**THE LORD KNOWS HOW TO RESCUE THE GODLY**

2 Peter 2:1-12,

Key Verse 9

“…if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.”

 We will study 2 Peter again. Let us refresh what we had learned in ch 1. We were given everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him. God’s very great and precious promises enable us to participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. So we better make every effort to increase such divine nature and make every effort to confirm our calling and election. 1:12-15 says, “12 So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. 13 I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, 14 because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. 15 And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.” Then he pointed out that we better pay attention to prophetic messages that are completely reliable. Today in ch 2, Peter exposes false teachers and knows how to punish them. Peter as a shepherd had a mission given by the Lord, Jesus Christ, he helped God’s flocks to the way of truth before he died. So Peter had to expose false teachers and concludes how God judges them. He also gives us a reason why we should live a godly life to the end. My message has two parts.

Part 1. There will be false teachers (1-3, 10-12)

 Look at v 1a. “But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you.” The word, “but” is related to 1:21. There were holy prophets of God who spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. But there were always false prophets and false teachers. False prophets & teachers spoke out of their own minds, imaginations and dreams as if they were the words of the Lord. In truth, they came from their human will and were controlled by the devil. Their motive was to lead people astray from the one true God. They promised peace when God was ready to judge the nation, planting a false security and hindering true repentance. Likewise false teachers are a serious danger to the church. V1b says, “They will secretly introduce destructive heresies'' False teachers do not wear t-shirts declaring, “I am a false teacher.” They are very sneaky. They secretly introduce teachings which contradict sound teachings. How then can we know them? Peter elaborates their several characteristics. Look at v 1c, “even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them” **The first and foremost characteristic** is that they deny that Jesus is the sovereign Lord. We Christians believe that Jesus is the Sovereign Lord. He has absolute authority as the Creator, Redeemer and Judge. Please pay attention to the words, “who bought them”. Through Jesus’ death & resurrection, they were bought and they are not their own anymore. They now belong to Jesus. They must listen to Jesus and obey Him. But those teachers do not want Jesus telling them what to do. They want to do whatever they want to do. They also tell other people what they want to hear. They say, “It is okay. There is no Jesus’ 2nd coming or judgment. God loves you. You don’t need to repent nor suffer.” False teachers who seem to have a godly relationship with Jesus can still bring in destructive heresies secretly. Oftentimes good looking men who teach lies do the worst damage, for their lies are far more easily accepted because of their good characters. But we must know who is who. God’s humble servants and their goal is to exalt Christ and lead people to our Sovereign Lord, Jesus, recognizing His divine authority. We, as His servants should also lead people to Christ, not to ourselves. We must teach the full gospel message instead of avoiding sin, repentance, judgment. We as “Bible teachers” are seeking God’s approval, not man’s. A **2nd characteristic** of false teachers is popularity. V2a says, “Many will follow their depraved conduct...” Take notice of “many will follow”. This reminds us that false teachers are popular. But it does not mean that it is of God. The distressing fact is that false teachers are always among us. They have been and always will be in the church. But the more disturbing fact is that so many believers will be attracted to their false teaching and follow their secret destructive ways. **A 3rd characteristic** of false teachers is extreme immorality. V2 says, “Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.” Here “depraved conduct” refers to open, extreme immorality. Peter will explain their sexual immorality more in detail next study. What does it mean by bringing the way of truth into disrepute? They say that there is nothing wrong with sexual sin. Because of them, Christ’ name is blasphemed and His truth is mocked, the reputation of His church suffers. The work of evangelism is greatly hindered. For a moment let us think about how to fight against false teachers’ deceptive teachings? Here is a “controlled structure demolition” technique. Have you seen it to demolish the building itself without affecting next buildings? It is called the “demolition by implosion” method. It is the opposite of explosion. False teachers want to explode from their inside secret deceptive teaching. But we must stand firm as independent Bible teachers to confront/confine them, let them collapse inwardly with all their deceptive teachings. It is like demolition by implosion. In v12b.They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like animals they too will perish. They act like animals, following instinct, ignoring the truth. In contrast, God’s servants should live a pure life according to the truth, not compromising with the corrupted culture. Their godly lifestyle and moral integrity honors God truly. **A 4th characteristic** is that they are greedy. V3a says, “In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories.” They are motivated by a desire for human recognition, power, pleasure, & money esp. 1Pet 5 Peter taught us not to pursue dishonest gain but be eager to serve as a shepherd. They are experts in greed. They commercialize the Christian faith for their own financial gain, turning the church into a market. **A 5th characteristic** is that they are arrogant (10-12a). 10 This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+peter+2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30511c)] and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, they are not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings; 11 yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not heap abuse on such beings when bringing judgment on them from[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+peter+2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30512d)] the Lord. 12 But these people blaspheme in matters they do not understand. False teachers follow the corrupt desire of the flesh & despise authority. They are bold & arrogant. They are unafraid to heap abuse on celestial beings, though even holy angels are afraid to do this. It is because they put themselves in the very place of God. They despised authority. In contrast, God’s servants are humble and God-centered. God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble. The head of the church, Jesus established the authority inside the church. Church members or local churches are accountable to follow the direction of the ministry and the headquarter where they belong to. But false teachers form their own authority as final, do not listen to anyone for they are arrogant and they even reject Jesus Christ and His divine authority. Have you heard of “slippery slope”? It means a course of one action leading to another negatively, & end up having unintended, disastrous outcome. For ex. if you begin to eat very sweet food today, you could repeat that tomorrow. Then it becomes a habit or an addiction, leading to diabetes with all deadly complications in the body. False teachers can be compared to this! A seemingly small intentional lie despising the authority of Jesus & His word leads to catastrophe on them & their followers! Peter warns of the serious consequences awaiting false teachers in v1 and 3. He used the expressions: “bringing swift destruction on themselves” (1d), “their condemnation has long been hanging over them and their destruction has not been sleeping” (3b). Peter was not expressing his own sentiment toward the false teachers, but the certainty of God’s judgment based on what God has done throughout history.

**P 2. God knows how to rescue the godly and punish the ungodly (4-9)**  In v 4-9, he uses 3 cases that reveal how God judges the ungodly, and rescues the godly in history to make his case objective. **1st, God did not spare angels when they sinned.** For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment. Angels are ministering spirits created to serve God and his people. They have a great privilege to share God’s important messages with his people. But in their hearts, they became proud and rebelled against God. God sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment. Why? God could not but punish angels when they sinned, for he is holy, righteous and just. Likewise just as the angels fall despite their high office and service, we must humble ourselves and acknowledge that we can commit sin of pride and rebellion. Then it will be worse than them after we become the beneficiaries of the full gospel message. Those who still insist on freedom to do whatever they want are like these angels. True freedom comes from obedience! **Peter’s 2nd illustration** is the ancient world and Noah.if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others In Noah’s time every inclination of the thoughts of people’s hearts was only evil all the time. They were full of corruption and violence. God’s judgment upon the ancient world was inevitable. So God brought a flood on it; everyone perished except Noah and his family. Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. He was not a perfect man. He had his own weaknesses. But he was a righteous man to obey everything God had commanded him to live by faith. He was a preacher of righteousness. Even during this peak Covid time, being a preacher of righteousness as Bible teachers is more important than anything else, including a preacher of mask or social distancing. **Peter’s 3rd illustration** is Sodom and Gomorrah and Lot (6-8). if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; 7 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless 8 (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)—The people of Sodom/G were so wicked that they were destroyed by fire from the Lord out of heaven and made them an ex. of what is gonna happen to the ungodly. But God remembered Ab’s prayer and rescued Lot. Here Peter interpreted Lot’s rescue from a different perspective from Gen's account. In v7, he describes Lot as “a righteous man who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless” Peter added in v8, “for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard” Was Lot really a righteous man? Again the righteous are not perfect. But Lot had some faith in God. When angels of the Lord visited Sodom, Lot welcomed and served them. He tried to protect them. When he was asked not to look back, he obeyed. Peter credited him with righteousness although he lost his wife & went chp7 bankrupt in this world. God rescued him at the time of the judgment.

 Peter makes the argument and made a case that if God judged angels, the ancient world, and Sodom and Gomorrah, how much more would he judge the false teachers and their followers. Let’s read v9. “…if this is so, then **the Lord knows how** to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.” The conclusion of Peter’s argument is that God will surely judge the ungodly and rescue the godly. “The Lord knows” the hearts of all men and he never fails to tell the godly from the ungodly. He has the power and the wisdom to both judge and rescue at the same time. There will be no accident, mistake or injustice when the Lord judges and rescues. Many times we do not know how, but the Lord knows how. So we don’t have to be obsessed with any doctrines. Rather we trust in God and His deliverance of the godly and His judgement of the ungodly. We must focus on knowing the true God. He is not only the God of love, but also the God who judges. God is the God of grace & salvation, but he’s also the God of wrath & judgment. Without his justice, his grace would have no meaning. We must also need to know that God is holding not only non-believers, but also believers accountable for the way we live. 2Cor 5:10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad”.

 In conclusion, let’s read V9 & 10a. “…if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.” 10 This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority.” This whole passage is mainly about false teachers & their destiny. But v 10 opens the door widely for anyone. In our culture many Christians lose their influence and minimize the biblical truth of God’s judgment. Some deny eternal hell. Others believe that God will ultimately save everyone. Then they either unknowingly become false teachers by saying that kindness is everything. Nothing is more important than going back to what the Scripture says and living a righteous life before God, for God is also the God of judgment. Jesus will surely come to judge the ungodly. We have to follow either Jesus’ authority rather than our own residual corrupted desires. But believers are confused by so many deceptive messages out there and they made mistakes to justify their desires as natural, human, normal desires. But Jesus came to this earth & suffered and died on the cross to save us. Then we know that our desires of the flesh are unnatural, unholy and no good, but cursed, condemned, and destined to eternal destruction. So after knowing our Sovereign Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, daily or even hourly we die to ourselves and live according to His words as godly children. Our bible says that our history will end anytime with Jesus’ 2nd coming but not to bear sin but to bring salvation and judgment. People are destined to die once either by aging, cancer, covid 19, or anything. Both car crash and suicide are killing teenagers in our nation as the 1st and 2nd death causes. They wrongly believe that their temporary issues are permanent problems, and choose to end their lives. When you visit one of the world's richest villages, Malibu creek, you will find a spot at the top of mountain road in memory of Dan Behar who committed suicide at the age of 17. He was a promising young man in the village. 2 other young men committed suicide in the silimar time, shocking America. What a tragedy! Nothing is more important than letting confused young people know God. It is our mission to share God’s words like Peter who reminded us again & again that Jesus is the Lord and after death we will face His solemn judgment. In 2021, we fix our eyes on our Sovereign Lord, Jesus and renew our hearts & identity with His words. We are bought by His blood sacrifice on the cross and we are His righteous people. Christ rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God. He is the Lord and the ultimate authority over all things and all human life, esp, the lives of those who were bought by His blood. He is the true Master of our lives. His words are now our ultimate authority and our guide in the darkness of this world. When we die to our corrupt flesh desires, His promises will surely guide our feet into the path of life and peace. We have no other guide in a world full of lies. Thus we pray to be deeply rooted and be established firmly in His Truth and do our priestly duty to preach God’s words always. Jesus established His church through His death and resurrection too. Let us keep in mind that we are not alone but always we are accountable for higher authority in Jesus and His established church. So we are asked to be completely humble to be united in love for God’s glory. In this way His promise(1:11) will be fulfilled, “and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!” Amen. One word: God knows how to rescue the godly!