

2Peter 11-11-11a

This is 11-11-11, November the 11th of 2011, Veterans Day, so happy Veterans Day, belated happy Marine Corps birthday, and welcome to our study this evening in the book of 2 Peter. We're going to resume in chapter 2, verse 12, where we left off last time. We'll take a moment, as is our custom, to go to the Lord in prayer, and then we will begin.

Father, how grateful we are to live in this nation and to enjoy the freedoms and the privileges, the opportunities, and the level of prosperity that we have. We appreciate the sacrifices of those who have gone before us, and the sacrifices of many who are even now present with us, and the service and the opportunity to serve that many of us have had to sustain and contribute to the freedom that allows us to worship, to pursue our understanding of your purpose and your plan, and to come to know our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We are grateful for the passage that is before us this evening in the book of 2 Peter.

We ask your blessing on us as we study it together. May each one of us find in it that truth and manna for the soul that will nourish, strengthen, and sustain us for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of us, so that we will be thoroughly equipped for every good work, and we'll look forward with anticipation and expectation to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ that draws closer with every passing day. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, you remember last time, as we were looking at this letter from Peter to the same people he wrote to the first time, the scattered Jewish Christians of the dispersion, it's really important to remember, and it aids us in interpretation and understanding what Peter is getting at, the recipients of this letter. Who are they? Where are they? What are they facing? This isn't just any old, generic, prophetic utterance or biblical pronouncement.

It is two people that are facing some circumstances that are in some ways unique, and yet in other ways they are universal, and they are circumstances that we ourselves also face. Let's read a little bit of this passage to put ourselves back in the context. You remember that he has made an issue of what is truth.

This is the most important thing for us as believers. Where is the truth of God's Word? Where is the information on His plan and purpose to be found? Remember, these people couldn't reach to a nearby table and pull up a New Testament. They had the Old Testament Scriptures, which they had had for centuries, but they are in a new dispensation.

They are in a new era, a new time in the unfolding of God's plan and purpose, and there is a different kind of provision, they are in a different status, they have different provisions made by God in terms of the presence of the Holy Spirit. There are new truths, they are not under the law anymore. So, as Jewish people with this long heritage and the weight of tradition on them, and then being more or less blasted out of the land and sent to this foreign culture, they are dispersed

amongst these dwellers of the Roman Empire.

They are doubly, if not confused, at least challenged to figure out who they are and why they are here. I mean, you can imagine, they know as Christians that there has been a shift in the dispensation. They have heard the preaching of the Apostles, that you are not under the law, you are under grace.

Well, what is grace? They don't have all four Gospels, they haven't got all the letters of Paul, they don't have all the letters of John, they don't have the fullness of the 27 books of the New Testament that we have. These infrequent apostolic communications and then the spirit-filled ministrations of newly commissioned pastors and elders, teaching elders, are all they have. So they are trying to figure this thing out, they are pioneers in a new frontier, a new land of opportunity, spiritually speaking.

So, when they get a letter from the Apostle Peter, this is just like gold. They are so anxious to hear it and to distribute it and to talk about it and to think about it. And they will study this thing pretty much like we do, because what else have they got? So Peter knows this when he writes the letter.

He is not casual, he is not superficial, he is not platitudinous, he is not just going to paint fairy castles in the air and give them sort of a feel-good message. If there is anybody that has a practical frame of mind, if there is anyone who is a pragmatist, anybody who understands reality, it is the Apostle Peter. He has been a businessman, he has been a fisherman all his life.

He is not from academia, he is not an Apollos or a Barnabas, crafting lofty speeches. When he writes a letter to these people and he knows their situation, he is going to do his best under the ministry of God's Holy Spirit to give them the truth. And at the same time, he is telling them, you have got to be able to distinguish truth from error, because there are competing messages.

You look around today in the United States of America, walk down any aisle of books that purport to be religious or Christian, even go to the Christian bookstore and look at the various viewpoints and the multiplicity of helps that are offered. Listen to the radio. We will send you a resource.

Send us a love gift of X number of dollars, \$35 or whatever. We will send you tapes, we will send you books, we will send you helps. Is there a consistent message? Is there a constant biblical theme? Occasionally you find some.

There are good materials out there, don't get me wrong, but there is an awful lot of blended and watered down theology mixed with New Age thinking, mixed with positive thinking, mixed with feel-good-ism. Partial truth is a dangerous thing because it doesn't have the biblical balance. There is grace, but there is also judgment.

You cannot just preach grace any more than you can just preach judgment. This by the way is an

interesting point to remember when you look at the book of Jonah because Jonah's message to Nineveh was only judgment. Yet 40 days and Nineveh shall be destroyed.

See you later. I'm going to go sit on the hilltop and watch. God's message to his own people is, look at this.

I only gave a message of judgment and the people of Nineveh, pagans that they are, figured out that there must be some grace and they appealed for it in sackcloth and ashes. You people who have gotten the balanced message of grace and just the threat of judgment can't keep the thing in your mind. You can't be obedient.

You can't get interested and God rebukes them with the example of the pagans in the same way that Jesus said the queen of Sheba is going to rise up in the day of judgment as a condemnation to those who had much more information and much less interest. Woe to you Chorazin and Bethsaida and that whole comparison. There are pagans that have had a better response than the people of God when the message of grace was given.

So Peter in writing this letter knows who he is talking to and what is the message? We saw last time this great sort of chiastic structure here. There is an outside reference to the angels. You've got the inside reference to the flood and to Sodom and Gomorrah.

There are really four if clauses in this passage. Peter says, if God knew what to do with these angels that sinned, if God knew what to do with the only evil all the day world, if God knew how to save Noah, if God knew how to deliver Lot, then God knows how to deliver the righteous. But there are these four ifs and he takes a long time getting to it.

What's interesting about this, and we talked about it last week, the central theme in all three of those examples that comprise those four ifs. What was the problem with the angels that kept not their first estate in Genesis 6? What did they specifically do that they should not have done? They saw, the sons of God saw, the daughters of men, however you understand that doesn't really matter. What happened in Genesis 6? Clearly a reference to Genesis 6. Took wives of all whom they chose.

There was illicit relations of a physical nature with the daughters of men. It wasn't supposed to happen and it did. And this led to the judgment of the flood.

This among other things, but this seems to have been the trigger mechanism, the straw that God said this is enough. So you have illicit physical relationships going on, right? Something that was forbidden, something that was commanded. Our understanding of this is that these angels were given physical form, fully functional physical form, to come down and judge men.

To get them a start on civilization. Tell them about the wheel. Tell them about fire.

Tell them about smelting. Tell them about a lot of these early industries that are spoken of in the

chapters of Genesis. It taught them how they could survive outside the garden.

God didn't just kick them out and say figure it out. How do you cultivate? How do you rotate crops? What's the nature of sacrifice? There's a huge amount of information that the early human race picks up in those first generations after Adam and before the flood. And these were God's ministers tasked with oversight and judgment, justice in that civilization.

Well, they apparently started brokering favorable judgmental decisions in exchange for marriage with a daughter. And look, I'll give you a favorable judgment and you can have this farmland, but I want to marry your daughter. And so there was this sort of dowry trade-off and they compromised their mission.

And they kept not their first estate and God has reserved them for punishment. But their problem was lust. They saw the daughters of men that they were beautiful and they took those whom they chose.

What's the problem with Noah right after the judgment of the flood? The example of Noah is brought up and what happens right afterward? Noah plants a vineyard and you have this escapade afterward and this very shameful scene. You've got Shem and Japheth walking backward covering it up. What happens with Lot? Why is Sodom and Gomorrah under judgment and destroyed? Gross perversion everywhere.

By the way, if you turn back to Genesis 19 and look at that, and I'm only just going to touch on it for a moment, but we've always been somewhat puzzled by what happens when these angelic messengers show up and the people of the town, the men of the city in verse four of Genesis 19, the men of Sodom, old and young, all the men from every quarter surround the house. And they called to Lot and they said to him, where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally. So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him and said, please my brethren, do not do so wickedly.

See now I have two daughters who have not known a man. Please let me bring them out to you and you may do to them as you wish. Only do nothing to these men since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof, is for protection.

And we say, gracious sakes, this is just heinous. And how do you reconcile this with Peter saying righteous Lot three times in our passage? Well, look at the next verse. I was looking at this this week.

They said, their response to his offer is, stand back, and they said, this one, Lot, came to stay here and he keeps acting as a judge, Dan. He keeps acting as a judge. He is a shofet, one who pronounces judgment.

Now we will deal worse with you than with them. What do they really resent? He has been

exercising authority as a judge. And what kind of judgment do you think he renders on these perverts? There is going to be an inevitable moral condemnation, right? But here's what I think.

These men came under Lot's roof. Who sees them? Who is going to assemble outside Lot's house and start making these demands? It's going to be the immediate vicinity, these neighbors, right? All of these men. And as Lot stands outside his closed door, trying to fend these guys off, and he makes the offer of his daughters, he knows these men, and they know him.

This isn't a crowd of strangers. They know him, and they say, this one came, and they know his history, they know who he is, and he knows who they are. If he has actually been a judge in the town, then they have come up, he can put names to these faces.

And as he looks out there, and by the way, you notice that both of his daughters of marriageable age are not married? There is nobody in the town for them to betroth or be betrothed to. So I suspect that this offer, Lot knows there is nobody in this crowd that will accept it, because every single one of them he looks at is a known pervert. And his offer is something of an empty offer, because he would love for there to be a man in Sodom who would be willing to take a wife.

And you remember in the ancient world, there was this thing where, it's kind of like the old shotgun wedding deal, where if there is an act of physical intimacy, then a marriage must soon follow. And we're not used to that in our culture, but you remember the story of Ruth and Boaz. There was this expectation, and it didn't really change until centuries later.

By the time of Christ with Mary and Joseph, there was no expectation of intimacy prior to the formal recognition and consummation and so on. But back in these days, remember, for example, Dinah, a few generations later, Jacob's daughter Dinah, when Shechem, you remember that incident, there was the expectation that he would marry her, and this was the thing that got Simeon and Levi in so much trouble. But here's the thing, here's the thing, Lot has judged them.

He has exercised some sort of authority. What is the subject in our passage? These who walk in the lust of the flesh and despise authority. We're going to set you aside, we're going to bring you down, we don't like this chafing authority.

This, by the way, is the reason that God has got to get rid of unbelievers, because they can't stand his authority. There are only two kinds of people that have ever been on the planet. Those who are drawn to God and those who are repelled by God.

And anything godly or that pertains to God or partakes of God, sooner or later affects in the same way. We had a set of Bible recordings when I was a child, and in the Job story, there is a sort of a monologue, sort of a soliloquy that's given to Satan. And at one point, when they say, well, you know, you're going up there to these conclaves and talking to God, and he says, I hate anything that reminds me of God, and I forbid you to mention his name or anything associated with him.

Because it all partakes of the same thing. This is how we end up with suffering for Christ's sake. Even if it isn't, you're a Christian, I'm going to persecute you, we are part of, we are members of the body of Christ.

And directly or indirectly, that sooner or later polarizes those around us. We are either drawn in fellowship to fellow believers, or we are rejected and hostilities ensue. But, look at this in Genesis.

This is really the key in verse 9. This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge. Now we will deal worse with you than with them. We are now, even though these enticing looking messengers have come, now that we think about it, you're really the one we want to do some kind of harm to.

And the only way they are stopped is when the angels come out and blind them. But I think, not as a defense in any way, I mean, it's hard for us to understand how Lot could ever even mention his daughters in this context, but in a way, I think he figured it was a safe bet. And if there were any guy in the neighborhood, remember the lament of his daughters later on is that, we haven't got any prospects.

There's nobody around here who will marry us. So I think Lot was certain that there weren't going to be any takers for this. I think he's just trying to get their minds off of the messengers and say, think about something else.

And, of course, they won't and they don't. But be that as it may, back in 2 Peter, we've got this, from the angels to the time of Noah, with this wicked imagination, only evil all the day, and God has to destroy that civilization because it has become so perverse and corrupted through this intermarriage, inter-copulation situation. So you've got that.

You've got Noah afterward, which is implicit, if not explicit, in the passage. Then you've got the situation with Lot, implicit and explicit. You remember what happens with Lot after the deliverance.

And so then you get down to verse 8, that righteous man dwelling among them tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds. Let me give you this in a more literal rendition from the Greek, because the word order and the way the ideas strike you in Greek is really telling. In verse 8, you have, BLEMATI GAR KAI AKOE, which is a Greek way of saying, for in seeing and in hearing.

BLEPO, you may remember, is your Greek verb for seeing. And AKUO, this is where we get acoustics. So this is exposure.

Now, you think about the people to whom Peter is writing, and you think about our situation today. Is there exposure through sight and sound to denigration and perversion and the lust of

the flesh? I mean, it's everywhere. So he is subtly reminding the people that he's writing to, these dispersed Jews distributed in the Roman Empire, that Lot was also immersed in a depraved culture.

And in seeing and in hearing, they say, boy, we know about that. We can't get away from it. We're shocked.

You know, this kind of things they were seeing, they had never seen in Israel, in Judah. There was a lot of religious departure from the truth of God, but they didn't have the perversion in Jerusalem and in Judah, and in the environs of their nation that they had once they got out in this Hellenistic Roman Empire culture. So in seeing and in hearing, and all it says is Hadikaiois.

You notice in your New King James, it's his righteous, his is in italics, because it doesn't make a specific reference to Lot. It says, the righteous, Hadikaiois, for in seeing and in hearing, the righteous dwelling among them. This is Ege-kat-oy-ken.

You remember oy-ke-o, this is the word for house, oy-kas, and oy-ke-o is to dwell. Kata is according to, and he's dwelling in their midst. En-al-toys, this is among them, we've talked about that en thing before.

In their midst, day by day. This is hameron-ek-hameros, hameron-ek-hameros, and they say day from day, but we would say day by day. So this is a daily grinding exposure, seeing and hearing, day after day after day.

Then it says, the righteous soul, di-kai-on-su-kein, it's actually reversed in Greek, it says the soul, the righteous. Then ah-no-moys-er-goys. You know what namos is, right? Namos is the law.

And if you remember what an alpha privative is, what would ah-namos be? Lawless. We say morals, and then we say someone is amoral, that's an alpha privative. You put an A in front of a Greek noun, it makes it the opposite, without that thing, lacking that thing.

So, you've got the righteous dwelling in the midst of them day after day. The righteous soul in lawless works. These ah-no-moys-er-goys, this is a dative, dative, locative, or instrumental.

This means in, by, with, among, in the midst, being exposed to these lawless works, is tormented. This is the imperfect active indicative, and it means it was tormented in this constant exposure. But by leaving a lot out of it and making it a more general statement, he is really appealing to these people.

This is what they say I can relate. I'm a righteous soul, in the sense that I know what righteousness is, and I am vexed by what I see and what I hear, day by day. I'm not used to it, I'm not inured to it, I'm not in favor of it, I don't like it, and day by day by day, I've got to put up with it.

These lawless deeds, these having to dwell in the midst of it, and basanizo is the word for

torment. This is the word that was used by the rich man when he says to Abraham, let Lazarus dip his leprous finger in the water and cool my tongue, because I am basanizo in this flame, I am tormented in this flame. A soul that is trying to cling to righteousness is oppressed, it is tormented by this daily immersion and exposure, dwelling in the midst of it.

What is the nature of Lot's righteousness? It is in a specific area. Lot has got his faults. He was materialistic, he was more interested in the green grass down there by Sodom and Gomorrah than he was in staying with his uncle who is the spiritual giant of the era and the progenitor of the people of God, and I'm sure he knew about the promises to Abraham and everything else, but Lot doesn't want to stick around.

He's in the world, he's materialistic. Well because he has made this choice, now he's got this daily oppression and he is worn down by it. And that's what we had in verse 7. It says, righteous Lot being worn down by the godlessness and debauchery of behavior and God rescued him.

So this is a wearing exposure. Well we get to, the Lord knows how to deliver the godly, notice it doesn't say the righteous, it says the godly. We've got two different words here, dikaios of course is righteous, and then we have the ungodly and the godly are two different forms lacking or having the prefix, and eusebeia is godliness in Greek.

And so you've got the, this means reverence or spiritual orientation, eusebeia, and of course the ungodly have got a negative in front of that. So God knows how to rescue or to, and this is not sozo, to save, this is a different word, this is huesthai, h-r-u-e-s-t-h-a-i. And this is a much less often used word for deliverance, and he is going to keep these others for the day of judgment.

And he says in verse 10, especially those who are going to be punished, who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. These two things are linked, and we talked about this last time, and it becomes more important as we move forward. They are presumptuous and self-willed.

To understand this you have to kind of glide into it from verse 10. He says, especially the ones who, after the flesh, this is behind the flesh literally, and this is getting a little bit graphic. He could have said according to the flesh, he could have said katha, he could have used a lot of different prepositions here.

He could have used en, or ace, unto, with a view toward, but he uses opizo, which means behind, and that's all I'm going to say about that. There's a reason for it, there's a specific kind of perversion in view. And he says behind the flesh, en epithumia, in the desire of pollution, and the word pollution is miasma.

We talk about the miasma of the swamp, something that drags you down and draws you in and it's difficult to escape. But they travel in this. This is poru amanas, and the amanas means this is sort of a middle idea.

They cause themselves to travel in it, they remain in it, they like it there for some reason. And they think down on authority. The word authority is kurio tetos.

The word Lord, when we say Lord Jesus Christ, this is kurios Jesu Christu, right? Kurios. Well, this is kurio tetos, and the tetos ending means this is the status of lordship. This is, there were many lords, you know, people would say lord, as you have the parable of the talents, the fellow dealing out the talents there is called Lord, and it's always tricky if you're punctuating that because in the parable it's not the Lord Jesus, and so it's a lowercase l, and then when Jesus applies it to himself it becomes an uppercase I. But be that as it may, kurio tetos is lordship, it is the status of one who has authority.

And they literally think down, froneo means to think, and kata means think down upon it. Ana is up, kata is down, and they think down on it. They look down on it, they despise it, and you just see these perverts circling the house of Lot, who has been serving as a judge, and they say, you know, the more I think about it, you're really the guy we ought to be after here, because we're sick of you coming in here from outside and then standing as a judge and serving as a rebuke for our moral behavior.

Well, how does this all pertain? Is that thing right, Dan? Am I already out of time? Can't believe it. Well, we'll pause here and take our break, but when we come back, I've just now laid the foundation upon which I'm going to set this great point, and I have just run myself clear out of time. So we'll pause here and take our break, but don't go away, because the whole reason we went through this is what I am just about to say, and I will try to remember to say it as soon as we come back.