

God will judge the false teachers

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into 2 Peter 2, exploring the presence of false prophets and teachers, the judgment of God on sinners like the fallen angels, the ancient world, and Sodom and Gomorrah, highlighting the examples of Noah and Lot being saved from destruction. The sermon emphasizes God's ability to deliver the godly from trials and reserve the unjust for judgment, urging believers to trust in God's righteous judgment and remain faithful amidst the presence of evil and deception.

Scripture: 2 Peter 2:4, 2 Peter 2:9, Genesis 6:5, Genesis 19:1, Luke 8:30, Revelation 20:11, Hebrews 1:14, Psalm 33:18, Matthew 7:13

Topics: "False Prophets", "God's Judgment and Deliverance"

Description

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Transcript

2 Peter 2, and I'm going to read 1 through 11 just so we can get the context, but we're going to deal primarily with verses 4 through 9. So 2 Peter 2, and we'll read 1 through 11. But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you. You will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who brought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

Many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words. For a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved for judgment, and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly, and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly, and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked. For that righteous man dwelling among them tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds. Then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of

temptation, and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment.

And especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority, for they are presumptuous, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels who are greater in power and might do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord. And so there's a whole bunch of quite complex ideas, in the passage, both this week's section and next week, but we pray by the grace of God we'll be able to figure out. Now let's get the context again.

We were in verse 3 last week, in which he speaks about false teachers. And he says, by covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words. And here is now the next thought.

So he's introduced the fact that there are false teachers in verses 1 and 2, that they are exploiting people. And obviously the question is, if they then are false, then why does God not deal with them? I've often wondered, particularly when you see preachers that are particularly vile or particularly godless, and you wonder how they can stand in the pulpit, and God doesn't just strike them dead. It seems to be strange that they can, with filthy hands, handle the word of God, and yet they get away with it.

And not only those who are unclean, but those who are teaching false teaching and false doctrine and leading people astray. Why doesn't God deal with them? Well, this is Peter. Peter is going to answer that question.

And so he says then that for a long time their judgment has not been idle. In other words, their judgment is coming. We said last week that the meter is running.

And so their destruction does not slumber. I don't remember if I said this last week, but when he uses that term, their destruction does not slumber, and I think that he is referencing the book of Psalms, where it speaks about the Lord, that the Lord does not slumber nor sleep. And so their judgment is not slumbering, just because God doesn't slumber.

God is keeping a record. Now what he's going to do is give us four examples in history of the sureness of God's judgment. And so if God has been reliable in his judgment in the past, then he will be reliable in his judgment in the future.

And so we begin in verse 4, and we have this word, if. Now in the King James and New King James and Revised Standard Version, the word, if, only appears once. In fact, in the original in the Greek, it only appears once.

You'll see in the argument, we'll go through it, the NIV and some of the other modern translations have the word, if, four times. And you can see that you can legitimately insert the if, even though it is not there in the original. So if God did not spare the angels who sinned, and here's the first challenge, what is the meaning? But cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved for judgment.

So what is he speaking about? Well, the answer is we don't really know. Many try to make all sorts of connections to all sorts of things in the Old Testament, but there is no direct, clear reference in the Old Testament where we can say it was at this occasion that it happened. And remember, it could have been even before the Old Testament.

Remember that the angels were there a long time before creation, that we understand that when the earth was created, certainly Lucifer is there, he tempts Adam and Eve. And so already at that stage, he had been cast out of heaven. And so the angels were there for, who knows, millions of years before creation, before the creation of this earth.

And so it could have happened during that time. It could have happened during the Old Testament. We don't really know.

The most popular theory is that it connects it to Genesis chapter 6, and that the angels, that the sons of God, had relations with the daughters of men, and that from that came the Nephilim, or the mighty ones, the giants, and that as a result of that, God brings the flood. I don't accept that theory for a dozen reasons. I'm not going to get into it in great detail.

I've written on that in the past. One is simply reading into a passage something that is not clearly stated. And we must remain within the boundaries of what Scripture clearly teaches us.

You can conjecture, you can guess, you can make up ideas for your own entertainment, but we cannot teach these things as doctrine. We cannot say that's the way it is. And the problem is that even suggesting or saying, well, you know, I'm not teaching this as doctrine, but I think this is the way it was.

Or for me, this is my idea. Well, that's at least good that you're not saying that this is doctrine, that this is what the Scripture teaches. The problem is that you're sowing seeds in people's minds, and people will remember, and after a few years, they don't say, well, you know, he said this was his idea.

People will just say, he taught this. That's the problem. And in fact, I don't conjecture, I don't guess as far as this is concerned, because there is nothing that we can make a clear connection with in the Old Testament.

What we know is sufficient here. And that is that God did not spare the angels who sinned. So we know that they were angels, and we know that they sinned.

What sin it was, we don't know. Clearly, it seems to be a very grievous kind of sin. And remember that sin is sin, but then there are different grades of sin.

While any sin will bar us from the presence of God, some sins are clearly more terrible than other sins. And so remember that there were angels who were cast out of heaven. We believe a third of the angels, and putting various Scriptures together from the Old and the New Testament, Lucifer being the leader of those angels.

Those are what we today call demons. And we know that they roamed the earth. Remember that in the book of Job, God says to Satan, he says, where you been? He says, I come from roaming up and down the earth.

And clearly in the ministry of the Lord Jesus, we see demon activity, and we know that there is still demon activity today. These we believe to be fallen angels. But here he's talking about something different.

He says they were cast down to hell. So the demons were cast down to the earth. They weren't cast to hell, they were cast to the earth.

So these were cast down even further, and they were reserved, delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved for judgment. So these angels, demons, are not roaming the earth. They are in prison in the heart of the earth.

And the word hell here is not the normal word for hell, and I'm not going to get into the meaning of that word, but they are imprisoned. They are in chains. What did they do? I don't know.

But clearly what they did was worse than what the other angels did. What the other angels did was bad enough. They rebelled against God.

That was bad enough. These guys did something, it seems, far worse. Now are we building a whole doctrine on just one verse? No, actually we have two verses on this one.

We only have two verses. The other one is in the Gospel of Luke. You remember not so long ago Jesus cast the demons out of the man called Legion, and the demons speak to Jesus, and they say, let us go into the pigs, but don't put us down into the abyss.

In other words, the same place. It's a different word there to the word here, but it seems to be the same place. So it seems that Jesus had authority.

Well, he has authority. God has authority. Remember, demons are not their own bosses.

They're under God's ultimate control and authority. God still can do with them whatever he chooses. Otherwise God would not be sovereign.

God would not be omnipotent, have all power. So they recognize that Jesus has the power to put them in prison too. And they say, no, don't send us to the abyss.

Let us go into these pigs. And Jesus allows them to go into the pigs. So we only have these two verses that seem to point to the same thing.

The point is that we can get all hung up on the technicalities of the verse and forget the point that he's making. And the point is that the angels, are the angels greater than we? Yes, they are. Because Hebrews chapter 1 says, speaking about Jesus being made in human form, that you made him a little lower than the angels.

In other words, that Jesus, who was God, when he was made a man, he was made a little lower than the angels. In other words, men are lower than angels. Angels have far more power than we have.

Angels have the privilege of seeing the face of God. Remember, we can't see the face of God because we have sinned and we are sinful. Even though we've been washed, we still have human bodies which are frail.

The angels behold his face, the scripture says. Remember Isaiah chapter 6, I saw the Lord on the throne, high and lifted up. And the angels were there, and they covered themselves in the presence of God.

Six wings, with two they covered their face, two they covered their feet, with two they fly. And so the angels are more glorious, more powerful than we are. And yet he says, even the angels, when they sinned, God judged them and put them in prison, bound them reserved for judgment.

So where they're in now is not the ultimate judgment, is not the ultimate, they're in a holding cell, if you will, awaiting the ultimate judgment. And remember that the devil and his angels are then finally cast into the lake of fire. And so that will be the end of them.

So in the meantime, they are remanded for judgment, they are waiting for judgment. So that's the first one. The next one is the ancient world.

So you can insert the word if, and as I said, the NIV and other modern translations insert the word if here, and if he did not spare the ancient world. So he judged the angels. Now he's speaking about the ancient world, obviously the world that existed before Noah entered into the ark.

He did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people. So who were the eight people? His family. So Noah and his wife, and his three sons, and their wives.

And so he saved eight people. Why is he mentioning eight people here? Well, I believe it's in contrast to the ancient world. He did not spare the world.

Remember the word world means different things in different contexts. Even today, we speak about the world, we mean the planet. Or when we say the world, we mean unbelievers out there in the world.

Here, the ancient world means the people who were living at that time. All of them were destroyed. How many were there? We don't know, but many, many, many, many people.

Remember that you say, well, you know, it's taken us all these thousands of years to populate the earth, and we now have a population explosion in many countries, and so the numbers are... But remember that there's a big difference between the rate at which we are multiplying, and the rate at which they multiplied. And the difference is that we lived 70 years. They lived almost a thousand years.

And all that time they were procreating, they were having children. And so you have a situation where Noah, and you can plot it out because it tells us how long each of those generations lived, Noah knew at least Adam's grandsons, going that far back. And so the earth was being filled at a phenomenal rate.

And so there's no way I can guess, and I suppose somebody did some calculations, trying to figure out, but there were many people. And the point that he's making is that only eight of the many were saved. And so he's obviously reminding us that narrow is the way, the gate, and narrow is the way, and few there are that enter in.

And so the majority may be wrong. In fact, the majority most of the time are wrong when it comes to spiritual things. So he saved Noah, one of... And you can insert, it's not in the Bible, but you can insert legitimately, one of only eight people, a preacher of righteousness.

And as was asked last week, where in the Old Testament does it say that he preached? Well, it doesn't say that he preached in the Old Testament. It doesn't say at all that he preached, but here it says that he preached. The same applies to the previous verse.

Nowhere in the Old Testament does it tell us about these angels, and yet here it tells us about them. The Old Testament does not tell us everything that happened. Some of the information that's not there in the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament to the New Testament writers.

And so it says that he was a preacher of righteousness. Now, remember that he was building the ark for a hundred years, and that was quite an amazing thing, because remember, they'd never seen rain, and yet he's building this massive ship. There's never been anything like it.

So do you think that people would come to him and say, Noah, what are you doing? What's this all about? And you think Noah's going to say, no, it's my business. It's got nothing to do with you. No, I would assume that Noah would say, no, God is going to judge this world because of the sinfulness of this world, and you need to repent and turn to him and be saved.

You don't need this verse to just... And again, I'm guessing what happened, but I can't see Noah doing anything different, because he was a just man. He was a righteous man before God. And so as he builds the ark, there must be this message going out, whether he's preaching from a soapbox, or whether he is just, as people come and ask him, giving them the story.

But clearly here it says that he is preaching, and he is preaching righteousness. The world had devolved into a terrible level of sin and debauchery, and of sin. And so he was righteous, and he was concerned about the state of the world.

And so God saves Noah, a people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood, not Noah, but God, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly. So how long did God wait for the judgment to come? Well, hundreds of years. Remember that in Genesis chapter 6 already, he says, my spirit will not always strive with man, because he also is flesh.

And then he gives him, and my mind's just gone blank, I've forgotten, 600 years or something, he says. And that's how long it was until the flood. So for hundreds of years, God had warned, I'm going to judge the world.

And of course, what people were saying is exactly what Peter quotes in chapter 3, is where is the judgment? In 2 Peter 3, he's saying, where is the coming of the Lord? Because since the beginning, everything is just continuing as it always has. That's what Peter says. And yet that's exactly what they would have been saying then.

Where's this judgment that God has been speaking about? And remember, there were others who were preaching as well. One of those who were preaching was Enoch. Remember, Enoch was the man who was raptured, if you will.

He was caught away to be with the Lord. He walked with God, and he was not. And the scripture tells us that he preached, and he prophesied concerning the second coming, that the Lord comes, Enoch said, with ten thousands of his saints.

So Enoch preached, and God warned. And for hundreds of years, God's judgment was pending. And then Noah begins to build the ark.

And for another hundred years. Now it's hard for us to imagine a hundred years. But you just ask Henry, he'll tell you about a hundred years.

It's a long, long time. And time didn't move any faster then than it did now. Time was the same then as it is now.

A hundred years is a hundred years. And so for another hundred years, Noah is building. A clear sign that something is going to happen.

Noah is preaching. And then God's judgment comes. Remember, the scripture says, and they knew not.

They continued living their lives, marrying, giving in marriage. And they knew not until Noah entered into the ark. And God closes the door.

And that's it. And the judgment comes. Now remember, Peter is encouraging us and saying, the judgment of God is sure.

Now it may take hundreds of years. It may take thousands of years. But it will eventually come.

Now verse six. And again, you can insert the word if. And if turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly.

Now we know the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. We're not going to get into that in much more detail. Two very, very wicked cities with all sorts of sin.

We remember them for the sin of sodomy, of homosexuality. But that wasn't the only problem. They had all sorts of sin and debauchery and evilness and wickedness going on in that city.

And you just need to read the story of the angels who come to Resculot to get an idea as to how terrible these people, how evil and wicked these people were. Now you remember the story, and I trust we all know the story, that Lot moves into Sodom, and he begins to live there. Remember Lot and Abraham had come to that area together.

They had too many flocks, too many sheep and camels and donkeys and stuff that they had. And so they needed to separate because there was just not enough grazing for both of their herds of animals. And so Abraham says to Lot, well you choose where you want to go.

And Lot looks down at the valleys, and he says, I want to go down there where the valleys are. And Lot moves down into the valleys, and he begins to camp, the scripture says, closer and closer to Sodom until the next thing we see. He is not just living in the city, but he is actually a city councillor.

He sits in the gate of the city, and so he is a leader in the city. And yet the scripture says, in the next verse we'll see that he vexed his soul over the sin that was going on in the city. Now I'm going to come back to Lot in a moment.

But he turned the cities of Sodom Gomorrah into ashes. And so we know how that fire of brimstone came down on those cities, consumed them, and not only consumed them, but it seems from what we can understand, actually burnt them so deep into the ground that where they used to be is today the Dead Sea. One of the lowest, if not the lowest spot on the earth.

And so that's why the Dead Sea is where it is, and how it came to be there. And so God judged Sodom and Gomorrah. How long were they evil for? Again, a long, long time.

But eventually God's judgment came. Now what he is reminding us is that he is making that God make them, making them an example to those who after would live ungodly. We forget, the world forgets Sodom

and Gomorrah, forgets the flood.

And in fact, obviously the way that they deal with this is simply to say, well, it didn't really happen. Somehow, you know, there never was a real flood, and yet we have evidence of that flood today. All around us, you go out into the hills here, you can see evidence of the flood.

And so God's judgment was sure. Eventually God's judgment, and remember Abraham intercedes for the city, and he says, Lord, if there's 50 righteous people, will you spare the city? Eventually he gets down to 10, and there's not even 10 in the city. And God says, this is the end of the line.

And God sends the angels, brings Lot and his daughters out, and his wife. His wife turns back, and she is turned into a pillar of salt. Now verse 7 says, and he delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked.

He was oppressed by the, I think it's in, it's Jude that says that he vexed his soul daily over what was going on. He was deeply disturbed all the time. Now we live in a modern-day Sodom and Gomorrah.

We are not much further, we're not behind Sodom and Gomorrah in terms of the level of immorality in the world and in our city. And I wouldn't even want to try and guess which is worse. We're probably at the same level.

We could even be worse than they are. And the attitude of Christians really is that we need to be disturbed by what goes on. Here's the problem.

You get used to these things. You get used to, this is just the way it is. And remember that the level or the heat just slowly increases.

You know the story about the frog in the pot of boiling water. If you take a pot of boiling water it's going to jump out. But if you put it in a pot of cold water and you slowly begin to increase the heat, eventually the frog dies.

Because it just gets used to the heat and it doesn't bail out. And the problem is that we can become so used to the immorality and the wickedness and the evilness of our generation that it doesn't affect us anymore. In the sense it doesn't disturb us anymore.

If that happens we're in a very, very dangerous place. It should constantly disturb us. The things that are going on around us, we should never get used to it.

And so he delivered righteous light. Now let's go back again just to get this together. So he did not spare the angels.

If he didn't spare the angels, if he didn't spare the ancient world, but, there's my favorite word, saved Noah, verse 6, if he turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, but, the word's not there, delivered righteous lot who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked. For that righteous man, sorry here's the verse I was looking for, for that righteous man dwelling among them tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds. Now there's a lot of debate about Lot.

Why didn't he get out of the city? Well I think we know the answer to that. I think if it was up to him he would have gotten out of the city. But his wife was married to that city.

Whatever it was, whether it was her house, or whether it was her possessions, or her friends, or whatever it was, but she was bound to that city. And even when the angels by force remove them out of that city, her heart is still back there. She looks back and she turns into a pillar of salt.

And from that we get the third, second shortest verse in the Bible, remember Lot's wife. Remember Lot's wife. And that's a powerful, powerful verse.

Remember that, and you can see the contrast. Lot's wife is just in love with that city. I'm not sure that she was necessarily in love with the sin.

I don't know if she participated in the sin. It doesn't tell us that. But her heart was there.

And yet Lot is vexing his soul. He's tormenting, the King James uses the word vexes here. New King James says, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds.

Was he partly guilty of his own trouble? Did he create his own trouble? Yes he did. He should never have moved into that city. He should never have made the choice that he made, which was because one of the attractions of the valley was not just the grazing for the animals, but it was actually the cities that were attractive to him.

And so the city lights, if you will, not that they had electric lights, but the city lights drew him as the city lights of LA draw people from all over the country, from all over the world. People come here because of the attractions of the city. He should never even have gone down that road.

It's his fault. And yet at the same time the scripture says that his soul was righteous. Now I don't know that you can say that he was righteous in the same way that Abraham was righteous or Noah was righteous.

But in comparison to his environment, he was righteous. And certainly he was righteous enough for God to save him. And I'm not talking about saving in an eternal sense, but saving him from the judgment of that particular city.

And so that righteous man dwelling among them tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds. May God create within us the same pain, that we may feel the same pain when we see the stuff going on around us—the immorality, the murder, the rapes. It just never stops.

Some of you may have the Citizen app on your phone. Those who don't have smartphones, you're blessed. But it simply alerts you to something that's going on in the immediate area.

Very small area. Basically this part of Sun Valley, maybe the northern part of North Hollywood, a little bit into Sunland and down into Pacoima. That's sort of the area.

But I don't even know if it's several times an hour the alert comes up. Oh, there's a guy with a gun over there. Somebody was stabbed over there.

A car was crashed with fatal injuries over there. And it just goes on and on and on and on all day long. You say, well, why don't I turn it off? Well, because it warns me of fires and of other things that are an immediate threat.

So it also has some use. But we get used to this. We get used to the sirens.

We get used to the helicopters all the time. And I don't know that Shadow Hills is any worse or better than anywhere else in the city, but there's almost not a night that the helicopters aren't overhead. Chasing somebody.

Something's happening. Something bad. And it's not good stuff that's happening.

If it was good stuff, it would be fine. But none of it is good stuff. It's all bad.

And all of the news is bad. There is no good news. I'm not going to get into that.

But folk, we can never get used to it. We can never accept it as normal. Because for the world, it may be normal.

For the Christian, it is not normal. It is evil. It is wicked.

It breaks the heart of God. And it should break our hearts also, as it did for Lot. Now verse 9. And here's the end of the argument.

Then. So follow with me. Let's go back.

Verse 4. If God did not spare the angels. Going the wrong way. If God did not spare the angels.

If he did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah. If he did not spare the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, but saved Lot. Then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations.

So you see the problem if we just read one verse. We have to follow. In fact this is all one sentence.

Peter writes this all in one long sentence. And so if God dealt with the angels. If God dealt with the ancient world, but spared Noah.

If God dealt with Sodom and Gomorrah, but spared Lot. Then, because he did those things, he knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment. So there's always these two groups.

Except in the first, as far as the angels are concerned. Obviously there were other angels who did not sin. And he doesn't make reference to them, but those angels continue in the presence of God.

And we will see them one day. But there's always the evil, and God judges them. But the good folk, the righteous, in our language the saved.

God preserves them. And he preserves them out of judgment. And so the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations.

Now I don't understand the translators, and why they use this word temptations. Well I do know partly. Because the same Greek word sometimes means temptation, in the sense of sin tempting you.

But sometimes the same word means trials or testing. So you've got to understand the context to be able to determine which way the word needs to be translated. That's a problem with many words in the Greek language.

And so the other, I've forgotten what translation, I think this is the English Standard Version. Then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials. Because that's the context.

The context is not dealing with temptation. The context is dealing with judgment, is dealing with the trials that come upon the wicked. And so God knows how to rescue the godly, and you can legitimately change this to judgment.

How to rescue the godly from judgment. He rescued Noah. He rescued Lot from the judgment, from the trials.

And at the same time keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment. The policeman who was found guilty of killing George Floyd is in prison. But he has not been sentenced yet.

As I understand it, it's another eight weeks before he will be sentenced. So he's been found guilty of the three counts, but he is now, his bail was revoked, and he is locked up. But he is waiting for the judgment, and in eight weeks time the judge will speak, and he will judge him.

So that's the same idea. These unrighteous, they are guilty, and God is waiting for the day that they will be judged. And of course we know when that day will be.

That will be at the great white throne judgment. Remember they're different judgments. These people are judged at the great white throne judgment.

They are not declared guilty at that point. They are guilty already, because the Word of God makes them, declares them guilty. And remember that the unrighteous, that when they die, they go into Hades, or into the heart of the earth, and they are also there in prison, and in torment according to the story, or not the story, but the account of the rich man and Cyrus.

And so in the same way they are waiting for judgment, but they're already receiving part of the judgment. They, I'm not exactly sure how to express that. The policeman who's in prison, he is not free to just do what he wants.

He has already been sentenced in a sense, but he's waiting for the ultimate judgment. And so the moment the unbeliever dies, he is judged at that point. Either he's saved, or anyone who dies is judged at that point, whether you're saved or not.

It's not a formal judgment. It's an informal judgment. If you're saved, you go to be with the Lord.

If you're not saved, you go to be in the heart of the earth. And there the unbelievers wait for judgment, at the great white throne judgment. The book of Revelation says, I saw the dead, small and great, stand before the Lord.

And the books were opened, and they were judged according to the things that were in the books. And it doesn't mean at that stage they get a past jail card. It's simply a formal process that needs to happen.

The same way as that policeman, he has been declared guilty. That he's going to be in prison for a long time, it's a foregone conclusion. That's the way it's going to be.

And I'm not making any comments as to the stuff around that whole case. It's simply an example. And so the unbelievers, their fate is sealed, and God is waiting.

But those who are still alive, and remember, he's not speaking specifically, although you can apply this to the wicked people in the world, just sinners in the world. He's particularly applying this to false teachers. How can these false teachers keep getting away with it? They continue to fly their jets and continue to live sumptuous lifestyles, and continue to deceive thousands and thousands and thousands of people.

How can they continue to do that? God is keeping the unrighteous under punishment. In other words, the judgment is hanging over them. It's just waiting for the moment that the judgment of God will be unleashed upon them, and they will be finally judged at the day of judgment.

So Peter is now saying, don't get impatient when you see injustice, particularly in the context of the passage. Don't get impatient when you see evil teachers, false prophets, false teachers, prosper and do well, because the judgment may not happen today or tomorrow. God may not strike them with lightning as they take up the word of God.

But the passage, the section ends. They are reserved under punishment until the day of judgment. God has set a day, and he is not going to change his agenda.

God is not slack, Peter says in chapter 3 concerning his promises. God has set a day, and that day, I believe, is not too far away. But whenever it is, and God's not going to change that day, by the way.

From the foundation of the earth, from the beginning of time, God already knew when that day would be, and that day is not going to change. But that day is sure, and it is steadfast. Nothing is going to move him to change that, because he has already done everything he could to change that.

Where did he try to change it? At the cross of Calvary. At the cross he provided a way of escape from the judgment of God. At the cross he provided grace and forgiveness to those who will accept his grace and his forgiveness.

And when we reject that, there is no further remedy. There is no answer to sin, and there is no answer to those who would mislead the nations and mislead the people of God. Now he continues in the next verse, but we'll pick up on that next week, Lord willing.

Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you, Lord, that while these are not pleasant things to talk about, Lord, at the same time we do need the sense of justice and of righteousness, Lord. We see around us so many things happening, and we see the evil and the wicked prosper.

Lord, we wonder whether you even know. Yet, Lord, this whole passage, these two chapters are telling us you do know, and you do see, and that your judgment is sure, and that it is coming. So, Lord, we thank you that you are righteous, and, Lord, we don't want to be those who are looking for vengeance.

Lord, we're not those who—and I pray that you'd help us, Lord, that we would not be those who want personal vindication, but, Lord, that we want to see justice and righteousness done. And, Lord, I thank you at the same time that you are able to keep those who are yours in spite of these things, that you're able to keep us from judgment. And, Lord, we're ever aware of the fact that we have passed from judgment into the light, not because of anything we have done, but because Jesus took upon himself our judgment, our sentence, that we might go free.

And so, Father, we thank you for your goodness and your grace towards us. And, Lord, I pray that you would help us, that, Lord, we would be faithful to the end, that we would be the small number out of that

whole—those two cities, just Lot and his two daughters, the only three that were saved, out of the whole world, millions and millions of people, only Noah and his seven family members. Lord, I pray that you would grant by your grace that we would be part of that number who would stand before you on that day, being declared righteous, not because of us, but because of Jesus.

And so, Lord, I pray that you'd help us to understand, help us, Lord, above all to live with an awareness that you are seeing and knowing, and, Lord, that there is nothing that is hidden from you. And so, Lord, we pray that you'd help us in Jesus' name. We pray that you'd go with us, keep us, protect us, bring us together safely.

On Sunday, we pray in Jesus' name.

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