
Sermon Notes

March 17, 2024

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Protection and Punishment

2 Peter 2:4-10a

IF... THEN...

- ❖ Peter writes weighty and serious words for our instruction and edification
 - vv. 4-10a = one VERY LONG sentence!
 - a conditional sentence (If... then...)
- ❖ Peter's main point: God judges those who obstinately disregard His commands, but He protects those who stay faithful to Him
 - **IF** God
 - did not spare angels
 - did not spare the ancient world
 - turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes
 - rescued righteous Lot
 - **THEN** the Lord knows how to
 - rescue the godly from trials
 - keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment
- ❖ Peter is masterful at providing balance to the points he makes

IF

- ❖ Each of Peter's 4 **IF** statements refer to historical, OT events
- ❖ **The angels who sinned**
 - no single, specific OT narrative
 - is Peter thinking of Isaiah 14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:11-19?
 - or is this an allusion to Genesis 6:1-4 and the account of angels cohabiting with women and producing children with them?
 - what **IS** clear is that God's judgment falls on a specific group of angels as He casts *them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment*
- ❖ **The ancient world**
 - entirely destroyed by the Flood
 - Noah and 7 others are protected
 - the godly are often vastly outnumbered by the ungodly
 - Peter may be drawing attention to the way the false teachers of his day are gaining such large followings
 - God is always faithful to preserve His remnant
- ❖ **The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah**
 - Peter follows Jesus' example in Luke 17:26-30
 - judgment is coming and it will be sudden and unexpected
- ❖ Peter balances the negative message about **God's destruction of the cities** with **God's rescue of Lot**
 - even though Lot does not come across as being a consistently righteous man, Lot **DOES** take a stand

- what WE need to learn from Lot's example of being *greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked*
 - how much torment do the lawless deeds that surround us in our society cause us?
 - do we cause ourselves to grieve in our souls over injustice, inequity, violence, racism, abortion, and sexual perversion of every sort?
 - ◆ does sin shock us anymore?
 - ◆ or are we passive, turning a blind eye?

THEN

- ❖ Peter invites us to "lineup with the godly" because God provides protection for those who are His
 - if you are in Christ, no trial, temptation, testing, sacrifice, affliction, persecution or even martyrdom will remove you from God's protection
 - *the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials*
- ❖ Though Peter's words point to end times events that will occur before Christ's return, there is still a **NOW** dimension to them
 - words of hope and encouragement
 - whatever things may look like in this life, God's justice will triumph
 - God's truth will prevail over false teaching
 - false teachers and all who oppose God will be dealt with and done away with in God's good time

Judgment Now?

- ❖ Many today promote and advocate on behalf of things which the Bible clearly condemns
 - claims are made that what the Bible proscribes and prescribes is conditioned by the culture in which it first appeared
 - such "religious teachers" are often successful, attract large followings, and generate a lot of publicity
 - how can God stand for this?
 - why doesn't God do something about this?
 - Peter's answer and enduring encouragement is that God is **NOT** silent
- ❖ **HOW** is God at work in judging sinners today?
 - Romans 1:18-32, God gives sinful humans over to their sin and the consequences of that sin
 - God's choice to not convict such people of their sin and lead them to repentance **IS** a sign of His judgment
 - the sin such people commit with all of its terrible consequences for the health of their mind and body, is its own form of punishment
- ❖ The example of the way God works in the life of Pharaoh in the OT book of Exodus
 - all God has to do in the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is to step back and do nothing!
 - "let Pharaoh be Pharaoh"
- ❖ C. S. Lewis "There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, 'All right, then, have it your way.'"
- ❖ 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10,
- ❖ Developing a heart of compassion for the lost