

A Message for the Last Days
2 Peter Chapter 2
“Unless Those Days Were Shortened”

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Ron had just purchased a new sports car and was out for a drive when he rudely cut off a mean truck driver. The trucker became very upset and motioned for Ron to pull over.

Seeking to avoid further problems, Ron complied. When he did, the truck driver got out of his truck and pulled a piece of chalk from his pocket. Drawing a circle on the road, he told Ron to stand in the circle and not move. He then went to Ron's new car and cut up the leather seats.

When the truck driver turned around to see Ron's reaction, **Ron had a slight grin on his face.**

"Oh, you think that's funny?" the trucker asked. "Then, watch this." He then proceeded to get a baseball bat out of his truck and break every window in the car.

When he turned to look back at Ron, Ron still had a smile on his face. This drove the driver into a rage. He got his knife back out and sliced all the tires.

Now Ron was laughing.

Then the truck driver really started to lose it. He went back to his truck and got a can of gas, poured it on the sports car, and set it on fire. **When he turned around he found Ron laughing so hard that he was having a hard time maintain his balance.**

"What's so funny?" The truck driver asked, frustrated at his inability to receive emotional revenge.

"When you weren't looking," Ron replied, I stepped outside the circle 10 times."

I think that there is a twisted little sense of Rebellion in all of us...

You know what I mean...when you see one of those signs in the front of someone's yard that says "Stay off the Grass", it makes you just want to go out and put your feet all over it!

Did you know that one of the signs that we truly are in the **"Last Days"** is that people will be manifesting that rebellion openly?

2 Timothy 3:1-5

1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers,
disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,
4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,
5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away

Jesus said that when you begin to see people openly showing their rebellion...His coming is near, even at the door.

Matthew 24:15-24

15 “Therefore when you see the ‘*abomination of desolation*,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand)

21 **For then there will be great tribulation**, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

And **unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved**; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.

The events of the Book of Revelation describe a time in which this rebellion will be in full bloom and that more than 2/3rds of the population of the earth will die during those last 3 1/2 years.

Revelation 6:8

So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over **a fourth of the earth**, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

In the opening of the First 6 seals: 1/4th of the 6 Billion People of the Earth = 1.5 Billion, DIE By weapons, hunger, and the beasts of the earth.

- ☞ **It is interesting also** that the word here: “***Beasts***” was translated from the Greek: “***Therion***”, This could be a natural animal such as a Lion or a Bear. It could also be an extremely small animal such as a bacteria or virus.
- ☞ **The days of the Great Tribulation** period in which Jesus Himself will finally put and end to all the nonsense that we see in this world today.
- ☞ **Every great man, King, president, ruler**, and even the common people, who hate God and despise that which is good, will finally have their reign of evil ended.

Revelation 6:15-17

15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,

16 and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!

17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

If the Great Tribulation were to begin in the next few years, We have currently, about 6 billion people on the earth, 1.5 billion will be are killed in the first 6 seals being opened of the Tribulation Period, leaving earth with 4.5 billion people.

- ☞ **Then, in Revelation Chapter 9**, One-Third of these are killed by 4 demonic angels that have been held in chains for the past thousands of years.

Revelation 9:14-15

14 saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”

15 So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released **to kill a third of mankind**

4.5 Billion - 1/3 = 1.5 Billion, leaving 3 Billion people on the earth. 2 Billion people have died so far.

Revelation 9:20

But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood,

Then, during the last 7 bowl judgments of Revelation Chapter 15, the Battle of Armageddon, and the number of Christians killed by Antichrist and those Tortured of men and women by Demons during this time, perhaps another 1 Billion or more are killed.

2/3rds of the population of the world is killed during the Great Tribulation...

Matthew 24:15-22

15 “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),

16 “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

21 For **then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.**

22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.

The subject of the Book of 2 Peter is that of these days of “Great Tribulation” that Jesus spoke of in Matthew chapter 24.

- ☞ **Days that will not be like** the days that have ever been seen on the earth before.
- ☞ **Days in which are so horrible** that if they were not shortened by the Lord Himself, not one person on the earth would survive.

This has been the subject that Peter wrote about in chapter 2

2 Peter 2

4 For **if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell** and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;

5 and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;

6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly;
7 **and delivered righteous Lot**, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked
8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)—

Peter makes the point that

- ☞ *“If God did not spare the angels who sinned,*
- ☞ *“If God did not spare the perhaps 6 billion people that lived on the earth during the days of Noah,*
- ☞ *“If God turned Sodom and Gomorrah into an ash heap...*

He will do it again...during the Great Tribulation Period that is just about to start...

- ☞ **The story of Lot** as he lived in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah is interesting to us because of what we learn about how God bases His judgment.
- ☞ **Also, because** in the story of Lot, there is a hint of what will take place during the Rapture of the church.

Genesis 13:8-12

8 So Abram said to Lot, “Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren.

10 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar.

11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other.

12 Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom.

Now, the first amazing thing that we see here, is that It is the Lord Jesus Himself that appears before Abraham. (Before He took the body of a man)

John 8:56

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”

Genesis 18

1 Then **the LORD** appeared to Abraham by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day.

20 THEN LORD BEGINS TO TELL ABRAHAM: ... **“Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great,** and because their sin is very grave,

21 “I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.”

22 Then THE ANGELS turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.

- ☞ **The 2 angels** go on to Sodom, Jesus the Lord stays with Abraham.
- ☞ **Here**—one of the most interesting principles in the O/T—we see Abraham as “The intercessor”.
- ☞ **Abraham becomes a wonderful model** of what intercessory prayer is all about. You will not hear many studies on intercessory prayer refer to this passage in Genesis but it is extremely important as a model for us.
- ☞ **So, Abraham begins to bargain with the lord.**

Genesis 18

23 And Abraham came near and said, NOTICE THE PREMISE THAT ABRAHAM BEGINS WITH: **"Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"**

24 "Suppose there were **fifty righteous** within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it?

25 "Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, NOTICE **to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked;** far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

- ☞ **Do you see the question** Abraham is asking the Lord: *“Are the righteous and the wicked both to be treated the same?”*
- ☞ **Notice the principle here:** The judgment of the righteous and the wicked.
- ☞ **Notice Abraham’s question to the Lord**—*“Shall not the judge of the whole earth do the right thing?”*
- ☞ **The Lord agrees with Abrahams argument** that *“The Righteous and the Wicked should not receive the same judgment”*. did you see what the Lord told Abraham?.
- ☞ **The Lord says:** That the righteous shall not be punished with the wicked

Genesis 18

26 So the LORD said, **"If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."** THE LORD AGREES WITH ABRAHAM’S PREMISE THAT THE RIGHTEOUS WILL NOT BE JUDGED WITH THE WICKED.

27 Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord:

NOW ABRAHAM SEEKS TO GET AN ADDITIONAL 10% OFF...

28 "Suppose there were **five less than the fifty righteous;** would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?" So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it."

29 And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be **forty found there?**" So He said, "I will not do it for the sake of forty."

30 Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose **thirty should be found there?**" So He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."

31 And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose **twenty should be found there?**" So He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty."

32 Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but **once more:** Suppose **ten should be found** there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten."

33 **So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham;** and Abraham returned to his place.

- ☞ **Actually, we find out a little later** that the lord takes only 1 righteous person out of Sodom before He destroys it, Lot.

Remember what Peter said:

2 Peter 2

6 and (The Lord) turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly;

7 **and delivered righteous Lot**, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked

Abraham expected the Lord to be fair, but even he stopped short of how fair God really is. Abraham asked for 10 righteous, the Lord saved even the one.

- ☞ **See how we always stop short** in our expectations of what The Lord is able to do.
- ☞ **Abraham thought God would be righteous** if he spared even 10 people from the destruction, The lord spared just one.

Here we see the principle that Jesus is interested in just you—Jesus would have died for just you, to spare you from the judgment.

- ☞ **We see also for the first time a new principle:** The lord removes his own people, before He brings His judgment.
- ☞ **There is not one other place in the bible** where you can find that the Lord brings His judgment while his own people are present.
- ☞ **Israel was spared from judgment** during the construction of the golden calf while Moses was gone, not for the sake of Israel, but for Moses sake.

Exodus 32:9-10

9 And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people!

10 "Now therefore, **let Me alone**, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And **I will make of you a great nation.**"

The Lord wanted to bring judgment, but because Moses pleaded before the Lord for the people, the Lord spared them.

Ezekiel 22:30

30 "So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall OR HEDGE, and **stand in the gap before Me** on behalf of the land, **that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.**

31 **Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them;** I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD.

- ☞ **Did Israel deserve God's judgment** when they turned from him to worship the golden calf? Absolutely, then why didn't He do it? Because there was a man standing in the gap, Moses.

- ☞ **Here in Ezekiel 22**, The Lord goes on to bring judgment upon the nation because of what He says in verse 30:

“ I sought for a man among them who would make a wall or hedge, and stand in the gap before me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one”.

There was no one to intercede and pray and stand in the gap for Israel here, so judgment came.

- ☞ **Does the United States** deserve to be judged by God for turning away from him? ABSOLUTELY, then why has God’s judgment not come?.
- ☞ **It has not come in the past** because there were men and women standing in the gap, praying for this nation. Whether or not He judges our nation now, or may be in the process of judging, depends on faithful men and women standing in the gap and praying for this country.
- ☞ **Here is a ministry for you** if you are looking for a ministry to do for the Lord. There is none greater ministry than to intercede on behalf of this country.

So here we see an additional principle that The Lord has ordained:

- ☞ **God cannot destroy anything** if 1 righteous person is present. The proof of this is in Genesis chapter 19, verse 22
- ☞ **Finally**, the awfulness of the sin in Sodom warranted the destruction of the city and all in it, Abraham interceding before the Lord on behalf of Lot saved Lot.
- ☞ **Sin is great**, but Jesus love and power to save from sin is greater. If ANYONE is willing to turn to him.

Back to the text about Abraham talking to the lord about the people of Sodom:

- ☞ **Abraham has a ministry here—intercession.**
- ☞ **Moses does the same** thing in behalf of Israel—until the lord says ok!
- ☞ **This principle is applicable for our own family—we recognize we cannot witness to them ourselves**—“no prophet is without honor except in his own country”—your family will not listen to you.
- ☞ **We cannot witness** to them because we are too close to them—but we can pray for them—intercede—go before god in their behalf.

We need to pray like Abraham and Moses did as intercessors

Genesis Chapter 19

1 Now **the two angels came to Sodom in the evening**, and **Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom**. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground.

- ☞ **How did lot know or recognize these 2**—did he know that they were angels—or was he just being respectful?

- ☞ **Lot is sitting at the gate of the city**—this was a place of honor reserved for the leaders of the city—lot was an elder in the city council.

Hebrews 13:2

2 Do not forget to **entertain strangers**, for by so doing some have **unwittingly entertained angels**.

This verse in the n/t may refer to lot when he entertained these two but may not have been angels.

Genesis 19

2 And Lot said, "Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." And **they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the open square."**

3 But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

4 Now before they lay down, **the men of the city**, the men of Sodom, **both old and young, all the people from** every quarter, surrounded the house.

This isn't just a few of the people in Sodom—all of them seem to be perverted.

Genesis 19

5 And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us **so that we can have sex with them.**"

6 So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him,

7 and said, "Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly!

12 Then the Angels said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and **whomever you have in the city-- take them out of this place!**

- ☞ **The angel asking** lot if there is anyone in the city that he has turned to the lord—you will see that there are none except his own family.

13 "For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it."

- ☞ **These are the people** that Abraham went to the Lord in behalf of, to find out if the Lord would spare them from the destruction that is coming.

- ☞ **These members of lot's family** were the most important people in the whole city to the Lord.

- ☞ **The most important people** on the earth right now are all of you who know Jesus.

- ☞ **Jesus himself said** that just before He returned, something would be happening on the earth that was just like how it was when He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah:

Luke 17:28-30

28 "Likewise **as it was also in the days of Lot**: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built;

29 "**on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven** and destroyed them all.

30 "Even so will it be in the day **when** the Son of Man is revealed.

The whole text of Genesis 18 and 19 is what 2 Peter 2:9

2 Peter 2:9

if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

The lord removing the righteous before he brings judgment.

- ☞ **“Righteous”** does not mean that Lot was without sin, Righteous, in the Biblical context means that a person is **“Justified.”**
- ☞ **How was Lot justified?** The same way we are Justified today. By believing in the sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the Cross..

Romans 5:1

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Lot was made acceptable to the Lord in the same way that Abraham was made acceptable, he believed in the promise of a Savior.

- ☞ **Abraham was told by God in Genesis 15**, that Jesus would come and die as the sacrifice for the sins of every person that has ever been born.

Do you think that Lot walked in his flesh from time to time? Were there moment in Lot's life where he failed even though he was saved? **Absolutely, did you notice how hard it was for the angel to get him out of Sodom.**

- ☞ **Yet Lot and His whole family** was removed before the judgment came.
- ☞ **In the question of the rapture:** Who gets Raptured? You are either saved or you are not saved. The saved go in the rapture, the un saved do not.

How do you know for sure if you are going? **Jesus is coming for those that Love Him, Do you love Him, I mean are you “In Love With Him?”**

- ☞ **So, what we are studying this morning** here is probably the most important thing that we need to understand after we are saved: The whole principle that

“The Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment...”

- ☞ **The Lord removes His people** from the place of judgment, **before** he brings His judgment.
- ☞ **There is not one place** in the scriptures where the saved are left to be judged with the un saved.

Revelation 3:10

Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth

1 Thessalonians 5:9

For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

But sadly, not everyone when they hear this important truth, believes it...

Genesis 19

14 So Lot went out and **spoke to his sons-in-law**, who had married his daughters, and said, "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.**

17 So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. **Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed.**"

The lord cannot bring his judgment in the great tribulation as long as those who are His, are still here.

22 "Hurry, escape there. NOTICE: **For I cannot do anything until you arrive there.**" Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

This is one of the most important statements in the Bible of how The Lord works.

- ☞ **Notice**—the angel is not simply warning lot to leave the city before they blow it up—they actually cannot do anything until lot is gone.

Genesis 19

24 **Then** the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens.

25 So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.

27 And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD.

28 Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace.

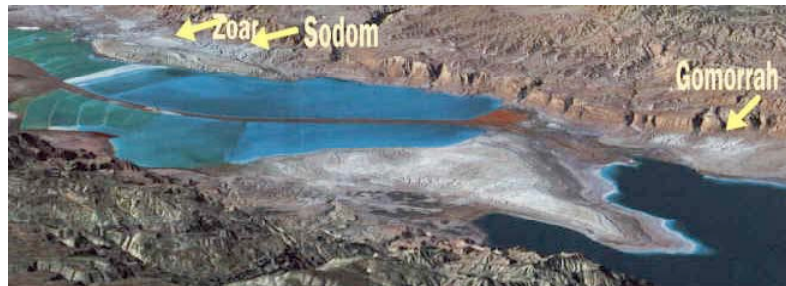
Today, on television and on the radio, you can hear the representatives of Hollywood and the liberal media discussing and joking around about the “*Literal Interpretation of the Bible*”.

- ☞ **That if you believe** that there was a “*Literal Adam and Eve*”, you are crazy.
- ☞ **That if you believe** a “*Literal Sodom and Gomorrah*”, you are delusional...”

Well, here is your delusion:

A recent Scientific discovery in the lower area of the Dead sea has revealed the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, buried under a heap of charred Ashes.

- ☞ **The following pictures** show the remains of the structures of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah that scientists say were destroyed by massive amounts of “**Burning Sulfur**”.
- ☞ **Wow, that is interesting**, that is exactly what the Bible says that The Lord used to burn up Sodom and Gomorrah.



The destruction of these cities took place approximately 3,900 years ago, so it is quite amazing to find ANY remains of ashen heaps. That they were destroyed in a Divine manner is understood, but it appears that they were also preserved in a Divine manner as well. These weren't composed of the kind of ash we commonly think of, that blows away into the wind. It was compacted ash -- the material was densely-packed and crusty on the outside. But when broken open, the substance was much softer, and with continual crushing, was soon reduced to powder.

Since combustion is a chemical process, we read up on and discovered that the study by the Frenchman, Lavoissier, on the nature of oxygen and combustion came

about when he discovered that substances burned with sulfur had a HEAVIER remaining ash than the original unburned substance. Further study into combustion got extremely complicated -- much too much to get into here -- but indicated that the event of the destruction of these cities was the result of a carefully controlled chemical reaction that took place VERY rapidly, yet maintained an equilibrium that didn't result in an explosion.