

“The fate which awaits false teachers” (6)

In our last sermon Peter reminded us that false teachers would come amongst us and totally destroy the Lord’s church with their words and teachings. He reminded us in **2 Peter 2:1** that they would bring on themselves swift destruction. He also reminded us that their judgement will not be forgotten by God in **2 Peter 2:3**. And to reinforce the idea that their judgment is certain, Peter gave us three examples of God’s righteous judgment from the past.

And that’s what we’re going to look at today; we’re going to look at God’s righteous judgment on the angels who sinned in **2 Peter 2:4**. We’re going to look at God’s righteous judgment in the flood in **2 Peter 2:5**. And finally we will look at the example of God’s righteous judgment on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in **2 Peter 2:6-9**.

But before we get into our sermon today let me share with you a story about **a man who died and went to the Judgment**. **They told him**, “Before you meet with God, I should tell you, we’ve looked over your life, and to be honest you really didn’t do anything particularly good or bad. We’re not really sure what to do with you. Can you tell us anything you did that can help us make a decision?” **The newly arrived soul thought for a moment and replied**, “Yeah, once I was driving along and came upon a person who was being harassed by a group of thugs. So I pulled over, got out a bat, and went up to the leader of the thugs. He was a big, muscular guy with a ring pierced through his lip. Well, I tore the ring out of his lip, and told him he and his gang had better stop bothering this guy or they would have to deal with me!” “Wow that’s impressive, “When did this happen?” “About three minutes ago,” **came the reply**.

And I guess the point of the story is to remind us that there are many theories about what will happen on Judgment Day. And there are also many theories concerning these angels which Peter gives as his first example of God’s righteous judgment. **2 Peter 2:4** “For if God didn’t spare angels when they sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.”

Now I’m not going to share all the different theories concerning these angels but what we will do is look at the text in order that we don’t miss the point. Now notice that Peter tells us that these angels sinned, which means angels must have had some form of divine law to follow. And notice also that angels were free will agents; Peter tells us that these angels exercised their God-given free will and chose to disobey God’s sacred law. And so because of disobeying God’s law Peter tells us they were cast out of heaven and committed to pits of darkness.

Now this makes sense in light of **1 John 1:5** where John tells us that, “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all”. And so these disobedient angels are now kept in hell awaiting judgment. Which is exactly what **Jude 6** tells us when he writes, “Angels who didn’t keep their first domain, but deserted their own dwelling place, he has kept in everlasting bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.” And so loved ones, it seems fairly obvious to me at least that some angels didn’t like the position they were given by God and tried to seek higher positions by rebelling against God.

In that great chapter of **Matthew 25** when Jesus is describing what His people should be doing, He tells us that those who don’t follow Him will be eternally punished. But notice who else is mentioned as being eternally punished. Jesus tells us in **Matthew 25:41** “Then he will say also to those on the left hand, “depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.”

A new believer was on a plane with an intellectual man who was educated beyond his intelligence. He sneered at her reading the Bible. Asked if she believed it? "Yes." "Jonah and the whale story?" "Yes." "How did it happen?" "Don't know, but I'll find out when I get to heaven." "What if Jonah isn't there?" "Then I guess you'll have to ask him for me."

And so loved ones if we get anything from Peter’s first example of God’s righteous judgment, it’s this. If God did not spare the angels who beheld His glory when they sinned, He will certainly punish false teachers who purposely lead His people astray.

Let’s go ahead and look at Peter’s second example of God’s righteous judgment. **2 Peter 2:5** “And (God) didn’t spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood on the world of the ungodly.” Peter reminds us that God used the flood to judge the ungodly.

Turn your Bibles and read with me **Genesis 6:5-7** “And the Lord saw that the sin of man was great on the earth, and that all the thoughts of his heart were evil. And the Lord had sorrow because he had made man on the earth, and grief

was in his heart. And the Lord said, I will take away man, whom I have made, from the face of the earth, even man and beast and that which goes on the earth and every bird of the air; for I have sorrow for having made them”.

Now go down and read with me **Genesis 6:11+12** “And the earth was evil in God's eyes and full of violent ways. And God, looking on the earth, saw that it was evil: for the way of all flesh had become evil on the earth”. Now notice that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and every intent of the thoughts of his heart was continually only evil. And at this time the earth was corrupt in God’s eyes and filled with violence.

Now there are times when we get these well meaning people coming to our doors to remind us of how bad the world is and they tell us that the world is bad place full of evil and they ask us if we think it’s just getting worse. Well your everyday person who isn’t familiar with the Bible may well say yes. But let me ask you, **how bad must have it been in Noah’s time?** Well if we know anything about it, we know it was bad enough for God to be grieved in His heart to such an extent that He found it necessary to destroy both man and beast from the face of the earth.

You see loved ones Noah was the first evangelist mentioned in the Bible and his life should teach us some lessons. For example Noah faced the same circumstances that Christians face today. When Jesus is talking about Judgement Day, He says in **Matthew 24:36-39** “But as for that day and hour no one knows it – not even the angels in heaven – except the Father alone. For just like the days of Noah were, so the coming of the Son of Man will be. For in those days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark. And they knew nothing until the flood came and took them all away. It will be the same at the coming of the Son of Man.”

You see loved ones just as most people today do not believe Jesus is coming back at all, let alone soon, the people of Noah’s day did not know when the Flood was going to happen. They would have saw Noah building the ark and surely some people would have asked what on earth he was doing and why he was doing it. **Hebrews 11:7** “By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”

And so like people today, almost certainly the people of Noah’s day were busy enjoying the pleasures of life and did not believe or care that judgment was coming. But the point that Peter is trying to remind us of again is this. If God destroyed the whole world because of their ungodliness, **will He not destroy these false teachers who deny the Lord who bought them?** And be assured loved ones, all people will be judged, no-one is going to escape the great Judgment Day which is coming. **Hebrews 10:25** tells us, “Just as people are appointed to die once, and then to face judgment.”

Just before the death of actor **W.C. Fields**, a friend visited **Fields' hospital room** and was surprised to find him thumbing through a Bible. Asked what he was doing with a Bible, **Fields** replied, "I'm looking for loopholes." There are no loopholes when it comes to judgement, loved ones.

Now it’s not all bad news because as we know from our study of **1 Peter 3:20** that God spared Noah. In other words that very same flood which God used to destroy the world was used to save Noah and his family’s lives. And it’s here as we begin to find comfort for the Christians who find themselves surrounded by the ungodly.

Look at **Genesis 6:8** “But Noah found favour in the sight of the LORD”. Now look at **Genesis 7:1** “The LORD said to Noah, “Come into the ark, you and all your household, for I consider you godly among this generation.” Noah was one who walked with God, even in the midst of a perverse generation. He was a preacher of righteousness, both in deed and word. And so while God was bringing judgment upon the ungodly, He did not lose sight of the godly.

Now remember that church, in this ungodly world in which we live, we sometimes feel like God isn’t bothered about what’s happening. But He does, He sees what the ungodly are up too but don’t forget that He also provides deliverance for the godly. In other words, not only will God bring destruction upon the false teachers, but He will also preserve all those who remain faithful to Him.

Let’s look at Peter’s final example of God’s righteous judgment. **2 Peter 2:6-8** “And if he (God) turned to ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah when he condemned them to destruction, having appointed them to serve as an example to future generations of the ungodly, and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man in anguish over the debauched lifestyle of lawless men, (for while he lived among them day after day, that righteous man was tormented in his

righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard).” Peter reminds us that God turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes.

Turn your Bibles to **Genesis 19:24-28** and read with me “Then the LORD rained down sulphur and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah. It was sent down from the sky by the LORD. So he overthrew those cities and all that region, including all the inhabitants of the cities and the vegetation that grew from the ground. But Lot’s wife looked back longingly and was turned into a pillar of salt. Abraham got up early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before the LORD. He looked out toward Sodom and Gomorrah and all the land of that region. As he did so, he saw the smoke rising up from the land like smoke from a furnace”.

Now why would God use such a terrible judgment on these cities? Well **Jude 7** tells us “They indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire.” **Genesis 18:20** “The LORD said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so blatant.” But what exactly was the sin they were doing which caused God to totally destroy these cities?

Well again if you turn your Bibles to **Genesis 19** we can read about it for ourselves. Lot has had a visit from two angels who wanted to stay in the town square but Lot persuaded them to stay at his house and eat. We pick up the story in **Genesis 19:4-11** “Before they could lie down to sleep, all the men – both young and old, from every part of the city of Sodom – surrounded the house. They shouted to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so we can have sex with them!” Lot went outside to them, shutting the door behind him. He said, “No, my brothers! Don’t act so wickedly! Look, I have two daughters who have never had sexual relations with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do to them whatever you please. Only don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.” “Out of our way!” they cried, and “This man came to live here as a foreigner, and now he dares to judge us! We’ll do more harm to you than to them!” They kept pressing in on Lot until they were close enough to break down the door. So the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house as they shut the door. Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, from the youngest to the oldest, with blindness. The men outside wore themselves out trying to find the door.”

Now we can understand why their sin was so great, now we can understand why God totally destroyed these cities. But once again notice this church; even though God destroyed the ungodly, He delivered righteous Lot. And this should serve as another reminder of how God does not lose sight of His faithful children when He brings judgment upon the ungodly.

Lot was delivered because he was righteous. **And how do we know that?** In **2 Peter 2:7** Peter describes him as righteous Lot. In **2 Peter 2:8** Peter describes him as that righteous man. In **2 Peter 2:8** Peter describes him as a righteous soul. And so once again we’re reminded that God sees the godly and the ungodly.

And if He destroyed these cities because of their sin, He will certainly destroy these false teachers for their sin. So we leave these false teachers for God to deal with, their fate is already awaiting them. And just in case you missed it, what we’ve just read is God’s justice in practice and God’s mercy in practice. But it’s difficult isn’t it, living in this world, surrounded by so much evil. And like I said earlier, sometimes we can get very discouraged because of what’s happening.

And Peter knows this, that’s why he goes on to tell us in **2 Peter 2:9** “If so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from their trials, and to reserve the unrighteous for punishment at the Day of Judgment.” Peter says if God can rescue Noah from a corrupt generation, then He can rescue you. Peter says if God can rescue Lot from a perverse generation, then He can rescue you.

The question is, **do you believe that? Do you believe that there is not a situation in which you may find yourself in where God cannot help you?** Peter says, the Lord is in the business of rescuing Christians from their trials but maybe the real question should be **do you want to be rescued?**

A man arrived in heaven and was ready to be assigned to his permanent home. At the check-in desk he told the clerk that he didn’t understand why he was here in the first place. So, the clerk called for Peter. **"How can I help you?"** Peter said. The man told Peter that he was a very religious man and was caught in a flood. The rains were coming down harder and he repeatedly called to God for help but help never came. He saw on the weather channel that the flood waters would continue to rise and local residents should take precautions. He said, **"God help me."**

He decided to weather the storm and when the waters began to rise he went to the second floor of his house. Two men in boat came by and they asked if he needed help. But, the man said, "the Lord will help me," and they went their way. The waters continued to rise and he climbed on the roof. A few minutes later a helicopter came by and they asked if he wanted a lift. He again said, "The Lord will help me." So, the helicopter left. "I don't understand," he said to Peter angrily. "Why didn't God help me?" Peter replied, "Who do you think sent you the message, the boat and the helicopter?"

You see loved ones, I hear people crying out to God for help on many occasions. And so God sends His people to help them but what happens? They don't take that help because they don't recognise that it's actually God who is working through the person He sent to help them in the first place. In other words God can't rescue you if won't allow Him to.

So not only is God in the business of rescuing His people, He always is also in the business of keeping the unrighteous in a secure place until judgment day comes. 2 Peter 2:9 "If so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from their trials, and to reserve the unrighteous for punishment at the Day of Judgment." Now loved ones this should encourage us to keep on growing in our knowledge and understanding of Christ.

Because the minute we start going along with some doctrine which isn't Biblical. The minute we start following some false doctrine, we can eventually find ourselves being on the wrong side of God. And that's a place nobody wants to find themselves in.

And if you're not a Christian this morning you need to know that you're still on the wrong side of God. And God doesn't want you there; He wants you on His side. And you can start that journey today by simply asking someone, where do I begin to get on right terms with God?

Peter warned us last week about the damage which false teachers can and will cause. Today he has reminded us of the fate which awaits these false teachers and next week Peter is going to remind us about how corrupt these false teachers are.