

## SAVIOR OF THE NATIONS - COME QUICKLY!

Welcome to Advent, dear friends in Christ!

Raise your hand if you like to wait. Perhaps you've done some waiting and you know how exciting it can be. You've waited for the doctor to call you back with the test results. You've waited for your teacher to post the test grades. You've waited at red lights, in line at checkouts, and on hold on the phone... I suppose you could look back on all the time wasted waiting and the number would be pretty disgusting; you could have been otherwise very productive.

In a way, Advent is about waiting – waiting for the coming and arrival of our Savior Jesus. But instead of sitting around to watch paint dry, instead of just twiddling our thumbs for that great and glorious day, our Lord tells us there is much we can do in the meantime – especially as it relates to the word: “Repent.”

This morning we're going to focus our attention on the Old Testament lesson as we prepare for our Savior's coming. Yes, we'll join our hearts and prayers with generations of believers and pray, “Savior of the Nations – Come, Come Quickly” for there is a great urgency. You and I need to be rescued – so come quickly and rescue us. And as we see how our Lord has answered that prayer, we pray again, Come Quickly – to bring us safely home.



### I. I need You to rescue me

“Savior, Come Quickly” is not a prayer that had been arising from the 2 cities in our reading – Sodom and Gomorrah. They could have cared less. “Savior, Come Quickly” is not the prayer that Abraham prayed when God told him he was going to visit Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham was trying to put the brakes on... “If there are 50 believers... please spare the city!” Then he adjusted his prayer downward... 45, 40, 30, 20, if only 10 believers are present.” Nevertheless, the Lord sent his 2 messengers to the city to proclaim to its people that because of their tremendous wickedness, the city would be destroyed! The Lord was coming very, very quickly and Abraham was so very concerned for the city because his nephew, Lot, and family lived there.

Back up a few years when Lot and Abraham arrived in Canaan. The Lord blessed the herds and flocks of both of them to the point that the water and fields couldn't support both their animals. Abraham allowed Lot the first pick of the land, and he would choose elsewhere. Those in real estate know the phrase, “Location, Location, Location.” Lot choose what looked like the best area for his flocks, but it was the worst area for him and his family. We read how he chose land NEAR Sodom and Gomorrah – but it didn't take long before he moved in downtown and his girls became engaged to men of the city. He was literally surround by the world's most sinful city – and it was horribly affecting his discernment and his relationship with the Lord.

In the events leading up to our text, the townsmen reacted very bitterly to the Lord's warning. They wanted to molest and kill the Lord's messengers. Lot tried to protect them – but by offering to the townsmen both of his daughters. *WHAT??!!* Finally, our text states, “*With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished.”* ***When he hesitated,*** *the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD was merciful to them.* Their hearts were so attached to their own way of life and things that it was totally blocking their ears and hearts from hearing the Lord's warning, “Get out! Get away from this!” In a way it was a call to “save yourself” but they were incapable of it! The angels had to literally drag them out – and then tell them again, “*Flee for your lives! Don't look back, and don't stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!*”

And then the Lord came quickly. With a clear display of his wrath and punishment against sin, he rained down burning sulfur from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah; all who lived there perished. Lot and his family were safe – or so one might have thought. Lot's wife – and this is where we really want to hone our attention – our text says, <sup>25</sup> *Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities—and also the vegetation in the land.* <sup>26</sup> ***But Lot's wife looked back,*** *and she became a pillar of salt.*

Oh, how the sinful flesh craves sinful things! How quickly and deeply our hearts become entangled in the ways and mindset of this world! Too quickly do the words of the Lord pass in one ear and out the other – only because we are so infatuated by material things which come to nothing when they are destroyed by fire on the last day. To this day, Lot’s pillar-of-salt wife stands as lasting testimony to what happens when we do not heed the Lord’s call to repent, to turn from the sinful desires of our flesh, to turn from the ways of this world – to turn to the Lord and live.

And, yet like Lot and his family – we and all people – are incapable of doing this ourselves. The Holy Spirit – working through the Word of God coming to use through one of God’s messengers – must take hold of our heart! The Holy Spirit must lead us away from sin and to the safety of the Lord. Friends, this is why we pray earnestly, “Savior of the Nations – Come Quickly – Come and save me, come and rescue me because I cannot save myself!” Come quickly now – leading me to repent and turn from sin now – before your 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent.

## II. I need You to bring me safely home

There have been many who have tried to predict the date and time of Christ’ 2<sup>nd</sup> return – and all have failed. A quick little reading of the Scriptures clearly says that no one knows on what day it will happen. As we await his return, we can be thankful for this waiting-time, for it has been precisely during this time that God has sent his messengers to us, to our city, to our homes, to our hearts – calling us to repent, taking us by the hand, leading us away from sin, pointing us to Jesus and his 1<sup>st</sup> Advent.

In Jesus, born in that manger, we see our perfect Savior who lived a sinless life. In Jesus’ beaten and bleeding body on the cross, we again see our perfect Savior – for it was there that God poured out all his wrath against all sin of all time. It wasn’t with burning sulfur, but in God the Father forsaking of his only begotten Son. There Jesus paid the price in full for each and every one of our sins. Through faith in Jesus and what he has done for us, we have been and will be brought safely home! This is the ultimate answer to our prayer, “Savior of the Nations, Come quickly.”

Speaking of answered prayers, remember how Abraham prayed for Sodom and Gomorrah... 50, 45,... 20, 10... Our text tells us, <sup>27</sup> *Early the next morning Abraham got up and returned to the place where he had stood before the LORD.* <sup>28</sup> *He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, toward all the land of the plain, and he saw dense smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace.* <sup>29</sup> *So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, **he remembered Abraham**, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.* It may at first seem like God did not hear Abraham’s prayer, but listen to Abraham’s initial plea: “*Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?... <sup>25</sup> Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?*”

The Lord indeed heard and remembered Abraham’s prayer. He answered his prayer – though not in the manner Abraham thought. The Lord did NOT sweep the righteous away with the wicked; he got the righteous out first. Yes indeed, “the Judge of all the earth” did do what was right. When the Lord returns again, we can be assured that “the Judge of all the earth” will once again do what is just and right. He will not sweep away the righteous with the wicked. He demonstrated here and he has spoken clearly through the rest of Scripture that he will rescue his people, that he will take all believers safely home to heaven... and that he will also carry out his final act of judgment against all the wicked.

And so, during this time of waiting for His second Advent, let us be thankful for this time – using it wisely to repent and to turn to the Lord and His Word... using it wisely as God’s own messengers for others who are caught up and living in sin, whose hearts are blindly attached to the things of this world. God has sent us out, not to Sodom and Gomorrah, but to Reno and Sparks – with a lifesaving message. “Repent and Live! Turn to the Savior of the Nations – who is coming again.”

Now is not a time for us whom God has rescued to wait around and watch paint dry. Now is the time to faithful and fearlessly share the Gospel. As the Apostle Paul said, “*I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes*” (Romans 1:16) May our prayer continue to be, “Savior of the Nations Come, Come Quickly” as we share God’s powerful and saving Gospel. Amen.