



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

2nd Peter 2:4-9

“The Angels That Sinned”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] We thank Thee Lord for the privilege of approaching Thee through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. We thank Thee that he has dedicated a new and living way through the sacrifice of himself. And we praise Thee that we are able through the blood to enter into the holiest and bring our petitions directly to Thee.

We praise Thee for the one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. And now, Lord, we pray that in this hour as we study Thy word that the Holy Spirit who has guided the human authors and inspired them as they wrote may be our teacher and our instructor as we listen to those Scriptures which the apostles have written. We pray for guidance, for illumination. We also pray that he may apply the word to each one of us. Enable us to respond to the truths that we see.

We thank Thee for the way in which Thou hast revealed to us the great program that Thou hast for this world of which we are a part. And again, Lord, we pray that the breadth and depth of that program may impress itself upon us and may we understand our own daily lives in the light of all that Thou art doing. We pray for each one in this auditorium and pray, Lord, that the ministry of the word may be edifying. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] We’re turning to the 2nd chapter of 2nd Peter again and we will be looking at the 4th verse which is the lead verse of a section that begins at verse 4 and concludes with verse 9. So for our Scripture reading we’ll read verses 4 through 9 of 2nd Peter, chapter 2.

I want you to notice that as we read this somewhat lengthy section that it really is one sentence. And in it Peter suggests that if God did not spare certain angels and did not spare Lot, and did not spare Sodom and Gomorrah, then we may expect certain things to transpire in the light of it. In fact, we would normally expect him to say, “Then he will not spare these ungodly teachers.” But you’ll notice as we read through it that Peter, while this is what he is saying, at the end concludes with a slightly different type of conclusion than we would expect. Later I’ll comment on it again. But now will you listen as we read beginning with the 4th verse through the 9th verse of 2nd Peter chapter 2,

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy manner of life of the wicked: For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds; The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.”

The New International Version begins the 9th verse with, “If this is so, then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” That is the natural conclusion that we would expect.

Well, now, our subject for tonight is “The Angels That Sinned.” The angelic world with its elect and non-elect persons, its divine service and its conflicts, is the subject of a wide, biblical revelation. I wonder if there was, or is, or ever shall be, discussion among the angels about the election of God. I wonder if the angels gather round and have the same kinds of discussions over the election of God that the saints do down on the earth. There are elect angels and there are non-elect angels.

The Bible is very plain. We do not concern ourselves with them too much because they are angels and we are men. But we surely concern ourselves with the election of men. And some react violently against the doctrine, others love it.

The angels, I say, have a wide part of the scriptural revelation devoted to them. There is a great deal of revelation concerning the character of the angels. There is also a lot of revelation concerning their duties, their normal duties. “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who are the heirs of salvation?” the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews asks. And then they have a very large part in the developing program of God. And very few things transpire in the word of God which are of great significance without some reference to the angels. They participate in many of the great events of the word of God.

We call this in systematic theology the doctrine of angelology. And in the doctrine of angelology we study the nature and the work of the angelic hosts beginning, of course, with Satan himself who is the head of the angelic hierarchy. This is a very relevant subject today and it’s not surprising that there are many who are writing books on the angels. Perhaps the best-known book is Billy Graham’s recent book entitled *Angels: God’s Secret Agents*.

Now that title doesn’t sound so good today because we would not like to think of the angels as God’s CIA, for the CIA has lost a great deal of face in the last year or two. So it’s obvious Mr. Graham wrote this before the present controversy. We could say that Satan’s angels are his CIA, that would be perfectly relevant. But anyway, this book and the wide sail that it has had evidences the fact that Christians are interested in angelology. They are interested in the doctrine of the angels.

Peter makes a significant contribution to the doctrine of angelology. For example, in the first epistle and in the 10th through the 12th verses, having spoken of the salvation that comes through Jesus Christ, he writes,

“Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them did signify, when he testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.”

Peter uses a word there which is used of John’s arrival at the tomb of our Lord. And you remember Peter arrived shortly afterwards, but John’s arrival at the tomb of our Lord, and looking down into it to discern if the body was still there. So the picture you have is of angels in heaven who are bending over to see what’s happening down here on the earth. And this is the picture that Peter gives us in these verses of the angelic interest in spiritual things. So they are very curious, they are very interested. I’m sure that there are some of them that are wondering what in the world I’m going to say tonight about the angels that sin. And perhaps they’re wondering if I’m going to be sound in my theology, as I tell what has happened. And I, of course, if they are listening I want you to know that I am sound [Laughter].

But anyway, in 1st Peter chapter 1, then, verses 10 through 12, we have something about the angels. And then again in chapter 3, in verse 19, we read,

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit: By whom also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.”

Now we are going to comment on this text later on this message, but let me just say that this text most likely refers to the angelic hosts in the reference the spirits in prison. And in fact I think that the same individuals are referred to here that are referred to in 2nd Peter chapter 2, verse 4, when we read about the angels that sinned. So here, again, in the first epistle Peter has mentioned the angels and also a very interesting fact about a certain class of them.

And then in 2nd Peter chapter 2, verse 4, the text we have already read, “For if God spared not the angels that sinned,” he refers again to a highly controversial passage. So it’s evident that Peter has a great deal of contribution to make to the doctrine of angelology. And no real good discussion of the doctrine of the angels should exclude these references that Peter has in his first and second epistles.

Remember, he has been arguing in 2nd Peter that the apostolic testimony is reliable. He said in the first chapter that it is reliable for the simple reason that he and James and John were with our Lord in the mount and there at the transfiguration they saw the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. That experience in the mount was a foreview of the messianic kingdom upon the earth and Peter affirms that he has actually seen the power and coming or the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He is not simply a person who has followed cunningly devised fables, but he has been an eyewitness of the majesty of the Lord Jesus. And since he is an eyewitness of the majesty of the Lord Jesus then we can be sure that the prophetic word of the Old Testament which speaks of the future in these brilliant ways in the prophets of the Old Testament we can be sure, then, that those great events are going to come to pass. Peter has already seen the fulfillment of the prophetic word. Therefore he says, “We do well to take heed to it, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arrives in our hearts.” And we should remember that this word of God is a word that has been given to us by holy men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

So Peter has stressed, then, that the apostolic testimony is reliable. But then, having said that, he goes on to prophesy that there are going to come false teachers who are going to bring in heresies of destruction. That’s what we read and studied in our last meeting and, remember, in the 1st verse he says concerning these false teachers that, “They shall secretly bring in destructive heresies.” The Greek text puts it “heresies of perdition.” That is, they will be teachings that will lead those who accept them to an eternal separation from God. Again, in the 3rd verse he says, “And their destruction, their perdition, slumbereth not.”

So these teachers, then, are teachers who give us teaching that leads to perdition if we accept it. And furthermore, that’s what awaits the teachers who teach that kind of doctrine, destruction or perdition. Now having said this Peter, in the next section that we want to look at, at least the beginning of it tonight, the whole thing in our next meeting, in this next section he points out that God is well able to damn these false teachers because if you’ll study the Scriptures you will know that there have been already three great exhibitions of judgment by God which demonstrate the fact that he is able to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. So in effect he is telling us, and the other readers of his epistle, “If you do not think that God is able to judge these heretics who are teaching heresies that lead to destruction, if you accept them I want to give you some illustrations from the word of God of God’s power to execute judgment.” And he begins with the angelic host. One might think that you could execute judgment upon men but one might have difficulty executing judgment upon the angels. And so he talks, first of all, about judgment upon the angels.

Now that’s what we want to discuss tonight, this 4th verse. It’s such an interesting verse and such a controversial verse that I’m going to spend the remainder of our time in seeking to answer the question, who are these angels that have sinned and what have they done?

Now I said as we read the Scripture that Peter gets carried away by his illustrations here and the shape of the sentence suffers. And so if you ever hear me get carried away by what I’m saying, and abandon the rules of English grammar and syntax you just understand that I’m just in the apostolic tradition, that’s all. And it’s not because, of course, I do not know English grammar or

syntax. It’s just that all of the apostles have this kind of disease and I don’t mind catching the disease that the apostles had, whatever it was.

Anyway, what we expect here as we read this is if God did not spare the angels, if he did not spare Noah, if he did not spare Lot, he will not spare these false teachers. That’s what we expect him to say. But I say, he gets carried away by his illustration, adding clause after clause by way of explanation so that he winds up in the 9th verse by saying that he not only is able to judge these false teachers but he adds he is able to deliver the godly out of temptation. So he’s not as logical as we would perhaps have him be, but still it makes excellent sense and he’s been able to introduce an element of encouragement in this. So we must say that evidently he wanted to encourage as well as condemn, he’s going to do plenty of condemning in the rest of this chapter anyway, so he introduces a little bit of encouragement in the midst of the condemnation.

The order of Peter’s illustrations is interesting because, as you probably well know from your reading of the Bible, the book of Jude and the 2nd and 3rd chapters of 2nd Peter are very similar. I want you to turn over with me, if you will, to the 5th, 6th, and 7th verses of the Epistle of Jude. And I’m going to read these verses through and I just want you to notice how similar they are to some of the sections of 2nd Peter that we have just read. Jude says,

“I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not, (now that illustration is not an illustration which Peter uses, but notice the next two) and the angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

Now Peter is just a little bit more logical than Jude, seems to me, because his illustrations are chronological. He speaks of the angels that sinned, then he speaks of the flood, and then he speaks of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. And when you read the book of Genesis you will find that the 6th chapter records the judgment upon the angels, and then in the 7th and 8th chapters we have the judgment of the flood, and then in the 18th and 19th chapters, particularly the 19th chapter, we have the judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

Jude is a little bit unchronological because he discusses the judgment of Egypt first, then goes back to the angels that sinned, and the illustration of Sodom and Gomorrah. These illustrations are rather interesting too because, remember, Peter is, in this epistle, attacking false teachers. And since he uses these three illustrations one would expect the sins that are represented by these three illustrations to be the kinds of sins that the false teachers were practicing.

So it may be a clue to us of the kind of character and lifestyle of these false teachers. Now in the case of the angels that sinned we are assuming that they are referred to in Genesis chapter 6 the great characteristic of the angels that sinned is that they were rebellious against God. So if it is true that the false teachers are individuals who are manifesting the same type of sinfulness that his illustrations look at then we can say these men are rebellious men. Incidentally, that is always true of false teachers. They are always rebellious men.

Now I don't mean that it's not possible for someone to be confused about scriptural teaching. That, of course, is possible. But generally speaking, false teaching given out in the public ministry of the word of God is an intentional false teaching.

Now the second illustration is the illustration of the flood. And the thing that characterized the people who were living at the time of the flood was ungodliness, according to Peter's words here in the 2nd chapter. So we should expect, then, that these false teachers had a lifestyle that was like those who were on the earth just before the flood.

And finally, he uses the illustration of Sodom and Gomorrah and he speaks of the lawlessness of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. And so we should expect to find in these false

teachers that he refers to here, lawlessness. So rebellion and ungodliness and lawlessness were the traits of these false teachers.

Incidentally, this past week in *Time Magazine*, again in the religious section, there was a very interesting article concerning theological seminaries. I, of course, was interested in it particularly because I happen to be with a theological seminary. And I was interested in this because of its title and I'm very happy to report the title is “The Fading Big Five,” and I just wish they would fade a little more [Laughter]. The reference is to Harvard Divinity School, Yale Divinity School, the school at the University of Chicago, and Vanderbilt, and New York's Union Theological Seminary. These are the big five of the theological seminaries. Not the big five in size, but the big five in influence.

As a matter of fact, Dallas Seminary is probably larger, I'm just going to say probably because I don't know it, it's probably larger than all five of these. Not the five put together, but all five of them. But anyway, these are the big five in influence and this is a most interesting article in reflecting upon how they have faded and how their student bodies have dwindled. And in the article it is also mentioned that evangelical seminaries are prospering and growing.

Some of the things that appeared in the article were these, “The swing to religious studies is the biggest change in religious higher education since separate divinity schools arose in the 19th century.” Now that is a very significant thing, religious studies. You see, religious studies become the object of study in theological seminaries which no longer believe in divine revelation. So if you no longer believe in divine revelation you cannot study a divine revelation such as a word of God given to us in the Scriptures. What you then turn to study is the religious experience of men and that becomes the object of your study.

So you'll notice that this has become one of the great things that takes up the time of theological students in the big five. Furthermore, we read here, I'll read the sentence about evangelical schools, “Evangelical schools and church-run seminaries are growing in size and prestige, though the report finds that the latter two are absorbing the religious studies approach.” Now that may well be the beginning of some of the apostasy in the evangelical schools. For, history points out

very plainly to us that most evangelical schools ultimately have gone down the drain. These schools that we are talking about -- Harvard, and Yale, and Vanderbilt, and Union Seminary -- were at one time theological institutions in which godly men taught.

For example, the professor of systematic theology at Union Seminary in New York was William G. T. Shedd, one of the greatest of the Calvinistic theologians. But now there's just a shell of what it was in the days of Professor Shedd. Another interesting thing is pointed out in this article. “At the same time, language requirements and basic required courses in the Bible, church history, and doctrine have vanished.” That's an interesting thing. In our theological schools no more Greek, no more Hebrew to speak of, no more church history, no more systematic theology. And when those subjects vanish from the theological curriculum, when they begin to be deemphasized, you can be absolutely certain that the love of the truth of God has begun to wane in the institution. And as the love of God continues to wane you will find that more and more of these basic studies, studies in Greek and studies in Hebrew because the reason we study Greek and Hebrew is in order that we may study the Scriptures accurately. The more we do not study the history of the Christian church and learn lessons from that history, the more we do not study biblical doctrine, systematic theology, the less opportunity there is for a young man to come out trained in the word of God.

But now, as you might expect, as a rule when the biblical doctrine begins to vanish from the theological seminary, when the great emphasis on the heart of the theological curriculum begins to wane, then you expect the moral standard of the institution also to fall. That is precisely what you have, notice. Manners, says the report, this is a report on, by liberals, on the five large, influential theological institutions. “Manners,” says the report, “are more relaxed, sex is freer, and acquaintance with drugs is often more than theoretical.”

So, you see, when biblical doctrine is abandoned as a rule, the life of the Scriptures, the life by the Spirit, true spiritual life also vanishes with the biblical doctrine. That's why, and I'm speaking for myself and I think for the others who minister here as well, that is why in Believers Chapel we try

in all of the ministry of the word of God to stress the systematic theology, the biblical doctrine, that is so important if we are to remain true to the calling that God has given us.

Well now, then, what about these angels, who are the angels and what do they do? This is Peter’s first great illustration of judgment. First of all, we’re going to turn back to Genesis chapter 6. So will you take your Bibles and turn with me to the 6th chapter of the Book of Genesis. And while you are finding the Book of Genesis, it’s the first book in the Bible, I’m going to read a few of the opening verses,

“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. (That’s the longsuffering of God that Peter will speak about in his first epistle.) There were giants in the earth in those days. (The Hebrew word here is a very interesting word; it really means the fallen ones, the Nephilim.) There were giants, fallen ones, in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men, (*‘el gibborim*, that word is a word that is used of the Lord Jesus, the mighty God, *‘el gibbor*) became mighty men who were of old, men of renown. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.”

This incident that is referred to here is described in the context of the Book of Genesis just before Moses records the flood. Now there have been two interpretations placed upon what is described here. You’ll notice in the Scofield note, if you have a Scofield Bible, that at the bottom of

the page we read, “Some hold that the sons of God were fallen angels who kept not their first estate. Accordingly this intrusion into the human’s sphere produced a race of wicked giants. Others hold that since angels are spoken of in a sexless way, Matthew 22:30, we’ll look at that verse in a moment, and that the words, “Took them wives,” signify a lasting marriage, the reference has to do with the breakdown of the separation of the godly line of Seth by intermarriage with the godless line of Cain. A refinement of the latter view holds that the expression, “Sons of God,” refers to all the godly and, “Daughters of men,” to all the ungodly irrespective of their natural paternity. Whichever view is held it is obvious that Satan attempted to corrupt the race that the messiah could not come to redeem man.

Now it is my view that the first interpretation is the interpretation that we should put upon this incident. That is, that what we have referred to here in verse 2, the sons of God taking them wives of the daughters of men we have an intrusion into the human sphere of the angelic hosts. Now we’d like to say why I believe that. I know that that is a very strange event. If there was any possible way that I could find a reasonable interpretation that would not require me to make this outlandish kind of explanation of what is found here, I would most certainly like to find it because I do not want to stand up in front of an audience and say that angelic beings united in any way with human beings. It just seems so odd and weird that it could not possibly be true. And yet, in the final analysis we must bow to what the Bible teaches. And I must confess that I have not found any way to rationally and exegetically escape this first interpretation.

It’s pure eisegesis, it seems to me. Incidentally, exegesis means the explanation of the text of the word of God, the leading out of the text of its meaning. Whereas eisegesis means the reading into the text of something that we, ourselves, have seen which may not necessarily be in the text. It seems to me to be pure eisegesis to say that the daughters of men were all Cainitic men. Furthermore, if the term, “Sons of God,” were human descendents of Seth then were God’s people limited to the male sex? Evidently all of Seth’s line were not so godly for only eight of them were saved when the flood came. Is this wickedness referred to here sufficient to account for the flood by

which that whole generation was wiped out? But if what we have here is a climatic sin on the part of the angelic hosts with the human beings then we would have some understanding for this worldwide destruction. If what we have is a demonic intervention then this could be the last straw in the wickedness of man that brought on the flood.

In other words, what I am affirming is that the greatest judgment that we know, the judgment of the flood, is understandable if this be some outstanding, out-breaking manifestation of sin. But looking at it from -- one other thing we might ask, why giants referred to in the 4th verse result from the union of simple of men if that's all that is men by this? How can we explain the giants that result from the union?

But, now, these are questions which I think make it very difficult for a person who believes one of these other interpretations to take them. But let's look at some things that are more positive. The term, “The sons of God,” is a very interesting biblical term. As a matter of fact the term, “Sons of God,” only occurs four times in the Old Testament. Now I want to be very careful here because there will be someone listening to this tape who will know something about Hebrew and who will also know something about concordance of the Old Testament, and there are certain expressions that I must distinguish. It is true that in the Old Testament we have the expression, “The sons of the living God,” but this precise expression that is used here, this precise expression, “The sons of God,” only occurs in four places in the Old Testament.

Now you can discover this for yourself with a concordance of the English text but if you want to be absolutely certain go to someone who understands Hebrew and ask them to look at a Hebrew concordance and you'll discover that this precise expression, the precise expression, is found only four times. The other three times outside of this occurrence are found in the Book of Job in the 1st chapter, in the 6th verse, in the 2nd chapter, in the 1st verse, and in the 38th chapter, and the 7th verse. These three other occurrences in the Book of Job are clearly references to angelic beings. The sons of God, plural, are references to angelic beings. So we have good, biblical usage of the term to refer to this to angelic beings. The expression in the Scofield Bible, the old Scofield Bible, referred to

as being equivalent to it, “Sons of the living God,” in Hosea chapter 1, verse 10, is not the precisely same expression in the Hebrew text that we have here.

Furthermore, the Greek translation of the Old Testament has at this place, verse 2, “The angels of God.” So in other words, this interpretation of this event before the time of Christ, by the translators of that Greek translation of the Old Testament made sometime before the birth of Christ, that translation confirms the interpretation that, “The sons of God,” is a reference to angelic beings. The giants that are referred to here are called, as I mentioned to you in reading the text, the fallen ones which is a term that certainly would be very suitable for angelic beings who left their habitation and came down to the earth to intervene in the human sphere.

Now I think you can see from Genesis chapter 6 that there is a very large weight of evidence that this interpretation that the sons of God are angelic beings is the correct interpretation. I do not know how to escape it. But that’s not all of the evidence for it. Let’s turn now to the Book of Jude and we look specifically at verses 6 and 7. Jude, verse 6 and verse 7.

This particular passage is so convincing and so conclusive that my old New Testament professor, Professor Everett Harrison, who was a very mild man. He was a Presbyterian, and he was a Presbyterian in all of his mannerisms too. He was dignified, he was quiet, he always took the middle of the road interpretation. He never launched out into any kind of interpretation that was weird and unusual like so many Bible teachers do today. Many Bible teachers just specialize in the weird interpretation because there are a lot of weird people sitting out in the pew who love that kind of interpretation [Laughter]. And they go home and they say, “My, did you hear that interpretation? Wasn’t that something?” And so they expect some weird interpretation. I daresay, I probably could increase the number in this audience by giving you a series of weird interpretations and also telling you on Sunday that I would be giving one of these sensational interpretations and pretty soon we’d have the audience filled with people who like sensational interpretations. But I don’t want to see the audience filled with people who like sensational interpretations. I want an audience filled with people who love sensible and accurate interpretations and that’s what I’m giving you, of course [Laughter].

Now then, we look at verse 6 and 7 of the Epistle of Jude. Incidentally, Professor Harrison, I started out saying that but like Peter I got off the track there [Laughter], Professor Harrison when he was teaching this question in 1st Peter had us refer to verses 6 and 7. We all had our Greek texts before us, and he said, “Men I just want to say to you, I don’t like to take this interpretation because it is an odd interpretation but I must say that what Jude says in verses 6 and 7 make it so impossible for me to escape it that I must affirm this strange interpretation.” Well let’s see what Jude has to say.

He says, “And the angels who kept not their first estate.” Now what does that mean? Well it means that they left the dignity of the angelic position for the human position but would explain who kept not their first estate. In other words, they were created to be a part of the angelic hierarchy. They were not created for habitation here upon the earth. So the angels who kept not their first estate, “But left their own habitation.” They abandoned their own peculiar home, they burned the bridges in apostasy and came down to the earth.

Now some of the details are not spelled out for us, we would like to ask a lot of questions but nevertheless we have these words which says, “They left their own habitation.” Then we go on to read, “He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” Now this tells you that these angels are not the ordinary demons and individuals that Satan uses today in the angelic sphere because they are not enchained, they are free. But these are a particular group of angels who are enchain.

Now notice, go on and read verse 7, “Just as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner.” And if you have a modern version, and most of you do, I really ought to start using one because I notice that most of you have one of these modern versions, but I’ve got something better even than that. I have the Greek text in my head, having taught it for so many years I know what it says so I just don’t have to look at this text, it says, “In like manner *toutois*,” with these, masculine. Now that word “these”, “In like manner with these,” you probably have something like that in your text and if you don’t have it they mistranslated the text. “In like manner with these,” now since it is masculine it cannot refer to the cities because the term “cities” is feminine. It must

refer, then, to something masculine that has proceeded in something that is plural. It can only refer to the angels in verse 6.

So Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them in like manner with these angels. Well what did Sodom and Gomorrah do? Well, he says, “They gave themselves over to fornication and they went after strange flesh.” But he says that what they did they did in the same way that the angels did. So we learn from this, you see, that Sodom and Gomorrah are guilty of the sin of fornication going after strange flesh in the same way that the angels were. Well that tells us, then that the angels that he referred to are guilty of the sins of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. They went after strange flesh.

In other words, what this does is define the angelic sin as unnatural sexual relationships. I don't have to tell you if we had plenty of time we could turn back to Genesis chapter 18 and 19 and read the story of the angels and Jehovah and their visit that they made to Abraham. And, remember, after the two angels left they went to Sodom. Lot received them into his house. The men of Sodom who were very wicked came to the door of Lot's house in Sodom and said, “Let the men out, we want to know them.” Now to know, as you know, is the Hebrew word for, in many contexts, for entering into a carnal knowledge of them. So what these men wish to do was to enter into a homosexual relationship with the angelic beings. And you know the story of what happened. The angels intervene and judged the men of Sodom and ultimately God judged Sodom and Gomorrah.

So when we read here, “In like manner with these, giving themselves over to fornication,” the reference is to an unnatural sexual relationship. And incidentally in the Greek text, again, the word for giving over to fornication, giving themselves over to fornication, is a rare word that is used only here in the New Testament. And it is a word that suggests that what is undergone or attempted in Sodom and Gomorrah is something that is against the course of nature. Giving themselves over to fornication is not the ordinary sexual relationship, but the extraordinary relationship; that against the course of nature, homosexuality. For homosexuality is against the course of nature.

Now then, one other thing, you’ll notice it says, “They went after strange flesh.” Now we have two words in the Greek text which mean another. One of these words means another of the same kind, and the other means another of a different kind. For example, I’ve used this illustration before, I have here a fountain pen. I won’t say anything about it, I’d waste time. Let’s suppose that I write with this pen and I love this pen and I decide that I would like to have another. So I go back to the place where I bought it, I put it on the counter and I say, “I would like to have another pen.” But I use, we’re speaking Greek, I use the word *allos*. Well immediately the person behind the counter would know he wants another one of the same kind and so they would go and get me this nice pen and I would have another of the same kind. But let’s suppose that I didn’t like this pen. Let’s suppose I was very disappointed in it and I had spent ten or fifteen or twenty-five dollars for it. So I go in and I don’t put it on the counter quite the same way, I probably toss it on the counter to let them know I was not too happy about it. I’d say, “I want another pen.” But in Greek if I were speaking Greek and I wanted them to know that I do not want this pen, but I want a pen, but I want one that’s different from this one I would use the word *heteros* from which we get the word, heterodoxy, or heterosexual. Now in so doing I would be saying, “I want another pen of a different kind.” Now that is the word that is translated strange here, “They went after strange flesh.” That is, they went after flesh of a different order. That is very suitable for the angelic intervention if we assume that angelic intervention means something like demonic possession of human beings.

So then, Jude has so plainly set forth the fact that what we have here is angelic sin that may be likened to fornication against the order of nature, going after strange or different flesh, that it seems impossible for me to understand that passage in 2nd Peter 2, verse 4, the angels that sinned in any other way than a reference to these angels of Genesis chapter 6. But I have one more passages, 1st Peter chapter 3, verse 19. 1st Peter chapter 3, verse 19, that’s the text that we read in the beginning when we were speaking about Peter’s contribution to angelology.

In the 18th verse we read, “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, made alive by the Spirit, By

whom also he went.” Now notice, “He went.” That is, after his death, “He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.”

Now let's stop for just a moment, I want to point out one thing here. This is the final brick on the structure of the interpretation of the angels that sinned as a reference to Genesis chapter 6. The word “spirits”, spirits, when used by itself, that is when it's not used with any qualifying word, spirits is always, or let me turn it around and say the negative, never refers to men. Now we can have the spirits of just men made perfect. We have that in Hebrews chapter 12. But there we have words to define the meaning of spirits. Spirits of just men made perfect. But whenever you have the term spirits it never refers to a man without any qualifying word. So we should normally expect this, then, preached unto the spirits in prison to be a reference to our Lord Jesus after his death, going to the prison where they were held and preaching to them. Well that introduces a lot of questions. You mean to say that the Lord Jesus went and preached the gospel to fallen angels who had committed this heinous sin described in Genesis chapter 6? No. The text translated preached, that word means to proclaim, not preach the gospel. It's not the word *euaggelizomai* which means to preach the good news, they don't have a second chance, it's the word *kerusso* which means to proclaim. What did he proclaim to the angels in prison, the spirits in prison? Well what did those angels try to do? Mr. Scofield says that all of the interpreters agree that this was an attempt to thwart the purpose of God in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Regardless of what interpretation we take he says that's the ultimate aim of what is described in Genesis chapter 6. So that let's just assume that it was an attempt to make it impossible for the Lord Jesus to redeem the human race. It's entirely possible that what we have, then, is an attempt by the angelic beings by intervening in the human situation to so corrupt human nature that it would be impossible for the Lord Jesus to come and to be born and to live his life and to die as a redeemer and redeem us.

Well now, if that's what it has to do with and, of course, we are engaging in some speculation there since that is not specifically stated, it would explain what he preached. It would explain, then, why he went. They attempted to thwart the incarnation and the work of the cross. So

having accomplished his ministry of dying, the just for the unjust, he went to the spirits in prison and there proclaimed to them not a second chance, but the victory of the cross. That he had accomplished that which they sought to destroy. He had, by virtue of the shedding of his blood, made it possible for sinners to be saved. And so he preached to the spirits in prison.

But now, was it really those spirits who sinned in Genesis chapter 6? Well will you look at the 20th verse? “Who at one time were disobedient when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, in which few, that is eight souls were saved by water.” In other words, the context is again just before the flood described in Genesis chapter 6, 7, and 8.

Well then, all fits then into a beautiful mosaic giving us, I think, the interpretation of that verse. Let’s turn back now to our verse in 2nd Peter. Incidentally, in other writings outside of the New Testament and the Old Testament in books such as 1st Enoch, 2nd Baruch and others, there are references to this event and the interpretation is essentially the same. “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, (those angels of Genesis chapter 6,) but cast them down to hell,” now, here again we are set in the context of the flood and we have the expression that they’re cast down to hell. Probably some of your translations read, “They were cast down to Tartarus.” Now that’s an interesting thing because, you know, I read about Tartarus before I became a Christian. I studied classical Greek and also I did eight years of study in Latin, four years in high school, four years again in college majoring in Classics, and I remember reading about Tartarus before I ever read much of the Bible at all. And I must confess that when I read 2nd Peter chapter 2, and verse 4, and read here, “Cast down to hell,” and read it in the Greek text in which the word Tartarus is found I was, I must confess, I was very startled because Peter has used a term that was well-known among the Pagans. They were cast down to Tartarus, which is specific place and, incidentally, other fallen angels are never said to be put in Tartarus. Tartarus is the special prison for those particular angels who committed that particular sin in Genesis chapter 6. That’s why they are said to have their own peculiar destiny here, Tartarus.

As I mentioned to you, Satan’s present day helpers, the non-elect, the other non-elect angels, are free. They are not bound. His demons are free, they are not bound. These are not the angels that sinned with Satan when he sinned in the beginning. These were guilty of a specific sin, the sin referred to in Genesis chapter 6. So Peter says, “If God spared not the angels that sinned but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment,” kept there and they shall have their judgment in the future.

I know, if you’ve read the Bible much, I know exactly what you’re thinking. You are saying, “But doesn’t the Bible say somewhere that the angels don’t marry or give in marriage? And isn’t that what you’re saying, Dr. Johnson that they did then. They took them wives.” Well yes, both of those statements are true but not quite true in every respect. We do read in Matthew chapter 22, and verse 30, “For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven.” And there it says the angels of God in heaven do not marry nor are they given in marriage. But I only ask you to notice two things, you know when you study the Bible you’ve got to be careful to look at every word. In the first place it says here that they are angels of God. Doesn’t say anything about the angels of Satan. And furthermore, he says, “Are like the angels of God in heaven.” This is true of the elect angels of God in heaven, but it is not true of those non-elect angels who sinned in Genesis chapter 6.

Now I know what you’re going to ask me, “Well how is it done?” I don’t know how it was done. It hurts me to say I don’t know anything but I don’t know that [Laughter]. I don’t know that. I don’t know how it was done, that doesn’t affect the facts, however, of the teaching of the word. I might say to you, “Your automobile will not start,” and if any of you know me you would know it’s impossible for me to know why it doesn’t start. I might say, “It won’t start, the battery is dead,” and you might go out and test it and find that the battery’s all right. But it still won’t start. It’s just that I have not analyzed the cause of the trouble correctly. And I don’t understand how this was done but, nevertheless, we are told that it happened. It’s possible, I only say possible, it’s possible they made men their instruments just as men were possessed by demons in the time of Christ. And

it may be that the Bible mentions the ultimate, not giving us the details of how it took place because the Bible is interested in the ultimate and not in the means and instrumentality. So possibly what is meant is that the angles cohabited individuals, like demons cohabited with men, and motivated them in such a way that this sin was carried out, to corrupt the race that the messiah could not come to redeem men.

One thing we do know, God executed tremendous judgment upon the angelic hosts and who were guilty of this sin and he has cast them into Tartarus and he is reserving them unto judgment to the very day and that illustrates, Peter would say, that when the false teachers teach that which is contrary to the word of God they are dealing with a God who does judge those who propound heresies that lead men to perdition. And that's the point that we should not fail to get.

Now in our next study we will consider the remainder of this section and deal with the flood and the judgment there, and then the judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah. And I want to relate it to the new morality and the teaching concerning it next Wednesday night. Let's close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for the Scriptures and for the light that they do give us. There are many difficult things, Lord, in Thy word. We only seek to understand. And by the Holy Spirit be enabled to apply the truth that we do see. Enable us to see and understand and obey...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]