

GOD'S RESCUE!

2 Peter chapter 2 presents somber warnings about false teachers, destructive heresies, blaspheming errors, corrupt sensualities, and exploiting greed - in the church! Like the saints of old, you may see yourself oppressed by fallen angels, or living in a corrupt violent world like Noah. Or Lot, living amidst people of lawless deeds and sensual conduct. So where is God in all this? Though you feel like a little ship tossed in a great storm in a vast and fearsome ocean, be not afraid. Trust and obey Almighty God. Of the wicked He says, "*their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.*" God is patient. He enacted judgment against evil in the ancient world. And will do so again.

1- Destruction of the godless. Of those rebelling against God, the apostle says in verses 9-10 "*the Lord knows how to keep the unrighteous under punishment, and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority*" - specifically the authority of God. Prominent Old Testament examples of Noah and Lot expose the hopeless condition of those who rebel against God. Perhaps Peter recalls how Jesus used the same examples in Luke 17. Worldwide corruption invited global judgment and Jesus says, "*the flood came and destroyed them all*" (Genesis 6-8). Jesus also noted how "*fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all*" in Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18-19). Those who choose and excuse their own unrighteous desires, go their own way, reject the character and command of God, and choose the lie of Satan. But ultimate inescapable judgment is coming in God's timeline.

2- Rescue of the godly. Peter and Jesus point to people who respected God's authority. Peter calls Noah a "*herald of righteousness.*" He lived a life of obedience to God as a vocal and practical witness of trust, not only to his own unrepentant generation, but to all of mankind. Eight persons of Noah's family were the only ones saved from the worldwide flood. Years later, Abraham prayed that God would spare the righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot seems like a compromiser. But Peter says "*God rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked, 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 made a lot of poor choices. An ineffective parent, he lingered amidst evil, clasping worldly wealth. God saved his family - except his wife who looked back, choosing the world instead of God's word. Lot paid a great price by tolerating evil, instead of actively rooting it out before judgment came.

3- God provides for you. Verse 9 says "*the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials.*" God actively preserves His people today as He did in past history. And God's powerful remedy against the influence and judgment of sin is regeneration by the Holy Spirit. He makes you a born-again believer in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Then you not only have His forgiveness of sins but also His eternal life within. The Holy Spirit empowers your new nature to say no to sin (Titus 2:12), and to trust and obey the authority of His Word of truth, the Bible. God's warnings in 2Peter 2 about the sensuous deception of false teachers and prophets relates to the sensual sin context of 1Corinthians 6:11, "*do not be deceived, neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*" Then he exults, "*and such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified*" (past tense) in Jesus! Changed! 1Corinthians 10:11 reminds that Old Testament history, including gross idolatrous and sensual rebellion, "*happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction.*" So pay attention! "*Take heed lest you fall...because no temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. Therefore my beloved, flee from idolatry.*"

4- God preserves His own. Alexander Cumming said "We must persevere in prayer, but we must also prepare to deal with distractions, discouragements, disappointments, and difficulties of all kinds. This is the way to the Kingdom." George Mueller said "the only way to learn strong faith is to endure great trials." In 1Peter1:6 various trials test the genuineness of faith. Who knows what trial will end in death? CS Lewis writes, "pain is terrible, but surely you need not have fear as well. Death will be a deliverer. We get afraid because we struggle. God says, 'do you trust Me so little?' In trials, we are like a tired traveler near the journey's end. But of course this may not be the end. Make it a good rehearsal." Scripture warns that God's ultimate judgment is coming for those who despise His authority. But the good news says God rescues those who trust and obey. Put all your faith in Jesus, the only Savior, who rescues you! □