

# The Lord Knows How to Deliver the Godly

2 Peter 2:4-11, “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) — then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.”

Heavenly Father, please as we study this passage today, I pray that You impress on us both the warnings and the promises that are here. I pray that You would cause us to meditate on the judgement that You have reserved and the judgements that You have already carried out in the world. I pray that those of us who trust in You and trust in Your Son would be comforted by these words here, that You can save the godly from the midst of the ungodly and keep them from temptation. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Last week’s passage was talking about false teachers in the church and those false teachers, even though they have been condemned, they continue to teach for a long time and it doesn’t mean their judgement was idol. Jude says they were condemned, but God continues to allow them to teach, He continues to cause many to follow in their destructive path. The logical question is, why would God do that? When people are deceived and misled from the truth, how can God do that to His people? Peter’s going to answer that question in this passage. He is going to start by giving three examples, the examples of God judging the wicked. Also for him, even though they have been judged for the final judgement to be delayed, how He judges the wicked and preserves the righteous. The fall of the angels He uses, the judgement on the world at the time of the flood where God delivers Noah and his family, the judgement on Sodom and Gomorrah where He delivers Lot. The point of this is that God can leave wicked people in the world and His people will still be delivered. He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. He doesn’t need to say, ‘Well, there’s this wicked person here, I need to eliminate him otherwise he will mislead My people.’ God knows how to deliver His people out of temptation so He can leave the false teacher in place because He has a purpose for that false teacher. He doesn’t have to immediately limit the false teachers so he doesn’t mislead the sheep. No, what He will do is get a group of goats to follow him because God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. He can leave the false teacher in place because it happens for a season at a time where the righteous will be misled, but only for a season. As the wicked man grows worse and worse, as his evil deeds become more and more manifest, the righteous will not continue to follow. As Paul says, talking about the same subject, in 2 Timothy 3:8-9, “Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest

to all, as theirs also was.” There’s a point where the false teachers’ folly won’t be manifest in the people of God and they won’t be ensnared in the temptation. He goes on to talk about how the wicked men grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, so as a false teacher goes on and gets worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, those who are righteous will recognize it and be righteous and be delivered. They won’t continue to follow the path of destruction. Their folly will be made manifest to all those who are righteous, all those who desire to follow God. Last week I had said that for a season I have listened to false teachers, but they reached a point, as I go back and think about it, they reach a point where they do grow worse and worse, this is how God has ordered it and there’s a point where you look at them and say, ‘Clearly they are a false teacher’. Now, our desire should be for us to increase in discernment so we discern it earlier, because we do have a responsibility to discern it, but understand God knows how to deliver the godly from temptation. The false teachers get a following by feeding people’s temptation, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. They know how to do this, to manipulate people to try to get them to follow them on the path of destruction. That’s not why God has them do it, God has them do it to separate the sheep from the goats. The goats will follow the allure of the world, the goats will not be delivered from the temptation, they will be consumed by the temptation. 1 John 2:15-17, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” Those who love the world, when the false teachers say this will get you this, this is where you will end up, you fulfill the lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. Those who don’t love the world, they won’t follow, they won’t go down that path of destruction. God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. Peter’s going to use examples as he makes his arguments so let’s examples.

Verses 4-5, “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly.” I find this to be a difficult verse, trying to match it with other Scriptures because it talks about casting them to hell. If you read the parallel passage from Jude 6, where Jude is making the same argument about false teachers, he said, “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.” If this is parallel, then this is the judgement that came when the angels rebelled against God and were cast out of heaven. They didn’t keep their first estate, their first place, their first position. If that’s what’s being spoken of here, for God did not spare the angels to sin, because the language is very similar about delivering them to chains of darkness, waiting for the judgement of the great day. “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned”, Jude is clearly talking about losing their initial position, but the other theory is that he’s tying it to the verses about Noah and about that judgment. The thing to remember is that what we do know is true is when the demons rebelled against God, when the angels that were in holiness and righteousness, who were creatures of light, when they rebelled against God, God did not immediately destroy them, He didn’t immediately cast them into the lake of fire, that’s still to happen. Instead He left them to cause a great deal of trouble. They were cast down to the earth. Now Peter says they were cast down to hell and this is one of the theories, that these demons are ones that

mised men in the time of the flood and then God flooded the world and took those demons who misled and cast them into hell, waiting to judgement like the men who had died. This might be the correct interpretation, I lean towards that this is the only place in the Bible that this word is used for hell, 'tartararo'. It's a Greek term that was a picture of separation, like they say the distance from earth, from Hades is the same from Hades to tartaro. That it's being cast into a great abyss, it's being cast far away. I think probably what Peter is talking about here, again, this is just my opinion as to what this verse means, is that the picture is the demons being cast to earth, that this is their judgement, that they are cast out of heaven and cast to earth. That's largely based on Jude, they were cast out of their high position. They left their abode and were cast down. All the angels that fell, all that followed in the rebellion of Lucifer, they were judged. The demons here seem to believe and recognize that they are reserved for judgement. Matthew 8:28-29, "When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" They understood that there was a time of judgement, that they were reserved for judgement. Whether this is what Peter is talking about or not, this is where demons were, they were cast out of heaven and sent to roam on the earth and they're waiting for the judgement day and anticipating that judgement day. This is the story where He cast them into the swine and the swine run to the water and die. They understood there was eternal judgement and they understood that time of judgment had not yet come. They know that there will be a time where they are sentenced to the lake of fire. So then Peter says, 'deliver them into chains of darkness.' With the two theories, one could be that God cast them into hell, into the abyss and they are chained in darkness. I lean again more towards the idea that they're constrained to do evil because this is where you have the false teachers too that's the context Peter is talking about, false teachers aren't all of a sudden of their own volition going to be righteous teachers. They stay in darkness and go into greater and greater darkness. The demons can't do what's righteous, they are enslaved, they are in chains. That word there comes from 'to bind', a word that's only used one place in the New Testament. It's like they are drawn to darkness, the demons can't say they will now go be a blessing, they are enslaved, they are bound because they left their first estate which was to serve God and be a blessing to the name of God. Now they are bound to do the opposite because they are reserved for judgement. Just as God said there were false teachers that were condemned and their only end is that they will be judged, that's the picture of the demons, they were condemned and their only end is that they will be judged. Revelation 20:10, "The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." The demons know this is their end, the demons know that this is what they're reserved for. Consider why does God have demons present on the earth, why are they here now? He allows them to roam the earth not because He couldn't do anything about it; after all He constrained them and forces them to do what He wants them to do, He forces them into darkness, He forced them in their rebellion out of the light. Part of their condemnation is they separate the righteous and the ungodly. We see this in obvious ways, the people that are worshipping demons, the people that are Satan worshippers, we recognize that this is separating the righteous from the ungodly. They're under condemnation and when God comes, their judgement will be rapid, but God has a purpose for them now, He has a purpose of separating those who desire to follow Him from those who don't. 2 Peter 2:5, "And did not spare the

ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly.” He gives the example of the angels, now he gives the example of the flood where He didn’t spare the ancient world. God had appointed it for judgement. Genesis 6:5-7, “Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the Lord said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.”” Because of their evil, God chose to condemn them, but after He made that decision the judgement doesn’t happen immediately. It’s not like He looked at the world and saw the violence and perversion and said He was going to destroy the world and the flood comes the next day. No, it’s 120 years later. He holds off the destruction and instead He says in 6:3, “And the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”” God chose the point of condemnation and He chose the point of judgement and they were going to be condemned. Even with the condemnation of the wicked, God knew how to deliver the godly from temptation, even with the possibly billions of people that are following after the world and following after the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, Noah didn’t. Noah’s family, his wife and three sons and their wives, they were delivered. We don’t know when the other seven decided to join Noah, but when he entered the ark, they went with him. God let people be misled, he let them act in a variety of unrighteous ways for 100 years while Noah’s preaching. He had condemned them, He had chosen the date of their judgement, but still He let the evil persist probably so they would be under greater judgement. People probably mocked Noah the whole time as they continued in their violence and perversity. God had a point for the wickedness to continue, He had a point to have Noah preach to them, to increase their condemnation. So often we think that condemnation should come and then the judgement should come and Peter’s saying, no, the false teacher will teach falsely, he will be condemned by God, but it doesn’t mean that His judgement is going to be instantaneous. Noah preached, he was a true teacher and not a false teacher. He preached truth for 100 years and even though God only saved eight people through that, Noah didn’t even reach anyone beyond his own family. Still God held off the judgement and He still protected the righteous through the judgement. He was able to deliver the godly out of temptation and then He brought the judgement. Bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly, He preserved Noah but destroyed all those who would not hear Noah. He flooded the whole earth and may have killed billions and billions of people who were reserved for judgement for 120 years.

Verses 6-8, “And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds).” He turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes. This is the third example that Peter is using to make us understand how God is and that God doesn’t need to remove temptation, instead He delivers His people from temptation. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed utterly, He turned them into ashes, He rained fire and brimstone from heaven upon them. Not just Sodom and Gomorrah, but the whole plain that Lot had looked on and said how fruitful it was and how well-watered it was. All of it was

burned up by God pouring out His wrath. He condemned them to destruction. God had condemned them to destruction just as He had the angels, just as He had the world, He condemns Sodom and Gomorrah. God chose to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah with all their wickedness, but the first time they did wickedly He didn't do it. He let it ripen and grow; they'd been doing evil for some time, they were in the most blatant rebellion against God's order and yet He waited. After He destroys Sodom and Gomorrah He waits another 430 years before He destroys Canaan by sending in the Israelites and have them defeat them because their iniquity is not yet full. God allows people to continue in their wickedness because He has a reason for it, He has a plan. Peter's making the point, He allows false teachers to continue; He doesn't need to punish them instantaneously because He has a purpose for them, He has a purpose to reserve them until the day where that judgement comes swiftly like it did upon Sodom and Gomorrah, making them an example to those afterward who would live ungodly. God chose Sodom and Gomorrah to be such cities of perversion so people would look at them and understand how God judges perversion, by destroying it. God did it as an example for us, He caused Sodom and Gomorrah to be wealthy, He caused them to be in a well-watered place, He caused them to turn towards evil and He did all of that so they would get worse and worse in their sin so He can destroy them so we can be warned and we can understand that this is what God does, this is what God does to those that would choose to live ungodly. Let's make sure we don't ignore the judgment of God, God judges so we fear. God judges, this is one of the ways He delivers us from temptation, He gives us these examples where He has poured out His wrath so that we're afraid to walk in that temptation. It's so easy for us to make these things mystical, somehow God sends an angel to grab us by the hand. He does do that sometimes, but other times He does it as simply as pouring out is destruction on Sodom and Gomorrah so we say, 'You know, if I walk down that same path, I will receive the same destruction.' This picture of hell, this picture of eternal damnation that is Sodom and Gomorrah. Even in that, He delivered righteous Lot. In addition to the judgement, in addition to the sinning, in addition to the perversity, God was still in the midst of that able to deliver righteous Lot. He was able to preserve Lot's faith even though he lived in Sodom. Lot was still working to live godly, even when he is surrounded by the wicked around him so God delivered him from the picture of hell fire. Remember the delivery, Genesis 19:16, "And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city." This is the picture of God delivering the righteous from judgement. He takes us by the hand because of His mercy and He brings us out. It may not look like that, it may not feel like that, but that's how we're delivered. We should never take credit for the delivery, it is God's mercy that He reveals Himself to us, it's God's mercy that He delivers us out of temptation and He doesn't need to do it by sending a physical angel to grab our hand and drag us out. Even when He doesn't do it with a physical angel, we should never doubt it is God who did it. As you continue with the story of Lot and his daughters, Lot is very affected by being in Sodom and Gomorrah, but God still said he was righteous and delivered him. Lot was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked. This is important to note, he wasn't rejoicing with the conduct of the people around him, rather he was oppressed by it. That word 'oppressed' means 'to be worn down with toil'. The conduct of all the evil people around him was wearing him down, it was constantly wearing on him. Because he was righteous he did not take pleasure in the wicked and filthy conduct of the wicked. For that righteous man, it's easy to think Lot is not a righteous man, but Peter is clearly declaring that he was, just consider how much his conduct was affected by the people around

him even though he didn't join in, it was constantly wearing on him. This is how we're supposed to be when we live in a place filled with rebellion to God, we should feel it as a weight upon us, we should feel it as pressure upon us because there is pressure upon us to fall into temptation, there is pressure upon us to agree with the world. If you're righteous you resist the temptation, but don't think that it's pleasing because if we don't, the other choice is to approve and God condemns those who approve in Romans 1:32, "Who, knowing the righteous judgement of God, that those who practice such things are preserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them." Lot didn't approve when he dwelling among them, even though that was a choice he made. In Genesis 13:10, he desired the well-watered land around Sodom. In Genesis 13:12, he pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. In Genesis 14:12, he's living in Sodom. He saw the temptation and he kept going and drawing himself to the temptation. He wanted the easy life, he wanted the fullness of bread. He saw the physical blessings, but make sure you understand what he sacrificed. He sacrificed spiritual peace because his righteous soul was tormented from day to day. This is important for us to recognize, day by day he was tormented, God was kind and merciful because Lot sought the physical blessings of this world and God tormented his soul because he was more concerned about physical things than about spiritual things. He was not lost to the love of the world, Lot was righteous, but we shouldn't choose a path that leads us into the temptations of the world, that draws us, that causes our footsteps to fulfill the lusts of the world or we should expect to be tormented like Lot was. That's nothing like the eternal torment that the angels will receive and those who rebel against God will receive. Make sure you choose peace rather than worldly things, rather than worldly satisfactions because if you seek after the temptation, this is how God delivered Lot from the temptations, He tormented him, his soul was tormented day to day by the evil deeds around him, by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds. He thought he would go to Sodom and he thought he would go to this fruitful place, this place of comfort, but he didn't find comfort there, he found torment there. Let's not think that seeking after fulfilling our temptations will give us joy and peace. God's more merciful than that, we don't find joy and peace by following false teachers that will lead us and will fulfill our temptations in the world. Instead we'll hear and see lawless deeds, see them and hear the violence and destruction. The key thing here is that they were lawless. Lot was tormented because these people didn't want to hear, 'This is what God has said', and God has given us the picture of Sodom and Gomorrah so that we could see the difference in God's response, to rescue the one who desires God's ways, to rescue the one who desires to be lawful, and to destroy those who desire to be rebellious. To destroy with fire and brimstone those who are lawless. That's what Jesus Christ said, 'Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.' The lake of fire is for those who practice lawlessness. Make sure that lawlessness torments you rather than rejoicing in the evil that people do.

Verses 9-11, "Then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord." So Peter's given three examples and now he's going to draw conclusions out of his argument. God knows how to deliver the godly. Remember again, the context of this is false teachers. They were condemned but not removed and they weren't removed because they weren't going to ensnare sheep, they were going to ensnare goats. God can leave the false teachers

there because it's one of the ways that He separates the sheep from the goats in this life now, He puts false teachers out there that are trying to lead people away by giving them temptations, by directing them through flattery, through giving shortcuts, the things false teachers do to puff up the pride. Those who are God's, they won't be lead astray by it. Lot was tempted by good physical things that were in Sodom and Gomorrah but he wasn't ensnared by them because God tormented him by their lawless deeds. Noah and his family, for 100 years they were preaching, they were building the ark, you can expect how the culture that was filled with hatred for God was treating them, but yet God still delivered Noah, still delivered Noah's wife, still delivered Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their wives. He still delivered the eight even though for 100 years they were confronted with temptations to do evil. God can leave people in the world who would mislead, whether it's demons or men, because He will preserve those who are His. John 10:27-28, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." God makes it so they won't be snatched out of His hand. That doesn't mean we seek after temptations, but understand God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. False teachers use temptations of the lust of the flesh to mislead people, to ensnare the just, but God delivers those who are His and He leaves the false teachers for greater condemnation, He leaves the false teachers to separate the sheep and the goats. He has a real purpose for what He does. He left the demons in the world for a reason. Notice Peter doesn't say 'those who have faith' even though that's clearly true, those are the ones God delivers. That's not how Peter describes them, he describes them as the godly. Don't think that your walk doesn't reflect who you are. That word 'godly' there means that they're reverent towards God, not just in profession but in actual actions, those are the ones He delivers. Those who have faith that are manifested in real works. Just as he is able to deliver the godly out of temptation, He also reserves the unjust in the day of judgement. Just as He delivers the godly, He also reserves judgement for the unjust. He condemns but it doesn't mean that judgement is going to come instantaneously. He typically doesn't destroy them, He leaves them in their position and they have real punishment, they're under punishment, just like the demons are under punishment now. They don't have the same position that they had before, they don't have the same power that they had before, they don't have the ability to walk in righteousness as they did before. He does the same thing with the unjust, He punishes them now. They get more and more enslaved to their sin, they get more and more deceived and do more and more deceiving, they walk further and further in darkness. As people are enslaved to their sin, as they are the unjust, understand there's real punishment that happens to them. We can watch it in our country as we see all these people spinning off into these areas where they are so insane and so detached from reality. This is what it looks like that the unjust are under punishment. I think drug addiction is a good example of how evil works. A person wants to smoke marijuana because they think it will be fun and they end up constantly needing to have the drug and an increasing dose and need this and are driven by it that they become slave to their sin. This is a physical picture of what happens all the time. Sometimes that can be slave to the sin of applause right? It doesn't need to be that, slave to the sin of pride, but it becomes this all-consuming thing. You have to have the people listening to you and applauding you, you have to have these things and it becomes this consuming thing. That is judgement, that is punishment, but they're reserved for eternal judgement. In the day of judgement both man and demons will be judged. Matthew 25:41-43, "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his

angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.” There is a day of judgement for those who are not godly. There is a day of judgement that’s pictured by the flood where God will come and judge the earth with fire and in that day He will deliver the righteous, He will deliver the godly, but the rest will be punished, the rest will be cast into the everlasting fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. So now Peter’s going to go on and say “especially”. So there’s this general, that He’s reserved the unjust for the day of judgement, but there’s also to specific categories that Peter wants to point out that will be judged more harshly, that are under punishment now in a greater way. They’re condemned now and they’re waiting for eternal punishment. The first are “those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness.” We might think of lust of uncleanness as lust of the world, but I don’t think that’s what is being described here. What’s being described here is not the normal sin people in the world have. What’s being described here is that uncleanness means to contaminate yourself, to perverse yourself. I do think it’s tying back to the picture of Sodom and Gomorrah, not just the normal sins of the world where you are trying to defile the natural processes, the natural order. Sodomy, rebellion against your gender, they’re reserved for a greater judgement. The misery that they suffer on this earth is incredible. Look at the suicide rate against professed homosexuals, look at the misery and the unhappiness in their situation and it’s the same for these people who say that they’re a woman even though they’re a man or that they’re a man even though they are a woman. They are the most miserable of people, this is the picture that they’ve been reserved under punishment now. That doesn’t mean none can be saved, I don’t think that’s what Peter is saying at all, but he’s saying there are real judgements now as they are waiting for the ultimate judgement. Then Peter gives another example that he puts on the same level as sodomy, those that “despise authority.” How often do we not think that despising authority isn’t that big of a deal, but Peter is connecting that to those who would commit sodomy? To those who would overthrow the natural physical order and Peter is saying those who would overthrow the order of authority, that they’re especially under judgement reserved for judgement. It’s so easy for us to not think of despising authority as that big of a deal, but that’s not correct, that’s on the same level as desiring the unnatural instead of the natural. When we despise authority we rebel against God’s order just like Sodomites rebel against God’s order. He talks a lot more about this point because in his day, the Jews understood that the homosexuals were in serious sin, this wasn’t in a debate. Those who despise authority has always been debated so I think Peter is stating the first one to prove how serious the second one is. He says those who despise authority are “presumptuous, self-willed.” This is another word that’s only used here out of the whole New Testament and it means they are “daring” or ‘audacious’. The despise authority is to believe that you, who have less power than they have, that you are able to overthrow somebody who God gave power and authority to. That takes daring because you know they’re more powerful than you are, but yet you have the audacity to stand and rebel against Him, you have the audacity to surprise them, that takes daring and we see this in children. Children should be really careful not to despise authority. It’s easy to despise the authority of your parents when they tell you what to do even though you are powerless against them, even though they are the ones who give your food and shelter, you’re dependent on them for everything, but yet children rebel. How much more evil do you think it is when adults who should know better, adults who have been trained, despise the authorities that God has put over them? Authority is a big deal that Peter talks about. In Romans 1, when Paul talks about how a sign



of judgement on a culture is that men stop using natural relations, women with women and men with men, and he goes on and puts in the same category, being disobedient to parents. Despising authority is as unnatural as Sodomy, it is as much overthrowing God's order as Sodomy is. I think self-seeking would be a translation that is more meaningful to us. The Greek word is two parts, the first part is 'altos', which is self and the second part is where we get the word 'heedless' from. It's about pleasing yourself, it's not about anything beyond you, it's about you. They're just seeking their own pleasure. The person who despises authority is just seeking their own pleasures as much as a Sodomite is who just says they want to do what they want to do, I just want to do things that please me. God puts authorities in place in order to put real constraints against sin. The person who despises authority is angry towards these authorities that God has appointed to constrain their evil. God puts them in place to constrain sin even when the authorities don't desire it, that is why God puts them in place and what God uses them for. Their presumptuous and self-willed and "they are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries." They're not afraid to speak against those who have more glory, more worth, more significance. That's what that word 'dignitaries' comes from, from the word 'glory'. God gives glory to people in this world, glory in position, glory in understanding, glory in power and those who despise authorities, they speak against them anyway even though the people that God has appointed, He's given them real things. They just are presumptuous and presume that these authorities that have more power, that they won't respond against them. Then he uses the same example Jude uses, "whereas angels, who are greater in power and might." The angels don't treat authorities that way even though an angel is far more powerful than we are, far more able to do things than we can. They are far superior in glory, they're face superior in power than we are, but yet they don't dare to bring a reviling accusation against authorities before the Lord. Jude gives us an example of Michael the archangel in Jude 9, "Yet, Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!'" Michael did not despise authority, even the authority of Satan. Understand it is to turn the world on its head, to reject the order of God when we despise authority.

#### Applications:

1. Don't be surprised. I think this was an application from last week, although I might not have put it in the same words. Don't be surprised when God lets a false teacher continue. Even as you see them leading many people as it says in 2 Peter 2:2, "And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed." Even though you see many people follow their destructive ways, there were many people that rejected Noah and followed the ways of the world, but yet for 100 years God continued to let it happen. We shouldn't be surprised when you see a false teacher leading people astray and God allows them to continue. This is the pattern that God has done in the past. He continues to allow demons to mislead, He continued to allow the evil of the ancient world to mislead people. Even after He declared them to be destroyed, He allowed the evil of Sodom and Gomorrah to continue until they were destroyed, but the evil continued for 400 more years. We have the testimony from Scripture that God allows evil people to continue to work to mislead so don't be surprised when we see it in this age, don't be surprised when we see it now because this is what God has always done and He's done it with perfect wisdom and understanding.

2. Are you tormented by the evil around us? Lot chose to live in Sodom, but made that decision because of the well-watered plain and was attracted to it by worldly reasons that led to his misery and torment. Where do you choose to do? Maybe the line of work that you choose to do, the stores you choose to go to, don't think places are neutral. The question is, if you're saved, the place that might look so beautiful can be a place of torment when they are in rebellion to God. You can think that you will have peace and joy there, but God is better than that, He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. He can cause you to be tormented so we should all ask ourselves where do we choose to go and what do we choose to do that causes us to be tormented and instead we should be making a different choice. Abraham went into the mountains and Lot into the well-watered plain, let's make sure that well-watered plain, that thing that looks so good in the world can be a place of torment. Are you making choices to be tormented by the evil around you, are you avoiding the evil? It's so easy for us to be like Lot's wife, where we look back at the evil and instead of looking to the goodness and joy of God's ways, we look back towards the evil so God tells us to remember Lot's wife, don't think that those worldly things that look so good are that good. Remember Lot's wife.
3. Do lawless deeds offend you? I've watched the embrace a few years ago of the so-called Christian community of candidate Trump at the time and even though he has done many things well, he is also in many ways lawless. We should be really careful not to embrace his lawless deeds. The church in America, the visible church, has largely accepted his lawless deeds and stopped speaking about it. People talk about how faithful Donald Trump is, there's no evidence Donald Trump is faithful. We need lawless deeds to offend us. It's easy to look at the economy and say he's strengthened the economy and we can be like Lot, looking in the nice fields around Sodom and saying, 'It's not that bad because it's comfortable.' That's how false teachers work, that's how demons work. We need to make sure that we're looking and lawless deeds are offensive to us. That doesn't mean we should despise the authority because authority is great blessings, but at the same time we shouldn't close our eyes to lawless deeds and not be offended by them.
4. God delivers the godly from temptation. How He does that doesn't eliminate our responsibility even though we should never take credit for it because it's God that moves us to fulfill our responsibility, it's the Spirit that's in us that causes us to walk in righteousness and be delivered. Peter's been talking about how we prevent being led astray, how we prevent being led by false teachers. Add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. This is how we're to pursue it. If we're pursuing these things, we won't be ashamed, we won't be caught up in the things of the world, we won't have people talking about us like Lot going, 'why did he go to Sodom and Gomorrah? Why did he go to that well-watered field of Jordan? Why was he being tempted?' Add to your faith virtue, be bold, stand firm. Add to virtue knowledge, have an understanding so you're able to refute the false teachers so that what sounds good in the flesh doesn't distract you from reality because you understand what God has revealed. We've all heard false teachers and as I said last week, we shouldn't be thinking that they are rare. Rather, we should think they are really common. They were common

in times past and they're still really common today and the way you don't follow them into destruction is you stand boldly, you stand firmly, you stand with knowledge, you stand with self-control, you persevere as they try to continue to mislead you over and over again, etc. God has given us commandments as one of the ways that He delivers the godly from temptation, the godly hear the commandments of God and obey them. Again, it's so easy to make it mystical about how God delivers us. A lot of the ways He delivers us is He gives us commandments and tells us what to do. Sunday nights we've been going through Proverbs. Solomon isn't saying it's a mystical thing, here's how you don't get ensnared by a prostitute, don't go down the street that she's on. So many times that is the simple way that God delivers those who are righteous from temptation, He says to not go there so we don't go there. He says to know these things so you won't be misled. Know what the Scriptures say, add to your virtue knowledge. This is how God delivers the godly out of temptation. Another way He delivers the godly is by giving us examples of what He has done in history. When we consider the extent of God's judgment, when we consider Sodom and Gomorrah with the fire and brimstone that rains down from heaven and destroys all the surrounding areas, in a night it's gone. God judged them and found them guilty. The sin had gone on before for a long time, but He declared them guilty. Another way He delivers the godly from temptation is that we remember that, we remember Lot's wife, we remember the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, we remember how the Israelites went into the women of Ammon. We remember what happens in the past, we remember these things and we remember the judgement that comes upon the people of God when they go to temptation. We remember the judgement that comes on the people of the world when they give into temptation, when they turn over the order that God has established in the world and they choose their own order, we remember the examples that God has given. Don't just think that the Old Testament are these fantastic stories. When David kills thousand with the jawbone of an ass, don't think this just happens at random. God is telling us things and giving us examples. The Old Testament is so we look at these things and are warned. This is one of the ways that God delivers the godly from temptation. God is still the same God; the Lord is still the same Master that wipes out whole cities that rebel against Him. He gives us these pictures so we can be warned and understand. One of the ways we are delivered out of temptation is to remember that God is ruling and reigning in the universe and that the day of judgement will come and it will come swiftly and that's not the day that you can flee, it's too late in that day, now's the day to flee from temptation.

5. Don't follow the goats. God leaves evil men in the world, He leaves false teachers in the world that get many people to follow after them on the path of destruction because He is separating the sheep from the goats. It reminds me of the parable of the wheat and the tares where the tares are mixed in with the wheat and God says to not pull up the tares because you will destroy the wheat, but God does do this, He does send false teachers and He sends false teachers so the goats will follow them. This is one of the ways He removes goats from the church, but what that means is don't follow, have discernment, have understanding. He roots out those that have a love for the world that defile the church by giving temptations to those who aren't godly, that feed the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. He has people come to try to

distract and He delivers the godly, but the ungodly follow and God separates and that's a blessing. What that means is, make sure you're not following the herd of goats because when you have a whole group of people moving it's easy to just join in, but add to your faith virtue. That idea of virtue is literally manliness, it's to stand firm, it's to not go with the crowd. Make sure you don't follow the goats.

Let me close us in prayer. Oh Lord God, we do thank you for this Word. We do pray that you give us greater understanding of it and we pray that you give us application of it, let us truly apply it to our lives and not just hear it and walk away. Let us hear it and truly do it. You are a kind and merciful God that delivers the godly out of temptation but so often You do it by revealing Yourself to us, by giving us Your Word, by giving us Your commandments. Let us recognize how easy it is for us to fall into temptation so we use the ways that you have given us to prevent it. Lord, we thank You that You are a God who is wiser than we are, who has more understanding than we do. Lord, let us walk in Your ways and not our own. We ask this in Your Son's name, amen.