

DON'T LOOK BACK

The Savior instructed us to “remember Lot’s wife” (Luke 17:32). In this context, Jesus was describing what would transpire at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. When they saw the signs of impending destruction, they were to flee from Jerusalem, not stopping to look back. It was in this connection that Jesus calls attention to Lot’s wife. You will recall that during the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen.19), Lot’s wife looked back as she was fleeing the cities of the plain, only to be turned into a pillar of salt (19:26). What can we learn Lot’s wife? What can we learn about the dangers of looking back?

Looking back shows I do not take God at His word. When God instructed Lot and his family to flee the cities of the plain, specific instructions were given that none should look back (19:17). This warning, as well as others, was attached to the punishment “lest thou be consumed.” Such should have served as a sufficient deterrent for casting a glance backwards. Perhaps Lot’s wife thought no real harm would befall her for simply looking back upon the home from which she was fleeing. However, God meant what He said! A terrible demise was the result of her failure to take God at His word. Oh, how many more face a far worse fate in the day of judgment because they refuse to believe what God has said!

Looking back shows my heart is still tied to what is behind me. God called upon Lot and his family to flee the city of the plains so that they might not “be consumed in the iniquity of the city” (Gen.19:15). Had they been allowed to remain in that place, they likely would have been influenced for evil (note how Lot’s married children reacted). Christ taught those who would follow him to forsake all, and don’t look back: “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). We must sever all ties with that which would pull us away from God (Jas.4:4). To those who are tempted to cast a glance over your shoulder at what you have left behind for the Lord (Mt.19:27), remember the words of Paul: “... forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before...” (Phil.3:13-14).

Looking backs shows a lack of trust in God’s promises. Often our attention is turned back to the things we left behind because we do not trust that God will care for us as He says He will do. It is always the case that God will reward those who do what is right. When we are called upon to leave behind father, or mother, or children, or houses or lands for the sake of the gospel, God will surely take care of us in every day and in every way (Matt.19:28). Those who will “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt.6:33) have every assurance that God will take care of our needs.

Looking back forces me to take my eyes off of what lies ahead. When we turn to view those things we have left behind, we are not able to see what lies ahead. There are temptations to resist, pitfalls to avoid, a path on which we must remain. Looking over our shoulders makes us unable to “look{ing} unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb.12:2). Can we

honestly sing that we are “constantly looking to thee” when we are looking back, longing for what we have supposedly left behind? *Patrick Morrison*