

Remember Lot's Wife

An important and timely lesson for God's elect as we close in on the final days of this flesh earth age...

by Steve Barwick

In Luke chapter 17 our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ admonishes us to "Remember Lot's wife." What's more, He directly relates this command to the time-frame of His second advent and to the events that will be taking place at that time.

So as we begin to enter into the final days of this flesh earth age and continue to witness prophetic Biblical events play out before us at a rapid pace, it certainly behooves us to examine *why* our Lord and Savior would bring up Lot's wife in relation to the time leading up to His second advent, and so strongly admonish us to remember her.

Keep in mind as you read this study that in the very near future, everything's going to change, just as it did for Lot and his family. I don't know if it will be a month from now, a year from now or five years from now. But on the day Satan sets foot on this old earth as the false messiah, your life is *never* going to be the same again. And neither is this old earth.

Indeed, at that point in time your commission from our heavenly Father becomes real. And you most definitely should be preparing mentally and spiritually for that time, even now. To that end, your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has set some important guidelines to follow during that time. And in the remainder of this study we'll take a look at some of them, starting here in Luke chapter 17 where Christ is speaking to His disciples about the final days of this flesh earth age:

Luk 17:28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

Luk 17:29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Luk 17:30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

Luk 17:31 In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

Luk 17:32 Remember Lot's wife.

There's Christ's admonition to "Remember Lot's wife."

Notice that one of the people mentioned in verse 31 is on the housetop, meaning he's standing watch, which is to say spiritually speaking, he's a watchman for the Lord. In the final days of this flesh earth age, he's one who watches for the approach of the adversary, so he can sound the

warning to others. And the other individual mentioned above is described as being in the field, meaning, spiritually speaking, he's a workman who hasn't been taken in by the antichrist. So he too is an acting servant of God. This message therefore is to God's watchmen and active servants in the field, which is to say, His elect.

So what exactly can we learn from the Biblical example of Lot's wife? Well, no pun intended. But *if* we're wise, and we understand how to properly apply the example of Lot and his wife to our own time and circumstances, we can certainly learn a *lot*.

After all, we're told in verse 30 above that in the time of Christ's second advent it's going to be *just like* the days of Lot.

Spiritually speaking, the people will be eating of the false kingdom wedding...drinking of communion to the false Christ...buying and selling souls through the deception of false religion...planting the (fig) tree of the knowledge of good and evil right smack dab in Jerusalem...and unwittingly building Satan's seat on the very ground reserved for our heavenly Father's temple.

And just as the wickedness of Sodom in Lot's time prompted our heavenly Father's destruction by fire of that geographical area, so in the final days of this flesh earth age the wicked beehive of religious activity that will be taking place in Jerusalem is going to prompt our heavenly Father's cleansing of that geographical area, too. When? As the Scriptures above stated, it will be at the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And by cleansing, we're talking about utter destruction. Yes, just as it was in Lot's time, so it will be in the final days of this flesh earth age. This is why, in Revelation 11:8, which speaks of the deaths of God's two faithful witnesses, God's Word tells us that Jerusalem is spiritually to be called "Sodom and Egypt."

Rev 11:8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

After all, in the final days of this flesh earth age, the antichrist and his fallen angels will be present in Jerusalem, and at that point, that great city will have officially become the world capital of spiritual perversion (Sodom) and spiritual bondage (Egypt). So our heavenly Father will indeed bring a cleansing to it at Christ's second advent.

As our Lord and Savior explained to His disciples in Matthew 24:1-2, regarding the fate of the temple and the great buildings of the city of Jerusalem in the final days of this flesh earth age, "*See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*"

In the original Greek, the term "thrown down" in Christ's words above is *kataluō* (see Strong's G-25647), which means "to disintegrate, demolish or dissolve." In other words, the city will be turned to sand at Christ's second advent. Nothing left.

This is why our Lord and Savior so strongly warns us in Luke 17:31 above that as the day of His second advent approaches, we are not to concern ourselves with our physical, fleshly goods, nor

even our place in society. After all, they're worthless to us at that point. No earthly fortune, no expensive jewelry, no plush linen, no \$600 wireless cell phone, no job we might hold, no business we might own, no position of power or authority or stature we might hold in this flesh life will be worth anything to us at that time.

To repeat what He said:

Luk 17:31 In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

Luk 17:32 Remember Lot's wife.

You see, in Lot's day, when the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot's wife made a grievous error – an error that literally cost her her life. And that error is one *we cannot afford to make* in the final days of this flesh earth age.

This is why Christ admonishes us to “Remember Lot's wife.” Her error was to look back with great longing on what she had been forced to leave behind, rather than being grateful in her heart that the Lord had chosen to deliver her and the remainder of her family, thanks to her righteous husband Lot.

To understand this a little better, we have to take a look at the area Lot lived in. Sodom and the surrounding cities were situated in the best part of the Jordan valley, with plenty of water and fertile soil. In fact, according to Genesis 13:10 it was so lush, it was comparable to “the garden of the Lord.”

In other words, because of the lush fertile valley it was situated in, riches abounded. There was plenty of farmland for crops. And there were abundant fields for cattle and sheep. In fact, according to the Scriptures the great pastures and fields in the area around Sodom were the main reason Lot chose to live in that area in the first place (Genesis 13:7-12), as he was wealthy with “flocks and herds and tents” (Genesis 13:5).

Sodom was also apparently a very industrious area: After all, in verse Luke 17:28 our Lord and Savior tells us “they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded...” In other words, they had it all. Plenty of food, drink, monetary wealth, farmland and fields, a myriad of business endeavors and building activities...you name it.

Unfortunately, as the Scripture tells us in Genesis 13:13, “But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.”

Indeed they were. We know from other verses, for example, that homosexuality was tolerated to the point it had become unsafe for decent people to be in the streets of town at night (Gen. 19:1-10). It appears from the Scriptures that Sodom was what you might call a very “progressive” place, which is what all-too-often happens when wealth abounds and people have it relatively

easy. They forget their moral foundations. They get spoiled and start trying to “fine tune” God’s natural laws to suit their own lusts.

Does this sound anything like the time we live in now? It doesn’t take much imagination to figure out this is why we’re told in II Peter 2:7-8 that Lot, being a just man, was “vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked” and that he “in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds...”

Yes, Lot enjoyed the wealth and prosperity of the area. His herds apparently prospered there. But he was afflicted to his very soul from day to day with the decidedly wicked and ungodly deeds of the “progressive” Canaanite and Perizzite inhabitants.

After all, in Genesis 19:1-9 we learn that Lot was a judge who sat in the gate of the city. This means he heard legal and religious cases, and judged them based on God’s Word. In other words, he was one of God’s elect.

As a judge who sat in the gates of the city, he was undoubtedly exposed to the evil schemings and wickedness of the men of that area on a regular basis. And it was no doubt a constant battle judging these men with righteousness, and trying to make a difference in that city, when so many of its “progressive” inhabitants – probably including many of his fellow judges -- were so steeped in wickedness.

But Lot was apparently up to the task. And Father blessed him for it by saving him, his two virgin daughters and his wife from the destruction He had decreed upon that evil city. Never forget that. For there’s no difference between the final days of this flesh earth age, and the time of Lot. As with Lot, *God will take care of you and your family, too...if you remain righteous to Him as Lot did.*

But the important point of the story of Lot and his wife is this: Through His grace, God had rescued Lot’s family from the destruction from above, which was triggered by the wickedness and perversity that was being practiced throughout that geographical region. Yet Lot’s wife inwardly lamented for Sodom.

Indeed, as they entered into the little city of Zoar where the angels of God had told Lot he and his family would be safe, Lot’s wife was apparently lagging behind the family, looking back with fondness on the city *even though God had judged it to be so sinful it was worthy only of complete and utter annihilation.* As it is written:

Gen 19:23 The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

Gen 19:24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

Gen 19:25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

Gen 19:26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

Lot's wife looked back longingly. She may have even resented having to start over again from scratch without the many flesh benefits and creature comforts her former position in the city of Sodom had commanded. Remember, Lot's family would have had considerable societal stature in Sodom, as would any judge's family.

What's more, Genesis 19:14 tells us that Lot and his wife had at least several married daughters in the city, and that they had refused to hear his message of impending doom when he tried to tell them about the coming destruction and urged them to get out of town. So family probably played a large role in the transgression of Lot's wife. That's a good lesson for us today, because we all have close friends and family members who can't hear the truth, no matter how plainly we put it to them. Yet when the day of the Lord arrives, we have to be willing to let them go their way, knowing we'll have the opportunity to help them in the millennium.

This should remind you of the cries of the "merchants of the earth" of Revelation chapter 18, who had "waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies" during the heyday of Mystery, Babylon under the antichrist's reign, but who, upon seeing the destruction to the world system ushered in at Jesus Christ's arrival, stood afar off from it, and began to "bemoan and lament for her" crying "*Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought*" (Rev. 18:16-17).

Here Christ is ushering in His heavenly kingdom, and rather than rejoicing that the miseries of this flesh earth age are over, the "merchants of the earth" are focused solely on what they've lost. So with Lot's wife. In essence, by looking back to Sodom with longing, Lot's wife *rejected the grace and deliverance God had so graciously bestowed upon her entire family, preferring in her heart to retain her former wealthy position and respected family and social stature in Sodom, in spite of the ungodliness of the inhabitants thereof.*

So God, recognizing that Lot's wife was an unfit vessel, turned her into a pillar of salt for her sinfulness. Which is to say, He sent the same consuming fire upon her that He'd sent upon Sodom, leaving nothing but a pile of salt in the place where she stood and lamented her perceived losses.

[As an interesting aside: The word salt in Genesis 19:26 above is translated from the Hebrew word *melach* (H-H4417), properly meaning "powder," as something that's easily pulverized and dissolved. Think in terms of the aftermath of a cremation, if you must, for that's pretty much what it was. Salt, by the way, is one of the chief electrolytes required for human life. The human body contains up to a cupful of salt, plus lots of calcium salts in the bones. No human being can live without it. Spiritually speaking, salt represents our *liveliness* on behalf of the Living God. As Christ would say to His disciples in Matthew 5:13, "*Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*" And so it is that Lot's wife would be turned into a "pillar (i.e., pile) of salt," having lost her "savour" with the Lord.]

This is very much like today, in which we all have many worldly goods, plus family and social stature, business status and more – things we might enjoy or otherwise take great pleasure in. But in the end, they're just things of the flesh. And they're not even *remotely* comparable to the riches and glory we'll enjoy in Christ's presence as part of our spiritual inheritance.

So to look back upon our worldly goods and stature with longing in the day of Christ's second advent is a slap in the face to our Lord and Savior, who will be coming to deliver us from this sinful age and its wicked inhabitants, just as He had delivered just Lot and his family from Sodom.

Would you honestly prefer the company of the sinful inhabitants of this old world to that of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and His saints? I hope your answer is, "Of course not!" So "Remember Lot's wife," and when the time comes for our Lord and Savior's second advent and the great cleansing He will bring to this old earth, don't look back with longing. There's nothing here that can compare to what He has in store for us.

Even our spiritually stiff-necked friends and family members who can't see the truth today because of the incredibly powerful drag of the flesh, will at that time be in a much better position to hear and understand the truth. So don't lament the loss of the flesh. Remember that we all move into spiritual bodies on the day of our Lord's second advent (I Cor. 15:51-52) – the good and the bad alike. And the drag of this flesh will no longer have influence. Be thankful our heavenly Father has granted the millennium teaching period so we can teach those of our loved ones who didn't overcome.

The bottom line is that if we turn back with longing at that time, which is to say, if our focus is on saving our flesh existence – our goods, our jobs, our family, our social status, etc. – we'll not only lose *all* of that as we enter into the spiritual dimension that will be ushered in by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but we also risk losing our *spiritual* life, for we will be found by Christ to be unworthy vessels for turning back at such a critical time. As it is written in the verses of Luke chapter 17 that follow our Lord and Savior's admonition to "Remember Lot's wife":

Luk 17:33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

In a large sense, this is speaking of compromise. Sometimes it can be very tempting to compromise with the world, or the worldly, in order to get along. It's called "going along to get along." But when Satan and his fallen angels are here in the days preceding our Lord and Savior's arrival, there's no room for compromise. You have to be willing to give it all up as the final days of this flesh earth age close in.

In that day, we must be completely willing to stand firm in our Father's Word and walk away from anything that can serve to hold us back from fulfilling our commission. At that time, some of Father's faithful servants will even be delivered up before the synagogues of Satan to be persecuted, as described in Mark 13:9-13.

That of course, is no point at which to grow weak-kneed. God's elect know that to compromise with the adversary and his minions in order to hang on to your fleshly possessions, family, business or social stature a little longer *puts you in the camp* of the adversary and his minions. It's as simple as that. And that camp is going to be destroyed, much like Sodom and Gomorrah were.

In fact, in Luke 17:33 above, the phrase "shall lose it" is *appolumi autos* (Strong's G-622 and G-846) meaning *complete self-destruction*. Yes, as we'll see in the latter part of this study, for those who know better, compromise with the enemy in order to save your fleshly place in this life brings about complete self-destruction. God knows your heart. So get it straight before Him. Be perfectly willing to lose what you have in this flesh life. After all, it's the only way to gain your eternal inheritance as an heir of God. "Remember Lot's wife."

As it is written in Revelation 12:9-11, Satan will be thrown out onto this old earth with his fallen angels, and then the time of Christ's second advent will be nigh at hand. But God's elect will stand firm in the blood of the Lamb, which is the Gospel truth, to deliver their testimony, fearing not even the threat of death:

Rev 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Rev 12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

Rev 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Of course, for God's elect at that time it will be no problem at all to give up the temporal benefits, goodies and social stature of this flesh life, in order to fulfill their commission from our heavenly Father. God's elect know that the flesh is nothing compared to the spirit, and that this entire flesh age is going to be gone anyway in a very short matter of time at Christ's second advent, to be replaced by something *much* better.

What's more, you can't take anything with you into the eternity, except for your righteous works on His behalf. And nothing you own here on this earth, no wealth, no goods, no position you hold, no social or business stature you've earned, can be used to buy your way into heaven.

Nor can it even remotely compare to the riches and glory of our heavenly Father's eternal kingdom of which we are the *heirs* through Christ Jesus. Would you trade your eternal heavenly inheritance for even a few more deceptively pleasurable moments of this flesh earth age? Would you look back in longing at your accumulations in this flesh age – family, friends, goods, status, position, power -- when the eternal heavenly age is directly ahead? I think I know your answer.

Therefore, when Christ tells us in Luke 17:33 “whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it,” and when He states again in Revelation 12:11, “and they loved not their lives unto the death,” He’s saying that only those who are willing to give it ALL up will be deemed worthy to enter into His eternal heavenly kingdom.

Indeed, only a short time after the false Christ reveals himself in Jerusalem and the party kicks into high gear, our Lord and Savior’s second advent takes place. And these old flesh bodies, as well as every single physical thing we own in this three dimensional world will indeed be...gone.

As St. Paul has taught so eloquently in I Corinthians 15:51-52, “*Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*”

We will be changed into our spiritual bodies at that point, to join our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in His coming eternal kingdom. That’s our Father’s promise of deliverance. Just as He saved righteous Lot from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah that rained down from heaven, so He will save His elect at the time they are delivered up before the synagogues of Satan. As it is written:

Mar 13:9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

They will be trying to convert you. Pummeling you with every reason they can come up with in a vain attempt to convince you to worship the false christ – Satan himself -- who they will sincerely believe is “Jesus.”

Mar 13:10 And the gospel must first be published among all nations.

For the first time in history, the good news of God’s Word will indeed be published worldwide, all at one time, and without the spot or blemish of man’s empty traditions being woven into it. It is the commission of God’s elect to allow the testimony of God to flow directly from their mouths at those great trials.

Mar 13:11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

It is God Himself Who will speak through His election. Don’t worry about what you’re going to say in your own defense. This isn’t about you. It’s the *adversaries* who need to be worried, for God’s Word flowing through the mouths of His elect will convict their very souls. This is why we are to “take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak,” but instead, let God do the talking through us, through the unction of His Holy Spirit who will be with us at all times.

Mar 13:12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

Can you handle that? Your own family will turn against you for standing firm for the truth of God's Word, and refusing to bow to the false Christ. After all, the death angel himself – Satan – will be standing there before them pretending to be "Jesus." And out of ignorance and flesh weakness, they'll believe every enticing word he says. This is why they'll betray you over to him, hoping he can convert you. But God's election will not fail Him. And God will not fail them. They will stand firm against the death angel, on behalf of their heavenly Father, in the power of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Mar 13:13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

In Genesis chapter 19, all Lot had to do was turn those two young men (angels) over to the crowd of wicked perverts that had gathered outside of his door that night, and ostensibly he could have saved his family, his social status, his goods, and his lofty position in Sodom. But he knew better than to compromise. And he would not cooperate. He knew nothing on this earth was more valuable than his standing with His heavenly Father. So he put his own life and even that of his family at risk to protect his young boarders (Genesis 19:4-10). And because of this, the wicked townsfolk who had gathered at his door hated him with a vehement hatred, so great was their wickedness. His very righteousness provoked their hatred. But God (through the two angels) saved him and his immediate family from the adversaries, as well as from the utter destruction that rained down from heaven upon that city directly afterwards.

So it will be when God's elect are delivered up to the synagogues of Satan at that time. The entire world will burn with hatred against them for standing firm for the Word of God, and refusing to bow to the false christ to obtain a temporary "salvation." Instead, they will count their flesh lives as worth naught – willing to give it all up in order to obtain a better resurrection.

And just as God saved righteous Lot and his family from the adversaries, as well as from the destruction that followed directly afterwards, so He will save those who faithfully "endure unto the end" from their adversaries, as well as from the destruction that follows as Father's righteous indignation kicks in, and Christ's second advent brings an ignoble end to Satan's short reign on this earth as the false christ.

We know from II Peter 3:10-14 that when that day arrives, the evil rudiments of this earth will be destroyed by fire, just like Sodom and Gomorrah was in Lot's time. Not only that, but this flesh earth age will be *over* with, as we move into the spiritual realm in our new spiritual bodies. As it is written:

2Pe 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

2Pe 3:11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

2Pe 3:12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

2Pe 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

2Pe 3:14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

That's the key: Be diligent in your understanding of His Word, and in your implementation of His Word in your life, that you may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless. Not like Lot's wife who refused to look forward in gratitude, but instead, looked back in longing.

Look forward to the promise – new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Don't look back with longing on this pathetic flesh age. After all, it will be over for good at that time.

Obviously, if you're heart is on your earthly goods, family, friends, or social, business or even religious status at that time, you won't be found in peace with Christ, nor without spot and blameless. After all, He's clearly and carefully warned you to "Remember Lot's wife."

As we know from 1 Corinthians 15:51-58, we'll be moving into our new spiritual bodies and the spiritual dimension at that time, to be with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in His eternal kingdom. And you can't take anything with you into that spiritual dimension, except for your white robe, which is representative of your righteous acts on Christ's behalf.

At the end of this flesh earth age, our flesh lives are...well...worthless. It is our *spiritual* life that matters at that point. As it is written:

Isa 40:6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field:

Isa 40:7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

Isa 40:8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

The flesh comes to naught. But the Word of God shall stand forever. And it is His Word – never forget, Christ IS the living Word -- that gives you *your eternal inheritance*. Don't muck it up by getting too wrapped up in the very temporary things of this flesh earth age, and forgetting as a result of flesh entanglements that His plan for you is an eternal one, if you remain worthy of it.

Again, as our Lord and Savior has admonished us, "Remember Lot's wife."

A Stern Warning

In chapter 10 of the great book of Hebrews, Paul is writing in a similar vein to the Hebrews of Judea and Palestine who had converted to Christianity. Many of them were likewise looking back with longing to the empty religious traditions of the synagogues which they had come out of.

Having been raised as members of the Jewish religious community from birth, these Hebrews had not been persecuted for their religious beliefs or treated with disrespect by the religious community. But when they converted from what is today called “Judaism” to the Gospel truth and accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, they suddenly found themselves held in extremely low regard by everyone around them. In many cases, they lost whatever social respect and position they may have held among the religious and even social community. They lost friends and family who considered them to be religious traitors. They were even physically persecuted for their newfound belief in Christ. As it is written in the great book of Hebrews:

Heb 10:32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

Heb 10:33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

Yes, after the Hebrew converts to Christianity had come into the light of the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ, they were persecuted by the adherents of the religion of the synagogues. They were looked upon with great reproach, and they were afflicted in many ways. Some were even killed for their newfound faith.

St. Paul warned in Hebrews 10:26 that if these Hebrew Christians deliberately and knowingly returned to the religion of the synagogues after having tasted the goodness of Christ (which is to say, the in-depth truth of God’s Word, through the touch of the Holy Spirit), there was no more salvation available for them.

After all, as a core tenet of its theology, the religion of the synagogues utterly rejects Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice on the cross at Calvary. And according to I Corinthians 16:22, this rejection of Christ as Lord and Savior leaves adherents to that religion “Anathema Maranatha,” which is a Greek phrase meaning, “accursed at Christ’s second advent.”

So for a Hebrew Christian to return to the religion of the synagogues in order to gain back lost social and religious status, would be the equivalent of committing the sin of Lot’s wife.

Just as Lot’s wife rejected God’s judgment on Sodom in her heart, and unappreciatively looked back longingly to the very center of sinfulness from which her family had been delivered, so those returning to the religion of the synagogues after having tasted the sweetness of salvation through Christ, would in essence at that point be rejecting Christ in favor of the sinfulness of the religious tradition they know to be in grave error. This is why St. Paul stated to them:

Heb 10:26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

Again, the willful sin discussed in this verse was turning back to the empty traditions of the religion of the synagogues, and thereby rejecting the grace and salvation of Christ in order to regain the temporary flesh benefits of being well thought of in your religious and social community.

Heb 10:27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

If you're willfully found sitting in the same pot as God's adversaries, you're going to be cooked in the same stew.

Heb 10:28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

You can't reject God's law and partake of His grace at the same time. It's just not possible. Similarly, you can't turn back to that which utterly rejects your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and expect the blessings of God to continue. There is no mercy for the willfully unfaithful.

Heb 10:29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

If after having been sanctified – i.e., touched by the Holy Spirit of understanding and set apart in knowledge -- you willfully and knowingly reject Christ's atoning sacrifice for your sins by returning to the false religious traditions you came out of, what have you got left?

Heb 10:30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

Indeed, He will. Our heavenly Father is looking for a faithful crew. He's looking to build a faithful family to live with Him in complete peace and harmony for eternity. But as it is written in Luke 18:8, "*Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*" Indeed He will, in God's elect who know to remember the example of Lot's wife, and keep their eyes on the prize rather than turning back.

Heb 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

And so it truly *is* a fearful thing, if, after having received His Holy Spirit of truth and understanding, you are willfully disrespect Him by turning back to whatever religious tradition you came out of. As St. Paul would continue a few verses later:

Heb 10:35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

You believed in the Gospel message. Stick with it regardless of consequences, for your heavenly reward is far greater than anything you could obtain in this flesh earth life.

Heb 10:36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

You have to do His will, with patience, to receive the promised inheritance. You're time is coming. It won't be long now. Stay in His Word.

Heb 10:37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Once the events of the final days of this flesh earth age begin to line up, as they are now, everything begins to speed up. Like a woman in labor, the birth pangs come faster and faster. Don't give up five minutes before the miracle.

Heb 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

Count the costs of serving your heavenly Father at this time. He has not held anything back from you. He has made it abundantly clear that you have to be willing to give it *all* up at the very end. So what's the big deal? As righteous Lot "vexed his righteous soul" day after day witnessing the sinfulness of Sodom, so God's elect do the same even today. This old earth grows more sinful by the minute. And God's elect don't count anything in this sinful flesh life as being so valuable that it can't be given up readily for Christ's sake. They know their inheritance in Christ (Ez. 44:28) is incomparable to any earthly goods or status.

Heb 10:39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

To "draw back" means to apostatize. Which is to say, to fall away from the truth. And the word "perdition" in this verse means "damnation." We are not of them who apostatize unto damnation. We stick with the truth of God's Word, no matter what Satan or this old world under his direction throws against us.

As St. Paul would remind Christians in chapter six of the great book of Hebrews:

Heb 6:4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

Heb 6:5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

Heb 6:6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

If you willfully apostatize after having tasted of the sweetness of the Gospel message and having received the Holy Spirit of truth, you cannot expect to be saved at the same time. You can't be unfaithful to Christ, and obtain salvation simultaneously. It's just not possible.

Heb 6:7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

Heb 6:8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

You either bring forth good fruit for the Lord, or bear thorns and briers. There's no in-between position. It's all or nothing. No compromise. And that's particularly so when Satan and his fallen angels arrive to this earth to usher in their little traveling salvation show and false kingdom wedding in imitation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. You can't attend the one, and expect to attend the other, too. You will not be welcome at the true Kingdom Wedding if you've willfully attended the false (Mathew 22:11-13).

By the way, it's important to understand that this isn't talking about a conventional Christian who backslides. There's *always* repentance for simple backsliding, however egregious, as long as the repentance is sincere and the necessary steps are taken to get back on the right track.

Instead, this is talking about a Christian who has come out of the deception of the empty religious traditions of man, and has been given understanding of the truth of God's Word by the Holy Spirit. But afterwards, when a little bit of persecution or personal rejection arises for the sake of the Word, or when longing sets in for the temporal benefits of the religious community the individual initially came out of, he (or she) returns to that community knowing full well in his (or her) heart that it is the *antichrist* that's worshipped there in place of Jesus Christ. That is simply not acceptable to our heavenly Father, and will not be tolerated. His elect know better.

Heb 6:9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

Indeed, we are persuaded of better things of *you*, too, beloved. God's elect will *not* desert their Lord and Savior, as many fledgling believers did at the time of His crucifixion. God's elect will stand their ground, firmly, in God's Word, regardless of what the worldly throw at them. Their love is for that eternal *spiritual* realm to come, and not for this present and all too temporary *physical* realm.

Heb 6:10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

God rewards those who stand firm for His Word of truth, and help each other do so.

Heb 6:11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

The word “diligence,” as used here, means *earnest eagerness*. We earnestly and eagerly look forward to that time when it all comes to a head, and then this flesh earth age is over. But in the meantime, we run the race with patience and perseverance. Remember Christ’s great promise in Mark 13:13, “He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

Heb 6:12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

The word “slothful” as used here is the Greek word *nothros* (Strong’s G-3576) meaning “sluggish, lazy or stupid.” But it comes from the root word *nothos* (Strong’s 3541) meaning “a spurious or illegitimate son: – bastard.”

That’s pretty strong language St. Paul is using here. But God has made it abundantly clear in the great book of Proverbs that he has no use for lazy people. God is looking for people whose love for His Word is not mere lip service – i.e., He’s looking for a people who can accomplish a little more on His behalf than simply warming a pew with their behinds on Sundays.

Any idiot can occupy a pew. But contrary to popular belief among many Christians, that does not give one the right to an eternal inheritance, any more than an illegitimate son has a right to inherit simply by virtue of his existence. Our heavenly Father is looking for those who are ready and rarin’ to *earn* their eternal inheritance -- to make a real difference during the final days of this flesh earth age. It is *those* He considers His heirs to the kingdom, in Christ.

The bottom line is that God is not impressed in the least with those who turn back. He was not impressed with the Hebrew Christians who stumbled at the persecution that arose from their conversion and as a result returned to the empty and adversarial religious traditions of the synagogues back in St. Paul’s time.

And in like manner, He’s not in the least bit impressed with Christians who, in the final days of this flesh earth age, stumble at the affliction that will inevitably arise for taking a firm stand for the truth of God’s Word and end up returning to the empty, polluted but oh-so-comfortable religious traditions of man. As it is written in the great book of Second Peter:

2Pe 2:20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

2Pe 2:21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

2Pe 2:22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Yes, the vomit and mire of false religion can be tempting to return to, because suffering rejection for standing up for the truth can be such a powerful force for the weak-willed and undisciplined. We all want to be loved, respected, and accepted. But we have to discern exactly *what* it is that

we're longing to be accepted by, and what it will *cost* us in the end. The wise will understand. If it costs you your internal inheritance, do you really want it?

When we try to talk to our family or friends in the religious community about topics like the seduction of Eve in the garden of Eden, the tares of Matthew chapter 13, the false Jews of Revelation 2:9 and 3:9, the corrupt celebration of "Easter" (Ishtar) in place of Christ's Passover, or even the seduction of the church by the false Christ through the any-moment-now rapture theory, we might quickly discover we are no longer welcome in the religious community our life once centered around.

As a result, we might grow to miss our old friends from the little church down on the corner. We might look back with longing on the "fellowship" we'd always enjoyed. We might miss the approval and acceptance we'd enjoyed in our community as members of a local church. Or we simply might not have the character and backbone it takes to stand up for the truth against the prevailing religious traditions which are embraced by the people around us.

In short, the old saying, "Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone. Dare to have a purpose dear, and dare to make it known," might begin to sound like little more than empty rhetoric as the flesh nature tugs at our heartstrings to return to the seeming warmth and amiable acceptance and hospitality we once knew in whatever religious tradition we came out of.

But that's not how our Lord and Savior told us to handle the situation. When the message we carry from our Father's Word is not accepted, we're not to compromise. Instead, we're to boldly reject the naysayers and move along, particularly at the time when antichrist and his fallen angels are on this earth. As it is written:

Mat 10:11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

Mat 10:12 And when ye come into an house, salute it.

Mat 10:13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

Mat 10:14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

Mat 10:15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

I'm sure you caught Christ's statement about Sodom and Gomorrhah in verse 15 above. Remember Lot's wife. When the time comes for Christ's second advent to take place -- and it *will* come, and sooner rather than later -- follow your Father's instructions. Shake the dust off your feet as you depart from those who would deny or denigrate the truth of God's Word. And don't look back on them with the slightest bit of longing, regardless of the "fellowship" they might offer.

Instead, set your heart to understand that they'll have their opportunity to come to the truth during the millennium teaching period. And during that time of great teaching, may our heavenly Father find good reason to judge you as a fit vessel for following His Word. Perhaps He'll even assign you to help teach and discipline those who rejected your message in the first place.

As St. Paul warned in another place:

Gal 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

It may seem like “fellowship.” But the compromises you have to make with the religious community, particularly in regards to their empty religious traditions, will put you back in spiritual bondage to the lie that leads to antichrist every time.

At a certain place in the Scriptures, the great prophet Jeremiah found himself so completely ostracized from the religious community for standing up for the truth of God's Word, that he cried out in great emotional pain to the Lord. As it is written:

Jer 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

We partake of God's Word with joy and rejoicing, because it is the *true spiritual food* that fills and animates our very soul. God's Word is the very power we operate under. Without it, we are spiritually dead to the Lord.

Jer 15:17 I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation.

Jeremiah the prophet refused to go into the church assemblies where God's Word of truth was mocked and denigrated. He had warned the people of the wrath to come, which would be directed against the people of Jerusalem by the Babylonian army, at God's command.

But the people chose to listen instead to their false prophets who fed them flowery religious traditions instead of truth. So Jeremiah sat alone, outside the congregation, ostracized from the religious community. He was filled with righteous indignation because He knew God's Word was true, and the words of the religious leaders were simply vain fables designed to tickle the ears of the all-too-willing congregations, and ultimately lead them into captivity at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

Jer 15:18 Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?

Jeremiah gets on a little self-pity jag here. For many years he had faithfully prophesied of the arrival of the king of Babylon and his armies, just as our heavenly Father had told him to. And the more he prophesied, the more scorned and rejected he became in the eyes of the people. His

pain was great, because he loved the people who now scorned him. But he loved God's Word even more. And he delivered it with a zeal that turned the hearts of the people against him with a fervor he had never experienced.

What's more, Jeremiah had prophesied of the arrival of the king of Babylon for some 23 years. He had warned repeatedly that if the people and their leaders failed to repent, God would ultimately bring the prophesy to pass, the city of Jerusalem would be sacked and burned, and they would all be taken into captivity to Babylon.

But as God waited to see if the people and their leaders would respond to His repeated prophetic warnings through Jeremiah, the people in turn mistook God's patience and long-suffering for *approval* of their stiff-necked refusal to listen to Jeremiah. This left Jeremiah in the emotionally charged position of asking God, "Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?" meaning, essentially, are you going to allow me to look like an idiot to these stiff-necked people an longer, Lord, or are you going to bring your Word to pass as you've had me deliver it? And how did our heavenly Father answer his prophet?

Jer 15:19 Therefore thus saith the LORD, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them.

God's reply to Jeremiah was similar to His reply to Job at the end of the great book of Job: "Get up and stand before me like a man, Jeremiah, and I'll continue to speak through you to this stiff-necked people. But don't you dare wimp out on me and go running back to them. Let them return to you. You don't return to them."

That's our lesson. As the end of this flesh earth age approaches, and Father's wrath begins to wax hot as he ushers in the events leading up to the arrival of the king of Babylon of these end days, we must "remember Lot's wife." Don't turn back to those who cling to the false religious traditions of man. Let them come to you for help and understanding. But don't you go to them.

We continue moving forward, standing firmly in our Father's Word, faithfully and exactly as it's written, no matter what the consequences. We do not allow ourselves to get drawn back into the congregation of the stiff-necked who refuse Father's Word, and who hold their empty religious traditions up as truth in the place of Father's Word.

And in the end, our heavenly Father's Word will flow through our mouths at those trials described in Mark 13:9-13. It's our commission in this flesh earth age...our very destiny...*if* we embrace it and refuse to compromise or look back when the time comes.

As our heavenly Father told Jeremiah "if you take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth."

That's the defining characteristic of God's elect. Their entire job is to "take forth the precious from the vile," which is to say, alert the people to the profound differences between what God's

Word says, and what the empty traditions of man say. And then let the people choose between the two.

As it is written in Ezekiel 44:23 regarding Father's faithful election, "*And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.*"

That very commission distinguishes God's elect from the leaders of what passes for Christianity these days. In other words, let there be no doubt in your mind that this message is as much for you today as it was for Jeremiah in his day.

Just as Jeremiah prophesied of the arrival of the king of Babylon, so do we. And Father's promise is that His Words will ultimately flow forth from our mouths, just as He spoke through Jeremiah. And though the people will fight against us, He is with us to save and deliver us, just as He did Jeremiah.

Jer 15:20 And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

This was God's promise to Jeremiah. But it's His promise to YOU today, too. Have you claimed it?

The deceived multitudes will indeed turn against you if you stand firmly in Father's Word, refusing to compromise for the sake of "fellowship" or "fraternity" or for any other reason. But our heavenly Father promises "*they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee.*" Wow. You just can't beat that kind of promise, beloved. You and Father make a majority. Always have, always will...as long as you *stay* in His will.

Jer 15:21 And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.

Read that again, dear one. That's your Father's WILL for you. "I WILL deliver thee." "I WILL redeem thee." You can't ask for more than that. I hope you've claimed these promises from your heavenly Father. He loves you very much. And He wants you to know He's got your back, now and especially at that time.

So when the going gets tough because of your firm stand in the Word of God, don't blow it by looking back with longing at what you might think were softer, easier times.

Don't let self-pity take over, either. And don't get resentful about any material losses at that time. Your eternal inheritance is incomparable to the perishable things of this flesh earth age. Know that your Father is a man of His Word, and He will indeed be with you to save and deliver you. And know that your inheritance in Christ is very real, and in the end, cannot even remotely compare to anything this old world has to offer you.

Looking Back to Jerusalem, or Forward to New Jerusalem?

To develop the idea of not looking back one step further: We know that in Revelation 11:8 our heavenly Father designates the city of Jerusalem, spiritually speaking, as “Sodom and Egypt.” Isn’t that interesting?

This means He considers Jerusalem to be the city of *religious perversion* and *spiritual bondage*. After all, Jerusalem rejected Christ at His first advent, and it continues to reject Christ to this very day. And in the very near future it will play host to the false christ, who will take the whole world into spiritual captivity.

As our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ stated in John 5:43: “*I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.*”

And so it is. The city of Jerusalem will willingly embrace the antichrist, and become the center of religious perversion and bondage. And the people will accept it with open arms, thinking “God” has returned. They will flock to Jerusalem to hear him speak.

This is why, as we learned earlier in this study, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ plans to destroy this very city upon His arrival to this earth at His second advent. Let’s review briefly:

Mark 13:1 And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!

Mark 13:2 And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

As we’ve seen earlier in this study, the phrase “thrown down” in that verse is from the Greek word *kataluo* (Strong’s 2647), meaning *to disintegrate*. In other words, the stones of the great buildings of Jerusalem will be turned to sand by those 150 pound hailstones promised in Revelation 16:21.

Our heavenly Father therefore plans to cleanse *earthly* Jerusalem of Satan’s stench before setting up His eternal kingdom – *heavenly* Jerusalem -- on that same geographical spot, on the first day of the eternity (Rev. 21:1-2).

So what does this have to do with Lot’s wife? Simple: As we’ve learned in this study, our Father’s Word tells us that as Christians we’re not to look back with longing upon the vanishing things of this earth, as did Lot’s wife. But instead, we’re to earnestly and eagerly look FORWARD to the heavenly things, which in this case is the “new Jerusalem.” As it is written in the great book of Revelation about God’s faithful elect:

Rev 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Rev 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Rev 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Yes, new Jerusalem is coming. It's our heavenly Father's promise to His election. Unfortunately, too many Christians today know not their Father's Word, and unwittingly tie themselves spiritually to *earthly* Jerusalem, not being able to "see" the heavenly city to come.

But in the "faith chapter" of the great book of Hebrews, St. Paul tells us of God's servants who faithfully await that eternal city, the New Jerusalem, and have so faithfully awaited it since the time of Abraham:

Heb 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

Abraham obeyed Christ, and left Mesopotamia for the land of Canaan, which he had been promised as an inheritance. It would later be re-named the land of Israel.

Heb 11:9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

His faith in God's word was impeccable. Though the country was strange (i.e., foreign) he knew God's Word would come to pass and that his heirs, Isaac and Jacob, would inherit it.

Heb 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

He didn't look back to the plush Mesopotamian valley he'd come out of. He looked forward to the inheritance He'd been promised. Ultimately, it would be a city "whose builder and maker is God."

Heb 11:11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

The seed line of Abraham began there. Unlikely as it were at their advanced age, Abraham and Sarah believed God when He told them they would be the progenitors of a people who would become an uncountable multitude in the earth. And in believing, Sarah conceived well past the child-bearing age, and to Abraham a child named Isaac was born.

Heb 11:12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

The tribes of Israel sprang forth from his loins, by the Word of God, and spread out across the earth over the centuries – millions upon millions of them over the centuries. And today they still number in the many hundreds of millions, though they've lost sight of their heritage.

Heb 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

The promises of God to Abraham were passed down from generation to generation, and the patriarchs believed and embraced them. And these promises continue to come to pass this very day.

What's more, they had "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth," meaning they knew there was something much better than this old flesh life coming. God had promised a Kingdom to come, with an heir of Abraham's loins on the throne. That would be our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Heb 11:14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

This is not speaking of the earthly nation known as the middle east land of Israel, the *physical* Promised Land. It is speaking of the *heavenly* Promised Land. That's what the patriarchs kept their eyes on, knowing their heavenly Father's Word was true.

Heb 11:15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

Ultimately, the People of Israel were driven out of the middle east land of Israel and scattered throughout what are largely known today as the western Christians nations. It was not on their minds to return to the middle east land of Israel. Only a very small remnant ever returned. God's People knew God had promised something even better. And they looked forward to it with anticipation.

Heb 11:16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

God is not ashamed of those who faithfully await the promise. And what is this heavenly city our Father has prepared for us? Let's find out in the great book of Revelation:

Rev 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Which Jerusalem is your heart tied to? The earthly, which is destined to be destroyed? Or the heavenly one to come, which is eternal? When you think of Jerusalem, do you look back to the earthly? Or forward to the heavenly?

Rev 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Behold! See it! Though it may seem afar off, it isn't any longer. It's almost here. The time is closing in. Look forward to your destiny. And don't look back with longing to that which is destined to be destroyed. The patriarchs didn't look back. They knew God had prepared for them a city. And they looked forward to that time and that city, in faith.

Rev 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

This is what we are to look forward to. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is our heavenly Father (Isaiah 9:6) will rule and reign on this earth from *New Jerusalem* throughout the eternity. The earthly Jerusalem of today will have been destroyed at His second advent. It will be "passed away," never to exist again.

What's more, St. Paul tells us that as faithful Christians, we're *already citizens* of this heavenly Jerusalem. As he explains in the great book of Hebrews chapter 12:

Heb 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

It may not be here yet. But it is a *reality* for God's election. In Christ, we "are come unto mount Sion," and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Look toward the heavenly, the eternal. Not back to the earthly.

Heb 12:23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

That time is coming, beloved. We will all be together with our heavenly Father, in Christ. But we can partake of it even now, through faith. It is what our heavenly Father expects of us.

Heb 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Abel's blood cries out for revenge. Christ's blood redeems and saves those who accept and embrace the new covenant. We look forward to His second coming, when the revenge upon the adversary and his unrepentant lineage will be finalized, and all who have sincerely accepted and embraced the new covenant will be with their Lord and Savior for the eternity.

Heb 12:25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

Turning back to the earthly things is a serious sin, particularly when the antichrist is on this earth. It's a sin our heavenly Father will not tolerate from His elect. Look forward to the spiritual. Look forward to "Him that speaketh from the heaven," whose promises will indeed come to pass exactly as they are written.

Heb 12:26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

That day is coming closer and closer. It is why I did this study.

Heb 12:27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Can *you* be shaken? Or are you standing on the firm ground of your heavenly Father's Word, in faith, looking forward to that which is coming, as Abraham and all of the patriarchs have done?

Heb 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

That Kingdom is on its way. Get your mind right. Remember Lot's wife!

Heb 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.

At the time of that great spiritual shaking, when God speaks through His elect at those trials of Mark 13:7-11, the old, earthly Jerusalem will be destroyed – like Sodom -- so that the new heavenly Jerusalem can take its place at the end of the millennium teaching period.

Yet though it is clearly written, too many Christians today know not their Father's Word, and continue to unwittingly tie themselves spiritually to *earthly* Jerusalem, not being able to "see" the heavenly city to come.

Worse yet, they don't realize they would be considered the "lively stones" of this heavenly city to come (I Peter 2:5) – meaning the *residents* that make up that heavenly city – *if* they would only understand and believe their Father's Word, and put their focus on the right Jerusalem.

This grave error of looking back longingly (spiritually speaking) at the fleshly material Jerusalem that's already been reserved for destruction, rather than looking FORWARD as He has commanded, with earnestness, eagerness and joy to the new and heavenly Jerusalem He has provided for our eternity, places most Christians today solidly in the camp of "Sodom and Egypt" – the very camp of antichrist.

Thankfully, their sin is an unwitting one, rather than a witting one, and they will have the millennium to learn, and to repent, and to choose the eternal Jerusalem under Christ Jesus, before it comes down from heaven.

But you can see that this sin will cause many to lose out on being able to participate in the first resurrection. Most Christians today, knowing not their Father's Word, and having their spiritual heartstrings tied to the earthly Jerusalem, place their souls in dire jeopardy, for they have unwittingly tied themselves spiritually to that earthly city of old which is of the antichrist (and therefore is considered to be spiritually dead by our heavenly Father) rather than to that *spiritual* city to come which is of Jesus Christ (and is therefore is abounding with life eternal).

All of that said, keep in mind that Christ's parable of the fig tree gives temporal Israel – and therefore temporal Jerusalem – the right to exist in the final days of this flesh earth age. Our heavenly Father has ordained it, for two important reasons:

One, so that antichrist will have a seat (throne) to sit upon when he arrives in imitation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ at the sixth trump, and...

Two, so that Christians can be *tested* to see if they've read their heavenly Father's Word with understanding, or have preferred the temporal vain traditions of man in place of Father's eternal Word of Life.

Therefore while we as Christians are not to look back with longing to that which is slated to be destroyed at Christ's second advent, we nevertheless allow it to BE, for now, for it serves our heavenly Father's great purpose and plan.

Rest assured, however, that the time will indeed soon come when God's elect are delivered up to the trials of Mark 13:9-11 under the auspices of the antichrist himself. And at that time the saying of Christ in Matthew 17:20 will come to pass:

Mar 11:23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

At that time, the great city, which is spiritually "Sodom and Egypt," will be destroyed by the spoken Word of God, through the mouths of His election.

As it is written, so it shall come to pass.

The question is, where will *you* be found standing when that time comes? Looking back at that city which has been destroyed? Or looking forward earnestly and with joy to that heavenly city of promise which has been ordained to take its place?

-- End --

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