

## 2 Peter Chapter 2B

Years ago Sharon and I were invited to attend an American Cancer Society event at the Sovereign Center in Reading. Well we parked the car and started walking toward the center when we were confronted by a young man, dressed in what appeared to be Camels hair with a leather belt tied around his waist. (sound familiar?)

- This young man made it his business to confront everyone who walked down the street with the declaration of God's impending judgment.
- As you can imagine many of the people walking the street scurried to the other side in a frantic attempt to avoid this boisterous prophet.
- Nevertheless, the young man, robed in the garb of Elijah passionately cried out in a loud voice to everyone who passed by:

“This is not a time to indulge yourself in worldly entertainment! This is a time to repent of your sin, because the Kingdom of God is at hand. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” And He cried out, “The Day of Judgment is close at hand!”

Like the crowd walking the streets of Reading that evening most people have a very strong aversion to any mention of divine judgment. They reject the notion that they will be held accountable for their actions by a sovereign and holy judge.

- Interestingly, when it comes to our own lives and our own sins most people think they deserve a pass. After all they haven't done anything really bad.
- The Judgment of God is for those people who gun down school children or terrorize crowds of people on city streets. They are the kind of people who should face judgment.

BUT the Scriptures clearly declares that all men, the just and the unjust will face a day of judgment. Jesus described that great day of Judgment.

Matthew 13: 41 **The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, 42 and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.**

- On the Day of Judgment, those who have received God's gracious gift of righteousness by faith in Christ will receive their eternal reward and shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father.
- And those who remain in their sin will be cast into the lake of fire.

Matthew 16:27 **For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.**

Contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture the False Prophets of Peter's day rejected the Biblical doctrine of judgment. They scoffed at the Apostle's teaching on the second coming of Christ.

- They attempted through their selective memories to rewrite history removing every remembrance of divine judgment. In Ch. 3 Peter confronts them saying:

2 Peter 3:3 **knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.** 4 **They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."**

- In what appears to be first century Evolutionary Thinking these false teachers said, everything on the earth continues on the same course from the beginning.
- And so with their heads firmly buried in the sand they taught: "God has never acted in judgment before, why should we expect Him to do so now?"

2 Peter 3:5 **For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, 6 and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.**

As we consider Chapter 2, verses 3-10 this morning Peter brings the truth of God's righteous judgment to light showing:

1. The Promise of Judgment
2. The Precedent for Judgment
3. The Pattern of Judgment

### The Promise of Judgment

Because the False Teachers gave themselves to sensuality, greed and all manner of wickedness and because they enticed others to follow them in their immoral excesses Peter warns them of their impending doom.

2 Peter 2: 3 **And in their greed (These false teachers) will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.**

- This same kind of greedy exploitation continues in the church even today.
- Selling vials of so-called holy water from the Jordan River, special cloths in which you are to wrap your prayer requests and send them back with your largest donation. Seeds that represent your seed of faith that you plant after sending in your seed faith donation.
- This is the modern day version of greedy exploitation, the "False Words" that are proliferated by the hucksters of religious error.
- Peter sternly warns them that their condemnation from long ago is not idle. It may appear for a while that they are getting away with their greedy exploits, but in reality they are not.

The image that Peter develops here of their looming judgment is quite interesting. He portrays their condemnation and destruction as a stealthy personage who is always following them. Like the grim reaper looming over he is never idle and never sleeps, he is always gathering, constantly accumulating wrath for the day of wrath.

- Paul writes to the Church at Rome:

Romans 2:5 **Because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.**

Example of the greedy man who stored gold coins in his attic. He scrimped and saved denying his family the very essentials of life in order to stockpile gold in his attic. Every month he added a few more coins to the pile. Until one day the attic floor gave way and all of the man's precious gold fell on his head destroying him as he lay sleeping in his bed.

- In his greed he literally stored up wrath for the day of wrath.

## 2. The Precedent for Judgment

Peter takes us on a brief tour of Biblical History to show us that God consistently judges the wicked and preserves the righteous. He gives us three examples of God's righteous judgment in the order in which they appear in the Bible.

He points to God's judgment of the Angels, God's judgment in the flood and God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah.

- These three examples demonstrate that God's Holy character has not changed. In His sovereign timing he brings his righteous judgment upon the wicked.
- And all of the previous judgments in history point toward and anticipate the final judgment at the coming of Christ.

The structure of the text is easy to see, Peter writes one very long conditional sentence employing three "IF" statements followed by a "Then" statement.

Like a skilled lawyer making his closing argument using a conditional clause to emphasize his point. (Remember the infamous words of Johnny Cockrin) **"IF the glove doesn't fit Then you must acquit."** Peter writes:

1. IF God did not spare the angels who fell.
2. IF He did not spare the ancient world but protected Noah.
3. IF He judged Sodom and Gomorrah but spared Lot.
4. THEN; it follows that the Lord knows how to preserve the godly and keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment. AND that is the point of Peter's argument.

The First Judgment that Peter mentions is the judgment of God on fallen angels.

2 Peter 2: 4 **For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;**

- SINCE God did not spare the angels of heaven when they sinned against him, human beings who likewise rebelled against God and perverted his truth should not Expect to Escape similar judgment.
- You see, both angels and men bear the same responsibility to honor and obey God as their creator and master.
- Now the spiritual dynamics of how and why the Angels sinned against God remains in many ways a theological mystery. However, many students of the Bible point to Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 as Biblical descriptions of the fall of Satan and God's declaration of judgment upon Him. (let's look at Isaiah)

Isaiah 14:12 "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! 13 You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' 15 But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.

- When Lucifer and his minions rebelled against God, God cast them out of heaven and in God's sovereignty; some of these fallen ones have been locked up, while others continue to roam the earth as tools in the hand of Almighty God.

Jude speaks of the angels who are already imprisoned saying:

Jude1:6 And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day.

Remember when Jesus confronted the demons in the land of the Gadarenes and the demons begged him not to send them to the abyss.

Matthew 8: 28 And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. 29 And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?"

- They knew that there was a day when they would face the judgment and the wrath of God and they greatly feared that day asking that He would allow them to enter into the herd of pigs.

Now there are other interpretations concerning the incarceration of angels here in Ch. 2 Vs. 4 that are built on extra Biblical writings and Jewish traditions. But for today the simple point of Peter's writing is this;

God set a precedent for judgment when he judged the angels. Although the fullness of His judgment may not be immediate, and those who are living in rebellion may continue in that rebellion for a period of time.

The Day of Judgment will inevitably come. And the wrath that they have stored up with every deceptive, immoral and rebellious act will receive a just recompense.

- God has established a precedent for judgment by committing fallen angels to prisons, subterranean silos of deepest darkness.
- And that judgment of fallen angels was followed by God's watery judgment on the ancient world. Now let's move on to the second precedent:

2 Peter 2: 5 **if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;**

- Peter points to the flood as evidence of the scope and severity of future judgment. Just as the judgment of God in the flood was global in scope and catastrophic in severity, so we can be sure that, none of the ungodly in all of creation will escape His final judgment.

Let's go back and look at the condition of the world in the days of Noah.

Genesis 6: 5 **The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.** 6 **And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.**

- The total depravity of man reached a critical mass and God moved in judgment.

7 **So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them."**

- We see how the wickedness of man grieved the heart of God, He waited patiently as Noah proclaimed the coming judgment to his fellow men and built the ark as a way of escape.
- We learn from the flood that the Spirit will not always strive with man, there is a time when patience of God eventually gives way to judgment.
- But even in the midst of such a horrific of judgment the mercy of God can be seen in the remnant who are saved from wrath by Grace alone.

Peter tells us that from the vast sea of humanity, God **preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others,**

- By grace God called Noah to himself and revealed his plan of salvation. He sent him out into the world as a herald of the righteousness that comes by faith.
- For 120 years Noah labored in obedience to God And no one repented, no one believed his word, Only Noah and his family were saved.

As I was thinking about the preaching of Noah, I imagined it must have been quite fiery. Not unlike the young man that I referred to earlier who said, "The day of judgment is upon us! Repent and believe the Gospel. This is not a time to give yourself to entertainment and relaxation, God is about to judge the world.

- Think about this:

If Noah would have been a False Teacher offering self-help seminars to the people of his day, teaching them how to have their best life now, How to raise teenagers who won't embarrass you in public, He could have filled the ark.

- But the good news of how to escape the wrath of God didn't draw one single person to the boat. WHY was Noah's message rejected:

1Co 2:14 **The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.**

- Only as God graciously imparts new life to the dead heart of man can a sinner repent of his sin and escape the impending doom of God's judgment.

Well Peter has one more historic illustration of divine judgment. In verse 6 He takes us back to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

2 Peter 2:6 **if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;**

7 **and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked**  
8 **(for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard);**

- God condemned Sodom and Gomorrah to utter destruction, complete annihilation as an example, a pattern or model of the fiery judgment that awaits the ungodly.

Paul speaks of this fiery judgment writing to the Thessalonian believers: 2 Thess. 1:7 **when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels** 8 **in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.** 9 **They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,**

- Like Sodom and Gomorrah the final judgment will annihilate the wicked.
- Peter and Jude make a connection between the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah and the false teachers of their day by pointing to their sexual immorality.

Jude 1: 7 **just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.**

- Remember that these false teachers rejected the Lordship of Christ, they scoffed at any form of accountability and gave themselves wholly over to every form of defiling lust.

With the clear warning of the Scripture in mind, HOW can it be that in the United States today there are more than 50 denominations (whole denominations) who joyfully affirm the immoral lifestyle that is promoted by the LGBT community?

Redefining gender and marriage is an act of blatant rebellion against the creator. In the words of the Late Billy Graham, *If God doesn't soon bring judgment upon America, He'll have to go back and apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah!*"

Again and again in verses 4-8 as Peter writes this conditional clause he said "IF"

- IF God did not spare the angels who fell.
- IF He did not spare the ancient world but spared Noah.
- IF He judged Sodom and Gomorrah but spared Lot.

Now in verse 9 and 10 Peter draws his thought to a conclusion showing us the Biblical Pattern of God's righteous judgment.

### 3 The Pattern of Judgment

2 Peter 2: 9 *then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.*

- I want you to see that this pattern of divine judgment throughout the entire Bible is two-fold. For the righteous, the day of the Lord will be a day of great deliverance, and for the wicked it is a day of wrath.

Malachi 4: 1 *"For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.*

- Like Sodom and Gomorrah the arrogant will be set ablaze like kindling.
- 2 *But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.*
- Sharon showed me a youtube video of cows in the Netherlands being released from the barn after being locked up in the dark all winter.
  - They were like little children, running and leaping for joy! So shall it be when we finally cast off these bodies of flesh, no more pain, no more sorrow for the former things will have passed away... Everything will be new.

The Lord Jesus clearly taught this two-fold pattern of divine judgment:

Matt. 25: 31 *"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

Matthew 25: 41 *"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*

As we close this morning I especially want to speak to those of you who may be in high school or college... Some of you are questioning the faith that was handed down to you by your parents and grandparents.....

- I respect healthy questioning so long as you know where to look for the right answers.
- On the college campus they will try to indoctrinate you in the spirit of the age. In the church we will do our best to teach you a truth that is ageless.
- They will tell you that there is no such thing as absolute truth.
- They will actively promote alternative lifestyles that destroy the very foundation of human society. Those same lifestyles that have lead to divine judgment in the past.
- Learn from the words of Peter, that God has judged the sinful world in the past.
- He is planning to judge the world yet again in the future. HOW can you escape that judgment?

If there is in you a healthy reverence for God, even a twinge of fear when you consider the reality of God's righteous judgment, I would call you today to respond to God's Word in faith.

Know the truth, agree with the truth and rest your whole life on the truth.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, He bore God's wrath on the cross for those who believe.

Entrust your life to him, abandon the spirit of the age, repent of your own immorality and you will be saved, delivered from the wrath of God.

**You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall**