

Alignment – Ordering Your Life With God
The Alignment of God’s Wrath on False Teachers
2 Peter 2:3b-13a

Introduction: Liberalism isn’t the only blatant false Gospel that has risen up from within the modern Christian Church, but along with the “Prosperity Gospel” that twists the Gospel to justify greed and materialism, it has undoubtedly become one the most prominent. When we speak of “liberalism” in Christianity, what we are talking about is the effort to dilute the deity of Christ and the supernatural acts of God in the Bible we call miracles, reject the penal substitutionary death of Christ, claim to be submitted to the Bible while rejecting the inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture, deny that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone, and redefine the apparent moral standards of the Bible by the standards of a lost world, especially as they relate to sex and sexuality. In short, like the Prosperity Gospel, Christian liberalism is a totally false Gospel put forward by false teachers, wolves in sheep's clothing, but it is in no way new. When Peter wrote 2 Peter, liberalism, with a dose of a prosperity Gospel, was already rising from within the church. As such, Peter confronted it in a way that leaves us no room to understand it as something that should ever be tolerated.

Last week, we looked at 2 Peter 2:1-3a and 13b-16, which taught us four truths about False Teachers.

- (1) False teachers rise up from within the church while denying the Lord of the Church. (2:1)**
- (2) False teachers lead people to justify sexual immorality and, as such, slander Jesus! (2:2)**
- (3) False teachers are driven by greed. (2:3a)**
- (4) False teachers feel entitled to sin. (2:13b-16)**

Today, we will look at what we skipped when we jumped ahead from verses 3a to 13b. While teaching us the truth about False Teachers, Peter took a moment to ensure we understand God’s response to them! Peter wrote,

“Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. 4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; 5 if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; 7 and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked 8 (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and

heard); 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, 11 whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord. 12 But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, 13 suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing.” (2 Peter 2:3b-13a)

If you're like me, when I first read that passage, the message was pretty obvious, but there was a lot in there that didn't make much sense, so let me unpack it for you and explain what's going on here.

Proposition: There are three parts to Peter's presentation of God's response to false teachers in 2 Peter 2:3b-13a.

The first part of Peter's presentation about God's response to false teachers is ...

(1) Peter's Thesis – God's wrath on false teachers is certain.

- A. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. (2:3b)**
- B. Some may see the lavish lifestyles or ease of life of some of the false teachers (2:13b-15) as indicating God's blessings on their efforts, God's ignorance of their efforts, or that God has possibly even justified it. But Peter assures us that this is not the case. No matter what the circumstances of the lives of the false teachers currently are, they have not escaped the notice of God nor His judgment! Whether it is visible or not, the judgment of God is not “idle” and thus already at work, and their destruction, that is, their “damnation,” is not asleep and therefore unaware.**
- C. K.S. Wuest noted, “The judgment is not *idle*. It is ‘represented as a living thing, awake and expectant. ... “Damnation” is *apōleia* (ἀπώλεια), “utter ruin and destruction, the loss of all that makes existence worthwhile.”¹**
- D. K. O. Gangel noted, “Their destruction **has not been sleeping** (*ou nystazei*, used only one other time in the NT, to describe the sleepy virgins in Matt. 25:5). **God's justice does not sleep and it is never late.**”²**

¹ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 12, pp. 48–49). Eerdmans.

² Gangel, K. O. (1985). [2 Peter](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 870). Victor Books.

- E. The point is that whether you can see God's wrath on them or not, it is certain.

The second part of Peter's presentation about God's response to false teachers is ...

(2) Peter's Proof – God has always responded with the condemnation of those who rebel and the affirmation of those who obey. (2:4-10a)

Note: "Peter develops the theme of v 3 more fully, drawing on early incidents in the history of God's people to show how his purposes both of salvation and of condemnation are sure and will be completed."³

Note: "In verses 4–10a, Peter gave several illustrations to demonstrate both the Lord's judgment and His deliverance. After citing three examples of punishment (vv. 4–6), Peter then cited a case of deliverance (Lot, v. 7). In fact, verses 4–9 are a single sentence, one of the longest in the New Testament. Peter was intent on demonstrating that God will judge false teachers and others who sin against Him and His Word. History, Peter wrote, gives ample verification of this truth."⁴

Peter issued three specific proofs that God's wrath and blessings are consistent.

The first proof is the testimony of the Angels.

A. Even though God loved the angels He had made to serve Him, He still eternally condemned the ones who rebelled against Him. (2:4)

1. **4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; (2:4)**
2. This does not suggest that fallen angels cannot roam the earth; rather, the reality of God's judgment on them is inescapable. Hell represents permanent separation from God, the ultimate reality of gloom and darkness. Interestingly, Peter uses a Greek word for hell here that, in Greek mythology, was used as the place for "the worst sinners!"⁵ God's judgment on their sin was that the reality of being separated from Him would be permanent and inescapable.
3. "When did the angels fall into sin? Scripture provides little information. The Bible is God's revelation about the creation, fall, and redemption of man but

³ Wheaton, D. H. (1994). [2 Peter](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 1392). Inter-Varsity Press.

⁴ Gangel, K. O. (1985). [2 Peter](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 870). Victor Books.

⁵ Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953–2001). [Exposition of the Epistles of Peter and the Epistle of Jude](#) (Vol. 16, pp. 285–287). Baker Book House.

not about angels. The angelic world is mentioned only tangentially in Scripture. God's Word teaches us that many of the angels rebelled against God, yet we do not know the nature of their sin. Therefore, we ought not to speculate and say that angels sinned when they, "the sons of God," married "the daughters of men" (Gen. 6:2). Angels are spiritual beings without physical bodies and are incapable of procreation. In fact, Jesus explains that at the resurrection, people, like the angels in heaven, "will neither marry nor be given in marriage" (Matt. 22:30). ... By implication, the conclusion to this verse results in an argument from the greater to the lesser. If God did not spare the angels who beheld his glory in heaven but cast them into hell, will he not punish teachers who are bent on leading his people astray? To ask the question is to answer it."⁶

4. If God would issue that kind of judgment on the Angels who rebelled against him, the Angels whom he made to serve Him and had done so up until they rebelled, then doing the same on false teachers who twist the truth about who Jesus is and what He did and said, is not at all an unimaginable or inconsistent suggestion!

The second proof is the testimony of Noah and the Flood.

B. God destroyed the world He made for rebelling against Him while saving Noah and His family. (2:5)

1. Now, to understand the gravity of what Peter teaches us in verse five, we need to remember just how much God loved his creation, especially mankind whom He made to rule it.
2. **27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ... 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. (Genesis 1:27-28, & 31)**
3. You can't miss the intimacy by which God created everything, especially mankind. God was perfectly pleased with all He made, but in creating humanity, He created beings with whom He also created a relationship like nothing else. In chapter two, we see it even more clearly. The Bible says,

⁶ Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953–2001). [*Exposition of the Epistles of Peter and the Epistle of Jude*](#) (Vol. 16, pp. 285–287). Baker Book House.

4. **7 then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. (Genesis 2:7)**
5. God was even living with and working with man. Genesis goes on to say,
6. **19 Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. (Genesis 2:19)**
7. God created humanity as the beings with whom He would have a covenantal relationship. God loves man like nothing else in creation because He committed Himself to man forever. But interestingly, instead of focusing on the death to that relationship that God issued to mankind because of Adam's sin in Genesis 3, Peter instead fast-forwards to the story of Noah. "Peter was greatly impressed by the significance of the Flood for he referred to it three times in his two epistles (1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5; 3:6)."⁷ Peter writes,
8. **5 if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; (2:5)**
9. Two thoughts are relevant to Peter's proof:
 - a. The most prevalent is that God spared Noah. God's wrath has surgical precision. Peter is saying these false teachers rise up from within the church of Christ (2:1), but when God's judgment comes, the wheat will not be destroyed with the tares (Matthew 13:24-30); the sheep will not suffer with the goats (Matthew 25:31-46). If God could spare Noah in something as colossal and broad-stroked as the flood, He can spare the faithful when He consummates His judgment on false teachers among the church.
 - b. In addition, the catastrophic event known as the flood was not just a rainstorm but a total destruction of the world as it was originally created and called perfect by God. Minus Noah and his family, he killed every human being on the earth, his most loved creation, and thus ended any chance of them repenting and returning to Him. In other words, if God was willing to destroy something He called perfect and, more prominently, end any chance of restoration for those He loved most, then the idea of God reigning down His wrath on those who teach a false Gospel that leads people away from His eternal Son and the life

⁷ Gangel, K. O. (1985). [2 Peter](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 870–871). Victor Books.

His Son suffered eternal wrath to provide them, is not only not farfetched but totally consistent.

The third proof is the testimony of Lot and, Sodom and Gomorrah.

- C. God spared Lot and his family while erasing the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and their inhabitants because of their grotesque rebellion. (2:6-10a)**
- 1. 6 if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; 7 and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked 8 (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.**
 2. Just as God surgically spared Noah and his family, He offered redemption to Lot and his family. However, to properly understand what happened, you need to remember something that often gets left out of the conversation. God clearly demonstrated His power and grace to both of these cities before He destroyed them! In Genesis 14, God sent Abraham and his men to defeat the Kings who had come and defeated the Kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and, in the process, took Lot and his family as slaves. In defeating these Kings, Abraham not only brought freedom to his nephew Lot but also to the Kings and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah! The point was that God had demonstrated his grace to these people, who in no way were “godly” people at that time either, but they refused to repent, and eventually, the judgment of God came.
 3. In Genesis 18, we find out that the citizens of these two cities had so flung themselves into the allegiance of the god of sex that the true God finally decided to terminate their existence. The level of their extreme sexual perversion and corruption was highlighted in Genesis 19 when the men of Sodom demanded that Lot surrender the two men who were guests in his house so that they could gang rape them! Ironically, these two men were the two Angels God sent to bring salvation to Lot and his family; therefore, as the aggression of the crowd increased against Lot, the angels blinded the mob and rescued Lot and then, a little later, led them to escape the total annihilation of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their inhabitants.
 4. So again, if God would surgically rescue Lot from the wickedness around him, then the faithful teachers and followers of Christ can know God will also

not pour out his wrath on them because false teachers have come up among them. Additionally, however, the false teachers need to know the certainty of God's wrath on them as well, especially those who use the teachings of Jesus to justify sexual immorality and reject the Apostolic authority he gave them over the church—the authority that has now been handed down as the New Testament Scriptures. The False teachers were rejecting the authority of Peter, Paul, and the other Apostles, to determine the church's doctrine and practice, thus rejecting the Christ who gave the Apostles their authority. Now that the Apostles have died when we reject the authority of what they wrote (The New Testament) by taking it out of context and twisting it to fit our own narrative or desires, we need to know we are doing exactly what Peter said consistently throughout Scripture comes under the judgment and wrath of God!

The third part of Peter's presentation about God's response to false teachers is ...

- (3) **Peter's Conclusion - The arrogance of the false teachers will blind them as they walk right into the wrath of God. (10b-13a)**
- A. **Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, 11 whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord. 12 But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, 13 suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. (2:10b-13a)**
 - B. I spent a great deal of time trying to understand what in the world Peter was talking about here! To be completely transparent, conservative scholars are all over the place on some of the details in this, so I'm going to share what I believe Peter meant when he wrote it with the complete understanding that other super solid teachers of the Gospel have differing opinions, but with the comfort that we all end in the same place—God's horrific final judgment on false teachers who refuse to repent. So, let me do my best to help you understand what's happening here.
 - C. The "**they**" in verse 10b are the false teachers he had previously just mentioned—"**and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.**"
 - D. These teachers of immorality are those who treat sex and their own opinions of Jesus and His teachings as people helping themselves to an all-you-can-eat buffet for them to do with as they want. Peter says as they "**indulge**" in their rebellion, they don't even "**tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones.**"

- E.** So, who are the glorious ones? This is where scholars begin to go all over the place. I'm of the opinion the context of this sentence is the contrast Peter had been drawing in the previous sentence between those who rebel against God and those who don't, between Lot and the city living in complete perversion that turned against him. Therefore, I believe the "**glorious ones**" are the followers of Jesus living in submission to the Jesus of the Bible and His clear teachings on morality and ethics.
- F.** So, what then do we make of his analogy of the Angels? I believe Peter uses it to highlight the significance of the false teacher's arrogance. In pointing to those in a higher position and thus more justified to issue judgment but don't, he highlights the foolish arrogance of the people who have no right to attack anybody! Being we are in the middle of the College World Series for NCAA Baseball, let me illustrate it to you this way. Imagine if you were a Hall of Fame baseball coach, and we went together to the UNC/LSU playoff game the other day. In this illustration, you are fully aware that I only played one year of recreational league baseball and that I was, at best, a below-average player! Now, imagine when it got to the 8th inning, and UNC was still behind, that I began yelling insults at the Carolina Baseball Coach and players about what they were doing and what I confidently believed they should be doing instead. At the same time, you, who have been recognized as one of the greatest baseball coaches of all time, saw no reason whatsoever to hurl any insults or advice! I believe this is what Peter is saying here. Even those these False Teachers never met Jesus or heard him preach; they confidently rejected the Jesus and His teachings testified to by the Apostles and, as the men of Sodom did with Lot, they hurled blasphemous insults at those who did! It is a blatant display of idiotic arrogance, but they were totally unfazed in presenting it!
- G.** So Peter goes on and says of these arrogant false teachers, "**12 But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, 13 suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing.**"
- H.** It's one thing to be arrogant, but it's an entirely different thing to be ignorantly arrogant. Let's go back to my illustration for a second. If the Hall of Fame Coach was barking out instructions to the coaches, nobody could say he didn't know what he was talking about, but it would still be arrogant and annoying because he's not in the game; he's in the stands! However, if I'm doing it, well, I don't even have a clue what I'm talking about! I'm completely ignorant. The only thing more ridiculous than the arrogance of a talented person is the arrogance of a person with no talent whatsoever. Arrogance is always absurd, but a person who is ignorant and arrogant has reached the pinnacle of utter and complete foolishness! Peter is saying those who, on their own authority, determine who they believe Jesus to be and what He said and did, as opposed to submitting to the Jesus testified to by the Old Testament Scriptures and the testimony of the

official New Testament Apostles, are the epitome of arrogant fools. They are making up their own Jesus and then insulting and attacking those who refuse to follow their fictional one!

- I. Peter says they will exist in the worthlessness they are creating and "**will also be destroyed in their destruction.**"
- J. They will spend eternity, "**13 suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing.**" The wrath that God will pour out on them is the righteous response to the complete and utter worthlessness (destruction) they are creating with their teachings. Their teachings point people to live in the damnation of sin, and that is exactly what their end will be—eternal damnation.

Challenge: If God judges false teaching and the sin it justifies this way, then how are we judging our own sin? Grace is not a license to sin; it is the power to overcome it!

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. (Titus 2:11-14)

It is not a sin to call false teaching false teaching, nor a sin to call the teachers of false doctrine false teachers. It is, however, a sin to not judge my own sin as sin, to not confess it and fight it by abandoning my rights over myself and my consumption with the things of this world, to be instead filled with Him, know Him, and abide in HIM! Suppose in rightly identifying false teaching and false teachers, we ourselves justify sexual immorality, bitterness, envy, jealousy, materialism, greed, divisiveness, and whatever other sinful behavior exists in our own lives. In that case, we need to know for certain that we are following the very false teaching we are condemning and the wrath that comes with it!

Take courage, God will reign down His judgment on false teachers, but we need to understand that the same God judges our sins! Are you making room for sin in your life?

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Are you arrogantly pointing out the sin in others while you yourself justify sin in your life? The Bible does not condemn rebuking false teaching or Christian accountability, but it absolutely condemns it being done hypocritically. If you have a big, colossal log sticking out of your eye, then it's going to be very detrimental to me and you both if you have your fingers up in my face trying to get a speck out of mine. Repent, get the log out, then come and help me with this speck. False teaching is not a speck; it's a log, but don't be the idiot trying to get a log out of somebody's eye when you have one as well!