

REMEMBER

She put up with a lot you know. He was a such a loser sometimes, ... but then there were times she was proud of him. He'd made a lot of money, and they were comfortable. Well, she was anyway. He was such a whiner though. How many times had she listened to his mournful tirades about the immoral conduct of the neighborhood. Why couldn't he just give it a rest? She'd move if he really wanted to, but then what about the girls? She'd miss them and their families. Everything was just so comfortable, so easy compared to those early days. She finally had her home together. God had truly blessed them.

But this was the limit! These two men with their story of impending doom. How could he believe them. Now, here he was out in the middle of the night, running around town, upsetting the neighbors and trying to wake our kids up. Surely, they're going to think he's out of his mind or that he's joking. He's such a jokester you know. He'd already caused such a commotion earlier just outside the door. She really had to talk some sense into him. Everything was going pretty well – there's no way God was going to do what these strangers say – doom and gloom – really! At least not anytime soon.

You know, of all that Jesus said, of all that He taught, besides the general admonishment to hold to it dearly, there was only one person,

place or thing that He specifically warned his disciples to remember.

We don't even know her name. Yet, her example is so important for us to consider that Christ made it a point to use her in describing the most sober, serious warning he gave his disciples.

“Remember Lot's wife.”

Why? What happened? What is it about her that we should keep in mind? Recall, Jesus was speaking to His disciples, not the Pharisees or any other antagonists. This warning was and is for those who follow Him and look for His return. Let's consider it more closely:

In Luke 17, Jesus says, *“And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of man.”* Then, he specifies that they ate, drank, married and were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark. After this, He continues, *“Likewise, as it was also in the days of Lot, they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, but on the day Lot went out of Sodom...”* In both cases, God's judgment came suddenly.

Many good Bible teachers point to the symbolism of Noah representing the Jewish believers during the Tribulation who will be preserved in the midst of God's judgment as well as Lot representing the mostly gentile Church who is taken out of the path of judgment. In both cases, the people were engaged in purely worldly activities so to speak. In Noah's day they basically fed their faces and followed their passions. In Lot's day, they fed their faces and expanded their earthly treasures. They're doing what we'd generally consider to be routine activities.

However, there's no sense of awareness portrayed of what's coming.

But Lot's wife was different – different from the indifferent. She knew! She knew what was coming.

Lot returned to his house distraught. He wasn't able to get his children to believe him. Was it because of the way he'd raised them? Were they so into their own little lives that his voice had lost its authority? Had they never understood his desire for God because of his compromises? Would God really destroy this place? Maybe he was over reacting. Maybe this was another of his 'hyper-spirituality fits' that his wife disdained so much. Maybe... ..

The men in his house stressed that he had to leave anyway. Maybe they'd change their minds... How could this be?! He knew they were right... He knew he was compromising in being here, but... but... He putz'ed around, pacing the floor while his wife gave him 'that look.' Could this really be happening NOW??

God was warning them. Yes..... he knew that was surely true.

Just then, the men grabbed him and the others by the hand and pulled them out of the house beyond the city gates. “Head for the mountains!” they exclaimed.

Lot whimpered and argued, persuading them to spare the little town of Zoar where they finally headed off to. Just as they arrived, fire rained out of the sky behind them upon the whole plain. The noise was deafening. The ground

shook violently, and the blaze nearly seared their backs.

It is at this point in the story that Christ's admonition focuses our attention. The original Hebrew uses some interesting words to describe what happened to Lot's wife. Of course, you all recall that she looked back at Sodom and turned into a pillar of salt, at least that's what the translators have given us. That may indeed be the case. However, there is another viewpoint that is worthy of presenting.

She was behind the others. The language implies a reluctance, even a resistance to going forward. She evidently lingered behind. When she looked back, the word 'nabat' is used in the imperfect tense and is causative. That means that her looking back was not just a glance or sudden action. There was something going on in her for which looking back was simply part -- an ongoing process if you would. The imperfect adds colour and movement by suggesting the “process” preliminary to its completion – it implies a 'condition' versus a single occasion. Causative means that when the fire hit, it was like a switch – almost like she had to look.

Here, the translators have made the Hebrew word pronounced 'n@tsib' which comes from the word pronounced 'natsab' pillar. It literally means to stand, to station oneself, or to take a stand. Because of this, some have asserted that she finally stopped following and 'made her stand'. It would imply that she had been reluctant all along and finally

got fed up or hard hearted about the situation.

The word for salt is pronounced 'melach' and comes from the word pronounced 'malach' which means to tear away or to vanish. Some teachers argue that this is a better translation than salt since Jesus in describing the last days events in Luke 17:34-36 follows His warning to remember this woman by three examples of people being taken or potentially vanishing. The potential problem with this is that the implication in Christ's teaching is that the godly vanish rather than the doubtful. (Though, it could be a matter of perspective.)

In any event, the alternative translation would be that she lingered behind until she finally stopped. The booming judgment caused her to turn and look longingly upon Sodom. As a result, she was taken away in the disaster, perhaps vaporized by flames.

Whatever the case, we can be assured that Lot's wife:

Was in relationship with a vexed but sincere believer – Lot
Was clearly and divinely warned of the impending judgment
Was initially delivered into safety but did not take advantage of it
Was not in agreement inwardly with the escape
Was inwardly attached to Sodom
Was separated forever from her escaping loved ones when judgment came

So what does this mean for us? Recall, Jesus was speaking to believers, not enemies when he warned us to remember her. Let's consider the points just above.

First, we must understand that a relationship with a believer does not make one a believer. If you've been bringing your wife or hubby to church, that's great, but they must understand – that does not mean they're ready for the Lord's return.

Next, like Lot's wife, God is faithfully warning this generation of His coming. End time prophecies have been fulfilled before our very eyes. Meanwhile, many of God's messengers are faithfully proclaiming the time is at hand. You'd have to be deaf to the world around you to miss it. Christ is coming at any moment!

Next, the preaching and teaching of the gospel is what has set us outside the gate so to speak, but if we do not take heed to it, if we do not accept its truth and obey, we are only failing to take advantage of the deliverance God offers. Many times and in many ways He has taken us by the hand and led us out. At some point, some of us may need to get it and get going – living 'full-on' for Jesus.

Next, 'a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.' The change must be inward first and foremost. Going through the motions of Christianity won't save anyone. Even if you've been to seminary or are related to the minister -- at some point, the unconvinced will say, "Enough is enough. I'm not going any further with this." I believe it's quite possible that God will bring the whole church to this point soon – the decision point – i.e. what do we believe – really believe? Are you willing to "lose you life" for it? That's the point Jesus makes immediately after His warning about Lot's wife. *"Whoever seeks to save his life will*

lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it." (Luke 17:33)

Next, we must answer the question, "Where is our treasure?" Is it here? Just how important is that home or job or relationship to you? More than your affection for your Creator and Savior? What are we longing for inwardly? I can't tell you how many sincere Christians have told me, "I'm not ready yet for the Lord to come." or "I don't think He'll come soon. Anyway, I've got too much at stake here and now to be thinking about that." or "The whole idea of the rapture and all just scares me." If our treasure is in this world and it in any way overshadows our treasure in heaven, our heart will 'long for Sodom' so to speak, just like Lot's wife.

Finally, Jesus told his disciples specifically to pray that they would be counted worthy to escape the

judgments of the tribulation and to stand before Him in heaven. He said, *"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."* (Luke 21:34-36)

Yes, some will be left behind ... if they are like Lot's wife. True believers? – no, I don't believe that. But let's have our houses in order -- in truth, in confidence, in sincerity. These are the days. Even now, God's messengers are ushering people out by the hand. Let's not hang out inwardly in Sodom! Remember.