

# The Reality of Judgment

## 2 Peter 2:4-11

### Intro

In our study last week, we considered the **deception** and **destruction** that is brought into people's lives by false teachers...

*We were reminded that false teachers have been around since the beginning of human history...*

*...And That the devil himself was the very first false teacher, deceiving and destroying in the Garden of Eden...*

*The Lord Jesus spoke of this reality when rebuking false teachers in...*

### **John 8:44 (NKJV)**

**“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”**

So, the Lord Jesus makes it clear that the devil is a **liar** and a **murderer** — a **deceiver** and a **destroyer** — and all false teachers share those attributes with him...

- Every false teacher is responsible for bringing **death** and **destruction** — *in one form or another* — into the lives of those they deceive...

*To remind ourselves of this stark reality, would you please follow along as I read the passage that we studied last week...*

## **2 Peter 2:1-3 (NKJV)**

**1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.**

**2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.**

**3 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.**

*Now, it is this subject — the subject of **The Reality of Judgment** that we turn our attention to this morning as we study...*

## **2 Peter 2:4-11 (NKJV)**

**4 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;**

**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;**

**6 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;**

**7 and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked**

**8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)—**

**9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,**

**10 and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries,**

**11 whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.**

*I've divided this passage into 3 sections...*

- 1) Examples of God's Judgment**
- 2) Example of God's Deliverance**
- 3) Promise of Future Judgment**

*Let's move into our first section...*

### **1) Examples of God's Judgment (vs 4-6)**

*Now, as we move into this first section, let's address the elephant in the room...*

***It is December 22 — two days until Christmas Eve — and here we are talking about judgment...🤔***

*Shouldn't we be talking about something a little more **uplifting** — something **nice** and **light** to get us in the Christmas mood?...*

These are the things I was thinking about as I prepared for this study...

- *But the more I thought about it, the more sense it made to teach on **the reality of judgment**...*

*...Because it is easy for us to overlook the primary reason that the Lord Jesus came to earth...*

- As we all know, the Lord Jesus did countless wonderful things during His earthly ministry...

He taught and healed and raised the dead — but those things were in some sense **secondary** to His **primary task**...

- And as we consider this subject, it is interesting to note that God had used others to teach and heal and even raise the dead *before the time of Jesus*...

But what is it that the Lord Jesus **could do** that **no one else could do** — what is it that even the greatest of God's servants could not accomplish?...

***I believe the answer is simple — only the Lord Jesus could save us from the judgment to come...***

Only the Lord Jesus could rescue us from the just judgment that we deserve...

*Now, please don't misunderstand me — no one ever taught or healed or raised the dead like the Lord Jesus dead...*

All the people that God has used before or after the Lord Jesus' public ministry are simply shadows of the true — the Lord Jesus is the fulness — He was and is the perfect messenger — the ultimate revealer of the Father...

- But the Lord Jesus' ministry is made whole — it finds its completion — in His sacrifice for our sins on the cross...

***Without the Lord Jesus coming to earth to die on the cross for our sins, all is lost...***

*Because the healed don't stay healed — they get sick or injured again...*

*...And those raised from the dead don't stay raised — they die again...*

*And great teaching — as wonderful as it is — can help us to **live well** but it **cannot cleanse us from our sin...***

So this is why the Lord Jesus couldn't come to this world — the world that He made — simply to be another teacher and healer...

- He needed to be something — He need to be someone — that no one else but He could be...

He needed to be our Redeemer — our Savior — the One who could take all of our sins upon Himself at the cross...

He needed to be the One who opened the way to Heaven...

***He came to live and die so that we might die and live...***

*We must understand that **judgment is a reality** — a harsh and terrifying reality...*

And only the sinless Savior could face **the reality of judgment** and come through the other side **with redemption in His nail-scarred hands**...

***And this was the primary mission of the Lord Jesus — dying on the cross so that we might live — sparing us from the reality of judgment...***

*Here are a few verses that remind us that the Lord Jesus came to earth to die...*

**Matthew 20:28 (NKJV)**

**“...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”**

**John 10:18 (NKJV) [speaking of His life...]**

**“No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”**

**John 15:13 (NKJV)**

**“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.”**

## **Ephesians 1:7 (NKJV)**

**In [Jesus] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace...**

This is why we celebrate Christmas — not simply because the Lord Jesus came to earth — ***but that He came to die...***

- And because He died for us He was able to save us from our sins — He was able to give us the gift of eternal life — so that we might live with Him forever...

***That's the gospel — that's the good news!...***

*Unfortunately, as we work our way through 2 Peter 2:4-11 this morning we see some bad news...*

*In this passage, the Apostle Peter will begin by listing three Old Testament examples of the reality of judgment — of God directly intervening and judging those who walked in disobedience...*

**4 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;**

Here Peter writes of the coming judgment of **the angels who sinned** — *But who are these angels?...*

*It seems likely that they are the same angels mentioned in...*

## **Jude 6 (NKJV)**

**And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day...**

Many Bible commentators believe that these angels are fallen angels who were somehow involved in the corruption of mankind before the Flood...

- Now, whatever the specifics may be, we understand that these angels who rebelled against God were cast down, imprisoned and await judgment...

*And here is the point that I believe Peter is making...*

***If God can imprison and judge fallen angels — who are much more powerful than humans — what hope do rebellious and unrepentant false teachers have?...***

*Moving on to vs...*

**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;**

***Peter now reminds his readers of the greatest judgment in the history of the world — the global flood that took place in the days of Noah...***

During the flood, everyone on the planet — except for the 8 people in the Ark — was drowned in the floodwaters of God's judgment...

Peter tells us that God did not **spare the ancient world** — that God’s judgment during the days of Noah could not be postponed any longer...

*We read these words in...*

### **Genesis 6:11-13 (NKJV)**

**11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.**

**12 So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way of the earth.**

**13 And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”**

*Wonderfully, in the midst of this unprecedented corruption, Noah and his family were saved...*

And Peter tells us that Noah was **a preacher of righteousness...**

- From this phrase we draw the conclusion that Noah — for the 120 years that it took to build the ark — continued to share the truth of God with an unbelieving world...

Noah and his family were a godly remnant in the midst of a world that was turned against God...

- And Noah is a reminder that we do not have to give in to the ways of the world — we can choose to share the truth even if that truth is rejected...

*Moving on now to vs 6 we see another example of God's judgment...*

**6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction,**

Because of their unrepentant rebellion against God, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by the direct intervention of the Lord...

*We read of this tragedy in...*

**Genesis 19:24-25 (NKJV)**

**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.**

*Now, As we read the last part of **2 Peter 2:6**, we see that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was an extreme object lesson...*

**making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly;**

In other words, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was not only a judgment upon the unrepentant people of those cities, it was a clear example to all ungodly people that God's judges sin...

*And this brings us back to the cross...*

You see, both the ***destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah*** and the ***death of the Lord Jesus on the cross*** illustrate the exceedingly sinful nature of sin and the punishment that must be meted out for it...

***The reality of judgment is really the reality of judgment for sin...***

- *In other words, sin must be judged — sin cannot simply go unpunished forever...*

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah reveals that unrepentant societies have an expiration date — sin cannot go unchecked indefinitely...

*And this is also what we learn at the cross...*

The cross shows the seriousness of sin — it shows that sin must be judged...

- And it seems safe to say that this is not something that any of us wants to spend much time thinking about...

***However, we must not look away from this difficult reality...***

***Instead, we must choose to look at the judgment that the Lord Jesus endured on the cross and realize that the Lord Jesus took the judgment that we deserved...***

***The reality of judgment*** includes not only ***the sinful being judged for their sin*** but also ***the sinless One being judged for the sins of others***...

The good news of the gospel is that God the Father is willing to **deliver us** from the just judgment that we deserve if we will place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ...

*And it is this subject of deliverance that we come to next as we move into our second section...*

## **2) Example of God's Deliverance (vs 7-9a)**

*In this section we will be reminded that Lot (Abraham's nephew) was delivered from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah...*

**7 and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked**

**8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)—**

*Now, if you are familiar with what we read about Lot in the book of Genesis, then these verses might come as a shock...*

Because from the limited information that we have in the Genesis account, we would not consider Lot to be a righteous man...

- Instead, we likely consider him to be **morally weak** and **indifferent** to the sin that is taking place around him...

But Peter — under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit — paints a more nuanced picture...

Peter describes Lot as **righteous** — which speaks of *being upright, virtuous, and keeping the commands of God...*

*This leads us to believe that there was more to Lot than what we read about in the book of Genesis...*

In fact, Peter writes that Lot was **oppressed** and **tormented** by seeing and hearing the wicked deeds that were committed in Sodom and Gomorrah...

**oppressed** — *worn down, wearied, exhausted...*

**tormented** — *tortured, afflicted with pain, vexed, harassed...*

*In other words, the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah had a terrible impact on Lot...*

And on some level we understand this — we too can be ***oppressed*** and ***tormented*** by our own evil culture...

- As we look around at the increasing degradation of our society it is all too easy to ***grow weary while doing good...***

*So, when we feel ourselves becoming discouraged, we would do well to follow the instruction that the Apostle Paul gave in...*

### **Colossians 3:1-2 (NKJV)**

**1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.**

## **2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.**

It is vital that we **seek** and **set** — that we **seek** the things above and **set** our mind on things above...[expand]

*Now let's look at the final (half) verse of this second section — ...*

### **9a then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations**

Peter writes that the deliverance of Lot is an illustration of the Lord's ability **to deliver the godly out of temptations...**

*And it is interesting to consider Lot as both **righteous** and **godly**...*

*But maybe there are a couple of things going on here...*

**1) It could be that Lot is viewed as righteous and godly from the standpoint that Lot legitimately trusted in God and that Lot was genuinely tormented and oppressed by the evil taking place in Sodom and Gomorrah...[expand]**

**2) We may also have assumed many negative things about Lot because we only have access to the situations in which he performed poorly...**

*What if the only story that we had about Abraham was when he lied about his Sara / when Jacob lied to his father / when Moses killed the Egyptian / when David committed adultery / when Elijah ran from Jezebel...*

If you saw me only on my worst days then you would have your doubts about me as well... 😬

- Though we may not like to admit it — we are all fallen sinners — we have no righteousness and godliness of our own — Christ alone is our righteousness...[expand]

***Now, back to the encouragement of 9a — the Lord is able to deliver the godly out of temptations...***

**deliver** — *to rescue from danger, save, rescue, preserve...*

**temptations** — *an attempt to make one do something wrong, enticement to sin...*

With this in mind, we see that the promise that God is able to deliver the godly out of temptations is a wonderful comfort!...

*It means that we do not have to give in to temptations when we encounter them!...*

**1 Corinthians 10:13 (NKJV)**

**No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.**

God will provide **the way of escape** but we must be willing to take the way that he provides...

*Let's move now to our final section...*

### **3) Promise of Future Judgment (vs 9b-11)**

*In contrast to the promise of deliverance of the godly, we have in this section the promise of future judgment for the ungodly...*

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

**reserve** — *to retain in custody, keep watch over, guard...*

**unjust** — *acting in a way that is contrary to what is right...*

***Here Peter is making it clear that God will keep the unjust under guard until the day of judgment...***

*And that judgment — the final judgment — is revealed most fully as we turn to...*

#### **Revelation 20:11-15 (NKJV)**

**11 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.**

Though this future and final judgment is something that is often mocked and dismissed, it is not something to be taken lightly...

- It is a future reality — it is ***the reality of judgment*** — and it reminds us that ***no one who refuses to place their faith in the true and living God will escape judgment for their sins...***

***But judgment for sins does not have to be the future of any individual — anyone who turns to the Lord Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sins and newness of life will find it!...***

*As we turn back to 2 Peter 2 we move into vs 10 where we read...*

**10 and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority.**

Peter seems to be indicating that there will be special judgment for those whose manner of life is characterized by the pursuit of that which defiles — that which pollutes (usually involving sexual immorality)...

**1 Corinthians 6:18 (NKJV)**

**Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.**

Peter also includes those who **despise authority** in this special judgment...

*This speaks of those who look down on and refuse to submit to legitimate authority...*

### **Romans 13:1-2 (NKJV)**

**1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.**

**2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.**

*Continuing on in 2 Peter 2:10 we read...*

**They are presumptuous, self-willed.**

**presumptuous** — *shameless and irreverent daring...*

**self-willed** — *one who is pleased with himself and despises others; a person who obstinately maintains his own opinion or asserts his own rights but is reckless of the rights, feelings, and interests of others...*

• ***[expand — self-centered VS others-centered...]***

*Now to the last part of vs 10 and into vs 11...*

**They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries,**

**11 whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.**

*This verse is a bit confusing to understand in relation to the identity of the **dignitaries** of vs 10...*

***Are they human dignitaries or angelic dignitaries?...***

I believe Peter is writing of rebellious individuals who are unafraid of speaking against legitimate human authority...

- In contrast, angels who are much **greater in power and might** do not bring a **reviling accusation against** those dignitaries...

I believe the big idea is that these individuals who are destined for judgment reject legitimate authority...

***And because they reject human authority they reject God's authority as well...[expand]***

## **Conclusion**

Now, as we close our time together it is vital that we understand that this truth — the truth of legitimate authority — is at the heart of ***the reality of judgment...***

***You see, the Bible makes it abundantly clear that legitimate authority exists...***

Legitimate authority exists in every arena of life — in the home, at church, in the classroom, at work, in sports, in society as a whole at every level...

***And all of those levels of authority rest on the foundation of the One ultimate authority — God Himself...***

And — as it has been well said — ***sin is cosmic rebellion*** — it is rebellion against the one to whom we owe all our allegiance...

- *And that sin against God's legitimate authority must be judged...*

Either ***we receive the judgment*** that we deserve for our rebellion or ***Christ takes the judgment that we deserve for our rebellion...***

- We have seen examples of *God's judgment in the past* — and we understand that *God will pass His judgment in the future...*

***But for anyone who comes under the shelter from judgment that the Lord Jesus provides — God promises a full and final deliverance from the judgment to come...***

***Let's pray...***