed to follow the counsel of the Lord and got into trouble. How far into God’s Word must we read in order to find such an occasion of rejection? How about the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chapter of the first Book – Genesis? Eve arose when she should have slept. She walked where she should not have gone. She stopped when she should have kept going, and she listened when she should not have. Then she answered the ill-fated Voice from the Tree in the midst of the Garden. There were TWO trees, but she stopped before the wrong Tree. The Tree of Life (representing our Lord) was nearby, but she stopped before the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (the Serpent’s Tree). She was beguiled by the Serpent of the Tree. From that great disobedience of God’s Word came upon Creation the miseries of the ages.

Her first son, Cain, was a murderer. The second son, a prophet. Abel well knew that there was no remission of sin without the shedding of blood. Cain knew as well; however, Cain brought an offering of the fruit of a cursed source – the ground. “. . . *cursed is the ground for thy sake.*” (Gen 3:17) Abel, on the other hand, brought a fit offering of his flock. *“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and **without shedding of blood is no remission.**”* (Heb 9:22) Adam’s Fall brought misery and death to the world, and Cain’s wickedness was consummated in murder. Misery and famine always results from a rejection of God’s wisdom and counsel.

The pride of Moses also resulted in his not being privileged to enter the Promised Land. *“7 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 8 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. 9 And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. 10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? 11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. 12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. 13 This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them.”* (Num 20:6-13)

What is the salient point here in God’s disapproval of the actions of Moses? Even if our obedience conforms in actions to God’s counsel, our hearts must also conform to that reverence required of a Holy Sovereign. *“13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.”* (John 14:13-14) God had commanded Moses speak to that Rock which would overflow with living water for the people – but Moses did not follow that command. He chose to impress the people with his own prowess in delivering forth the deluge. God desires that we do all things in His name and attribute the glory to whom it belongs – to God alone. That Rock symbolized the Lord Jesus Christ! *“1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock*

*that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.” (1 Cor 10:1-5)*

Though there are too many examples in Scripture to cover them all, I will relate the shortcomings of one more man, called of God, who fell far short of perfect obedience. It may surprise you to learn that that man was Abraham!

What did God tell Abram at first dawn from Haran concerning his being called out? *“1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen 12:1-3)* To his great credit, Abram did not waste a single day in preparation to do what the Lord had called him forth to do – but not all.

Read the very next passage: *“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. 5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.” (Gen 12:4-5)* Did God instruct Abram to bring Lot along? No, God told Abram, *“Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house,”* Lot was Abram’s nephew. Bringing Lot along would result in much sorrow and misery for Abram (later given a new name, Abraham, by God).

Lot was one of those lukewarm believers who could be tempted by the delicacies of the world. Once Abraham had gotten much wealth and much cattle, Lot, having also acquired much cattle, became a burden for Abraham. The herdsmen of Abraham and those of Lot were constantly in conflict over water and grazing land. So Abraham would propose to part ways with Lot. *“And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. 9 Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. 10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. 12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. 13 But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.” (Gen 13:8-13)*

Lot was much like many modern day wonders of the pulpit. He believed in a prosperity Gospel. So he pitched his tent toward Sodom, and, according to the normal descent into the abyss of worldly pleasures, finally moved bag and baggage into Sodom, and even became a judge to sit in the gate there. Such is the progression of men and churches that fall in love with worldly greed, irreverent music, and a watered down gospel.

God had promised Abraham that He would make him the father of many nations; however, as Abraham grew old, the promise seemed to fade more with each passing day. Sarai, Abram’s wife, hit upon an idea of her own hatched wisdom. She was old and unable (in her thoughts) to bear a child; so, she would give her slave girl, Hagar, to Abram with whom to bear a son. We are not told if Hagar was a willing accomplice, but it matters little since she would be compelled to obey her mistress. Abram did bear a son. Ishmael, by Hagar. He is considered the father of the Arab nations. He and his tribal descendents

have proven to be a pain in the side of believers from that day until this – all because Sarai and Abram decided to forget God’s promise and wing it on their own wisdom.

Later, the promise of God was fulfilled in Sarah’s having a boy child named Isaac. He was the natural son of promise for Abraham because he was born – not illegitimately, but through the parentage of promise through Sarah. It is for this reason that God refers to Isaac as Abraham’s ONLY son. *“1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. 2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.”* (Gen 22:1-2)

Of course, we all know God did not require the sacrifice of Isaac at his father’s hand; but God was giving us an example of the pain of a Father giving his only Begotten Son for the sins of the whole world.

The Mountain of Moriah to which God had led Abraham and Isaac was the same upon which God’s only Begotten Son was sacrificed almost two thousand years later.

When we undertake to follow the Lord in His wisdom and Counsel, let us follow all the way and not, at some point, stop following the Star of Promise and wind up in Herod’s Court.