

Divine Judgment on False Teachers, Part 2

Scripture: 2 Peter 2:5-10a

Code: 61-19

We're going to continue our series of the study of the Word of God by looking again at 2 Peter chapter 2 and verses 3 through 10. As I have been reading this section over time and time again in the last month or so, I find the fury of it almost breathtaking. Peter, speaking for God, pledges devastation and fiery judgment on the false teachers who misrepresent His truth. And the tremendous warning here that condemns the false teacher in my mind is reminiscent of Matthew chapter 23 and in your own reading you might want to read that chapter tonight or in the next few days and just refresh your mind of the diatribe that Jesus rendered against the Pharisees and the scribes and the false leaders of Israel. Matthew chapter 23, the whole chapter is devoted to that, particularly from verse 13 through verse 33 are strong, penetrating, fiery, devastating, scathing rebukes of those who say they speak for God and do not.

Throughout Scripture the Lord has always had strong words for people who teach lies and teach perversions and live ungodly lives. But the strongest words of all are reserved for those who teach and live like that and say they represent God. As we come to the second chapter in this wonderful little epistle, we really come to the heart of his message here and that is to warn us against false teachers. The first three verses of the chapter Peter sketched the outline of the false teachers, drew sort of the sketch, as it were, of the portrait that he will fill in in great detail starting down in verse 10 and going on to the end of the chapter. But before he fills in the color, as it were, in this initial outline, he stops in verses 3b through 10a to pronounce God's judgment on them, and then follows up in describing their character by telling us the things that are going to cause God to have every right to judge them.

But as we look at this section on the judgment of false teachers, we're looking at several points that arise and we've already begun so let me just remind you. We first of all noted the promise of their judgment. In verse 1 at the end it says that they bring swift destruction upon themselves. At the end of verse 3 it says their judgment from long ago is not idle and their destruction is not asleep. In both of those verses they are promised condemnation and judgment. So the promise of their judgment is very clear.

And then last time we began to discuss what is a fascinating section, and we titled it the precedent for their judgment. What it is that we can look back to to see reason for them being judged. And as verse 4 unfolds and all the way down through verse 8, Peter gives us three historical precedents that have been laid down in the past to guarantee the reality of the future judgment on false teachers.

First of all, in verse 4 he says, "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness reserved for judgment," and there he introduces the first

illustration in his conditional sentence. Since God didn't spare angels when they sinned, but cast them to hell, to pits of darkness reserved for judgment, do these false teachers think somehow they will escape...is the implication. And last time we looked at this fascinating account. There have been in the pits of darkness, in the lowest part of hell called Tartaros, demons occupying a place for millennia.

What did they do? We saw last time that Jude 6 says they kept not their own estate, their own domain, they abandoned their proper abode, they went out of the sphere of their own life.

When did they do it? We noted from 1 Peter 3:19 and 20 that they did it during the time of Noah, during the construction of the ark. They are the spirits imprisoned at that time.

And what did they do? They left their own sphere. When did they do it? At the time of Noah. And how did they do it? We remember Genesis chapter 6 tells us at the time of Noah saw the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, they took wives for themselves whomever they chose.

Fallen angels, demons cohabitating with women to produce an unredeemable race and a race that couldn't even bring forth a Messiah, a demon/human race. And God had to drown that entire race along with the rest of the wicked world. The angels that did that God cast into the lowest part of hell called Tartaros, into the pit of darkness where they have been ever since, and only will be translated from there to the lake of fire for eternal torment.

And Peter's first point then is if God didn't spare the greater angelic beings who were His special creation, once in glory gathered around His throne, angels who were higher than humans and more glorious and even more intelligent than men, if God did not spare those beings when they perverted His truth and spread their corruption, then what makes you think He will spare false teachers who are lesser beings who pervert His truth and spread corruption? And so illustration number one was fallen angels. And if God judged them, He will judge false teachers.

Second illustrations, and we pick up the text at this point. Peter moves to example number two which is also at the time of Noah, the ancient world. From fallen angels to the ancient world, he goes not from higher angels to lower men, but from more, the whole world, to less, the false teachers, verse 5. "And since...we can imply...since God did not spare the ancient world but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness with seven others when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly," we'll stop at that point, another in his conditional sentence, another illustration.

And he says if God condemned, listen to this, the whole world...the whole world and drowned them all, sending them all into eternity forever to be punished, except for eight people, Noah and seven others, then why would He spare the lesser number of false teachers? So now we're not going from the higher to the lower, but from the more to the less. When God brought the flood upon the world He drowned the whole world except for eight people. Millions of people that occupied the globe were caught in the devastation of that flood and plunged into eternity.

This, by the way, follows Genesis 6. God sees the wickedness on the earth and then sends the flood and the flood begins to unfold in the same chapter where those fallen angels committed their great and heinous sin. By the way, this is, I noted, also referred to in 1 Peter 3:20 as being right at the time of those spirits being placed in prison.

Let's look more closely at verse 5. "If God did not spare the ancient world," that is the world before the Flood, the Antediluvian world, it is often called, the world not just the world of people but the world as a system, the world as kosmos. And it means the whole unrighteous system that had developed since the day of Adam, the Fall of Adam. It had become a totally wicked world. A very cursory reading of the early chapters of Genesis will show you the progress of wickedness from the Fall onward. But look at chapter 6 for just a moment and note verse 5 as a starting point. At that very time when these fallen angels did what they did, it says, "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth." Not only the wickedness of fallen angels, but the wickedness of man was great, "And that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually and the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth and He was grieved in His heart and the Lord said, `I will block out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, for I am sorry that I have made them.'" God says I'm going to destroy the whole thing...the whole thing, except for Noah, verse 8, who found favor in the eyes of the Lord. Verse 9 says Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time.

Noah walked with God and Noah became the father of three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. Apart from them the earth was corrupt in the sight of God and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked on the earth and behold it was corrupt for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me for the earth is filled with violence because of them and behold I am about to destroy them with the earth." God looked at the world and said I'm going to destroy the whole thing...totally wicked, absolutely consumed with wickedness.

If, Peter says, God is so committed to truth and so committed to righteousness that He would drown the entire world, why should we believe that He would spare the lesser group, a smaller group of false prophets who have lived the same way, corrupting His truth and living in unrighteousness?

Would you note for a moment the third chapter of 2 Peter? Because here we see a future, prophetic precedent. It says "the day of the Lord" in verse 10, so that's a familiar phrase to us, but backing up to verse 9. "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." In other words, the reason things continue along the way they do is because of God's patience, "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up."

Go back to verse 7, "The present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." God did it in the past, that is He destroyed the whole world. And God will do it in the future. In the past He did it by water, in the future He will do it by fire. God always gives fair warning and He did.

Look at Jude chapter 1, there's only one chapter, and verse 14, even prior to the days of Noah it talks about Enoch who was in the seventh generation from Adam who prophesied. And what did Enoch say? What did he warn his time about? "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones to execute judgment upon all and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have

done in an ungodly way and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." Long before Noah, even out of the mouth of Enoch, had come a warning of judgment against the ungodly. And then there was the preaching of Noah who preached for 120 years, warning people, those were the 120 years he was involved in building the ark, which was a living illustration of the coming judgment. And so it says in verse 5, if God did not spare the ancient world, and then skip down toward the end, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly...God doesn't hesitate to destroy the wicked even if it means He has to destroy the whole earth.

The word "flood," by the way, is kataklusmos from which we get cataclysm, deluge. And by the way, it was total, it was total. The only thing you can believe in is a universal flood, that the whole world was engulfed in it. Look at chapter 3 again of 2 Peter, and we'll look more at this in the future as we get to the chapter. Those people who don't think God's going to judge have forgotten that He already has. It escapes their notice, says Peter in verse 5, that by the Word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water through which the world at that time was destroyed being flooded with water. The world was destroyed. It couldn't be more clear than that. The Flood covered the earth. That has not only been stated in Scripture but it has been proven by scientists who have studied it and understand the implications of all that Genesis says about the Flood. You can read that very great book by John Whitcomb called The Genesis Flood and gain many insights into that reality.

So, it says He brought a Flood upon the world of the ungodly. There's a sense in which they brought it on themselves. Back to verse 1, just like the false prophets who bring swift destruction upon themselves, the ungodly living in Noah's time brought it upon themselves. But God also brought it. They deserved it, they earned it, God brought it.

Then that little phrase "the world of the ungodly." The ungodly are the impious, the irreverent, the unholy. That word is used a couple of other times here in chapter 2 verse 6 and chapter 3 verse 7, it's also used in Jude. It refers to those who taught and believed error about God and His truth. And God brought a cosmic catastrophe that changed the whole world and its environs and changed the sky. Prior to the Flood there was no rain, a canopy covered the earth that watered the earth with a mist. God dumped all those waters and the waters came out of the deep, the whole globe was drowned. Now as Peter is writing about this he imagines under the direction of the Holy Spirit that some of the Christians might be getting a bit nervous wondering if they're going to escape this future judgment. And so he adds a note to comfort and encourage his flock. Back to verse 5, "And God did not spare the ancient world when He brought a Flood upon the world of the ungodly," but in the middle of the verse it says, "But preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others." Here's a principle to keep in mind, and you're going to see it again in a moment, that in the midst of this cataclysm, this holocaust of universal judgment, God preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others.

We all know the story. We don't need to go over it in detail. God told him to build an ark. The ark was about the size of the Queen Mary, a rectangle. And God told him to take his wife and his three sons and their three wives and go in and take two of each living thing and take it in the ark so that the

world could be repopulated. For 120 years Noah had been a faithful preacher of righteousness. He had heralded the message of righteousness. He had preached by his life, he had preached by his lip the message of obedience to God, the message of truth, the truth of God about sin, but you can believe there were liars in the world and there were demon-inspired false teachers who were lying about God and lying about truth and lying about righteousness. And the world believed them. But God knew who His own were and it says He preserved them, the eight who were righteous.

The word here, preserve, phulasso, means to be...to be put in a guarded place, or to be put in a special place, to be put in a protected place. And, of course, in their case it was an ark. And the ark could ride out the judgment because it could float on the water. John Lilly(?) wrote that Noah's preservation makes it clear that, quote: "The divine justice does not regard majorities but deals with men be they few or many, strictly according to their character," end quote. Only eight on the face of the earth survived.

Kind of reminds you of what we've been learning in the morning, before the day of the Lord, the Lord is going to make sure He boxes up His own and protects them. Rapture, then day of the Lord, He's going to put us in a safe place during judgment to be brought back afterward to a new world of righteous people. When the ark finally settled on Mount Ararat, the water subsided, it was a new world, a world of righteous people. So it is after the judgment of God, so it will be in the future. After God comes in fury and judgment and judges all the false teachers and all the people who follow the false teachers, having taken His own out for protection and having guarded His own who were left in the world in a protected place, He will bring them back to a new world of righteous people. So if God condemned the angels that sinned, and damned them who are higher than men, and if God condemned the whole world of wicked men and damned them who are more than false teachers, will He spare the lower and the lesser? The answer is no.

And Peter follows through Genesis to the next judgment, the third one, Sodom and Gomorrah. Fallen angels, the ancient world, Sodom and Gomorrah, verses 6 to 8, this is absolutely potent, powerful illustration of God's judgment on those who rebel against His truth. Verse 6, "And if, or since, He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter." We'll stop at that point.

Peter names the two major cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 13:12 calls them cities of the valley. Actually there were more than just those two. There were Sodom and Gomorrah, and according to Deuteronomy 29:23 there was Admah and Zeboiim...Zeboiim. There were four cities and surely there were people living in other little villages about. It was a whole region, the major cities being Sodom and Gomorrah. And so it says, in verse 6, "He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes." The word "condemn" has the idea of a sentence executed on the wicked. The judgment was like the Flood, totally devastating so that it killed every single human person and everything else that was living, not by water this time but by divine incineration. And everything that was left was ashes.

What was once a lush valley, and it must have been a lush valley because you remember when Abraham and Lot were looking to decide who got what part of the land that Lot looked toward this

area of the plain because it was so lush? And it became a soot pile. The word for "destruction" is *katastrophe*(?), complete overthrow. In fact, the devastation of Sodom and Gomorrah was so wholesale, you'll be interested to note this, that they can't find those cities. They're utterly non-discernable. For many years it was believed that the reason they couldn't find them was because the Dead Sea had grown larger and as the Dead Sea went further south covering more and more land, it had covered the place where Sodom and Gomorrah once was. Archaeologists around the land of Palestine have found almost every ancient city. They can uncover the rubble of almost all of them. And digging deeply enough they can pretty well reconstruct the culture. They have never been able to find these cities, or any remote indication of where they were. They have no idea where they were. They couldn't find them north of the Dead Sea. Many archaeologists felt it was east of the Dead Sea, they went there, they couldn't find them there. So they concluded that they were under the south part of the Dead Sea and the expanding water had covered them. Since that's the lowest and flattest point, that's where the water goes recent shrinking of the Sea has led archaeologists examine the floor of what was once under water and they cannot find in the south any trace of these cities whatsoever. Some kind of explosion of gas, *betumin*(?) chemicals, rock salt, turned that whole plain into burning sulphur.

Why did God do that? Why did He totally obliterate and totally incinerate a whole civilization? Answer: they rejected His truth and followed liars, false teachers. And so verse 6 says, "He made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter." He wanted to send an unmistakable message to all future generations that false teachers and those who follow their lies will feel the fury of God's incinerating vengeance. The word "example," *hupodeigma*, means a model, a pattern.

You remember this account, don't you, back in Genesis 19? You remember Genesis 18? A man by the name of Abraham was very, very concerned about these cities. Let's go back to chapter 18 of Genesis. So concerned that he prayed, he prayed that God would spare them. You remember his prayer? He kept giving God numbers and kept saying, "Lord, if You could find fifty righteous," verse 24, "will You spare?" And his number kept dropping, "Thirty...Twenty." Verse 32, "O may the Lord not be angry and I shall speak only this once, suppose ten are found there? And He said, 'I will not destroy it on account of the ten.'" Abraham had pleaded with God that if there were just ten righteous people God would withhold His wrath.

Do you want to know something? There were not ten. There were not ten in the whole region. Do you understand that this is not long after the Flood? And this whole culture is described in Genesis 13:13 by these words, "They were exceedingly wicked and sinners against the Lord." All the warnings and even the Flood from which, in some ways, they were just recovering, and the prayers of godly Abraham, the father of faith, couldn't stay God's hand. And Peter is saying, "If those who had Abraham praying for them couldn't escape judgment, why should false teachers think they'll escape it?"

Now what did they do to deserve this? Let's look at Genesis 19. But what...what kind of life brought this on? Chapter 19 verse 1, "Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening," these were two holy angels who had paid a visit to Abraham with God Himself, who had appeared to them in form

and spent time in fellowship with them. These two holy angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. "When Lot saw them he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. And he said, `Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant's house and spend the night, wash your feet, then you may rise early and go on your way.'" He knew they were angels, and, of course, angels are spirits but they can take on physical form and they always appear in the form of men when they take that physical form. And they said in verse 2, "However no, but we will spend the night in the square." He knew that that was not a good idea. He urged them strongly, so strongly they turned aside to him and entered his house. He pleaded with them, those two holy angels, not to stay in the square. And he prepared a feast for them and baked unleavened bread and they ate. That's interesting, isn't it? You know what it says in Hebrews 13 about you better be careful how you treat people or you might be entertaining...what?...angels unawares. They ate before they lay down, which meant they were going to rest. So apparently these holy angels became embodied in genuinely human form, at least to some extent. Again it would be a body like Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 15, not quite like ours but something like ours, for each has a body suited to its own kind. Verse 4, "Before the time for sleep and rest and the family was to lie down, and perhaps the angels were to rest, the men of the city...the men of Sodom...surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter." Now I don't know how many there were but this is to give you the idea that there was a lot. From every quarter of the city, young and old, the men came to surround the house. "And they called to Lot and said to him, `Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them.'"

They were homosexuals, the whole city of men come and they want to have a homosexual relationship with these magnificent creatures. Remember last time I told you that the sin of the fallen angels was the reverse of the sin of Sodom. Here homosexuals went after angels, back in Genesis 6 fallen angels went after women...another polluted degenerated perverted act was on their minds.

"Lot went out at the doorway, shut the door behind him, said, `Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly.'" Don't do this.

And then he did a stupid thing, but I guess in his sort of shallow thinking at that time, in the fear of all that was going on, he said, "I have two daughters who have not had relations with men, please let me bring them out to you and do to them whatever you like." I would say that's a pretty poor father. "Only do nothing to these men inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof." In other words, I'm responsible to God now for how I have cared for His holy visitors. He says take my daughters, I'd rather have you do something to them than to these holy angels.

And you can understand that kind of thinking if you have to make a choice. What you can't understand is the lack of trust in the fact that God would deliver through some other means than that kind. They said, and maybe he kind of knew where they were coming from, "Stand aside, get out of the way, we're not interested in your daughters." Furthermore they said, "This one came in as an alien and already he's acting like a judge," talking about Lot. "Now we will treat you worse than them." So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door. This is the passion of homosexuality, uncontrollable.

I'll never forget reading the reports of Halpern(?) who was the coroner for the city of New York for years and years, did sixty thousand autopsies, said, "In ten seconds I can tell you whether a body was a victim of a homosexual murder because of the mutilations." He's not a Christian. He said, "I don't know why they do it but the passion runs way beyond heterosexual people."

And so they tried to crush Lot against the door and break the door down. Verse 10 says, "But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door." The angels protected him. And verse 11, this is amazing, "They struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great." The whole bunch were struck with blindness. What did they do, repent? Look at this, "So they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway." You talk about passion, you talk about perversion, they've just gone blind and all they can think about is getting those angels. That's how wretched they were.

"The men said to Lot, `What else do you have here? Son-in-law and your sons and your daughters, whomever you have in the city, bring them out of the place for we're about to destroy this place because their outcry has become so great before the Lord that the Lord has sent us to destroy it.'" That's it, I'm going to destroy it.

Verse 15, "Up, take your wife, your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city. But he hesitated so the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his daughters." You know how earthbound we get and how in to our possessions? You can just see them saying, "Whoaaaa, what are we going to take and what are..." and the angels just grab them and drag them out. "For the compassion of the Lord was upon him," they brought him out and put him outside the city. There was Lot, there was his wife, and two daughters. There weren't ten and there weren't four, there were only three who survived. It's unthinkable, it's unthinkable what life style those people were engaged in, absolutely unthinkable. And that was the cause of their destruction. It says in Jude 7 this about them, "Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them since they in the same way as the fallen angels indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire..." They went after strange flesh, the flesh of angels, just as the fallen angels had gone after strange flesh, the flesh of women. And so God says I'm going to destroy them. And He sent a fire that incinerated all of them and turned the whole place into an ash pile, a soot pile. And Sodom and Gomorrah became the prime example of the sin of man against the truth of God and the consequence of that kind of sin. By the way, about fifteen references in the Old Testament are made to the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. And if you go over to the New Testament, repeatedly in the New Testament Sodom and Gomorrah is held up as an illustration of what happens to people who fail to understand and believe the truth. Matthew 10:15, Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city." That city that rejects My truth will have a worse time than Sodom and Gomorrah. Why? Because Sodom and Gomorrah didn't know what you know, what you know is you know the Messiah has come. In Matthew chapter 11, I think it's verse 24, talking about Capernaum, "Nevertheless I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you." In Luke chapter 10, and this is repeated in the gospels, in Luke

chapter 10 verse 12, "I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city. Woe to you, Chorazin, woe to you, Bethsaida, for if the miracles that had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago." So He uses Sodom again and Sodom and Gomorrah as the historical point of judgment on those who reject the truth and follow the lies of false teachers. And again Jesus speaks to His disciples in Luke 17 verse 29 and reminds them of the day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

And so Peter is giving us graphic illustrations of how God judges in fiery judgment, how He judges in water as in the case of the flood, how He judged by putting in everlasting chains the demons that fell. By the way, in Revelation 11 the city of Jerusalem is called Sodom. Jerusalem becomes Sodom in the end times. It takes on Sodom's identity so God gives it Sodom's name.

So God judged that society. But notice now, let's look at verse 7, and I want you to see this because this is a potent truth. Verse 7, "And if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men, for by what he saw and heard, that righteous man, while living among them felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds." Stop at that point.

Again, Peter wanting to be sensitive to his pastoral duties speaks a word of comfort to the believers. In both of the illustrations where God does a wholesale devastation of all living people, once on the whole face of the earth in the Flood, once in the whole region of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other places, in each case because the devastation is so wholesale he stops to say...There were some who were rescued. It was Noah and seven others in verse 5, here it is righteous Lot to whom he refers. He doesn't say anything about his daughters being righteous, which if you read the narrative story you can understand why, because it wasn't long after having left that city that Lot, I'm sure under the horrible trauma of barely escaping and seeing the whole place buried in ashes, and his wife turned to a pillar of salt because she looked back and was destroyed by God, in the trauma of all of that he began to drink and made himself drunk and they fearing that there was no one left to impregnate them had sexual relationships with their own father. We will not go so far as to say they were righteous. But God did spare them mercifully. But it does say Lot was righteous.

For some people that even seems to be a problem. In fact, would you please notice that in the two verses I read you, verses 7 and 8, Lot is called "righteous" three times. Righteous Lot, that righteous man, felt his righteous soul tormented...now if God says somebody is righteous once, he's righteous. If He says it three times, He's trying to make a point. And because if He said it once we might question whether it was really a right translation, or a right source, He said it three times because it sounds so unbelievable, frankly.

It does need some explaining. You start out in Genesis 13 and you meet Lot and he is worldly and he is shallow and he is superficial and he is selfish and he is unwise. And then you come again to chapter 19 and he seems to be morally weak, offering his own daughters as fuel for the fire of lust in these perverts. He was weak as a father in his duty to his daughters. And then when the angel said get out, he was weak and he dilly-dallied and delayed and hesitated and they had to drag him out. And then by the time you hit verse 30 in chapter 19 he's out and he's tucked away in a safe place in

the mountains and doesn't have the self-control not to drink too much, he becomes drunk and is abused by his own daughters.

You say, "This is a righteous man with a righteous soul? How can Peter say it?" I'll tell you how. Number one, when Abraham prayed he must have included Lot in the group of righteous men that he wanted to identify when he said, "God, if there are ten righteous," Abraham believed that Lot was righteous. He must have included him in his prayer. Furthermore, he believed in God, he had faith which was accounted to him for righteousness. He sought to show great care and concern and protection to the holy angels that represented God. He sought to obey God. He wanted to leave, he was just hung up. And when he did leave he didn't look back, he never looked back. He was reverent, he bowed before the angels, he was hospitable.

But Peter marks his righteousness in another way, which really gets at the heart of it. Peter tells us why he was righteous. "He was righteous," verse 7, "because he was oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men for by what he saw and heard that righteous man while living among them felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds." You know how you know he was righteous? Because he hated...what?...sin. He hated it. Sure he might have been a weak father, and yes, he might have been on the worldly side and enamored with possessions and somewhat selfish, and yes, he had a little bit of hesitance in moving out, it was a big move, and yeah, he did drink a little too much in the trauma of all of that moment. But he wouldn't have any part with the filth of the culture he lived in. He was oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men. What a statement. I'll tell you, that should be able to be said of every Christian. He was oppressed by that. In his heart he loved righteousness. In his heart he hated sin. He rejected the sins of his culture. Literally the Greek says they wore down his soul. It means to wear out someone, kataponeo, to exhaust them by suffering. He was worn out with them. He was literally troubled deeply and exhausted with what he had to endure. Sensual, that word *aselgeia* means outrageous behavior, unprincipled means unrestrained, without standards. Here was a man worn out, exhausted by the unprincipled, immoral, outrageous behavior of men with no standards.

And verse 8 makes the point even stronger, "That he had a righteous heart for by what he saw and heard..." that was going on in his own culture, that righteous man while living among them felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds...while living among them day after day, all the time, his righteous soul was tormented, tortured. Like Noah and his family, Lot stood against sin in his day. He wasn't swallowed up in the sewer of immorality, the lawless deeds. The whole society had followed lies, rejected God's truth, followed the lying false teachers of Satan but not Lot and God was gracious to him. And such is the attitude of the righteous, they hate sin, they love righteousness.

So, if God destroyed a whole civilization with just three exceptions, a civilization wicked, a civilization that had been prayed for by Abraham, will He not destroy again? But in each case rescue the righteous?

And that leads us to the last point. The pattern of their judgment. We saw the promise of judgment, the precedent for judgment, finally the pattern of their judgment. It comes in verses 9 and 10a, then

we can conclude this, "The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh and its corrupt desires and despise authority." Listen, the Lord knows how to judge the wicked and He also knows how to rescue the righteous. Haven't we been learning that in 1 Thessalonians? "The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night and with it will come sudden destruction and they shall not escape but you, brethren, are not in the darkness that the day should overtake you."

You're not going to experience that. Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:13 to 18, day of the Lord, 1 Thessalonians 5:1 to 3, Rapture first, then day of the Lord. The Lord is going to deliver His redeemed people, His beloved people. The Lord is going to rescue us, even as He did Noah and his family, even as He did Lot. In Luke 17 I remind you of the words of our Lord, "They were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark and the Flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same as happened in the days of Lot, they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building, but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed...just the same. Let the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house not go down to take them away, and likewise let not the one who is in the field turn back, just get out. Remember Lot's wife." Jesus said don't look back...don't look back. It will be just the same. God will rescue His own and judgment will come. That's the pattern of judgment rehearsed in verses 9 and the first part of verse 10.

Here's the clear pattern. Look at it, verse 9, just quickly. "Then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly." If He knew how to save Noah and seven others, and He knew how to save Lot and his two daughters before He destroyed the city, then He knows how to save those who belong to Him and they have absolutely nothing to fear.

I cannot help be reminded, perhaps you were as well, you remember in Malachi and the prophet is talking about God's judgment and how God is going to come in in devastating judgment? And in chapter 3 of Malachi, "Those who feared the Lord spoke to one another." And what are they saying? Oh, what's going to happen to us...what's going to happen to us? "And the Lord gave attention and heard it and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and esteem His name. And God writes down the names of those who belong to Him and they will be Mine, says the Lord of hosts, on the day that I prepare My own possession and I'll spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him. So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who doesn't serve Him, for behold the day is coming, burning like a furnace and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff and the day that is coming will set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear My name the Son of righteousness will rise with healing in His wings and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall, and you will tread down the wicked for they shall be ashes unto the souls of your feet on the day which I am preparing, says the Lord of hosts."

God knows His own. God will rescue His own. His own have nothing to fear. I love the phrase, "The Lord knows how..." It's hard, but the Lord knows how. It's difficult, but the Lord knows how. The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, or out of, rhuomai, out of...out of peirasmos, what a tremendously important term this is. The Lord knows how to rescue the godly out of peirasmos. What does this mean? Well you see it's translated temptation, follow this very important thought. It can also carry the idea of an attack. I did some study on this word, peirasmos, and it can mean an attack with intent to destroy. For example, just a couple of illustrations that are very, very important to make the point here. In Mark chapter 8 and verse 11 this word is used, "And the Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, that is Jesus, seeking from Him a sign from heaven to test Him," to peirasmos Him. What are they trying to do? They're trying to attack Him. They're trying to destroy Him. This isn't a test to determine how intelligent He is. It's an effort at destruction. They have destruction in mind.

In Luke 4 verse 12, "And Jesus answered and said to them, 'It is said you shall not put the Lord your God to the peirasmos, to the test.' And when the devil had finished every test..." What was the devil trying to do? Destroy Him, devastate Him.

In Luke chapter 22 and verse 28, He says, "And you are those who have stood by Me in my peirasmos." In My trials or temptations. What does He mean? In the times when I've been attacked with the purpose of destruction.

In Acts chapter 20 and follow this one more text after this that's critical. In Acts chapter 20 verse 29, "Serving the Lord...says Paul...with all humility of mind with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews." And what were the Jews plotting? They were plotting to kill him. And those were the trials. They were attempts at his destruction.

And then the most important Scripture, follow my thought, Revelation 3:10 says this, "Because you have kept the Word of My perseverance, I also will keep you out of the hour of peirasmos." Out of the hour of peirasmos, the hour of testing in the sense that it is destruction, devastation, attack.

So the pattern of the plan of God is to rescue the godly out of, before His judgment falls and fall it will. Go back now to 2 Peter. Peter says God knows how to rescue the godly out of temptation and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment...to guard them under sentence, under punishment, to hold them for the day of judgment while continuing their punishment. That's very important, that's the NIV translation, very good translation. They are kept for the final day of judgment when they'll be cast into the eternal hell but while they're being kept they are under punishment, like prisoners in prison simply waiting for the sentencing that will send them to a different prison...the day of judgment. That refers, of course, to The Great White Throne of Revelation 20:11 to 15 when all the ungodly of all the ages are judged finally and cast into eternal hell.

So he says...Now keep this in mind, God is going to judge and God is going to rescue the godly out from that time of trial and judgment and then He is going to judge those who are kept under punishment now and brought finally to the ultimate judgment. But notice verse 10 and we close with this, this is the powerful climax..."Especially...and now he's back to his main idea...especially--takes him back now to false teachers where he started who are identified in these two terms, "Those who

indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority."

What did we say at the very outset several weeks ago about the false teachers? They were characterized by those same two things...those same two things. First of all, those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires, those who live in the lust of corruption, that is the false teachers back in verse 2. They are sensual, sexual, lustful. They have carnal natures with carnal cravings. And if the genitive here is subjective, it means they lust for defilement. They indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires. They want defilement, like the homosexuals in Sodom.

So the first characteristic that we talked about was their sensuality. Peter says especially is God going to judge those sensual, lustful, sexually perverted false teachers. And the second characteristic, they despise authority. The second damning mark of the false teacher that takes us back to where Peter started, this is unbelievable, really, they despise authority, despise means to look down, to think little of. And what is authority? Listen to this, the word is kuriotetos(?), from the word kurios. What does that word mean? Lord. What does kuriotetos mean? Lordship...lordship. They despise lordship. They look down on the sovereignty of Christ in their life. Didn't we say that back in verse 1? They deny the despotes, the Master who bought them. They want Christ as Savior, they don't want anything to do with Him as Lord and Master. It's a cheap, shallow thing. They identify with Christ, they name His name, they do not live under His authority. They deny His mastery in their lives and they reject His lordship. They reject the sovereign lordship of Christ. They name His name, they don't want to live by His commands.

So God is a God of truth and all who teach lies about Him and all who live unrighteously, deny His lordship will be judged, especially those false teachers who come in His name and live sensual lives of disobedience to His sovereignty. And God is going to destroy them all and with them those who believe their lies.

Let's pray.

Father, this has been again a powerful text, covered so much ground. Lord, help us to understand it, help us to thank You again and again that we know the truth. Help us to be faithful to it, to live it. We pray for those that are caught in these systems, propagated by false teachers, those who are caught in the lies of cults, of Roman Catholicism and of even false teachers in Protestantism who name the name of Christ but are sensual, denying the rule of Christ in His sovereign lordship and saying they can name His name and live anyway they want and be characterized by love of money and greed. Father, we pray that You will rescue people from those situations, even as we see You doing it that they might know the truth in Christ and escape the judgment that is inevitable, for if You judge the angels that sinned, and if You drown the whole world and destroyed a whole culture, You'll do it again, even as You said You will. And so, Father, we need to be in Christ, protected in the ark of safety, hidden on the hill when the judgment falls. Thank You for that promise to those who love You, in Christ's name. Amen.

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