

Advent 1  
December 2, 2018

Genesis 19:15-17, 23-29  
220-29-207/19-22

### Jesus Is Coming – AGAIN!

- I. These last days will be dangerous.
- II. The Last Day will be God's righteous judgment and our gracious deliverance.

Dear Christian friends,

This **first Sunday** in Advent we hear the call to PREPARE – to **get ready**. But it's not to **get ready** for Christmas but for Jesus' second coming. We could be picky and **say Christmas CAME AND WENT** 2,000 years ago. But the Last Day – JUDGMENT Day – is **still to come**. JUST AS we can get so busy **this time** of year and LOSE SIGHT of the real meaning of Christmas **so** we can get so busy in our **everyday lives** and LOSE SIGHT of Jesus' **second coming**.

Advent reminds us that JESUS IS COMING – AGAIN! These verses illustrate that 1)these **last days** will be dangerous and that 2)the **Last Day** will be God's righteous judgment and our gracious deliverance.

#### **I. These last days will be dangerous.**

Jesus is coming – AGAIN! The Scriptures repeatedly emphasize that FACT. God's Word also repeatedly warns us that **life in** these last days will be dangerous. **Dangerous because** AS WE WAIT for Jesus to **come again** we can let our guard down – we can become so distracted by all the **commotion** of this life that we NEGLECT our souls and our relationship with God. These **last days** can be so dangerous **because** we can GET OUR PRIORITIES in life all messed up. Think of Jesus' familiar warning, ***“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. People were eating and drinking, marrying and being married ...and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away.”*** There was NOTHING WRONG or sinful with that ***“eating and drinking, etc.”*** – but where was God? They had pushed God out of their lives.

Right after making that point Jesus went on, ***“It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.”***

These verses take us to that very DARK and DISTURBING chapter in the Bible. What was going on in Sodom – the **rampant, impenitent homosexuality** – was disgusting. Lot's behavior throughout this chapter – you can read it at home this week – we're left scratching our heads **wondering**, “HOW COULD you, Lot? WHAT were you thinking?”

To better understand these verses and see HOW DANGEROUS **life in** these last days can be we need to go back a few chapters. Lot had moved with UNCLE Abraham and **aunt Sarah** to the Promised Land of Canaan. There as God had promised Abraham ***“became very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.”*** Lot had also prospered with Abraham. The **two men had so many flocks** and herds that they had to PART COMPANY – ***“the land could not support them while they stayed together.”*** Abraham GRACIOUSLY and generously told Lot, “Let's NOT FIGHT about this. You pick wherever you want and I'll take the other area.” That's when we read, ***“Lot saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD (the Garden of Eden). So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan. So ...Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tent near Sodom.”***

AT FIRST Lot ***“pitched his tent near Sodom.”*** EVENTUALLY Lot and his family moved into Sodom. Lot bought a house in Sodom - he became involved in the city's **business** – his daughters were engaged to men from Sodom. MATERIALLY Lot and his family had it good in Sodom. SPIRITUALLY

Sodom **was not** a good place to live. Peter tells us that Lot was ***“a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of the lawless men, ...living among them he was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard.”***

Do you see what Lot was TRYING TO DO? Lot wanted to be a CHILD of God but still enjoy the WAYS of the **world**. He tried compromising – finding a MIDDLE GROUND - between being a Christian and living like an **unbeliever**. That took SUCH A TOLL on **Lot and his family**. MORE AND MORE they were accepting and living the ways of Sodom. Even when the angels announced God’s judgment on Sodom Lot and his family HESITATED leaving. The angels had to grab their hands and GET THEM MOVING. God commanded them, ***“Don’t look back – don’t stop anywhere.”*** But it was TOO MUCH for Lot’s wife. She had to have ONE LAST LOOK. She ended up losing her SOUL. ***“But Lot’s wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.”*** When Jesus compared life in these last days to the ***“days of Lot”*** He added the warning, ***“Remember Lot’s wife!”***

That temptation to compromise with the world is what makes life in these last days SO DANGEROUS. The devil convinces many Christians that a HALF-HEARTED commitment to the Lord is **perfectly acceptable**. He convinces us that we CAN COMPROMISE our Christian **faith and morals** and it won’t hurt us – we can live like unbelievers and still be Christians. **What makes life** in these last days SO DANGEROUS is that the devil just keeps picking at us. He attacks our **faith** and our relationship with God THROUGH OUR MORALS and **values**. We begin ignoring GOD’S CALL to a **holy life** and we end up ignoring God HIMSELF. “I’d never do that – that will NEVER HAPPEN to me!” are famous last words. For good reasons Jesus orders us, ***“Be careful! Be alert!”*** Yes, ***“Remember Lot’s wife!”***

Life in these last days can BE SO DANGEROUS. Our comfort – our HOPE – is that Jesus is coming – AGAIN! That Last Day will be...

## II. God’s righteous judgment and our gracious deliverance.

Sodom and Gomorrah were ripe for **God’s judgment**. In the chapter before this **Jesus** and these **two angels** had visited Abraham. Jesus had told Abraham, ***“The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached Me. If not, I will know.”*** God didn’t need to PERSONALLY check out Sodom and Gomorrah and make sure He had **things straight**. This pictures for us that God was not being PETTY – God wasn’t blowing things out of PROPORTION. God’s judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah was JUST and **right**. The homosexuality – the brutality and viciousness – of the men of Sodom were NO EXAGGERATION. With a swift and sudden judgment of ***“fire and brimstone”*** God ***“overthrew and destroyed”*** Sodom and Gomorrah. ***“Overthrew”*** is such a FITTING description. Sodom and Gomorrah – so PROUD – so defiant – so impenitent – ***“overthrown”*** – KNOCKED over – brushed aside. IN THAT RESPECT Sodom and Gomorrah become pictures of God’s RIGHTEOUS judgment on the Last Day. Peter tells us, ***“(God) condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly.”*** Jude wrote, ***“Like Sodom and Gomorrah, who in a similar way indulged in extreme sexual immorality and pursued homosexual perversion, they serve as an example of those who are going to suffer the punishment of eternal fire.”*** Perhaps because of Sodom and Gomorrah Revelation pictures hell as ***“the lake of burning sulfur.”***

Sodom and Gomorrah illustrate the truth that ***“God is not mocked. To be sure, whatever a man sows, he will also reap. Indeed, the one who sows to please his own sinful flesh will reap destruction from the sinful flesh.”*** Sodom and Gomorrah illustrate what we read in Hebrews, ***“It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*** Anyone who thinks the holy Lord God is a WISHY-WASHY pushover who would never send anyone to hell should join Abraham looking toward Sodom and Gomorrah and seeing ***“smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace.”*** As Christians STILL STUCK with our **proud, defiant** sinful natures we also need to see that.

Jesus is coming – AGAIN! – and **that Last Day** will be God's righteous judgment on our **defiant, wicked** world. That we are STILL waiting – that it's still Advent – is SOLELY because as Peter explains, ***“The Lord is not slow to do what he promised, as some consider slowness. Instead, He is patient for your sakes, not wanting anyone to perish, but all to come to repentance.”***

Lot is a good example of what it **means** to be saved **“by grace and not by works.”** Lot was not spared because he was such a GREAT BELIEVER but because God is such a GREAT SAVIOR. The sins and shortcomings of Lot's **life and faith** are very clear in this chapter. The angels practically had to PUSH THEM OUT of Sodom. The Lord delayed destroying Sodom UNTIL Lot and his family were **safely out.** ***“The Lord was merciful to them.”***

***“The Lord was merciful”*** is also the REAL MEANING and message of Christmas. **Rather** than raining down His **righteous judgment** on us God sent down His Son to be the Savior of the world. God's Son took on our human flesh and blood to take our place under God's law. WHAT MERCY! We who have been AS WEAK and wavering and **less than perfect** AS LOT was here – we get the credit for Jesus' WHOLE-HEARTED **devotion** and **obedience** to His Father. WHAT MERCY we see and receive at the cross as Jesus takes the blame for the sins of the whole world and is punished in our place – as Jesus sheds His blood and sacrifices His life to PAY for **every single one** of our sins. WHAT MERCY – what LIFE – we find at Jesus' empty grave. Our Savior who conquered death and hell shares His victory with us. **What mercy** - our Savior has promised to COME AGAIN and take us to be with Him forever in heaven's glory. As we live in a **world so much** like Sodom and Gomorrah WHAT MERCY to have Jesus' promise. ***“In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come AGAIN and take you to be with Me, so that you may also be where I am.”***

***“When God destroyed the cities of (Sodom and Gomorrah) ...He brought Lot out of the catastrophe.”*** Jesus' COMING AGAIN on the Last Day will be the day of our GRACIOUS – FINAL deliverance from all sin. Living in these **dangerous last days** we pray, ***“Come quickly, Lord Jesus!”*** Amen.

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