

Remember Lot's Wife (Luke 17:32)



By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

We have all heard about the runner who looked back. While he was making his final turn that would lead to the finish line, he looked back. However, at the very moment he looked back, and took his eyes off the course, another runner with a burst of speed passed him. As a result, the runner who was in the lead ended up losing the race. Instead of keeping his eyes on the finish line, he looked back and lost the race. In a similar way, Lot's wife looked back and she lost her life.

The Bible says that Lot's wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt. There certainly is a lesson that we can learn from this scene of Scripture. Looking back and longing for the world will render us useless.

Three words that seem to jump out when reading through the New Testament are the words that Jesus spoke in Luke 17:32, "Remember Lot's wife." There must be an important lesson to learn, if Jesus tells us to remember something about Lot's wife. So in this study, we want to "Remember Lot's wife." Of course, there is one obvious point that Jesus is teaching about Lot's wife from this context of Scripture and the point is this; Lot's wife looked back. She looked back to the burning cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and was turned into a pillar of salt. Looking back is something we should never do in our personal lives. Looking back will defeat us and destroy us from a spiritual perspective and make our lives ineffective for the Lord.

Here is the spiritual lesson we are going to investigate in this study.

Looking back and longing for the world will defeat our lives.

This truth is evidenced in two ways.

I. In the practical application

Lot's wife looked back and expressed her longing and heart's desire for Sodom's way of life, which was a worldly and selfish way of living that was independent of God, and which resulted in her downfall and demise. There are some practical applications in this text that we can apply to our personal lives as God's children today.

A. Don't long for the wrong things

Genesis 19:24-26 records these words:

"Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."

The Biblical account reminds us of how God rained fire down from heaven upon these two cities and how Lot's wife disobeyed what God had said about looking back to the two burning cities. Instead of keeping her eyes focused on the mountain and God's place of rescue and blessing, she longed for the worldly loves associated with the cities. She then lingered and looked back.

Alford, says:

"It was a steadfast, earnest look. A wistful look, a lingering, hankering look."

When she looked back, it became evident where her heart really was. She was longing for the old way of life. Her heart was still focused on the worldly things that God had told her to separate from and repudiate. Lot's wife no doubt remembered all of the trinkets and gadgets that she left behind in Sodom. She remembered her position

and popularity. She recalled her material goods and all of the praise that she would get when living in Sodom. No doubt, she began to bewail and moan, as she viewed the mass destruction. Perhaps Mrs. Lot moaned and cried like the merchants will cry when Babylon will be destroyed in the future.

Revelation 18:9 says:

“And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.”

Revelation 18:11 adds:

“And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more.”

Perhaps Lot’s wife was mourning over the massive destruction. But her tears were quickly dried up because the Bible records that she became a pillar of salt. She experienced the chastisement and judgment of God instead of the blessing of God upon her life. Her body experienced an unnatural calamity and she was turned into a pillar of salt. It is very possible and likely that this transmutation was sudden and miraculous. This is because God is a God of the miraculous. In whatever way Lot’s wife became a pillar of salt, it was still a miracle of God. I believe she was immediately chemically changed to salt. But this is difficult to determine from the text.

Some suggest the explosions in the region threw great quantities of its salt deposits into the air, and some of these fell on her and buried her alive under a great pile of salt. Gradually her body would become petrified, “becoming salt” in a similar fashion to those inhabitants of Pompeii who were buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. In fact, to this very day there are many pillars of salt in this area and Arab people have called a number of these pillars of salt, “Lot’s wife.” However, since God did this miracle, it stands to reason that Lot’s wife perished in the destruction of Sodom, by being changed instantaneously, into this pillar or stationary mound of salt. Nevertheless, if God chose to use a slower method of crystallization, then this too would serve His purpose.

One thing we can be sure about is the spiritual lesson for Christians women that is attached to Lot's wife. The lesson is simple. We are not to love the world and hang on to the things of this world, whether it's the world's fame, fortune, and fleeting sins. In doing so, we will experience God's disfavor and chastisement (Heb. 12:6), instead of the true blessing of God.

The erosions of time and weather have no doubt obliterated this salty statue. But the Lord Jesus has embalmed her in the Bible as a warning to all of us concerning the consequences of turning back to the world. Remember Lot's wife!

There are many Christians, who have become crystallized salt deposits, within the Church, at least from a spiritual perspective. They have lost the real blessing of the Lord upon their lives because they have compromised and followed the corruption of the world system. Are you one of these mothers or ladies today? Have you been looking back to the world and allowed sin to control your life? You must break this cycle.

Whenever we long for the world and follow its teachings and patterns, we begin to slowly become a petrified pillar of salt that God cannot use effectively and for His glory. There are many salty Christians in the Church today, who are slowly becoming spiritually changed into a worthless pillar of salt, due to their continual love for the world and their compromise with the world system.

Many Christians are slowly becoming crystallized salt deposits that God cannot use for His greatest glory. They are becoming so entrenched in the cultural system of the world that they begin to lose God's rich blessing and favor upon their lives and leave behind the most important thing, which is their testimony for God's holiness. It's true that God will use what we give to Him, but it's equally true that we can become salty monuments of worldly living, over a period of time, when we allow the world to continually overtake our lives and when we become fashioned or conformed to it (Romans 12:2).

Every mother, wife, and woman must take this to heart today. She must remember Lot's wife! Jesus wants you to sit down and take an inventory of your life today and ask yourself the question: Have I

been longing for the things of this world and looking back over my shoulder at the world system? Maybe you have the taste of salt upon your lips today because you have been longing for the temporary satisfaction of the world and looking back to the old ways of living.

Usually a small taste of the world eventually becomes your downfall over a period of time. You begin to want to adopt some of the secular trends, styles, music, dress, and philosophies of the world, so that you might be better accepted in society, the broader Christian community, and more readily looked upon as an intelligent and up-to-date Christian, instead of a remaining a separated Christian from the world, the flesh, and the devil (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

Dear mother and wife, God has commanded you to not long for the world and look back! Jesus wants you to remember about Lot's wife and not commit the same tragic error that she committed. This was the error of loving the world system and looking back to the world to find enjoyment, acceptance, and physical blessing.

1 John 2:15-16 reminds us:

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

The practical lesson and obvious application that Jesus intends to teach from Lot's wife is that we should not love and long for the things of this world.

James 4:4 adds these scathing words:

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

The world is a set of values and vices which are against God. It's a system of plans, purposes, programs, pleasures, pride, and personal activities which are against God's will and purpose for our lives. Like Lot's wife, when we long to keep and treasure worldly fame and possessions, we will ultimately become a pillar of salt, which for the Christian means that our life will become defeated and ineffective for

God. When we long for the material or any worldly thing, we will find ourselves overcome by it. If we love our worldly possessions more than God, and look back to the world's storehouse of treasures, we will find ourselves overcome and defeated.

Joshua 7:21 records Achan's downfall when he longed for earthly treasures and looked at them! "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it."

Ladies, what are you trying to hide from God? I've got news for you; you can't hide anything from God. We can't hide our possessions and worldly things from God's holy site. The lesson of Lot's wife is very easy to understand. We are not to long for worldly things and end up looking back! We should not allow your love for worldly things to take us back to the world system. This is because the world will overtake, control, and defeat our life every time. It will steer us away from what God wants for our life.

Jesus reminds us about Lot's wife. The Lord intends to give an illustration of a woman mentioned in Scripture, who longed for worldly things and then looked back, experiencing utter defeat and demise. "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32). This is the second shortest verse in the Bible. These words stick out on the pages of Holy Writ and will always be a constant reminder to every Christian mother and wife that she should refuse to look back to the old way of life, to the world for satisfaction, since in the end, she will only find defeat and the chastisement of God.

Lot's wife is a picture of a woman who longed for worldly things, and then looked back to the world system. She loved all of the pomp, prestige and pageantry of Sodom. She remembered the days of luxury and financial blessing. She remembered when things were easier. She remembered her old friends, her old ways, her old activities, her old loves and her old patterns of living, which were apart from God's leading and blessing. Her love for the world caused her to look back to Sodom as it burned down to the ground. And as a result, Lot's wife became a pillar of salt.

Let us not take this lesson with a grain of salt. No pun intended! What a tragic event this was for Mr. Lot and what an important spiritual lesson this becomes for every mother and wife today. Once again, the lesson is this. Don't long for worldly things and look back to the old way of life. Don't look back to the world's idea of success and the world's popularity, philosophies, viewpoints, attitudes, goals, dress codes, and practices which are against God and His holy will for your life.

Ladies, looking back to the world will cause you to become entangled in the culture and follow the world's standards instead of God's will. There are many fleshly and worldly things that you can long for which in the end will make you look back to those very things that will cause you to stumble. There are many things in the world that can overtake the hearts and lives of women today. Anything from pride, popularity, personal gain, and private sins, which nobody knows about, except you, can overtake your spiritual life and bring you to a place of spiritual defeat and demise. Ladies, don't be like the children of Israel, who looked back to Egypt, which is a type of the world.

Numbers 11:5

"We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick."

When you long for the old fleshly ways of living and look back to the world for fulfillment, you will lose God's rich blessing upon your life. Lot's wife had a secret love affair with the world and it eventually came out when she looked back to Sodom.

B. Don't linger behind



Genesis 19:17 adds to the record of the historical account:

“And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.”

God told Mr. and Mrs. Lot to escape to the mountain and not look back or else they would be consumed in the fiery devastation of the two cities. They were also told by God to not remain in the plain. This was a dangerous place to be since God’s judgment would also encompass this area. And yet, this is obviously where Lot’s wife experienced her judgment. She was lagging behind the rest, as we will see, and it’s here that she experienced God’s judgment.

She wanted to remain, as close as she could, to Sodom, without getting burned! But this kind of attitude will eventually burn you anyway! Obviously was wandering in what we might call “no man’s land.” The spiritual lesson is this. When you try to find “the plain” of the *middle ground* between the world and God’s will, it’s then that you will end up getting caught in God’s chastisement. Christians should not roam on the plain or take the middle ground. It’s here they are susceptible to God’s chastening hand. You cannot please God when you try to live close to the world. You will only experience certain hardship and God’s displeasure.

Lot’s family was informed by God to not look behind themselves as they went out of the cities and into the mountain. God did not want them to look over their shoulder lest they be judged for loving the world system that was represented in the two cities. The family needed to obey the Lord and refuse to linger and look back in the direction of the two cities. To do so would bring God’s chastisement upon them. Sadly, we see how Lot’s wife allowed her past worldly love and attachment to these cities to cause her to linger behind the others. As a result, she looked back and become a pillar of salt.

Why did Lot’s wife look back? It’s because she was lingering behind the others and she fell in the way she was leaning. A tree that is leaning in one direction will likely fall in that direction during a severe wind storm. It will collapse in the direction that it is leaning. This is what happened to Lot’s wife. When you linger too long at a

temptation, sooner or later you will give in to that temptation. Ladies, have you been leaning in a direction that might cause you to stumble and fall? You need to take a look at your life.

Why was the Mrs. lagging behind Mr. Lot?

There are three reasons for her lingering.

1. Losing sight of the husband's leadership

Ladies, please note how Mrs. Lot lagged behind Mr. Lot. This is an important spiritual lesson to see as we study this text in Genesis.

Genesis 19:26 records:

“But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.”

In other words, Lot's wife was not walking with him; she was behind him. She was no doubt a considerable distance behind Lot and the rest of the family. She chose not to be with him and follow his leadership. Men, I'm disturbed at the fact that Lot did not have the hand of his wife in his own hand. I'm disturbed that Lot did not have his wife by his side. Why didn't Lot keep his dear wife by his side? As men, we are responsible to lead our families out of Sodom and all worldly living. Men, take you stand and take your wife and family with you!

Let me suggest that Lot's wife was disobedient at this point. I'm sure Lot was concerned about her. After all, the Lord said you had better get out of this place as fast as you can. And if his wife was way behind him in the plain, it's because she chose not follow Lot and the righteous path he chose to take at this point of his life. In fact, even while Lot was in Sodom, he spirit was grieved at the worldliness and wickedness of the city.

2 Peter 2:7-8 reminds us of this truth:

And (God) delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;)

Ladies, God expects you to follow your man and not lag or linger behind him. Lot was following God's command and will for his life. As a result, Lot's wife should have gladly followed him. But her heart was not with her husband. It was with the world.

Of course, your husband is not perfect. No man is perfect. Lot surely was not. But God still expects you to follow that man as he seeks to do what God says. You must stand by His side and not try to do your own thing in life. God has not given you the right to live independent of your husband's leadership. God will not truly bless your life and marriage, if you seek to forsake the pattern of submission to the man (Eph. 5:22-23). God's advice is important. Don't lag behind your husband's leadership. Don't try to usurp your husband's authority. Follow his leadership.

2. Losing spiritual alertness over one's life

Lot's wife did not possess any real spiritual alertness and this is why she ended up looking back to the burning cities. Again, the words "looked back" (Gen. 19:26) are one Hebrew Word that has the connotation to look intently at something or to give it deep consideration. This is what Lot's wife did when she looked back to the burning cities. The lesson is this; when you begin to linger behind and then look back to the world, becoming captivated and captured by its outward success and material goods, it's because you have not maintained your spiritual alertness. You were not staying on top of your spiritual life. You failed to remain alert from a spiritual perspective.

Jesus said in Matthew 26:41:

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

When we lose our spiritual alertness and look back to the world, we will find ourselves being overcome by the fleeting things of this life and world. This woman's salty monument gives us the eternal reminder that the world is passing away and has no lasting value.

1 John 2:17

“And the world passeth away (is passing away), and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

Everything that is worldly and carnal is passing away as we speak for it has no future value. When a bank is breaking, smart people do not deposit in it. When the foundation is tottering, intelligent builders do not proceed. Concentrating on this world is like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

1 Corinthians 3:15 reminds us of the futility of worldly things:

“If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

When you lose your spiritual alertness and edge in life, you will begin to invest in worldly and non-eternal things that will bring no eternal reward. We need to be reminded of the importance of eternal things over temporal things! When we lose our spiritual alertness and begin longing for carnal or worldly things which will not last when we stand before the Lord and are rewarded.

A man bought a new hunting dog. Eager to see how he would perform, he took him out one day, hoping to track down big game. No sooner had they gotten into the woods when the animal picked up the trail of a bear. Excitedly the hunter followed close behind. Then suddenly the dog stopped, sniffed the ground, and headed in a different direction. He had caught the smell of a deer that had crossed the path of the bear. A few moments later he halted again, this time he was captivated by the scent of a rabbit that had crossed the path of the deer.

So on and on it went, until finally the breathless hunter caught up with his dog, only to find him barking triumphantly down the hole of a field mouse. Many new Christians start out with the high resolve of keeping the Savior first in their lives. But it isn't long before their whole attention is diverted to things of temporal importance. This is what happened to Lot's wife. Her mind and heart were captivated by the world.

Even as a Christian woman, you must beware of looking back and going back in to the world system. You may not like the way that you will end up! Salt pillars are definitely not in style! Remember Lot's wife! If you want to become a worthless pillar of salt that amounts to nothing for God and your family, then just continue on the same path. However, if you want your life to count for God and eternity, then stop looking back to the world and start looking ahead to the future.

3. Losing our spiritual edge on life

What happens when we lose our spiritual edge in life and our commitment to God?

a. Covetousness

Lot's wife allowed her heart to covet earthly treasures.

Jesus taught in Matthew 6:19-21:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Where is your treasure today? Remember that what we long for in life is what we live for on a daily basis. Jesus taught "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If God has our heart, He will have our hands (service). It all begins in the heart.

Mark 12:30

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."

Love for God will keep you from becoming an ineffective pillar of salt. Ladies, when you love God your sites will be on heavenly investments (living for God and eternal reward) instead of earthly investments (living for self and earthly pursuits or accumulation). Beware! We can lose the things that money can never buy, when we

look back to the world, with all of its glory, pride, lust, and covetousness.

It was Jim Elliot, martyred missionary by the Auca Indians, who said: "He is no fool who loses what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

b. Carnality

Lot's wife lived a carnal (fleshly) life and loved the world more than her family. This is evident by the way she lingered behind her husband and family while escaping from Sodom (Gen. 19:26).

1 Corinthians 3:3

"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

Romans 8:7

"Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

Ladies, don't choose to love the carnal or fleshly things of this world over your husband and family. You may have your sights on something that is allegedly bigger than your husband and family, but God says that the godly woman will love and cherish her husband and children more than her bank account, job, new car, and new home.

Titus 2:4

"That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children."

When mothers look back to the carnal delights of the world, it keeps them from motherhood and this results in their shame. One of the greatest tragedies in America today is that mother is not home!

c. Carelessness

Lot's wife became careless. She needed to run away from the world instead of lingering and imbibing the world's passing allurements.

Maybe you need to set aside some weights that have been weighing you down in life? If so, follow the advice of God's Word.

Hebrews 12:1

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

Lot's wife *longed* for the things of the world, she then *lingered* behind, and then she *looked!* She had become careless and found herself being overcome by the world. Beware of this. Ladies, there is no time for lingering. There is not time to be careless. There is only time for running!

As a mother and woman, you are called upon by God to flee the world system with all of its enticements and philosophies, which try and keep you from motherhood, and running an effective Christian race, as a woman of God. You must run away from the world and all of its allurements today and live victoriously in the Lord's power and grace (Eph. 6:10). There needs to be drive and determination in your heart to get as far away from the world as you can, which is seeking to crystallize your life, as a useless heap of salt. This brings us to our final note of application.

d. Crystallization



Lot's wife became a crystallized monument of disobedience. She became a monument to the way she lived. Lot's wife became a monument of rebellion and disobedience to God. Ladies, God wants the opposite from your life. He wants you to become a monument of obedience. Here is a question of application. What kind of legacy are you leaving behind for your children and grandchildren? What kind of monument will you ultimately leave behind when you have passed off this earthly scene?

Remember Lot's wife! As a mother and wife, what kind of monument are you going to leave behind? It's far greater to be a monument and legacy of rubies instead of a monument of salt (worldly living).

Proverbs 31:10

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies."

Ladies, it's time to stop lingering and start living for God. Don't allow the world, the flesh, and the devil to keep winning out over your life. Remember Lot's wife! Don't live in defeat. Instead, live in God's victory through Jesus Christ.

1 John 5:4

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith."

There is a legend told that pictures a high mountain on whose top had a palace filled with all kinds of treasures and gems. Men and women were climbing up the sides of this mountain in order to reach the top. But legend has it that whenever someone looked back over their shoulder they were turned into stone. And in the legend there were thousands of evil spirits around the people. They were whispering, sometimes shouting and flashing their own treasures before the climbers, in order to distract them and draw their eyes away from the treasure at the top of the mountain.

In a similar way, Satan and his demons (Eph. 6:12) would want mothers and women to look back into the world system, and take their eyes off the heavenly treasure or reward that awaits them in the future (Matt. 6:20), as they seek to keep their eyes on Christ, and surrender to His will and way for their lives. Dear ladies, keep your

hand on the plough and do not look back. In the end, you will be rewarded with wonderful treasures and gems (God's eternal reward), when you get to the top of the mountain! In short, God will reward you for your faithfulness in godly living and motherhood.

Hebrews 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.”

B. Don't look back.

This is when tragedy struck! The problem arose when Lot's wife looked back to her past and this is what brought about her defeat. There is an important practical lesson for all of us to apply to our lives. As a Christian, Paul the apostle reminds us to not look back. In other words, we should not dwell on our past lives, which may have been riddled with worldly sins, carnal vices, or some other difficulties.

Philippians 3:13 reminds us:

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.”

The Bible says we are not to look back and live in the past. We must look forward and go on and find the abundant life that Jesus promises (John 10:10). Instead of looking back at our past sins, worldliness, discouragements, or whatever dark spot we might have in our past, we are reminded to keep “looking unto Jesus” (Heb. 12:2) and let His life inspire us to live and walk by faith.

When we look back to our past, we will only find defeat. Don't look back! If you look back, you will eventually go back! Lot's wife is a wonderful reminder to each of us that we should decide to follow Jesus and there should be no turning back!

“I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
No turning back, no turning back.

Though I may wonder, I still will follow;
Though I may wonder, I still will follow;
Though I may wonder, I still will follow;
No turning back, no turning back.

The world behind me, the cross before me;
The world behind me, the cross before me;
The world behind me, the cross before me;
No turning back, no turning back.

Though none go with me, still I will follow;
Though none go with me, still I will follow;
Though none go with me, still I will follow;
No turning back, no turning back.

Will you decide now to follow Jesus?
Will you decide now to follow Jesus?
Will you decide now to follow Jesus?
No turning back, no turning back”

Ladies, remember Lot's wife!

Looking back to the world will defeat our lives. This truth is evidenced in one more way.

II. In the perishing of Lot's wife

A young minister of the Gospel was confronted—as the congregation expected—with an able young skeptic, Burt Olney. At the close of the first service Olney said, 'You did well, but, you know, I don't believe in the infallibility of the Bible.' It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment,' was the young man's calm assertion. 'I can prove to you there is no such thing as a judgment after death,' declared the skeptic.

'But men do die,' the young preacher declared, 'for it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.' 'But that's no argument,' the skeptic protested. 'Let's get down to business and discuss this matter in regular argument form.' The minister shook his head. 'I am here to preach the Word of God and not to argue over it.'

Olney, annoyed, turned away with the remark, 'I don't believe you know enough about the Bible to argue about it.'

Perhaps you are right,' was the calm rejoinder, 'but please remember this—"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment".' The very tree-toads wicked Olney heard on the way home sang the verse, and the stream he crossed, and the frogs seemed to croak, 'Judgment, judgment, judgment.' The next morning, he called at the parsonage. 'I've come to see you about that verse of Scripture you gave me last night,' he said. 'I've spent a terrible night with those words burning their way into me. I can't get rid of them. Tell me what I must do to be saved. I've got to get rid of this torture.' When he left, he was a child of God through faith in the finished work of Christ.

The setting of Luke seventeen is in a prophetic context that deals with the future Tribulation Period and God's judgment that will occur in conjunction with the Second Coming of Christ to planet earth. In Luke 17:26-31 we are given a word of warning concerning the days prior to Christ's return to planet earth, when He will establish His Messianic Kingdom and judge the unsaved still living on earth.

Luke 17:26-31 records:

"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed *them* all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. 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."

Notice the threefold progression in these verses.

- a. Living independent of God – 26-28

The signs and conditions of the world prior to Christ's return to earth are clearly marked for us in the Gospel accounts. They represent

those things that would be taking place in the world prior to Christ's return to earth. Similar signs were occurring in the days of Noah and Lot ("Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot" – Luke 17:28). The signs that would precede Christ's Second Coming to earth were also seen occurring in the days of Lot before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The mention of Lot's days sets the background for Jesus' statement about Lot's wife.

In the days prior to Christ's return to earth, people would be living totally independent of God, as they did in the days of Noah and in the days of Lot (Luke 17:28). During these past days, people lived their own lives and forget about God ("they die eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded" – Luke 17:28). The actions stated here are not sinful in and of themselves; however, what Jesus is teaching is that these people lived their lives without any regard for God and accountability to Him. They went on with their daily lives without considering God's salvation and purpose for their lives. We do know from the historical accounts that these people lived for self, sin, and sinister things. All of this was independent of God. Jesus says that this is the way it will be when He returns to earth as the Son of man.

Luke 17:30

"Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

In other words, people will be living for themselves and then God's judgment will fall upon them with Christ's Second Coming to earth. The indifferent people of Sodom (eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building) were not prepared for God's judgment (Genesis 19). They were living in sin, oblivious to God. Therefore, they were destroyed. Jesus was teaching that people should not be attached to their material things at the time of the coming of the earthly Kingdom for they, like Lot's wife, will be judged accordingly.

In fact, Jesus taught that people who are working or relaxing on their roofs (many of which are flat in Palestine) should not try to get things out of their houses. Nor should those working in the fields go to their houses to save their possessions. Any delay could be fatal. This was a warning to the Jews who would experience the persecution of the Antichrist prior to Christ's Second Coming.

2. Looking back to the world - 31

Luke 17:31 reveals:

“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.”

When a person wants to live an independent life, they will look to the world. Similar to the experience of wife, the Jews will need to flee their homes in Jerusalem or the surrounding area and not look back to their home. In the days prior to Christ's return to earth the Jewish people of God are warned about remaining in their homes to pack their belongings and those who are working in the field are warned not to “return back” (Luke 17:31) to their homes to get food, clothing or material possessions because of the persecution of the Antichrist.

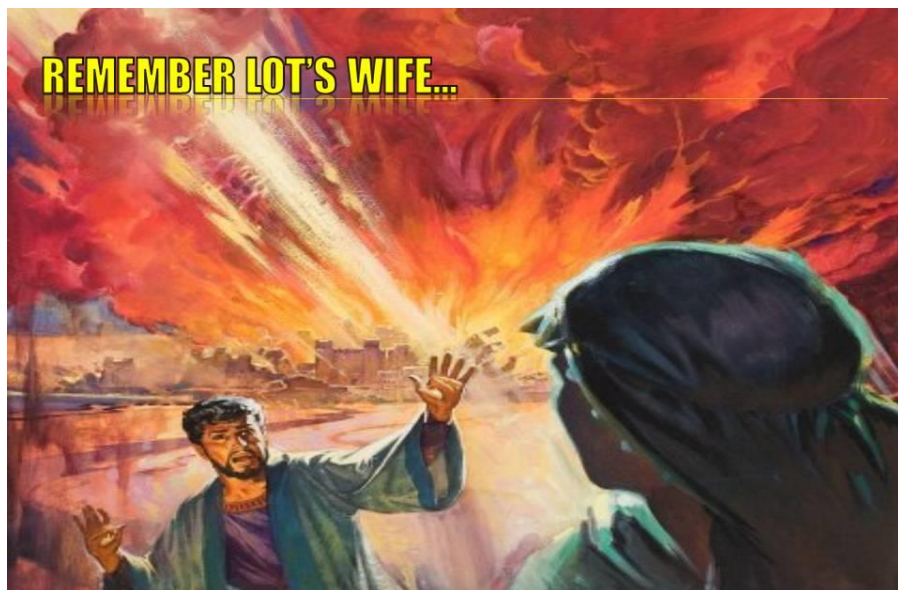
At the middle of the Tribulation Period the Antichrist will break His covenant with the nation of Israel (Dan. 9:27) and begin to persecute them severely. Jesus said that when the Jews see the abomination of desolation take place, when they see him erect a statue of himself in the Tribulation temple, it's then they must flee into the wilderness and not take the time to look back or return back to their homes for any material possessions (“his stuff” – Luke 17:31).

Friend, the possessions that we have and which we often treasure are termed as “stuff.” My wife and I had a yard sale and the items we had to sell were nothing more than “stuff.” However, many times the “stuff” or material things that we have in life have a way of capturing our hearts and overtaking our time and usefulness for the Lord. Material things, money, and making money can come in the way of what God wants us to do and keep us from the Master's will for our lives.

Let's just remember that what we own and seek to obtain is nothing more than “stuff” which has no eternal value. Your clothing, homes, campers, motorcycles, guns, fishing rods, and golf clubs are just stuff! They should not rule your life and keep you from serving the Lord. If they do, get rid of them!

In a similar verses found in Matthew 24:15-18, Jesus stated:
“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes”

Jesus reminds the Jewish people that when the Antichrist starts his persecution against them, they will have no time to pack. They will have no time to return to their homes to get their belongings. They will have to immediately flee into the wilderness to avoid being persecuted by the Antichrist. If they would look back and try to return home for any personal items, which they could not give up, it would result in their own personal judgment under the hands of the Antichrist. Therefore, the Jews will need to flee into the wilderness in the coming day and not look back at their personal gain or material possessions. They will need to keep focused on the future, what lies ahead for them, and not look back and cherish their worldly belongings. To “look back” would mean their sure judgment, even as Lot’s wife was judged when she looked back.



It’s in this prophetic context of judgment that Jesus spoke of Lot’s wife and said, “Remember Lot’s wife” (Luke 17:32). The Jews living in the future, like Lot’s wife, are commanded to get out of their own city (Jerusalem), leave their possessions behind, and not look back. They

were commanded to forsake their personal wealth, agenda, and goals, and not return to their former ways of living. Doing so would mean their sure doom and demise. Any delay could be fatal.

Lot's wife looked back and experienced God's judgment and wrath. Luke 17:32 seems to join together the thought of the Jews looking back to their own city (Jerusalem) in the future, who want to hang on to their worldly goods, and also looks ahead to the judgment of God that falls on sinners at the Second Coming for living lives that are independent of God. This is our final point.

3. Leaving the earth in judgment - 29-30, 33

We should remember Lot's wife because of what Jesus taught in the following verses. The unsaved are going to one day leave this world at the Second Coming and be judged by Jesus Christ. Let's get the picture of judgment in our thinking.

Luke 17:29-30 records these solemn words:

"But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

Luke 17:33 adds how these people lived independently of God:

"Until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all."

This is judgment! As Sodom and Gomorrah were judged and the people in Noah's day were judged, something similar is going to occur at the Second Coming. Unsaved people still living on earth will experience God's wrath and meet their doom in judgment. In the midst of this worldly independent lifestyle, God called Lot and his family to leave the world, or the city of Sodom behind them, and not look back! Why? It was because God was about to judge these cities.

In the context of the Second Coming, we learn an important lesson about this story. Like Lot's wife, many people are interested in earthly things more than eternal things, including the salvation of their own soul. Instead of taking God's advice, they love the luxuries of the

world and in the end die the sinner's death without Christ, without salvation, and without hope (Heb. 9:27).

Jesus taught earlier in Luke 9:25:

“For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?”

Ladies, remember Lot's wife! Although Lot's wife was taken almost by force out of Sodom, her heart remained in the city. This was indicated by the fact that she turned back. She was out of Sodom, but Sodom was not out of her! She failed to repent of her sin, live in open rebellion against God, and did not trust in God's plan of salvation.

It seems clear that Lot's wife was not a genuine believer who had embraced God's saving grace. Therefore, her perishing is a reminder of the fate of the unsaved or lost.

Jesus spoke the words of Luke 17:32-33 in the context of the Tribulation Period and His Second Coming: “Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.”

Jesus is talking about the danger of *false profession* in this context. In the future day of the Tribulation Period, the person who chooses to “save his life” from hardship and difficulty by taking the mark of the beast and following the Antichrist, instead of the true Christ, “shall lose it” in the sense that they will experience Christ's judgment at the Second Coming. However, if another person chooses to “lose his life” through identifying with Christ and His righteous cause during this dreadful time (Tribulation Period) and lives to the Second Advent, they shall “preserve it.” This means they will be saved to enter the Millennium at the time of the Second Coming. Instead of being judged, their lives will be preserved to enter the earthly theocracy or Millennial Kingdom.

Why will these people be saved at the Second Coming? It's because their transformation of life demonstrates before God that they are regenerate, or that they possess God's life and nature (Matt. 25:31-46). Of course, we need to remember that losing one's life to Christ's

cause or living a righteous life is not the way of one's salvation but the *proof* of one's salvation. This is all Jesus is teaching.

Lot's wife is compared to those people who will NOT be preserved to enter the Millennial, but who will lose their lives and perish in God's judgment, at the Second Coming, due to a lack of interest in spiritual and righteous living. Their lives will condemn them and they will be taken to judgment at the Second Coming.

The obvious and best interpretation of Luke 17:32-33 is taken from what follows in Luke 17:34-35, which we have already seen is placed in the context of the Second Coming.

"I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left."



At the Second Coming, the UNSAVED person who is taken will be judged; like Lot's wife. However, the person who is left will enter the earthly Millennial Kingdom (Matt. 24:36-51), like Lot and the rest of his family. Since those who are taken are judged, at Christ's Second Coming, this becomes an appropriate comparison to Lot's wife. Lot's wife was taken in judgment, since she

sought to save her life from identification with a righteous way and holy lifestyle.

Lot's wife was characterized by a worldly and unrighteous life which marks her out as an unbeliever (1 John 3:7-8) whose desire to look back became a sign of her true heart and motivation in life. A similar reference to someone who looked back to live for the world is found in what Jesus said in Luke 9:62: "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

We have no indication at all that Lot's wife was saved and what we are told about her is negative. Her heart was in Sodom. She loved the world and her love for God and righteousness was not present in her heart, as it was in Lot's. 2 Peter 2:7 reads that God "delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." It does not mention that Lot's wife was just and delivered from the fate of these twin cities.

Lot's wife sought to save her life from identifying with the righteous way of living and by doing so, demonstrated her heart's desire and longing for the world over salvation (Matt. 7:20). This gives clear evidence of her unregenerate state before God (Matt. 12:33). As a result of her unsaved life, she perished in God's judgment.



A pillar of salt named "Lot's wife" is located near the Dead Sea at Mount Sodom in Israel. It is a reminder to all of what occurred long ago when God judged these two cities. Ladies, remember Lot's wife! Don't forget what happened to Lot's wife. She was judged and missed out on God's wonderful plan of salvation.

A Christian physician was once obliged to take refuge from an approaching storm in a grocery store which also contained a shop where people could purchase beer and wine. Two drunken men were present, and as the lightning flashed, they poured forth such a volley of fearful oaths that finally the storekeeper said, "Gentlemen, I am no Christian, but I want to say that your awful cursing is too much for me. God will strike you dead right here with a stroke of lightning if you do not hush your blasphemous oaths."

The leader of the two rolled up his sleeves, went to the door. cursed God, and defied Him. At that moment a blinding flash of lightning descended with a flame of fire. Quickly the light was gone and only smoke remained. In a moment that, too, had disappeared, and there lay God's defiant sinner in a heap, just as an empty garment when let loose would fall. The physician helped to lay the man out, and he said he did not believe there was a bone two inches long left unbroken in his body.

The lesson Jesus gave of Lot's wife is one that is related to God's wrath and judgment. This is why every woman must look deep in their hearts today and reflect on the matter of their salvation. Are you saved from God's wrath and judgment through Jesus Christ? Have you expressed faith alone in Jesus Christ to save your soul from hell?

Romans 10:13 gives this wonderful promise:
"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."