

THE CELESTIAL RAILROAD

May 12th, 2019 – The Celestial Railroad

Part 15 – Demas and Lot's Wife

Demas, one of the Apostle Paul's traveling companions, abandoned the gospel, call and election on his life for the temporal pleasures of this world. Likewise, Lot's wife, after being delivered from the city of Sodom was turned into a memorable pillar of salt because she too, turned back. These are serious circumstances that we can learn from today. Please [click on this link](#) and read 'Demas and Lot's Wife'. If you'd like to review this part in Pilgrim's Progress, please [click on this link](#) and read Chapter 23 & 24.

The Celestial Railroad says this in our story today; *“Finally, after a pretty long residence at the Fair I resumed my journey towards the Celestial City, still with Mr. Smooth-it-away by my side. At a short distance beyond the suburbs of Vanity we passed the ancient silver mine, of which Demas was the first discoverer, and which is now operated to great advantage, supplying nearly all the coined currency of the world.”*

Mr. Smooth-it-away was certain to stay close to our passenger, maybe realizing that the pleasures of Vanity Fair didn't trap him and that still, deep within his soul, he was wanting to reach the Celestial City. Mr. Smooth-it-away was maybe, 'upping the anti' to ensure his plan succeeded in the life of this pilgrim. He probably made sure he was as comfortable as possible, had the best of the best with front row seats in the train.

It would look like in this story, Demas, by becoming a supplier of silver to the world's currency, (which we read about in Pilgrim's Progress he was led astray into), has done very well for himself, leading many down a road of destruction as he lured them into the filthy lucre of the silver mine. He's prospered and the world has prospered but at the cost of many Christian pilgrims and ministers led off the straight and narrow path. He tempted them to get their eyes on the earthly riches and off of the true heavenly riches.

Demas was a fellow laborer who worked with Paul, Mark, Aristarchus, and Luke in preaching the Gospel. These were dedicated preachers, filled with the Holy Spirit, who laboured hard with much persecution. Some venture to say that Demas wasn't born again and that's why he went astray, but that argument doesn't hold water.

Some scriptures that talk about Paul and his traveling companions are found here; **Acts 19:29** talks about the upheaval in Ephesus when these great men started preaching Jesus Christ; *“So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions.”*

Colossians 4:10 also says; *“Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him),”* **Philemon 23-24** says; *“23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, 24 as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.”*

Demas left the ministry and forsook Paul in his greatest time of need. It says in **2 Timothy 4:10**; *“10 for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.”*

How can a person be a fellow labourer with these great servants of Christ, and forsake Paul at a time when he needed him the most, while he was on death row for preaching the gospel.

[Matthew Henry's Commentary](#) says this about it; *“Demas, who abides under an ill name for it: Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world. He quitted Paul and his interest, either for fear of suffering (because Paul was now a prisoner, and he was afraid of coming into trouble upon his account) or being called*

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off from his ministry by secular affairs, in which he entangled himself; his first love to Christ and his gospel was forsaken and forgotten, and he fell in love with the world. Note, Love to this present world is often the cause of apostasy from the truths and ways of Jesus Christ. He has gone off, has departed to Thessalonica, called thither perhaps by trade, or by some other worldly business.”

In Pilgrims Progress we read about Demas who is portrayed as the Silver Mine keeper. A commentary by BunyanMinistries.org says the following;

“C. The Mine-keeper Demas Attempts to Allure Christian and Hopeful.

Christian has recently warned concerning religious mercenaries who will just as readily discard their religion for worldly profit. So he and Hopeful now encounter just such a person. Demas has formerly been on pilgrimage (Col. 4:14; Phil. 24), but now has quit his journey on account of his greater love for “this present world” (II Tim. 4:10).

Then I saw in my dream that a little off the side of the road, and right next to the silver mine, stood Demas. Standing like a gentleman, he would invite passing pilgrims to step aside and investigate the sight; so he hailed Christian and his companion. “Hello their friends; come over here and I will show you something quite remarkable.”

CHRISTIAN: What could be so deserving of our attention as to draw us out of the way?

DEMAS: Here is a silver mine, and right now some are digging in it for treasure. If you also would come here, with only a little effort you will be able to richly enhance yourselves.

HOPEFUL: If this be true, then let us go and investigate.

CHRISTIAN: Not I! I have previously heard of the reputation of this place and how many have been destroyed here; and besides this, the treasure being promoted is in fact a snare.”

If we're really honest, everybody wants to find a treasure or be part of a venture that will set them up for life, pay the bills, help them get through the month or pay the mortgage, right? But it's a snare. At the expense of apostasy, you need to flee from it. It is God's will to prosper the work of your hands, but the devil connives to get you off track and the straight and narrow, regardless of how many years of chasing bunny trails – all to get you out of the ministry and to back-slide.

In the parable of the Sower we read in **Matthew 13:22**; *“Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.”*

This is the goal of the devil; to put a choke hold on you through the cares of the world, deceitfulness of riches, and ultimately being unrecognizable a few years down the road because of being back-slidden. Again, the wages of sin will affect you so much that you'll become unrecognizable. You're not the same person, you used to look and sound like Jesus but now you look and sound like Judas.

Some would venture to say that Demas was never born again, but it's very clear that he laboured with Paul in the ministry and then left for the love of the world. How many times have you heard of dedicated preachers being hooked by get rich programs, with the idea in mind that this will help finance the gospel, but only to become distracted, unfruitful and the word sown in their life is choked out by the deceitfulness of riches, and no longer are in ministry as a result. They were once at the peak of ministry, with signs, wonders, healings, miracles and huge evangelistic campaigns, but were led down the Silver Mine scenario, leading many investors with them, to in the end, loose everything.

In **Matthew 6:24**, Jesus says this; *“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”* Hate is a

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strong word, but that's what Jesus said would happen, and there your loyalties will fall. Do you need money for ministry? Of course, but it's the love, lust and preoccupation of it which will take a person out. Money in and of itself is not evil, it's the love of it that is.

1 Timothy 6:9-10 says; *"9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."*

We've all heard of Christians who have invested life savings in Christian business ventures, only to lose their shirt and in return, shed a bad light on the Christian business owner, instead of taking responsibility for the love of money that motivated them to invest in the first place.

We can take it a step further and apply it to giving to a ministry. It's easy to give the 10% tithe and offerings of your income to a non-profit ministry that can provide a tax return, but giving to a non profit that can't provide a tax return isn't easy; but in the end is it really giving or even lending without expecting anything in return? In the back of your mind you have the tax wright-off that is coming your way.

Some will say that it's just better stewardship to give where you can receive a percentage returned back from the government, saying it's the wealth of the wicked laid up for the righteous that is coming back. So if that's the case then, the proper and righteous thing to do is give the tax return that you benefited from off of the non-profit organization, all back to their ministry and not spend it on yourself. If you get money back from the government on your tax returns because you've given to charity or non-profit ministries, it's only coming back to you because you've given, not because you've earned it. In keeping it for yourself, you haven't really given it all, because a percentage of what you've given is coming back. But how many Christians do that?

It all comes back down to what Jesus said in **Matthew 6:19-21**; *"19 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

Are you laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven or on the earth? Are you giving or lending expecting something in return? Treasures, again, in and of themselves are not wrong, it has to do with priorities and the love and lust of them that is. When you lend to someone, Jesus says to not even expect to get it back in Luke 6:35. True giving, is not expecting to get anything from anyone back.

Jesus also says in **Luke 6:38**; *"Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."*

Demas allowed the devil to take him out of ministry for the love of the present world and as a result there is no record of him returning back to the ministry. But if you, Christian, were to examine how you give to ministry, are you giving only to non-profit ministry's that can provide a tax return? If so, do you give it back to the ministry or do you spend it on yourself? I know this is touching a sore spot, but could it be that the love of money and this world is in you as it was in Demas, but the only difference is your still in the church?

Continuing to read from The Celestial Railroad; *"A little further onward was the spot where Lot's wife had stood for ages, under the semblance of a pillar of salt. Curious travelers have carried it away piecemeal. Had all lapses been punished as rigorously as this poor dame's were, my yearnings for the relinquished delights of Vanity Fair might have produced a similar change in my own body, and left me a warning to future pilgrims."*

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In other words, he was saying, that could be me standing there as a pillar of salt if I look back to Vanity Fair. The story is found in **Genesis 19:12-26** where God sent angels to Lot living in Sodom and Gomorrah in order to deliver him and his family. It says; “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 mountains, lest you be destroyed.” 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.” 21 And he said to him, “See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. 22 Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there.” Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. 23 The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. 24 Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. 25 So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. 26 But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.”*

[Matthew Henry’s Commentary](#) says this about this verse; “*II. The punishment of Lot’s wife for this sin. She was struck dead in the place; yet her body did not fall down, but stood fixed and erect like a pillar, or monument, not liable to waste nor decay, as human bodies exposed to the air are, but metamorphosed into a metallic substance which would last perpetually. Come, behold the goodness and severity of God (Rom. 11:22), towards Lot, who went forward, goodness; towards his wife, who looked back, severity. Though she was nearly related to a righteous man, though better than her neighbours, and though a monument of distinguishing mercy in her deliverance out of Sodom, yet God did not connive at her disobedience; for great privileges will not secure us from the wrath of God if we do not carefully and faithfully improve them. This pillar of salt should season us. Since it is such a dangerous thing to look back, let us always press forward.*”

Philippians 3:13-14 says; “13 *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*”

In [BunyanMinistries.org](#), it says this about Lot’s wife; “*Lot’s wife would not shun the sin of lust. While her feet were ambling away from Sodom behind her husband, her heart had never departed from that depraved city. Unlike Lot, that urban environment did not so much as vex her soul.*”

Remember, the Bible says that Lot’s soul was vexed at the wickedness of Sodom, but not his wife. She probably thought, ‘each to their own, I don’t participate in it, and I don’t want to judge them’. Sound familiar?

“*Elsewhere Bunyan comments: I have sometimes wondered at Lot in this particular; his wife looked behind her, and died immediately, but let what would become of her, Lot would not so much as look behind him to see her. We do not read that he did so much as once look where she was, or what was become of her; his heart was indeed upon his journey, and well it might: there was the mountain before him, and the fire and brimstone behind him; his life lay at stake, and he had lost it if he had but looked behind him.*”

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Jesus says this **Luke 14:25-27**; “25 Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, 26 “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

[Matthew Henry’s Commentary](#) again says this; “They must be willing to quit that which was very dear, and therefore must come to him thoroughly weaned from all their creature-comforts, and dead to them, so as cheerfully to part with them rather than quit their interest in Christ, [Luke 14:26](#). A man cannot be Christ’s disciple but he must hate father, and mother, and his own life. He is not sincere, he will be constant and persevering, unless he love Christ better than any thing in this world, and be willing to part with that which he may and must leave, either as a sacrifice, when Christ may be glorified by our parting with it (so the martyrs, who loved not their lives to death), or as a temptation, when by our parting with it we are put into a better capacity of serving Christ.”

Anything that gets in the way of Christ’s lordship in your life, has to go. Many things Jesus says sound extreme and over the top and can be taken out of context. But once you study His life and the Bible, you’ll understand it fully and it will bring life to you.

Jesus says in **Matthew 12:46-50**; “46 While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. 47 Then one said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.” 48 But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” 49 And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”

Each Christian has to come to a place in their life where even family will not hold them back from doing God’s will. Slice it any way you want, but that is what Jesus is saying here.

Jesus says in **John 15:19**; “If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” In the world but not of it. And in **Hebrews 11:13** it says; “All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

What it comes down to with both Demas and Lot’s wife, is that they both loved the things of this world more than being obedient to God. That’s why Jesus could say “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” 49 And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”