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## Genesis

Chapter 19 - God's Rescue Mission

Who Holding Things Up (vs. 23-26)

**Genesis 19:23-26:** The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar. Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven, and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But his wife, from behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

Well, there are two events that are happening within this particular passage. One clearly is the judgment of God. But God is also saving. And it is the saving that we should be focusing on because that is the nature of our Lord, to save. Strangely enough, as you begin with this particular chapter, in Chapter 19, it looks like Lot's trying to save.

And unfortunately, I think that the “monkey wrench” in all of the things in our life is really us going in there and saying, “Well, we're actually saving people.” And God goes, “You're just getting in the way of the saving.” And you begin to realize that in that desire to save and rescue people, we neglect the very things that God has called us to do. In this particular passage, it is Lot neglecting his own family for the sake of saving the angels, which you're going to save God, really? So, you begin to realize that we get off focus. And in our getting off of the focus of what God wants us to do and doing the things that He doesn't want us to do, we read everything wrong. Clearly, it's God's desire to give us peace. One of the things that you see repeatedly in the Gospels is Jesus, as He talks to His disciples, “Peace I give to you.” Even when He breathes upon the disciples after the resurrection, “I give you peace.” And you realize God desires well-being for us, which is really the definition of the word, and a sense of wholeness and completeness. Nevertheless, we sit around going, “Okay, if there's this peace thing that God has given me, how come I don't feel peaceful, secure, safe, confident? Why are all these things not a part of my

life?” And in many respects, this passage is actually telling us why. It is God turning to us and saying, “Waiting on you.” And we begin to realize that we're the ones holding it up.

As we come to the passage, there's a wonderful metaphor that is given, and that's the picture of the sun rising at the beginning of this judgment, of this salvation. And it is a picture that is given to us really throughout all of Scripture. That sun that we see in the sky, God has so placed; as you begin with verse 14 in Genesis 1, it talks about God creating the lights of the world. He already at the beginning actually said, “Let there be light.” But it's not until verse 14 that He begins to describe the lights that He places in the heavens. And He talks about the sun, the moon, and I love that wonderful phrase at the end, “Oh yeah, and He created the stars also,” which is a wonderful side note. But as we begin to see, we begin to ask ourselves, “Well, if He had already created light, why does He create these light objects?” And the answer is, they're for signs. So, you realize that the sun itself is a sign in the heavens.

One of the great pictures that's given to us in Psalm 19, as it begins to talk about the glory of God at the beginning, and it states that it's like the sun rising in the east, and the sun is like a bridegroom that's coming. And you begin to realize that he's actually describing a picture of the word of God and the light of the word of God revealing things to us in our hearts, because it is in that Psalm 19, "The word of God is perfect, comprehensively flawless. It restores us whole." And he goes into the wonderful explanation of that. What we understand is that God's bringing us light. He is bringing us warmth, comfort, but life through the gospel. So, "In the beginning was the Word," right? What a wonderful picture of the Word of God shining upon us and giving us a sense of hope. It is this picture that He continues with throughout.

And let me just show you an example of this found in Psalm 37, one of our great passages, in which there are times in our life where we feel that God is perhaps a little slow in giving us the great benefits that we feel like we so deserve. So, as you come to Psalm 37, He reminds us not to fret about these things.

It begins in Psalm 37:1,

“Do not fret because of evildoers,  
Be not envious toward wrongdoers.

(Psalm 37:2) For they will wither quickly like the grass  
And fade like the green herb.

(Psalm 37:3) Trust in the LORD and do good;  
Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.

(Psalm 37:4) Delight yourself in the LORD;  
And He will give you the desires of your heart.

(Psalm 37:5) Commit your way to the LORD,  
Trust also in Him, and He will do it.

(Psalm 37:6) He will bring forth your righteousness as the  
light  
And your judgment as the noonday.”

What is He doing? He's actually giving us a picture that He's established in creation that, I mean, you go through a night, oftentimes your depression is in the nighttime, but that morning light comes and there's a sense of, “Well, maybe it is a new day.” And God gives us that sense of hope through that.

In this text, what you begin to see is that the light is a hope to us, but as you go on a little bit further, he goes on and says in verse 7,

(Psalm 37:7) “Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him...”

That is to say, the righteousness shining upon you.

“... Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.

(Psalm 37:8) Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing.

(Psalm 37:9) For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land.

(Psalm 37:10) Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more...”

So, the picture now is not only the righteousness of God, but if you go back to verse 6, the judgment of God being revealed as the sun is rising; to some a benefit, to others perhaps not so much. And how could it be that one thing can be two things? And we begin to read that same

picture in this interesting text in which the sun begins to rise.

Lot is an interesting character as we come to this. Peter actually tells us that while he was in Sodom, his heart was being tormented. What Scripture is letting us know is that he clearly was an individual that had a sense of belief. However, he would not proclaim that belief. He kept it under wraps. I've oftentimes talked with individuals that within their household, they say, "Well, you know, it's my personal faith. And I don't want to push it on anybody else." I've even seen parents go, "I don't want to push it on my kids." And I'm going, "What are you talking about? You don't want to push it on your kids? You're wanting to save their lives, aren't you?" I mean, what parent wouldn't want to rescue a soul, especially their family? "I don't want to push it on them." So, you have this interesting dichotomy that exists in which you know that Lot feels a sense of right and wrong, yet he's not saying anything. And one of the ways that we know that he hasn't been saying anything is when he finally tells his sons-in-laws to be, "You need to get out of here," they

think he's joking. They go, "You're just joking." What it's telling us is that he had not been living that life outwardly. There's something that he felt inwardly, but he had not been sharing that outwardly to these that he's supposed to be loving.

And it says in verse 14,

(Genesis 19:14) "Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, and said, "Up, get out of this place, for the LORD will destroy the city." ..."

They're probably going, "Lord? I've never heard you say that name before. What are you talking about?"

"... But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be jesting."

"You've got to be joking because you've never said anything before. Obviously, this has not been a concern. I mean, has my soul ever been a concern to you?"

As we go on in the passage, then we see in verse 16 that as the two angels, as it describes in verse 1, go to him and say, "We've got to get out of here," it says literally within the text,

(Genesis 19:16) "But he hesitated..."

And what it demonstrates is that though perhaps inwardly he knew what was right, outwardly He longed for the things of Sodom and Gomorrah. And so, the hesitation, the fact that there hadn't been a consistency in his life; those things began to reveal the fact that, is this even real, what He's asking us to do? And we have a sense of they're not leaving this place. So, the angelic beings begin to grab; they begin to pull, as you see within the passage. And it says in verse 16, because it was the compassion of the Lord that begins to pull. Oftentimes it's not the parents that are saying anything, but the compassion of the Lord still is rescuing in spite of ourselves.

(Genesis 19:17) “When they had brought them outside, one said, “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains...””

And we talked about this last week, which if in fact you ran to the mountains, you'd be going at places in which you couldn't see the valley. And yet, ultimately, Lot says, “You know, God, I appreciate the fact that You're trying to

rescue me. You've been very gracious and compassionate. But here's the deal. I think I know how to rescue myself a little bit better than You do. So, instead of me going to the mountains, there's a little town, a quaint little place called Zoar," which was once again part of the allies of Sodom and Gomorrah. "But perhaps I can be safe there. It's just a small place, not going to be a problem there." So, God says, "Go, just get out of this place." Now, what we see within the passage is Lot obviously hesitated on doing what is right and insistent on doing things his way. And I would say that in some ways that's almost a definition of most of us in our lives. And in that setting we go, "Why isn't God doing great work in my life? Why isn't my heart at peace? Why am I feeling all this anxiety? Why am I not feeling productive? Why do these things elude me?" And I would say, because you're not doing what God told you to do and you're insisting on things that God told you not to do. It is the nature of man to perceive that he knows better than God. And you know, it's really strange when you consider that Lot is literally saying, "I need to do this in order to feel safe and secure." Everybody has their plans. I oftentimes hear people say, "Well, I've kind of

mapped out what I'm going to be doing the rest of my life." And they tell me what they're going to do. And I'm going, "You don't have control over whether you're going to be breathing tomorrow. The breath that's in your nostrils is something given by God. So, why do you feel safe and secure because you've mapped something out?" Our security is not in those things. It's not in what the doctor says. It's not in what I can do to feel safe by virtue of a place. It is God who protects us. It is God who saves us. Nevertheless, we do this debating with Him.

By the time you come to verse 22, the angels are already saying, "You've got to hurry." Now, one of the first things that came to my mind when I'm hearing the angels, not only are they tugging them and dragging them out of the house, but now they've got to say, "Go, run." The fact that there has to be this hurrying up is telling me that they're not hurrying. It's telling me that they're slowly moving, they're maybe packing stuff up, maybe putting stuff in their pockets. I don't know what's going on, but they're not leaving. And you see that hesitation just drawing out, which really is a form, and I won't go into

the psychology of it, but passive aggressive behavior. But anyway, running late and dragging your feet is a sense of rebellion in all of this and stating that. What the angel clearly says is, "You need to go to the hills; you need to not look back." And he's made it very clear. However, we have our own ideas.

It is in verse 23 that we have the sun coming up. And it is that picture that I want you to kind of have within your mind. Because of the way that this text is worded, it's a very unique passage. And it is tying the event with the sun rising, which is very interesting to me.

So, it reads this way in verse 23,

(Genesis 19:23) "The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar."

Which is telling us that there is a contingency with the sun rising. And I'm going, "Wait a minute, the sun rises 24 hours, it's a whole thing that goes on." And we realize that God had created things to be a time clock, a time piece. What actually is happening here?

There's a familiar passage that we've read, and not too long ago we were in, Joshua 10, probably longer than I thought, but anyway. But in Joshua 10, if you remember, Joshua demands that the sun stands still. Actually, the text is not as much stating that the sun stands still, but that the sun and the moon would remain in place for literally a whole day. Think about that fact. Well, as Scripture says, for almost a day. So, what an amazing event. The Scripture goes on to say, there's never been a day like this. And you go, "Whoa, that's right." No, he's not talking about the sun. You have to read the rest of the verse... When God listened to the demands of man. It was a very interesting passage, and we talked about that when we were going through it. But the point of the passage is that Joshua was in this war, he was in this battle, and in this war and in this battle, he felt like that there had to be some sense of vengeance. So, he wanted to keep going. Now, the point of the matter is, and if you remember reading the story of this particular battle, up to this point, Joshua had actually failed a couple of times at least. One is with the Battle of Ai, which was really a small town. They thought, "Well, it's a pretty easy conquering

thing, so we won't even ask God." And so, they go after Ai, and then Ai beats them. And it was really embarrassing. So, you're facing failure number one. Then you have the Gibeonites that deceive them and trick them into bringing them into their place. Now, here's Joshua going, "You tricked me." And they go, "Yeah." But anyway, he had made the promise and now he's got to settle with that. So, you literally have two failures going on. And finally he goes into this battle and he goes, "We're going to beat these guys." And God goes, "Yes, you're going to beat those guys. I'm going to beat them for you." So, what God does is, and it actually says in the text, He confounds the soldiers, so that they don't know what's up, they don't know what's down; they're not able to fight. But on top of that, God goes, "And just in case you want to save your arrows," He starts throwing rocks at them from heaven. So, these big boulders are coming down and they're killing all the people. And Scripture says, "And God actually won the victory for them. And it's at that point where Joshua goes, "No, let the sun stand still and the moon not move because I'm going to finish this off." And he begins to chase them and begins to

avenge. You can't help but feel like he's trying to at least bolster his self-esteem in this particular setting, God says, "Okay, we'll do that." It's a very unique passage because it really shows not only the patience of God, but the desire of God to give us assurance and to care for how we feel.

There is another particular event with the whole sun thing, and you're probably familiar with that as well. It's recorded in Chronicles and Kings as well as Isaiah 38. And in Isaiah, it talks specifically about the fact that God tells King Hezekiah, "You're going to die, pack up your bags, get ready to go, you're going home." And Hezekiah goes into this prayer before God, throws himself on the floor, and cries out, "I'm too young to die." Which he was fairly young at that time to give him credit. So, he begins to cry out to God, "You can't let this happen, I'm just too young." And God says, "Okay, I'll let you live longer. I'll give you 15 more years." Hezekiah goes, "So, how do I know you're going to do this?" And God goes, "See those shadows on the steps? Watch them go backwards, 10 steps." And they did, another time when the sun played a role in the grace of God. These particular incidences, what

you're seeing is that it's fundamentally answering a question, what would God do, how far would He go to give you confidence, to give you assurance, to give you salvation? What would He do? And Scripture is telling us He would change the course of time for you. It's such a great picture in this. As you come to this text, that's exactly what He's doing. To save him, He's giving the picture in the sky, "That sun's not moving until you get to Zoar. Get to Zoar." And we realize the wonderful power and the patience of God in the midst of the hesitation of man, in the midst of his stubbornness.

So, as you pick this up with me, if you look in verse 23, and once again the connection of the words,

(Genesis 19:23) "The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar."

In other words, one was contingent upon the other.

If you look in verse 24, then came the judgment. See that? Save first, then the judgment.

(Genesis 19:24) "Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire..."

Brimstone, this interesting thing of pitch and sulfur, and fire which came out of the heavens from the Lord.

(Genesis 19:25) “and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley...”

Why did He tell him to not be in the valley? Because He's going to overthrow the valley too, because that was part of what Sodom was actually tempted about, was that which was a draw. I mean, if you look in Genesis 13, the statement is that the valleys look like the garden of Eden. So, it was part of the allurements of that particular surrounding.

“... and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.”

Scripture is telling us that the world has a lot to offer us and has a lot of allurements. It has a lot of things that look shiny, look pretty, look beneficial to us. But look beyond the things and begin to ask yourself, what's the influence? And oftentimes we don't ask about that. We don't consider that, which is the most important question to ask, really.

When you look at Revelation 18 and it talks about Babylon, it's literally God saying, "You need to get out of Babylon." Now what He's saying is, "I'm giving you an opportunity not to be burned. Get out." Here we sit, going, "Well, you know, I'm thinking about it. Perhaps it's not a really good day to do it." And God says, "It's going to come."

Peter will tell us in 2 Peter 3, the day of the Lord will come. Now, when it comes to the benefits of the Lord and His wonderful promises, we go, "I think the Lord is kind of slow about His promises." And so he states, "The Lord's not slow about His promises. He's just not willing that any should perish." And we go, "What's the holdup?" He goes, "You. You're the holdup." And the very thing that we're oftentimes praying that needs to happen, and quite frankly, we should be anxiously awaiting the coming of the Lord. But oftentimes when I say, "God, I want you to come today," I can hear His voice go, "You know someone down the street doesn't know Him. One of your loved ones hasn't come to Him. You sure? I'm holding the sun back for them."

There's a passage in Malachi, if you look there with me in Malachi, as you come to the end of that wonderful book, and as it ultimately goes into the New Testament, the last book of the Old Testament, it starts off in Chapter 4 this way, "Just to let you know, the day of the Lord is coming. It's coming." Peter says it. Malachi says it.

(Malachi 4:1) "For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch."

That's a total desolation, isn't it?

Watch verse 2.

(Malachi 4:2) "But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall."

Same day; same coming. To the wicked, it'll be a day of destruction.

If you turn me to Revelation 6, there's an interesting picture that really correlates with this, in which you see

the souls that are beneath the throne of God. I love Revelation in the sense that it reveals things that are happening in the heavens. And in Revelation 6:9, we see the fifth seal that's broken.

And it reads this way,

(Revelation 6:9) “When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained;

(Revelation 6:10) and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

(Revelation 6:11) And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.”

We're not going till they're all in. And it's just such a great picture when you begin to realize the patience of God in

contrast with the stubbornness of man, and yet the inevitability of His coming. Nowhere in Scripture does it say He's not coming. He's coming. And the day is coming. And the way I kind of read it is that just as sure as that sun dawns, the day of the Lord is coming. Now, what's surprising to me is He's holding it back. And it's an amazing, miraculous moment in which God begins to move to bring them all in. And in many respects, the picture that is given here, as He begins to overthrow these cities, you realize every conceivable opportunity was given to everybody there to leave. It was the cities that He was destroying. It was the valleys that He was destroying. They could leave. They would not leave. And you begin to see, once again, the stubbornness of man. If you look in verse 26, on top of that,

(Genesis 19:26) “But his wife, from behind him...”

That phrase, you might want to underline it, is telling us that she should be focusing on following her husband and submitting to him, keeping her eyes on him. She's behind him, so she's following, walking, but she'll stop and turn from him to Sodom.

The passage reads this way,

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

It's kind of a perpetual desolation picture that salt gives within the text.

Let me show you a passage in Deuteronomy 29, if you look with me.

If you look in verse 22, it reads this way,

“Now the generation to come, your sons who rise up after you and the foreigner who comes from a distant land, when they see the plagues of the land and the diseases with which the LORD has afflicted it, will say,

(Deuteronomy 29:23) ‘All its land is brimstone and salt, a burning waste, unsown and unproductive, and no grass grows in it, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim...’

All those cities were a part of that. What it's actually conveying is that picture of salt is that which God is declaring, “This land will be unproductive, unsown, will be complete and total desolation, never to be lived in again.”

I don't know if you've ever gone in that particular region or have seen pictures of that region. Nobody's living there. And God was declaring that. But the picture that He's giving as well is now you have Lot's wife, and she becomes that pillar of example, of desolation. Luke will actually say, "Remember Lot's wife." And you realize that God is telling you to think about the desolation that's permanent because the day of the Lord will come. It is that passage that I've been repeating over and over again in 2 Peter that I think in many respects parallels this text.

And so, if you turn with me to 2 Peter 3, you'll see that kind of emphasis that the day of the Lord is coming.

And once again, he states in verse 8,

(2 Peter 3:8) "But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day."

The Lord doesn't see days the same way you do. So, you might see it as, "Wow, it's taken a long time." God doesn't see it that way.

But verse 9 reads this way,

(2 Peter 3:9) “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

(2 Peter 3:10) But the day of the Lord will come...”

Now, once again, as sure as that sun is rising, it's coming. The clock is set.

“... like a thief...”

And the reason why it makes reference to “the day of the Lord will come like a thief,” is that it's going to take everything that the world loves. You're going to say, “Where's all of my valuable stuff?” He goes, “It's burned up.” So, you're going to say to Him, if in fact, you're not wanting Him, “You stole my stuff.” He goes, “Yeah, but it was Mine from the very beginning.”

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements...”

A wonderful word that is used within the Greek that makes reference to what they believed to be atoms,

“*stoicheion*”. They actually believed that there were these micro things that you couldn't see that was the makeup of all things. We call them atoms, they would call them this word. The passage is saying, the physical world, like as you know it, it's like God removing the science. People go, “I'm really smart, I know science.” Well, that's wonderful, but that science is going away. Every science, every equation that you can perceive is going away. It will not exist the same way.

The way the passage reads,

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.”

And we're talking about heavens, that is to say the sky. In fact, I think the way Isaiah puts it is, the heavens will be rolled back like a scroll.

(2 Peter 3:11) “Since all these things are to be destroyed...”

And actually the word that is used is “*lyō*,” dissolved.

“Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness.”

In other words, shouldn't you be more reverent towards God? That's actually the word that's used here. Shouldn't you be more conscious of God in your life? I think you should be thinking more about God.

Look at verse 12.

(2 Peter 3:12) “Looking for and hastening...”

That is to say, earnestly desiring, not rushing.

“... the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

(2 Peter 3:13) But according to His promise...”

Now, once again, interesting day; we have the destruction of the earth and everything in the universe that we know of.

And yet at this moment,

“But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”

It's a wonderful day for us. It's just like that sun rising. Interesting, with intense heat, yes, but with hope and joy and life, abundant for us. According to His promise, we're looking for this day.

It says in verse 14,

(2 Peter 3:14) “Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

(2 Peter 3:15) and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation...”

God is saving. God is moving in our lives, and He's saying, “You’ve got to get out of here.” And we say to God, “What's the rush?” And God says, “I'm holding things up for you.” But not only that, but also you realize that you need to decide to commit to God today for another reason. And the reason is, because your lackadaisical attitude, your hesitation in following God is affecting everybody around you. And you say, “Well, you know, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. At the last minute...” I remember my brother telling me, you know, when you're sitting in your bedroom late at night, you think about

really strange things with your brother. So, you know, you're 10 years old and you're talking about stupid stuff. He goes, "You know what I'm going to do if we're in a plane and it crashes?" And I said, "No, what are you going to do?" He says, "I'm going to wait until it gets right about two feet off and then I'm going to jump up." So, we all have our way of dealing with it. And I think that our perspective is that when we finally come to that final day, "I'm just going to make a decision. And I'm going to turn to my family and I'm going to go, 'You need to make a decision right now.'" And you know what they're going to do? They're going to laugh at you because you haven't been doing it.

We're trying to rush God with all the benefits, but the fact of the matter is, we're the one holding everything back. And in our holding things back, and in our hesitation, and in our not leaving what God has already told us to leave... One of those meaningful passages found in Philippians 3, where Paul begins to talk about all those things that used to be so important to him. You know, all the accolades, all the trophies, and all the wonderful things. He goes, "You

know what? It's just garbage to me now.” You'd have to ask yourself, “Paul, when did it become garbage?” And you would almost have to say the moment he made a decision to follow Christ. And then you would ask him, “Why didn't you hesitate?” And he would say this, “I'm pressing on towards the mark of the high calling. I'm forgetting what lies behind. I'm not looking back anymore.” And what he's talking about in that passage is not as much forgetting the past totally. What he's talking about is, “Forgetting those things that I don't love anymore. I've laid them behind. It was the city. It was Sodom. It was the thing that was drawing me away from the Lord. And what I'm doing is not looking back on that. And I'm just going to press forward to the mark of the high calling.” Now, here again, we give the opportunity for you to make a decision every Sunday. And you would say, and probably good question to ask, “What's the rush?” And I would say, because we're not only rescuing you, we're rescuing those around you. And every day you hold off is another day that you hesitate. And in that hesitation, people are not taking you seriously because they don't see the reality of your faith; they don't see that

this is really important to you. Because if it was, you would get out. You wouldn't hang around the people that oftentimes you hang around and fellowship with because you know that they're a bad example and they're not following God. "What's the rush?"

Turn with me at the end of the Book of Revelation, and I think in many respects, Revelation will clarify why we need to get on the stick and get out of Sodom. Revelation 22, if you'll pick up there with me. What a wonderful book, isn't it?

It says in verse 7,

(Revelation 22:7) "And behold, I am coming quickly..."

Actually, you could probably translate that, "Behold, I am coming suddenly." What Scripture is telling us is at a time that you wouldn't expect it, it happens. "Oh, I'm going to make a decision. We're going to..." No, no, it's not going to happen that way.

So, it reads in verse 8,

(Revelation 22:8) "I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to

worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

(Revelation 22:9) But he said to me, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.””

Which, by the way, if you're ever confused about what the main purpose of the Book of Revelation is, there it is, worship God.

(Revelation 22:10) “And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.”

And then he states this very interesting verse,

(Revelation 22:11) “Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.”

(Revelation 22:12) “Behold, I am coming quickly...”

“And there won't be enough time for you to change. And quite frankly, you won't change.” And the thought is that,

“At that last moment, I'm going to tell my family what's really important to me.” And they're just going to laugh at you. And everybody's going to start hesitating and not doing what you say.

When you read Matthew 24, and Luke will record a similar event in which the day of the Lord comes, and He says to them, “Run to the mountains. Don't go back to your house. Don't go get anything. Run.” You think if you're not used to obeying God, you think if you have not let go of the things of this world that you're going to be able to do that? No. You are the kind of person that you have been becoming, and these things are a part of your life. It will not leave you suddenly, because you never really believed and obeyed it. The voice of the Spirit says, “today,” and there is a reason why God is rushing us. Praise God for His grace. Praise God for His patience. Praise God for His staying power, which is amazing to me, that He would do the things that He does for me. Nevertheless, the day of the Lord is coming. And it is inevitable, and it is unavoidable. It is coming.

## **Closing Prayer:**

Father, we come before You today, and we ask that You would speak to our hearts about just simply obeying You, following You, living the life that we say that we believe in; that it becomes so much a part of our life that people would just see it as not only a part of our life, but as second nature to us to such a degree that people are actually convicted and change. They see a reality that would actually make our faith valid to them, and they would see the veracity of it that would ring true in their hearts.

Your head's bowed and your eyes closed. What I'm asking you to do is just come before the Lord and make changes. And I would say, hurry. Because the day is coming. And you won't be prepared if you don't.