

Deliverance and Destruction by the Same God

2 Peter 2:4-10

Introduction: Why do people get involved and follow false teaching?

One reason is they get worn down in the faith with trials, tribulations, setbacks, giving in to temptations and they look for the quick fix or the shiny new truth instead of persevering with the truth they already know. Here is the story of one who persevered with his dream and his belief to the end of his life.

There are approximately ten Lego pieces sold for every person on earth each year—more than seventy-five billion of the little plastic bricks. But if it wasn't for the perseverance of **Danish toymaker Ole Kirk Christiansen**, there wouldn't be any Legos to snap together.

Christiansen toiled away in Billund, Denmark, for decades before creating Leg Godt, which means “play well.” His workshop was destroyed by fire twice. He endured bankruptcy and a world war that caused a shortage of materials. Finally, in the late 1940s, he landed on the idea for self-locking plastic bricks. By the time Ole Kirk died in 1958, Legos was on the verge of becoming a household word.

Persevering in the challenges of work and life can be difficult. Staying true and faithful to God's Word is a challenge at times and can be difficult. Gary Chapman said then when the unexplained or the illogical things happen in a person's life, this is when a lot of people bail on their faith and God. Trials and tribulations either cement your faith, build character, draw us close to God or we jettison the truth for some other false truth or false reality in our world.

In James 1:5, God promises wisdom for such times and He asks us to trust Him as He provides what we need (v. 6). Through it all, when we allow Him to help us persevere in honoring Him with our lives, we find true blessing (v. 12) and a crown at the end of our lives if we persevere with the truth of God's Word.

Peter is writing here in a culture much like today. There are many voices out there claiming they are the truth, they have the truth, come follow us. False teachers doubt God will punish them for leading people into corruption, pollution and eternal damnation. They rail and say if God is really out there and is God, why don't we see false teachers being punished?

Peter is reassuring those who are believers, living for the truth of the Gospel, daily being persecuted for it and paying the price know that God will judge those who are leading others astray. There will be a payday of judgment for them in this life but if not, certainly, when they stand before him and are judged when they step into eternity.

Scripture Reading

2 Peter 2:4-10

4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chain of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; 5 if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; 7 and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked 8 (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones

Purpose: Every Christ follower must not underestimate the wrath and mercy of God

Transition: We will look today at the balance of God's angry wrath and His compassionate love and mercy for His followers.

The Raging Wrath of God on Display – 2 Peter 2:4-5a;6

2 Peter 2:4

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chain of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment

- The degenerate angels
 - Notice the for if here. If here makes this a conditional clause. Some translations use the “since” here.
 - God did not spare – provide a way to escape judgment, salvation. Jesus did not die for the angels but human beings
 - False teachers, just like the fallen angels will suffer in hell
 - The story goes that Lucifer was the highest-ranking angel in heaven that God created. Some believe He was in charge of the worship of God in heaven using the heavenly angels as instruments to praise God. – Ezekiel 28:12 - 19

Isaiah 14: 12 – 15

“How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! 13 You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God, I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ 15 But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.”

- Satan and one third of his angels who rebelled with him were cast down out of heaven.
- Hell was created for Satan and his fallen angels. Now humans who follow Satan knowingly or unknowingly end up there. They have rejected God and Jesus Christ. – **Going to hell to be with my friends – T-shirt at the YMCA this week**
- Peter says that some of those angels are already confined to hell and will not be tried in future judgment but sent directly into the lake of fire for eternity with Satan, the false prophet and the antichrist. Their judgment is secure
- There are some angels, we often call them or think of them as demons, who are roaming the earth doing Satan’s bidding. We know Satan has been cast out of heaven because in Job 1, Satan comes to God after roaming the earth.

Job 1:6 – 7

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. 7 The Lord said to Satan, “From where have you come?” Satan answered the Lord and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.”

- Remember that Satan is not omnipresent or omnipotent. He is merely God unfaithful servant. God has a leash on how far Satan can go and bring evil and temptation to this world.
- **But cast them into hell – Hell – Tartarus – In Greek mythology it was a subterranean pit, lower than hell itself. It was the abiding place or home of the most wicked of all the spirit beings in the universe. Much like Jesus description of hell – Gehenna – a burning, smoldering garbage dump outside the walls of Jerusalem.**
- Peter is using a common Greek word that his readers would know very well. They knew exactly what Peter was talking about
- **God committed them to chain of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment**
 - Committed – to turn them over for imprisonment in the pits of hell and darkness.
 - Chains shows the loss of freedom because they are in a place of confinement. This was a fate that demons feared.

Luke 8:28 - 33

28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg

you, do not torment me.” 29 For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) 30 Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. 31 And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. 32 Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. 33 Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

James 2:19

You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

- Verse 4 goes on to say that these demons, fallen angels along with false teachers are **to be kept until the judgment**
 - Their sentenced has been pronounced upon them and their final sentencing will come at a future time. - Revelation 20:10

Jude 1:5 – 7

5 Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who save a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire

- The angels referred to here specifically in verse 4 are the angels who most likely possess mortal, wicked men (Genesis 6:1 – 4) and they cohabited with the daughters of men.
- Jude is saying here, they somehow left their boundaries and performed an egregious sin by carrying out this gross immorality.
- The summary of this verse under this point is this. God severely judges those who oppose Him and His truth. False teachers, like fallen angels, will face the full anger and divine wrath of God.
- Peter goes on in verse 5 to use another example from Genesis
 - The **depravity of the entire world**

2 Peter 2:5

If he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly

- Peter turns now to the story of Noah and the world wide, cataclysmic flood.
- Humanity was multiplying but was becoming more and more sinful, corrupt

Genesis 6:11 - 12

11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

Quote: "The depravity of man is at once the most empirically verifiable reality but at the same time the most intellectually resisted fact." – Malcolm Muggeridge

- They knew God but rejected Him
- God told Noah of the coming judgment. He tasked Noah with building the ark. The Ark Encounter in Williamstown, Kentucky – **Picture**
- Flood – cataclysm in our English language. A cataclysmic flood that was world wide in nature. 40 days and 40 nights of torrential rains.
- God killed every land animal and every human being
- Ungodly are those who have a complete lack of reverence to God and worship. They do not fear God but despise Him.
 - The early church fathers used this Greek word for those who were atheists and heretics, who were rebellious and immoral, who brought God's judgment on themselves.
- Peter uses one more example to emphasize the point of what false teachers and those who follow false teaching will face.
 - **The destruction due to sexual sin**

2 Peter 2:6

If by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly

- Sodom and Gomorrah are an example of what will happen in the future to false teachers.
- Sodom and Gomorrah were main cities of the Jordan plain region. This is near the SE corner of the Dead Sea. It was very fertile and an ideal place for raising crops and animals.
- So, when Lot was offered any land he wanted from Abraham, he pitched his tent toward Sodom and Gomorrah to enjoy the beautiful pasture lands for his livestock.
- **Sodom and Gomorrah became a place of gross sin, big time immorality including homosexuality.** That was the charge that God brought against

- them. Abraham begged God and bargained with God to not destroy Sodom and Gomorrah but to no avail.
- This is small in scale to the destruction that occurred in the world-wide flood.
 - Lot allowed Sodom and Gomorrah to infiltrate his thinking along with his wife and kids. Like Noah, only Lot's family survives the judgment
 - It has only been 450 years since the flood at this point so people would know what happened as ancestors would have told them of the destruction due to sin.
 - Yet, the angels had to pull Lot out and his family. His sons – in – law mocked him when he warned them of judgment. He had a very weak testimony. Lot's wife when told to run and not look back at the city, couldn't resist and became immediately a pillar of salt.
 - Then fire and brimstone rained down from heaven and all of the people of these two towns were incinerated or asphyxiated. Today, no one can find the ruins of this city. Many think the Dead Sea has consumed the city under the banks of its sea.
 - Extinction – utter destruction, total ruin, covered in ashes
 - Twenty times, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is used as an example in the Bible.
 - Don't take for granted God's patience and time allowing grace. He allowed people 120 years to repent before the world-wide flood but judgment is coming!

Application: Our God is an all-powerful, holy God!

Transition: We see the angry wrath of God poured out on false teachers, now we see the deliverance of God's people through God's compassionate love and mercy.

The Redeeming Mercy of God on Display – 2 Peter 2:5b;7-10

2 Peter 2:5b

But preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others

- **The rescue of Noah**

- In verse 5 here, **Noah is called a herald or a preacher of righteousness**. In his "spare" time, he would go and tell people of the coming judgment and that they needed to repent from their sins and turn to God.
- People must have thought he was out of his mind. They had never seen "rain" before and why was he building this humongous boat?
- We are in this condition today.
 - The world population is growing

- Secularism and other false religions are cropping up. This is the century of the rise of the “none’s”

Illustration: About Three-in-Ten U.S. Adults Are Now Religiously Unaffiliated - Self-identified Christians make up 63% of U.S. population in 2021, down from 75% a decade ago. Pew research – December 2021

Illustration: Stack of books – false teaching

- We see wickedness, sin and evil growing like in the days of Noah
- Lawlessness and violence abounded and the believers (8 in Noah’s case) are in the minority. God preserves and protects His people even if they are persecuted.

Matthew 24:37-38

36 “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. 37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark.”

- In the end, God will judge those who reject the truth. What should our attitude toward those who have yet to come to Christ be?
 - Pray that the blinders on their eyes will be removed and they can see the truth of the Gospel
 - Lovingly engage them in a relationship that may lead to spiritual conversations. You may be the only Jesus or Christian they will ever meet up close and personal in their lifetime.
 - Serve and love people expecting nothing in return.
 - Expose them to the Gospel and the truth of scripture by your lifestyle, values, and words
 - But we cannot be like Lot. Lot compromised and allowed the world to infiltrate his life. We are to be in the world but not of the world Jesus said. We see next in verses 7-9 of 2 Peter 2;

- The reluctant rescue of Lot

2 Peter 2:7-8

7 And if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked 8 (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard)

- Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom. He chose the best land out of selfishness when he was offered a choice by Abraham
- Lot was tormented by his worldly and utterly sensual surroundings and yet stay in Sodom and Gomorrah. He hated the sin but he wouldn't leave the sin that was all around him.
 - Sensual conduct – outrageous sexual behavior
 - Wicked – unprincipled, unrestrained, lawless standards that violate the conviction that came upon their consciences and the commands of God
 - Tormented – greatly distressed / oppressed in his soul, exhausting someone, wearing them down, deeply troubled in their soul at the activity around them.
 - Lawless deeds – there wasn't Mosaic laws as of yet, when Lot was alive. The meaning here that they acted contrary to their consciences and human nature by acting out their homosexual desires.
- He exposed himself to ungodly things and it made his testimony weak among his family and the people when it came to matters of his faith
 - Lot offered his daughters to the men who knocked on his door and wanted to be sexually involved with the angels that were in Lot's home.
 - Lot hesitated to leave Sodom and Gomorrah when the angels told him it was time to leave to avoid judgment.
 - Lot's wife disobeyed the angels command to not look back. She longed for the city of sin and couldn't comply. Became a pillar of salt immediately as a result of her longing for worldly things.
 - We see all of this take place in Genesis 13 and then it says in verses 30 – 35, Lot got drunk and committed incest.
- Yet, Peter is saying here that lot was a witness for God in these cities and God rescued Lot and his family before destruction came.
- Peter calls Lot righteous. He had faith just like Abraham. They both were given God's righteousness in their heart as a gift of salvation.

Genesis 15:6

And he, (Abraham), believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness

Romans 4:3

For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”

Psalm 24:3 – 5

3 Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. 5 He will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation

- It is important to note that Abraham, like Lot, did sinful things as well.
 - Genesis 16 records his running ahead of God’s will and being disobedient due to Sarah giving her servant, Hagar, to Abraham and they had a son – Ishmael that was not the promised son. Isaac would come when Abraham was one hundred years old.
- As Christians, we will sin and receive forgiveness but let’s learn from these examples Peter is giving us with the angels, Noah, and Lot. God judges’ sin if we don’t confess it and get it under the blood of Jesus Christ
 - For the lost person, unconfessed sin will bring separation from God for all eternity
 - For the believers, a loss of quality relationship with God the Father if we continue to live in our sin without repenting.
- In this area of teaching for us as believers, take your teaching very seriously and dig deep into God’s word for truth.
 - Study the context of the passage
 - Study the meaning of the passage
 - Study the teaching of the passage and the application
 - Don’t shortage your study because this is God’s truth.

James 3:1

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

- Take your opportunity to teach seriously because they have eternal implications in the life of those who are exposed to your teaching.
- By highlighting Lot’s salvation and deliverance out of sin, Peter is comforting Christ followers everywhere to remember we have nothing to fear. God is our deliverer and our protector..

- The amazing thing about God is that He is perfectly balanced in how He deals with human beings because all of who He is, His attributes come out of the fact that He is holy!!

- The response of God in balance of wrath and mercy

2 Peter 2:9-10

9 Then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority

- If the Lord rescued Noah and Lot out of the depth of sin in their culture, we can live in our culture and look to God for wisdom and guidance knowing with confidence He will protect us and ultimately deliver us.
- Trials means here an intent to attack

1 Peter 5:8

8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour

- At the beginning of verse 9, Peter is referring back now to verse 4. If or since, now he is saying then
- If he rescues the saved, he will also reserve the unrighteous for eternal torment in hell forever. If God did these things in the past, he will do it again in the present and certainly the future.
- And especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority – verse 10a
 - False teachers indulge the flesh to feed their fleshly desires in an unrighteous manner
 - They despise those who are in authority over them
 - They reject the Lordship of Christ over them
 - Instead of surrendering in humility daily to be a living sacrifice for God, they desire to live out their lives however they want to.

2 Peter 2:1

Even denying the Master who bought them. – who paid for their opportunity to be saved from hell and enjoy an abundant life here on planet earth.

Application: Our God is full of grace and mercy to those who come to Him and follow Him on His terms

Key Thought: We underestimate, to our personal peril, the wrath and mercy of God

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10

9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.

Questions to Ponder This Week

- 1. Do you take the patience of God for granted in how you live your life?**
- 2. Have you ever experienced God's anger toward you in your life? When and why?**
- 3. Are you grateful for the balance of all of God's attributes, especially this week His mercy and wrath?**