

Standing in the True Knowledge of Christ

“The Lord Knoweth”

The Distinction of the Righteous and the Wicked

2 Peter 2:4-10a

In verses 1–3, we saw the danger within:

- False teachers are not merely outside the church, but among the people of God
- They bring in destructive heresies
- They influence many
- And ultimately, they bring destruction upon themselves

That brings us to the question, if false teachers are present... if they are influencing many... if they seem to prosper over time... What will God do about it?

Peter answers all that with one simple, powerful truth: “The Lord Knoweth” (v. 9).

This is not merely saying that God is aware. The word (εἶδω) means to see with perception. It carries the idea (when used of the Lord) of perfect knowledge, sovereign awareness, and purposeful action. In other words, God does not just *know about* things — He knows how to act in every situation.

Specifically, as used in this text, God knows how to deliver the godly, and He knows how to reserve the unjust for judgment.

Peter proves His point by pointing to history:

- God judged angels that sinned

- God judged the world in the flood
- God judged Sodom and Gomorrah
- And in the midst of judgment, He delivered Noah and Lot

The message of this passage is simple: God has never failed to judge the wicked — and He has never failed to deliver the righteous.

I. "THE LORD KNOWETH" HOW HE JUDGES THE WICKED (VV. 4-6)

The Certainty of Divine Judgment

If God has judged in the past, then false teachers will not escape in the present or the future.

A. The angels that sinned — judgment in the heavenly realm (v. 4)

1. The reality of their sin

"Angels that sinned" — speaks of a definite rebellion. This is willing transgression.

Jude 6

⁶ And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

2. The severity of their judgment

"But cast them down to hell..." — the word for "hell" here (ταρταρώω) is only used this one time in the New Testament. It refers to a place of deepest confinement and judgment. Not final hell (the lake of fire), but a holding place of punishment.

3. The certainty of their reservation

“Delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment”

- a) “Delivered” (παραδίδωμι) — handed over without the possibility of escape
- b) “Chains of darkness” (σειραίς ζόφου) — restraint, confinement
- c) “Reserved” (τετηρημένους) — kept under guard for future judgment.

➤ If God judges angels, who are greater in power than men, He will certainly judge false teachers.

B. The world that perished — judgment on the global scale (v. 5)

1. The scope of the judgment

“And spared not the old world” — pre-flood humanity — speaks of universal corruption.

Genesis 6:5

⁵ And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

This was not partial judgment — it was total judgment.

2. The preservation of the righteous

“But saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness...”

- a) “Saved” (φυλάσσω) — kept safe through judgment
- b) “Eighth person” (literally means Noah, one of

eight; that is, Noah and seven others) — speaks of a small minority.

- c) "Preacher of righteousness" — a herald of truth in a corrupt world

3. The certainty of destruction

"Bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly"

- a) "Bringing in" (or, brought in – ἐπάξας) — shows a deliberate act of God.
- b) "Ungodly" (ἄσεβων) — literally means without worship; without fear and reverence of God. They were morally and spiritually corrupt.

- God knows how to judge the many and preserve the few.

C. The cities that burned — judgment in the moral realm (v. 6)

1. The completeness of their destruction

- a) "Into ashes" — total annihilation
- b) "Condemned them with an overthrow" — catastrophic ruin (Gen. 19)

2. The purpose of their judgment

"Making them an ensample" (ὑπόδειγμα) — a pattern; as used here, a warning — Sodom is not just history; it is a preview of judgment.

Jude 7

⁷ Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah, 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.

3. The moral nature of their sin

“Unto those that after should live ungodly” — speaks of gross immorality; open rebellion; rejection of divine authority.

- If God did not spare angels... if He did not spare the old world... if He did not spare Sodom and Gomorrah... then we can be certain — false teachers will not be spared either.

II. “THE LORD KNOWETH” HOW HE DELIVERS THE RIGHTEOUS (VV. 7-8)

The Care of the Godly in a Corrupt World

A. The declaration of Lot’s righteousness — his position before God

“And delivered just Lot...” — “That righteous man...”

1. The repetition is intentional

This truth is repeated three times in these two verses: “just Lot,” “righteous man,” “righteous soul.”

2. The emphasis is doctrinal

“Just / righteous” (δικαιος) — declared righteous — this speaks of his standing before God.

2 Timothy 2:19

¹⁹ Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

3. The clarification is important

When we consider what Genesis 19 says concerning Lot, he does not look very “just” or “righteous.” And yet, God declares him to be so.

Righteousness is not based on perfection in life, but on position before God.

Genesis 15:6

⁶ And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Romans 4:3

³ For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

B. The distress of Lot’s environment — his surroundings in the world

1. The condition around him

- a) “Filthy” (ἀσέλγεια) — literally, the conduct of the lawless ones — speaks of unrestrained sin.
- b) “Conversation” (ἀναστροφῆς) — manner of life
- c) Sodom was not subtly corrupt — it was openly, aggressively wicked.

2. The pressure on him

“Vexed” (καταπονούμενον) — worn down, oppressed, exhausted. This speaks of constant spiritual pressure.

- Even though Lot failed in his testimony, the righteous can live in a corrupt environment without becoming like that environment.

C. The conflict within Lot's soul (v. 8) — his response to sin

1. The means of the conflict

"Seeing and hearing" — daily exposure to sin

2. The depth of the conflict

"Vexed" (ἐβασάνιζεν) — this is an even stronger word than the one in verse 7 — this means tormented, or tortured.

3. The focus of the conflict

"With their unlawful deeds" — against God's standard

- A righteous man should not be comfortable in sin, as Lot seemed to be — he should be grieved by it.

Psalm 119:136

¹³⁶ Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.

Ezekiel 9:4

⁴ And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

D. The deliverance of Log by God (v. 7a) — God's intervention

1. The source of deliverance

God delivered him. Lot didn't do it in his own strength.

2. The timing of deliverance

It wasn't before Sodom became wicked, but at the appointed moment.

3. The nature of deliverance

Out of judgment, not alongside it, so to speak.

Genesis 19:16

¹⁶ And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

- God sees the righteous, knows their condition, feels their distress — and delivers them in His time.

III. "THE LORD KNOWETH" HOW HE DISTINGUISHES THE TWO (VV. 9-10A)

The Certainty of Divine Separation

A. The knowledge of the Lord — His perfect ability (v. 9a)

"The Lord knoweth..."

1. This is not just awareness (as was pointed out in the introduction).
 2. God doesn't just know about things — He knows how to act.
- God doesn't need to figure out what to do — He already knows how.

B. The deliverance of the godly (v. 9b)

"...to deliver the godly out of temptations"

1. The people described

“The godly” — those who belong to Him

2. The problem defined

“Temptations” (πειρασμοῦ) — trials, pressures, testing environments. This includes living in a corrupt culture, exposure to false teaching, and spiritual pressure.

3. The promise declared

a) “To deliver” (ῥύομαι) — to rescue, to bring out — literally, to snatch from danger.

b) This is not always immediate removal, but often preservation through and ultimate deliverance out of.

1 Corinthians 10:13

¹³ There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

2 Timothy 4:18

¹⁸ And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

C. The reservation of the unjust (v. 9c)

1. The people identified

“The unjust” — the unrighteous, including false teachers

2. The present condition

“To reserve” — kept, held under guard

3. The future certainty

“Unto the day of judgment to be punished” — judgment may be delayed, but it is definite.

Romans 2:5

⁵ But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Jude 14–15

¹⁴ And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, ¹⁵ To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

D. The identification of the ungodly (v. 10a)

“But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government”

1. Their lifestyle — fleshly corruption

- a) “Walk after the flesh” — habitual pattern
- b) “Lust of uncleanness” — moral defilement
- c) This connects back to false teachers (vv. 1-3) and Sodom in vv. 6-8.

2. Their attitude — rejection of authority

- a) "Despise government" (κυριότης) — literally, they reject authority (lordship)
 - b) Ultimately, they reject God's authority, and the lordship of Christ.
 - c) False teaching is not just doctrinal — it is moral and rebellious.
- In a world where false teachers seem to prosper and righteousness seems to struggle; we are reminded of this unchanging truth — "The Lord knoweth."

He knows how to judge, He knows how to deliver, and He knows how to distinguish between the two.

Conclusion:

In a world of false teaching, moral corruption, and spiritual confusion, there is great comfort for the believer: The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly.

But there is also a sobering warning: no sin is ignored; no false teaching escapes; and no rebellion goes unanswered.

So, the call is simple and clear:

- Be sure that you are in Christ
- Be careful what you believe and follow
- And be steadfast in the true knowledge of Him