

An Exposition of the 2nd Epistle of Peter

“The Know-How of God”

2 Peter 2:3-10



Theme: It is not necessary to take matters into our own hands – vengeance belongs to God.

I. THE DISCOURAGEMENT OF THE FAITHFUL – 2:3

A. The Conflict Due to False Teaching

1. Toleration of false teaching has always been a key element in the diluting of the Church’s influence.
2. Peter addresses the effort of Satan to duplicate his old strategy of *“secretly introducing destructive heresies,”* error by mixing it with truth.
3. This results in a church which is being “destroyed” by the error of Satan – cp. v. 1.

B. The Confusion Due to Delayed Judgment

1. This brings the faithful to a state of confusion – “Why God, do you permit this?”
2. Satan then uses this confusion to suggest that maybe the false teachings are not so bad after all – perhaps God is not provoked by it and it really doesn’t matter.
3. However, Peter begins by reassuring the believers that the judgment received by the false teachings is imminent and adequate: *“... their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.”*
4. As I mentioned last week at the conclusion of the message: “God’s wrath, although not immediately dispensed when worthiness is determined, is actively accumulating until it will be unleashed toward the false teachers when they are cast into the intensity of the Lake of Fire.”

II. THE DEMONSTRATION OF GOD’S DISCERNMENT – 2:4-8

A. God’s Judicial Discernment re: Heavenly Beings – v. 4

1. Even before creation, God had to deal with a rebellion of some kind within the angelic orders – perhaps by the followers of Lucifer – *“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment ...”*.
2. The “if ... then” statement begun here ends in verse 9

3. These angels were cast from Heaven into the darkness of the underworld – to be reserved for ultimate judgment for some egregious act; an act considered certain – *“God did not spare [them]”*.
4. This is not a description of those angels who followed Satan at the original fall, they are not all confined.
5. We are told that this group of angels referred to here are not free to roam about but are confined in *“hell”* [ταρταρόω] - a verb meaning to be “netherworlded” – held captive awaiting judgment.
6. There seems to be a section in *“hell”* that are specially reserved for these angels – in *“pits of darkness”* [σειραῖς ζόφου] – literally: *“chained in deep gloom”*
7. God has already condemned them and is waiting until the right time at the end of the age to exact His wrath upon them in the Lake of Fire – cp. **Matthew 25:41**

B. God’s Judicial Discernment re: Hostiles – v. 5

1. Peter then moves on to discuss the time when God moved against the wickedness of man in Noah’s day – *“... and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;”*
2. Peter is here referring to God’s judgment through the flood on those hostile to the truth in the face of Noah’s preaching – cp. **Genesis 6:5-8**
3. Peter summarizes their character by describing them as *“ungodly”* [ἀσεβής] – a term that generally refers to those who violate norms for proper relation to deity; those who are irreverent, impious, and hostile to God.
4. As God was destroying the ancient world, He was faithful to deliver the few righteous ones who remained faithful to the truth – despite the defilement around them.

C. God’s Discernment re: Homosexuals – vv. 6-8

1. This same unwillingness to tolerate wickedness & vileness was seen when God reduced Sodom & Gomorrah to ashes through His fury – *“... and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter ...”*
 - a) The sin which evoked God’s enormous wrath was that of homosexuality – His hatred of this sin continues today with no less intensity.

- b) This harsh punishment was discharged in an effort to communicate to all the vehemence with which God views the sin of homosexuality – “... *having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter ...*”
- 2. However, in the midst of this whole-sale destruction, God showed His faithful discernment by delivering “righteous” Lot – “... *and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men ...*”
 - a) “*sensual conduct*” [ἀναστροφή] literally describes an “alternative lifestyle” characterized by sensuality and immorality.
 - b) Yet, God is described as being merciful to Lot – “*rescue*” [ῥύομαι] – describing the act of drawing someone to oneself; thus, to rescue.
- 3. Lot was fatigued and worn down – “*for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds.*”

III. THE DISCERNMENT OF GOD’S DETERMINATION – 2:9-10a

A. He Knows How to Rescue the Godly – v. 9a

- 1. Peter assures the believers that simply because God is not immediately judging the wicked, does not mean that they are alone in contending for the faith – “*then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation ...*”.
- 2. “*temptation*” [πειρασμός] – refers to the attacks by the enemy to lure the godly from faithfulness to God to indulgence in sin – the state in which both Noah & Lot suffered.
- 3. He repeats the determination of God in redeeming them – not to think of themselves as having been passed over by foolish belief in God – cp. 3:3-4.

B. He Knows How to Recompense the Wicked – vv. 9b-10a

- 1. What Peter wants us to know is that it is okay if God punishes the wicked in His own good time – “... *and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.*”
- 2. They are not “getting away with” anything – cp. Hebrews 10:30-31
- 3. The wicked will know the full scope of God’s wrath at the proper time – “*and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.*” – the common denominator in each of the examples of those judged by God.
- 4. In the meantime, we are told that God’s wrath is already being poured out upon the wicked as He allows them to suffer the natural consequences of their sin – cp. Romans 1:18.

