

# Big Trouble Ahead: The Battle with Discouragement

## I. You Can Choose

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 (NIV®)

<sup>19</sup> This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. **Now choose life**, so that you and your children may live <sup>20</sup> and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him.

2 Peter 2:4-10 (NIV®)

<sup>4</sup> For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; <sup>5</sup> if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; <sup>6</sup> if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; <sup>7</sup> and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, **who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men** <sup>8</sup> (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)-- <sup>9</sup> if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. <sup>10</sup> This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings;

### A. Choice: Oppressed/Distressed

1. Diminishes Your Ability to Hear
2. Impedes Obedience
3. Doorway to Fear

### B. A Response/Resolution

Ephesians 5:14-21 (NIV®)

<sup>14</sup> for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." <sup>15</sup> **Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise,** <sup>16</sup> **making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.** <sup>17</sup> Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

<sup>18</sup> Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup> always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>21</sup> Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

1. Understand God's will, v.17
2. Contrast: Drunken/Debauchery vs. Filled with Spirit, v.18
3. Speak to one another of spiritual things, v.19 (psalms, hymns, spiritual songs)
4. Sing & make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks, v. 20
5. Submit to one another, v.21

## II. The Days of Noah & Lot

Matthew 24:37-39 (NIV®)

<sup>37</sup> **As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.** <sup>38</sup> For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day

Noah entered the ark; <sup>39</sup> and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

Luke 17:26-30 (NIV®)

<sup>26</sup> **"Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man.** <sup>27</sup> People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. <sup>28</sup> **"It was the same in the days of Lot.** People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. <sup>29</sup> But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. <sup>30</sup> **"It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.**

## A. Big Picture

1. In God's sight there is "right & wrong"
2. God will exercise judgment

2 Peter 3:3-4, 10 (NIV®)

<sup>3</sup> First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. <sup>4</sup> They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." . . . <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup> **But the day of the Lord will come** like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

3. Righteousness is better

## B. Choice: Unaware & Unconcerned

1. Oppressed & Distressed
2. Unaware & Unconcerned
3. Listening & Obedient

## III. Choice: Listening & Obedient

Hebrews 11:7 (NIV®)

By faith **Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family.** By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

### A. The "Fruit" of Listening

1. Obedience
2. Say No to Ungodliness
3. Spiritually Minded (not carnally)
4. Warned & Ready

### B. Cost of Obedience

1. "All in" —Future in God's hands, expression of trust, relinquishment
2. Separation
3. Alone in a Crowd

Hebrews 11:13 (NIV®)

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they



only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.

Hebrews 11:36-38 (NIV®)

<sup>36</sup> Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. <sup>37</sup> They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated-- <sup>38</sup> **the world was not worthy of them.** They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

1 Peter 2:11-12 (NIV®)

<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, I urge you, **as aliens and strangers in the world**, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. <sup>12</sup> **Live such good lives among the pagans that**, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

### **Proclamation**

I choose obedience to God's plan for my life. I choose to obey the truth God has revealed to me. I will set my heart on things above and turn away from ungodliness. I will be content without becoming complacent. I will listen for God's voice, direction, and prompting. I will invest time to listen and to encourage others around me to cooperate with God's best. I will encourage those who are distressed. I will be a light to those who are unaware. I declare this day my intent to listen and obey.