**Thankful for God’s Power to *Preserve, Spare,* and *Rescue***

Can two distinct and even opposing views both be accurate?

There are typically at least *two* ways to look at most things. We could talk about *positive* vs. *negative, conservative* vs. *liberal, intellectual* vs. *emotional, humble* vs. *haughty,* etc. But there is also *love* vs. *hate, confident* vs. *fearful, anticipation* vs. *dread,* and *thankful* vs. *entitled.* Typically, **what you *see* depends on *where* you stand.**Look with me at Rom.2:4-8.

Here we see *two* sides of God: the *kindness, forbearance,* and *patience* side, v.4; and the *wrath, justice,* and *indignation* side, vv.5,6,8. Both sides are true and relevant. **Our perception of God is determined by where we stand.** Whether we see (and experience) the *kind, forbearing,* and *patient* God, or the *wrathful, just,* and *indignant* God depends not on Him, but us. Whether we are *repentant* or *unrepentant, persevering* or *stubborn, doing good* or *doing evil* determines whether we enjoy His *glory* and *honor,* or His *wrath* and *indignation;* for *“there is no partiality with God,”* v.11.

Now consider **2Pet.2:1-10** (with particular attention to vv.4-10). **Note that** **God:**

1. ***Did not* *spare* the *angels* or the *ancient world,* vv.4-5a.** God did not *keep* or *keep from trouble* or *destruction* (Grk. *pheidomai*) the *“ancient world.”* Conservative estimates put the number of people perishing in the Flood at 3 billion (Yes, that’s *billion* with a *‘b’!*) people! Nor did He *spare angels,* though no indication is given of the number (remember there are *myriads of myriads,* and *thousands of thousands* cf. Rev.5:11) from *“pits of darkness, reserved for judgment.” Tartarus* (used only here) may be the same as, or similar to *Hades-* the portion of the place *lost souls* suffer *torment* and *agony* until the final judgment and its disposition to *Gehenna* (Hell), cf. Luke 16:22-25. The point is: those who *sinned,* who were *wicked,* whose *“heart was on evil continually”* (Gen.6:5) were **not spared** from the temporary *agonies* of Hades, nor the eternal *horrors* of Hell **because of their choices.** They not only *saw,* but *experienced* the *wrath, justice,* and *indignation* of God firsthand!

***Preserved Noah* and *seven others* (as well as the *angels who didn’t sin*)*,* v.5b.** They were*preserved* (*phulasso-* to *watch* or *guard* to *keep safe*) by the power of God from catastrophe. But this *favor* and salvation was not a unilateral act of God. His power was wielded to *preserve* rather than *destroy* because was Noah *righteous* and *blameless* (Gen.6:9), and was a *“preacher of righteousness,”* v.5. **He *saw* and *experienced* *preservation* rather than the *destruction* because He *“walked with God”!***  I’m sure his perception of God was very different from the rest of the world- both before and after the Flood, but it was so because of where he *stood* and *walked!*

1. ***Condemned to destruction* the cities *Sodom and Gomorrah,* vv.6-8.** These ancient *cities of the valley* (including *Admah* and *Zeboim,* cf. Deut.29:23) were *reduced to ashes* and a *burning waste* as an *“example to those who live ungodly thereafter,”* v.6. They *saw* and *experienced* God’s *justice* and *condemnation* because of their *lawless deeds* (v.8) and *sins* which were *“exceedingly grave,”* cf. Gen.18:20. These sins are highlighted by *homosexuality,* Gen.19:4-5; *unrepentant insolence,* Gen.19:9a,11b; and *violent intentions,* Gen.19:9b toward God’s *messengers* (*angels*).

***Rescued* *Lot,* v.7.** The word translated as *rescue* is *rhoumai*, which literally means *to draw to one’s self;* to *deliver.* Lot was *drawn out* of Sodom and Gomorrah and *to God* in order to *deliver* him. But note *why* this was done. Lot lived *among* evil true enough, however, he was a *righteous man* who *felt his righteous soul tormented day after day* by his neighbors’ *lawless deeds.* **Lot not only *did* right, he *felt* right about *wrong.***He was neither *ambivalent* nor *inconsistent* in these regards. He was *standing* in the right place, so his *view* of and *experience* with God was very different from that of his neighbors.

**Conclusions- Let’s not overlook the point Peter is making with these ancient examples:**

1. ***“then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation,* (probably better rendered as *trial*), v.9a.** *What* or *what extent* of evil that surrounds you is not important; *where you stand* is! God *sees* and *knows* everything. He knows not only *what you do,* He knows *how you feel.* Thus, your *view* of and *experience* with God is determined by you, for God never changes nor fails, cf. Jas.1:17. **He will exercise His *kindness, forbearance,* and *patience* (cf. Rom.2:4) to *rescue* us if we’re in the *right* place of *repentance, persevering,* and *godliness.***Noah and Lot unmistakably prove the point. But,
2. **God also *knows how to “keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,”* v.9.** He knows how to *reserve for judgment* even rebelliously sinful *angels;* He knows how to, and is willing to *destroy* an *entire population* He has created when they *turn away* from Him; and He knows how to *burn with fire and brimstone* those who choose *evil* over *good.* ***How* you *see* and *what* you *experience* in/with God depends on *where* you stand.**
3. **Indeed, we have many reasons to be *thankful;* and God’s power to *preserve* and *rescue* the righteous from peril and destruction should be paramount among them.** But to *see* and *experience* God’s power to *preserve* and *rescue,* we have to be *standing* in the right(eous) *place.* Which will it be for you? Do you *see* and will you *experience* God’s *kindness, forbearance,* and *patience;* or His *wrath, indignation,* and *justice?*

**What you *see* depends on where you *stand.***