

Peter has made the point that sure and permanent punishment awaits false prophets arising among the Christian profession on earth. It will be sudden, swift and is sure. To back up his warning he appeals to three examples where God has taken positive action to judge certain beings while preserving His own. The three are:

- angels that sinned,
- the ungodly destroyed by the worldwide flood in Noah's time,
- the cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, destroyed by fire and brimstone.

In each case the righteous were spared. God's judgement is **discriminating**. In the case of human beings, **warning** is given and **space** is given for repentance. (We aren't told that space was given the angels to repent.) As to humans, God is longsuffering not willing any should perish, as Peter states in the next chapter.

The angels who rebelled and sinned have been put out of circulation permanently, not only being locked up and confined but bound. They are cast down into the deepest pit, here called Tartarus in the Greek. (The mythology of the Greeks tell of fallen gods being confined in Tartarus.) This is the only use of this word in the Bible. It appears to be a **separate** and **more severe** place or condition than the place (hades) where lost souls are confined while awaiting the final judgement. (Stories and cartoons showing Satan and demons running loose in hades or hell and tormenting humans there are totally false and deceptive.) Both Tartarus and Hades are most unpleasant, as the Lord tells us in Luke 16:24-26, a place of torment even though not the Lake of Fire awaiting them. They are **reserved** unto judgment, before the Great White Throne, Jude 6; Revelation 20. Believers who have died do not even see either of these places, but are immediately in Paradise, Luke 23:43.

There is much speculation about what these rebel angels actually did and where and when. Many commentators agree these angels had children by women before the Flood. Jude seems to imply this as well, even though the Lord states that in heaven we will not marry or give in marriage but be like the angels in heaven. Satisfying curiosity to know what really happened is not God's purpose at this time and this is not particularly edifying to dwell upon. We have been told what we need to know, that sin **will be judged!**

God has a testimony among us humans today as He did in the days of Noah and the days of Lot. He gives plenty of warning prior to destruction. Noah **walked with God** and was a **preacher of righteousness** while building the ark, about 120 years.

*Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by*

*faith.*

*1Peter 3:20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.*

Yet only his immediate family had faith to enter the safety of the ark. He is spoken of as the eighth, probably as the eighth and last through the door, before the Lord shut it. Christ the Door of salvation is still open today to those still in their sins. Enter while you may.

Lot is characterized as having a **righteous soul**. Though truly a child of God he wasn't walking with God or preaching righteousness as had Noah. Instead, His soul was vexed at the unrighteousness surrounding him daily. (**Vexed:** tortured, pained, toiling, tormented, tossed, distressed, oppressed, worn out.) When he and Abraham separated, Lot didn't have to go live in the green plains of the Jordan near Sodom, he chose to. Soon he moved closer and eventually became not only a citizen but was sitting in the gate (an official, judge and elder). He was vexed but unable to effect any changes there for the better even though participating in the local government. We need to learn from his experience. Avoid world bordering and decline to be actively involved in the affairs of the world. When Lot finally tried to warn his relatives of impending destruction they thought he was joking. He was so much part of Sodom he couldn't witness against it, even to those who knew him best. In John 17 the Lord prays for us that we be kept from the evil in the world (v.15). He prays that we be sanctified as He is (v.17). We are to be as separate from the world in spirit as Christ is physically right now in heaven.

God is able to save His own from judgement and He will. He even sent angels to rescue Lot despite his lack of faithfulness. He was so entrenched in that evil place he had to be dragged away by angels to safety. He left Sodom with just three family members, and even then his wife looked behind and perished. His own daughters, raised in Sodom, seduced him and their descendants, Moab and Ammon, have harassed Israel for centuries. May our path and legacy be like Abraham's not Lot's.

God consigns to judgement all who choose to remain evil. He sent angels to rescue Lot but He will personally return for us. In Matthew 13 Jesus speaks of angels being sent to gather men for that judgement at the end of the age. But the Lord Himself will personally come for us, accompanied by an honor guard of angels, 1 Thessalonians 4. His heart yearns for His bride.

Peter says the chief of the unjust destined for judgement are the those who:

- walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness. They have a longing especially for what is forbidden (concupiscence, desire).
- those who despise government. They do not want to be

controlled and want to do their own thing without restraint.

So what is new? These two characteristics of the last days are closely tied together. They are selfishness and pride at work. This is so rampant today in the world that we scarcely notice it around us. It vexes us. But Peter is speaking of the Christian Profession. We hear supposed Christian men and women rail publically against government leaders. While they may be the “basest of men,” Daniel 4:17, yet they are the ones suiting God’s purposes. He has established and given them authority and rule over the nation, state, county or city we happen to live in. In his first letter Peter has called upon us to honor the king, etc., 2:11-17. Note also Paul’s statements in Romans 13. Respect for authority begins with children being taught to respect, honor and obey their parents, Ephesians 6:1-3. If we will not stoop to obey our parents or the other governments God set over us, how will we stoop to honor and obey God Himself? This prideful, selfish, anti-authority attitude is natural to man’s fallen nature. They may arise in any of our souls if we are not diligently feeding upon the Word daily and growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have heard “Christian” preachers railing against the devil. They boldly “rebuke” the devil, apparently seeking to display Jesus’ authority over him for purposes of achieving some miraculous objectives before their audience. Jesus hasn’t authorized us to do that. Jude cites

an instance where Michael the archangel didn’t dare do that. *Jude 1:9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.*

When Satan was resisting the Angel of Jehovah, the Angel of Jehovah does not personally rebuke him but says: “Jehovah rebuke thee Satan,” The Angel of Jehovah was God the Son in angelic form. He invokes His own Name, Jehovah, to rebuke the wily created dignity resisting Him.

*Zechariah 3:1 And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of Jehovah, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. 2 And Jehovah said unto Satan, Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan! (JND)*

Jesus Himself never railed (spoke abusively) against the devil or any demon, even when rebuking them. Presumptuous railing accusations against the devil and other dignities characterize ungodly men. We are not even allowed to rail against “equals,” other humans. Those who dare to verbally abuse or accuse other men are counted as wicked, 1Corinthians 5:11; 6:10. Always respect the created dignity of other creatures whether superior, equal or inferior to man, and no matter how wicked they may be. We each must beware of indulging in a prideful attitude, reflecting a prideful heart.

By Ronald Canner, May 25, 2005