

Judgment is coming for the ungodly. Just hearing that creates a little bit of tension in our hearts, I think, for a number of different reasons, probably that's the case. Maybe because we're in this day and age, we're conditioned to feel offended by the thought that God will actually judge the ungodly. We're offended by the thought that God would actually judge anybody at all. And so, as a result, when we hear the statement, the judgment is coming upon the ungodly, it creates kind of a little bit of internal tension and then it causes us to recoil a little bit and then it causes us to push back a little bit. Maybe not us specifically, but maybe people that we've talked to.

Now let me go ahead and say that it's clear that sometimes people may not be actually pushing back from the truth of what that says, they may be pushing back against the people that are saying it. There are times where maybe when we talk about a god who will bring judgment upon the ungodly, that we do so in a manner that is actually judgmental ourselves and, as a result, they're pushing away from that, maybe not the truth. But there's other times, and maybe even the majority of the time, that the truth is, in our cultural context, we don't really want to hear that statement and don't know how to conceptualize it. We don't know what to do with that.

And so here's the pushback that we get, maybe when somebody's talking to us, they kind of build a caricature of who we are and what we believe and they build their own idea of what that means. So, in other words, I hear this from time to time, "Jerry, you know, I appreciate you, I like you, but it's silly to me to believe in a god who's going to judge everyone because I only believe in a god of love."

I also, by the way, believe in a god of love, but it makes no sense for us, when we talk about this idea, to not talk about the reality of fully who God is. The truth is, is when we say sometimes that we only serve a god of love and, therefore, nobody's going to be judged and all that's good, let's be honest, you don't really want it to be that way. You really don't. You certainly don't want that to be that way in the real world that you live in, right? For everybody that does something awful, violent, horrible, you want them to actually have no accounting for that whatsoever, no desire for there to be justice in that scenario.

You see, if that's you, then you are only thinking about this philosophically, it's never been something that's been personal for you, because when it happens to you, when the violence happens to you, when the offense happens to you, when the theft happens to you, you want people, even though we can forgive, you want people to be held accountable because you don't want to live in a world where that's the case.

Plus I have to believe that you and I both know, in real true reality, that true love actually brings about sometimes, as a result of it, wrath. Dare anyone to try and violently approach your small children. Your love will compel you to

something other than those crazy people coming at them. You will think about that in a different light, will you not?

See love sometimes gives rise to that idea of wrath or of judgment, but the second kind of pushback sort of goes like this. "I can't believe in that because that's super narrow-minded, like you're really narrow-minded to just talk about a god who's gonna judge people and all that kind of stuff." Well, hang on a second. If I'm narrow-minded in that way, I need to understand what your definition what narrow-minded means, because the only way that you learned that God is a god of love is you learned that from the scripture. You didn't learn that from just looking around. You didn't look at the way the world is and go God must be a god of love. You didn't learn that from outside source.

By the way, you probably didn't learn it from any other world religion because that's not fundamentally what they teach about the nature of God. You know where you got it? You got it from the revelation of scripture. And here's the thing. I also got that God is holy and judges sin from the scripture. So who's more narrow-minded, the person who takes one piece of it or the person who's embracing the fullness of the revelation.

Or maybe sometimes the pushback is something along this line. That kind of belief in a god whose going to judge, that kind of belief actually promotes violence. What a first world excuse. First of all, the people of God, that actually believe in a god who judge, are the people who can actually not take justice into their own hands because they trust that there's a god who's actually going to balance the scales at the end, who's actually gonna make wrong things right. He's gonna deal with this on our behalf and we don't actually have to take justice into our own hands. Vengeance is mine, says the Lord, I will repay. You see, people that actually believe in a god who judges are actually the opposite, they are less violent, because they can trust in a god who's going to make wrong things right and broken things better.

But the reason I say it's such a first world excuse is because our brothers and sisters around the world, who love Jesus, who are being beheaded and who are being persecuted and who are being oppressed, do you realize how good news the Good News of judgment is? That for them to know a god who is actually gonna make things right, even when things are going horribly wrong for them right now, that's exceptionally good news to them in their hearts. God is going to deal with all of this, even if it doesn't get dealt with now.

I believe it was really good news, by the way, the idea of a god who judges the ungodly was really good news to the early church. The early church was experiencing persecution and they were experiencing oppression, and to know that there were many writers, including Peter and others, specifically Jude, who were encouraging them to continue to press on and defend the faith that's once for all been entrusted to God's holy people. Even if things are going poorly, even if there are false teachers in your midst, know this. There is a god who's gonna deal with all of that and he's not gonna make any mistakes, he's not gonna miss

on any of that, he's actually gonna deal with all of that. That had to be good news, particularly in Jude's context, because he's dealing with false teachers who have infiltrated the church and are dealing poorly with the people of God.

So what does Jude do? Well, Jude is telling us, as we've been reading this little book that's power packed and learning a whole lot from a very few verses, Jude is trying to remind us about these false teachers and ultimately what's going to come of them. And here's how he begins, in verse number 11, he simply says this, "woe to them." Now the word woe is kind of a signal of deep grief and it's something that you read in the prophets, that God speaks through the prophets and issues woe, sometimes towards cities and sometimes toward peoples, and you certainly see it in the life of Jesus, when he's talking about people sometimes and cities sometimes. He's echoing this woe, this deep grief over what's going on, and Jude begins that exact way.

And Jude is going to go on to tell us about the nature of God's judgment, but before he gets there, he's not done dealing with these false teachers, these ungodly people, that are in the midst of the people of God. And so what he does, and I'll kind of set it up this way, what he does is he begins by saying what these ungodly teachers are doing is they're walking in the same paths of the ungodly that have gone before them. And he gives us historical examples. Do you know how many he gives us? Three, right. We already knew that. We've seen that over and over and over again in Jude.

What are these? Well, here's what he talks about, he talks about the path of the ungodly, and what's the first path that he references, he references the way of Cain. If you'll look in Jude, chapter ... I'm sorry, Jude chapter, Jude is one chapter. That you, Jerry, for coming, I appreciate you being here. Jude verse 11, he says "woe to them, they have taken the way of Cain." You're probably familiar, at least to some degree, with the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis chapter 4, and you can read that for yourselves, but you know kind of the general gist of the story, right. That Adam and Even had kids and Cain and Able, you got these two brothers and presumably both of them were taught, either by their parents or by God directly, they were taught how they were to approach God and how they were to offer worship before God. That seems to be clear.

And so both of them bring their particular contents for worship, and the issue wasn't about necessarily the contents, because one kind of dealt with animals and one kinda dealt with the ground, so that's just what they did. But one of them, Abel, brought his offering and it was received by the Lord, and Cain brought his offering and it was rejected by the Lord. Cain wasn't happy about that and so Cain killed his brother, he murdered Abel.

Now, you know that part of the story, right? But what he's doing here is he's helping to remind us of something quite specific because he's saying that these false teachers that have snuck in, Jude is saying this, these false teachers that have snuck in among you, they have taken the well worn path of the way of Cain.

In other words, here's what these false teachers are doing among you. They are actually teaching, not the revelation of God as God has designed it, but their own. They're actually making things up that are inconsistent with the revelation of God. They are not offering proper worship to God, because they're worshiping in a way that God hasn't revealed Himself to be and, instead, they ought to be dealing with the revelation of who God has revealed Himself to be, not only in the Old Testament, but also in the apostles' teaching, and he's saying they've taken the way of Cain.

But you know what he's also suggesting? He's also suggesting that these false teachers, whenever they're teaching these things that are against the revelation of God and just made up in their own minds, that they're actually committing soul homicide. They're helping to murder the souls of the people. This is the way of Cain that we're talking about here.

But he doesn't just use this example. He uses a second example and he says the path of the ungodly is also Balaam's error. Not only the way of Cain, but Balaam's error. Here's what it says about Balaam's error in verse number 11. "Woe to them, they have taken the way of Cain. They have rushed for profit into Balaam's error."

Now some of you are going, "I don't know what Balaam's error is." Well, there's a story contained in the Old Testament, and you're gonna have to stay with me today, okay, 'cause I'm giving you a lot, but we're gonna land in a place that I don't want you to miss, so stay with me. You've had plenty of sleep, for crying out loud, plenty. I did not. I didn't remember. But it was God's grace to me because I just got to spend it with Him.

Here's Balaam's error. So when you read the story in the Book of Numbers, here's what you find. You find there's a king of Moab and the king of Moab is named Balak, B-A-L-A-K, and Balak sees that the Israelites, who are kind of nearby, that God has blessed them and God is allowing them to begin taking the ground that He has promised them and he knows we're probably next. He doesn't want that to happen, so what does he do. He finds this kind of prophet named Balaam, it's debatable as to Balaam's background in terms of where he came from, whether that was outside of Israel or Israel, but nonetheless, they find this prophet named Balaam, right, and he wants to hire Balaam to basically pronounce a curse on Israel, so that they won't be able to kind of come and take over Moab, right. So he brings Balaam in and he says here's what I want you to do, I'm gonna pay you big money, and I want you to do this, and so Balaam says "well, I've gotta do whatever the Lord tells me to do."

And so he seeks God and what God gives to him, he opens his mouth, and you know what? Instead of pronouncing a curse on Israel, he blesses Israel. God actually opens his mouth to bless Israel. And the king, Balak of Moab, he's going "no, that is not what we're doing here, try it again." He goes, he comes back, he blesses Israel, seven times over. Balaam is continuing to bless Israel and bless the people of Israel and he's not cursing them. And you think, when you read

that story, kind of situated in Numbers 20-something, in that neighborhood, you kinda go, "okay, so what's Balaam's error, I don't really get it. It seems like he did what he was supposed to do."

And you don't really know until later on in the Book of Numbers, when there's commentary about what he did that we didn't find out about in the story itself. Because apparently what Balaam did is, even though he did all of these things, apparently he still wanted to get paid. And as a results of wanting to get paid, here's what he did. He didn't pronounce curses on Israel, but he told Balak, the king, how he could get Israel into bad trouble. All you gotta do is take some of your Moabite women and hook them up with the Israelites and they'll start worshiping false gods and God will not be pleased and will not bless them. Apparently that's what he did.

How do I know? Well, look a little bit later in Numbers, in chapter 31, it says "these were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and enticed the Israelites to be unfaithful to the Lord in the [Payor 00:16:16] incident, so that a plague struck the Lord's people."

By the way, you can even find the New Testament reaffirming this truth about Balaam's error in a couple of different occasions. Not only in Jude, but you can also find it when Jesus is speaking his words of exhortation to the churches in Revelation, in chapter 2 and chapter 3, notice what it says in chapter 2. "Nevertheless, I have a few things against you. There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate foods, sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality."

So here's what Jude is saying. He's saying not only are these false teachers who are among you taking the way of Cain, by creating their own revelation instead of sticking to the revelation that God has given, through His apostles and through the prophets, and not only is this teaching kinda murdering your soul, but he's saying, "here's what else they're doing, they're perfectly fine with leading you into sin or immorality, as long as they keep getting paid." What a word for us today.

What a word for us today. I get concerned that, sometimes in the Western church particularly, that for the sake of size and crowd and all of those things, that sometimes those who do what I do, I'm saying all of them, I love pastors, I love them, I'm one of their number, I love them. But I'm concerned when they sell their soul, because people have ears that need to be tickled and they need to figure out how to have just a better Monday and make me feel better about myself and, if not, I'm not gonna give anything, and so they retract away from preaching the whole counsel of the word of God and, instead, they'll just lead people down a path of destruction as long as they're getting a paycheck. May that never be in my life. May it never be in any of God's servants' lives. Because this is the way of Balaam, it's Balaam's error.

But then he says there's a third historical example and it's this, Korah's rebellion. Now if you're not familiar with Korah, you'll find Korah also in what happened after the people of Israel got out of Egyptian captivity. Moses was leading them, God was providing for them, manna, He was giving them water to drink in the desert. And Korah was actually a part of a group of people who were involved in kind of a sub-leadership group who ministered in the tabernacle. Here's what it says in Numbers, chapter 16. I'm sorry, let me tell you where it is in Jude first. "Woe to them, they've taken the way of Cain. They've rushed for profit in Balaam's error, they've been destroyed in Korah's rebellion." That's what Jude was saying to us.

Then note what it says in Numbers 16. "Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites, Nathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab and On the son of Peleth, all them, they became insolent and they rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well known community leaders who had been appointed members of the Counsel." So, in other words, here's what happened. Korah, who led this rebellion, wanted to be more what Moses was. That's really fundamentally what this is about. He wanted to be more of what Moses was. And he got a group of people and he began to rebel against Moses and Aaron, the scripture says, and that is not a good thing because God Himself is the one who appointed Moses and appointed Aaron to be His servants in that context, and so they led this rebellion, and not only just those 250 people, but there were even more than that that joined them in this rebellion.

And here's how God dealt with that, just in case you were wondering. God said Moses, I want you to tell all of the people, a count of the rest of the people of the people of Israel, to get away from Korah and his rebellious people, just get away from them, like leave their tents, like move away from them, and so they did. Moses was like, okay, alright, so what's about to happen? Here's what happened. The earth opened up and swallowed them all, that's how excited God was about what they were doing, it swallowed them all.

And we're reminded, even in the New Testament, that what these false teachers were doing, what they're doing, they're not only taking the way of Cain, they're not only making Balaam's error, these well worn paths of ungodly people, but now they're also doing what Korah was doing in his rebellions, because here's what they're doing. God had appointed His apostles, that walked with Jesus, to be able to communicate truth to the Body of Christ, and that message was being communicated, the true gospel of Jesus Christ, and they were working against that. They were rebelling against that and trying to bring people along that same line and here's what he says, Jude says, "they have already been destroyed in Korah's rebellion."

Do you think that's interesting? He actually uses a past tense statement, in the [Erosist 00:21:06] tense, in the Greek language, he uses a past tense statement, they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion, talking about false teachers that are among them right now in the present. Why did he do that? Some scholars

use the phrase that it's a prophetic perfect in terms of its tense, which means this. It's as sure as if it's already happened. I'm gonna speak to this as if it's in the past because it's as sure as if it's already happened. They will not get away with this. Why? Because there's a God who brings judgment upon the ungodly.

So he gives three historical examples, right, about the pathways that they take, and then what he does at the end, by the way, in this section that we're studying, in verse number 16, he actually talks about characteristics of these people and he's basically saying these are characteristic of these very same errors that we just talked about, Cain and Balaam and Korah.

Notice what he says in verse 16, and I'll stop here to just kind of pause and show you. These people are grumblers and faultfinders. Do you know that's exactly what the people who joined Korah and his rebellion were doing? They were grumbling and faultfinding with God, and certainly with Moses as well, but they were really upset with God. And it says here's another characteristic of these false teachers, they follow their own evil desires, exactly what Cain did. This was about what he wanted to do, not about the revelation that God had given to him. They boast about themselves, that's what Korah was doing. He wanted to be Moses, basically, he wanted to be prime. And then it says "and they flatter others for their own advantage." That's exactly what we see with Balaam, he wanted to get paid, so he was willing to do whatever it took to get paid.

So he gives us these paths that these ungodly people have trod beforehand and he says these false teachers are doing the same thing that these ungodly people have done, they're just walking in the same path. But then he's not even done, he's like, Jude is serious about these people. He says, if you didn't get that, I'm gonna give you some pictures of what they're like. I'm gonna give you some pictures of what they're like, so he gives us the pictures of the ungodly, not only the path of the ungodly, but he gives us pictures of the ungodly. I'm gonna show them to you pretty quick, I'm gonna bounce through these pretty fast. Stay with me, though, they're interesting.

First of all, he says they're blemishes. I put in parentheses here hidden reefs. That's the alternate translation that I actually prefer. It means both, it mean blemishes or hidden reefs, but I'll explain that in just a second. Notice what it says in Jude, chapter 12, kinda beginning part of the verse, Jude, verse 12, first part of the verse, forgive me. "These people are blemishes at your love feast." Love feasts were communal meals that they would share together in the early church and then, oftentimes, they would also pull the Lord's supper into that context as well. And he says they're blemishes, or hidden reefs. That's kind of the compound of that word, it means hidden reefs.

Think about it this way. It's as if they are willing to just show up, they don't even care, like they're not worried about it, they're just glad, they know that they're doing the wrong thing, but they don't care. They're just gonna be among God's people, but they're hidden reefs.

Think about this. Think about a ship that's making its way somewhere and you can't see below the surface. But what happens to the bottom of that ship is that, when they hit it, it opens it up and everybody on that ship is in trouble. That's the picture that Jude is giving to us about these false teachers being hidden reefs or blemishes.

Then he says, secondly, that they're selfish shepherds. Notice what he says in the second part of verse 12. He says, "they'll eat with you without the slightest qualm. They are shepherds who feed only themselves." Do you know that's the exact opposite of what a shepherd does? The reason he's a shepherd is because he's got sheep to take care of and feed. Shepherds don't just feed themselves and go, "hey, you guys are on your own, I'll be eating your grass." That's not what shepherds do. Shepherds don't just take care of themselves.

Do you know what he's doing here? He's giving a shout out to Ezekiel's reminder to Israel and Jude is making it now a figure in the church. Listen to what Ezekiel said in chapter 34, "Son of Man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, 'this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel, who only take care of yourselves. Should not shepherds take care of the flock?' You see, Jude is actually giving us kind of a reminder of that and saying these false teachers, they're only in it for themselves, they're not in it for people.

Then he says, here's the third thing, you can just keep following. If you're bible's open, you're seeing all of these, right, that "they're clouds without rain." Notice what it says in this kinda the third part of verse 12, "they're clouds without rain, blown along by the wind." Now if you're an agrarian person, maybe some of you are farmers, I have no idea, and nowadays, right, we have all kinds of ability to hydrate all of our farms things. As you can tell, I have a long lineage as a farmer. So we can do that, right. But back in the day, they had to just look and go, "God, we need rain." And so, do you know how bad it was, when you would have a cloud, and a darkened cloud, that never rained. Do you know what that was indicative of to them? A promise that was made that wasn't fulfilled, that's what it was indicative of. In fact, the writer of Proverbs actually says that exact thing in Proverbs 25, "like clouds and wind without rain is one who boasts of gifts never given."

This is like you've made promises that you can't come through on and this is what the false teachers are doing. You're saying that somehow what you're saying to us is benefit for our life, it's actually leading to destruction, it's leading to immorality, it's leading to everything opposed to the gospel. You're like promising things that you can't deliver.

But then, if you keep going in the text, you see this, "they're autumn trees without fruit." Now you and I both know that there are harvest seasons, right. A lot of people like to go apple picking in October, a lot of people like to go do that, right. Autumn trees without fruit. That means that they're in trouble, in fact, look what it says in verse number 12, "these autumn trees, without fruit



and uprooted, they are twice dead." In other words, not only are they not producing fruit, but now they're uprooted. He's basically saying that these false teachers, listen to this, not only don't know the truth of God and they're gonna deal with that in the context of where they're at, their lives don't produce any fruit, but eternally speaking, it's like they're twice dead. Don't follow them is what he's saying. This is what these people are like.

Then he says that they're wild waves of the sea in the next verse, the beginning of verse 13, "they're wild waves of the sea, foaming up in their shame." I used to live in Florida, some of you know that, eight years ago, I hardly remember it. And we lived not far from the coast and there were times where we could go to the beach, like in February, and we could go to the beach and we would watch the waves just pound on the shore. But then we watched them foam up and there was all kind of junk associated with it, right, then it would just leave. Like the waves looked great and then it left all kinds of junk, particularly if it was like a red tide and then you've got all these dead fish and toxins and all kind of stuff all over the place. That's the picture that he's giving. He's giving this picture of waves that are coming in to the shore and are leaving all kinds of filth and toxins. He's saying that's what these false teachers are like.

In fact, he's also, in this context, Jude not only quoted earlier, or kind of inferred from Ezekiel, but he's also doing the same thing with Isaiah. Here's what he says, Isaiah chapter 57, "but the wicked are like the tossing sea which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. There is no peace says my God for the wicked."

You see, this is what Jude is doing, and then he gives us one last illustration, one last picture here, and he says that these pictures of the ungodly, they're like wandering stars. Notice what he says in verse 13, "they're wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever." Now that word stars, it doesn't just necessarily mean shooting star, in fact, I think it actually means planet, and here's why. Because the Greek word for that word star is where we get our English word planet, same exact word. So why is he saying that? Well, he could be referring to shooting stars, but I think he's referring to planets and here's why. Because planets didn't stay stationary in the sky. A lot of the stars were fixed, and you see, they depended upon fixed stars to navigate themselves in the ancient world. But with things that moved, that became useless for navigation. They were like, "now how am I supposed to know where I am?" Right? So they're basically saying, these false teachers are useless for navigating your lives. They are wandering stars and what's reserved for them is basically the darkness of blackness forever.

So he gives us the paths of the ungodly and then he gives us these pictures of the ungodly, but then he gets to what he's trying to say and that's that there's a prophesy about the ungodly, there's a prophesy about the ungodly.

Look in the beginning part of verse number 14, it says this, "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them." So here's what Jude is doing. Jude is

pulling from, I've already mentioned to you before, the first book of Enoch, which was a historical book. Jude is pulling from that book and he's saying Enoch, in his prophesy that was given, which I've taught on before and may have some value in looking at, what he was saying about the coming flood in the time of Noah, because Enoch proceeded that time frame, but also had a long term look at the coming of the Lord. So basically, Jude's pulling that out and saying Enoch was prophesying about these false teachers, these kinds of people and here's what he had to say.

He actually had, I'm gonna give you kinda three quick things that he had to say about him, here's the first. The prophesy says the Lord is coming. Can't be anymore straightforward, right? Notice what it says, Jude 14, Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them, and here's the prophesy. "See, the Lord is coming." Hey, fundamental to who we are as people who believe in Jesus and His gospel, it is fundamental that we believe that He's coming, fundamental. As surely as He came, born in Bethlehem, as surely historically as He lived and went to a cross and died, which is historically documented, nobody really argues about that. As surely as He rose from the dead, with even extra biblical sources, who did not believe in Him as Lord, actually testified to. As surely as He ascended to the Father in heaven and promised His return, you can bank on the fact that Jesus is going to come again.

Now, that's the first piece. The Lord is coming. Have you ever sat with that for very long? I mean, just sat with that one singular thought, that Jesus is going to show back up. That will sober you up. That is better than any smelling salt you have ever done in your life. It is better than any jolt of caffeine you have ever given yourself. Jesus is coming. But he tells us a second thing, He's not coming alone. The Lord's not gonna be alone when he comes.

Look at what Jude's prophesy says. "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them. 'See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his Holy ones.'" Now, there are some that certainly could believe that the reference to holy ones there is referring to the saints of God and certainly that's going to be the case. We will join Him in that, those who have died and who are in Christ will be able to join Him in that. But I don't think that's who he's referring to here. I believe he's referring to angels because, up to this point, in the context of Jude, he's been talking about them quite significantly and giving us historical examples about them, and they are referred to in this way over and over and over in the scripture. Just like, by the way, the saints of God are also referred to that way.

But do you know why I believe that he's referring here to the angels, that Jesus is coming and that he won't be alone? Do you realize how ironic it is, that Jude is writing woes on the false teachers, who we've already studied, who heap abuse on celestial beings. How ironic is it, that when Jesus returns to judge, that the instruments of his judgment will be the ones that they have heaped abuse upon, the angels of God. Startling, really.

So the Lord's coming, the Lord's not going to be alone, and then, here's what you need to remember, the Lord has an agenda. He's not coming for no reason. This isn't just, "hey, I'm here again." He has an agenda. What is it?

He tells us very clearly, verse 14 and 15, "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them. See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." He's coming and he's not going to be alone and He has an agenda and the agenda is the judgment of the ungodly. Judgment is coming upon the ungodly.

That's exactly what Jude is saying to us, you can't read it a different way, that's what it's saying. You see, Jude is helping us to understand something, that Jesus loves His bride, and those that want to do her violence, He's going to deal with. Why? 'Cause He loves her. Because He loves her. He loves his bride, and those who will deal violently with her, He will deal with.

Now, in seeing this, we are reminded that judgment is coming upon the ungodly, but here's the question that we have to ask ourselves, what does that entail? If that's the case, and it is, what does that entail? Well, we've had clues that have been given to us, through Jude's writing, not only in the text that we're reading today, but in text we've been reading already, because it's such a short letter.

Let me show you a couple of those. Verse 7, "They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire." Then notice what it says in verse number 11, "Woe to them. They've taken the way of Cain, they've rushed to profit into Balaam's error, they have been", what is it, "destroyed in Korah's rebellion." And then notice what it says in verse 13, "They're wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame, wandering stars for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever."

See, if I could sum up on one word what Jude is helping us to understand, that the judgment on the ungodly would be, it's really simple. Hell. The word is not used, but the pictures are painted, and we have the whole of the New Testament scripture to be able to help inform our idea of what means and what that looks like. Now stay with me for a second, because some of you are checking out, because not only can your mind not conceive of a God who judges, but you can't allow yourself to conceive of a hell, but you need to stay with me.

So, these pictures, you don't have to make them all agree because they're pictures, they stand on their own, right, 'cause some of you are trying to go, "well, wait a second, I can't make these make sense, right, of hell. How can you have eternal fire and darkest blackness?" Well, you can't, right. Fire gives light, right, that's not the point. The point is, he's not trying to make a literal statement here, he's trying to give us pictures of what we understand hell to be.

And that judgment for the ungodly is actually going to end in this kind of way. In fact, even the word destroyed, when we read that, it can at times mean completely annihilated, but the compound nature of the Greek word in the word destroyed can also, and it's used this way a number of different other times, it can also mean, listen to this, never again what it once was, utterly ruined or completely useless. That's what that word can mean.

So here are the pictures that you have, eternal fire, complete ruin, blackest darkness forever. I find it interesting that in two of those three, eternal and forever are both used, to make a description of this. Now the struggle that we have is just like we have people or maybe we ourselves struggle to conceive of a god who would ever judge, even though we tried to get some of those excuses out of the way so we could hear. We can also not conceive of a god who allows or sins anyone to hell.

Now stay with me for a moment. That's oftentimes because we've got as completely wrong understanding of what the bible is describing and what we understand regarding hell. You see, here's the caricature that the world puts on us, is this, "I'm never following after a god who would just capriciously throw people into an abyss, who are generally decent people and, while they're going into the abyss, they're screaming, 'no, I didn't want this.'" That's a caricature, ladies and gentlemen, that's not what this is about. You see, everybody that goes to hell wants to.

C.S. Lewis actually said that "everybody that wants to go to hell does, and that everybody in hell wants to be there." You see, the context that he was making there was that an unregenerate heart can choose none other, that given that place, they can't choose anything other than that. And he actually depicted this when he wrote a little book called *The Great Divorce*, and in this book, *The Great Divorce*, here's what Lewis did. He wasn't trying to be a theologian in this particular book, but he was painting kind of this, from a sanctified imagination, highly biblically informed, and he showed this bus that was pulling up to the outskirts of heaven, full of people who were in hell. And the bus pulled up on the outskirts of heaven and they were given the opportunity to leave the bus and enter in to heaven, and no one got off the bus. Why? Because they were already where they wanted to be, independent from God.

You see, ladies and gentlemen, listen. Hell is simply the eternal trajectory of a soul that has already decided it wants independence and rebellion from God in this life. That's all it is. It's the eternal trajectory of that soul, which continues down the pathway of degradation. And people, listen to this, people that find themselves in that place, who end up in hell, will find that they have a dissatisfaction so gnawing in them, that it will never ever be able to be satisfied, much like an eternal fire, a ruinous destruction, a blackest of darkness forever. Because every choice, listen to this, every choice of an unregenerate heart into eternity cannot choose anything but complete unregenerate things. Because in the absence of God, and in the absence of a knowledge of good, it will be a

continual descent into things that begin to look subhuman, not truly human, and that is the trajectory that they're on. It is not a good picture that we see.

But see, I think, that maybe for some of us, we can't conceptualize the idea of hell because we have never conceptualized the glory of what God has done in Jesus. That's what I've been sitting with this week, overwhelmed. We don't realize how deep and how lasting the impact of sin is upon us and upon humanity. We don't realize the glory of what God has done for us in Jesus and, as a result, we can never conceptualize of an idea of hell because we can't see the gospel so beautifully. We can't see Jesus and what's He's done on the cross so gloriously.

I wish that these were my words, they're not. These were the things going on in my heart, but I found somebody with better words than I have. And so I have to yield the floor to Randy Alcorn at this point and here's what he says. "If we regard hell," please listen to this, I wept in my office when I was reading it, "if we regard hell as a divine overreaction to sin, we deny that God has the moral right to inflict ongoing punishment on any humans. By denying hell, we deny the extent of God's holiness. When we minimize sin's seriousness, we minimize God's grace in Christ's blood, shed for us. For if the evils he died for aren't significant enough to warrant eternal punishment, perhaps the grace displayed on the cross isn't significant enough to warrant eternal praise." That is staggering to me, staggering to me.

If what Jesus did on the cross, in dealing with eternal punishment, wasn't all that great, then maybe what He did on the cross isn't all that praiseworthy. But because we know that what He has done is so glorious, that He is worth every praise, thousands of thousands of lifetimes on end, we know that what He's done is completely praiseworthy to the same degree. We don't often understand the depth of rescue that God has done for us in Jesus Christ and, as a result, we can't even begin to conceptualize the idea of God's justice and the idea of even hell.

We have to be careful in our day and age, we need to be concerned if, in local congregations we never hear this truth, if we never hear this truth. If all we ever hear is, how to feel a little bit better after you showed up, listen, I get that all the time. And I realize people are trying to encourage me and I thank you for that, I really genuinely do. I'm grateful to be in a place that encourages me. I'm thankful for you, I love you folks. But I need you to understand something. If you think that saying to me, every time you leave, "man, the reason I come is you just make me feel so much better about myself", I have missed the mark, because sometimes when you preach the gospel, it doesn't, listen, it doesn't initially make you feel better about yourself. What it makes you do is feel better about Jesus and what He's done on our behalf, that's what it does. The gospel, rightly placed, does that because, good grief, what we're doing with our itching ears is just trying to heap up for ourselves, everybody'll tell us how to get our best life now and how to make Tuesday better than Friday and all that kind of stuff.

For the love of Jesus and His gospel, we have to tell people the truth, that has been revealed in the scripture, because if all we do is try and make people feel better, we run the risk of running the way of Cain, where we are simply now avoiding the revelation of God and instead making sure we tell people what they want to hear so they'll give us a paycheck to do it. But we are, listen, we have to be people who surrender to Jesus in such a way that even the hard stuff like Jude is, that we can communicate and say "this is what God's saying, I'm laying it out here before you. Why? Because I don't want to be guilty of helping to murder your soul. I want to make sure that you make sure that you understand the glorious news of the gospel." Thank you.

How many of us have potentially been influenced already? We run like crazy whenever we hear anything about God's justice or God's judgment or we hear the idea of hell and then we're embarrassed and we cower in a corner, because we've been influenced by a narrative that's false, it's wrong. It has nothing to do with the revelation of God. We're making things up in our heads. That is an unhealthy place for us to live, ladies and gentlemen, I can't stress that to you enough.

How many of us maybe are followers of Jesus, that have been following Jesus with our whole hearts? I mean, He's changed us and He's transformed us and we've following with our whole hearts. Do you know what? You and me, those of you who are in that camp, which I am, we need this reminder. And do you know why we need it? We need it because there are people that are living around us that need to know the beauty of Jesus, they need to see it in our lives.

You see, the great commission that we've been given, ladies and gentlemen, is not just aspirational. It's not just something we look out and go, "oh, that's neat, we can make a cool statement around that and sell t-shirts." It's not just aspirational. Listen to this, as my buddy, Scott, says, it is geographical and generational. In other words, there are real people that live around you, that are going to live and die, real people. And Jesus has put His church in the world to bring the gospel to those people, for them to able to see and to hear and to respond to the glorious love of God that He has shown to a sinful world in Jesus Christ, in terms of what He's done on a cross and through rising from the dead, and enabling us by faith to be reconciled to the Father. This is the glorious news that we have been entrusted with, and if you're a follower of Jesus, you need to hear this message, just like I need to hear this message, because we need to be reminded of that.

And lastly, maybe you're somebody here who's never come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. Maybe church for you has just been something you check into occasionally, you listen to and go, "that's good, no, I'm for that." But you've never been born from above. You've never been regenerated. You've never been transformed. You've never, old has never been gone, and everything made new.

Well, see you've already heard the bad news and the bad news is this. You can't do it. You're up a creek with no paddle. You are helpless to save yourself. There is nothing you can do. Try as you might, you can walk as many senior adults across the road as you want to. You can not work your way into heaven. This is an act of God's grace, in what He has done through His son, Jesus Christ, and He gives us, listen to this, He gives us this beautiful gift called faith that we can now, in turn, put that back in Him because this is not about our works, unless we should boast. It's an act of grace through faith, this is how we are saved. And this comes because God initiated it, not us, because God is gracious, not us.

So I've got great news for you, that have heard really bad news, that you've sinned and you've come short of the glory of God, and you cannot save yourself, and you're already under condemnation, and all of those things are true. But God loves us so much that he sent His son into the world, that whoever would believe in Him would not perish, but would have everlasting life. That though we had sinned and come short of the glory of God, God has given us this gift of salvation by His grace through faith that we can be reconciled back to Him. What incredible love, that a God that is offended enough by sin, who has to send His only son, God in the flesh, would still do it. That is a love that we can't even begin to understand. So high, so deep, so great that it's overwhelming. That's what we sang and that's what His love is. But His love will also result in justice.

So I've said a lot and you've been patient and I thank you for it. But I want to ask if you're here in this place anywhere and you've never come into a relationship with God through His son, Jesus, I pray that you're listening to His drawing in your heart and that you'll respond to that very thing.