

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **The Condemnation of False Teachers 2 Peter 2:4-10**

Today we are in **2 Peter 2**. We will be looking at **verses 4 through 10** as we are going through this chapter. This section is dealing with false prophets and their condemnation and if we understand the condemnation that God brings to the ungodly, then we will be thankful for His deliverance of us from His wrath. I'll read this for you and you can follow along in your Bibles. **2 Peter 2:4-10** says **"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; (5) 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. (6) 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 thereafter. (7) and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (8) (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds), (9) then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, (10) and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties."** It's a long sentence in the original and in most translations. It certainly gets the point across that God has brought judgment in the past and will bring it again in the future.

The context from chapter one is the Word of God brings truth. It brings us everything we need to live a life of godliness and escape the corruption that's in the world by lust. We have the prophetic Word of God. It's divine, it's from heaven, it's the Holy Spirit spoke from God and it is true. In contrast to that is the false teachers who are leading people astray and God's wrath is coming upon them and this is in **chapter 2**. In this we see God's judgment in the past in the Old Testament and there's a purpose for the Old Testament being written, and for us in the church age it gives us an example. It warns us regarding sin.

**1 Corinthians 10:6** says it this way, **"Now these things happened [I'm speaking of these Old Testament incidents] as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved."** And another passage is **Romans 15:4** which tells us **"For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."** So, if we choose ungodliness we can see that God has dealt with ungodliness decisively in the past. If we choose righteousness we will see that God blesses righteousness and delivers those.

So, as we look through these incidences in the Old Testament, they are instructive to us and we should take heed. With our recent events with the hurricanes we see that if it wasn't for hurricane Katrina, and the difficulties that we faced due to that, we undoubtedly as a nation would not have been as responsive to hurricane Rita, and most likely more devastation would have been delivered on the part of people who might not of listened to the warnings as carefully.

Another one that's been below the surface on the news has been the bird flu. I'm not sure if you are familiar with it. It's been basically isolated in Asia. It's in Indonesia now and it's killed a small number of people, a handful of people. It's not yet spread human to human and it may not ever be

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spread human to human, but with a few people dying in Indonesia and a few more people infected, Indonesia has raised a warning of a possible epidemic. You could think well what is the big deal, but as you look back at events in the past you will see that when viruses spread they can create dramatic devastation on humanity. The most notable one was in 1918 with the influenza virus, and it's sort of interesting of how I think our society quickly forgot about this virus and has suppressed it in memory, but fortunately some epidemiologists have not and are able to be more careful about these things.

To give you an idea of the devastation reeked by that virus in 1918 and 1919, in the United States, which was not nearly hit as hard as most other places in the world, an estimated (and it's a conservative estimation) 675,000 people died in that year. It started in March and really came in the second wave in the fall until the beginning of the spring of 1919 and eventually disappeared. Within about a 12-month period it spread worldwide, and another conservative estimate is 25 million people passed away from that, so severe that the city of Philadelphia in October of 1918 lost 13,000 people from the virus and that was mirrored in many, many other cities. In World War I about half of our military died, not in battle, but from the flu. So, as we look back at these events we should take it more seriously when they come up in the present. Here's the chart, I like charts remember, of the life expectancy from 1900 to 1960 in the United States. It started at 47 and moves up to 70, except for 1918 when it dropped down to 37 years old. That's how big an effect the influenza virus had on our country.

It helps us to look at what has happened in the past so we can take heed for what is coming in the future. The Scripture is doing this in **2 Peter 2**. It's looking back at the past and here is what has happen. God did not spare the angels. The judgment of the fallen angels was dramatic. He cast them into hell, committed them into pits of darkness to reserve for judgment. We know from **Revelation 12:4**, while most angels are holy, some chose evil. An estimated one third of the angels rebelled against God and some of them are bound. This verse indicates that they are committed to pits of darkness reserved for judgment. Now there are demons we see in the New Testament and certainly people have suffered by certain evil angels that are on the loose, but some evidently are bound. But one thing we can say is all evil angels, all angels who have turned in rebellion to God, are destined for eternal judgment in **Revelation 20**. And what's also interesting about the judgment of angels in the contrast to the judgment of people is there is no plan of redemption for fallen angels. When they chose rebellion, God in His wisdom committed them to pits of darkness to reserve for judgment. He did not spare them. So if He did not spare the spiritual beings of heaven, how should we think He will spare the earthly beings who have rebelled against Him.

Now there is the judgment on the ancient world, the world of Noah, **verse 5**, an incident in history. **"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."** God's judgment was worldwide. Speaking of swift devastation, God is able to bring worldwide judgment. There are some people who believe that this flood was local, that it wasn't a universal flood through out the earth. But this is one of the many verses we can look to that gives indication that this was worldwide. But He preserved someone, Noah, and his family. The seven others were his three children, Shem, Ham and Japheth and their wives. So these eight people in faith were delivered. They weren't just delivered in faith but they believed God.

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Back to this epidemic to show how swiftly devastation can come of how this influenza virus spread in the fall. Before September 17, 1918 it was basically localized to the Northeastern seaboard and a few cities. The next week it spread through the Southeast and the Northeast and most of California. Then the next week more, and finally in three weeks time it spread through the entire country, in three weeks time, even affecting the president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, though he didn't succumb to it. In fact, most people didn't. It's estimated that about 2.5 percent people actually passed away from this virus, which made it able to infect so many people, but it was deadly.

So God's judgment is able to be quick. Noah is described in **Hebrews 11:7** as a man of faith. In faith he not only believed God, he built the ark. In spite of it never raining, in spite of 120 years from the point of God revealing to him the judgment that was to come, Noah continued in faith building the ark and he proclaimed that belief to people around. Did they receive it? No. They continued in their ungodly ways and ignored God's warning. He, Noah, faithfully believed, faithfully acted upon that belief and proclaimed that, a preacher of righteousness.

Next is the incident of Sodom and Gomorrah. **Verse 6, "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 thereafter."** This is another example to us. If you read back in **Genesis 19** about the ungodly people of Sodom and Gomorrah and their attack on righteous people, God was able to bring specific judgment on certain places. Not only worldwide judgment, but here in **verse 6** specific judgment. He is able to target the judgment. One of God's purposes of this is to make them an example or to warn us. Now there was someone who was delivered in this and that's in **verse 7**. He rescued Lot from this destruction, from this devastation. In **Genesis 19** you read the story of the angels coming to Lot, and the people of Sodom attacking and them having to be defended, and then the words of these angels to Lot. **"Up, take your wife and your two daughters, who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city."** They urged Lot to leave. The judgment was coming for these evil men and Lot's response in **verse 16** was that he hesitated, he paused. When we are warned we should take the warning seriously.

God's grace sends messengers to warn us and we are able to see the warning that is plain and when we do not heed it we will be judged. There is an article I found in an Indiana newspaper that shows the attitude of the time of the influenza epidemic. This is from October 25th. This is from a month where nearly 250,000 people passed away from the virus and this is the take of the people of the time. "Lots of flu but no football. Chicago and the rest of the country here about with few exceptions will have to endure another sport-less Saturday tomorrow. Dr. C. St. Clair Drake, state director of public health is the only man who can lift the quarantine against football games and similar contests. And he said yesterday the conditions would not warrant raising the ban any time anywhere." They were more concerned it seems about the football that was being cancelled. And you have to understand this was during WWI so the war was capturing people's attention and they weren't taking the outbreak of the flu as seriously as they should.

This man, Royal Copeland, who was the Commissioner of Public Health in New York City, three weeks before 851 people in New York City died, announced the city was in no danger of an epidemic. There was no need for our people to worry. His help didn't warn people. He, I suppose, rose to the level of his competency when later after continuing on as the public health commissioner

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for five more years resigned to become a United States Senator. So, people didn't, I think, hold that pronouncement against him. We look at the rescue of Lot and these angels seized him and his family and they physically delivered them from the city because they didn't respond as aggressively to the warning as they should have. God's grace sends messages even to deliver us. We need to be delivered from a life of ungodliness and God's grace delivers us even when we are sinners. Yet in our sin God loves us and demonstrates His love for us in sending His Son so that we can be forgiven and delivered.

Now there is the matter of Lot's righteousness. He is described in **verses 7-8** as being righteous. **"And if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (8) (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds)."** Get the picture? He's righteous. If you read **Genesis 19** he kind of comes across, at best, as kind of bumbling. At worst, he doesn't really seem like a stellar example of righteousness but yet he is called such here. Which I think shows you the contrast between even someone who desires good but is not as attentive as we might think he ought to be with the severe depravity of the people around him.

It's more a statement about the depravity of the people that he was living among. And you have to remember that we now have so much revelation from God, we know about Jesus Christ, we know about the salvation that Christ brings and the message of it. And the revelation that we have been given is voluminous compared with what Lot knew and was able to respond to. So in his heart he was righteous. He just was a little slow. And he is declared such. And in his attempt to be righteous he did look to resist the oppressiveness of the sensual conduct of these unprincipled men, unlike his family.

You should kind of look between Noah and Lot as it's described in **2 Peter 2**. We see Noah being described along with his family. Well Lot's resistance wasn't joined by his family nor the unsensual people but he himself did look to resist. With the influenza virus there was a desire to resist it. In fact, it was mandated that everyone was to wear masks as it got worse and worse. Even in sporting events they were required. Those who were allowed to continue were to wear masks. Now as you probably know, with viruses this was woefully inadequate. Someone likened it to trying to stop a sandstorm with chicken wire. This wasn't effective but there was a desire to resist.

Ultimately there was only one way that they were able to resist, and that was quarantine. There is one nation that basically was very little impacted in the world by this virus and that was Australia. Not only because they are a continent unto themselves, but what they did was when the ships arrived in Australia was to let them sit there with the people in them until they were confident that everyone who was going to die died and that the people who were infected recovered. So, they quarantined them. That is essentially God's ultimate plan for delivering the world from sin. He is going to rescue the godly and deliver the ungodly to destruction. He is going to separate those who are battling against sin in righteousness, desiring to be free from it. We will be delivered one day.

Lot's relatives got delivered physically but we can see from the story in **Genesis 19** that they were not truly in faith following God. So, they physically got delivered out of the city, but they reverted back to their sin. You can say this. You can take Lot's family out of Sodom but you can't take a lot of Sodom out of his family. The only way that we are going to be delivered from our sin is through faith in Jesus Christ to be delivered into the presence of God and completely removed from the sin that surrounds us.

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Lot lived among the sensual conduct of unprincipled men until he was delivered from them. We look forward to that deliverance. His destiny in the future is guaranteed. It is promised to us.

The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the Day of Judgment, especially certain people. **Verse 10, "and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties."** These are the targets of God's judgment. He knows who is being targeted and the people that are being targeted by God's judgment specifically are those who indulge the flesh with its corrupt desires. The people whose hearts are looking to indulge themselves are not followers of God, those who despise authority, those who look to authority as not being God-given and God-designed. As incompetent as it may be, God is still bigger than the authority and is able to work through the authority. The people who don't trust God and don't have faith despise authority. The targets of God's judgment, He knows who they are, indulge the flesh. They despise authority.

When is God's judgment going to happen. God knows when the judgment will come and when it comes it will be decisive. There is a punishment that is taking place. **Romans 1:27** indicates that people have abandoned natural functions and burn with desire toward one another committing indecent acts receiving in their own person the due penalty of their errors. There is a natural flow of penalty that comes from sin in this present life. But worse is a future punishment. This is indicated in **Luke 16:23** where those who are rebellious are held in a place prepared for destruction which is coming in **Revelation 20:11-15**. The eternal punishment is when all the ungodly will be cast into the lake of fire as well as the fallen angels. There is an eternal punishment and the timing of this is uncertain for us, but it is known to God, and He will bring it about. This threat of God's judgment, He knows how so don't be mistaken. The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation. He knows how to do this. We are looking for the rescue of His deliverance. The rescue of the godly is sure if we have true faith. We will be rescued.

In **Luke 17** Jesus spoke of the matter of judgment that's coming and He said this in **verse 22** speaking to His disciples. **"The days shall come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it."** In other words, this judgment that is coming will come swiftly, suddenly and they will be past the point of preparation. But first, **verse 25, "He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation."** And that has happened. Christ suffered, was rejected and His suffering and His death opened the door for our deliverance from sin.

**Verse 26, "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man."** We will know when that day comes, that the chance to be warned and to prepare is gone. The chance to warn and prepare is now, to do the things as Noah did, to plan, to take the time to in faith prepare for the future. Noah spent his time believing God and building an ark even though he was being ridiculed for it, and when the judgment came swiftly his ark was prepared and he was delivered. Others didn't have that opportunity because they could not construct an ark fast enough and they perished. Pray that every one of us will take the opportunity to heed the warning and not let it fall on deaf ears. Is your boat ready?

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Let's pray together. Lord, we thank You for the warning that You give us of what is coming. We pray that we would be responsive to that warning, that we would take Your Word seriously and know that ungodliness only leads to destruction. That living for corrupt desires only leads to reaping the corruption that we have sown. Lord, we pray that you would help us to understand the significance of what surrounds us in this life so that we can respond to you wholeheartedly rather than apathetically. We pray that we would be delivered together to the rescue that you planned for us each one here today. In Jesus we pray, Amen.