

Remember Lot's Wife

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[0 : 00] Luke chapter 17, I will read from verses 20 through to verse 37.

! Nor will people say, here it is, or there it is, because the kingdom of God is within you.

Then he said to his disciples, the time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. Men will tell you, there he is, or here he is.

Do not go running off after them, for the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying, and being given in marriage up until the day of Noah entered the ark.

[1 : 15] Then the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

It will be just like this on the day of the Son of Man, the day the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, no one who is on the roof of his house with his goods inside should go down to get them.

Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed. One will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together. One will be taken and the other left.

Where, Lord? they asked. He replied, where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather. Remember the Alamo.

[2 : 17] Just three words, and yet what a word it was to wake up a sleeping nation back in 1836. The garrison at the Alamo was being defended by Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and around 200 men.

And due to their heroic actions, they were able to repel two attacks by General Santa Ana and his Mexican infantry that outnumbered them 12 to 1.

But on the third attack, the Alamo was overwhelmed and conquered, and all but two were killed.

When word of this slaughter got out, it became the rallying cry that called fresh troops to action.

And six weeks later, Santa Ana and his men were defeated. Remember the Alamo. Just three words, but the remembrance of what happened there stirred men to action.

Two thousand years ago, as Jesus Christ was teaching his disciples, he drove home his point with just three penetrating words.

[3 : 30] Remember Lot's wife. Remember Lot's wife. This was so important that the Holy Spirit had it recorded for us in Luke's Gospel, chapter 17, verse 32.

When was the last time you remembered Lot's wife and thought about her? A year ago? Two years ago? Ten? Twenty? Ever? There are some things you can afford to forget and not be the worst for it, but there are other things we're called to remember because of their importance.

So this is one of them. Remember Lot's wife, says our Lord. But why? What could be so important about a woman that lived 4,000 years ago that the Son of God would tell us to remember her?

Well, it's not just remembering her and what she did and what happened to her, but more importantly, we're to learn the lessons that Lot's wife's life and death teach us.

Just as remember the Alamo was meant to stir men to action, so remember Lot's wife is meant to stir us all to action.

[4 : 50] So today we're going to heed the words of our loving Savior and remember Lot's wife and trust him to teach us those lessons that he means for us to learn from her life and death.

Now, I find it hard to improve on J.C. Ryle's division of this three-word text into three divisions, her privileges, her sin, and her punishment.

And so I'll use that simple outline and also pass along many of Ryle's helpful points along the way. But first, her privileges. Her privileges.

Who was this woman? Well, she's more than just a story. She really lived some 4,000 years ago. You can read about her in Genesis chapter 19. Now, it's interesting we don't even know her name. Rebecca? Rachel? Rhoda? We don't know. But we know the name of her husband. His name was Lot. She was Lot's wife.

[5 : 58] That's how Jesus refers to her. We might call her Mrs. Lot. And from that information alone, we learn a lot about her spiritual privileges because she was married to a righteous and godly man.

Now, Lot was far from perfect, as the Bible plainly shows. But Peter, in his second letter, says that Lot was a righteous and godly man who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men.

He lived among them day by day, and doing so was like torture to him. The Bible says he was vexed, he was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds that he saw and heard.

That has ever been a mark of the righteous, living in the midst of an unrighteous world. Their souls are vexed with the wicked things that we see and hear being done.

In Ezekiel's time, they're described as those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that were done in Jerusalem. And so, before we criticize Lot, I wonder if we even measure up to this standard of righteousness.

[7 : 26] Do we grieve? Are our hearts tormented? Does the Lord Jesus hear our laments in prayer as we grieve over the wickedness that's done all around us?

Foul language, filthy jokes, filthy music, God's name blasphemed, used in vain, hatred, malice, kidnapping, abuse, stealing, lying, perversion, worship of self, all that we see and hear?

Or have we got used to it and no longer raise a protest in our spirit or a sigh before the Lord, but maybe even partake and watch and listen to the same ourselves.

Lot was a righteous man and it was evidenced in this very point that he was tormented by the unrighteousness that he witnessed all around him.

So just by being married to this righteous man, Mrs. Lot had many spiritual advantages over many other ladies of her day. She had a daily witness to the reality of God and his holiness right there living with her.

[8 : 42] Furthermore, her husband's uncle was Abraham. Wow, now that packs a whole lot of privilege in it. The father of the faithful was her uncle through her husband to whom God had appeared and had revealed himself.

He had chosen and called Abraham out of his idolatry, from being a man that worshipped idols to worshipping and loving and serving the one and true God.

God entered into a covenant with Abraham. That's an agreement with him, a promise sealed with oaths, and with his family to bless them and to bring blessing to all the nations of the earth through him.

As Abraham would bring forth from his line the Messiah, the one that had been promised to crush the head of the serpent, Satan, and in so doing would have his heel wounded.

So when the Lord had told Abraham to leave his homeland and to go to a promised land that he would show him, by faith he obeyed and he went not knowing where he was going.

[9 : 58] And when he did so, Genesis 12, 5 says, he took his nephew Lot with him. So Lot's with Abraham.

Mrs. Lot is with Abraham. As he moved away from home and went with his uncle Abraham. Just because of a promise that Abraham had heard from God, she saw, she heard close up of Abraham's faith in this faithful God.

And then as Abraham got to the promised land and was moving around in tents from place to place, we're told that Lot was with him. And we're told the Lord appeared to Abraham and he built an altar to the Lord and worshipped him.

And so would have Lot and Mrs. Lot who were with him. So her husband, Uncle Abraham, Aunt Sarah, were worshippers of the one true God in a day when that was rare on the earth.

She had knowledge then of the living and true God. She had knowledge of the truth about creation, how we got here. About history that had happened from Genesis up to this time, from the creation up to this time.

[11:18] Passed down to her. Word of mouth. She knew about the promise of redemption in the coming seed of the woman. And she went along with Lot in this worship.

But then the land where they were living became too small for both prosperous Abraham and prosperous Lot and their flocks that were too large to feed on the land.

So Abraham gave Lot the choice. You take this way and I'll go that way or you choose that way and I'll go this way. And Lot chose the well-watered plain of the Jordan and pitched his tent near Sodom. And then we're told, now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord. When Lot and his wife were taken captive in a war that took place, Uncle Abraham came to their aid and rescued them and all their possessions.

They must have heard him give all the praise and glory to God, which he did. Therefore, her spiritual privileges were great through her uncle Abraham.

[12:29] And we especially see this when the Lord was going to come and destroy Sodom because of its wickedness of violence and sexual perversion, homosexuality. Abraham pleaded with the Lord on behalf of Sodom and said, what if there are 50 righteous people in the city?

Will you really kill the righteous with the wicked? Far be it from you. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? So the Lord promised to spare the city if 50 righteous people could be found in it. But Abraham begins to wonder whether 50 righteous people could be found. And so he asked, Lord, will you destroy the city just for five people?

Can we go down to 45? God says, I'll spare it for 45. 40? Yes. 30? Yes. 20? Yes. I'll spare it for 10? Yes. And that's where Abraham quit asking.

But 10 could not be found. Only Lot was found. And the Lord spared him and with him his wife and two daughters. The Bible's concluding word after it all happened was this.

[13:43] 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.

God spared righteous Lot and his family with him for Abraham's sake. Because Abraham had prayed and asked.

So Mrs. Lot had received amazing mercy. And here's how it happened. When the day arrived, with the coming of the dawn, God sent two angels to urge Lot, hurry, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you'll be swept away when the city is punished.

But we read that Lot hesitated. He hesitated. He didn't run at once. He hesitated. So the two angels grasped the hands of Lot, his wife and their children, and led them safely out of the city.

For the Lord was merciful to them. And then the angels warned them, flee for your lives. Hurry. Don't look back and don't stop.

[14:54] What a mercy to have angels come from heaven to warn them of the coming disaster and to tell them to flee the coming wrath. Mrs. Lot heard warnings that no one else in the city heard.

And when they lingered, what a mercy to have the angels physically grab their hands and hurry them out of the city. Mrs. Lot was one of the most spiritually privileged women on the earth at that day.

Given the knowledge of the true and living God, godly examples in her uncle and aunt and husband, spiritual experiences of worship of the one true God, seeing angels, hearing them, touching them, warnings from them, mercies received.

Yet in spite of all of this, she still perished under God's wrath and went to hell. Now this is one reason we need to remember Lot's wife, that we might learn the lesson that spiritual privileges are not enough to save us.

It's on the pages of Scripture for us. To remember that however many spiritual privileges we have, they do not save us. The fact is all of us here have known far greater spiritual privileges than Lot's wife.

[16:16] The true knowledge of God is rare in the world today. There are many places where you can be born and live and die and never hear the way of salvation. But no, you were caused to be born here.

You're here in the United States where we have plenty of knowledge about God and the gospel, the one way to get to heaven, to be spared of everlasting torments. We have all 66 books of the Bible. Lot's wife had none. Just the testimony passed down from one to another. We have Bibles and books and sermons online and we have a perspective to look back on the finished work of Christ that Lot's wife never had.

She had the promise of a coming seed of the woman, but we look back at the life, the example of Christ, his life, his death, his suffering, and the words of his mouth, and the words of the apostles. Many of you have had Christian parents who bring you to church. You've heard hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Sunday school lessons and sermons and devotions. That's a lot more than Lot's wife had.

[17:27] Remember, she grew up in idolatry. But though she was married to a believer, yet she perished in her sins.

Spiritual privileges have never saved anyone and never can save anyone. Only Christ can save. So we need to remember Lot's wife.

Because human nature tends to rest and trust on spiritual privileges rather than on the Savior himself. Our privileges are meant to lead us to the Savior and only in Him to find salvation.

But we stop short of Christ and we think, well, because my parents are Christians and I go to church and I read my Bible and I pray and I do this and I do that.

We think that somehow these privileges and these works will save us. Well, according to Jesus, many on the day of judgment will be found relying on spiritual privileges.

[18:36] The door of heaven will be closed with them found knocking and pleading, sir, open the door for us. And he will reply, I don't know you. Oh, we ate and we drank with you and you taught in our streets.

We stopped our work and came and listened to you. We heard you preach. And he will say, I never knew you. I don't know you.

Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons, perform many miracles? Surely, Lord, you remember me. And then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you.

Depart from me, you who work in iniquity. You and I never had a knowing relationship, a relationship of savior and trusting sinner, of Lord and obedient follower.

Depart from me. And if we would not hear those words in the end from Jesus, then we need to remember Lot's wife and never rest in our spiritual privileges.

[19:37] You know, that's what the whole nation of Israel, but for a remnant, did. They were resting in their spiritual privileges. When John the Baptist starts preaching, what do they say?

We have Abraham for our father. Oh, yeah. Well, that gave you a lot of privileges, having Abraham for your father, just as it gave Lot's wife a lot of privileges, having Abraham as her uncle.

But it doesn't save you. And yet the whole nation of Israel would lean into the fact that we've got Abraham's blood in our veins. You see, they leaned on their spiritual privileges.

It doesn't matter who you have as your father if Jesus is not your personal savior and Lord. So be sure to have personal dealings with him and not rest in privileges.

So we've seen Lot's wife and her privileges. Next, we remember her sin. Now, this is interesting. What was her sin? Kids, are you ready for this?

[20:40] Watch closely. This was her sin. Did you see it?

You say, that's it? That's it. That's all she did. She looked back. That's what the scriptures say. Lot's wife looked back and she became a pillar of salt.

What's so serious about a look? That's not hurting anybody. That can't be so bad. Well, though it was just a look, there's a lot in that look.

For her look revealed her heart. There can be a lot in a look, can't there? We have the saying, if looks could kill, there was hatred in that look.

And according to Jesus, that's murder in the heart and it'll send you to hell. Jesus tells us there can be lust in a look, adultery in the heart, that if not repented, will land you in hell.

[21:53] In Proverbs 6, we have a list of seven things that the Lord hates. Yes, they're an abomination to Him. Kids, an abomination means it's detestable. It's the greatest hatred that God has.

And first on the list, haughty eyes. Haughty.

There's pride. There can be arrogance and pride in just a look, just the way the eyes look. And God hates it.

So the Bible says, there can be a whole lot in a look. Serious things in a look. Many sins are revealed in just a look.

Now, what was there in the look of Lot's wife? What was her sin in looking back? Well, first of all, it was blatant disobedience, wasn't it?

[22 : 49] She was told not to look. The angel sent by God to destroy Sodom had clearly said, flee for your lives, don't look back. So there was disobedience in her look.

And disobedience against God. The angels are only the messengers from God. But her look back revealed something else about her heart. And we don't have to guess what it was.

The Lord Jesus gives us His divine commentary on her look back in the text that was read for us, Luke 17, 32, and 33. Remember Lot's wife.

Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it. And whoever loses his life will preserve it. According to Jesus, when Lot's wife looked back, she was trying to keep her life, the life she had back in Sodom. Trying to hang on to life as she wanted it, which for her was back in Sodom. Where her house was. Her nice things. Her wealth. Her garden. Her friends.

[23 : 59] Her esteemed place in society. Her comforts. That's where her heart was. That's the life she longed for. The life she wanted to hold on to instead of the life that God was now calling her to.

And so in trying to keep her life, she lost it. How tragic. That though her feet went out of Sodom, her heart remained in Sodom.

And her look back revealed that heart that was attached to the things of this world that said, I want life my way rather than God's way. This was no small trial for Lot's wife.

By now, her husband was wealthy. A successful man. He could, and could afford a nice lifestyle in Sodom.

But now she's being called upon to pick up and leave it all behind and to start over. This was even more costly than the first time when she and Lot left their homeland with Uncle Abraham.

[25 : 04] It says they took their possessions along. But now, they're having to flee without anything. Just flee with their own breath and life themselves and to leave it all behind and to have nothing but the Lord.

Well, that was too much. She was drug out of Sodom against her will. She looked back with a heart to return to it and so was caught up in the same destruction that overtook Sodom.

Jesus says in trying to save her life, she lost it. She lost it. And sadly, she not only lost her life back in Sodom as she wanted, she also lost the life that could have been hers as the Lord was offering her.

A fatal attraction to things. A love of the world in that look back. And then there was also unbelief in her look. Not only disobedience and love of the world, there was an unbelief.

She's being called upon to flee and leave everything behind just because of God's words through these angels that Sodom is going to be destroyed. But would Sodom really be destroyed?

[26 : 17] I mean, it stood for so long. There's nothing threatening today. It's just another day. Everybody's up and going on as usual, eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building, going to work.

And so she looked back with unbelief. Is it really true? Is it really going to happen? And worse than seeing its destruction, she shared in its destruction. So remember Lot's wife.

Remember the fatal attraction to earthly things. John tells us, love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For everything in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of what one has and does comes not from the Father, but from the world. The world and its desires are passing away.

Boy, were they ever passing away. But whoever, whoever does the will of God endures forever.

Jesus uses that word, whoever, in this text that we're studying this morning.

[27 : 26] You see, the destruction of Lot's wife was not an isolated incident in history that's nice to study, but somehow unrelated to us. No, no, not at all. The text says, remember Lot's wife.

Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it. Be you Lot's wife or you or me who comes along behind and reads this. If you're not careful, the world will own your heart and choke out the word and cause you to look back to the world when following Jesus would cost you too much.

Remember Lot's wife. Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it. Jesus calls us to deny ourselves, to take up our cross, an instrument of death, and follow him.

A cross is an instrument of death. We don't like to die. We like to live. We like our own way of life. We cling to the wheel. We want to be in the driver's seat.

It's got to be my way. But no, Jesus says, that's where you've got to deny yourself. That's where you've got to die. You've got to get in the back seat and let Jesus drive and tell you where you're going and where you're not going and determine these things.

[28 : 42] Lot's wife wasn't ready to have the Lord tell her where she should go. Trust him enough to follow him wherever he leads you.

Willing to live in poverty on the mountains rather than in luxury in the city of Sodom if that's what being true to God's word brings, if that's what he wants.

Are you willing to lose anything in order to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness? If you're following Jesus faithfully, the world will look at your life and say, what a waste.

You're losing it. If you need not listen to them, the Savior says, you lose your life for my sake in the gospel. You will find it. To try to save it is to lose it.

To lose it for his sake is to find it. Our Lord would say, what are you afraid of? It's the thief that comes to steal, kill, and destroy, but I've come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.

[29 : 43] I've not come to take away that which is good. I've come to give you abundant life. He comes to give. He comes laying down his own life to give us life forever.

Here's one we can safely entrust. Are all two. He's proven it on Calvary. God had another life for Mrs. Lot, a far better life, but she wanted her own over God's.

And she lost. Remember Lot's wife. Remember her sin and flee. Her privileges, her sin, and lastly, her punishment.

Lot's wife looked back and she became a pillar of salt. Genesis 19, 26. Why a pillar of salt? Well, I'm not a chemist, but salt is what's left after burning sulfur devours.

I believe God is making the statement that the same judgment that befell Sodom befell Lot's wife.

The Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah from the Lord out of the heavens.

[30 : 57] And she looked back and became a pillar of salt. The aftermath of burning sulfur.

Zephaniah 2, 9.

Therefore, as surely as I live, declares the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, surely Moab will become like Sodom and the Ammonites like Gomorrah, a place of weeds and salt pits, a wasteland forever.

Burning sulfur left salt pits behind. Deuteronomy 29, 23. The whole land will be a burning waste of salt and sulfur, nothing planted, sprouting, or vegetation growing on it.

It'll be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admon and Zaboam, which the Lord overthrew in fierce anger. God's judgment of burning sulfur from heaven reduced the plain to a salt land and turned Lot's wife into a salt pillar.

Do you see the connection? She shared in the judgment of God upon Sodom. Though her feet had left, her heart was still there, and so she shared their punishment.

[32 : 05] Now, a pillar is also something of a monument, and if you had come upon that, kids, you could have said, Dad, what's this? And he could have told you about Lot's wife and why she became a pillar of salt.

But now, we're 2,000 years later, and the Son of God is teaching His disciples. And by now, no doubt, the weather had melted away the salt pillar of Lot's wife.

But He resurrects the warning with His words, remember Lot's wife. You don't need to see the pillar of salt. You and I don't need to see it. 4,000 years later, all we need is the words of Jesus.

Just three words. Remember Lot's wife. She shared in the judgment of God. For you see, what happened to her and Sodom and Gomorrah is an example of what's going to happen to all the ungodly.

2 Peter 2.6, God did not spare angels when they sinned or the ancient world under Noah, and He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes and made them an example of what's going to happen to the ungodly.

[33 : 21] Jude 7 says they serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire because Revelation 21.8 says that the burning lake of fire is the second death.

and Jude says Sodom and Gomorrah and we can add Lot's wife who suffered the same punishment are examples of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

So it was like these in Sodom and Gomorrah and Lot's wife were so ripe for judgment that hell splashes out and consumes them with sulfur which is what the final and second and the last and eternal death is called the lake of fire and brimstone.

But what we see is hell is not just for homosexuals, not just for those who are abusive of others or murderers or atheists or other gross sins.

No doubt Lot's wife was far more moral than many in Sodom. Very outwardly religious doing much the same as her husband Lot did.

[34 : 35] Nevertheless she goes to the same hell as those in Sodom do and all do who do not repent of their sins and run to the Savior. She's an example to us of religious people who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

Even as we're going to see with Judas and we began to see last week religious people one of the twelve and he went to his place.

She was so close to being delivered she got out of Sodom but she didn't get into heaven. She was brought out of the condemned city and on the way to safety but she looked back and showed her true self and suffered the same destruction.

So these three words are meant to motivate us. They're meant to stir us. They're meant to get under our skin and to make us think and to think hard about who we are and where we're going and what we need to realize is Jesus loves us and that's why he gives us these three words.

This is the most loving eternal God become man and he's the one that's saying remember Lot's wife. Don't forget what happened to her the kindness of Jesus.

[35 : 53] He doesn't want us to come to the same end as she did and he knows how enticing this world can be. He's been here he's been tempted in every way as we are. He feels he knows what it is to have the world pulling at him pressuring him.

He knows how addicted we are to having life our way. He knows how many are just like Lot's wife resting in spiritual privileges while I've been to church today check the box I'm on my way to heaven I've been baptized I'm a church member I take the Lord's Supper people conforming themselves to a religion while the world has their hearts not Jesus going far in religion but coming short of salvation in the end.

J.C. Ryle says a man can go a long way in religion and still come short of heaven and that I think is one of the lessons that we see here. So Christ is calling us to trust him.

You see Lot's wife looked back in disobedience unbelief and love in the world but there's another kind of look that is commended to us that we all need to have and it was pictured in the desert when the Israelites had complained and God sent poisonous snakes to come and to bite them and whenever one was bitten they died.

Took some time but they died. Many had been bitten and were dying some dead and others dying and you remember then they cried out for mercy to Moses and Moses to God and God says Moses make a bronze snake and put it on a pole in the middle of the camp and lift it up high where everyone can see it and then tell them to look to that snake up on the pole and whoever does this will live.

[37 : 56] Whoever looks will live. And Jesus says to Nicodemus in John chapter 3 just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so the son of man must be lifted up that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

You see there's a there's belief there's faith in that look to Jesus just as there was sin in that look of Lot's wife there is there was faith in that word and promise of deliverance that these Israelites had and they looked as they were told and they lived and Jesus says whoever looks to me believes in me.

That look of faith away from yourself in anything you've done and looking away to all that I have done for sinners by my perfect life my atoning death my suffering the wrath of God if that's your trust you will live look and live that's the invitation of Jesus that's the look we need to have not a look back not a look back a faith that looks to Christ for everything that I need his righteousness for my sin his atonement for my guilt his life for my death his wisdom for my folly his power for my inability look and live there's an urgency about it just as there was for Lot's wife run hurry don't look back so we would say to you hurry to Christ linger not hesitate not but get into Christ today well he welcomes you so what we have is the Lord

Jesus saying remember Lot's wife amen and the reason those words are words of hope to us is because of where he was going that's Luke 17 in a few chapters he'll be lifted up hanging on a cross and he'll be calling us to look to him and live and so I urge anyone that's outside of Christ young or old moral or immoral in this Savior Jesus you will find a sure refuge for your soul sure salvation he has made this promise and he's never gone back on it once whoever comes to me I

will in no wise cast out and he's not about to let his faithfulness fail for the first time with you venture on him venture holy throw yourself upon the Savior and he will save you let's pray we thank you Father that we have a Savior who has finished the work that we needed to reconcile us to God we have a whosoever will gospel that invites one and all however bad the sinner however long the sinner has stayed in sin however many times they have repelled the gospel if they will but come today you will receive them we thank you for such a gospel it suits every one of us and so we pray that if there are any here today that have not closed with Christ in faith and repentance they would turn from their own way and cast themselves upon God for mercy as it's found in Christ do this work for your own glory and praise do it for the eternal salvation of sinners do it not only here do it all around the world did you not promise to Abraham that you would through his coming seed bring salvation blessings to all the nations of the world save many today we ask in Jesus name amen and