

Rendering Judgment and Rescuing

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- [0 : 0 0] 2 Peter, beloved. Chapter 2 of 2 Peter is a long treatise on the nature and deeds and destruction of false teachers, of evil men.
- Typically men, because they stand in the place of authority in the church, and these men seek positions of authority where they can influence people for evil.
- But obviously we have evil women in the world who are also being used as instruments of the devil to undermine the things of God, so ladies, we don't want to leave you out.
- However, this is a focus on the authority that men will wield in the church and abuse.
- And it's a sobering topic. And I recognize that. So let me begin to move through some of the introductory material, and hopefully you'll be encouraged this morning.
- [1 : 1 8] I pray to God you were encouraged last Sunday. I know that that ship has sailed, but nevertheless, we need to be reminded that God is sovereign. And so whatever topic we're dealing with in the Bible, we're dealing with a sovereign God, and he's the author of this material.
- So God knows, and God has all of this in hand. So we don't need to be afraid of the things of men, but we need to learn to fear the Lord and love him forever.
- So the title of my message, Rendering Judgment and Rescuing, the two major themes that we'll be dealing with in the passage this morning. Rendering Judgment and Rescuing, we're speaking about the actions of God.
- So right off the bat, let me ask you a question related to what we dealt with last Sunday as we move into this material. First of all, what is the goal of all false teaching?
- Because that's what Peter is so concerned about in this section of the Bible. What is the goal of all false teaching? The goal is to deceptively undermine the process of your personal holiness or your becoming increasingly like Jesus.
- [2 : 3 1] That is the goal of all false teaching. False teaching is about deception. And in the church, we're talking about God's people.
- You're the church, not this building. So false teaching is aimed at undermining you, growing in Christ's likeness over the course of your life.
- Now they do this, false teachers accomplish this by, let's roll through a few of these, and remember as you're taking notes, all of these materials that you see coming up on the slides will be made available on our website in accompaniment with the sermon.
- All right? They do this by appealing to your flesh. Your flesh, that is sensuality, pride, your sense of entitlement, things like that.
- They do it by attacking godly desires. Your humility, your teachable spirit, your self-denial that are all wrapped up in the main desire that you have as a Christian to please the Lord Jesus, to please God in every aspect of your life.
- [3 : 4 0] They attack the humility, the teachable spirit, and the sense of self-denial that makes pleasing Jesus possible in your life as you seek him from your heart. They do this by preoccupying your mind with earthly things over and against heavenly things.

So this is a Jesus plus, scripture plus, life plus mentality. What they want to do is encourage you to make earthly things a greater priority in your life than heavenly things.

There's all kinds of ways that they seek to do that. They also seek to create idol worship in your heart. They seek to foment what is already a battle in your heart to be faithful to God.

And so this deals with God replacements you depend on. This is concerning the attitude of worship in your heart. In any given moment, are you remaining loyal to Jesus and worshipping Jesus?

Or have you replaced him in that moment with some idol, some false god that you are looking to or depending on in that moment? They also do this by, they try to undermine your growth in Christ-likeness by encouraging judging in your life.

[4 : 59] That stems from discontentment, grumbling, and finding fault. They are like that, and they want to encourage you to be like that. They want to circle a bunch of people together who feel disenfranchised and who constantly engage in criticism.

They just have a critical spirit. They are this moth to flame that they go to people like that. And then finally, they direct your hope away from Jesus as Lord and Savior.

That kind of sums up everything that we just talked about in those bullet points. Directing your hope away from Jesus as Lord and Savior. Now, if you would, would you hold your finger there in 2 Timothy and turn over, or in 2 Peter, and turn over to 1 Timothy with me.

1 Timothy chapter 1. I want to give you the contrast of this list just from one place in Scripture. We could turn to a number of places. And I'm going to read in verse 5 of chapter 1.

But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

[6 : 16] So if I was to ask you, based on this text of Scripture, this verse in 1 Timothy 1, what is the goal of all Christian or biblical or godly or sound instruction?

What's the goal? Love. Love. Something that false teachers don't have. Because they don't have the Holy Spirit.

They don't have the love of God in them. And they don't have a love for God. They don't have a love for God's people. And they do not have a love for God's truth. So for false teachers, it's not about love.

It's about lust. And there's a big difference. Now, they camouflage it with love. That's why I'm showing you this. Contrast then the outcomes of false doctrine that we just listed with the goal of all true or sound doctrine.

Contrast this list with what I'm going to show you now. The goal that he speaks of here is telos. The Greek word telos. It means end.

[7 : 18] So here the idea is the state of affairs that a plan is intended to achieve. In other words, what's the end game? What's the goal?

What's the result? The outcome of all sound, biblical, truthful doctrine teaching? And the answer is love. Agape.

The selfless love of God that sent Jesus Christ to the cross. It's selfless. It's other centered and it's sacrificial. The false teachers don't know anything about that.

This kind of love flows from a pure heart. That is an undivided, loyal, true, clean heart. A heart that's not mixed in its motives.

Also, he says it flows from a good conscience. That means an upright, godly, honorable, moral center. And then finally, a sincere faith.

[8 : 19] This is an unhyprocritical, genuine trust in Jesus. It's not spurious. It's not camouflaged. It's not fake. It's not one thing at church and another thing out in private life.

False teachers deceptively mix. Hear this carefully, friends. False teachers deceptively mix the truth of God with their own unsound, man-centered teachings to poison your heart and to draw it away from a sincere, genuine, pure, and growing devotion to Jesus.

That's the goal. That's what they want to do. Now, Peter, as an apostle, someone who walked with Jesus for several years, saw his life.

This is a man who watched Jesus sleep. This is a man who watched Jesus in every aspect of his life as a human being.

Peter now, he knows the devastating power of the deceptive lies of these kind of men, these false teachers. He watched them rail against his Lord.

[9 : 29] Peter had an eyewitness accounting of the way that these false teachers treated Jesus and went after him. And he's very, very concerned about this for his people.

That is, his brothers and sisters in Christ that he's writing this letter to. In chapter 2, Peter unmasks, unmasks these men and much about their nature and their ways.

He wants to expose them for who they are and what they do. He begins with three foundational facts about who these false teachers are and how they operate in their fight against God and his truth.

If you look with me at 2 Peter 2, verses 1 through 3. This is from last week. But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will, not if, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

Many will follow their sensuality and because of them, the way of the truth will be maligned. And in their greed, they will exploit you with false words.

[10 : 49] Their judgment from long ago is not idle and their destruction is not asleep. Three foundational facts from what we covered last time.

The first one was this. False teachers are among us. False teachers are among us. That's from last time. We said that in the Greek, these men are the pseudo-prophetai, false prophets.

Pseudo-prophetai and the pseudo-didaskaloi, the false teachers. They teach what is contrary to sound doctrine. Many people will follow them.

That was our second point from last week. These men are masters at appealing to the flesh. Their emphasis on self-indulgence often, often turns into various kinds of sexual sin, but not always.

Not always. The bottom line, their teaching supports an anti-authority, do your own thing, chase-your-desires kind of lifestyle.

[11 : 51] And it doesn't have to be that they always appeal to your sexual appetites. There may be some other aspect that they can hone in on about your life that you're having a desire for, or maybe you're not even fully aware of how much.

They want to get in there, and they want to tickle that. They want to arouse it. They want to keep you discontented and dissatisfied and grumbling, constantly thinking in terms of what you're missing out on, what you could have, what you might have.

And then finally, many people are exploited as a result of this kind of emphasis. False teachers and their followers are driven by the greed of their hearts.

Greed, you might remember, friends, is an insatiable desire for what God forbids. That's greed. They plan and they purpose to take advantage of people who also are inwardly craving autonomy and license.

They listen to you, and they watch you, and they study you. They're predators. They find the weak link in your armor, and they begin to exploit it. And if they can use it as a way to create divisiveness in the church family, they will do it.

[13 : 10] In your family, they will do it. Let me say this unequivocally, and I will repeat it again. And I want to look you in the eye as I say it. I have dealt with these men for 30 years of my life.

I could tell you stories that would curl your hair. They would almost be unbelievable to you that these men were able to get into the church and do the damage that they have done. And we have witnessed it firsthand.

We have been the victims of it in many instances. Let me tell you, there are two things these men are after as they worm their way through those doors and get into this congregation. They want our women, and they want our money.

They might even want our boys. You understand what I'm talking about? We've seen that. They are ruthless, ravenous, evil, wicked despisers of God.

They will rip us to pieces and not bat an eyelash. That is the truth. And as we move through this passage together, if you haven't read ahead, you will see that Peter draws no quarter about exposing who these men are and what they're after.

[14 : 20] Men, we cannot let these kind of people have any oxygen to breathe in our midst. Amen? And Greg and I need you as the men of our church, as our brothers in Christ, to help us be on the alert for these kind of men who will come in, sneak in unawares.

They will make it past the first screen here, folks. It's just going to happen. And as careful as Greg and I are, the promise is they're going to make it through that screen at times. And so we need to be ready to sniff them out and then deal with them.

And we will deal with them. You have our promise to you on that. We will safeguard you to the best of our hearts ability in doing all that we can to protect you from this kind of reality.

So Peter deals with these three basic facts that he's presented to us, even as he tells us at the end of verse 3.

Notice verse 3. Their judgment from long ago is not idle and their destruction is not asleep, even though he tells us that is going to be the reality. His prophetic prediction of their presence and power among us still is an unsettling one, isn't it?

[15 : 35] It's unsettling. There are perhaps maybe many of you, if not the majority of you, last week, maybe heard a message for the first time that was that straightforward and that direct about how the Bible speaks about false teachers and that they come from within the church.

They come from among us. That might have been new for you. And it is unsettling. I remember the first time I ever heard it. I'd already experienced it and I wasn't ready for it and I didn't know the Bible taught it.

So when it happened, it dismantled Suzanne and I theologically, emotionally. It took almost two years of us living in that situation, watching that unfold.

Now, as Peter moves through all of this, I want to give you some hope. You are right to be concerned. You are right to be cautious.

You are correct biblically to be on the alert. That's good. Peter has already warned us in his first letter to be of sober spirit, be on the alert, because what?

[16 : 41] Our adversary, the devil, is prowling around like a hungry lion looking for whom he can devour. That is an active spiritual force against you. It's not going to go away until you go to heaven or Jesus comes back.

That is a reality of living in this world. Friends, please hear me. There are a lot, lot worse things than rape and murder. Spiritual death is final.

You give your heart to this kind of evil and there's no hope for your redemption. That's what Peter's telling us. That's why this is so serious and that's why we have to preach it and teach it and to prepare for it.

So it's not a message of doom and gloom. It's a message of reality. But God has given us the power to prepare. We have a plan.

Be of sober spirit, yes. Even so, there is no reason for us to be afraid. We are to fear the Lord, not man.

[17 : 44] We don't need to be afraid of these people. We do not need to be afraid of what these people can do. We need to be sober minded about it. And we need to be prepared to deal with it, especially the men of our church.

So I want to move through some of this and just help you to be encouraged about what it's really all about behind the scenes in terms of God's perspective. False teachers fancy themselves as an authority unto themselves.

So they mock God. They exploit his people. They deny God's future judgment for themselves or for you. And they deny that believers will be rescued by Jesus coming again.

These false teachers' claims are what Peter is setting right or correcting in his letter to his brothers and sisters. He tells us that false teachers are deadly wrong.

And I mean that, deadly wrong. God will hold these people accountable. The ungodly will receive God's wrath and judgment and the ungodly will be punished forevermore while the godly will receive his mercy in Christ.

[19 : 05] God is sovereign. God is sovereign. Over these people. Over you. Over his truth.

Over redemption. God will have his way and prevail over liars and their lies. So look to your Lord and Savior.

Look to your Lord and Savior. And trust that God is sovereign. Now if you join me in reading chapter 2, we'll go from verse 4 down through verse 10a.

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, 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, 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 lives thereafter, and if he rescued righteous lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men, for by what he saw and heard, that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.

That's a lot to say, verse 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, to get to the then in verse 9, which is the main point, but that's the way he chose to do it.

[20 : 59] Verses, hear this, verses 4 through 9 are one long sentence in the Greek. The passage is styled, as you saw in the English text, it is styled in an if-then structure.

It would be better if you took the ifs in your Bible, they may be this way, since. Since. This is not a question. This is not an issue that is in doubt. Peter is just simply saying, since this happened, and since God acted in this way, and since God did these things, then.

It's a powerful way of expressing the point that God will act. Trust God to be sovereign in these situations. The sense, or condition clauses, that begin in verse 4, and go through verse 8, are ways that Peter helps structure the passage toward the point.

He waits to bring the then, in verse 9. And the structure helps us see the twin themes that Peter wants to emphasize, that is, judgment and redemption.

Mainly judgment. The weight of the text rests on God's judgment against these people. So, Peter gives us, at this point then, in the passage before us, he gives us three examples of God acting as sovereign judge, and two examples of God acting as sovereign redeemer.

[22 : 33] each of these examples that we'll move through focus on God's actions in the past to help us see that what he's done in the past will set precedent for what he's going to do in the future.

So, you and I may not see the swift destruction of a false teacher or two here or there, or hear about something that went on at a church, and we recognize that was probably led by a false teacher, and it divided the church, and boy, it just took them down, and they lost all these people, and now they're, they're not even a single church, you know, that kind of thing.

You've seen that, I've seen that, you've heard of that, but God promises that in the end, they will pay, and they'll pay dearly. They'll pay for all eternity. They'll go on paying, and it'll never be spent.

It's terrifying, but it's very real. The first one that we want to deal with in the way of these examples is this, and you'll see the way that I couch it is very important.

God's sovereign response as righteous judge. For if God, or since God, did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment, and then he moves on to the next example.

[23 : 49] What's the first example he gives us? The first one is of angelic arrogance. Angelic arrogance. Obviously, Peter is referring here to an actual event in history involving demonic spirits.

This is very, very real in our time. So, the questions that we want to ask of the text at this point are these. Who were these spirits?

Since this is a real event, and he's referencing this, who were these spirits? Why did God choose to treat them in this way? And what do they have to do with the false teachers we encounter in these days, our last days, the days we're living in?

Now, these questions are important. A, because Peter is using these angels in his analogy about God's judgment against false teachers.

False teachers are people we have to contend with. And B, not all demonic spirits are imprisoned. But these are untold numbers of demonic spirits do evil in our world every day on a spiritual level, don't they?

[25 : 02] It's demons that constantly tempt you in the flesh. They do that through people in all manner of ways. Well, all right. We know that there are demons that are involved in our world today.

Ephesians tells us that several other places in Scripture. Well, why? Why is it that this particular set of demons that Peter's referring to aren't loose to do whatever they wanted to do, but they're being kept in pits of darkness?

Why is that? What happened? What took place? Well, Jude helps us substantiate the event Peter is most likely referring to, the one that I'm convinced he's referring to.

Most conservative commentators also believe what I'm about to share with you. If you go to Jude verse 6, you'll see an uncanny parallel here.

And we'll be turning to Jude again several times today. Jude 6. And angels who did not keep their own domain but abandoned their proper abode, he has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

[26 : 14] Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they, in the same way as these, indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal life.

Well, he's comparing what the angels did with what happened in Sodom and Gomorrah. You see that? So we have something really weird going on here. This refers us to, because this is what Jude is referring to, Genesis 6, verses 1 through 4.

And I warn you, it's strange. And you're not going to have all your questions about this answered. I, two different times in seminary, I did a paper on this passage.

And it was, I don't even know how many pages, digging into this passage and trying to come to some understanding of what is being talked about here.

We'll identify it quickly. Genesis chapter 6. Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God, that's angels, that's a reference to angels, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful and they took wives for themselves whomever they chose.

[27 : 35] Then the Lord said, my spirit shall not strive with man forever because he also is flesh. Nevertheless, his days shall be 120 years. The Nephilim were on the earth in those days and also afterward when the sons of God came into the daughters of men and they bore children to them.

Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. Notice verse 5. Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth. This was not a good thing.

These mighty men, they're not a good thing. What do we have going on here? What does Genesis 6, 1 through 4 mean? In a very brief way, and you can check all of this out, fallen angels are demons.

We are talking about fallen angels in this passage, not angels in heaven who decided to come down. These are fallen angels. These are demonic spirits. long ago, a certain number of these fallen angels, demons, looked on and lusted after human women.

Following that lust, they then possessed human men so that they could have sexual relations with the women. The question on the table then is how did God view and deal with this violation?

[29 : 01] If you turn back to Jude with me, you'll see again what God tells them. I already read verse 5 to you in Genesis 6, but now look again with me at what we read in Jude 7.

Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these, these what? these angels indulged in what?

Gross immorality and went after strange flesh are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. Jude 7 begins with this just as.

Just as. That's how my Bible translate it. The gross violation of the angels in the sight of God was just as the gross sins of Sodom and Gomorrah in the sight of God.

That's the important connection that we need to make. This terrible act took even those demons outside of their realm. God had set them in a realm and they went outside of it.

[30 : 12] For this reason, Peter and Jude tell us that God cast them into hell into a special confinement in pits of utter darkness.

That just gave me goosebumps reading that. Reserved for judgment. So denied the freedom to roam and tempt these particular demons, these particular fallen angels who possessed human men in order to cohabit with human women.

These particular fallen angels were denied the ability to roam and tempt. They now await their fate in thick blackness. And Peter says, since God did this, since he did this to even fallen angels, since he judged them in this way, what fate now awaits others who sin in similar ways?

Well, we don't have to guess. We have another example, don't we? What's our second example? It's the example of ancient apathy. The example of ancient apathy.

And then it gets worse. It's amazing what Peter does with this. Notice the text. And since God did not spare the ancient world when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.

[31 : 40] He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly. it's a sobering reality that we also find in Genesis chapter 6.

I'll take you back there. Now, one of the things that's interesting to me as I studied this out, and several commentators made this point, Peter is not explaining any of this.

Did you notice that? He's not going into great detail explaining these historical events. What's he assuming? He's assuming his audience knows exactly what he's talking about and what he's referencing in detail.

Now, we're doing a little bit of the detail to remind ourselves, but Peter didn't worry about that. He knew his audience would resonate with what he was saying and understand the point. In Genesis 6, beginning in verse 5 that I read a few moments ago, right on the heels of talking about these demons possessing these men and cohabiting with women, then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Now, did you pick up on that? Please reference that carefully. The Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth and he was grieved in his heart. I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, for I am sorry that I've made them.

[33 : 10] Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. verse 11. Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God and the earth was filled with violence. God looked on the earth and behold, it was corrupt for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

Now that's a sad. To me, terrifying truth about these people and about what was going on. Noah was a preacher of righteousness, God's righteousness.

But the people didn't want to hear and they didn't want to heed his message of God's impending judgment. Answers in Genesis. Are you guys familiar with that ministry?

Answers in Genesis? All right. Answers in Genesis offers a helpful discussion on how long it took Noah to build the ark. Listen carefully. The countdown to the flood, according to scripture, was 120 years.

But the actual time Noah and his sons worked on the ark was somewhere between 55 and 75 years, given the structure of the passages that speak about this.

[34 : 19] The people of Noah's day had that amount of time to repent. They watched this man and his sons and his family work on the ark, perhaps along with some other people that were brought in that didn't believe what was going on, but they helped build it.

I don't know how all that came down. But there were 55 to 75 years that these people were able to watch this going on before them. Folks, that's a long time to be hardened in your heart and be calloused toward what Noah, a preacher of righteousness, was obviously telling them.

But they did not listen and they did not heed. Why? Why did they not believe God in the promise of judgment coming? Look, the people of Noah's day are labeled by the Holy Spirit as ungodly.

The word means destitute of reverential awe towards God. There is no fear of the Lord in their eyes. They condemn God. They're impious people.

They have no respect or reverence for the Lord. So lacking a reverential awe towards God, not holding God in high esteem, brings about God's judgment.

[35 : 35] And these people are under God's judgment. The horrible reality of all of this in Noah's time is that these people on the heels of the angels doing what they did, the demons, the angelic spirits who had followed Satan in the rebellion.

And now some of these spirits entered these men and did this with these women following right on the heels of that. Children were born human children.

You understand? These were not some weird aliens with green big eye almond eye. It's not that you'd be surprised how many people believe that kind of stuff. These are human babies that are produced as offspring from these demon possessed men.

This is a bad scene. These people are born into that atmosphere, raised in that atmosphere, and that atmosphere continues to become more and more pervasive around the earth.

That's why the Lord said, only evil continually. This was a wicked, sick, sick. You would not want to be living in this time. For you to live in this time and seek to be righteous would have been a very, very difficult, if not almost impossible situation for you.

[36 : 53] It was a terrible, terrible thing. But we have a third example. He doesn't stop there. We have a third example. It's the example of ancient avarice.

Ancient avarice. Verse 6 in 2 Peter 2. 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 lives thereafter.

And he goes on to talk about Lot. We'll get to that in just a moment. What's this third example about? Greed. Just wicked greed. The Bible tells us that greed, an insatiable desire for what God forbids, is the root of all sexual sin.

You'll find that in Colossians 3 verse 5. Greed is the root of all sexual sin. These are greedy men, these false teachers.

Again, I refer you to Jude 7. The deep wickedness of the fallen angels was like that of Sodom and Gomorrah. How? The evil was expressed in sexual perversion.

[38 : 11] Sodom and Gomorrah were led and characterized by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men. That's the text. The sensual conduct of unprincipled men.

That is a definition of the men who will sneak in through those doors and plant them in our congregation, plant themselves here. Life was always.

At this time, a lawless romp of unbridled lust. God had removed his restraining grace. That's the key.

He gave these people over to what they most desired and worshipped. And as God removed his restraining grace, the common grace of restraining people from being as wicked as they can be, as he removed that restraining common grace, which my brother Greg will speak to this Wednesday night.

He's going to be on that subject. I let it out of the bag. You weren't going to tell him. He's going to be speaking more to that. That reality is God removed that common restraining grace to keep people from being as sinful as they can be.

[39 : 19] These people were given over to the lusts of their flesh that define us apart from God. There was nothing to restrain them. License was the law. They did whatever they wanted to do.

We don't we don't have to imagine much of this. The Bible gives us detail about it and it's gross. But the Bible tells us what it was. We actually see this account, this account of the wickedness and the level of depravity these people had drooped to when we look at and read about the angels visiting Sodom.

You remember that story? I'm not going to go into it right now. But the these these angels visited and they were good looking. These two male angels.

And the people of the town assaulted Lot's house. Send them out. We want them. You might want to ask yourself, how in the world can the Bible describe Lot as righteous when he said to him, don't take these men.

I know what they are. Take my daughters instead. They've never known a man. Now, guys, that's not a biblical precedent for how we handle false teachers. We do not sacrifice our daughters to them.

[40 : 38] Quite the opposite. But that's what happened in that situation. That's the level of gross immorality the Bible speaks about.

Gross immorality then combined with homosexuality, strange flesh. brought the population of an entire valley of cities, not just Sodom and Gomorrah, all of the cities of that entire valley, brought them down into a cesspit of vice that proved, hear me, unredeemable.

So God burned them all to ash and cinders. These ungodly people, the scripture says, these ungodly people are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

Just like the people during Noah's time were an example of how much God hates this kind of evil and the damage that it does to human beings, God destroyed the entire world.

Our world bears the scars of a global flood. He didn't just destroy all living things that breathe the air.

[41 : 53] He destroyed the world that he had made. Before Noah, it was a very different kind of world before the flood. This is catastrophic judgment, folks.

And do you see that that that in choosing these examples, Peter is telling us God does not play with this. Judgment is coming.

On these people, judgment is coming on all of the ungodly. Ungodly people don't have a false don't have to have a false teacher lead them to be ungodly, do they?

They do just fine on their own. That's what's happening. And that's the example that it gives. Well, I spent most of my time on this first point, but let me move this toward a conclusion as we deal with the next two points that Peter wants to bring out in this text.

God's sovereign response as righteous redeemer. Thank the Lord. Peter doesn't just leave it with all the bad news about God's judgment on these wicked, wicked people and the false teachers who led them.

[43 : 08] He says some other things. If you look at chapter two, verse five 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, there's that title again, the ungodly. ungodly. This is the example of Noah.

God preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness with seven others. Now, you and I need to view this deliverance in the context of the violent, violent destruction of the flood.

God. Even the horrific violence God reigned literally on the world. As they knew it could not prevent God from saving those who belong to him.

Was a devastating reality that none of these people could escape. I was reading an article last night. And it was talking about a bunch of dinosaur footprints that were found in a riverbed that had dried up during a drought in Texas.

[44 : 20] And they took photographs of it. And there's, I don't remember, I think it was over a hundred of them. These huge dinosaur footprints of a dinosaur they think resembled T-Rex.

And they have a name for it. And they did a depiction of it. And they show it weaving its way along this limestone creek bed. And he's just ambling up following that that layer of mud.

It's amazing. And there's, it looks like he just did it. How it was preserved. And they explained in the article when this happened during the flood.

And they explained that here we are in a dry riverbed in Texas with dinosaur footprints clearly visible all over the place. And yet that kind of limestone mud is only deposited by seawater.

Hmm. Where do you think that came from? Where did they get the water? The flood. The flood was real. The judgment was real.

[45 : 26] Everything that breathed air died. They found not too far away a pile of the bones, the skeletal remains of many of these creatures where it kind of pooled up and did a like a swirling and deposited them.

Not too far away. And we see that all over the world too, don't we? This was a catastrophic, swift and decisive judgment on these people.

And they couldn't escape the horrific violence of it. God's punishment proved swift and decisive for these people. But his promise to save one.

One, the day and established a future for his godly ones, didn't it? Because he preserved Noah and Noah's family. And so who are we descendants of?

Noah and his family, right? We all share that heritage together. Every human being on the planet has God to thank for their life. Because he could have judged everybody, but Noah was a preacher of righteousness.

[46 : 37] And then the second example that we see under this righteous redeemer and rescuer is the example of Lot in verses 7 and 8.

And since, or if, God rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men, for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds.

The example of Lot. Peter said just enough to help his readers recall what they already knew about this particular event. By God's mercy and power, Lot and his daughters were the only survivors of many, many, many, tens upon tens of thousands of people who lived in that valley.

And they were all destroyed. God's judgment for people giving themselves over to what false teachers teach and stand for and what it does to society when people do give themselves over.

But he doesn't leave off there. He has these examples of Noah and Lot being preserved in the midst of horrific judgment and destruction all around them.

[47 : 55] Do you see that? Here's the ark floating on the water that wiped out everything. And here's Lot and his daughters escaping a city and being told, don't look back.

While God rains fire literally from heaven down and burns every folks to ash. The Bible is clear.

I've heard of stories where archaeologists believe that the remains of Sodom and Gomorrah perhaps are under a portion of what is now the Dead Sea.

That whole area used to be a very fertile area in the time. How do we know that? Remember when Abraham and Lot separated and one was going to go one way and Abraham said, you pick the way you want to go.

And what did Lot do? He looked down on the cities of the valley and he saw they were lush and green and beautiful and good for herds. And so he went down in the valley and got even richer.

[48 : 55] That's used to be that valley. Now what is it? It's the Salt Sea. It's desert and plumes of gas and stuff coming up out of the earth.

And I've heard of these archaeologists who want to go find the cities. And I'm thinking, now wait a minute. If we're reading the Bible correctly, read it again. It says to ash.

You ain't going to find nothing. There ain't nothing there. It's gone. So stop looking. Go spend your money and your time doing something else more productive, right? That's what I want to tell them.

But nobody listens to me. The best part of all of this then comes in this last point. God's sovereign revelation to rescue us.

His sovereign revelation to rescue us in verse 9. This is why I said, hang on. It's got some good in it here. Then, since God did all these things, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation.

[49 : 59] I'm glad he led with that one. After all this doom and gloom judgment stuff, he says, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation. He kind of wrestles the theme from judgment back to the wonderful and glorious reality of deliverance.

And to keep the unrighteous or the ungodly under punishment for the day of judgment. Especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.

There's your false teachers and their followers. I told you the two basic elements that characterize all these people, the ungodly, the false teachers who lead them, the false prophets who tickle their ears, are these two things.

They live in the corruption of the desires of their flesh and they despise authority. I had a great question from one of you from the congregation last Sunday as I ended.

This person came up and asked me some great questions. One of the questions they asked me was this. Do you think that false teachers, first of all, do they, if I think I'm getting this right, do they have as an agenda at the front of their mind to destroy the church?

[51 : 24] And then I think the second part was, do you think that they know that they're being used by the devil? That they are tools of Satan? Do they actively are aware of that?

All right. In all of my experience with this, personally, trying to look to scripture and understand what we were going through and what's happened is I'm able to look back.

I've never had one of these false teachers or their followers come up to me and their head starts spinning around and stuff spew out of their mouth, like in the exorcist, and say, I'm of the devil and I'm here to ruin the church.

I've never had that. The question is important because we need to understand that even if these people are unwitting, even if they don't know that they're tools of the devil being used to undermine your walk with Christ and try to destroy and tear apart churches, even if they don't know that, and I think most of them don't, most of them don't realize that Satan's behind all this.

Here's what they do know. They know they're fake. They know they're false. They know they're hypocrites. They know the secret life they live behind the scenes and they know what they want.

[52 : 44] They want money and they want our ladies and maybe some of the guys because that's real too because that's Sodom and Gomorrah.

That's what they want and they know that and they have a plan for it. So whether they know they're being used as Satan or not, they know their plan and they know their agenda and it's not good for you.

So bank on that. When they're exposed, they fight like demons. Yes, that's right.

That's right. They don't, I don't think that most of them in my experience, this is just my, most of them in my experience, I don't think they had a full recognition that Satan is behind all that.

They are tools of the devil. The ungodly are tools of the devil. They belong to their master. That's what Jesus said, right? John 8 all the way through 10.

- [53 : 55] But they do know that they're fake and they do know what they want out of life. Well, let me, let me pull this together then toward the end. Look at this.

Since God rescued righteous Noah and righteous Lot and their loved ones from the judgment, he brought on all of those who mocked God, his truth and his promise to a punishment, to punish the ungodly.

But if you'll notice in verse 9a, then the Lord knows how to rescue the ungodly or the godly from temptation. The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation.

Rescue godly and temptation tell you three significant things about God and his plan for you concerning false teachers and false doctrine.

And this is for us today. Here's what I want to show you. Rescue. Rescue simply means what you think. To deliver. To keep from harm. Thank the Lord.

- [54 : 57] Godly refers to God worshipers. The godly or the God worshipers. Those belonging to the Lord. Those who are devout towards God. And temptation.

Temptation is a little more tricky. It means test or trial. It has the idea of testing in order to prove fault. Now what does that mean? Listen. God knows how to deliver you as his child from all the trials and temptations of this life which would otherwise bind you in the ungodliness that deserves God's punishment.

So verses 9 and 10 9a through 10 we're dealing with the greed the selfish desires and the pride of mocking God's authority that characterize spiritual deceivers and their ungodly followers today.

They will receive the terrifying full measure of God's holy wrath just as the false teachers of our day and their ungodly followers will receive it. Today they're going to receive it just like they did in ancient times.

Look again with me at 9. Then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation praise the Lord and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.

- [56 : 23] For whatever reasons good to the Lord he especially despises that kind of thing giving yourself over to your desires and despising authority.

Human authority his authority God hates that. So there's a big but here isn't there as but as God's child in the faith you live under a very different and more life-giving promise.

That's the beauty of what he's describing for us here. We have been able to escape that. All that's coming on the ungodly and the false teachers the cross of Jesus Christ has made us hear this immune to it.

Why? Because God has imputed the righteousness of Jesus to us. So we stand uncondemned. We stand pure and clean and spotless and blameless and Jesus is going to make sure that he presents his bride you you Jesus is going to present you to the Father in that perfect righteousness.

in other words as a virgin bride. That's your inheritance. That's your guarantee. And friends false teachers can't disrupt that.

- [57 : 38] False teachers can't rob you of that. They can try to make life difficult for us but they can't rob us of the glory that God will give to us through Jesus Christ. They can't do it. They can make trouble if we let them.

False teachers and false doctrine are not more powerful to define and shape your life than the grace of God in Christ. Amen. And then finally look at this look to Jesus.

Learn the fear of the Lord and live in the joy the hope and the peace of your Redeemer your rescuer and your deliverer. That's what we're called to not to fear false teachers.

So the last caveat I'll give you before we close out in prayer is this. folks please don't don't make the mistake of allowing this to grip your heart in fear so that when people come through those doors we're right and any we're listening for any because people are going to come through those doors and they're going to struggle with sin just like you and I do.

People are going to come through those doors and they're not going to have all their theology wired just like we don't. And so we need to be patient and kind and loving as well as circumspect and prudent and sober minded.

[59 : 04] And we need to come alongside of these people and help them walk in struggling against sin. It won't be long before a false teacher will reveal his true nature. Why? Hear me carefully now because they don't struggle with sin.

They give into it and it's just a matter of time. There's a big difference between people who are not struggling against sin and trying to hide it and true believers who come through those doors who are struggling and striving against sin and need brothers and sisters to come alongside of them and walk with them.

So let's err on the side of being gracious and trust that God will help us sort it out. Can we do that? Together? And the men will join Greg and I. Alright.

Let's pray together. Father God in heaven we give you the glory and we thank you for the truth of the scriptures as we craft these sermons and messages from the scriptures as we try to do our diligence and understanding what the Bible means by what it says.

We ask that you would help us to get our hearts and minds around these truths and to prepare ourselves knowing that they will come from within and we need to be ready to address these issues to trust each other to be faithful and biblical and God our prayer even now is that knowing these people are owned by the devil knowing that they are being used as tools of Satan.

[60 : 38] We pray for their redemption. We pray God that you would save them that you would open their eyes to see how they're being used by the evil one that you would help them to see their need for Jesus and forgiveness from sins and that they would turn their hearts to Christ and be one as a trophy of your marvelous mercies and grace.

Father if they refuse to turn to the master they refuse to submit themselves to Jesus and seek forgiveness for sins through him alone and we have no choice but to deal with them for what they are unrepentant ungodly sharks that will prey on the people of our faith our congregation.

So we ask for your wisdom God we ask you to help us to fear you and not fear man and that we ask you to help us to tune our hearts to what Peter is telling us because this these are the words of a man who's about to die and he is desperate to communicate his message to these people and help warn them away from what will rob them of joy in life and even of their very souls.

And we thank you for your truth that protects our hearts and we thank you for Grace Church Williamsburg where we are enjoying the wonders and the joys and all of the blessings and benefits of the people who are united in Jesus name looking in one faith one hope and one baptism to serve Jesus as the Lord of our church.

Thank you for these blessed truths in his name we pray. Amen.