

Jesus came first to suffer on the cross to set up His spiritual Kingdom, a Kingdom of people who would trust in His death/resurrection alone for their salvation from sin and live with Him as their King and Lord. This Kingdom is an invisible one of sorts, a Kingdom that the Jews weren't looking for and many still aren't. They expected Messiah to come in great power and glory and set up His earthly reign. Though He didn't come that way at first, one day He is coming that way, obvious to all as lightning in the sky, to defeat His enemies, set up His earthly Kingdom, His millennial rule, inaugurate His forever reign. All those and only those in His spiritual Kingdom will be saved to that eternal Kingdom; all others will be judged and condemned.

### **Christ's Second Coming is Certain** **Verses 26-30**

Jesus uses two historical events to describe what His return will be like. In Noah's day, evil was everywhere: (Gen 6:5, 11) *The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually...Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence.* Judgment was coming in a flood to destroy mankind. Noah was righteous, walked with God (Gen 6.9, 7.1), and preached righteousness (2 Pet 3.5), but people didn't listen. In their great sin, they lived indifferent to God, going about normal activities of life, *eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage*, not heeding the words of Noah, and living as

if there was no judgment to come at all. And then one day, when Noah and his family entered the ark God had instructed him to build for his and his family's safety, it started to rain...and rain...and rain. Those who had been living in rebellion to God, carrying on with life as usual like it was no big deal, were all consumed and destroyed in the sudden judgment. There was no escape, except for Noah and his family who heeded the words of impending judgment and fled to the safety of the ark.

Lot was living in Sodom/Gomorrah (Gen 18:20) *the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave.* Lot was distressed/tormented by the city's evil people (2 Pet 2.6-7). In Gen 19, we see the great sexual perversion there. Every male in the city surrounded Lot's house, as a gang of sorts, to rape and have homosexual relations with the two angels who came from the Lord to destroy the city. This was a wicked place. But the people of Sodom/Gomorrah lived indifferent to God, carrying on with life as usual, *eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building*, with no urgency or awareness that the judgment of God was coming for their sin. The angels told Lot to get all his family & flee the city that was about to be destroyed. Lot tried to warn his to-be sons-in-law (Gen 19.14), but they thought him to be jesting. On the day the angels hurried Lot and his family out of the city, *fire and sulfur rained from heaven* and all in the city were destroyed. Sinners living in rebellion to God, carrying on with life's normal routines like there was no judgment to be

feared, were suddenly consumed and destroyed in God's judgment. There was no escape, except for Lot/his family who were saved by God's mercy.

Jesus saw these events as real, historical events that happened, because they did! They were no fairy tale. And Jesus also promised that He will return. That is no fairy tale. *If we believe the promises of our dear Savior and glorious Lord in His Word, then we must believe in His return.* These two events are a description of what it will be like on the day that Jesus returns. Yes, there will be sin, evil, rebellion, and wickedness ready to be judged. But it seems Jesus is focusing on the complete indifference to God and His impending judgment on them and their sin in which sinners will be living. Distracted by everyday activities (*eating, drinking, marriage, business, building, planting*), people will ignore God and the call to repentance/faith, and live as if there is no need to escape God's certain, coming judgment by trusting in Christ and following Him. They won't be waiting/ready for His return. (2 Pet 3:3–4) *...Scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."* It will seem to them that things are going on as they always have, that He's not coming, so they will just keep on with their normal, evil, rebellious lives.

Everything will continue as normal until it's not normal anymore. *Ever had a life-changing moment in life, where you woke up that morning & things were normal, but by the time you went to bed that night, everything had changed forever?* In a moment, when Christ returns, all will change. There will be a sudden worldwide re-ordering of all things, a new normal, as the Son of Man comes crashing with power and glory into this world to bring glorious salvation for the believer into His Kingdom (*Lot, Noah, and families in the stories referenced*) and terrifying judgment for the unbeliever (*everyone else in the stories referenced*). (Jude 14–15) *Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him. This is reality. Oh God, help us to care.*

It's hard not to look at the sin in the days of Noah and Lot and not see parallels to the sin in our world today. I don't know when Jesus will return, whether we will be alive to see it or not. But Jesus will return to save believers to His eternal Kingdom and execute judgment on unbelievers alive at His return. Believers who died before His return will be in His Kingdom; unbelievers who died before His return are under His eternal judgment/wrath for their sin. There is only one escape from God's eternal judgment coming for all unbelievers.

**1 Thess 5.1-11 - GOSPEL** Christ, our Ark.

**4 quick applications:** *1) Unbeliever, take seriously the judgment coming. Flee to Christ for salvation, eternal safety. Live obedient to Him and let His return be your blessed hope and not your eternal terror. 2) Believer, realize that the sinner's only hope to escape the flood and fire of God's judgment is faith in Jesus. Go spread the news of gospel rescue in Christ! 3) Believers, encourage one another in the grace that is ours, saved from God's judgment. Be moved to great worship and obedience to a God who is worthy. 4) Believer and unbeliever alike: The normal activities of life are not bad in and of themselves. However, it's so easy to let the normal activities and pursuits of life become idols and distract us from following Christ and sharing Christ. Be different from this God-denying world living like there is no judgment to come. Don't let its pattern of "normal life" become yours. Our life should be more than just eating, drinking, buying, selling, and such. Our life should be Christ! We must not let the tune of the world's song serenade us and muffle the song of our Savior calling us to repent and be saved and to live for what really matters. What beat are you tapping your feet to? The world's song or the Savior's song? On the day when Christ returns, unbelievers who lived to the beat of the world's song instead of the Savior's song will see just how foolish/vain that was. But it will be too late.*

### **Live Ready for His Return **Verses 31-33****

We must pursue Jesus now with everything, not turning

back to worldly living and instead live unattached to the things of this world, waiting and ready for His return, that there would be no hesitation to leave it all to go be with Jesus when He comes again. If on the day He returns, we are like the person on the housetop wanting to go grab a few things first or the person in the field wanting to go back, then it indicates that our lives found us valuing the things of the earth more than Jesus. (Duncan) *In that day when He comes, if your instinct is what? To hang on to this world, that says what about you? It says you never trusted in the Savior and valued Him and His kingdom above this world. When His coming comes, your instinct is what? "Hang onto this world! This is what I really love! This is where my security really is! This is what I really believe in! This is what I really want!" And Jesus says, "If you do that, you will be judged because you've never really believed in Me and you've never loved Me more than you love the world."* Christ's return will reveal what people really loved, Him or the world. REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE! Told to flee Sodom and not look back, what did she do and the moment of fleeing the judged city? With either curiosity and/or longing with affection of what she left behind, she looked back and was destroyed herself, turned into a pillar of salt. She lost her life because she had some attachment to the wicked city. It caused her to disobey God's word and hesitate while fleeing to look back upon that sinful, judged city that by His mercy, she was given the opportunity to flee from.

(Ironside) *In just three words our Lord next gives a very solemn warning: “Remember Lot’s wife.” Why should we remember her? Because she was almost saved, and yet she was lost. She was a wife of a godly man; she had even entertained angels in her home; she was in the way to being saved, but she was destroyed at last. Why? Because after she had left Sodom, her heart was still there. She had never taken her true place before God, and when Sodom went down she went down with it. We may well remember Lot’s wife. Especially does this warning apply to those who belong in Christian homes, who have had godly parents, who have heard the Word all their lives, and with whom the Spirit of God has striven. They have said in their hearts, “I ought to turn to Christ, I ought to trust Him, but I cannot yield myself to Him now.” Remember, oh, remember Lot’s wife! Remember, one may be almost saved but lost forever.*

For many close to being saved from God’s wrath on their sin, the love of the world, sin, self is so strong that they can’t let go of it. They turn back to keep their “old life” Jesus tells us to leave and deny, and they end up losing their eternal life. So close, yet forever lost.

**Verse 33** We must live today unattached to the things of the world; lose whatever must be lost to faithfully and obediently follow Christ; deny ourselves, deny worldly lifestyles and pursuits; take on His life and let no worldly distractions keep us from following Him and living His Kingdom life. Those who do so will be revealed as such on that Great Day of His return, will

gladly leave everything, and inherit eternal life. But those who love this life and the things of this world too much, who let worldly kingdoms, worldly wealth, pursuits, and pleasures keep them from trusting in and faithfully following Jesus - they will also be revealed on that Great Day of His return. In clinging to the worldly life they loved so much at the expense of following Christ, they will look back with fondness for this world on that Day and lose their eternal life. *We like to think we aren’t living that way, but are we? Are we blind to the grip that the things of the world have on our lives? Are we trying to live with one foot in God’s Kingdom and one foot in the world’s kingdom and don’t even realize it?* **“Take It” Test**

(1 John 2:15–17) *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. Remember Lot’s wife! Live now unattached to the things of this world. Don’t turn back from following Jesus with reckless abandon now, that were we alive when He returns, we would not turn back with a fondness for the things of the world because our hearts truly were captured by Jesus and His Kingdom. Live in such a way now that when He returns, any “good” in the house will be revealed to have no value in your life in comparison*

to the greatest “Good” in your life, your Savior coming to deliver you from this corrupt, insufficient, judged world. Let nothing in this world, no normal activity of life’s routine, dull your desire to see your Savior or cause you to say “*Yes come back Jesus, but not now because I love this life too much.*” The Puritan Richard Baxter says that the unbeliever chooses heaven over hell, but not over this world. He will not get heaven. But the believer chooses heaven over this world, and he **will** receive heaven.

### **The Great Separation** **Verses 34-37** (mention 36)

The day of Christ’s return in power and glory will be a worldwide event. People sleeping at night on one side of the earth and those working in the day on the other side of the earth will both see it. People will be doing normal things (sleeping, working) and it will come suddenly. And when it does, tragically, there will be a great separation of those who followed Christ and those who didn’t, the wheat and the tares, the good fish and the bad fish. Unbelievers and believers who slept in the same bed, ground grain together, worked in the same office, lived in the same house, the same neighborhood, joined the same Facebook group, played on the same team, went to the same church, will be divided forever - believers to God’s glorious Kingdom and unbelievers to destruction in His eternal wrath. Where would His judgment fall the disciples asked? It will be as obvious as knowing where a dead body is by seeing vultures

circling overhead. Wherever there is spiritual death and sin and people are ripe for judgment, you’ll see His wrath circling and swooping down. Oh, what a horrible day. A day we all deserve because of our sin. It will all be just and right. But how tragic for those that didn’t accept God’s offer of rescue, to be forgiven and made right through faith in Christ. Believer, you won’t be able to grab unbelievers you love and take them with you on that day. This hits so close to home. People you share life with right now may be lost forever. **Imagine...** One day, all the conversation and life engagement that took priority over the gospel being lived in front of and shared with our unbelieving family and friends will be seen for the utter vanity that it was. *Oh God, let us care before it’s too late. Let us prepare them for the day of the great separation that they may be saved.* Or maybe you’re the unbeliever who will see your family and friends go to be with God forever while you are taken to forever judgment. *Are you ready? Are you a tare that thinks it’s wheat? Should He come today, do you think you’d enter the Kingdom but would really enter His judgment? Oh, if He’s unsettling you, make sure you know for sure.* (Duncan, as if Jesus is saying in this passage) *“Don’t go to hell! Don’t go to hell with your arms around the world! Believe Me! Trust Me! Love Me, and I’ll take you to Myself! But if you love the world, you’re going to go where the world goes, and I don’t want you to go there! I don’t want you to get what you deserve! I want you to get what you don’t deserve! I*

*want you to get mercy! Don't pick what you deserve!"*

Praise God that He has given us such gracious and loving passages like this that teach us stunning and compelling truth that we may choose the great mercy He offers us in Christ and escape His judgment and be welcomed into His Kingdom at His return. Praise God that gracious passages like this implore us to lead others to His Kingdom as well. He's a good and gracious God.