

EXPOSITION OF II PETER

Message #8

II Peter 2:4-9

The last thing people who are immoral want to hear is truth about God's judgment. They want to hear about God's love and grace, but not judgment. In fact, one of the many truths of Scripture that false teachers despise is the truth of their future judgment and condemnation. Ungodly, lustful, greedy, religious people and leaders do not want to face the fact that God intends to completely and utterly judge them, destroy them, and send them to an eternal burning fire.

The Apostle Peter wanted God's people to know this truth and remember this truth, and he gives a series of illustrations to prove his point. In giving these illustrations, Peter wants God's people to know that when God does finally pour out His wrath, God's people have nothing to fear.

GOD'S FEROCIOUS WRATH WILL COME AGAINST FALSE, RELIGIOUS, IMMORAL PEOPLE AND TEACHERS, AND WHEN IT DOES GOD WILL ALWAYS PROTECT AND PRESERVE HIS PEOPLE.

God is a God who knows how to save and God is a God who knows how to destroy and punish. God is a God of judgment and God knows how to rescue those godly and He knows how to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the Day of Judgment. Now **verses 4 to 8** are a series of "if" clauses with the main idea and verb found in **verse 9**. So all of these subordinate clauses lead us to **verse 9**; God knows how to save and punish.

There are two specific key points that **verse 9** makes. **The adverb "how" is not in the original.** The Greek reads, "Lord knows to rescue the godly out of temptation" (my translation). **This is not about what God knows how to do; it is what He will do!**

(Key Point #1) - God knows to rescue the godly out of temptation .

- A. The word "rescue" (ρυσμαι) is one that means God draws Himself near to rescue and deliver. The very same word is used in I Thessalonians 1:10 and II Timothy 4:18 and it refers to an eschatological rescue.
- B. The word "godly" (ευσεβεια) refers to one who has a reverent piety and godliness.
- C. The word "temptation" (πειρασμος) speaks of a trial or temptation that may lead to sin.
- D. The preposition "out of" (εκ) means to be taken out from within.

What I understand this to mean is that God will rescue His people and ultimately take them out of the environment of sinful temptations. In other words, this is speaking of an eschatological rescue or deliverance. It is speaking of the Rapture of the Church before God pours out His wrath. This is not a statement that you will not be tempted or even a statement that you will not give into the temptation; it is a statement that God will one day rescue His people out of this world and its sinful temptations. God will eventually rescue us out of this Sodom and Gomorrah world. He will eventually deliver us from this world that is heading to His condemnatory judgment.

(Key Point #2) - God knows to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the Day of Judgment.

The promise of future judgment against false teachers prompts Peter to give a series of three illustrations of God's judgment. Most of these illustrations of judgment were prompted by immoral sexual activity and depravity in which legitimate sexual boundaries were crossed.

JUDGMENT ILLUSTRATION #1 – The judgment against sinful angels. **2:4**

Most people are fascinated with the idea of angels. According to the Word of God angels are very important and very real. God obviously wants us to know things about angels and that is why He has revealed things about them in His written Word.

Angels were created by God (Psalm 148:1-5; Nehemiah 9:6; Colossians 1:16). The exact time of their creation is unknown, but we do know that they were in existence before the seventh day of creation (Genesis 2:1; Exodus 20:11), and they were in existence before most all of creation (Job 38:7).

When God initially created the angels, they were all classified as “very good” (Genesis 1:31) and “blameless” (Ezekiel 28:14-15a). This classification of angels continued until “unrighteousness was found in” some of the angels (Ezekiel 28:15b). This was what caused a twofold classification of angels. From that moment on there were two classes of angels:

(Class #1) - Unfallen holy angels;

(Class #2) - Fallen unholy angels (demons).

This angelic fall occurred before Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1 / Ezekiel 28:13) and apparently one third of the number of angels fell into a state of rebellion against God (Revelation 12:4).

The primary sin that caused the fall of angels was one of pride (Isaiah 14:13). The angels who fell were not content with their God-created, exalted status, but they wanted greater authority and higher rank. One key angel headed up this rebellion - Lucifer, the Devil, Satan.

The Apostle Peter obviously knew key doctrine pertaining to angelology and in this final Epistle he refers to one of the most depraved episodes in history which is found in Genesis 6:1-4. This passage describes a very unique, immoral sin in which sinful angels possessed men and sexually mated with women. The fallen angels who did this received a permanent judgment of God in that they were bound and cast into hell (II Peter 2:4; Jude 6). The Greek reads they were cast into Tartaros, which means they were cast into hell, the abode of the damned.

When it comes to fallen angels (demons) there are two kinds: 1) Those who are presently free (I Timothy 4:1); 2) Those who are presently bound (Luke 8:3). Of those who are bound there are two types: 1) Those who are temporarily bound (Revelation 9:1-11); 2) Those who are permanently bound (II Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

Peter's point is God knows how to eternally judge those who are immoral. These angels prove that. These angels were involved in sensual immorality and it brought about the eternal judgment of God and if God would do that to angels, you can be certain He will do that to the false religious teachers who are promoting their sensual licentiousness and greed.

God did not spare angels His judgment. In fact, for angels it was even worse than it is for false religious teachers. God did not provide any means of salvation for those angels who sinned. In fact, the text says that He has cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, which are places reserved for those who receive a condemnatory judgment.

Now Peter's point is that God certainly knows how and when to judge those immoral. He knows how to cast one into hell and bind them in a pit until the final time of judgment (Jude 6). If He did not spare angels, you can be sure He will not spare false teachers of religion. They will be bound and they will burn.

JUDGMENT ILLUSTRATION #2 – The judgment against the ungodly world. 2:5

God is a God of judgment and one great proof of this is that He judged the world. Not only did God not spare angels His ferocious judgment, but there was a time when He did not spare the world His ferocious judgment. God wiped out all humanity and animals with the exception of Noah and his family and the animals that were in the ark.

During the days of Noah, God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that “every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). Much of this evil thinking had to do with lustful, sexual activity. The world had become a place dedicated to “wicked pleasures.” Apparently people would crawl out of bed in the morning thinking about lustful, immoral things and it dominated their lives every waking moment.

Now there is a contrast in this illustration between the righteous remnant of Noah and his family and the rest of the world. Noah and his family were saved from God's wrath whereas the rest of the world was destroyed.

Peter specifically says that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. Keep Peter's context in mind. He is writing in a context when false teachers were promoting a licentious and greedy lifestyle that was completely devoted to self-pleasure. When God brought about His cataclysmic judgment against the whole world, He saved Noah and his family and no one else.

The implications of this are profound. Peter saw a religious world, most of it doomed because they were not preaching the truth of God. But he wants God's people to know that God will always care for those given over to Him and His true Word, even when He wipes out all others.

The word “ungodly” (ασβεία) is one that refers to those who have no reverence for God and His Word. There are religious leaders who do not fear God and they do not reverence God, and one day, God says, I'll destroy them.

JUDGMENT ILLUSTRATION #3 – The judgment against the ungodly cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. 2:6-8

You could not find ten righteous people in these cities (Genesis 18:32).

God is a God of ferocious judgment against those who refuse to reverence Him, and now His judgment noose tightens from heavenly angels, to the world, and now to specific cities. God targeted two immoral cities for His destructive burning wrath.

Peter now moves on from Noah and the world and the flood to Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah and the fire. All of the people of these cities were not destroyed by any flood, but they were destroyed by incineration and asphyxiation caused by fire and brimstone. God brought the cities and the people in them to ashes.

According to Jude, this judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah not only meant these people experienced a horrible burning death, but they also experienced a horrible eternal death (Jude 7). The issue that brought about God's wrath was their immorality, specifically their homosexuality.

Now Sodom and Gomorrah are cities that are used many times in Scripture to illustrate the ferocious judgment of God specifically against the sin of homosexuality (Genesis 19:1-24; Deuteronomy 29:23; Isaiah 1:9-10; Jeremiah 23:14; 50:40; Ezekiel 16:46-56; Amos 4:11; Zephaniah 2:9; Matthew 10:15; Luke 10:12; 17:29; Romans 9:29; II Peter 2:6; Jude 7).

When we track the Scriptural data concerning these cities it is obvious that God wants us to realize that the abominable sin of homosexuality will eventually cause Him to pour out His wrath on specific people and specific locations that support it. Nations, cities and militaries and individuals who support this activity are not strengthening themselves, they are sentencing themselves to serious judgment from God.

Sodom and Gomorrah in Scripture are illustrative for God's wrath being poured out because of the vile sin of homosexuality; and not only were the cities and the people condemned, but they were burned to ashes.

The primary point is that God can severely punish the ungodly and at the same time save the righteous.

It is specifically stated three times by Peter in **verses 7-8** that Lot was a "righteous" man. Now of course in view of what we know about Lot, this has caused some to wonder how he could have this classification. Lot was a very flesh driven man.

We may recall that when Lot first chose to move to this area of Sodom and Gomorrah, his motives were greedy, selfish, and worldly (Genesis 13:5-13). We also know that he didn't have much integrity when he offered his own virgin daughters to be raped by lusting Sodomites (Genesis 19:6-8). We know that he even hesitated to leave Sodom even after the angels told him to get out of there (Genesis 19:15-22), and then in the soon aftermath of all of this, he got drunk and was involved in incestuous relationships with his own daughters (Genesis 19:30-35). So the question arises, how is Lot righteous?

The word “righteous” (δικαιος) means Lot had a judicial righteousness that had been imputed to him just like it had been to Abraham (Genesis 15:6). Lot was a believer and he had an imputed righteousness from God.

Furthermore, **verse 8** informs us that even as messed up as Lot was, he saw the promotion of homosexuality and his soul was tortured day after day. Deep in Lot’s heart was the sense of right and wrong, godly and godless, moral and immoral. The immoral excesses of the Sodomites bothered him and Lot, like Noah, preached against them.

Peter wanted these believers to know that the doom of God and the judgment of God would eventually come against those religious leaders who are demonic and immoral. Believers may have some struggles, but deep in their hearts they see things clearly.

Now the deliverance of Lot from Sodom, before God pours out His wrath, is illustrative of the deliverance of N.T. believers via the Rapture before God pours out His wrath again. God knows how to pour out His wrath on evil, sexually immoral people and at the same time He knows how to deliver His family.

PARTING THOUGHTS:

- 1. God will eventually judge and destroy false religious people who are given to sexual immorality.**
- 2. Deliverance from this kind of lifestyle and judgment is found in the Lord Jesus Christ.**
- 3. One who loves the Lord and loves righteousness has nothing to fear about any judgment.**