

**Text: 2 Pt 2.4-10a**

We continue in the “gruesome chapter.” Last week we had the topic, “There Will Be False Prophets.” I summarized that message with this statement:

The reality is that false prophets will come. This is a feature of this age. Peter warns his readers to beware, for their lies can cause much damage in the church and in lives. God plans their destruction, but we must be aware of their mischief.

Today, our topic is,

### God Knows What to Do about False Teachers

In the passage, Peter lays out several historical scenarios showing God knows what he is doing. We will survey those and make some observations for our present time.

Read 2 Pt 2.4-10a

As you can see, the passage is one long conditional statement (with multiple conditions).

You will also notice that we have a period in the middle of verse 10. This marks the end of the conditional statement.

“Verses 4–10a form one long, complex conditional sentence; verses 4–8 form the conditional statement, and verses 9–10a the conclusion. This long sentence skillfully combines the different aspects involved in God’s judicial dealings with mankind. Peter cites three instances of God’s past judgment upon sinners (vv. 4–8) and states the assured conclusion (vv. 9–10a).”<sup>1</sup>

## I. The historical conditions forming the premise of judgement (4-8)

### A. First class conditions

1. Greek has several different ways of expressing conditional statements.
2. Some conditions are very hypothetical, like a “what if...” kind of speculation

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<sup>1</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, *Second Peter and Jude: An Expository Commentary* (Greenville, S.C: Bob Jones University Press, 1989), 95.

### 3. First class conditions “assume the condition to be true”

- a. Sometimes this is for sake of argument
- b. Sometimes the assumption conforms to reality, as here

### B. The “if” is present only in verse 4

1. In the NAU, the “if” in v. 6 and v. 7 are italicized, the grammar assumes its repetition
2. Notice also the “then” of v. 9 is italicized, again implied by the grammar

### C. The Lord’s ancient judgements (4-5)

#### 1. The judgement of angels (4)

##### a. Attempts to identify the judgement

- 1) The judgement of some angels when Satan rebelled against God
- 2) The judgement of some angels for their part in the sins of Gen 6 (“sons of God” and “daughters of men”)

If the first, why is Satan still free to trouble the earth?

If the latter, what in the world???

##### b. Arguments for the Gen 6

- 1) Widely held interpretation of Gen 6 by Jews
- 2) Parallel to judgement of Titans held by Greeks (Titans held in Tartarus, the word for “hell” here – a place “as far below Hades as heaven is from earth”<sup>2</sup>)
- 3) The view of Enoch who is quoted by Jude, and offers a parallel passage

Jude 1.6 And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,

<sup>2</sup> Homer

My view: the exact interpretation is uncertain, we don't have enough information, but we do have ...

### c. Curious passages in Revelation

Rev 9.11 They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.

- 1) He leads the "locusts" who also come out of the abyss
- 2) They are sent to plague men on the earth in the Tribulation

Rev 9.14 one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

- 3) These are also released to plague people during the Tribulation

However, Wiersbe rightly notes, "It is not necessary to debate the hidden mysteries of this verse in order to get the main message: God judges rebellion and will not spare those who reject His will. If God judged the angels, who in many respects are higher than men, then certainly He will judge rebellious men."<sup>3</sup>

## 2. The judgement of the Flood (5)

### a. God did not spare the sinners of Noah's day

"The fact that vast numbers are participating in and condoning sin may harden evil-doers in their wickedness, but their numbers will never shelter them from the wrath of God."<sup>4</sup>

- 1) God's judgement of sin is total: the whole world flooded
- 2) God's judgement of sinners is certain: so too will God judge false teachers

<sup>3</sup> Warren W Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996), 449.

<sup>4</sup> Hiebert, *Second Peter and Jude*, 99.

- b. Here Peter adds the theme of preserving the remnant of the righteous
  - 1) Noah, called “a preacher of righteousness”
  - 2) Seven others (his wife, three sons, and their wives)

The theme encourages believers because it seems that false teachers are in the ascendancy at most points of church history. There is hope of preservation for the righteous.

#### D. The Lord’s patriarchal judgement (6-8)

1. The judgement of Sodom and Gomorrah a warning to all ungodly hereafter
  - a. Judged by fire
  - b. Completely destroyed
2. The sparing of Lot likewise encourages present believers surrounded by sin and false teachers
  - a. Notice that Lot is called righteous
  - b. Peter defends Lot’s righteousness in v. 8
    - 1) He was not a perfect man
    - 2) He was vexed by the unrighteousness surrounding him
    - 3) He was spared by God (by God’s grace, not Lot’s righteousness)

“Abraham prayed in Genesis 18 that the Lord would preserve Sodom if there were even ten righteous within it. The Lord more than answered Abraham’s prayer, for he rescued from the city the one person who was righteous.”<sup>5</sup>

And what of us in our day?

- a) I hope we are vexed (κΙV) by the sin we see around us

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, v. 37 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 341.

b) I trust the Lord will rescue us (and pray we may have more victory than Lot)

## II. The present conclusion giving assurance to the righteous (9-10a)

### A. The Lord knows how to rescue the godly

1. Note: many parallels made between Noah/Lot and the Rapture
2. “Temptation” here is not temptation to sin, but trials believers undergo in this age, perhaps especially “The Temptation,” *i.e.*, the Tribulation

“His ability to rescue them ‘out of’ (*ek*), not ‘away from’ (*apo*), trial recognizes that the godly are not promised exemption from the difficult situations of earthly existence.”<sup>6</sup>

### B. The Lord knows how to keep the unrighteous under punishment

1. This is a general statement of God’s determination against all sinners
2. They are reserved for judgement: though the wicked might seem to prosper now, their destiny is bleak

“The angels, the flood generation, and Sodom and Gomorrah were not judged immediately. They pursued their sin for some time before the fateful day of judgment.”<sup>7</sup>

### C. The Lord knows how to judge especially those who promote unrighteousness (false teachers)

## Conclusion:

While we are in the “gruesome chapter,” there is hope for believers.

Those who trouble the church are especially preparing a great judgement for themselves. In the meantime, we who believe ought to be determined to remain faithful, no matter the trials we face or the pressures of the “crowd” who make heroes of false teachers.

The Lord knows how to preserve the righteous and judge the wicked.

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<sup>6</sup> Hiebert, *Second Peter and Jude*, 106.

<sup>7</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 344.