

Title: Terrorists in the Church: Description, Danger & Doom of False Teachers (Part4)

Passage: 2 Peter 2:4

Theme: The deadly danger of false teachers in the church

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{{Read Passage}}

Last week we finished v. 3 which actually straddles the trans. from t/1st major section of this chapt. to t/2d.

First ==>

I. The Commencement of False Teachers (1-3a)

In these 3 vv. Peter writes to warn us that those who would pervert God's truth are on t/scene. They have arrived. In fact, they are nothing new. OT ==> NT.

From "commencement" we move t/2nd major section ==>

II. The Condemnation of False Teachers (3b-9)

We managed to just get our feet wet last time as we moved from v. 3 to v. 4.

A. Their Judgment Declared (3b)

. . . their judgment from long ago is not idle and their destruction is not asleep.

This statement bookends the end of v. 1 {cite} – Not only that, it's a hinge that transitions us to a larger theme of judgment and to that we now turn.

B. Their Judgment Described (4-9)

I should clarify that by "described" I don't mean that t/descriptions or examples given are of these false teachers.

Peter uses as examples 3 events all from t/first book of t/Bible (Gen). These examples serve as a parallel to t/certain judgment of those who deny JC & His Gospel of Salvation.

Again, it goes back to t/issue of truth.

Truth is central to God's Nature. He is called "the God of truth" in Psa. 31:5.

In t/prologue to his Gospel, TAJ speaks of JC, God in the flesh, as "full of grace and truth" and later records Jesus' declaration, "I am t/truth" in chapter 14.

God is all about t/truth.

All truth is God's truth because apart from God there is no truth.

Truth is foundational to our physical existence.

Think about it. How could you live if there were no such thing as truth?

Only thing that would be predictable is that nothing would be predictable. There would be no logic since there would be no basis to form consistent arguments. You couldn't do any science // know any history.

A purely post-modern world would be impossible to live in. The red light might mean "go" or it might mean "detour."

Relationships would be shredded. If there's one thing that's foundational to healthy relationships it's truth.

Why, as parents, we have drilled into our daughter's head how serious lying is. If there's no truth there's no trust.

Truth is foundational to our physical existence.

Not only that

Truth is foundational to our spiritual existence. God has clearly spelled out what He demands of sinful men if they are to be forgiven of their sin and be rightly related to Him.

That same passage in John 14 that says Jesus is t/truth also says that no one can be t/Father apart from Him.

Saving faith in JC is t/single condition for entrance into t/KD. That's t/Gospel (good news). It's like an equation. It's like $2+2=4$. If you add to it or take away from it, then it's no longer true.

You can't say $2+3=4$; or $1+2=4$. ISW - you can't say

Faith + Works = salvation OR Faith + Sacraments = salvation.

Tremendous example of all this in Galatians

Truth is essential to t/Gospel & integral to God's very nature. Therefore, to pervert truth – particularly truth that relates to what God has said or who he is – is to provoke God's sure judgment.

Isn't it interesting that those 2 things: t/perversion of God's voice and t/denial of His judgment are central to t/first lie ever recorded in t/Bible?

Genesis chapter 3. The first man and woman created by God are tested as to their obedience.

At this point in t/narrat. they have not fallen. In theology we refer to them as having been created in a positive but unconfirmed state of holiness (better than "innocence" which is too neutral a term). They were holy. They were without sin. But they were unconfirmed in their holiness. Like t/non-elect angels, they had t/inherent ability to sin. When they sinned they were confirmed in their depravity.

IOW - they were unable to be "not sinful."

When we as believers are in X we are put in a state of confirmed holiness in that we, like t/elect angels, will never be able to fall back into condemnation.

If we go back to our story in Genesis we see that God gives them a single prohibition: "Don't eat from t/tree of t/knowledge of good and evil, for in the day you do you will die"

Satan, t/personification of all evil, arrives on t/scene and says what?
"You will not die"

God lied to you (there's t/perversion of God's voice)
You won't die (there's t/denial of God's judgment).

Perversion of God's voice and t/denial of His judgment are central to t/first lie ever recorded in t/Bible.

Before this year we'd never been to Washington DC. In July we took a short trip there. We saw a lot of things and there were a lot of things that we missed. One of t/sites that took me by surprise was t/Jefferson Memorial. From t/road it didn't seem like much. The bus stopped there and I almost hated to get off. But it was very impressive.

There are several inscriptions on t/memorial, including this one which records engraved in granite t/words the words of our 3rd President ==>
“And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure, when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that his justice can not sleep forever.”

I tremble for those who deny t/saving liberties of t/Gospel of grace // for false teachers that lead others to hell by denying t/Gospel or rejecting that God will judge t/world in righteousness.

As we saw at t/end of v. 3 - God's judgment is not idle and their destruction is not asleep.

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I want to give you an overview of where we will be going over the next few weeks as we look at vv. 4-9.

We have an extended "if" / "then" argument here.

IOW - "if this is true, then this is true" or "if this is true then this will happen."

Fancy term for this is "protasis" and "apodosis"

John 8:31 Jesus said ==> **“If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;**

IF (protasis) you abide in my word, THEN (apodosis) you are true disciples.

Here in vv. 4-9 we have an extended if / then clause. Verse 4 begins a protasis that does not have an apodosis until verse 9.

{cite vv. 4/5/6/7 w/ v. 9}

Here's another way to look at it

If God judged the angels (v. 4)

*and if he judged the flood generation (v. 5) while at the same time sparing Noah (v. 5)
and if he judged Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 6), while at the same time preserving Lot (vv.7-8)*

Then it follows that the Lord will preserve His true children who live in an ungodly culture (examples: Noah and Lot)

And it also follows that the Lord will punish false teachers, along w/all unrighteousness on t/day of judgment (examples: Angels, Flood, Sodom & Gomorrah).

Three examples of God's judgment:

- 1) The fallen angels of Genesis 6
- 2) The Flood of Genesis 11
- 3) The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19

These are cited by Peter as first-class evidence as he builds his case that t/false teachers who denied future judgment will be held accountable for their sin and condemned.

Something that runs parallel to this judgment theme is God's preservation of t/righteous remnant (Noah / Lot / Peter's readers & ultimately us).

Let's go back to ==>

B. Their Judgment Described (4-9)

1. Described in Terms of the Past

a. Three Examples of God's Certain Judgment of the Unrighteous:

Remember we said that one feature of certain brands of heresy is sensuality.

Sexual sin and false doctrine are often found sleeping together.

... many will follow their SENSUALITY ...

v. 10 (they "indulge the flesh w/its corrupt desires")

v. 14 (they have "eyes full of adultery")

v. 18 (they "entice by fleshly desires" and "by sensuality")

The 3 examples that Peter gives in vv. 4,5,6 all relate in 1 way or another to t/sin of sensuality or sexual perversion.

Peter's examples are carefully chosen. Not only for that, but because they mark out 3 key points in OT history.

a. Three [past] Examples of God's Certain Judgment of the Unrighteous:

(1) The Fallen Angels of Genesis 6

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned . . .

[t/"For" goes back to t/end of v. 3]

(a) Peter brings up as his first example angels who sinned and were not spared judgment

i. He doesn't say anything beyond that

IOW - he doesn't say "which angels" // nature of their sin ==> lead us to believe that his readers knew exactly what he was talking about.

I've already shown my hand as to what I believe Peter is referring to – the fallen angels of Genesis 6.

Might wonder why I'm going there since we have so little information in this verse. Answer has to do w/the parallels in 1 Peter and Jude.

(b) Remember toward the end of 1 Peter chapter 3?

Peter writes about ==>

spirits now in prison . . . who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah

We have imprisoned spirits / demons / fallen angels.

Imprisoned due to disobeyed.

Specific act of disobeyed. during t/time of Noah & t/Flood.

i. What do we have here?

Angels (spirits) who sinned (were disobedient)

They are imprisoned (chained in pits of darkness).

Then we have what in v. 5? Noah.

Jude 6 angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

their sin is likened to that of Sodom and Gomorrah in that they both . . . indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh . . .

In all 3 instances we have fallen angels (demons) who sinned & are imprisoned.

(c) Angels beings fall into two basic categories

i. Holy elect angels (1 Tim. 2:4) -

these are those angels whom God created in a state of confirmed holiness. They did not join t/rebellion of Satan.

ii. Evil, fallen angels (demons)

And these fallen angels may be sub-categorized: 1) Loose; 2) Bound.

It's t/bound or imprisoned angels that Peter (and Jude) are is talking about.

Question is, why?

Why are they imprisoned?

What did they do?

Jude gives us a key in t/example of Sodom and Gomorrah. Like t/men of Sodom, these angelic beings ==>

. . . indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh . . .

They did something immoral and unnatural.

(d) Peter and Jude are drawing from a very common Jewish tradition that angelic beings cohabited with human women

Result was a perverted mongrel race of people who were destroyed in t/flood. That is an interpretation of what happened in Genesis 6.

i. Just to show you how pervasive this was among t/Jews I want to cite a few extra-biblical sources

In *Testament of Naphtali* 3:4-5 the angels of Gen 6:1-4 are designated as 'Watchers,' and they are said to have 'departed from nature's order' and hence are cursed with the flood.

In the *Testament of Reuben*, women charmed the Watchers with their beauty, so that the Watchers lusted after them. They transformed themselves into males and gave birth to giants (cf. IQapGen 2:1).

Book of Jubilees also teaches that the Watchers sinned with the daughters of men by mingling with them sexually (*Jub.* 4:22).

1 Enoch. The angels desired the daughters of men and fornicated with them. Some of the language used bears remarkable parallels to Jude — The idea that the Watchers abandoned their "proper sphere." ==> For what reason have you abandoned the high, holy, and eternal heaven; and slept with women and defiled yourselves with the daughters of the people, taking wives, acting like the children of the earth, and begetting giant sons?' (15:3).

The authors of t/Bible sometimes quote or allude to outside sources. That doesn't make t/o/s source an authority and it doesn't mean that everything in that source is true.

When Paul writes "All Cretans are liars" in Titus 1:12, he cites t/Gk. philosopher Epimenides.

When biblical writers quote / refer to o/s sources that doesn't make t/source inspired. It doesn't even make t/quote in t/source inspired. The quote is inspired where it's found in t/Bible (Titus 1:12) only because t/biblical author meant to use it for a larger purpose w/i t/canon.

Dr. Thomas Schreiner's warning applies ==>

We must be careful, however, to avoid saying that Jude [or Peter] necessarily agreed with everything found in 1 Enoch or Jewish tradition in general. His own reference to the tradition is terse and avoids the kind of speculation we find in 1 Enoch 6-8. . . . A general appropriation of a tradition is not the same thing as accepting every detail of the tradition. We must remember that 1 Enoch is the most detailed account, and elsewhere in Jewish tradition the story is communicated with brevity. We must beware of reading more into [the biblical text] more than is warranted. Still, I think it is clear that Jude [along with Peter] believed angels had sexual relations with women and that God judged the angels for violating their ordained sphere. [Thomas R. Schreiner, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Peter; Jude*, 2003]

(e) All of this relates to Genesis Chapter 6

A chapter that I think records an early attempt by Satan to pollute the race of humanity.

Satan, who is called by Jesus "the father of lies" works very hard to pervert God's Word, especially as it relates to the Gospel.

Goes all t/way back to Genesis 3 ==> "Has God said..."

Satan must have had a seminal understanding of God's plan to bring forth a Savior thru t/Jewish line because ever since that time he's been hard at work to thwart God's plan.

See this, for example, in the OT with the attempted genocide of the Jews recorded in t/book of Esther.

Then there was t/wicked queen Athaliah who usurped the throne of Judah & massacred t/house of David which would have effectively destroyed forever t/Messianic line. God used t/High Priest, Johoia, who hid t/Joash who later became King and renewed t/Messianic line thru which would come JC.

i. In Genesis 6 we have one of those early attempts to prevent the coming Savior of men

God announced in 3:15 that Satan's ultimate defeat was to come through t/seed of a woman (3:15). "protoevangellion"

Genesis 3:15 **And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."**

Genesis 4-5 ==> t/spread of civilization.

Gen. 6:1-2 **Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.**

"Sons of God" = Hebrew phrase "bene elohim". A Hebrew idiom for angels.

6:4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

The Jews understood this passage as referring to "Watchers" - fallen angels who left their proper place to marry human females, have children who were mighty warriors, & teach forbidden arts & practices.

These are shut away in a prison by God, awaiting their final judgment.

I tend to think that these are demonic spirits who entered into wicked men. This is the first recorded instance of demon possession. They were probably powerful rulers, empowered by demons, who took women as wives.

We know from passages like Ezekiel 28:11-19 and Daniel 10:13 that earthly rulers/kings can have demonic forces ruling behind them. IOW their power is demonic.

This is perhaps the most heinous effort of Satan to corrupt humanity (which was itself descending into greater depravity, v. 5).

God responded by wiping out the entire race with the exception of Noah and 7 others — see that in the next verse.

The fallen angels who took part in this were condemned & imprisoned awaiting final judgment.

This interpretation is assumed by the LXX and is supported by early Jewish exegesis, as well as by the earliest church fathers and some later ones (including Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose).

Also interesting that cultures from various parts of t/world share stories of a past union between wicked angels and humans.

Many events recorded in first 11 chapters of Gen. are found in other cultures (i.e. similar creation accounts, similar flood accounts) suggesting a common source.

Only one that has been preserved from error and myth is that found in Scripture.

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned but cast them into Tartarus and delivered them to chains of darkness, reserved for judgment; .

(f) Did he just say "tartar sauce"?

Here we have t/only use in t/NT of this word that most every translation renders "hell" ==> verb $\tau\alpha\rho\tau\alpha\rho\omega$ = to cast into Tartarus.

What was tartarus? Among t/Gks. this referred to t/lowest part of hell.

In Gk. mythology t/Titans were punished by being consigned to Tartarus.

Was Peter referring to Gk. mythology? I don't there's any reason to assume that.

There were Jewish writers who compared the myth of the Titans to the story of the fallen angels (Josephus, Ant. 1.73: *"these men did what resembled the acts of those whom the Greeks call giants"*).

The word was already being used in t/Gk. language for the abode of t/dead & is even found 3x in t/LXX.

Was Peter simply using a word that was familiar to his audience? Perhaps.

May be that Tartarus is a place akin to Hades where wicked spirits are confined until final judgment.

Remember it's at the last judgment (future) that death and hades are cast into t/Lake of Fire. I understand that to mean there's a difference between Hades and Hell. Hades is to Hell what a jail is to a prison.

A condemned criminal can be held in a jail until final sentencing when he is thrown into prison. That's a similar idea to what we see here.

Interesting parallel in Isaiah 24 (judgment)

21 So it will happen in that day, That the LORD will punish the host of heaven, on high, And the kings of the earth, on earth.22 And they will be gathered together Like prisoners in the dungeon, And will be confined in prison; And after many days they will be punished.

... cast them into Tartarus and delivered . . . to chains of darkness, reserved for judgment;

Textual issue: $\sigma\epsilon\iota\rho\alpha$ = a chain VS $\sigma\iota\rho\omicron\varsigma$ (a pit). Probably $\sigma\epsilon\iota\rho\alpha$ is the best reading and would parallel Jude's use of a similar word "bonds".

Over 100 years ago, C.H. Spurgeon preached this text to his congregation at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. His message was entitled "Fallen Angels a Lesson To Fallen Men."

That's the point.

It's a point w/3 prongs.

First – it's a warning that if God did not spare angelic beings, those who were created beautiful and who bathed in t/glorious presence of his majesty in t/heavenly places, neither will he spare men who are made a little lower than these.

It's also a warning that we take heed we stand lest we fall.

Beloved hearer, this should teach us not to presume upon anything connected with our position here below. You may be the child of godly parents who watch over you with sedulous care, and yet you may grow up to be a man of Belial. You may never enter a haunt of iniquity, your journeys may be only to and from the house of God, and yet you may be a bond-slave of iniquity. The house in which you live may be none other than the house of God and the very gate of heaven through your father's prayers, and yet you may yourself live to blaspheme. Your reading may be bound up with the Bible; your companions may be of the choicest; your talk may concern holy things; you may be as if you were in the garden of the Lord, shut in to everything that is good, and every evil shut out from you; and yet you may have no part nor lot with the people of God.

Lastly, it's a reminder that God will cause those who are his to stand firm even in t/midst of terrible persecution and suffering.

Same word translated "reserved" here in v. 4 (reserved for judgment - verb $\tau\alpha\rho\epsilon\omega$) is used in Peter's first letter.

1 Peter 1:3-4

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

What a contrast. The elect of God, protected by His power and grace, have an inheritance reserved in heaven.

With that I will close with the words of Spurgeon who, on the last day of January the year 1892 received that inheritance ==>

Though I had tasted of the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come, yet, had I been left to myself . . . I should have so fallen that I could never again have been brought to repentance. But I was kept; preserved by as great a miracle as if a spark should fall into the sea and yet burn on, or a straw should be blown into a heated furnace and should not be consumed, or a moth should be trodden on by a giant and yet remain uncrushed.

To think that men should stand where angels fall! We are by sovereign grace called to be as near to God as the angels ever were, and in some respects we are nearer still. We are the body-guard of Christ, his chosen ones with whom he communes. We are the table companions of our Lord—we eat of his bread, and drink of his cup, and are made partakers with him. We are lifted up to be one with him, and are made to be "members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones;" yet God's eternal unbounded power keeps us in the day of temptation, and leads us so that if we go through the rivers we are not drowned, and when we pass through the fires we are not burned. O, the splendor of triumphant grace! Neither the glory of our calling, nor the unworthiness of our original, shall cause us to be traitors; we shall neither perish through pride nor lust; but the new nature within us shall overcome all sin, and abide faithful to the end.

"Kept alive with death so near,
I to God the glory give."