

January 11, 2009 by Steve Brandon



# God Knows How

## 2 Peter 2:4-9

1. Sinful angels (verse 4)
2. A sinful society (verse 5)
3. Righteous Noah (verse 5)
4. A sinful city (verse 6)
5. Righteous Lot (verses 7-8)

Romans 11:22 says, "Behold, the kindness and severity of God." In our text this morning, we will see the kindness of God. We will also see the severity of God.

We all love the kindness of God. We spend much of our time each Sunday morning singing of the kindness of God toward us in the cross of Christ. But, we must not forget His severity.

Before we actually read our text, I want for you to notice that the passage begins with the word, "for." This is a word of explanation. As you will read later, you will see that it gives reason for Peter's statement in verse 3, in which he spoke about how the judgment of false teachers "is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep." As Peter describes the false teachers in the church (in verses 1-3), he ended his summary by saying that they would not get away with their sinful actions. They will be destroyed.

Verses 4-9 put forth the absolute certainty of God's judgment upon false teachers. They will not escape their punishment. It is sure. The flip side is true as well. God will protect His people from all of the onslaughts of the enemy.

To prove his point, Peter takes us into some Biblical history in verses 4-9. In doing so, Peter demonstrates that God knows how to rescue the godly from temptation and God knows how to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment. Thus, the title of my message this morning: "God knows how." I considered taking the title of my message this morning as, "God knows how to protect the godly and to punish the righteous." But, that was too long, so, I went with, "God Knows How."

Let's consider our text.

### 2 Peter 2:4-10a

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.

These verses form one long sentence. If you look closely, you can see the structure of his sentence. It begins in verse 4 with an "if," ... "if God did not spare angels." In verse 5, there is an implied, "if" ... "If God did not spare the ancient world." In verse 6, we see another implied, "if" ... "If He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah." In verse 7, there is another implied, "if" ... "If He rescued righteous Lot." Finally, the conclusion comes in verse 9, ... "then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment."

In this statement, we see two sides of God's sovereign hand. On the one hand, God can keep those who are sinfully rebellious against Him until the day of judgment, when they will receive their due for their wickedness. On the other hand, God can keep those who love and follow Him through the trials and temptations of life. "I am confident of this very thing that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6). "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in His presence, blameless and with great joy" (Jude 24).

In verses 4-8, Peter gives us five Biblical illustration of how this is the case. In the case of sinning angels, God didn't spare them. In the case of a sinful ancient world, God didn't spare them. In the case of righteous Noah, God preserved him. In the case of sinful Sodom and Gomorrah, God didn't spare them. In the case of righteous Lot, God preserved him.

These five examples of God's dealing with men will form my outline this morning as we flip back and forth between God's kindness and God's severity. I thought about grouping these together with outlines, such as (1) God's kindness and (2) God's severity. I also thought of (1) God's protecting and (2) God's punishing. However, Peter doesn't do this. Rather, he goes back and forth, mixing together these two characteristics

of God. In an attempt to unleash the Spirit of God, we will go with His flow, bouncing back and forth from the punishing hand of God to the protecting hand of God.

Now, notice that all of these examples given are historical fact. They aren't some theoretical conjecture. They aren't some unrealized hope. These things really happened. And, since they really happened, you might equally translate all of these "if" words with "since." Verse 4, "Since God did not spare angels when they sinned, ..." Verse 5, "Since God did not spare the ancient world, ..." (Verse 5), "Since God preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, ..." Verse 6, "Since He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, ..." Verse 7, "Since He rescued righteous Lot." And then, the conclusion in verse 9, "then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment."

There are many other Biblical examples that Peter could have used to illustrate his principle here in verse 9 that he punishes the wicked and preserves the righteous. Peter could have used the example of the hard-hearted Egyptians, who were in God's hands, until He smote the first-born throughout the land. He could have used the example of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who God singled out as rebels, and instructed everyone away from their homes and then swallowed them up in the earth (Numbers 16). He could have used the examples of all of the nations that Israel conquered in taking over the promised land. Joshua 11:20 says, "It was of the LORD to harden their hearts, to meet Israel in battle in order that he might utterly destroy them, that they might receive no mercy, but that he might destroy them." God knows how to punish the wicked.

On the other side of rescuing the righteous, Peter could have used other examples as well. He could have used the example of Rahab, who was delivered from the destruction of Jericho (Joshua 2). He could have used the example of Elijah, who alone conquered the 450 prophet of Baal (1 Kings 18:22). He could have used the example of Manasseh, who God kept alive in a Babylonian prison long enough to repent (2 Chron. 33). God knows how to protect the righteous.

But, Peter didn't use any of these. He used the examples of sinning angels, a sinful world, Noah, Sodom and Gomorrah, and Lot. To try to figure out why Peter picked these examples and not others would only be conjecture. But, in each of these examples, God is directly involved. He's the one who has bound the angels. He's the one who sent the flood. He's the one who instructed Noah to build an ark. He sent fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah. He sent the angels to urge Lot to seek safety. Perhaps Peter is attempting to show his readers how directly involved God is in the punishing and preserving process.

But, on top of that, please notice that all of these examples come from the book of Genesis. The story of the flood and Noah take place in Genesis 6-9. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah and the rescue of Lot takes place in Genesis 18-19. It's almost as if Peter wanted to say to his readers, ...

"Are you doubting power and will of God to bring condemnation upon the false teachers who have infiltrated your churches? Let me give you a few historical examples of how God has done this in the past. Surely, God is willing enough to do the same in the future. Surely, God is powerful enough to do the same in the future. I can give you many, many, many Biblical examples of this. But, let me begin with Genesis. Here are five examples that took place in Genesis until my run-on sentence gets too long and I need to stop. And I haven't even gone halfway through the book. This is how God has always operated. He punishes the wicked and preserves the righteous. Be assured of this."

Let's look at these examples that Peter gives. God knows how to punish ...

#### 1. Sinful angels (verse 4)

We read there in verse 4, "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment."

Now, it's difficult to know exactly who these angels were that Peter is referring to in this passage. We can pull some clues from this verse that might help us a bit. First of all, we see that these angels "sinned." In the Bible, sinning angels are called "demons." They have the same nature as angels, only, they have chosen the route of rebellion, rather than submission.

Second, we can see here in verse 4 that these angels are bound angels. In other words, they have been cast into hell. They have been committed to pits of darkness. And they cannot get out, until the judgment.

When you think of the angelic world, you can divide them up into two categories.

- 1 - Righteous angels - these are the angelic beings that serve and worship God.
- 2 - Fallen angels - these are the angelic beings that have rebelled against the LORD and have followed the devil, himself.

And within the fallen angels, there are two categories, ...

- 1 - Unbound demons - these are the demons that are free to roam the earth and do their damage in seeking to draw people away from the LORD.
- 2 - Bound demons - these are the demons whose rebellion has been so bad, that they have been imprisoned until the day when they are finally judged (These are the demonic beings that we see here in verse 4).

Most of your translations say that they have been "cast into hell." That's a bit deceiving, because we often think of hell as the permanent place of final judgment. But, these demons are in a sort of holding place, like the local jail, awaiting final judgment, where they will spend it forever in the federal penitentiary. Literally here, these demons have been "tartarized" that is, they have been sent to Tartarus, which was a common word used in Greek mythology to speak of an abode for the wicked. It's difficult to know too much about this place. We simply know that it's a place where the demons are kept for their final judgment.

The question naturally comes, "What did these fallen angels do that was so bad that they have been bounded and kept for the day of judgment?" How is it that they are bound with no room for repentance. Bottom line? We don't know for sure.

Most theologians would trace their sin back to Genesis, chapter 6 during the days of the flood. Many would even identify them as the "sons of God" who "took wives for themselves" and brought forth a demonic race of people (Gen. 6:1-4). Jude may be alluding to this when he said that there were "angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6).

We could spend a long time talking about this. though, but at this point, I'd rather not, because quite frankly, much of it is speculation. It may be true. It may not be true. It's difficult to piece all together. But, if it does piece together, it all makes sense.

The point of Peter is that these angelic beings have sinned so badly, that God has bound them and has not permitted them to roam the earth as other demons are able to do. They continue to live today, awaiting that day when God's righteous judgment may be known to the entire universe.

Peter's point is simple: If God can bind these angels and keep them until the day of judgment, then, certainly, He can deal with the false teachers who are reeking havoc with the church of God. According to 2 Peter 2:11, Angels "are greater in might and power" than we are. But, such powerful beings are no match for God. He can keep them bound until the day of judgment. And if God can keep the mighty angelic beings bound for the day of judgment, then certainly He is fully capable of dealing with the false teachers of our day.

In mentioning these things, Peter has designed these words with your comfort in mind. When God says, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay" (Rom. 12:19), it comes as a comfort to us. It lets us be worry free about the future. In verse 3, Peter had affirmed to us that "their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep." He's backing these words up with what God has done with the angelic world. So, rest assured in God's sovereign hand to punish those who rebel against Him.

Next, Peter calls to mind the world before the flood. We have seen God's dealing with the sinful angels (verse 4). Now, let's look at God's dealings with ...

## **2. A sinful society (verse 5)**

We read in verse 5, "And [since He] did not spare the ancient world, ... when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly."

Now, without doubt, this does refer back to Genesis, chapter 6 when the LORD brought a flood upon the world. The reason why the LORD flooded the entire earth was because of the sinfulness of man. Genesis 6:5 records God's perspective of the world in the days of Noah. We read, "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and the every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). This is the God's evaluation of the world shortly before He destroyed it with a flood.

The breadth of man's sin was great. The depth of man's sin was great. "The wickedness of man was great on the earth." If you take the broadest sweep of evaluation of the moral compass of man, his corruption was "great." There was much sin and violence upon the earth.

Furthermore, if you would examine each person who lived at the time, delving deep into his heart with a microscope able to detect sin, you would find nothing there but corruption as well. "Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." That is, the corruption takes place all the time, nothing but evil was coming out of every thought.

When God looked down upon such evil, we see the tender heart of God. Genesis 6:6 says that "The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart." When God created mankind and they chose to rebel, rather than submit to Him, God's heart was crushed. He had placed Adam and Eve (the perfect man and the perfect woman), into the garden (the perfect environment). And what became of it? -- an earth filled with rebels against the LORD. They despised His way. They despised His name. They were wicked to the core.

And so, the LORD made a plan. "The LORD said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them'" (Gen. 6:7). And you know the story.

Gen. 7:11-12, 18-19

All the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened. The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. ... The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, ... so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered.

The result was simple.

Genesis 7:21-23

All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind; of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died. Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark.

(We'll get to Noah in a bit). But, think about the reality of what took place in those days. The entire world was destroyed, except for eight on the ark. How many people was that? It was a lot. If you trace the genealogies from the time of Adam until Noah, you get 1656 years. Henry

Morris in his Genesis commentary estimates that there were some 7 billion people on the earth at this time. [\[1\]](#)

Even if Morris was off by an order of magnitude, and only 700 million people died in the flood, it still is an astonishing number of people. How many were destroyed? -- All of them. How many were saved? -- Eight of them. As you think about that and weigh the numbers, you see that God doesn't grade on a curve. It doesn't matter how many are the false teachers, God can handle them all. God is able to deal with them.

If God was willing to destroy millions in the days of the flood, saving only eight. Then, certainly, God will be willing to destroy all of the false teachers, regardless of how numerous they may be. And they can never out-number God! You don't have to worry, God knows how to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.

He didn't spare the sinful angels (verse 4). He didn't spare the sinful society (verse 5). And now, let's get a taste of good news. Verse 9 also says that "the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation." We see this embedded into verse 5. God knows how to rescue people like ...

### 3. Righteous Noah (verse 5)

Look what Peter says about Noah, "But [God] preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly" (verse 5).

When God saw that "the earth was corrupt ... and ... was filled with violence," God determined to destroy the earth. Listen to what God said in Genesis 6:13, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth." God pronounced that His judgment was coming upon the earth. And yet, "Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:8).

According to Genesis 6:9, we read that "Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God." We know that Noah wasn't perfectly righteous. After the flood, we see that he became drunk from the vineyard that he grew. And yet, God found Noah to be righteous.

But, the writer to the Hebrews tells us of Noah's righteousness. Noah "became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Heb. 11:7). As Noah walked with God and believed God, God reckoned his faith as righteousness, and as a result, preserved him and his family.

God dealt with Noah just like God would deal with Abraham almost a thousand years later. "[Abraham] believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). In other words, when Abraham looked to God in faith, God looked to Abraham as a righteous man. This is the same way that God deals with us. When we believe in Jesus Christ, God accounts our faith as righteousness (Gal. 2:16). This is the glories of the gospel! It's not that we are righteous in an of ourselves. Rather, it's that God credits our faith as righteousness to our account. Believe in Jesus!

Now, when you read the Genesis account, you can see the faith of Noah. During the days of Noah, the earth was a bit different than it was in our days. The atmosphere was different, as rainbows didn't exist. The Scriptures talk about the "waters above the firmament." Some have postulated that there was a "vast vaporous canopy which maintained the earth as a beautiful greenhouse, preventing cold temperatures and therefore preventing wind and rain storms." [\[2\]](#)

In Genesis 2:5-6 we read that "the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, ... but a mist used to rise from the ground and water the whole surface of the ground." Many have thought that it never rained until the days of Noah. Rather than being on top of the earth, the water was under the earth. If that was the case, then it makes sense that the flood is describes as "the fountains of the great deep bursting open" (Gen. 7:11), like a cracked egg, which begins to ooze out. So, in the days of Noah, there may well have never been rain, nor a flood. And yet, God told Noah to build an ark, because he was going to destroy the world with a flood.

The act of building this ark was a demonstration of the faith of Noah. Perhaps to all reasoning ability, it made no sense to build an ark that was gigantic. It was certainly big enough to hold Noah and his family. Peter here tells us that Noah was saved, along with seven others. It was Noah, and Mrs. Noah. It was Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. It was their wives, Mrs. Shem, Mrs. Ham, and Mrs. Japheth. Along with Noah's family were two of every kind of animal. And some animals, designated as "clean animals," there were seven of them on the ark.

The ark was certainly big enough to hold all of those animals. It was three stories high. It was longer than a football field, but a bit skinnier. It had the capacity of more than 500 modern railroad livestock cars. Certainly there was enough room to save the animals.

The size of the ark demonstrated the depth of Noah's faith. He built this thing in broad view of all of his neighbors. The best guess that we have is that it took him 120 years to build the ark. During this entire time, Peter tells us that he was "a preacher of righteousness." Think about it. He was preaching 120 years, preaching righteousness, without a convert. Certainly, he was ridiculed the entire time. And yet, Noah believed God. And Noah walked with God.

How did he do it? I believe that it was God who preserved him. Certainly, there were days of discouragement. Certainly, there were days when he wanted to quit. But, I believe that God sustained him through his trials, and delivered His life, when all around him perished in the flood! "God knows how to rescue the godly from temptation."

And the comfort to you ought to be obvious. I don't care how bad it gets! I don't care how many false teachers arise. I don't care how poor the church looks. God is on His throne, and God will rescue the righteous, who trust in Him.

Let's turn to our fourth example. God known how to judge ...

#### **4. A sinful city (verse 6)**

Look there at verse 6, "And if He condemned Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter."

The story of Sodom and Gomorrah is told in Genesis 18 and 19. When the LORD visited Abraham and told him that he and Sarah would have a son in their old age, the conversation drifted into a discussion about Sodom and Gomorrah. The LORD said, "The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave" (Gen. 18:20) and planned to destroy the city. In verse 21 God said that "[their outcry] has come to Me."

Similar language is used of Nineveh in Jonah's day. God said to Jonah, "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me" (Jonah 1:2). Somehow, in some way, we see the wickedness of a city being so great that it rises like a stench toward heaven. And the LORD takes note. In the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, the wickedness was so bad that the LORD had decreed that he would destroy the city.

Even Abraham's pleading for the city wasn't enough for God to relent of His judgment upon the city. Perhaps you remember the story when Abraham said to the LORD, "Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous within the city?" (Gen. 18:23-24). God said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account" (Gen. 18:26). And then Abraham pleaded for God to spare the city if 45 righteous people were found in the city. And God said that he wouldn't destroy the city if he found 45 righteous people. Then, Abraham pleaded for 40. And then, it got down to 30. And then 20 and then 10. And God says, "I will not destroy it on account of the ten" (Gen. 18:32). For some reason, that's where Abraham stopped. For the sake of ten righteous people, God promised that he would not destroy the city. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (of course he will). Perhaps Abraham was convinced that there were 10 righteous in the city and that his prayers didn't need to continue on.

But, as the story unfolds, there weren't ten righteous people in the city. Peter tells us of one, Lot, whom he called, "Righteous." (We'll get to him in a bit).

As you read the account in Genesis, you are immediately struck by the sinfulness of the city. Lot was in the city square when he was visited by two angels, who would protect him from the coming destruction. They wanted to spend the night in the square, but Lot knew of the wickedness of the people in the city. It was not safe for them in the city square. So, they came into his home.

As evening approached, "the men of the city ... of Sodom, surrounded the house" (Gen. 19:4). And they requested that Lot give these two men (who were really angels) to them, so that they might engage in homosexual behavior with them (Gen. 19:5). They were relentless in their request. Lot could not persuade them otherwise. So, the LORD struck them with blindness (Gen. 19:11) to protect Lot and his family. But, this didn't stop them. "They wearied themselves trying to find the doorway" (Gen. 19:11).

Such was the extent of wickedness that rose up to the LORD, which incited Him to destroy the city. As Lot and his daughters escaped, "The LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven" (Gen. 19:23), and the destruction of the city was total. When Abraham "looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the valley, ... the smoke of the land ascended like the smoke of a furnace" (Gen. 19:27).

The point is this: If God reduced the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes, doesn't He know how to destroy the false teachers that will arise in the churches? Of course He does. He can reduce them to ashes. He can burn houses. He can bring car crashes. We all ought to look to Sodom and Gomorrah and learn its lesson.

Peter goes on to tell us (in verse 6) that the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah was "an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter" (verse 6). More than twenty times throughout the Scripture, the memory of God's work in Sodom is used as an example of wickedness. The argument often goes like this: "Remember what God did to Sodom and Gomorrah because of their wickedness. They are an example to us of how God will punish the wicked."

Peter's words are a direct threat to the false teachers of Peter's day and of our day. Do you want to live an ungodly life? Then, expect to experience the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. And, for those of us in the church who feel the weight of the sin of false teachers, be comforted, because God knows how to keep the unrighteous under punishment.

Finally, let's turn our attention to Peter's fifth example in our text. God knows how to rescue people like ...

#### **5. Righteous Lot (verses 7-8)**

Consider verses 7 and 8, "and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds)."

Three times in this text, Peter identifies Lot as being righteous. He is called, "Righteous Lot" (verse 7). He is called a "righteous man" (verse 8). He is described as having a "righteous soul" (verse 8).

Now, if you go back and read the account of Lot as given in the book of Genesis, you need to look long and hard to find how Lot was righteous. When we first encounter Lot in Genesis 13, we see him choosing to live among the wicked of Sodom simply because the land was good (Gen. 13:10-13). In other words, Lot was a worldly man, choosing the pleasures of the world, rather than the fellowship of godly people.

Furthermore, when you get to Genesis 19, his actions were far from righteous. He was willing to give away the sexual purity of his daughters to the wicked men of the city (Gen. 19:8). The angels who came to tell him of the coming disaster upon Sodom practically had to drag him out of the city (Gen. 19:16). Finally, he was seduced by his daughters to raise up offspring for them (Gen. 19:30-38).

And yet, Peter says that he is righteous. And so he must be. But, how? The key to his righteousness comes in the parenthetical comment in verse 8, "(for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds)." As Lot saw the wickedness around him, his soul was in agony at the rebellion of his neighbors toward the LORD. As Lot heard the way that they talked, his soul was in agony at how little they regarded the LORD. Lot didn't join them in their sin. Lot didn't mix with the sinful of the city. Instead, he was derided as their judge. When he was arguing with the men of the city, the accusation came against him, "This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge" (Gen. 19:9).

Lot was righteous in that he didn't join in their wicked activity. Rather, he suffered agony of soul as he observed their sin. In this way, Lot was a righteous man. He knew what was right and suffered in his soul whenever he mixed with those who failed to follow the ways of the LORD. Is this you? When you mix with a company of sinful people, do you feel as if you are a fish out of water? Do you feel like an alien? Are you tormented in your soul?

The encouraging thing is this: God rescued Lot. God went to great efforts to rescue him, sending two angels on a mission to take him out safely.

A few months before Yvonne and I were married, I was driving cross-country from Chicago to Los Angeles. I was driving with my parents. We drove straight through from Chicago to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where we finally arrived in a hotel. Upon checking in, I remember the clerk at the counter asking us where we were headed. When we told him, "Los Angeles," he mentioned about how bad things are in Los Angeles. I shrugged his comments off, saying, "Yeah, it's not too bad, though. I lived there for a couple of years." Then, he said, "No, there have been some riots in Los Angeles as a result of the Rodney King verdict."

So, we went to our hotel room and turned on the news to find fires burning in Los Angeles and the city under curfew. I remember thinking how we were going to go into Los Angeles and rescue Yvonne and take her away from the terrible city. Well, when we arrived, we discovered that it wasn't quite as bad as it looked on television. We were staying many miles away from the trouble. And actually, with the curfew, the city was amazingly quite at night.

But, I remember the rush of feeling that I was going to be on a mission to rescue my future wife from the troubles in the city. That's the very same rush that these angels felt. They descended upon the city, told Lot of the trouble and dragged him out of the city to safety, just before fire and brimstone consumed the city.

This is typical of what God does in rescuing the righteous from hard situations. God will rescue those who see sin around them and cry to the Lord for help. God will rescue those who see their own sin and cry for God's help to overcome. The great promise of 1 Corinthians 10:13 rings in my ears, "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it."

That's the message of our text this morning. Verse 9 is the summary. Verse 9 is the where the entire passage is leading. "The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment." When false teachers arise in the church and seek to mislead many, you have no need to fret. God will take care of them. He has demonstrated His ability and willingness in the past. He will carry it out in the future.

Regarding your own soul, God knows how to rescue you from temptation. So, trust Him. If today finds you rebelling against the Lord, know that He is patiently waiting for you to repent (2 Pet. 3:9). But, there may be a day when he hands you over to judgment. Repent while you have opportunity.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on January 11, 2009 by Steve Brandon.  
For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

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[1] Henry Morris, The Genesis Record, p. 144.

[2] Ibid., p. 194.