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## Into Thy Word Bible Study in 2 Peter

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### 2 Peter 2: 4-11: "False Teachers Will be Judged and Destroyed!"

**General idea:** Take heed, God will destroy those who are wicked; but take comfort, for He also will rescue those who are in Him. No one is immune from the judgment of God. No one will escape God's wrath! We cannot think that because of grace we have a "license to kill," or to teach as we see fit, or to do as we please, thinking God will forgive us. Yes, we have special favor and dispensation with grace and receive a multitude of forgiveness. However, to deliberately sin, do wrong, or teach what is false or misleading and knowingly continue in it, thinking it is OK, will cause us big trouble. God did not excuse the angels when they sinned and fell to become demons. God did not spare any ancient culture or people group, tribe, clan, family, or person who transgressed His law. *For all have sinned and all have fallen short of the glory of God.* Cities were destroyed, and vast civilizations were wiped out, never to be known to us today. Such judgments set a tone for us to heed. We are to consider ourselves as clearly warned. To distort or pervert God's most precious Word has a well-deserved death sentence attached to it in the Kingdom.

Humanity is bent on seeking what is false and trading truth for a lie. We love arrogance and lust, despise authority, scoff at those who are righteous, and seek sin rather than Him. Yet, in the midst of judgment and doom, God has grace and spares those who fear and love Him. We have hope and certainty when we hold on to truth in Jesus and point out lives in His direction. With grace, God does not seek perfection, as no one would be able to make it. However, He does seek for us to be the best we can be. We will make mistakes and be forgiven, but we need to keep moving in His direction, perfecting and improving our spiritual and earthly lives to glorify Him as Lord (Rom. 3:23; 6:23)!

**Vs. 4-9:** Take the warning. God did not spare the angels who fell and He will not spare those who live ungodly lives, those who are self-willed, and/or those who refuse His grace. This is serious! God does not want *hucksters* in His church, people who use devious methods to promote themselves or false doctrines. There is no escape from God's judgment—then or now. So, be wise, get real, and fall to your knees in repentance if you have ever misled someone in the name of Christ. You may think you have escaped God's notice or care. But, your judgment will be a reality; it will be swift and heinous, and you will be deserving of it. However, our repentance is sweet to His ears; He forgives us in abundance, but our repentance is a must to obtain His forgiveness (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:28ff; Titus 1:10-16)!

- *Angels when they sinned.* There are two main references in Scripture that depict how angels sinned. The first is in Genesis 6:1-4 where the "sons of

God" (as in angels) intermarried and cohabitated with humans, producing the *Nephilim*. (God has since made this impossible for them.) The "sons of God" could have been another created order we do not know about. See Mark 12:25; Jude 6; and 1 Enoch (*Pseudepigrapha*, a non-canonical book). The second main sin was when one-third of the angels (satan and His legion of demons) fell to evil and sin (Gen. 3; Psalm 148:2, 5; Isa. 14:12–15; Ezek. 28:12, 17; 1 Cor. 10; Rev. 12:7–9).

- *Sent them to hell*. The Greek is *Tartarus*, which was a Greek term (from *Homer's* metaphors) to indicate where the wicked spirits and peoples were "cast out" to be penalized and severely tortured. *Tartarus* was made for the Titans who were super beings, the children of Uranus and Gaea, who conspired to rule the heavens but were defeated by Zeus. For the Jews, it was a place for fallen angels. For the Kingdom of God, this is a "holding cell" for the wicked while they await their trial and judgment. Scripture seems to indicate some demons are allowed to run free (while others are in prison for reasons that are not given) perhaps to do God's bidding to test and perfect us (Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12).
- *Judgment*. This refers to the final judgment, called the *great white throne judgment* (Rev 20:11-15). Hell is real; you do not want to go there!
- *Ungodly people*. A reference to our total depravity (Gen. 6:5, 11-12, 8:21).
- *Preacher of righteousness* is a description of Noah who was a person dedicated to righteous living amongst a pagan culture of debauchery. In Jewish traditional writings (Sibylline Oracles and Jubilees), Noah is portrayed as preaching against sin and condemning the lifestyles of the wicked who, if they did not pursue repentance, would not inherit eternity (Gen 6:1-14).
- *Seven others* refers to Noah's family who were eight in number (Gen. 1 Pet. 3:20). God is loving and will save those He has chosen.
- *Condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah* conveys the image of the embodiment of ultimate sin (Gen. 19; 32:32; Isa. 1:9-10; 3:9; 13:19; Jer. 23:14; 50:40; Lam. 4:6; Ezek. 16:46; Zeph. 2:9).
- *Distressed by the filthy lives*. Lot was called a "righteous man," even though he performed the dubious action of offering His daughters to be raped, not to mention what happened to his wealth and what he was doing in that city. This is very perplexing. Perhaps hospitality customs, a code of honor, and the honor of entertaining and protecting the angels when the city folk wanted to rape them was greater than the rights and honor of women then. Later on, Lot allowed his daughters to rape him twice to produce sons, thinking the world was ended and they were all that was left. Thus, maybe he just was not wise like Abraham and acted with good intentions, and, even though he was wrong, thought he was doing the right thing. Perhaps he was forgiven;

perhaps the veracity of his life was good. In any case, God chose him to be righteous by grace just as he has done with us. Perhaps God honored Abraham's intercession for him. Take comfort that when we are in Christ, God will deliver us out of temptation and rescue us (Gen. 13: 10-11; 18:23-32; 19:1-17, 30-38).

- *Continuing their punishment/keep under punishment* points to a reference to the future or the possibility that God does preliminary punishment before the judgment, and/or that God holds those who are wicked and destined for punishment before the Judgment, just as the police do with criminals before their trial. The point is the certainty of their punishment.

God will destroy those who are wicked! As we look at church history and what goes on today, the devil continues his work of evil and is persistent in assaulting the work of our Lord and what He calls us to be doing in the world!

**Vs. 10-11:** Peter is dedicated to condemnation and getting rid of false teachers in the church. And, he makes it clear that false teachers will be judged severely, because those who teach are under a great responsibility to teach correctly and in truth. When we deceive others because we follow the will of our ways, we prove our sinful nature is in control and that we do not care. The other main reason why false teachers engage in their wicked craft is they have a disdain for authority and disrespect for God.

- *This is especially true.* This is a reference to the power and actuality that heretics will be judged. This may also have been a reference to the practice of immoral sexuality and/or homosexuality because of the reference made to Sodom and its reputation.
- *Slander celestial beings/glorious ones.* The Greek means to slander "glories." This means to blaspheme angels or anyone who represents God and His sovereignty. The false teachers may have also denied the reality of angels or demons, or mocked them since they also denied the reality of Christ. This also refers to those who hate authority, challenging, disrespecting, and despising authority, even that which comes directly from God. Some of the false teachers were being theatrical and were slandering demons and making fun of them, thinking they were muting their power, which they were not. They were only subverting true spiritual warfare which is to invoke Christ's power and Supremacy, not ourselves. This also applies to despising and slandering of pastors and church leaders who speak out against false teachers (Acts 19:13; Eph. 1:19-23; Jude 8-11).
- *Angels . . . do not bring slanderous accusations.* Angels seem to have the right to talk back and to place blame where blame is due, or to defend themselves, but they, by reason of the character Christ demonstrated by going to the cross, chose not to dare to bring accusations against demons. Possibly, this was because this is God's providence, and they showed

respect for His sovereignty over them. This can also mean a dismissive attitude towards demons and spiritual warfare, thus allowing the influence of Satan to flourish by denying his power and influence (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20).

The problem with false teachers is that they corrupt the church. To propagate lies that devalue, demean or distort the Person and Work of Christ is heinous. Consider that Christ is the One who loves us beyond measure and rescues us from our sins, which we do not deserve. When we distract others from whom and what He is and has done, we not only bite the hand that feeds us, but we betray our only hope and reason in life.

God is a God who loves to rescue us. But, we have to want to be rescued from our distorted lives and thinking. He sends the Spirit ahead to prepare us for salvation. Then, when we become Christians, the Spirit lives and works in us. We are still sinful and seek sin, so we must make the determination to allow the Spirit and His Word to influence us to seek His Truth more, and learn and grow in Him. We are naturally bent on rebelling and hating authority, wanting to do things our way and not His Way. God will be hard on us until we get it—to love, trust, and obey His Truth because His ways are best; ours will leave us unhappy and bankrupt. God does not want us to be bankrupt. He wants us to be triumphant in Him, and to proclaim Him in our lives.

We must be aware that we have a problem in the church today, and that problem is *false teachers*! Our awareness needs to jump to being proactive, doing a better job of screening people and providing church discipline, sanction, and even removal of people who willfully, purposely distort God's most precious Truth. We have to ask *are we, as Lot was, sick of the immorality and hatred of God?* For someone to deliberately distort His truth shows they are perhaps mentally ill, delusional, or they hate God, because God is a God of Truth and if you do not love truth, the only logical conclusion is that you must hate God.

***The Essential Inductive Questions*** (for more Inductive questions see [Inductive Bible Study](#)):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

***Additional Questions:***

1. How much influence do people in church authority have on you? Are position and authority important to you? Why, or why not?
2. Why do you suppose that no one is immune from the judgment of God? How can God's will to judge give you hope and comfort?
3. Why do people think that because of grace, they can get away with false teaching? Considering that it is clear that God will judge false teachers, why do people follow them?
4. Can you give an example of someone seeking what is false and/or trading a truth for a lie? What do you think would be the motivation to do this?
5. Why are arrogance, lust, and despising authority attractive to people? Why would someone scoff at those who are righteous, and deliberately seek sin rather than Christ?
6. What can motivate you to seek to be the best you can be? How can you take comfort that God will deliver you out of temptation and rescue you from harm?
7. How can a dismissive attitude toward demons and spiritual warfare actually permit the influence of Satan to thrive? Why would some people, who claim they do spiritual warfare, engage Satan by their own authority rather than by invoking Christ's power and supremacy?
8. How and why does being theatrical without teaching or only a little teaching attract people versus just quality teaching? What should a pastor do or not do to attract people?
9. What are some of the reasons why false teachers engage in their wicked craft? Why would someone in church authority hate, disrespect, and despise authority, even that which comes directly from God?
10. What needs to take place in some people for them to have the desire to be rescued out of their distorted thinking?
11. What would it mean and what would your will and your life look like if you became more triumphant in Him and lived to proclaim Him? So, how can you make the determination to allow the Spirit and His Word to influence you to seek more of His Truth, and to learn and grow in Him more?
12. How do false teachers corrupt the church? How do false teachings devalue, demean, and/or distort the Person and Work of Christ? What can you and your church do to be proactive and on guard?