

Series: **A Firm Foundation** – week 5
CDOBC – beginning on 8/28/16
Today's Title: **“God's Judgement on False Teachers”**

September 25, 2016 ~ 2 Peter 2:4-10

OBJECTIVE: To help people know God's faithfulness to judge the ungodly and rescue the righteous.

Opening Prayer

Open your Bible to **2 Peter 2**.

Illus. - Brian - soap in the mouth - *“Tastes pretty good”*

I must admit - I have escaped justice myself.

- When I received a ‘warning’ instead of a speeding ticket
- When I hit cars with snowballs and was chased by one of the drivers
- Cheating on a test but I was never caught

I can't share any of the really bad stuff...my mom and dad are here today!

Granted - these may not be major crimes, but they illustrate the point: Justice is not perfect in our life and experience.

There are times when justice seems to escape your best efforts or it takes a very long time to show up.

Far too often, the wicked enjoy their standing and live undeterred way too long.

- We see it on the world stage as murderous dictators live in extreme luxury while the citizens under their rule starve and live without the basic necessities of life.

- We see it in our own nation as the criminals seem to escape any legal consequences for their actions.
- We see it in some churches, as they are led by false teachers for decades, and God appears to be silent and detached.

In the O.T., we see historical situations where kings and kingdoms were evil, yet they seemed to thrive for generations - even hundreds of years. In much of the Psalms and the Prophets, the people of God cried out and wondered why evil nations enjoyed so much success - and why God seemed to be absent and allowed this to occur.

In every case, eventually, the judgment of God materialized - but not on the timetable many hoped for.

But we must remember what the Bible clearly teaches: our timetable is not always the same as God's timetable - “For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.” (Psalm 90:4, see also 2 Peter 3:8)

For the people of God - for us as followers of Jesus Christ, it is very easy to look at the world around us - to see the degrading culture and the redefinition of what is right and wrong - and it's easy to wonder why God is letting all of this occur? *Doesn't God care about these things?*

For the wicked, the perceived silence of God can lead them to a false-sense of freedom - thinking they are getting away with their actions, or thinking God must be a myth.

The Christians Peter was writing to were in the midst of persecution - living in a very pagan and humanistic culture which was obsessed with pleasure and power.

Not only was the 1st century Greco-Roman culture filled with sinful extremes which would make our own culture look like Mayberry, but in the Church itself, false teachers and their perversion of the truth were in some cases thriving - even flourishing.

So, let's look at what Peter says, beginning in vs. 3b of 2 Peter 2:

The patience and promise of God vs. 3b

“Their (false prophets) condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.”

God is both *patient* toward the unsaved - and faithful to His *promise* to bring justice to every thought and deed of every person.

From our vantage point, the justice of God can seem very slow - even delinquent.

Which would you rather have (*before you answer, think of your own sinfulness!*): A God who is quick to judge and quick to punish, or a God who is slow to judge - a God who is “...merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” (Psalm 86:15) and “...patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

God is patient with sinners, giving plenty of time for them to repent and put their faith in Him, but don't mistake His patience with a reluctance to judge sin and evil.

“The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but He will by no means clear the guilty...”

Numbers 14:18

Peter says the condemnation of the false prophets is not idle, and their destruction is not sleeping so as to miss the time of judgment.

3 reminders of God's judgment vs. 4-6

This section (vs. 4-10) is one long sentence - connected with 4 “if” statements, concluding with the “then” statement of vs.9. Instead of “if” (in English states a possibility), a better translation is probably the word “*since*” - because these are not statements of potential or possibility - but statements looking back to historical events / facts.

Peter is doing two things through this list of three reminders of God's judgment: **First**, he's telling the false teachers not to put any merit or confidence in the absence of judgment they have enjoyed so far.

Second, he is encouraging the believers by reminding them of historical realities - God's track record - His faithfulness to judge sin and evil. The first reminder is:

1. Fallen angels vs. 4

“For if (Since) 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...”

Ezekiel 28:12-19; Isaiah 14:12-21; Revelation 12:3-9; Luke 10:18

Each of these passages give us information about the fallen angels who followed Lucifer (a.k.a. Satan, the Devil) as he led a rebellion against God. I don't have time to give a full outline and explanation on the doctrine of angels and demons, but I will give a 'Cliff-notes' overview in order to make sense of this verse.

The perfect, sinless creation of God included not only the physical universe, but also the spirit world - the heavens and the spiritual beings who inhabit these places.

In **Ezekiel 28** we read how glorious Lucifer was when he was created. He was a “anointed guardian cherub” (vs. 14), with incredible power and splendor.

However, In **Isaiah 14** we read of his fall from perfection, and how his pride swelled up inside and he determined to rise above God Himself (vs. 13).

In **Revelation 12** we're told when Lucifer (referred to as the “great red dragon” - vs. 3-4), took a third of the stars (angels) with him when he rebelled against God.

Since that time, Lucifer and his fallen angels (which we refer to as *demons*) have been fighting a cosmic battle against God and His people - doing everything they can

to destroy God's plan of salvation and to destroy His people.

Which means the demons are not yet cast: “into hell and committed...to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment...”

So what fallen angels (demons) is Peter referring to?

Most likely the demons associated with the events of **Genesis 6:1-4**. **Jude 6** is a parallel passage with our passage this morning, and sheds additional light on this: “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...”

So, when we put these Biblical clues together, it seems there were a group of demons who went beyond the limits God had placed on them - and as a result God imprisoned them and to this day they are imprisoned and they await their final judgment.

Hell and judgment are two words / ideas / realities which our culture strongly resists. Many both inside / outside the church say, *“We believe in the God of love - the love of Jesus - “Love your neighbor as yourself” kind of Christianity, and we don't believe God / Jesus is a God who will judge people and send them to Hell simply because they didn't believe.”*

But the Bible not only verifies the existence and reality of Hell and God's judgment, it's one of the topics Jesus talked about quite often. In fact, no less than 60 verses in the Gospels alone quote Jesus speaking about Hell.

Matthew 10:28

"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

So, Peter reminds us of the fallen angels who were judged by God - and await further judgment.

2. The flood vs. 5

"...if (Since) 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..."

So many modern people deny the supernatural events and claims of the Bible - but the Bible is unapologetic in not only speaking to these historical events, but mentioning them often.

The point Peter is making is this: the ancient world was so evil, wicked and sinful, that God judged all but 8 people when He caused the flood, which we can read about in **Genesis 6-9**.

3. Sodom & Gomorrah vs. 6

The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah was more than homosexuality - in **Ezekiel** we also read of their pride, their gluttony, laziness and lack of concern for the poor

(16:49-50). Because of their gross and unrepentant sinfulness, God judged them:

“...if (Since) 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...”

Don't miss that last part...the judgement of Sodom and Gomorrah is an example for the ungodly. Not only divine justice in the moment, but an example to all who follow.

God has given clear and ample warning of His judgment!

But this passage has just as much good news as it does news of judgment.

God's people always live in the midst of a non-believing world - and the Church has always lived in the midst of cultures which deny the reality, power and truth of Christ.

2 reminders of God rescuing the righteous vs. 5, 7-8

“...but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others...”

and if (since) 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) ...”

In the eyes of the Jewish people, Noah was the cream of the crop. He was at the top of the righteousness and faithful scale.

Lot, on the other hand, was scraping the bottom of the righteousness barrel.

When you read the account of Lot in Genesis, you quickly realize he held on tightly to the material things of the world, and the promises of God were a lower priority for him. So why does Peter call him “righteous”?

We read in **Genesis 15:6** that “And he (Abraham) believed the LORD, and He counted it to him as righteousness.” (see also Rom. 4:3)

This is why Abraham was righteous - and it's also why Lot was righteous - because Lot was a believer - Lot had faith in God.

God rescues / saves from judgment all who have by faith accessed the righteousness of Christ.

What makes you righteous is not your good works - but your faith in Christ, which imputes the righteousness of Christ into your life.

The superstars (Noah) and the ‘not-so super’ (Lot) - all are righteous before God because of the work and righteousness of Christ.

One other thing to notice...I'm not sure how much weight to put behind this observation, but I think it's obvious enough in the text to mention.

Peter gives 3 reminders of God's judgement in the past - and 2 reminders of God rescuing the righteous from His judgment. ***There is no rescue mentioned with the judgment of fallen angels...why is that?***

Because your only chance to believe in Christ and be rescued from God's judgment is in this life - not the next life. Once we die and cross the threshold into the spiritual world, the dye has been cast - there is no chance of rescue. You either enter eternity already being rescued...or you enter eternity under the eternal judgment of God. (Heb. 9:27 - "...appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment")

So the obvious question is: Have you put your faith in Christ to escape God's judgment against your sin?

You can trust God's justice vs. 9-10

"...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. Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones..."

The 3 reminders Peter gives us: the fallen angels, the flood and Sodom and Gomorrah along with the rescue from judgment of Noah and his family and Lot and his family, demonstrate that God:

1. Knows how to rescue the godly
2. Judges the ungodly (even the worst, most extreme - vs. 10)

We can trust the Lord - knowing justice will be realized in every situation, and knowing the righteous will be / have been rescued from His judgment.

Apply it...

Trust in God's promise to bring perfect justice to every thought and deed of every person.

If you get discouraged as you look at our world, remember God is patient and longsuffering - but also remember His record of judging evil and rescuing the righteous from His judgment.

Remember the fallen angels, the flood and Sodom and Gomorrah - Remember Noah and Lot's rescue from God's judgment.

And when you do - rejoice in the Lord and His perfect and just judgment!

Rejoice - Jesus took God's judgment against your sin.

Admit your sins

Believe in Jesus as your Savior

Commit each day to Christ