

Sunday, March 3, 2023 pm

STUDIES IN 2 PETER (10)

God's Wrath Against False Teachers

2 Peter 2:4-10a

Tonight, we continue our study through 2 Peter. We are currently addressing Peter's primary purpose for this letter, warnings against false teachers. We have noted 2 lessons on vs. 1-3 where Peter warned that as there were false prophets among the people, there would be false teachers among them. We have addressed the warnings to beware of their methods, exploiting with deceptive words those who are unprepared. In this lesson, we continue our study of false teachers by noting their fate – God's wrath.

2 Peter 2:3 noted that *"their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber"*, a declaration that God WILL deal with them. Our text tonight continues to address that judgment by noting 3 examples of past judgment.

I. **God did not spare angels who sinned (4)**

- a. He did not spare angels who sinned – of the 3 examples Peter gives, this one is the most enigmatic (mysterious, puzzling).
- b. We know little about angels. Yet, they are a subject of curiosity. And it is not the scope of this lesson to engage in a detailed examination of their existence and purpose. But there are a few observations to consider with our text.
 - i. Clearly they are addressed in scripture as God's messengers sent to help God's people on earth (Hebrews 1:14).
 - ii. AND they are involved in various judgments of God, including the end times (cf. Matthew 13:39-42 – parable of the wheat and tares; Revelation as they are involved in various acts of judgment, etc. Genesis 19:1 tells us 2 angels went to Sodom to oversee its destruction, etc.
 - iii. We also learn from this text that they were created with some freewill. Jude 6 (a parallel to 2 Peter) notes that they did not keep their proper domain, but left their abode.
 - iv. Demons are possibly some of these "fallen angels". Consider Matthew 8:29 where Jesus will cast out "legion" in the country of the Gergesenes where they enter into the herd of swine. Note their request, *And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"*
 - v. All of this could relate to God's judgment of angels in our text.
- c. **But cast them down to hell in chains of darkness**
 - i. They are being held in a place for judgment.
 - ii. The word "hell" in the NKJV is from the Greek *ταρταρόω* (*tartaroō*) – aka, Tartarus. It is ONLY used here in the NT. Thayer describes this word as the Greeks answer to Gehenna for the Jews (the word Jesus often used to describe the place of punishment of the wicked after this life).
 - iii. The "chains of darkness" is translated as, "pits of darkness" in the NASB, "chains of gloomy darkness" in the ESV, etc. It indicates that they are being restrained or confined. WHATEVER freedom they had (or have) is limited.

- d. **Reserved for judgment** – rebellious angels, as with rebellious man, awaits a final judgment of condemnation. Jude 6 describes it as “the judgment of the great day.”
- e. We must learn from this, that there is a day of reckoning coming and we need to be prepared.
 - i. Acts 17:30-31, Matthew 25:31ff, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Romans 14:10-12, etc.
 - ii. Consider: IF God will punish angelic beings who have likely been in His presence in heaven, then we must heed these warnings that apply to us as well.
 - iii. Consider Matthew 25:41, Revelation 20:10 which tells us “*the devil, who deceived... was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone...and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*” THEN Rev. 20:14-15, *Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.* Also Revelation 21:8 which gives a list of those who will be there.

II. The world destroyed by flood (5)

- a. **He did not spare the ancient world** – Peter now makes reference to the flood as recorded in Genesis 6-8. We learn from Genesis 6:5-7, 11-12 as to how wicked the world was that prompted God to set a day when He would destroy the world by flood.
- b. **He saved Noah and his family** – Genesis 6:8 tells us that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. We know that God used him to build an ark through which he saved himself and his immediate family totaling 8 (NOTE: The Greek text uses the word for eighth (Luke 1:59, Acts 7:8, etc.). The NASB uses the phrase, “with 7 others” which is factually correct, BUT the word is “eighth”). 1 Peter 3:20-21 makes reference to his family being saved through water (8 souls) and ties that to our baptism.
- c. **A preacher of righteousness** – Genesis 6:9 tells us that “*Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.*” From Genesis we know his character. From Hebrews 11:7 we know of his faith. Our text introduces a fact not elsewhere mentioned – what did Noah do as he prepared the ark? For at least a part of that time, he preached – warning the people of coming destruction.
- d. **Flooding the world of the ungodly** – God judged and cleansed the world, in essence starting over with Noah and his immediate family. BUT, He knew who belonged to Him!

III. Sodom and Gomorrah (6-8)

- a. **Turned into ashes** – Genesis 19 describes the depravity and destruction of Sodom (and surrounding cities). We know this account of a city so perverted with immorality (homosexuality – Jude 7 describes them as having given themselves over to fornication and had gone after strange flesh) that God chose to not permit them to continue to exist. Recall in Genesis 18 that Abraham interceded for the city and promised if 10 righteous people could be found in the city it would be spared. Genesis 19:24 tells us He rained fire and brimstone upon the area. It is believed that the area around the dead sea is where these cities WERE.
- b. **Making them an example to those who choose to live ungodly** – we are told in both 2 Peter 2:6 and Jude 7, that the destruction of Sodom is an example, WARNING us of the fate of the ungodly.
- c. **Delivered righteous Lot, a man tormented by their lawlessness** - vs. 7-8 describe Lot as righteous. We know from the context of Genesis that Lot had some issues. He chose the land based on external appearance, disregarding the corruption of Sodom (Genesis 13:10-13 – he knew this as he made his choices).
 - i. **Nevertheless, Lot was a righteous man** – compared to the wicked of that city.
 - ii. Clearly Lot served YHWH and desired to live a godly life.

- iii. But he was surrounded by wickedness (by his choice) which tormented his righteous soul (Are we tormented by the wicked?). His choice came at a cost including family.
- iv. Which brings us to our final point.

IV. God knows how to deliver (9-10a)

a. He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation.

- i. Our text emphasizes that just as Lord delivered Lot, so He can deliver us from the wicked.
- ii. Remember 1 Corinthians 10:13.
- iii. In context, a point being addressed here is “the Lord knows those who are His.” 2 Timothy 2:19; cf. John 10:27, 1 Corinthians 8:3, etc.

b. And to reserve under punishment the unjust to for the day of judgment.

- i. We have already noted that there is a day of judgment coming. On that day the righteous and the wicked will be separated and assigned their eternal rewards (Matthew 25:46).
- ii. TAKE NOTE of the 3 examples in our text – they are the extremes that prompted God to take action of judgment BEFORE the end of earthly time.
- iii. In our context, Peter relates these judgments to how God feels about false teachers. With that in mind, do you think we ought to be concerned when and if false teachers enter into our midst?
 1. Consider Ephesians 5:11. Paul in Galatians 2:4-5 where Paul noted that He and Titus “*did not yield submission even for an hour...*”
 2. Give them time to repent (Titus 3:10-11), but if they do not, cut them off! Cf. Revelation 2:20-23.

c. Especially those who walk according to the flesh - Peter concludes this sentence by describing some of their conduct. They are carnal and walking after fleshly desires, “*in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority.*” This will lead to a description of how God views false teachers. We will develop this in our next lesson.

In this lesson, we can see how God feels about false teachers, AND how we ought to view them. Of course, false teachers CAN repent (as did Paul & Apollos), but if not, they will face His wrath, just as sure as God punished rebellious angels, destroyed the world by flood and rained fire and brimstone against Sodom and Gomorrah. AND, such will be also be the fate of their followers (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12).

BUT, that does not have to be you. God can deliver the godly out of temptation and if you turn to Him, He can deliver you too. So, where do you stand in God’s eyes? Who are you going to follow? Think about it!