

2Peter 2:4-10

The Lord Knows How to Deliver the Godly

Psalm 73:2-28 NIV, “*But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold.* ³ *For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.* ⁴ *They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong... ¹² This is what the wicked are like—always free of care, they go on amassing wealth.*

¹³ *Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence.* ¹⁴ *All day long I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishments...*

¹⁶ *When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply ¹⁷ till I entered the sanctuary of God [until I gained God’s perspective—this is what I pray happens to each of you this morning]; then I understood their final destiny.* ¹⁸ *Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin.* ¹⁹ *How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!* ²⁰ *They are like a dream when one awakes; when you arise, Lord, you will despise them as fantasies...*

²³ *Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand.* ²⁴ *You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory... ²⁷ Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.* ²⁸ *But as for me, it is good to be near God...”*

Does it seem like the wicked are getting away with their evil agenda? Does it seem like they will succeed and nobody can stop them?

If the wicked live a long and comfy life and die peacefully, that doesn’t mean they got away unpunished for their wickedness. These 80, 90 or 100 years that we live in this life is just the beginning of our existence.

It is just the first sentence in the long biography of our life. And yet, how we live this short sentence—how we write this first sentence, will determine how the rest of our story unfolds.

In this second letter of Peter, he is warning the churches that there is coming a time in the future when false teachers will secretly bring into the churches destructive heresies, false teaching, that will lead many people astray from the truth.

2Peter 2:3, “*By covetousness they will exploit you [they will use you] with deceptive words [their teaching sounds true, so if you don’t know your Bible you will easily be deceived]; for a long time their judgment has not been idle [God condemned them long ago], and their destruction does not slumber [right on time with God’s schedule their punishment will be sudden and just].”*

The false teachers, and those professing Christians who follow their teaching, do not believe the prophesied warnings about coming judgment. In fact, they mock us who do believe the prophesies, and they do not take us seriously.

2Peter 3:1-4, *“Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder) ... ³ knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days ... ⁴ saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”*

This unbelief in any coming judgment is at the heart of this letter. This letter confronts those who reject the truth that one day we will all have to stand before our Creator and give an account for our lives.

2Peter 2:4-5, *“For if God did not spare the angels who sinned [angels who sin are known as demons], but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵ 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...”*

Verses four and five are both describing God’s judgment upon all of those participants in the great rebellion against God that resulted in the global flood.

Genesis 6:1-8, briefly describes some of the things that were going on in the final years leading up to the flood.

Demonic activity on the earth was prevalent in the days before the flood, and the book of Revelation makes it clear that demonic activity will again be very prevalent in the last days leading up to the return of Christ to judge the world.

2Peter 2:4, which seems to be speaking of this event, describes how God judged those demons who had who crossed a boundary that God had established (Jude 6), and had procreated with humans.

“For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [in the Greek this is the word, Tartarus, which is the deepest region of the underworld; a place of punishment for demons (Gene Green, p. 250)] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment...”

2Peter 2:5, *“...and [God] did not spare the ancient world [not only the demons were punished, so also were the humans who rebelled], but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly...”*

Here we are told that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. The Lord used Noah to proclaim truth to a wicked and fallen world, but it seems that only seven members of Noah’s family believed his message and were saved.

Noah was faithful to the Lord in building the ark and in preaching the gospel.

Because of Noah's faithfulness the animal kingdom was saved from the flood, and also a small remnant of the human race. Noah's life was not wasted. In fact, almost every living thing on the earth today is here because of Noah's faithfulness.

Genesis 7:17-24, *"Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. ¹⁸ The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. ¹⁹ And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. ²⁰ The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. ²¹ And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. ²² All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. ²³ So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive. ²⁴ And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days."*

So, God separated the wicked from the righteous, and then He rescued the righteous and punished the wicked with destruction.

This separation of the righteous from the wicked, and then the destruction of the wicked while saving the righteous, is given as a foreshadowing of what God is going to do again in the last days—the days we are entering into.

One day soon, as the Lord delivered Noah and his family, the Lord will take the righteous off the earth temporarily, in the rapture, while He brings judgment down upon the wicked during a time of great suffering known as the Tribulation.

2Peter 2:6, gives another example of how God in the past delivered the righteous and punished the ungodly. *"...and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, [God] condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly;"*

Here the Bible makes clear that what happened to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, was an example of what God is going to do again to the ungodly, on a much larger scale, in the last days.

But again, as in the judgment that came on the earth in Noah's day, so also God was merciful to deliver Lot from judgment, because he was righteous.

As in the last days, God will first remove the righteous before He brings punishment down upon the wicked.

2Peter 2:7-8, “and [God] delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked⁸ (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)—”

Let’s look at how that event happened. Lot was the nephew of Abraham. He grew up with Abraham and was taught by Abraham to know and to fear the Lord God.

But there came a time when they parted company and Lot selfishly began a pursuit of seeking to become rich and he moved into the place which he thought gave him the best chances of success.

Genesis 13:11-13, “Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. [Up to this point Abram and Lot let the Lord lead their path in life, but now Lot chooses to go his own way.] And they separated from each other.¹² Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom.¹³ But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.”

Genesis 19:1-3, “Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground.² And he said, “Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant’s house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way.”

And they said, “No, but we will spend the night in the open square.”

³ But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.”

Lot had never seen these men before, but there was something about them that he recognized. They shared the same heavenly citizenship.

And he also realized that this neighborhood was no place for decent men like these—he knew they were in danger, so he takes them into his home.

Here Lot passes a test that showed that though he lived in a wicked city, he was a righteous man and not one of the wicked.

The test I am referring to, is one that in the last days will be used to identify who are the righteous and who are the ungodly. In times of great wickedness, even at great risk to their own lives, the righteous will show hospitality to the Jews.

Matthew 25:34-35, “Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in...”

Genesis 19:4-8, “Now before [Lot and his guests] lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. ⁵ And they called to Lot and said to him, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally.”

⁶ So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, ⁷ and said, “Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly! ⁸ See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof.”

Now wait just a minute. How could Lot be identified by the Bible as a righteous man when he is offering to turn his own daughters over to these sexual predators, inviting them to do as they wished with his daughters?

2Peter 2:8, speaking of Lot, said, “for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds.”

Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says Lot was righteous, speaking of his identity, not of his behavior. But because of the company he kept, he was doing a lot of damage to his righteous soul. He was being corrupted by the people of that city.

Lot should never have been living in that city in the first place. It was following the lust of his flesh that led him to Sodom, not the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Keep in mind that it is not our works, or our behavior that makes us righteous, it is our faith that makes us acceptable in God’s sight.

Just as **Romans 4:3** says, “Abraham [Lot’s uncle] believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”

So, Lot also believed God, and was counted righteous, and though he had become badly sidetracked from following the Lord, that did not change his status. The Lord knows those who are truly His own.

And in these days, when God’s approaching judgment is becoming evident, we are seeing God drawing back unto Himself some of His children who have been wandering far from Him for many years.

Some who nobody knew they were believers, are being drawn back to the family of God, realizing this is where I belong.

God seems to be sifting and sorting out, separating the wheat from the tares, identifying His own, in preparation for coming judgment.

Genesis 19:9-25, “And they [the wicked men of Sodom] said, “Stand back!” Then [speaking of Lot] they said, “This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge [Lot had been living there, but he never really fit in, he always knew what they were doing was wrong, but now he is taking a stand]; now we will deal worse with you than with them.” So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door. ¹⁰ But the men [the angels] reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. ¹¹ And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door.

¹² Then the men [angels] said to Lot, “Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take them out of this place! ¹³ For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.”

¹⁴ So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, “Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!” But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.

¹⁵ When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, “Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city.” ¹⁶ And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife’s hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. ¹⁷ So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed...”

²³ The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. ²⁴ Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. ²⁵ So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.”

Unlike Noah, Lot had pretty much wasted his life. He was saved, but had nothing to show for his life.

1Corinthians 3:12-15, “Now if anyone builds on this foundation [Jesus Christ—our salvation] with gold, silver, precious stones [works of faith, like Noah did], wood, hay, straw [works of the flesh, like Lot did], ¹³ each one’s work will become clear; for the Day [the Day when Jesus calls us home] will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

2Peter 2:9, is the conclusion of what began in verse 4. If God did not spare the angels who sinned, but punished them, and if God judged the wicked world of Noah’s day with a flood, but

saved righteous Noah, and if God destroyed the wicked people of Sodom and Gomorrah, turning their cities into ashes, but delivered righteous Lot...

2Peter 2:9, “...then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations [or trials] and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment...”

The Lord knows who are godly and who are not, and He knows how to save the godly from the punishment that is coming upon the wicked.

Do you worry that maybe there will be no salvation for you from the coming judgment? Do you find it hard to believe that the Lord could actually rescue us, like He rescued Noah and rescued Lot?

The Lord knows how to deliver the godly—He’s done it before; He will do it again.

And the rescue He has promised us in 1Thessalonians 4:13-18, will be just as amazing and supernatural as the rescue He performed for Noah and Lot.

In **Revelation 3:10**, Jesus promised the faithful church, “*I will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*”

But those who do not trust Jesus to save them, will not be saved by Him—they have a reservation for the day of judgment.

To drown in the flood was not the day of judgment; to be burned to ashes by fire and brimstone at Sodom and Gomorrah was not the day of judgment. And to go through the unprecedented horrors of the Great Tribulation is not the day of judgment.

Those things are all part of God’s judgment process—they are punishment.

The day of judgment that the unjust are being reserved for, is the day that they must stand before their Creator, and experience the full weight and force of their sin and their guilt in the presence of His indescribable perfection.

And as they bow before Him to realize with intense horror, what perfection, and joy and goodness they have rejected.

And then to hear from Jesus Christ, those most terrifying words any being could ever hear, “*Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*” (Matthew 25:41)

Revelation 20:11-15, “*Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.* ¹² *And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the*

things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

With certainty, this day is coming.

But the good news is, the Lord knows how to save you.

Romans 10:13-15, “For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

Church, this is why we are still here. “¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”

Therefore, let us go and make this good news known.

Copyright © 2021 by Parkdale Grace Fellowship Permission: You are permitted to reproduce and distribute this material in any format, provided that you do not alter the wording in any way and do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. Unless otherwise noted, Scripture taken from the New King James Version. Copyright 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved