

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Luke 17: 26-37

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We'll continue reading Luke Chapter 17 and today we will read verses 26 to 37.

Verse 26-27: "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."

When Jesus spoke about the days of the kingdom of God, He used two illustrations. As we mentioned yesterday, these relate to the final judgment that all humanity will face—the judgment that comes when the Son of Man is revealed from heaven.

The "day of the Lord," or what we call eschatology, is indeed very mysterious and not easy to fully understand. Different Bible teachers often have different interpretations. What I am sharing today may differ from what you have previously learned or believed. Concerning such mysteries, it is difficult to say definitively what is completely accurate. Therefore, it is important to have a spirit of humility and openness, respecting that different teachers may hold different views.

What, then, makes for a good interpretation? It is not merely about being right or wrong, but about application. If an interpretation helps you love the Lord more, love the church more, and become more willing to commit and to give yourself, then it is beneficial for you. With this attitude—one of openness and discernment—we can listen to different perspectives. What truly helps you, may God make it real in your life; that, for you, is a good and useful understanding.

Verse 28: “Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built.”

When speaking about “the days of the Lord” or “the days of the Son of Man,” Jesus used two different illustrations. The first is: “as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man”; the second is the illustration of “the days of Lot.”

Most interpreters believe these refer to the same thing—that people in this age are absorbed in their own lives: eating, drinking, marrying, farming, building, and forgetting the Lord. Then the day of the Lord comes unexpectedly, and those who are unprepared face judgment. This understanding is certainly valid, but I would like to present another perspective.

There is about a thousand years between Noah and Lot. In Noah’s time, the judgment God brought was one of total destruction. God judged all humanity, except for Noah’s family of eight, who were saved by entering the ark. This illustration emphasizes the distinction between those who are saved and those who are not.

Lot, however, lived about a thousand years after Noah. He was the nephew of Abraham. By Abraham’s time, God had already changed His way of working with humanity—He chose one man from among many, and Abraham became the beginning of a chosen lineage. Today, all who are justified by faith can be called Abraham’s spiritual descendants. Lot was connected to Abraham and spent time with him, learning much from him. Yet in the end, he was drawn by the desire for enjoyment and separated from Abraham. He moved his tent gradually until he settled in the sinful city of Sodom. Although he lived in Sodom, 2 Peter 2:7 still calls him “righteous Lot,” who was distressed by the sinful conduct of the wicked.

Therefore, it seems that here Jesus uses Lot as a picture of believers living in the last days—situated in a corrupt and immoral generation. The characteristic of Lot’s time was that people were “eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building.” Outwardly, everything appeared prosperous: active commerce, ongoing construction, advancing material civilization, and increasing indulgence in pleasure.

Yet Lot lived in such a wicked city and was continually grieved by the people around him. As it says in 2 Peter 2:8: “for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds.” In this way, Jesus uses the example of Lot in Sodom to show that in the last days, believers living in a corrupt and immoral society will often feel as Lot did—deeply troubled within by the surrounding evil.

Verse 29-33: “but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. “In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot’s wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.”

At that time, God’s judgment on Sodom was local—it was limited to that one city. It was not like the judgment in the days of Noah, which was a universal destruction.

When God sent angels to rescue Lot, the situation was extremely urgent. Lot could only take his wife and two daughters and hurriedly flee the city. At that moment, there was no time to delay: “He who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away; and likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back.” In other words, whatever is left behind must not be clung to—once you hear, you must leave immediately.

Jesus also specifically tells us to remember Lot’s wife. In Genesis 19:26, it is recorded: “But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.” Lot’s wife seemed unable to let go of what she had left behind in Sodom. When she knew the city was being destroyed, she looked back with reluctance. That single glance resulted in her becoming a pillar of salt. Jesus deliberately brings up this example and draws a conclusion: “Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.”

Salt is meant to preserve, to purify, and to give flavor. Yet Lot's wife became like salt that has lost its purpose—a sign of shame standing there. This echoes what is written in Luke 14:34–35: “Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out.” This seems to describe the condition of Lot's wife—becoming salt that has lost its usefulness, unfit for the field or even for the dung heap, only to be cast out.

Through this example, Jesus makes a contrast between Lot and his wife. Although Lot lived in a corrupt city, he remained a righteous man and was delivered when judgment came. His wife, however, could not let go of what she had, and when she looked back, she became a pillar of salt—cast outside.

Thus, Jesus gives this conclusion again: “Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.” Following this, Jesus speaks a passage that is not easy to understand, and one that has often been the subject of differing interpretations.

Verse 34-36: “I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.”

This seems to describe the hidden appearing of the Son of Man. Perhaps we are sleeping—one will be taken and the other left; or perhaps we are working—like women grinding or men in the field—again, one taken and one left. I personally lean toward understanding this as the rapture of the overcomers.

Regarding the rapture of believers, there are many different interpretations. The most commonly cited passages are 1 Thessalonians 4:15–18 and 1 Corinthians 15:52, which speak of the last trumpet, when all believers are caught up together in the clouds. I tend to see those passages as referring to Christ's public coming, when the majority of the saints will be resurrected and raptured at the same time. After being caught up, the children of God will then face judgment.

However, before this general rapture, there may be what is called the rapture of the overcomers. This is reflected in the words here: “two in one bed... one will be taken and the other left; two women grinding together... one will be taken and the other left; two men in the field... one will be taken and the other left”.

The rapture of the overcomers may occur under different circumstances—some in the day, some at night; some while resting, others while working—according to each person’s situation. Outwardly, people may be doing the same things—grinding, farming—but God looks at the heart. Are we living for business, for labor, for building our own lives? Or are we living for the kingdom of God? An overcomer is one who, in whatever they do, does it for God’s kingdom.

At the time of Christ’s hidden appearing, these overcomers are, so to speak, first identified and taken. This is different from His final, public coming—like lightning flashing from one end of heaven to the other—when all remaining believers will be resurrected and raptured together.

Therefore, may God grant us a watchful and sober heart. May our daily life and work be centered on the kingdom of God, with His kingdom as our goal. I simply share what I have received as a reference for brothers and sisters to consider.

Verse 37: “And they answered and said to Him, “Where, Lord?” So He said to them, “Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”

This is also a very difficult passage, and different interpreters offer different explanations. I personally prefer to understand it this way: at the end of the age, when Jesus returns, He comes with the overcoming saints to engage in the final battle against the forces of the Antichrist. This is recorded in Revelation 19:17–21: “I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, ‘Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.’ And I saw the beast, the kings of the

earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.”

In this final portion concerning the kingdom of God, may God grant us wisdom. Let us also maintain a humble and gracious attitude, recognizing that there are many different ways of interpretation. Yet one thing we must ask God to preserve in us is a watchful heart—that in our daily lives we would continually take the kingdom of God as our center and our goal. May we live in a state of readiness, so that in the end we may be pleasing to Him.

Let us pray together: Lord, regarding the mysteries of Your kingdom, we do not claim that we fully understand. We know there is still much that is unclear to us. We ask that by Your grace You would cover us, help us, and grant us hearts of wisdom. While we still have time, may we be willing to follow in Your footsteps. As You suffered and walked the path of the cross, may we also be willing to suffer with You, taking up our own cross to follow You. Remember our days, and help us to continually remember Your grace and turn back to You, making You the only goal of our lives. Bless our life today. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen!