



Prophecy in Perspective

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An Email Newsletter

Our Times - Prophecy in current events

Sodom and Gomorrah in Prophecy

In ancient times, God visited Abraham and let him know that he was on His way to visit Sodom to determine its state of corruption and wickedness. In the words of Genesis 18:20-21:

"And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know."

It seems that the days of Sodom are very much upon us here in America. Some of the supporters of the homosexual lifestyle and same-sex marriage around the country had certainly made themselves known after the president of Chick-fil-A, Dan Cathy, simply stated that he was in support of the biblical definition of marriage. I believe they were emboldened by our President who made a formal declaration to the nation about a month ago that he now believed same-sex marriage was ok. I believe that was the signal for fellow supporters of same-sex marriage to take this opportunity to see how much support they have in the U.S., by speaking out with extreme indignation. Some city mayors exposed their anti-Christian spirit when they threatened to keep Chick-fil-A from getting licenses or building stores in their cities. This action would have been illegal. But, interestingly, and revealingly, our President, who seems to be able to find a microphone to speak out on behalf of others, had nothing to say in support of this Christian organization and their rights of freedom of speech.

I rejoiced to see the great support of tens of thousands who turned out on Wednesday, August 1st to eat at Chick-fil-A in support of both free speech and of biblical marriage. Seeing the anger of liberals exhibited toward Mr. Cathy and toward the Chick-fil-A company for their clear stand and financial support for organizations that up-hold biblical marriage, I felt the Lord was speaking to our nation a solemn warning. The pattern we witnessed at that time followed the clearly revealed pattern of Genesis 18 and 19, and of Luke 17:28-37 where Jesus spoke about the times nearing His return:

"It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left. [Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.] And answering they *said to Him, 'Where, Lord?' And He said to them, 'Where the body is, there also the vultures will be gathered.'" (NASB)



It is very interesting to me the specificity and detail with which the Lord, Jesus Christ, predicted the character of the times which would just precede His return. We have just read how, in the last days we can expect to see people "**eating and drinking, buying, and selling, planting, and building.**" These activities were characteristic of the times in the days of Sodom. Notice they were, on the one hand, normal activities, but on the other hand, these were activities out of which extreme evil and wickedness would arise in society and which, would be relatively unnoticed by the majority of citizens.

Satan is skillful at making evil look normal. One of the devil's methods is to subtly twist what is normal into what is abnormal. He is corrupting normal things like marriage. Satan is appealing to the consciences of masses of people who have been immersed in secular/humanistic and New Age philosophy. Discerning people, however, see that things are not as they should be, but wickedness is greatly increasing. This is happening by educators removing references to traditional marriage and religion from textbooks, and by teaching socialistic and global citizenship ideologies to young people. Omitting traditional truths on moral absolutes has been practiced for many years in public education. Students have been taught not to think in terms of right and wrong, but in terms of neutral values. Along with this they have been taught "values clarification," by which they make their own minds up about what they feel is right or wrong. "Values clarification" supposedly helps the students to learn to be "values neutral." But, as Richard A. Baer writes:

On the deeper level...the claim to neutrality is entirely misleading. At this more basic level, the originators of values clarification simply assume that their own subjective theory of values is correct....If parents object to their children using pot or engaging in premarital (*or, these days, homosexual*) sex, the theory behind values clarification makes it appropriate for the child to respond, "But that's just *your* value judgment. Don't force it on me." (Richard A. Baer, Jr., "Parents, Schools and Values Clarification," The Wall Street Journal, April 12, 1982,) (Italics mine).

Increasingly, evil is being called good, and good is being called evil. Many young people are graduating from public schools which are required to teach that homosexual marriage is normal and therefore many of them cannot understand why there is a problem with this view. The churches need to teach that homosexuality is one of the many sins that people can get seduced into. The churches also need to show the redemptive love of Jesus Christ to those very many people trapped in these sinful and defeating practices, who want to know how to escape them.

Notice how lately, the Lord gave Christians and other supporters of biblical marriage an opportunity to demonstrate their convictions through something as simple as "**eating and drinking.**" The issue also came up about Chick-fil-A, "**planting (as it were)**" and "**building**" new establishments when several of the mayors warned that they will not allow them to have restaurants in their cities. I have heard of one police sergeant who was demoted for bringing Chick-fil-A food into the police station. Two lesbian officers were offended and so he was demoted to a night-shift for his "hateful" actions. People have been heard asking: "Who would have thought such a fuss could have happened over a chicken sandwich?" And so we ask: "Who would have thought that "**eating and drinking,**" could be such an issue?" God did, thousands of years ago. He showed us the manner of unusual attitudes and beliefs against God that seem to arise out of the normal things that God has created and ordained for our good. But it is Satan's nature to take that which is good and of God and turn it into something not good and not of God. But are we discerning enough to see the difference?

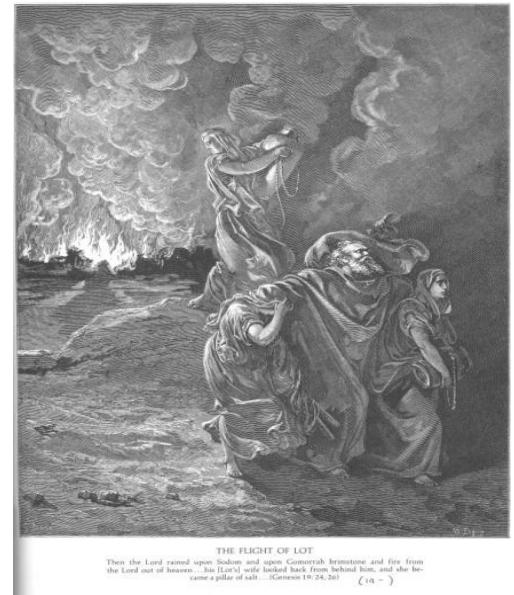
In Luke 17:26-27, Jesus said,

"And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all."

Notice the statement about how, in the latter days, marriages will be happening, seemingly as normal. But, as the return of the Lord will draw near, the normal and everyday will slowly mutate into something that begins to look like something not normal. This is the case with the growing controversy over same-sex marriage today. In this prophecy,

Jesus certainly affirms marriage between one man and one woman, yet, as I have said above, *the devil is crafty about twisting the truth and turning something good and that which is otherwise normal into something that God had not intended.* The controversy today is over biblical verses same-sex marriage. I believe Jesus' prophecy is being revealed to us as a sign that is more understandable than ever. It is not marriage, nor eating and drinking, nor planting and building that are new nor unusual in these latter days, but the deceptive ways these normal activities are being commandeered by the devil as devices to advance his corruption in the world.

In actual fact, there are evil spirits that are driving the thoughts of many on this issue. Paul said in his letter to Timothy that: ***"In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1)*** One of the trendy latter day teachings will involve strong demonic influence on ***"forbidding to marry,"*** which is to move in the direction of a non-traditional, non-biblical, New Age/Humanistic view of marriage and relationships. This will be, to change the normal and biblical view of God ordained marriage which He gave for mankind's good. Today, we hear growing threats from those saying that supporters of biblical marriage are "haters." Jesus predicted concerning times like we are living in now: ***"And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake" (Luke 21:17)***. But, no matter how much we are maligned as Christians, we need to continue to stand for truth and to demonstrate the loving, gentle and redemptive Spirit of Jesus Christ. We should always seek to exhibit the love of the Lord who said: ***"Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not."*** Further, we need to constantly check our motives and follow the example of the Apostle Peter who said: ***"Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing."*** And I believe this spirit was wonderfully exhibited by tens of thousands who came out in support of Chick-fil-A's Christian principles of business.



THE FLIGHT OF LOT
Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven... his [Lot's] wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. (Genesis 19: 24, 36.)

The Prophetic Significance of God's Judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah (Read Genesis 18-19)

The root problem with Sodom was their covetousness. Their homosexuality resulting from rejecting God and His word, was actually a judgment both then and now. According to Romans 1:21-15,

"Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."

Historically, the times and places where this sin becomes *prevalent, protected and even preferred* are where the truth of God, as taught in the Bible, has been systematically and aggressively renounced and replaced with a new form of morality. So extreme is this sin that those who defend it often do so in extreme ways. We have seen this often demonstrated in America in recent decades. When Jesus said: ***"Remember Lot's wife,"*** he was warning His disciples in His day and in our own to beware of the *seductive power of covetousness*. Jesus was pointing to reluctance on the part of Lot's wife to leave the life that she had grown accustomed to in Sodom.

Sodom was a beautiful place. It had all anyone needed to get along in the world. They had art, culture, commerce, friends, social status. Many of the things that easily become substitutes for the spiritual life for the believer were found there. Jesus said in Matthew 10:39, ***"He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it."***

The Bible gives us a picture of Sodom from God's viewpoint, not from the viewpoint of the residents of that city. Because Lot chose to live in Sodom when he had the pick of any place for his family to live, indicates that he already was possessed of covetousness (Genesis 13:9-13). He saw the comforts and advantages of Sodom for he and his family in their temporal needs, but he neglected his and their spiritual needs (Galatians 6:7-8). So Lot gave up the separated life of a shepherd and settled into the soft life of being an elder in the city of Sodom. In Genesis 19:1 we read the words describing the extent of Lot's compromise with worldliness: **"Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom."** When we as Christians, as churches and as a nation become interested in personal comfort and rights over the Word and will of God, we will soon learn to tolerate the sins of worldliness. We are seeing a great deal of this today.

Jesus describes the spirit of the times just preceding His return as being like the days of Noah and like the days of Lot. Perhaps Lot reasoned, like so many Christians today, that by living in Sodom, he could be a witness for God to them. Yet, the Sodomites were not influenced by Lot in the least. They hated Lot, his family, and his God! Lot even called them **"brethren"** when he tried to reason with them not to sexually assault the angels that were staying in his house (**Genesis 19:7**). Lot's daughters had married men from Sodom. The entire family was completely sold out to the mindset of the Sodomites. This reminds me of Christian leaders today who are seeking ways to find a place in the church for those who are involved in same sex-relationships, otherwise known as "gay" lifestyles. These preachers have completely lost their way! I believe that these preachers need to give up their popular, plush, and compromising pastorate. They should go out into a secluded place and read through the Bible and pray for about a year. Then, if God confirms their call, they need to begin again in a small pastorate surrounded by seasoned and Bible believing men of God.

The worldliness of Sodom had permeated Lot's family. When Lot, at the urging of the angels, tried to talk his sons-in-law and his daughters into leaving Sodom with them, he said to them: **"Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city! But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking"** (**Genesis 19:14**).

The Church Today - Doctrine and Prophecy Today

The Rapture in Genesis 19

Before God could bring destruction upon Sodom, he first determined to take out the righteous. This is precisely what the Lord will do for the church before the beginning of the tribulation period. Lot, and his two daughters, were the only three in Sodom who were willing to come out from that wicked place. The angels brought them out, assuring them that God could not do anything to the city until Lot and his family, the members who were willing, were out of there (Genesis 19:17,22). After Jesus predicted that the time of His return would be like those of Noah and Lot, both of whom were taken out from judgment and into safety, Jesus said that when He returned: **"one shall be taken and the other shall be left"** (**Luke 17:34-36**). This prediction is repeated three times in Luke. Many believe that this may be a reference to the rapture, because the word for **"taken"** is the Greek word: "paralempthesetai". This word is probably used here, as one writer says, "in its nomad sense of being taken into fellowship (in Noah's case, into safety), rather than being taken into judgment." There is an alternate interpretation which is possible, that this refers to those being taken into judgment. Yet, I believe the overall context of Jesus' prediction, and the typical usage of "taken" indicate a strong possibility that He is referring to the rapture of believers before the coming of judgment. (see also 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, and 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12).

In the context of both Noah and Lot, they were certainly taken from the place of judgment, to a place of safety. Jesus is warning His disciples then and now of the suddenness of judgment and the need to be ready to evacuate quickly. Today, we need to evacuate from the presence and approval of any and all sin. We need to separate from evil. The Lord gave us the Great Commission to witness for Jesus Christ while we are here, but also He gave us the power and wisdom to witness through separation from sin (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17).

Lot may have thought, like so many in the church today, that by living in the midst of the wickedness of Sodom, and by showing his good intentions to the Sodomites, he could win them (Genesis 19:1). But they actually hated him! They

were not influenced by him in the least for good. Instead, they corrupted Lot's family by their evil ways. Such is the way that the leaven of sin can creep into the life of any Christian who unwisely ignores the importance of his or her own spiritual separation. We need to check our motives when we seek to serve the Lord, that we are not just serving ourselves. We may end up simply being influenced by the world and using worldly means to try to accomplish God's work. This methodology has brought down many ministries and great preachers of the Word of God. This methodology of infiltration will backfire, as it did with Lot. Lot and his family lingered as the angels tried to take them out from approaching judgment. As they finally went out, Lot's wife, disobeying the angel's command not to look back, and who's affections were still in Sodom, deliberately did look back. As she did, her spiritual life having already dissolved into the compromise of Sodom, her physical life now also dissolved into hardened salt (Genesis 19:17,26).

It is sad today to realize how few believers are looking for the imminent (any moment) return of the Lord to rapture His Bride, the church, to heaven to be with Him. He will do this prior to the beginning of the seven year tribulation period (Daniel 9:24-27; 2 Thessalonians 2:2-12). Yet many are not looking for His return, but are only trying to get more and more comfortable in this world. This is why there is growing compromise in the church today which is often more interested in using the world's corporate methods for church life and the world's entertainment methods and music. All this, along with shallow preaching which hardly ever mentions the coming of the Lord.

It is up to believers to grow mighty in Spirit by studying the word and choosing to live holy and separated lives unto the Lord. I believe God desires to raise up a remnant of prophets in these latter days, who will stand for and speak the truth of God's Word even as the great prophets of old, such as Elijah and Elisha. If God is able to use something as simple as a chicken sandwich to show the world that His Word is true, then He can certainly use you. The Lord can use you as you seek Him in true humility and watch for His return.

Upward Call - How to walk in view of Prophecy

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering!"
(Hebrews 10:23)

Mitt Romney chooses Paul Ryan as VP running mate: Who is Paul Ryan? Briefly, he is a committed Catholic. He is pro-life, and pro-traditional marriage, and so is opposed to same-sex marriage and civil unions. Paul Ryan is also a strong supporter of Israel. We need to pray for him and his family in the days of testing that lay ahead.

And never forget to pray for President Barak Obama and Vice President Joe Biden, that they will repent of their pro-choice and pro-redefinition of marriage positions which will certainly continue to bring judgment upon our nation.

Please be prayerful in your selection of America's next president. Vote your conscience and convictions as the Lord leads you. May God direct our nation in the days ahead to come back to the Lord to continue to defend and support God, freedom, life, family, and Israel.

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD"
(Psalm 33:12)

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(Note: If you would like to interact with Dr. Downing concerning this newsletter, views, etc. you can "blog" with him at prophecyinperspective.com. If you would like to subscribe to this newsletter at no charge, please send your email address to: sgdowning@bellsouth.net. Also, you can purchase his book, "Good News From a Far Country", a study in the book of Daniel [\$15]; "Becoming Mighty in Spirit...through Revelation's Prophecies" [\$10]; or his latest book, "Becoming Mighty in Spirit...through Developing a Prophetic Walk...A Study in the lives and ministries of Elijah and Elisha" [\$10] by contacting him.)