

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 17 January 2020. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

Damnation and Deliverance

2 Peter 2:4-7

In the last few weeks, we have been studying through **2 Peter 2**. In this chapter, the Apostle Peter is warning Christians to beware of false prophets. Now, the word that we often use to describe a false prophet is the word “apostate,” because an apostate is someone who “departs” from the truth. An apostate is someone who has heard the truth, and who even professes it; yet, in reality, he rejects the truth, and he is craftily drawing people away from the truth.

Now, as we saw last week, Peter also reminds us of the *destiny* of apostates. He says that their **“judgment...lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”** The writers of the New Testament often reassured God’s people of the eternal damnation that is awaiting false teachers. Now, why do we need to be reassured of this fact? We certainly don’t *desire* that apostates should perish. (God surely doesn’t desire it!) However, we *do* need to be reminded that God is a just God, who does not acquit the wicked! This is important to remember--because in this world, apostates do *appear* to be successful. Oftentimes apostates are wealthy and powerful. In this world, apostates are well-liked and adored by many, while God’s people suffer reproach and oppression. Outwardly, it almost appears that apostates are *blessed*, while God’s people are cursed. For this reason, it is easy for God’s people to become disheartened and disillusioned, and to ask, “Where are you, God? Why are you silent? Are you asleep?” If we’re not careful, we can easily develop an upside-down picture of reality. That is why we must be reminded that God is just. *God* says that teachers of false gospels are **“accursed.”** *God* says, **“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”** God is *not* asleep! God says that the judgment of apostates **“slumbereth not.”**

Now, in order to drive home this point, Peter reminds us of three groups of apostates who did *not* escape God’s judgment. He also gives a couple examples of saved people who *did* escape God’s judgment. This morning, we will be looking at these examples. The title of this message is ***Damnation and Deliverance***.

Read 2 Peter 2:4-7.

I. The damnation of apostates

What makes sinners think that God will not judge them? What makes them feel so secure? Probably the biggest reason that sinners feel secure in their sinful ways is, simply, that that *no judgment has come to them yet!* As the years roll by, and all seems to be well, and there are no apparent signs of coming judgment, they become increasingly confident that judgment will never come to them. However, this is a delusion! Let’s see what Solomon said about this.

Read Ecclesiastes 8:11-12.

Why do sinners fully resolve in their hearts to do evil? It's simple. Because their judgment has not been executed *speedily*, they've convinced themselves that it is not coming *at all*. Now, if this be true of sinners in general, how much more must apostate teachers feel secure in their sin? Remember, apostates usually have large followings. They are loved and adored by many. They are what the world would call "successful"; and *because* they are so successful, they feel *all the more* confident that no harm is coming to them. In fact, over time, apostates often begin to believe their own lies; and they convince themselves that God is smiling upon them. However, Peter puts this lie to rest. In **verses 4-7**, Peter reminds us of three ancient groups of apostates who *seemed* to be secure from judgment; yet, the day came when God's judgment fell upon them fast and furiously. The first of these three groups are "***the angels that sinned.***" (Read verse 4 again.)

There was a time, before God created man, when *all* the angels of God were holy. In **Job 38**, we are told that when God laid the cornerstone of the earth, "***the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God*** [all the angels] ***shouted for joy***" (**Job 38:6-7**). At this point, *all* the angels were still sinless and holy. But then, sometime shortly after God created the earth and man, the unthinkable happened. Lucifer, one of the highest angels in heaven, suddenly became *unholy*. It began when he entertained a covetous thought. He desired to sit upon God's throne; and his heart became lifted up in pride. Very soon, he convinced a third of the angels of heaven to follow him in rebellion against God. However, their rebellion was unsuccessful; and they ended up being cast out of heaven. When Christ was here on earth, He recounted to His disciples that day, thousands of years before, when he had seen Satan fall "***like lightning***" from heaven (**Luke 10:18**).

Lucifer and his angels were the very first apostates. They *knew* the truth that God is holy; and they *knew* that God deserves complete, undivided worship and obedience from His creation. However, when pride sprang up in their hearts, they rejected that truth; and they soon convinced our parents, Adam and Eve, to turn from the truth, as well.

The war in heaven 6,000 years ago was the very first apostasy. However, it certainly was not the last. There was an *even worse* apostasy that took place in the angelic realm about 1,500 years after the creation of man. It is this *second* apostasy that Peter is talking about here in **2 Peter 2**. These "***angels that sinned,***" whom Peter mentions here, were a *particular group* of demons. During the days of Noah, a *portion* of Satan's angels committed a crime so heinous, that God delivered them into "***chains of darkness***" straightaway. To this day, they are still in torment; and they are awaiting the final judgment. **Jude** mentioned these angels, as well.

Read Jude 6.

In this passage, Jude says the same thing that Peter said in **2 Peter 2**. According to both Peter and Jude, there is a particular group of fallen angels who are *already* chained in the bottomless pit. Now, *Satan* is certainly not chained in the bottomless pit; and neither are the greater part of his angels. *For now*, Satan is going "***to and fro in the earth***" and walking "***up and down in it.***" In fact, there are even times when Satan has brief access to God's throne room, and hurls accusations at God's saints. The Bible says that Satan is like a "***roaring lion***" walking about, "***seeking whom he may devour.***" *For now*, Satan is *not* chained; and neither are the

millions of demons who assist him here on earth. Right now, Satan is the *“prince of the power of the air”*; and he has a vast hierarchy of principalities and powers underneath him.

Clearly, then, **2 Peter 2:4** is *not* talking about Satan, nor about the demons that are on earth today. Peter is talking about a specific *portion* of the demonic kingdom, which committed a heinous crime against God in the days before the Flood. Let’s see what that crime was.

Read Genesis 6:1-4.

Who are these *“sons of God”* who went in to the *“daughters of men”*? I’ll give you a hint: God is *not* talking about any of Adam’s descendants. These *“sons of God”* were not men! In the Old Testament, the term *“sons of God”* *always* refers to the angels--whether they be God’s holy angels, and Satan’s fallen angels. So then, what is the crime that these angels committed? According to these verses, a portion of Satan’s angels manifested in human form; and they *“took”* wives (literally “women”) for themselves. Now, we may not understand how such a union could take place; but we don’t need to understand. We simply need to take God at his Word! God says that the *“sons of God”* (fallen angels) went in to *“the daughters of men.”* That phrase *“went in to”* refers to sexual activity.

What was the result of this union? Offspring! The offspring of these demons were called the *Nephilim*, or the *Rephaim*, in Hebrew. Both these words mean “giants.” By the way, lest you think that this is a fairy tale, think again. This ancient idea of creating a race that is not entirely human is very rampant today! For years now, mad scientists all over the world have been splicing genes of animals and plants--and humans! Back in 2011, scientists in Britain openly bragged that they had created 150 *chimeras* (hybrids) of humans and animals in the laboratory (supposedly to find cures for diseases)! Hollywood and the pop music industry are conditioning people to this idea by producing movies and songs that glorify the idea of mixing animal and human genes, and even of *humans and aliens* comingling. (The pop song “E.T.,” by Katy Perry, pushes this idea in a not-so-subtle way.) This is one of the many reasons I believe that the Rapture is near, and that the Tribulation is about to be begin. The transhumanists have been saying for *years* that their goal is to create “human 2.0” by mixing animal genes with human genes. Make no mistake about it: Satan is preparing mankind to commit the same kind of wicked crime that people committed before the Flood! The “mark of the beast” will probably *literally* be a mixing of man’s genes with the genes of beasts!

Now, why did the angels do this terrible thing to mankind? It’s simple. They were trying to thwart God’s plan of redemption for mankind. By corrupting the human seed (or genome), they were creating a wicked race of monsters that God would not redeem or pardon. Also, they were trying to prevent the Redeemer Himself, God’s Son, from being born! Remember how God promised Adam and Eve that He would send *“the seed of the woman”* (the Messiah) into the human race, so that He could crush Satan’s head, and defeat Him? God promised that the Messiah would be a Man—a real, flesh-and-blood descendant of Eve. Yet, how could this sinless Man be born into a race of demon-human hybrids? He couldn’t! Satan knew this; and that is why a portion of his angels comingled with women, and began the corruption of the human race. By the time the Flood came, there were, apparently, more giants on earth than there were men! The Bible says that *“all flesh”* had *“corrupted his way”*!

Read Genesis 6:5-12.

Do you see why God has already placed this particular group of angels in chains, long before the Judgment Day? Their crime against God and man was incredibly evil! By the way, the word “hell” here in **2 Peter 2:4** is not the usual Greek word for hell. The two usual Greek words for “hell” in the New Testament are *hades* and *gehanna*. However, the word for “hell” in **2 Peter 2:4** is *Tartarus*. What is Tartarus? Tartarus is, apparently, the deepest, hottest compartment of the abyss of hell! (Even the pagan Greeks, who had almost completely forgotten about the true God, knew about this place, and had a word for it!) Tartarus is a special compartment of hell into which God has already cast this particular group of demons. Remember when Jesus cast out the legion of demons from the maniac of Gadara, and the demons pleaded with Jesus not to send them into “*the deep*”? They were talking about “the abyss”—the pit of hell. They knew very well that a portion of Satan’s angels had already been chained in Tartarus centuries before; and they didn’t want to be sent there early. They pleaded with Jesus not to torment them “*before the time.*” However, make no mistake about it: their time is coming. They *know* that their “lockdown” in the bottomless pit is coming: and they quake in fear. The Most High God has already made an example of the angels that went in to the daughters of men. He has cast them down to Tartarus, and has chained them in darkness.

The fate of these angels should be a warning to apostate teachers. The fallen angels are far more intelligent and powerful than we are. Our strength is puny and futile compared to theirs. Yet, as powerful as these fallen angels are, they could not escape being cast into the abyss by Almighty God. Now, unlike apostate demons, who have no hope of redemption, apostate men *do* have the opportunity to be redeemed. Christ has bought their salvation. Yet, they turn away from it, and keep others from being saved. If they will not repent, they will be cast into the Lake of Fire—just as surely as these angels were cast there!

Now, let’s look at the second group of apostates. The second group of apostates that Peter mentions is “*the old world*” that existed before the Flood. (**Read 2 Peter 2:5 again.**)

As we’ve already seen, many people on earth, by the time of the Flood, were corrupted with the genetic material of the fallen angels. However, regardless of how many people were still *genetically* pure, we know one thing for sure: by the time the Flood came, Noah and his family were the *only ones* who believed God, and entered into the Ark. Now, the people who perished in the Flood were not without warning. Peter calls Noah a “*preacher of righteousness.*” During the 120 years before the Flood, Noah undoubtedly preached often, warning people to repent, and to place their faith in the true God. Sadly, though, they would not listen. Millions of people, no doubt—probably a good number of whom were still genetically uncorrupted, and had the opportunity to be redeemed—rejected the offer of salvation from sin. In doing so, they also rejected the offer of deliverance from the Flood. All they had to do was believe God’s warning, and enter the door of the Ark. Everything was provided, including the food they would need during the Flood. But they *would not believe!*

By the way, if *you* have not entered into the Door of Jesus Christ, judgment is awaiting *you*. You don’t have to be an apostate teacher to be condemned to the Lake of Fire. If you have not personally admitted your sinfulness and your need of Jesus’ sacrifice, and believed on Him, you are already condemned by your sin. Jesus said of in **John 3:18**, “*He that believeth on*

him (Christ) is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” If you do not know Jesus Christ as your Saviour, I urge you to heed Jesus’ invitation! Jesus said, **“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved” (John 10:9).**

The people thought that judgment would never come. All the evidence around them seemed to say that a global Flood was impossible. For one thing, it had never *rained* before the Flood: so the possibility of there being *any* flood, much less a world-wide flood, seemed ludicrous. What’s more, the people had been hearing about the coming judgment for hundreds of years, through the prophecies of Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah. No doom had come *yet*; thus, they were confident that Enoch, Noah, Lamech, Noah, and Noah’s sons, were nothing but crazy fanatics. After all, there were only a couple handfuls of the crazy Jehovah worshippers, while the rejectors of God numbered in the millions. “Surely we can’t all be wrong!” they thought. But they *were* wrong! The day finally came when God shut the door of the Ark. Seven days later, the fountains of the deep broke up, the windows of heaven were opened, and the horrible Flood finally came, and took them all away.

The **“old world”** that lived before the Flood should be a warning to those who depart from the truth of God’s Word today. Apostates who lived in the old world did not escape the judgment of the Flood; and neither will people of *any* age of history escape the judgment of hell, if they depart from the living God. In **Hebrews 2:3**, God warns us, **“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”**

Now, let’s look at the third group. The third group of apostates that Peter mentions is the people of **Sodom and Gomorrah**. (Read verse 6.) Let’s look the record of their destruction.

Read Genesis 19:1-3, 12-28.

The people of Sodom and Gomorrah were incredibly wicked. In **Jude 7**, we are told that they were filled with **“fornication”** (every kind of perversion). Specifically, it says that they went after **“strange flesh.”** (In other words, men with men, and women with women--and worse.) In **Ezekiel 16**, we are also told that the Sodomites were filled with pride, abundance of bread, and idleness (laziness); and they refused to help the poor and needy. The ancient Book of Jasher (an ancient Jewish commentary, of sorts), says that the Sodomites were extremely violent, and delighted in beating and killing for sport, and purposely starving poor people to death.

Yet, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were not without witness of the true God. The Bible tells us in **Genesis 14** that God’s man, Abraham, with a mere 318 servants, saved the people of Sodom and Gomorrah from the armies of the kings of Elimelech, who had taken all the people of Sodom and Gomorrah as captives, and had stolen all their goods. Yet, Abraham did not require any payment from the people of Sodom and Gomorrah for his service. Instead, he returned their captives and goods, and praised the Most High God, who had given him the victory. Abraham’s nephew, Lot, as well, was a witness of the true God (though not a very faithful one), right there in the city of Sodom. According to ancient Jewish sources, Shem (the eldest son of Noah), and some of his godly grandchildren, such as Eber, also lived somewhere in Canaan in the last years before their deaths, and were a godly witness to the wicked people

of that region, as well. However, the people would not listen to them. They continued in their evil ways until the day when God brought down fire from heaven.

In **Jude 7**, Jude says that “*Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*” The people of Sodom are an example to *all* people who depart from the truth. The fire that consumed these five cities was so hot and destructive, and the brimstone so thick, that the ground of the Dead Sea plain is still covered with salt and sulphur to this day, and has never been arable or habitable since then. The people of these cities suffered a few seconds of horrible *earthly* fire; but they then went straight into the *eternal* fire of hell. Their fate is a warning to all who think that they can ignore God, His Word, His laws, and His offer of salvation.

II. The deliverance of God’s people

The Scriptures repeatedly tell us that even in the darkest days of history, God has *never* left mankind without the witness of His Word. Let’s look at one of these Scriptures.

Read Romans 10:13-18.

The Word of God truly has gone out to the ends of the world. God has enabled weak, fallible men to translate His Book into more than 2,450 languages; and 2,000 more translation works are in progress! God has *not* left men without a witness. Do you realise what this means? This means that *men have no excuse for rejecting God!*

Yet, men *do* reject God. In fact, the *overwhelming majority* of mankind rejects God. The number of people who repent and place their faith in God is always small. Yet, no matter how outnumbered and persecuted God’s people may be, God assures us that He *will* deliver us. In these verses, God reminds us of two saved men in Old Testament times whom God delivered from judgment. Those men were Noah and Lot. Noah was a strong believer, while Lot was, sadly, a weak and worldly-minded believer. Yet, imperfect though these men were, God called them “just” men. They were justified by faith; and God delivered them from judgment. Let’s see what the Lord said about their deliverance.

Read Luke 17:26-37.

Noah and Lot lived in days of great apostasy. They and their families were the only ones who had not departed from God. (And even then, only *part* of Lot’s family was saved!) God promised to bring judgment on the wicked world around them. However, just before the judgment fell, He delivered His people. Those who departed from God suffered earthly judgment, followed by *eternal* judgment; but God’s people were delivered from both.

Brethren, we are living in a day of great apostasy. Even as we speak, our Western societies are being ushered into communism. It may not be *full-scale* communism yet; but we are getting there swiftly. We are now being told not to assemble together, nor not to sing hymns when we *do* meet, nor to have Bibles available for people, nor to stick around to fellowship. We know that if we say certain things from the Bible, we can be not only censored, but

accused of “hate speech.” What are we to do, then? Will we succumb to the “Marxising of the inner man,” as the Italian communist Antonio Gramsci advised Christians to do? Will we change our way of thinking in order to “get on” in this brave new world? Will we be like the weak Christians of Romania, who quickly embraced communism after the Soviets took over their country in 1945? The “Christian leaders” of Romania almost fell over each other in their race to blend the satanic precepts of communism with Christianity. They allowed the communists to “elect” their church officers. Many “pastors” even became members of the secret police. They changed their core doctrines, as well. One Lutheran leader taught that God has given three revelations to man--one to Moses, one to Jesus, and one to Joseph Stalin; and it was *Stalin's* revelation by which they must now live! Many of the professing Baptists weren't much better. One group of Baptists in the town of Resita flew the red flag over their building, and sang the Soviet anthem as though it were a hymn. One Baptist leader said that Stalin was a great Bible teacher, who was fulfilling God's commandments!

Yet, in this thick darkness, there were still some true Christians who would not apostatise. One of them was a Jewish pastor named Richard Wurmbrand. The communists had called for a “Congress of the Cults” at the parliament building, in order to celebrate the new “religious freedom” that they were ushering in. For hours, one Christian leader after another stood up and praised Stalin. Most of them did so merely out of fear for their jobs, their salaries, their families, and their lives. Yet, there were some in the audience who were not cheering. They sat there passively, wanting to say something, but fearing to do so. Wurmbrand was one of them. After hours of listening to communist rubbish, his wife finally whispered to him, “Richard, stand up and wash this shame off the face of Christ!” He told her, “If I do, you will lose your husband.” Her reply was, “I don't want a coward for a husband.”

That was enough for Wurmbrand. He sent forward his ID card, and requested a chance to speak. Knowing how respected Wurmbrand was in Romania, the communist leaders were thrilled to have him speak. However, what came out of Wurmbrand's mouth was *not* what they had expected. Wurmbrand reminded his audience that the duty of Christian ministers is to glorify their God and Creator Jesus Christ, and not temporal earthly powers. Their duty was to preach the truth of God's Word, and not the lies of communism. Of course, his mic was quickly cut off by the “fact checkers”; but his words had already cut to the heart. Someone began to clap; and soon, waves of applause washed over the room! God has used one man with Spirit-filled courage to wake up those who were slumbering on the precipice of apostasy!

Needless to say, Wurmbrand paid dearly for that speech. The communists didn't arrest him straightaway; they let him carry on a while longer, while they gathered a huge file on him, and prepared to strike. When they finally kidnapped him and sent him to jail, they demanded that he turn in every Christian that he knew. But he refused. For 14 years he rotted in prison; and his wife suffered in a labour camp for 3 years. All that time, they tortured Wurmbrand in unimaginably horrific ways; but he would not deny Christ, nor betray his brothers and sisters.

Brethren, standing up for Christ while the rest of the world is plunging into satanic darkness requires courage--a courage that we, in ourselves, do not possess. However, in Christ, we can be bold, and defy the hosts of Satan himself! Why? Because we know that our God *will* deliver us!

Conclusion: Deliverance is coming, Christian. No matter how bad things may get down here, the Rapture—the Resurrection Day—is coming. Whether we have already died in the Lord, or whether we are still living, God will snatch us away from this earth just before He pours out His judgments on the world. Most importantly, God has already delivered us from the *eternal* damnation of hell. God promises that those who overcome the world by placing their faith in Christ “*shall not be hurt of the second death.*”

If you have not truly put your trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, I plead with you to turn to Him in faith today! He will deliver you, if you will, in faith, surrender your heart and life to Him!