

# SPIRITUAL BASTARDS IN SCRIPTURE

By C White  
Version 1.2

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## Introductory Remarks

What is a bastard? The term is used in certain places and in certain ways in the Bible. Why does God raise this as an issue in the Bible? What does a bastard typologically represent?

It is a given that what the term typifies provides lessons for believers throughout all generations. This study intends to explore this typology in a compressed format.

## Bible Helps

*New Testament  
Greek Lexicon  
(Strong's 3541):*

1. illegitimate, bastard
2. one born, not in lawful wedlock, but of a concubine or female slave

Translations:

**KJV** (1) - bastard, 1;

**NAS** (1) - illegitimate children, 1;

*Old Testament  
Hebrew Lexicon  
(Strong's 4464):*

1. bastard, child of incest, illegitimate child
  - a. bastard
  - b. mixed population (fig.)
  - c. born of a Jewish father and a heathen mother or visa versa

Translations:

**KJV** (2) - bastard, 2;

**NAS** (3) - illegitimate birth, 1; mongrel race, 1; one of illegitimate birth, 1;

*International Standard  
Bible Encyclopedia:*

bas'-tard (*mamzer*, *nothos*):

In Deuteronomy 23:2 probably the offspring of an incestuous union, or of a marriage within the prohibited degrees of affinity (Leviticus 18:6-20; 20:10-21). He and his descendants to the tenth generation are excluded from the assembly of the Lord. (See Driver, at the place). Zechariah (Zechariah 9:6), after prophesying the overthrow of three Philistine cities, declares of the fourth: "And a bastard (the *Revised Version*, margin "a bastard race") shall dwell in Ashdod," meaning probably that a "mixed population" (BDB) of aliens shall invade and settle in the capital of the Philistines. In Heb (Hebrews 12:8) in its proper sense of "born out of wedlock," and therefore not admitted to the privileges of paternal care and responsibility as a legitimate son.

By T. Ress

*Nave's Topical Bible:*

- (An illegitimate child)
- Excluded from the congregation  
Deuteronomy 23:2
- INSTANCES OF
  - Ishmael  
Genesis 16:3,15; Galatians 4:22
  - Moab and Ammon  
Genesis 19:36,37
  - Jephthah  
Judges 11:1
  - David's child by Bath-sheba  
2 Samuel 11:2-5
- FIGURATIVE  
Zechariah 9:6; Hebrews 12:8

*Easton's Bible Encyclopedia:*

In the Old Testament the rendering of the Hebrew word *Mamzer'*, Which means "polluted." In Deuteronomy 23:2, it occurs in the ordinary sense of illegitimate offspring. In Zechariah 9:6, the word is used in the sense of foreigner. From the history of Jephthah we learn that there were bastard offspring among the Jews (Judges 11:1-7). In Hebrews 12:8, the word (Gr. *nothoi*) is used in its ordinary sense, and denotes those who do not share the privileges of God's children.

*Smith's Bible Dictionary:*

Among those who were excluded from entering the congregation, even to the tenth generation, was the bastard. (23:2) The term is not, however, applied to any illegitimate offspring, born out of wedlock, but is restricted by the rabbins to the issue of any connection within the degrees prohibited by the law.

### **Comment**

What is a bastard?:

Based on the above Bible helps, a bastard could be one of the following:

- Descendant of an irregular union
- Illegitimate children
- Person produced as a result of an incestuous union or adultery/fornication
- One born out of wedlock
- Offspring of an interracial union

### **Relevant Scriptures**

Deut 23:2:

"A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD."

Heb 12:6-8:

[comment: bastards prevented from entering the congregation for 10 generations!]

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

Lev. 18:6-20:

[comment: anciently bastards had no title to land. Today there are spiritual bastards. They have no inheritance as they have been produced via a union between truth and error]

“None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover *their* nakedness: I *am* the LORD.

The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: she *is* thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.

The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it *is* thy father's nakedness.

The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, *whether she be* born at home, or born abroad, *even* their nakedness thou shalt not uncover.

The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or of thy daughter's daughter, *even* their nakedness thou shalt not uncover: for theirs *is* thine own nakedness.

The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she *is* thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.

Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister: she *is* thy father's near kinswoman.

Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister: for she *is* thy mother's near kinswoman.

Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother, thou shalt not approach to his wife: she *is* thine aunt.

Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter in law: she *is* thy son's wife; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.

Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it *is* thy brother's nakedness.

Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; *for they are* her near kinswomen: it *is* wickedness.

Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex *her*, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life *time*. {a wife...: or, one wife to another}

Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness.

Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her.”

[comment: incest barred – bastards are the result]

Deut 23:3:

“An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever.”

[comment: similar to bastards, Ammonites and Moabites are not permitted in the congregation for 10 generations. They were the result of incest. Why 10 generations? 10 is the spiritual number for ordinal perfection (generations = 40 or 70 years)]

Neh 13:1:

“On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for

ever.”

[comment: spiritual Ammonites today are those that war with you and undermine your faith.]

Zech 9:5-6:

“Ashkelon shall see *it*, and fear; Gaza also *shall see it*, and be very sorrowful, and Ekron; for her expectation shall be ashamed; and the king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.

And a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.”

[comment: by a bastard/mixed race living in Ashdod – one of five Philistine city-states, God is signalling his displeasure with them. See also 2 Sam 1:20]

**How does this impact upon a believer?**

In a spiritual sense, a bastard is one who refuses to use God’s correction to change or to be changed. He/she is one that is supposed to be of the Body of Christ, but is not a pure spiritual Israelite – washed white and clean by the blood of Christ. Instead, they have become like an illegitimate offspring from a wrong union. A mixed breed - like those that were the mixed multitude that followed Israel out of Egypt – becoming thorns in the flesh of the Israelites – causing problems and issues (Ex 12:28; Num 11:4). These try and destroy the sons of light with their slanders and lies. From such, turn away.

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**Appendix:  
Christians and Sin**

(excerpts from *Faith Works: The Gospel According to the Apostles* by John MacArthur)

I recently read a book about Christians and sin that began with an unusual account. The author of this book was acquainted with a pastor who had been sent to prison for robbing fourteen banks to finance his dalliances with prostitutes! The author was fully convinced the bank-robbing Lothario was a true Christian, and so he wrote a book to explore how such a thing could be possible.

Call me old-fashioned, but I think it is fair to raise the question of whether someone who regularly robs banks to pay for illicit sex is truly saved! That man’s sin was secretly his lifestyle. There is every reason to believe that he would still be committing his crimes today if he had not been caught. Can we concede that this “so-called brother” is a genuine Christian, just because he was once an evangelical pastor?

True, we cannot judge the man’s heart, but we must judge his behavior (1 Cor. 5:12). “Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9-11). In those verses the apostle Paul was describing sins of chronic behavior, sins that color one’s whole character. A predilection for such sins reflects an unregenerate heart. Paul reminded the

Corinthians, "Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God" (v. 12, emphasis added).

But wait. Doesn't Scripture include examples of believers who committed gross sin? Didn't David commit murder and adultery and allow his sin to go unconfessed for at least a year? Wasn't Lot characterized by worldly compromise in the midst of heinous sin? Yes, those examples prove that genuine believers are capable of the worst imaginable sins. But David and Lot cannot be made to serve as examples of "carnal" believers, whose whole lifestyle and appetites are no different from unregenerate people.

David, for example, did repent thoroughly of his sin when Nathan confronted him, and he willingly accepted the Lord's discipline (2 Sam. 12:1-23). Psalm 51 is an expression of David's deep repentance at the end of this sordid episode in his life. The point, after all, is that this was merely one episode in David's life. He was certainly not predisposed to that kind of sin. In fact, 1 Kings 15:5 says, "David did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite" (emphasis added).

Lot is a different case. Not much is known about him from the Old Testament account, but what is recorded about him is disappointing. He was a pathetic example of compromise and disobedience. On the eve of Sodom's destruction, when he should have fled the city, "he hesitated" (Gen. 19:16). The angelic messengers had to seize his hand and put him outside the city. Near the end of his life, his two daughters got him drunk and committed incest with him (Gen. 19:30-38). Lot certainly did seem to have a proclivity for sins of compromise and worldliness.

Yet the inspired New Testament writer tells us Lot was "oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds)" (2 Pet. 2:8). He hated sin and desired righteousness. He had respect for holy angels-evidence of his fear of God (Gen. 19:1-14). He obeyed God by not looking back at Sodom when God's judgment rained down (cf. v. 26).

Lot was certainly not "carnal" in the sense that he lacked spiritual desires. Though he lived in a wicked place, he was not wicked himself. His soul was "tormented," vexed, grieved, tortured with severe pain at the sight of the evil all around him. Evidently his conscience did not become seared; he "felt his righteous soul tormented day after day" with the evil deeds of those around him. Though he lived in Sodom, he never became a Sodomite. Those who use him as an illustration of someone who is saved but utterly carnal miss the point of 2 Peter 2:8.

What is the lesson of Lot's life as Peter saw it? Verse 9 sums it up: "The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment."

In Lot's case, one means the Lord used to rescue him from temptation was severe chastisement. Lot lost his home; his wife was killed by divine judgment; and his own daughters disgraced and debased him. He paid a terrible price for his sin, being "tormented day after day." If Lot proves anything, it is that true believers cannot sin with impunity.

God always chastens and disciplines His children who sin. If they do not experience chastening, they are not truly His children, but spiritual bastards. Hebrews 12:7-8 explicitly states this: "What son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons." The specific purpose for which He disciplines us is "for our good, that we may share His holiness" (Heb. 12:10).

All of that flies in the face of the notion that millions of Christians live in a state of unbroken carnality. If these people are true children of God, why are they not constantly under His discipline?

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### **Bibliography & Suggested Reading**

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