Fulfilled Prophecies



Why Jesus Said "Remember Lot's Wife"

By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† When Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife," He wasn't giving a random warning about someone who lived nearly two thousand years earlier. He was pointing His disciples to a historical judgment that would become a prophetic pattern for what was about to happen to Jerusalem in their own generation.

† The destruction of Sodom wasn't simply an ancient story about wickedness. It was an example of how God judges a

corrupt society, delivers His people, and brings destruction upon those who refuse to listen to His warnings.

† Jesus deliberately connected the days of Lot with the coming of the Son of Man. He described people eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building, completely unaware that their world was about to collapse.

† The warning was especially important because Jerusalem was approaching its own covenant judgment. Just as Lot had to leave Sodom before its destruction, the first-century believers would have to flee Jerusalem when they recognized the signs Jesus had given them.

† The command to remember Lot's wife wasn't about the end of planet Earth. It was about the danger of looking back toward a condemned covenant system when God had already provided the way of escape.

† Jesus wasn't warning people thousands of years in the future to watch for another destruction of Jerusalem. He was preparing His own disciples for the judgment that would arrive before their generation passed away (Matthew 24:34).

Luke 17:28-30

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, and they were building; but on the day that Lot left 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.

† Jesus established a direct comparison between the destruction of Sodom and the revelation of the Son of Man. The people of Sodom continued their ordinary activities until judgment arrived. They didn't recognize the seriousness of their situation.

† Notice that Jesus didn't describe a gradual destruction that allowed everyone to reconsider their decisions. Judgment

arrived suddenly after Lot departed. The separation between those who escaped and those who remained was decisive.
† This same pattern applied to Jerusalem. The Jewish nation continued its religious ceremonies, sacrifices, commerce, and daily activities while rejecting the Messiah who had warned them about the coming destruction.
† The revelation of the Son of Man wasn't necessarily a description of Jesus becoming physically visible in the sky. In biblical prophecy, God revealed His authority through historical judgments against nations and cities (Isaiah 19:1).
† Jesus had already declared that the Son of Man would come in His kingdom during the lifetime of some who were standing before Him (Matthew 16:27-28). The judgment against Jerusalem in AD 70 demonstrated His authority as the enthroned Messiah.
† The destruction of Sodom provided the pattern. The destruction of Jerusalem provided the first-century fulfillment of Jesus' warning.

Luke 17:31-32

On that day, the one who will be on the housetop, with his goods in the house, must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one in the field must not turn back. Remember Lot's wife.

† These instructions weren't abstract teachings about spiritual readiness. Jesus described an actual emergency requiring immediate action. Someone on a rooftop wasn't supposed to enter the house to retrieve possessions. Someone working in a field wasn't supposed to return home.
† This was a warning about physical flight from an approaching judgment. Personal belongings, property, and attachments to the old life couldn't become more important than obeying God's warning.
† Lot's wife became the example because she had been given

the opportunity to escape Sodom, yet she looked back toward the city God had condemned.

† Her mistake wasn't simply turning her head. Her action demonstrated a failure to obey the explicit command God had given through His messengers. Jesus used her example to emphasize the seriousness of responding without hesitation.

† For the first-century Jewish believers, this warning carried enormous significance. Jerusalem was the center of their national identity, ancestral traditions, temple worship, and religious history.

† Leaving Jerusalem meant abandoning everything that had once represented Israel's covenant relationship with God. But the Messiah had already fulfilled the purpose of that covenant system, and its final judgment was approaching (Hebrews 8:13).

† Looking back toward the condemned city could cost them their lives. Jesus wanted His followers to understand that obedience mattered more than possessions, traditions, or emotional attachments.

Genesis 19:15-17

When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city." But he hesitated. So the men grasped his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, because the compassion of the LORD was upon him; and they brought him out and put him outside the city. When they had brought them outside, one said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the surrounding area; escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away."

† The angels didn't tell Lot to remain in Sodom and wait for God to protect his house. They commanded him to leave immediately because the city had been appointed for

destruction.
† Even Lot hesitated. His reluctance demonstrates how difficult it can be to abandon familiar surroundings, especially when a person's entire life has been established in one place.
† God's mercy was evident when the angels took Lot and his family by the hand and led them outside the city. Their escape wasn't accomplished through human strength alone. God provided the warning and the opportunity for deliverance.
† The instruction not to look behind them was part of the command to escape. They weren't supposed to return, delay, or remain attached to the place that was about to be destroyed.
† This provides the background for Jesus' warning in Luke 17. When the time came for the disciples to flee Jerusalem, they couldn't allow hesitation or attachment to the city to interfere with obedience.
† God's judgment and God's deliverance appear together in both accounts. The same event that brought destruction upon the condemned city also marked the deliverance of those who obeyed the warning.

Genesis 19:24-26

Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah from the LORD out of heaven, and He overthrew those cities, and all the surrounding area, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But Lot's wife, from behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

† Lot's wife had already left Sodom, but she didn't complete the escape in obedience to God's instructions. She looked back after being specifically warned not to do so.
† Scripture doesn't explicitly describe every thought in her mind, but her disobedience became a lasting warning about the danger of remaining attached to what God had condemned.
† Jesus didn't tell His disciples to remember Lot's possessions, his house, or his former position in Sodom. He specifically told

them to remember his wife because she became the example of someone who began escaping but failed to follow the warning completely.
† This is particularly important in understanding the first-century transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. The temple, priesthood, sacrifices, and ceremonial system had served their appointed purpose, but their fulfillment had arrived in Jesus Christ.
† Returning to the old system as though Christ hadn't fulfilled it would have meant turning away from the reality to which those institutions had pointed (Colossians 2:16-17).
† The destruction of Jerusalem didn't mean God had abandoned His promises. It demonstrated that those promises had reached their fulfillment in Christ, and the old covenant order was passing away.

Luke 21:20-22

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are inside the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; because these are days of punishment, so that all things which have been written will be fulfilled.

† Here Jesus identified the specific historical event that would require His followers to flee. Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies, and its approaching destruction would become unmistakable.
† This wasn't a warning about an unknown global catastrophe thousands of years later. Jesus named Jerusalem, Judea, and the surrounding countryside. He gave instructions that could be followed by people living in that geographical region.
† The connection with Lot's escape is unmistakable. Both accounts involve a city appointed for judgment, an advance warning, and an urgent command to leave.

† Jesus also explained that these would be days of vengeance in which the things written concerning that judgment would be fulfilled. The destruction wasn't an accident of Roman history. It was the covenant judgment that Israel's prophets had repeatedly warned about.
† Jerusalem had rejected the prophets, persecuted God's messengers, and ultimately rejected the Messiah. Jesus had already announced that the consequences would come upon that generation (Matthew 23:34-36).
† The Roman armies became the historical instruments through which Jerusalem experienced the judgment Jesus had predicted.
† Those who listened to Jesus weren't supposed to defend the temple, protect their property, or remain loyal to a city under judgment. They were supposed to leave.
† Remember Lot's wife was therefore a practical warning that could mean the difference between life and death.

Matthew 24:15-18

Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place -let the reader understand - then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get things out of his house. And whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.

† Matthew's account reinforces the same instructions recorded in Luke. Jesus told those in Judea to flee to the mountains and warned against returning to collect possessions.
† The parallel language demonstrates that Jesus was describing the same kind of urgent escape. His disciples were to recognize the approaching judgment and respond immediately.
† The warning wasn't directed toward Christians living throughout every nation in every future century. It specifically

concerned people in Judea who would witness the events preceding Jerusalem's destruction.
† The reference to Daniel connects the warning with the prophetic judgment upon Jerusalem and the sanctuary (Daniel 9:26-27).
† The disciples didn't need to speculate about a future worldwide evacuation. They needed to understand the signs Jesus had given them concerning their own generation.
† Lot's wife became the perfect example because she demonstrated the danger of hesitation when God had already made the path of escape clear.
† Jesus wasn't merely teaching that material possessions are temporary. He was warning His followers not to sacrifice their lives by clinging to a city whose covenant judgment had already been announced.

Matthew 24:34

Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

† This statement establishes the time frame for the warnings Jesus had given. He didn't place the destruction of Jerusalem thousands of years beyond the lives of His disciples.
† The generation that heard His warnings would also experience their fulfillment. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 occurred within the first-century generation Jesus addressed.
† This is why the command to remember Lot's wife must be understood within its historical setting. Jesus wasn't giving an isolated warning disconnected from the coming judgment against Jerusalem.
† He was preparing His followers for events that would take place within their lifetime.
† The prophecy had a definite audience, a definite location, and a definite historical fulfillment. Removing those details

creates interpretations that Jesus Himself never required.
† The warning was fulfilled when Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed, bringing the Old Covenant order to its historical conclusion.

Hebrews 10:37

For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay.

† The writer of Hebrews reinforced the nearness of Christ's coming judgment. He didn't describe an event that was still thousands of years away.
† The expression a very little while communicated genuine imminence to the original readers. They were living during the closing years of the Old Covenant age.
† The believers were being encouraged to persevere because the promised vindication was approaching. The old covenant system that had opposed the gospel was nearing its final judgment.
† This agrees with Jesus' warnings in Luke 17 and Matthew 24. The first-century church wasn't waiting for the destruction of planet Earth. It was approaching the conclusion of the covenant age that had begun under Moses.
† The warning to remember Lot's wife belonged to that same period of transition. Those who trusted Christ needed to remain faithful rather than return to a system that was about to disappear.
† The judgment of AD 70 confirmed that Jesus had spoken truthfully about the approaching end of the Old Covenant age.

Historical References

† Flavius Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian who witnessed the Jewish-Roman War, described the siege and

destruction of Jerusalem in The Jewish War, particularly Books 5 and 6. His account records famine, internal conflict, widespread death, and the burning of the temple in AD 70.

† Josephus described a city overwhelmed by war and suffering. His historical account illustrates the severity of the destruction Jesus had warned about decades earlier.

† Eusebius, writing in Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5, reported that members of the Jerusalem church had received a warning and relocated to Pella before the war overtook the city.

† Eusebius wrote centuries after the events, so his report is historical testimony rather than an eyewitness account. Nevertheless, it preserves an early Christian tradition that the believers escaped Jerusalem before its destruction.

† Epiphanius also preserved traditions concerning Christians who left Jerusalem and settled in Pella. These accounts support the historical understanding that early Christians associated the flight from Jerusalem with the warnings of Jesus.

† Tacitus, the Roman historian, discussed the Jewish revolt and the siege of Jerusalem in Histories, Book 5. His account provides additional Roman historical context for the catastrophe that overtook the city.

† These historical witnesses don't establish biblical doctrine by themselves. Scripture provides the prophetic explanation, while historical records help demonstrate that the predicted destruction occurred in the first century.

† The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 wasn't the end of the physical universe. It was the devastating conclusion of the temple-centered covenant order that had rejected its Messiah.

How It Applies To Us Today

† Although the historical warning to flee Jerusalem was fulfilled in the first century, the account still teaches important principles about faith, obedience, and our relationship with Jesus Christ.

† First, God's warnings deserve our attention. Lot's family received a clear instruction, and Jesus' disciples received a clear warning. In both situations, obedience mattered.

† Second, we shouldn't allow possessions, traditions, or familiar surroundings to become more important than following Christ. Lot's wife reminds us that attachment to what we're leaving behind can interfere with obedience.
† Third, we must recognize that Jesus fulfilled the promises of the Old Covenant. We aren't waiting for another temple, another sacrificial system, or another covenant judgment against Jerusalem. Christ has accomplished what the Law and the Prophets anticipated (Matthew 5:17).
† Fourth, believers today aren't living under the same prophetic emergency that confronted the first-century disciples. We don't need to flee Jerusalem because of a future fulfillment of Luke 17. That warning belonged to the generation Jesus addressed.
† Fifth, the kingdom of God isn't waiting to be established. Christ reigns now, and believers have already come to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22-24).
† Sixth, our confidence rests in the completed work of Jesus Christ. We don't need to look backward toward the shadows of the Old Covenant when we already possess the reality found in Him.
† Finally, remembering Lot's wife means understanding both the historical warning and the continuing spiritual lesson. We should follow Christ faithfully, trust His completed work, and never allow the things of this world to become more important than our relationship with Him.
† Jesus' warning was fulfilled in its original historical setting, but the wisdom of His words remains valuable for every generation of believers.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why did Jesus specifically say to remember Lot's wife?

A: Because she became an example of someone who was warned to escape judgment but disobeyed the instruction not to look back. Jesus used her experience to warn His first-century

followers against hesitation when the time came to flee Jerusalem (Genesis 19:17, 26; Luke 17:31-32).

Q: Was Jesus predicting the end of the physical world?

A: No. In this fulfilled perspective, Jesus was describing the coming judgment upon Jerusalem and the conclusion of the Old Covenant age. His instructions concerned people living in Judea, and He declared that the events would occur within that generation (Luke 21:20-22; Matthew 24:34).

Q: Why did Jesus compare Jerusalem with Sodom?

A: Both cities became examples of divine judgment following persistent wickedness. Jesus used Sodom's destruction as a historical pattern for the judgment approaching Jerusalem. The comparison also emphasized the necessity of escaping before destruction arrived (Luke 17:28-32; Matthew 23:37-38).

Q: Did Lot's wife look back because she loved Sodom?

A: Scripture doesn't explicitly identify her thoughts or motives. It tells us that she looked back after being commanded not to do so. Her disobedience is the central fact Jesus used in His warning (Genesis 19:17, 26).

Q: Was the command to flee Jerusalem meant for all future Christians?

A: No. The original command concerned the first-century believers living in Jerusalem and Judea. They were instructed to flee when they recognized the approaching destruction. The historical command was fulfilled, although the principles of faith and obedience still apply today (Luke 21:20-22; Matthew 24:15-

18).

Q: Did Christians actually escape Jerusalem before AD 70?

A: Eusebius reported that the Jerusalem church relocated to Pella before the destruction. His account is later historical testimony, not a contemporary eyewitness report, but it supports the tradition that Christians responded to warnings concerning Jerusalem's approaching judgment (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5).

Q: Does remembering Lot's wife mean Christians can lose their salvation by looking backward?

A: Jesus' immediate warning concerned obedience during an approaching historical judgment, not a formula for losing salvation. Lot's wife serves as an example of the consequences of disobeying God's warning. Our salvation rests in Jesus Christ, not in our ability to escape a geographical location (Ephesians 2:8-9; Luke 17:32).

Q: Why was leaving Jerusalem so significant for Jewish believers?

A: Jerusalem contained the temple and represented the center of Israel's Old Covenant worship. Leaving meant recognizing that their relationship with God no longer depended upon the temple system. Through Christ, believers had access to the Father and belonged to His spiritual household (Ephesians 2:18-22; Hebrews 8:13).

Q: What does this passage teach about the Second Coming?

A: Within the fulfilled perspective, the revelation of the Son of Man in Luke 17 concerns Christ's covenantal judgment against

Jerusalem in AD 70. The language follows Old Testament patterns in which God revealed His authority through judgments upon nations. Jesus placed these events within the lifetime of His generation (Luke 17:28-30; Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 24:34).

Q: What is the most important lesson for Christians today?

A: We should trust Jesus Christ, obey His teachings, and refuse to place our confidence in possessions, religious traditions, or institutions instead of Him. The historical judgment has been fulfilled, but the call to faithful discipleship remains (Luke 17:32; Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 12:22-24).

† Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife," because He wanted His disciples to recognize the seriousness of the judgment approaching their generation. The destruction of Sodom provided the pattern, Jerusalem provided the first-century fulfillment, and the warning continues to remind us that obedience to Christ must come before attachment to anything He has called us to leave behind.

† The warning wasn't about the end of the planet. It was about the end of an age, the judgment of a covenant-breaking city, and the deliverance of those who trusted the words of Jesus Christ.

† **This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies** †

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† Flavius Josephus, The Jewish War, Books 5-6; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5; Epiphanius, Panarion 29.7; Tacitus, Histories, Book 5

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