

Jude 1:5-19

Defiance. Destruction. Judgment. Salvation.

The Summit Church, Jude¹

MPT: Jude reminds believers that the ungodliness in their midst is a repeat of the unbelief, rebellion, and sensuality of earlier apostates...and they will be judged accordingly. Likewise, he calls believers to remember the apostles' warnings and contend for the faith.

MPS: Jesus is coming to judge every rebellion against his rule and to save all who take refuge in him.

UFN: We all need a trustworthy, unchanging guide in a world of persuasive and conflicting voices—someone who can expose what will destroy us and lead us safely home.

[Jude 1:5-19 Read Locally]

In case you listened to those verses and **short-circuited** by the end of it, let me remind you of the words from our fearless leader last week:

I've never preached on Jude. . . I'll be walking through the opening and conclusion of this letter, and I'm gonna leave the really difficult middle part for our teaching team next weekend.

-Pastor J.D. Greear, Coward

In all seriousness, his sermon last weekend was incredible; verses 1-4 are great. But starting in v5 **Jude begins going down a rabbit hole**...honestly, when I first read this and opened a blank page to write a sermon, my initial sermon title was literally: *What Is Happening?!* So hopefully that makes you feel better as we go

through this. Instead I've titled it: **Defiance. Destruction. Judgment. Salvation.** So be encouraged! And let's get to work.

INTRODUCTION

How many of you enjoy cruises? Y'all are crazy. I've seen one too many documentaries.

Imagine you're getting ready for a cruise: you board the boat, get all settled in, then the Captain calls everyone to the top deck for an announcement. He proceeds to **UNFOLD A CHART**. Scattered all over the chart are **warnings**: shallow water here, hidden reef or iceberg there, and **marked remains of shipwrecks that have gone before you.**

- Now imagine the Captain takes that chart and says, *"You know what? Those wrecks happened a long time ago. I don't wanna live in the past!"* So he folds up the map, throws it overboard, and says, *"We're gonna follow our instincts! All aboard; the adventure begins!"*
- THAT'S WHEN YOU GET OFF THE BOAT, AMEN?

Those marks on that chart were not **irrelevant pieces of ancient history**...they're there because somebody sailed into those waters before you, and didn't make it home. *And the wreckage of the past should be a warning for the future.*

¹ Walls, D., & Anders, M. (1999). I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude (Vol. 11, p. 263). Broadman & Holman Publishers.; Utley, R. J. D. (2000). Jesus' Half-Brothers Speak: James and Jude: Vol. Volume 11. Bible Lessons International.; Miguel Nuñez - *Contend for the Faith* (Jude 1:1-7); Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The

Bible exposition commentary (Vol. 2). Victor Books.; Lucas, R. C., & Green, C. (1995). The message of 2 Peter & Jude: the promise of His coming. InterVarsity Press.; Miguel Nuñez, 2 Peter and Jude for You; Alistair Begg, *Sermons on Jude*; Skip Heitzig, *The Fight: Ancient and Modern*; Tim Mackie and Jon Collins, *Warning from Ancient Rebellions*

That is essentially what Jude does in verses 5-19. **He unfolds the chart of biblical history and points to the wreckage:** Israel in the wilderness, rebellious angels, S&G, Cain, Balaam, Korah....

- And he's not just giving us **random pieces of Bible trivia**...he's **marking the dangerous reefs for us.**
- Each story says, *"Hey, people have sailed this direction before—they **rejected** God's Word, **resisted** God's authority, and **redefined** God's design—and everyone that sailed in those directions ended up SHIPWRECKED every time."*
- See, God wants to help us not shipwreck our spiritual lives in the same way some of these folks did—so remembering and understanding the past should give us **insight for how we should live today.**
- Jude might've written this 2000 years ago, but his warning is that **we should be very careful calling something "progress" if all we are doing is sailing toward an old disaster in a newer boat.**

CONTEXT

By way of reminder, this **short little letter** was written by Jude. Jude was **one of Jesus' 4 half brothers.** (None of which, BTW, believed he was the Messiah until *after* the resurrection. Which, if you have siblings, totally makes sense.)

Well initially Jude wanted to write a **beautiful, encouraging** letter about the **salvation we share**—the kind of letter filled with verses we would **hang in our homes** and **put on coffee mugs** one day. Basically he wanted to write *Philippians*; instead he had to write *First Condemnations* because, verse 4 tells us, Jude realizes that **ungodly false teachers** have **"crept in unnoticed"** to the church and are

seeking to **"pervert the grace of our God."** So Jude sounds the **alarm**—not because he enjoys being harsh, but because he loves the church too much to remain quiet.

- He understands that **bad doctrine** always provides a framework for **sinful living**...that **doctrinal** and **moral** corruption always go hand-in-hand.

As confusing as these 15 verses are upon initial reading, thankfully Jude writes like every good Baptist should and **presents everything in sets of 3.** And understanding that framework really helps **simplify** what otherwise feels like a **ton of randomness.**

CAVEAT

Now lemme give you one caveat: the hardest part of going through this is the pace in which Jude writes—he's short and to the point; just 25 TOTAL verses. And in his writing **he assumes a LOT of background knowledge—including references to some extrabiblical Jewish literature his audience would've been familiar with**—so he doesn't explain things in detail. Meaning: when you read this, you shouldn't feel bad if you're like, "Bro, I have NO CLUE what he's talking about?" So I'm just letting you know ahead of time you're gonna have a **million questions** and want me to go down a **million rabbit trails** that we just don't have time to go down. And if that's you, consider that **the prompting of the Holy Spirit** to go read all of those stories and study for yourself!

WALKTHROUGH

With that caveat, notice how Jude begins: **Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it...** Jude opens the chart of biblical history and points to our first set of three shipwrecks:

- **One in the wilderness**—where Israel refused to believe God’s word.
- **One in the heavenly realm**—where angels refused to remain under God’s authority.
- **One in the cities of S&G**—where people refused to live within God’s relational design.

Let’s take them one at a time...

First, Israel shows us the danger of **UNBELIEF**. God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt—they witnessed the plagues, walked through the Red Sea, experienced God’s provision in the wilderness—yet **when God told them to enter the Promised Land, they refused to trust him**. Verse 5b: **Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.** (Bolding their action and underlining their consequence.)

Numbers 14 tells us everyone over the age of 20, except for Caleb and Joshua, would die in the wilderness **because of their unbelief**. They had **seen what God could do**, but they still refused to **trust what God had said**.

See, unbelief is not merely **lack of information**—they had plenty of information. Unbelief is the refusal to trust God...it’s the conviction that **my assessment of the situation is more reliable than his Word**.

And notice the two actions attributed to the same Jesus in v5: he **saved** and he **destroyed** →The Savior is also the Judge.

- The entire **nation** was delivered from Egypt, but the majority of the **individuals** were destroyed because of their unbelief.
- Here’s what that means: merely being in the church is not evidence of your salvation. God will **deliver** his Church; but the individuals who have not personally placed their trust in Jesus will be **destroyed**. Many Jews were part of the people God delivered out of the land of Egypt, but they were still destroyed because of their sin of unbelief.
- **Being near** the people of God is not enough; **experiencing God’s blessings** is not enough...**religious privilege** is no substitute for **personal believing faith** in Jesus Christ.

Israel rejected God’s word, and their unbelief led to destruction.

Second, the fallen angels show us the danger of **REBELLION**. Look at v6: **And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—**

God had given angels a place beneath his authority, **but they refused to remain there**. Satan entices some of these angels to follow him in rebellion, so they abandoned the order God had established and crossed the boundaries God had created. You can go read all about it in **Genesis 6**...it sounds like something out of **Jerry Springer** or **Real Housewives**. It’s wild.

But the details aren’t the point...the point is that they rebelled against God, therefore, God has kept them in gloomy darkness, awaiting the judgment of the great day.

- See, **UNBELIEF** says, *“I don’t trust what God has said.”*
- **REBELLION** goes a step farther and says, *“I refuse to live under God’s rule.”*

Third, Jude uses the story of S&G to illustrate how **SEXUAL PERVERSION** rejects God's design. S&G were, of course, known for giving themselves over to **unnatural** and **lustful desires**. Again, you can read all about that in **Genesis 19**. So Jude says, 7just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

Their rebellion did not remain an abstract idea...it entered their desires and expressed itself through their bodies. They rejected God's design for sex and **attempted to redefine good and evil according to their fleshly desires**.

- See, that's what happens when **desire becomes lord**—instead of bringing our desires *beneath* God's authority, we make our desires the authority and expect God to approve them.
- And Jude's warning is sobering: just as physical fire fell on S&G, eternal judgment awaits those who **refuse to repent** and **persist in rejecting God's authority and redefining his design for sex**.²

Three different **settings**; three different **stories**; three different **expressions of sin**. But underneath them all is the **same act of defiance**, with the creature shouting to the Creator, "*I KNOW BETTER THAN YOU,*" and all three ending with the same destination: **DESTRUCTION**.

- **UNBELIEF** rejects God's word.
- **REBELLION** rejects God's rule.
- **PERVERSION** rejects God's design.

²To be clear: Jude is not saying sexual sin is uniquely beyond the reach of God's grace; it isn't. He is warning about unrepentant sin that is defended, celebrated, and used to overturn

Every time SELF takes God's place, **destruction** follows.

And if that's not clear enough, Jude makes the connection explicit in v8: 8Yet in like manner (just as Israel, angels, and S&G did) these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. IOW, the same spirit of defiance *then* is operating in the church *now*.

Specifically, these false teachers were "relying on their dreams," which they claimed gave them permission to **ignore clear biblical teaching** in favor of their "spiritual experiences" and "divine revelation."

While we don't know the exact nature of their dreams, the effect is the same: they're allowing **subjective experience** to overrule **objective truth**. Lemme modernize this for you: Just follow your heart.

Listen: God calls us to worship in **spirit AND truth**. But these are folks who, when the *truth* told them "no," claimed the *Spirit* told them "yes."

- The problem with that is that the Spirit who inspired the Word will never contradict the Word.
- If the "spirit" leading you claims Scripture is outdated, believes the resurrection optional, or God's design for sex negotiable, it is NOT the Holy Spirit, it is the **spirit of the age**.

God's design. Sodom refused to repent, and its destruction became a visible warning of the final judgment to come. Sodom rejected God's design, and its perversion led to destruction.

And y'all this isn't new—it's the ancient lie of **Genesis 3** all over again. Satan's original lie in **Genesis 3:5** is that YOU can **"be like God;"** YOU can **define what's good and evil**; YOU can **determine what's truth** for yourself; YOU can **become your own highest authority**. You could say it this way: **When feelings become my authority, desires become my direction.**

Once self takes God's place, **personal desire becomes the only law by which you abide**. Which is why Jude says they **defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones** (i.e. spoke arrogantly about spiritual things they didn't understand).

- Their fundamental problem wasn't that they had **too little information**, it was that they had **relocated authority**. God's Word was no longer above them...instead their feelings, instincts, desires, and experiences had taken its place.
- **When feelings become my authority, desires become my direction.**

And to show us how reckless that posture is, Jude gives us a surprising contrast. These false teachers spoke arrogantly about **spiritual realities they didn't understand**, claiming **authority they did not possess**. However, **But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."**

Michael—the *archangel* who **leads God's armies** and **cast Satan out of heaven**; a dude who *actually* possessed extraordinary spiritual authority—refused to claim an authority that belonged to God alone.

- If anyone could have thrown his spiritual weight around, we might expect it to be Michael. **But instead he defers to God.**

The story of Micheal and Satan disputing over Moses' body doesn't appear in the Bible, but was in a Jewish book called *The Assumption of Moses*, which, again, was something the early church knew.

- Well in *The Assumption of Moses*, it basically says Michael buried Moses' body and Satan tried to steal it.
- Instead of **arguing** with Satan—or **cursing** or **mocking** him or **talking trash** to him—Michael, *unlike the other angels who rebelled*, maintained his place of submission and left judgment to God by saying, **"Hey bro, you gotta take this up with the Lord. The Lord rebuke you."**
- Michael just stayed put and just **let God handle Satan**.
Application: BE LIKE MIKE. (And I know you **Dukies** don't like that, but the Bible is literally telling you to NOT be like a devil, and BE LIKE MIKE. Don't shoot the messenger.)
- BE LIKE MIKE. Which means, BTW, please don't **talk to or try to mock** the Devil. I know that sounds crazy for some of you, but I've met plenty of people who think **trash-talking** Satan is a good idea → **"Come at me, bro. I'm covered by Jesus!"**
- Please don't do that. Satan's not scared of you. You—the one who **couldn't find your keys this morning** and **spilled your coffee while trying to drive** cuz you can't do two things at once well. You who **can't find your way back home** without using Google Maps. You whose **tummy gets upset** if you consume the wrong kind of milk. He's not scared of you.
- Satan's not roaming around but then sees your **"Not today, Satan"** bumper sticker and is like, *"Oh, dang, better keep moving to the next driveway."*
 - Y'all, please let God handle Satan. You talk to God.
 - **Resist** the Devil. **Pray** to God.
 - Don't talk to the Snake...talk to *God* about the Snake.

Anyways, the whole point is that Michael submitted what he knew to **God's authority**, while these false teachers submitted everything to **their own instincts**. He draws that contrast in v10: **10But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively.**

Animals live according to instinct; *human beings* were **created in God's image to be governed by God's Word**. **When we trade his authority for our appetites**, the desires we trust to **free** us become the very desires that **destroy** us.

Now Jude is gonna show us what this self-rule looks like practically, using three more stories: Cain, Balaam, and Korah.

11Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain...

The way of Cain is **GOD ON MY TERMS**. It's the way of **man-made religion without faith**.

Cain, we know from **Genesis 4**, attempted to worship God at the altar, but did so by wanting to approach God on his own terms.

- The way of Cain is religiosity without saving faith; it's claiming Jesus as Savior w/o submitting to him as Lord. It's wanting God to **accept what I bring** while **refusing to receive what he says**.
- Cain is GOD ON MY TERMS.

And that instinct remains in every human heart. We want God to approve our effort, recognize our goodness, and accept the case we've made for ourselves. **But Christianity begins when we stop**

relying on what we can bring to God and start relying on what Christ has done for us.

- To live as a Christian is to **continually rely on your Savior and not on yourself**. We do not **earn** our salvation; we **receive** it.

Second, they **and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error...**

Balaam's error is **USING GOD'S GIFTS FOR MY GAIN**. We read Balaam's story back in **Numbers 22-25**. He was a **prophet-for-profit** who was willing to use **spiritual influence for money, power, and personal advantage**. When God prevented him from cursing Israel, Balaam helped lead Israel into **idolatry** and **immorality** instead. Balaam used **spiritual things** to serve **selfish ambitions**.

Which, lemme pause here for a minute: **When someone uses ministry, or influence, or spiritual authority to build a platform, enlarge a bank account, or exploit the people they were called to serve, they are committing Balaam's error and they will be judged by God.**

This is why we, at TSC, when it comes to **FINANCES** are accredited by a **third party accountability organization**—one that requires high standards of biblical accountability, board governance, transparency, integrity in fundraising, and proper use of financial resources to remain above reproach and certified. Our **PASTORS AND STAFF** seek to remain above reproach so as to not commit Balaam's error, as well. **PJD** told you last week his salary is set by our Directional Elders, half of which are not staff members. **FOR ME PERSONALLY:**

- I have multiple people who know all the financial details of my life and have all my passwords to everything.

- My wife and my assistant must sign-off on all extra speaking and travel engagements.
- Dozens of ppl have read my sermon content before I get up to preach to ensure biblical integrity
- Like 10 folks who have me on FMF.

We believe at TSC that faithful ministry welcomes accountability, because God's gifts are for **his people** and **his glory**, not our personal gain.

Third, they **and perished in Korah's rebellion.**

Korah is **USURPING GOD'S AUTHORITY FOR MY GLORY.** In **Numbers 16**, Korah and his followers rebelled against the divine authority given to Moses and Aaron and tried to assume power for themselves. Korah was grasping for a position God had not given him.

BTW, you see the downward progression in the verbs? Began to **walk** in the **way of Cain**, then they **abandoned** themselves to **Balaam's errors**, and ultimately **perished** in **Korah's rebellion**.

- Y'all, this is **ALWAYS** the downward spiral of sin.
- Starts as a **dabble (walk)**, then becomes a **direction (abandon)**, and it ends in **destruction (perish)** .

And before we move on, these are not merely sins of the ancient **past** or **celebrity preachers** we criticize from a distance on Twitter. These same temptations can find their way into faithful Christian hearts:

- **The way of Cain** wants God on our terms; it's **reshaping Jesus around our preferences**: It sounds like, *"God should accept me because I'm sincere,"* or, *"My Jesus would never require that of me,"* or, *"I know what the Bible SAYS, but that's not what it MEANS."* The way of Cain is when we obey only what affirms

our feelings, ignore what confronts us, and become angry when God refuses to approve what we bring him.

- **Balaam's error** appears whenever we use God's gifts for our **gain**—and that temptation is not limited to pastors. Any Christian can use spiritual knowledge, generosity, service, or even a compelling testimony to gain attention, approval, access, or control. We can *begin* serving Jesus because we love him and slowly start *using* Jesus to build ourselves.
- **Korah's rebellion** appears whenever we grasp for God's **authority for our glory**: it can look like building a dissenting faction around your complaints, undermining faithful leaders cuz you want influence yourself...treating every disagreement as evidence of compromise, or demanding authority without accepting accountability.

Every one of us must ask ourselves: *Am I laying my terms, my gain, and my glory at Jesus' feet...or am I using Jesus' name to selfishly pursue them?*

Next Jude moves from the biblical examples over to the **damage they inflict**. In vv12-13, he piles up **six vivid images showing us what false teachers are like and what they produce** (and y'all think some of our sermons have too many points):

1. **¹²These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear,**

Love feasts were just communal meals shared by the church—think fellowship dinner or potluck. Yet sitting at the table were **"hidden reefs"**: false teaching lingering beneath the surface waiting for someone's life to be shipwrecked. **Hidden reefs endanger people.**

2. **shepherds feeding themselves;**

Apparently some of these leaders were using the flock for their personal benefit instead of caring for them—they were feeding themselves by exploiting others.

3. **waterless clouds, swept along by winds;**

Waterless clouds leave people thirsty and wanting. That's what false teaching does: promises freedom, fulfillment, and prosperity and spiritual power but cannot deliver what people actually need.

4. **fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted;**

Fruitless trees leave people hungry.

5. ¹³**wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame;**

Just like a raging sea leaves a bunch of debris on shore, these teachers generate **attention and excitement**, but the lasting product of their ministry is chaos, shame, and spiritual wreckage.

6. **wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.**

“Wandering stars” refers to what we’d call **shooting stars**—stars we see really quickly and then they’re gone. The problem, of course, is that **travelers depended upon FIXED stars for direction** (like the star that led the Magi to Jesus!). Conversely, these teachers claimed to offer spiritual direction, but cuz they’d abandoned God’s truth, they could only lead people astray toward darkness.

But now, through all the darkness—the rebellions, fallen angels, corrupt leaders, wandering stars—one fixed point comes into view: **The wandering stars will disappear, but Jesus remains**. And the Savior who **delivered a people in verse 5** is the Lord who **returns in verse 14**.

¹⁴It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, ¹⁵to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” (Sidenote: This is another one of those extrabiblical sources, called ‘1 Enoch,’ so don’t go looking for this in Genesis.) ¹⁶These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.

¹⁷But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁸They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.” ¹⁹It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.

Even with all this wreckage of the past, Jude wants to fix our eyes on the hope of the future: that Jesus is coming, Jesus will judge, and Jesus came to save.

1) Jesus Comes (v14)

v14 Jude says, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones...” This isn’t a new idea; Jude is drawing upon a promise that runs through the entire Bible.

From the opening pages of Genesis, God promises that evil will not have the final word:

- The offspring of the woman will crush the serpent, and the rightful King will reclaim his creation.
- The prophets develop that promise into the Day of the Lord—the day when God will appear as the divine warrior, judge evil, rescue his people, and establish righteousness on the earth.
- Daniel sees the Son of Man coming with the clouds to receive an everlasting kingdom.
- Zechariah sees the Lord coming with all his holy ones.

Then Jesus arrives on the scene and identifies himself as that promised King:

- He says that he will return visibly, in power and glory, accompanied by his angels, to gather his people and judge the world.
- The NT writers repeat the promise: the same Jesus who ascended will return; the dead will be raised, evil will be defeated, creation will be renewed, and Christ will reign forever with his people.

Jesus' Second Coming is not just a doctrine for **prophecy charts** and **end times enthusiasts**...it is a **fixed star** by which everyday Christians navigate everyday life:

- See, because Jesus is coming, you don't have to envy people **who gain influence through compromise**, cuz their apparent "success" will not last beyond this life.
- Because Jesus is coming, you don't have to follow every **persuasive voice**, or **surrender to every desire**, or **take justice into your own hands**.

- Because Jesus is coming, **no act of faithfulness is wasted, no hidden injustice will remain hidden, no suffering will be final, and no false teacher will have the last word**.

The wreckage of the past shows us where the reefs are...**but the return of Jesus shows us where history is headed**. The past warns us not to drift; our future hope gives us courage to remain faithful.

- So when our world feels like it's lost its mind, or when those who do evil still prosper, or when your obedience and faithfulness to Jesus feels costly, REMEMBER: History is not wandering aimlessly. God is sovereign. Jesus is coming.
- Stay faithful to the King who is coming back for you. And when he arrives, be assured there will be no more **tears**, no more **crying**, no more **pain**, no more **injustice**, no more **betrayals**, no more **exploitation**, no more **sin**, and no more **death**—because the King who is coming for us is coming to make all things new.

The return of Jesus is good news cuz he's coming to put everything right. However, putting everything right means confronting everything that's wrong.

2) Jesus Judges (v15)

See, a love that never confronts evil is not truly loving...and a justice that never judges evil is not truly just.

- Jude says that Jesus is coming ¹⁵**to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness. . . and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.**

Notice his repetition: 4x he says **ALL**, and 4x he refers to the **UNGODLY**.

ALL means that Jesus' judgment will be UNIVERSAL.

- No one will be overlooked and nothing will remain hidden.
- Every single person will stand before him. No exceptions.
- He will judge everyone for every **deed**, every **word**, every **motive**, every **abuse of authority**, and every **secret act of rebellion** will be brought into the light.
- And no amount of **money** will be able to purchase a different verdict...no amount of **influence** will help you control the narrative...no amount of **religious language** will disguise an unrepentant heart.

And his judgment will also be MORAL—he won't judge according to opinion polls, or cultural trends, or standards that change from one generation to the next. He will judge according to his own perfect, holy character.

- This judgment is **FIXED**: Hebrews 9:27 says your judgment day is appointed.
- This judgment will be **FAIR**, because Jesus knows everything never renders a mistaken verdict.
- And this judgment will be **FINAL** because there will be no higher court to appeal to and no opportunity to rewrite the story after the verdict's been given.

Listen to me: If you are hiding behind religious appearances, excusing persistent sin, exploiting people, or reshaping God's Word around your desires, do not confuse God's patience with God's approval. The wreckage of the past shows us that his judgment is not an empty threat. **The decision to submit to the Lordship of Jesus in this life is the only thing that can save you from eternal damnation in the next.**

Repent, turn from self-rule, and submit yourself to Jesus. And when you do, he will hear your cry for salvation, because, most importantly:

3) Jesus Saves

Don't ever get over that word: SAVES. If Jesus is coming, and if his judgment is sure...where can guilty people like us find refuge? Here's the astonishing answer of the gospel: **Our refuge is the Judge himself.**

Don't miss the two actions attributed to the same Jesus: v5 says that Jesus **saved**...and that Jesus **judged**.

- The question is not *whether* we will encounter Jesus—he's coming.
- The question is *how* we will meet him: clinging to our own **self-rule** or taking refuge in his **salvation**.

See, the good news of the gospel is that **the only One with the authority to condemn us is the same One who came to bear that very condemnation for us.**

- At his first coming, Jesus stepped into the place of rebels—on the cross, he carried our guilt, received our judgment, and endured the condemnation our sin deserved.
- But then he rose from the dead, demonstrating that our sin debt had been paid, death had been defeated, and the sacrifice had been accepted.

The cross is the intersection of love and justice: God did not ignore justice in order to save us...he satisfied justice *through* Jesus. That means salvation is not something we **earn** or **achieve** or **deserve**...it's a gift we receive.

- We bring Jesus our **guilt**; he clothes us in his **righteousness**.
- We bring him our **rebellion**; he gives us his **perfect obedience**.
- We bring him our **condemnation**; he gives us **eternal life**.

DMLJ, writing over 75 years ago, said this: “The modern world is desperately ill ... [people are now] perhaps more unhappy than [they have] ever been. There is only one cure for the world’s sickness, only one thing that can give to a man or a woman rest and peace. That is to know that Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, has forgiven me.”³

- Not know that forgiveness is *possible*.
- Not know that forgiveness *exists*.
- But know that **Jesus has forgiven ME**. Died for *me*. Clothed *me* in his righteousness. And on that judgment day, I will be safe—not cuz I lived a perfect life, but because I am found in him!

So the only question is, “**Have you taken refuge in Jesus? Have you personally received his forgiveness?**”

- If not, hear Jude’s warnings as **invitations of grace**. Yes, your judgment day is appointed, but today the **door of mercy** is open to YOU.
- Turn from your self-rule. Stop defending your rebellion. Believe on Jesus and run to him.

PRAY

There’s only one cure for the world’s sickness—only one thing that can give rest and peace—that is to know that Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, has forgiven *me*

³ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Truth Unchanged, Unchanging* (London: Fleming H. Revell, 1950), 95.