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Title: What Does the Immorality of Our Day Mean?

Text: Luke 17:26-36

We are living at a very critical time. I believe it is important to understand the time in which we live and recognize that Jesus is coming. We aren't trapped here. God has not left us alone. It's been said that about 30% of the Bible is prophecy – much of it end-time prophecy. That is a gift from God. We are the only people on earth with a book that tells us the future with accuracy. God tells us what the end will look like and that He's coming to take us to be with Him.

Today we will be looking at the immorality of our present world. I recently heard a preacher declare that we are living in the most immoral time in the history of the world. We and our children are seeing incredible changes taking place. Technology has made all kinds of things available to us and the world via our telephones, tablets, computers, satellite and cable television in a way that was not possible before the internet and satellite TV.

Recently a Florida pastor called an emergency meeting to talk about the immorality of a high school in his city. The pastor's son attended that high school. The latest hot topic was not homosexuality or bi-sexuality but PAN-SEXUALITY. He stated that many of today's students no longer define their sexuality by limiting it to anything. Some have stated that they will have sex with anybody and anything, anytime they want to and no one will tell them different. I am seeing the erosion of morality and sexuality unlike anything I have ever seen before. Who among us would have dreamed that our government's agenda would be to redefine marriage as has been defined by God since Adam and Eve? This pastor's son's best friend was suicidal. He said this boy is involved in a type of pornography that cannot be fulfilled and that he was addicted to it. This addicted boy had fallen in lust with fantasy figures. How do you fulfill that relationship? That's just like the devil. He gets you addicted to something that you can't fulfill. One of the things about God – NOTHING in God is addictive. I'm not aware that anyone's ever been addicted to Bible reading or prayer or going to church, because Jesus doesn't want you to do it because you HAVE to. He wants you to do it because you WANT to. He's not a slave driver; He's a shepherd – Big difference! The devil IS a slave driver. He wants you to become addicted. We are seeing a moral free fall in our world today. That's a major sign of the end times that the Bible speaks of very clearly.

First, I want to talk about what Jesus said of the days of Noah and Lot. Jesus said that His coming will be like the days of Noah and Lot. They both lived in immoral cultures. (Read the text.) Jesus said, "When I come and rapture you, it will be just like the days of Noah (just like before he got on the ark), and it will be just like the days of Lot (just before he was taken out of the city of Sodom and Gomorrah).

There are four parallels between the cultures of Noah and Lot. **1. There was a BUSINESS AS USUAL attitude.** The world acted as though it would go on forever. There was no fear of God. **2. There was THE REFUSAL TO LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF TRUTH.** Noah was a preacher of righteousness and as far as we know he never had a convert. Lot was a righteous man taking the truth to Sodom and Gomorrah. Did you know that between Noah and Lot that neither one had a convert because the world they lived in was so hardened toward truth? **3. There was A SUDDEN REMOVAL OF THE RIGHTEOUS FROM AMONG THE WICKED.** How many raindrops hit Noah's head? Zero! Noah went on the ark before the rain began. God shut the door of the ark. He shut the door and sealed Noah and his family in the ark. THEN the rain came. There wasn't a drop of rain or judgment on Noah and his family. How many hailstones hit Lot and his family when they were in Sodom and Gomorrah? Zero! An angel came into Sodom and Gomorrah and said, "We must take you out of here because judgment can't fall until you are gone." Likewise judgment (as declared in the tribulation) can't fall on the world until we are removed, snatched away – GONE! I'm talking about the wrath of God. **4. There was CATAclysmic JUDGMENT.** Not just judgment, but the wrath of God. In Noah's day a flood came on the world that destroyed every single person outside the ark. That is cataclysmic judgment. This is not just bad things happening. This is more than wars, rumors of war, earthquakes and famines. In the case of Lot's world, it was fire, brimstone and hailstones that came down from heaven and destroyed every single human being.

Every chapter in 1 Thessalonians mentions the coming of Christ. It's in 1 Thessalonians that we are told that we are not going to experience the wrath of God (1:9). The tribulation is not just judgment. It is the wrath of Almighty God poured out on the earth. Judgment in the Book of Revelation kills 1/3 of mankind (Rev. 9:15). This is why at the end of the tribulation there is no buying and selling. The economy is shattered. Billions of people have died. The earth is smoldering. That's NOT business as usual. 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 tells me that we are all to encourage each other. So that's what I want to do. As believers, we AREN'T going through the tribulation because He has not appointed us to wrath. We will be taken in the rapture while the world goes through seven years of hell on earth and billions are dying

and being tormented. We will be with Jesus in Heaven during that time. That's comforting! Let me try something with you. See if you are more comforted by this. You COULD go through the tribulation. Some of you, maybe many of you might die during that time. A few will live. Your children might go through the tribulation. If Jesus hasn't come by then, your grandchildren will likely go through the tribulation. Anyone comforted? I don't think you can comfort people by telling them they are going to go through the tribulation. Here's the comfort – JESUS IS COMING FOR US! He's not going to leave us here on earth as He pours out His wrath. We are NOT appointed to wrath. Be comforted by that. Comfort others with that. It's a wonderful thing! All of those parallels between Noah and Lot's day are there for us.

Let's look at Noah's world specifically. (Read Genesis 6:9-13.) The word "corrupt" there (in the NKJV) is the Hebrew word "sahat". It means full of evil, filthy and immoral. Does that sound at all like the world that we live in? God looked down on the world of Noah. It wasn't just a BAD world. It was an EVIL world. It was a FILTHY world and God looked down and judged the world because it was filthy, violent and immoral – like our world today.

This is Lot's world. (Read 2 Peter 2:4-9.) They are presumptuous and deep-willed. Again we see the word "filthy". The Greek word is "asulgaya" – which means sexually immoral, insatiable, desires for pleasure without the fear of God whatsoever. If you remember when the angels came in to deliver Lot and his family, the men of Sodom and Gomorrah tried to force themselves on the angels. That's how ungodly they were. So when God looked down on the world in the days of Lot, it was much like our world, and His answer was cataclysmic judgment. Jesus used a direct parallel between those two worlds and He poured out cataclysmic judgment – and it's headed to this world.

Let me read a more graphic description of our world. This is a prophecy given by Paul in 2 Timothy 3:1-8. (Read it.) Paul is basically describing the deconstruction of morality in the world. I want to be very careful what I say here. I grew up in a very different world than today's world. I remember respect for authority. If you got in trouble at school, your parents didn't call the ACLU. I don't recall parents threatening teachers. When I got in trouble at school, I was in trouble when I got home. It wasn't long ago that most people didn't lock their doors. As kids we often played outside in the daytime and sometimes at night. Today pedophiles grab kids off the front porch. We had three TV stations – ABC, NBC and CBS. They stopped airing around 10 pm with an Indian Head on the screen and a beep all night long. You assumed that your neighbors were Christians. Most of my teachers were Christians. We prayed in the name of Jesus every day at school and saluted the flag. Of course, there were immoral people, but people were generally moral. It's a different world today. The last twenty – even ten years - especially since the internet, we have seen a lot of changes.

So Paul uses 19 different measurements of the immorality of the end times (2 Timothy 3:1-8). He is rather detailed with a list that explains the full spectrum of immorality. Immorality isn't just about sexuality. It's about one's character. When a person becomes immoral, it affects every fiber of their character. It grows. It spreads. Morals protect. The reason for morals is the protection of relationships. If I'm moral, I won't hurt you. I won't lash out at you. I'm not going to lie about you or blaspheme your character. I'm not going to steal from you. I'm not going to seduce or go after your spouse or take your spouse from you. If I am a moral person, you are safe around me. Your family is safe around me. But, if I'm immoral, I'll damage you. Immorality destroys people's lives. Paul also uses this list because it explains how God hates immorality and will judge it severely. Our God is loving. He designed morality to protect the people He loves. Immorality devastates. That's why Paul says, "Beware. In the last days dangerous times will come." We are living in dangerous times right now because people don't have moral restraints. People get mad at work, come back and shoot somebody. It's a dangerous world – be it in a movie theater in Louisiana, a military recruiting office in Tennessee, a church Bible study, and the list goes on and on. It also describes our perverted value system.

Here are the four basic categories of what Paul is describing:

- 1. EXALTATION OF SELF & NARCISSISM** – lovers of self, boasters, proud, haughty, headstrong. When I was a boy and you did something good in sports, you didn't celebrate it. The Cowboys would make a great play and walk back to the huddle. The fans would celebrate, but it was considered wrong to celebrate your own thing. ILLUSTRATION: Anyone remember Hollywood Henderson doing a back flip and Tom Landry pulling him out of the game? Today it's rather common to flaunt your good fortune. "Look at me!" People are narcissistic. It's all about ME.
- 2. REJECTION OF AUTHORITY** – disobedient to parents, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of Godliness but denying His power. If you're in a position of authority, this is a dangerous world. The police of America are under assault. Statistically a police officer is killed every 60 hours. 117 officers were killed in the line of duty last year! The military are under assault. They guard our society. They are special people. You can't pay them enough. Yet they have become open targets. Look at parents and teachers. A teacher in Amarillo, Texas got after a boy for his behavior. The boy told the teacher that he was going home to get his gun and kill the teacher. So the teacher expelled the boy. At the end of the day when the teacher went to get into

his car, the boy's mother was waiting for the teacher. She said to the teacher, "If you won't make my son mad, he won't threaten you with his gun." Parents and teachers are under assault. Teachers need authority to educate our children. Our society has all but become a lawless society. The Anti-Christ is called the "lawless one". When you are in rebellion, you have the same spirit as the Anti-Christ.

3. **REJECTION OF MORAL STANDARDS** – unholy, without self-control, despisers of good. A story is told that back a number of years ago, a popular Christian boy band told the minister who was speaking that night that if he heard screaming girls, it wasn't for him. These "boys" wore chastity rings having made an agreement with God and their parents that they would wait until they were married to have sex. The press vilified them. They were openly attacked! We need more young people who are committed to being virgins until they are married. "Despisers of good" – they will persecute you for doing good.
4. **DISLOYAL, UNLOVING, VERBALLY VICIOUS, UNFORGIVING, SLANDERERS and TRAITORS.** Some of today's bloggers go after people. Children have committed suicide because of things put on social media. It's a vicious world. There is an entire industry consisting of gossipers. They don't care if they destroy your life. They use any opportunity they can. How many of you knew that when Franklin Roosevelt was president he was crippled? Basically, the American people didn't know it at the time because the media didn't want them to know it. They didn't want the American people to see their president in a weakened condition. So they would do photo shoots to make him look like he was strong or like he was standing. That was then. Today, if there's one area of your life out of order, they will seek it out, viciously attack it and try to destroy you. People make their livelihood doing that! Today's world is unlike the world of 100 years, 50 years, or even 20 years ago. What do you think? Does our world fit the description of the end-times world? Morally we are at a tipping point.

Let me reverse these measurements of an immoral person and show you what a Godly person looks like:

1. **EXALTATION OF GOD OVER SELF – GOD FIRST.** The Godly should not be haughty or proud. The Godly should exalt God and be of a humble spirit. 1 Peter 5:5 says, "*Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'*" Do you know why the Bible says to clothe yourself in humility? Because if you don't have it on, you need to put it on. We're prideful. That's part of our sin nature. We need to make it our practice to put on humility and walk in humility. It's not about me. IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS! One of the most important things about praise and worship is that it exalts God above us. It reminds us that it's not about us. The Book of Revelation speaks of a sea of worshippers that no one can count. Here's the thought: It isn't about me. It will NEVER be about me. IT'S ABOUT JESUS! Get over it! God and GOD ALONE is worthy! As believers we must never draw attention away from Christ and toward ourselves.
2. **SUBMISSION TO GOD'S AUTHORITY AND HIS DELEGATED HUMAN AUTHORITY.** I need to submit to those in authority. The Godly are not rebels – they submit to authority. Jesus said, "I do nothing except by the Father's will." Jesus submitted to His Father. Jesus submitted to His mother. Mary told Jesus at 13 he couldn't go into the ministry when he wanted to. He submitted. At 30 He didn't want to start His ministry. Mary told Him to start and He did. Jesus submitted to His mother – His God-delegated authority. Jesus submitted to authority.
3. **THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE ABSOLUTE MORAL STANDARDS OF THE BIBLE.** At least on occasion, we all want to do things that the Bible says not to do. We have all done things that the Bible says we shouldn't do. But there is a difference between committing sin and practicing sin. The Bible says don't – I did it – it is sin – I repent. The Holy Spirit gives me the strength to do that. No one is perfect. Practicing sin says, "I'm doing it – It's okay! I'll do anything I want to do anytime I want to do it. I'll find a scripture to make it look right. It's my lifestyle. It's the way I live. Romans 10:9 says, "*that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised His from the dead, you will be saved.*" Jesus also said, "*Why do you call me Lord, Lord and don't do what I say?*" Lord means Master. You can't come to Jesus and make Him Lord and tell Him what the terms are. It's not, Lord I want to be saved, but I want to be Lord of my life. Hey, it's 2015! THE WORD is the infallible, inspired Word of God. This tells us what truth is. It tells us what sin is. I believe every word of this book. I even believe the GENUINE LEATHER. This book tells the truth.
4. **LOVES OTHERS – LOYALLY & SACRIFICIALLY.** Jesus says blessed are the peacemakers. You will be called the sons of God. Believers should never be troublemakers or gossips or mean-spirited. We should be peacemakers if we are going to call ourselves sons of God. Exaltation of God over self, submissive to God's authority and His delegated authority, acceptance of the absolute moral standards of the Bible and loving others loyally and sacrificially – that's how America became great! It was the character of our founding fathers – the spirit of our

nation. We were ascending into greatness. Now we have become an immoral and vicious nation. In every category, we have fallen. I'm afraid that America has removed herself from yesterday's place of God's blessings. Jesus said in Matthew 5:13-16, *"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."* As we live in these last days, we must be a light to this dark world. Our light needs to show someone else the way to God. Rather than being influenced by the world, we need to be influencing the world. Rather than others drawing us into sin, we need to draw the lost unto righteousness and Jesus Christ. We can be on the offense or the defense. We NEED to be on the offense. We need to live our lives intentionally for the purpose of glorifying God and being prepared when Jesus comes, taking as many people with us to heaven as we possibly can.

5. **Conclusion.** Let me say this is closing about Noah and Lot – they both were preachers of righteousness AND they both were examples of how to live your life in these kinds of times. First – Both Noah and Lot were BOLD ABOUT THEIR FAITH in the evil time that they were living in. Mark 8:38 says, *"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."* I'm NOT ashamed of Jesus Christ, God the Father, the Holy Spirit or the Word of God and its standards. I'm ashamed of the sin I lived in before coming to Jesus. We are in an election season now. I'll not tell you who to vote for. (As election day approaches, if you ask, I might tell you who NOT to vote for.) You NEED to vote. (I heard one of the camp speakers say that only 20% of professing believers voted. Shame on you if you didn't vote!) The next election is about the future of America and what will happen if the character of our nation doesn't change. I prefer to live the rest of my days and for my daughter and her children to live in America under the blessings of God. As politicians promise us the sun, moon and stars and everything they are going to do for us, we need to ask them, "What is your view on abortion? On marriage? On religious liberty that is being taken away from us? Don't try to distract me by promising me money. I've heard that before. I want to know where you are morally. I want to know what you'll do when you get into office. I want the blessings of God back on the USA. It's not a democrat or republican thing. It's a God thing. This is the time to stand up. Don't ever envy sinners or be deceived by them. Think about the day before the flood and the way arrogant, ungodly people were strutting around acting as though there was no end and they could get away with anything they wanted – with no fear of God whatsoever. But Noah and his family got in the ark. God shut the door and the rain started. Noah and his family probably heard the beating of the people outside the ark – pleading to be let in. That day, people saw Noah in a different light. There had never been rain on the earth and he was building a massive ship on dry ground. Can you imagine the mockery and how foolish he looked? Every time someone saw that ship there was another joke told. But on the day the rain started, Noah looked like a genius. Your family and friends make be mocking you and making fun of your faith, but the day after the rapture, you'll be looking like a genius. Then there's Lot. The angels came to get Lot and his family and the men of Sodom and Gomorrah try to force themselves on them. They were arrogant and ungodly. They had no fear of God whatsoever. Then Lot and his family were taken out of the city before the fire and brimstone started. Think about the day before the fire and brimstone. Then think about the day of. NYC is known for its attitude and noise, but after 9/11 things got quiet for a while. I took a train into the city and saw it first-hand. Church were filled. People were respectful. Horns didn't honk as usual (miracle). People had become humble. Atheists were praying (but who were they praying to). I suspect the tribulation will make 9/11 look like a picnic. The world will change dramatically the day of the rapture. Think about AFTER the rapture. Think about the start of the tribulation. Don't envy sinners. Let me finish by saying this – Live for God and not this world. Put God first. Be in accountable relationships with fellow believers. I close with Hebrews 10:24-25 – *"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."* (The word "Day" is capitalized – this is speaking of the coming of the Lord!)