Almont Vineyard Church

Week 3 Sermon Series: Faith Under Fire

November 7, 2026

Opening Monologue

Welcome to the Church app, where you'll be able to dig into this week's sermon topic much deeper. Below you'll find spiritual applications, commentary, devotional thoughts, discussion questions, and other helpful tools to enhance this week's message. Dive in and enjoy the great holy Word of the living God.

We're continuing our series Faith Under Fire. If you've been following along, you know that the book of Jude was written by Jesus' brother. As we've discovered so far, Jude has a powerful and urgent message for the Christian church and for our society. We've only covered the first four verses so far, but those opening statements have already been weighty. Here's what we've seen:

1.If we are Christians, we have a calling on our lives.
2.That calling is to rise up and defend the gospel of Christ and His Word.
3.Certain people have made their way into the church and into society in order to pervert the gospel of Christ.
4.Godless men are committing the deepest forms of sexual immorality and think they are getting away with their sins.

This week we are going to build on that foundation and dive into verses 5 through 7.

This Sunday we're going to address some hot-potato topics as Jude exposes them. He shines a light on these evil men and all of their corruption. He makes it clear that no one is getting away with anything—they will come under the judgment of the living God. And if they do not repent of their sins, they will face eternal fire. So let's buckle up as we continue to work through the book of Jude. Jesus' brother both exposes error and encourages our hearts and minds with the truth of God's Word.

Come join us this Sunday, and please take time to look through the applications below—you'll find plenty of commentary and spiritual applications to help you go deeper.

In Christ,
Rev. Pastor Brad

To Listen to this week's Sermon: "Week 3 Series: Faith Under Fire" Go to the Sermon tab here in our APP or use the links to our website or YouTube Channel where you can also listen to our Sermons:

Web: https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media
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Key Sermon Text

Ephesians 4:26 https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204%3A26%20&version=NIV

Psalm 4:4
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%204%3A4%20&version=NIV

Romans 12:9
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012%3A9&version=NIV

Jude 5-7
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jude%205-7&version=NIV

Matthew 25:40-46
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2025%3A40-46%20&version=NIV

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Thessalonians%201%3A8-9%20&version=NIV

Romans 14:10-12
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2014%3A10-12&version=NIV

Romans 10:6-13
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2010%3A6-13&version=NIV

Spiritual Reflection

Theological Reflection: The Judgment of the Lord and the Judgment of Human Beings

We live in a culture that is highly sensitive to the word "judge." The common slogan "Don't judge me" is often used to shut down any evaluation of behavior, attitude, or lifestyle. Behind that phrase is a real concern: many people have experienced harsh, condemning, or hypocritical judgment from Christians. That concern is not entirely misplaced. Scripture clearly warns us against the kind of judgment that flows from pride, self-righteousness, or a spirit of condemnation.

At the same time, the Bible does not call us to abandon moral discernment. We are commanded to distinguish right from wrong, truth from error, and righteousness from unrighteousness. This is part of living faithfully before the Lord. The real question is not whether Christians should make judgments, but what kind of judgment Scripture permits and what kind it forbids.

The Greek words behind our English terms help clarify the issue. The verb krino means to separate, decide, or assess. From it come krima (the verdict or sentence) and krisis (the process or act of judgment, often with the sense of a decisive outcome). These words can describe either careful evaluation or final condemnation. Context determines the meaning. Jesus forbids hypocritical judgmentalism—looking down on others while ignoring our own faults—but He does not forbid the moral discernment that is essential to discipleship. Paul, James, and the rest of the New Testament make the same distinction.

Human judgment is limited, provisional, and easily distorted. Jesus warns that we will be judged by the same standard we apply to others and uses the vivid picture of someone fixated on a speck in a brother's eye while ignoring the log in his own (Matthew 7:1–5). Paul points out that when we condemn others for sins we ourselves practice, we condemn ourselves (Romans 2:1–3). James is blunt: there is only one Lawgiver and

Judge who is able to save and to destroy; we have no authority to judge our neighbor (James 4:12). Jesus further notes that human judgment is "according to the flesh"—limited by incomplete knowledge and prone to error (John 8:15–16). Even our best efforts at evaluation remain partial. We do not see motives clearly, we do not know every fact, and we are not free from bias or pride. For these reasons, Scripture repeatedly calls us to begin any judgment with ourselves, to refuse superficial or appearance-based assessments, to respect the conscience of a brother or sister, and to refuse a censorious spirit.

God's judgment stands in sharp contrast. It is perfect, final, and authoritative. The Father has entrusted all judgment to the Son (John 5:22–30). Every person will stand before God's judgment seat and give an account (Romans 14:10–12). The Lord will bring to light what is hidden and disclose the motives of hearts (1 Corinthians 4:5). On the day of judgment people will answer for every careless word (Matthew 12:36–37), and each will receive what is due for deeds done in the body, whether good or evil (2 Corinthians 5:10). When the Son of Man comes in glory, He will separate the nations as a shepherd separates sheep from goats; the righteous will enter eternal life and the others will face eternal punishment (Matthew 25:31–46). The dead will be judged according to what they have done, as recorded in the books (Revelation 20:11–15). Nothing escapes this judgment—every deed, whether good or evil, will come into it (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

Biblical teaching also shows that God's judgment is not only future. It has a present dimension. Judgment in Scripture often means vindication and deliverance for God's people. David could pray, "Judge me, O Lord," because he was asking for God's intervention and protection. At the same time, those who reject God's righteousness remain under condemnation. Judgment is the inevitable reaping of what has been sown. It begins in this life and is consummated at the end. This present and future reality of God's judgment is meant to shape how we live now: in reverence before the impartial Judge.

The practical difference for the Christian is therefore clear. We are called to exercise moral discernment—to recognize false teaching, to identify sin, and to call people to repentance and faith. That discernment must be rooted in Scripture, guided by the Spirit, and motivated by love for the person's redemption rather than by a desire for their condemnation. It must begin with honest self-examination. When someone says "Don't judge me," they are often reacting to a spirit that felt condemning rather than constructive. Our response is not to abandon discernment, but to make sure our assessments are the hard, compassionate work of people who have consulted God's Word, prayed for wisdom, and are seeking the good of the other person.

In short, human judgment is fallible and must be exercised with humility and love. God's judgment is perfect and final. We do not occupy the throne of the final Judge. We do, however, live under His authority and are called to walk in the light of His truth, distinguishing what honors Him from what does not, while entrusting the ultimate verdict to Him.

Sources: 3-13

Is Hell Real and Eternal? A Theological Reflection

The question of whether hell is real and whether it lasts forever is one of the most sobering matters in Christian doctrine. Scripture does not treat hell as a vague metaphor or a temporary inconvenience. It presents

hell as a real place of conscious, irreversible judgment whose duration matches the eternity of God and the eternity of life with Him.

Hell Is a Real Place

Although the Bible uses vivid figurative language to describe hell—darkness, fire, a bottomless pit, weeping and gnashing of teeth—these images point to an actual destination, not a fictional concept. Jesus taught that both soul and body can be cast into hell (Matthew 10:28). A physical body cannot be thrown into a mere metaphor. The consistent biblical witness is that hell is a real place of conscious existence after death for those who remain under God's judgment.

Hell Is Eternal

The biblical language of permanence is clear and repeated. Jesus said the wicked "will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life" (Matthew 25:46). The same word that describes the everlasting life of the redeemed is used for the everlasting punishment of the lost. Elsewhere Scripture speaks of "eternal fire" (Matthew 25:41; Jude 7), "unquenchable fire" (Mark 9:43), "shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2), "everlasting destruction" (2 Thessalonians 1:9), and a place where "the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever" and the wicked are "tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Revelation 14:11; 20:10).

This eternality is not arbitrary. All sin is ultimately against an infinite and eternal God. Because the offense is against an infinite Being, the just penalty is likewise infinite and eternal. Hell is the place where God's holy justice is fully carried out. Jesus Himself indicated that the punishment of the wicked is as everlasting as the life of the righteous.

Jude's Witness

Jude points to Sodom and Gomorrah as a concrete example of this reality. He writes that they "serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 7). The destruction of those cities was not merely temporary. It stands as a permanent warning of the same eternal judgment that awaits all who reject God's righteousness. Some interpreters note that Jude's language suggests the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah are already experiencing this fire, underscoring that eternal punishment begins at death rather than waiting for a distant future event.

The Final Judgment

The book of Revelation consolidates the teaching. The devil is thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, "where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Revelation 20:10). Those whose names are not found in the book of life are likewise thrown into the lake of fire, which is the second death (Revelation 20:14–15). Paul describes the same destiny for those who do not obey the gospel: "They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power" (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

Torment Rather Than Mere Torture

A helpful distinction exists between torture and torment. Torture is pain inflicted from outside against a person's will. Torment, by contrast, arises from within—unending regret, spiritual thirst with no remedy, and the conscious awareness of one's condition and separation from God. Scripture portrays hell primarily as this

kind of self-inflicted torment. It is not a torture chamber in which people are forced against their will, but the enduring consequence of a will that has permanently rejected God.

Theological Significance
Hell's reality and eternality affirm that God takes human freedom seriously. Choices made in this life carry genuine, irreversible consequences. God does not force people into His presence against their will; He honors the final rejection of His grace. At the same time, the doctrine underscores the infinite seriousness of sin against an infinite God and the infinite value of the salvation offered in Christ. The same passages that speak of eternal punishment also speak of eternal life. The gospel remains the only way of escape from the one and entrance into the other.

In short, Scripture presents hell as both real and eternal. It is the just and permanent outcome for those who remain under God's judgment, just as heaven is the permanent outcome for those who receive His righteousness through Christ. This teaching is not offered to satisfy curiosity but to call every person to repentance and faith while the opportunity remains.

Sources: 14-20

Passages on Future Judgment Before the Lord

Matthew 25:31–46
"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world…'

Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels…'

Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

John 5:22–29
"Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son…
And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.
Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned."

Acts 17:31
"For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

Romans 14:10–12
"You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.

It is written: ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.’
So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.”

2 Corinthians 5:10
“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”

Hebrews 9:27
“Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment…”

Revelation 20:11–15
“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books…

If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

Passages on Eternal Fire, Hell, Hades, and Everlasting Punishment

Matthew 5:22
“But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment… But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”

Matthew 10:28
“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Matthew 13:40–42
“As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Matthew 18:8–9
“If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.”

Matthew 25:41, 46
“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels…’
Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Mark 9:43–48
"If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out…
And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'"

Luke 16:22–24 (Hades)
"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell [Hades], where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'"

Jude 7
"In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire."

2 Thessalonians 1:8–9
"He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power."

Revelation 14:9–11
"…he will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image…"

Revelation 20:10, 14–15
"And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever…
Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

Revelation 21:8
"But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

Source: 21

The Judgment of Believers and Unbelievers: Destiny Secured and Reward Determined

Believers and unbelievers face fundamentally different judgments. The distinction rests on whether a person has trusted in Christ's atoning work. For those who have believed, the decisive judgment concerning sin and destiny has already taken place. For those who have not believed, a future, final judgment remains.

The Believer's Position: Already Judged
Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and

will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (John 5:24). Paul affirms the same reality: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

Justification is a change of legal status—from guilt and condemnation to forgiveness and acceptance—accomplished solely by God's grace through the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Sin was judged at the cross, finally and decisively. The full measure of God's righteous wrath against sin fell upon Christ as our Representative. Because of this, believers do not stand before God facing condemnation; they stand before Him already justified.

The Unbeliever's Judgment: Future and Final

All sin will be judged. For those who have not accepted Christ, judgment remains. Scripture describes the final scene: "Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books… If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:11–15).

Those outside of Christ are "condemned already" (John 3:18). Their judgment is not about determining destiny—it is the public confirmation of a destiny already fixed by unbelief.

The Believer's Evaluation: Rewards, Not Salvation

Although the believer's eternal destiny is secure, every Christian will still stand before the judgment seat of Christ (the bema). Paul writes, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). This is not a judgment of salvation or condemnation. That question has already been settled. At the bema, Christ evaluates the believer's works and service for the purpose of reward. The foundation is Christ; what is examined is what has been built upon that foundation.

In 1 Corinthians 3 Paul explains: "If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames" (1 Corinthians 3:12–15).

Works done in faith, by the Spirit, for the glory of God, and in love will endure and be rewarded. Works done from selfish motives, in the flesh, or for human approval will not survive the testing—even though the person himself is saved. Belief determines location; faithfulness determines the quality of reward and responsibility in the age to come.

Varying Degrees of Reward

Not all believers receive identical rewards. Everyone's cup will be full, but not everyone's cup will be the same size. Just as there are degrees of punishment in hell, there are degrees of reward in heaven. God will not treat a mediocre life the same as one marked by costly, Spirit-empowered commitment to Christ. Some will arrive with little eternal value to show for their Christian lives; others will receive abundant affirmation and greater responsibility.

Scriptural Rewards for Believers

• The Imperishable Crown — Awarded to those who exercise self-control and discipline their bodies (1 Corinthians 9:25).
• The Crown of Righteousness — Given to those who long for Christ's return and live in light of His appearing (2 Timothy 4:8).
• The Crown of Life — Bestowed on those who endure trials and testing with steadfast faith (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10).
• The Crown of Glory — An unfading crown given to those who have faithfully shepherded God's people (1 Peter 5:4).
• The Crown of Boasting / Rejoicing — The souls won to Christ become a believer's joy and crown before the Lord (1 Thessalonians 2:19; Philippians 4:1).

Beyond these crowns, rewards include treasures in heaven, a share in Christ's future rule, and the commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21, 23). Though the degrees vary, every believer will receive praise from God and will experience complete joy.

What This Means Practically

Because salvation is secure, the believer is free to serve without fear of losing eternal life. At the same time, the reality of future reward calls for seriousness about how we live. Paul says the aim of the believer is "to please him" (2 Corinthians 5:9) precisely because we will all stand before Christ. The judgment seat is therefore both a comfort (our destiny is settled) and a motivation (our service matters and will be recognized).

Conclusion

The cross allows God to be both just and the justifier of the ungodly. For the believer, sin has already been judged; what remains is the gracious evaluation of a life lived in response to grace. For the unbeliever, judgment is still future and final. In both cases, the decisive issue is the same: the person and work of Jesus Christ. Belief determines eternal location; faithfulness determines the quality of reward and responsibility in the age to come.

Sources: 22-24

Commentary on Main Texts

Every Knee Shall Bow

"So that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10–11).
This is one of Scripture's most sweeping claims about the ultimate authority of Jesus Christ. When His power is fully revealed, every being will bow before Him—angels in heaven, people on earth, and those under the earth. No realm will be exempt.

Paul deliberately applies Isaiah 45:23 to Jesus. In Isaiah, God Himself declares, "Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear" (Isaiah 45:23). The honor and homage that belong exclusively to God are now

given to Jesus. This is a clear affirmation of His full divinity. The worship due to God alone is rightly offered to the Son.

The confession “Jesus Christ is Lord” also carried immediate practical weight. In the Roman world, the required public declaration was “Caesar is lord.” To say “Jesus is Lord” was both a theological statement and a refusal to give ultimate allegiance to any earthly ruler.

At the last judgment, even those who rejected Him will recognize His authority and right to rule. People may choose now to regard Jesus as Lord through willing faith and commitment, or they will be compelled to acknowledge Him when He returns. This does not mean everyone will be saved. Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, either through believing trust or through forced recognition of His lordship. The difference is eternal.

In the end, this universal bowing and confession brings glory to God the Father. The exaltation of the Son is the Father’s own honor.

Sources: 25-26

Sodom and Gomorrah

Jude 7 declares: “In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual
immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire” (1984 NIV). This reference anchors a broader theological pattern throughout Scripture about divine judgment against rebellion.

The city of Sodom and Gomorrah was so grave that the men of the city actually knocked on the door and demanded that the men come out so they could basically rape them—sexual intercourse with them. Think about that. It was so grave that God literally came down and had to witness it for himself. It got his attention from heaven, and he wouldn’t let it go. He dealt with it head on; his judgment would come. How could people be so depraved and lustful and sinful? It is no different than what we are seeing in our society today—people committing all sorts of abominable sexual acts with each other, and even bestiality exists. Not to mention the tragedy and heart-wrenching reality of human trafficking. All of these things, my friends, as Jude points out, are not going to be overlooked by our Lord, and even on this earth, if these people do not get their punishment, they will get their misdeeds judged by the living God.

The sins of Sodom extended far beyond sexual transgression. Ezekiel identifies the city’s fundamental guilt as pride, material excess, and indifference to the vulnerable—coupled with abominable behavior before God. (Ezekiel 16:49–50, 1984 NIV) The gravity of these offenses prompted God’s personal investigation, as “the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah” had reached heaven with such intensity that divine judgment became necessary. (Genesis 18:20–21, 1984 NIV)

Sodom as Divine Warning

Scripture employs Sodom’s destruction as an eschatological prototype. God’s judgment manifested through fire and sulfur that consumed the cities and rendered the land barren, (Genesis 19:24–25, 1984 NIV) a

devastation so complete that prophets invoked it as a comparison for other nations facing judgment. Isaiah warned that Babylon would become “like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them,” (Isaiah 13:19, 1984 NIV) while Zephaniah declared that Moab and Ammon would become “like Sodom” and “like Gomorrah”—desolate wastelands. (Zephaniah 2:9, 1984 NIV)

Jesus intensified Sodom’s significance by positioning it within a hierarchy of judgment. He stated that if Sodom had witnessed his miracles, the city would have repented, making Capernaum’s rejection more culpable on judgment day. (Matthew 11:23–24, 1984 NIV) Luke records Jesus using Sodom’s destruction as a type of the final judgment, when “the Son of Man is revealed.” (Luke 17:28–30, 1984 NIV) This typological reading transforms Sodom from historical tragedy into cosmic warning—a preview of how God responds to sustained rejection of his authority and grace.

Peter reinforces this by describing Sodom’s incineration as God’s method of demonstrating what awaits “the ungodly” while simultaneously rescuing the righteous. (2 Peter 2:4–10, 1984 NIV) The city thus embodies both God’s absolute opposition to sin and his commitment to preserve those who align with his character.

The Nature of Sodom’s Sin

Sodom’s depravity was multifaceted. The city symbolizes depravity, immorality, corruption, and hostility to God and his people, ultimately representing the rebellious world apart from Christ and ripe for end-time judgment. Beyond sexual transgression, Sodom’s guilt included pride, excess of food, prosperous ease, failure to aid the poor and needy, and abominable behavior before God. (Ezekiel 16:49–50) The city lacked justice, engaged in idolatry, and displayed pride, indulgence, and disregard for the vulnerable.

The Permanence of Judgment

Scripture stresses the permanence of Sodom’s destruction—a one-time destruction lasting forever, illustrating the destiny of those who suffer eternal fire. This finality underscores God’s absolute opposition to rebellion against his character and his people. God’s judgment arose because “the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave,” (Genesis 18:20–21) establishing that divine judgment responds to persistent, widespread wickedness. Genesis describes the men of Sodom as “wicked, great sinners against the LORD,” (Genesis 13:13, 1984 NIV) while Isaiah warns that without God’s mercy, Israel would have become “like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah.” (Isaiah 1:9–10, 1984 NIV)

Sources:27-31

Nephilim and Angels

The identity of the Nephilim and the “sons of God” in Genesis 6 is one of the more complex and longstanding debates in biblical interpretation. Faithful scholars and ordinary believers have held differing views for centuries, and Scripture does not provide an absolute, clear resolution. What follows brings together the main lines of evidence and interpretation so readers can understand the discussion without forcing a single conclusion.

What Genesis 6 Actually Says

In Genesis 6:1–4 we read that the “sons of God” (bene ha’elohim) saw that the daughters of men (benot ha’adam) were beautiful and took them as wives. Their offspring are called the Nephilim. The text describes

these Nephilim as “the heroes of old, men of renown” (the Hebrew haggibborim means mighty warriors, and ’anshe hashem means famous men). Immediately afterward the Bible states that human wickedness had become so great that every inclination of the thoughts of people’s hearts was only evil all the time (Gen 6:5). God decided to bring the Flood. The Nephilim therefore appear in the narrative as part of the growing evil that brought divine judgment.

What Does the Word Mean?

The Hebrew word for Nephilim is nĕpilîm (נְפִלִים). It comes from the root npl, which simply means “to fall.” The most straightforward meaning is therefore “the fallen ones.” Scholars debate exactly what kind of fall is in view—whether they fell from heaven, fell into sin, or were simply those who had already fallen in battle by the time the story was written down. The earliest known use of this West Semitic root appears in a military context, which supports the idea of warriors who had fallen. Understanding them as “the fallen ones”—those doomed to die—also aligns with how the later Nephilim (the sons of Anak) are identified with the Rephaim, ancient warriors slain in battle.

Who Were the “Sons of God”?

This is the central question, and three major interpretations have been proposed: the cosmologically mixed races view (angels and humans), the religiously mixed races view (godly Sethites and worldly Cainites), and the sociologically mixed races view (despotic male aristocrats and beautiful female commoners).

1.Angelic beings. Many early Jewish writers (including 1 Enoch, around 200 B.C.) and some New Testament passages (Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4) treat the “sons of God” as angels who left their proper place, married human women, and were then imprisoned by God. This view sees the Nephilim as the result of an unnatural union. It claims the greatest antiquity. However, it faces significant difficulties: while “sons of God” does mean angels in Job and the Psalms, Scripture nowhere else describes angels marrying humans, and Jesus explicitly stated that angels do not marry (Matt 22:30).

2. Human rulers or kings. In the ancient world, kings were sometimes called “sons of God.” On this view, powerful men (tyrants) took as many women as they wanted, and their children became the famous warrior-heroes of that age.

3. The godly line of Seth. An older Christian interpretation held that the “sons of God” were the descendants of Seth who married the ungodly daughters of Cain, producing a mixed and increasingly corrupt population. This position was held by figures such as Augustine, Luther, and Calvin.

The text itself does not settle the debate. What it does make clear is that something deeply wrong was happening, and it contributed to the corruption that brought the Flood.

On the Nephilim’s Identity

Grammatically, the Nephilim are often linked to the semi-divine offspring of the “sons of God” and human women, and some scholars argue this is the clear sense of the text. Others contend they were merely human offspring—mighty men of renown but not divine hybrids. A third position treats the Nephilim reference as a temporal aside, a narrative marker anchoring the passage in a known context rather than describing an actual race of beings.

Later Mentions
When the spies went into Canaan, they reported seeing giants they called Nephilim, the sons of Anak (Numbers 13:33). This shows that the name continued to be used for exceptionally large or powerful warriors. In Ezekiel 32:27 there is a reference to ancient fallen warriors that some scholars believe originally said "Nephilim."

What Should We Take Away?
For everyday believers, the main point of Genesis 6:1–4 is not to satisfy curiosity about giant half-angelic hybrids. The passage is part of the larger story of how human sin grew so deep and widespread that God brought the Flood. Whether the "sons of God" were angels, kings, or the line of Seth, the result was the same: the world became full of violence and moral chaos. God saw it, grieved over it, and acted in judgment while still preserving Noah and his family by grace.

The New Testament (Jude and 2 Peter) later uses the same tradition to warn that God does not ignore rebellion—whether by angels or by humans. The story of the Nephilim reminds us that pride, the misuse of power, and the crossing of God-given boundaries bring serious consequences. At the same time, it points forward to the greater rescue God provides in Jesus Christ for all who turn to him.
Scripture does not provide clear answers on the precise identity of the Nephilim or the sons of God, leaving interpreters to work with uncertainty. The complexity of the debate itself is part of the honest reading of the text.

Commentary

Jude 5 through 7
In verses 5–7 Jude reminds his readers of three well-known examples from the past that show God judges those who rebel against Him. These examples function as serious warnings. Even people who have experienced God's kindness and deliverance are not free to live however they want. Jude uses these stories to urge believers to stay faithful and not follow the false teachers who have slipped in among them.

Israel in the Wilderness
Jude begins with Israel. God powerfully delivered His people out of Egypt, yet later He destroyed those who refused to believe Him. After the spies returned with a bad report, the people of Israel refused to trust that God would bring them into the land He had promised. As a result, that generation died in the wilderness and never entered the land (see Numbers 14).

The point is clear and pastoral: an initial experience of God's rescue does not guarantee a safe future if a person later turns away in unbelief. Israel's story warns the church not to presume on God's grace. True faith shows itself by continuing to trust and obey God. Those who ignore God's warnings reveal that they were never truly His people in the first place.

This example is especially relevant for a church facing false teachers. Just as the wilderness generation experienced real deliverance yet still fell under judgment because of unbelief, so those in the Christian community who turn away from the truth and follow ungodly teachers show that their profession of faith was not genuine. Jude is not saying that true believers can lose their salvation. He has already affirmed that God keeps those who belong to Him (vv. 1, 24–25). Rather, the warning itself is one of the means God uses to keep His people faithful. Responses to such warnings reveal, over time, who really belongs to the Lord.

The Angels Who Left Their Proper Place

Next Jude points to angels who abandoned the place and authority God had given them. Because they did this, God has kept them in darkness, bound with everlasting chains, until the final day of judgment.

Jude is almost certainly referring to the events described in Genesis 6:1–4, where the "sons of God" took human wives and their offspring became the Nephilim. Early Jewish tradition (especially the book of 1 Enoch) understood these "sons of God" as angels who left their proper heavenly place, came to earth, and had sexual relations with women. Jude appears to share this understanding. The angels crossed a boundary God had set, and they were judged for it.

This story is strange to modern readers, and Christians have long debated the exact meaning of Genesis 6. Some see the "sons of God" as angels; others understand them as human rulers or as the godly line of Seth intermarrying with the ungodly line of Cain. What Jude emphasizes is straightforward: even powerful angels did not escape judgment when they rebelled against God's order and left the place He had assigned them. Their present imprisonment is not the end of the story; they still await final judgment on the great Day. The false teachers in Jude's day should not expect to escape either.

Jude's reference is brief. He does not speculate about names of angels or elaborate details found in some Jewish writings. He simply uses the well-known tradition to make a clear point: those who abandon the place and boundaries God has established will face judgment.

Sodom and Gomorrah

Finally, Jude mentions Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns. They gave themselves over to sexual immorality and perversion, and they now serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

Their destruction was not only a historical event; it stands as a lasting warning of what happens to those who persist in defying God. The fire that fell on those cities points ahead to the final judgment that awaits all who reject Him. Jewish tradition often noted that the region still showed signs of the devastation, reinforcing the memory of God's judgment. Jude draws a parallel between the sexual sin of Sodom and the sin of the angels in Genesis 6. In both cases, boundaries God had established were crossed. The main emphasis, however, is not that the false teachers in Jude's churches were committing the exact same sins, but that persistent rebellion against God brings certain judgment.

What This Means for Us

Jude brings these three examples together for one main reason: to show that God judges rebellion. Israel, the angels, and Sodom all left the place or path God had assigned them, and all faced judgment. The false teachers among Jude's readers were doing the same thing—rejecting God's authority and living in ungodliness.

These warnings are not meant to make true believers afraid that they might lose their salvation. Jude has already said that God keeps those who belong to Him (vv. 1, 24–25). At the same time, the warnings are real and necessary. They are one of the means God uses to keep His people faithful. Those who continue in unbelief and rebellion show that they were never truly part of God's people. The call to persevere is not a call to something beyond faith; it is a call to keep believing and trusting God's promises in Christ to the very end.

The message is both sobering and hopeful. God's judgment on those who rebel is certain. At the same time, those who trust in Christ and continue in the faith He has once for all entrusted to the saints will be preserved

to the end. The three examples remind us that pride, the misuse of power, and the crossing of God-given boundaries bring serious consequences, while also pointing forward to the greater rescue God provides in Jesus Christ for all who turn to Him.

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Sermon Notes:

Good morning and happy Sunday everyone… and welcome to those joining us online…

Here are the AVC connections to keep you all updated and in the loop…

PP YouTube, App, Facebook/Website, Text Alerts
[Let's Pray]

We are in a series titled: PP Faith Under Fire
If you have been following along then you know the Book of Jude was written by Jesus' brother…
As we are discovering, Jude has a powerful message for the Christian church…
Jude is not afraid to expose the darkness inside and outside the church…

Thus far we have discussed these important truths in just 4 verses…

PP #1 If we are Christians that means we have a calling on our lives.
PP #2 The calling we have received is to rise up and defend the gospel of Christ and His Word.
PP #3 People have made their way into churches and society to pervert the gospel of Christ.
PP #4 Godless men are committing the deepest form of sexual immorality and think they are getting away with their sins.

These evil people have been given a license by Satan to carry out their demonic activity…
Look… Jude comes out swinging with his words… He reveals the demonic truth…

This isn't… (soft voice) "Well friends, there are some bad people out there. Be careful…"
No… Jude is like… "CHRISTIANS! THERE ARE LUNATICS OUT THERE ATTEMPTING TO DESTROY CHRISTIANITY…"
There are demons coming after your family, children, and teenagers… (We should care.)
Let's be honest… We look out into our society, and it appears evil people are getting away with a lot…
I don't know about you, but it makes my blood boil when evil people are let off the hook or get away…
As a pastor, when I see pictures of a mother who has been brutally beaten by her husband and he gets a slap on the wrist—I'm angry.

[Family Member Story]

Some may say: "Well, you shouldn't be angry…"
Jesus got angry… and so did the apostles…
PP Scripture says: "Be angry and do not sin" — Ephesians 4:26 & Psalm 4:4
PP Scripture also says: "Hate what is evil; cling to what is good" — Romans 12:9 (I don't have permission to repay evil for evil.)

There is what's called righteous anger… and it was coming out of Jude.

Let me tell you some good news today… No one is getting away with the evil they commit…
Turn with me in your Bibles to Jude 5–7.

PP Read Jude 5–7

"Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt but later destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire."
I'm here to tell you hell is a very real place… It's not popular to talk about in church.
Both Jesus and the New Testament writers talk about it.

PP Jesus said this: Matthew 25:40–46
"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

PP Apostle Paul said this: 2 Thessalonians 1:8–9
"He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power…"
It's not God's will for anyone to go to hell…

PP John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

The one thing we hear people say all the time is “Don’t judge me!”
Let me give you a biblical definition of the word judge and judgment according to scholars Mounce & Turner: “Jesus forbids hypocritical judgmentalism, in which we self-righteously look down on others, but he does not ban judgment in the sense of exercising moral discernment. The words ‘judge’ and ‘judgment’ can connote either analysis and evaluation or condemnation and punishment, and discipleship inevitably requires discerning ‘judgments’ about individuals and their teachings. The problem arises when judgment becomes personal condemnation rooted in pride rather than moral assessment rooted in love.”

Jesus Himself tells us a day of judgment is coming… Listen to these passages: (More in the APP)

PP John 5:22–29
“Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.”

PP Apostle Paul says: Romans 14:10–12
“You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. It is written: ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.’ So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.”
Friends… this is good news… Evil people will be punished…

I want to make this all-so-important point… Believers will not face the same judgment as unbelievers… (APP)
We are covered by the blood of Jesus…

Listen… People don’t have to go to hell… People don’t have to face God’s vengeance…
I am not your judge… and neither is any other Christian…

PP Romans 10:6–13 says this / (Read in Bible)
Friends… the Bible is clear… No one is getting away with anything…

Devotional Questions:

Week 3 Faith Under Fire

1. Jude 5–7
Jude reminds us of three groups who faced God’s judgment (the unbelieving Israelites, the angels who abandoned their place, and Sodom and Gomorrah). What do these examples teach us about the seriousness of

unbelief, rebellion, and sexual immorality? How does this reminder shape the way we view the “godless men” Jude is warning about in the church?

2. Matthew 25:41–46 and 2 Thessalonians 1:8–9
Both Jesus and Paul speak clearly about eternal punishment and separation from God’s presence. Why is it important for the church to talk about hell even though it is unpopular? How should the reality of eternal judgment affect the way we pray for, and speak to, people who do not yet know Christ?

3. Ephesians 4:26 and Romans 12:9
Scripture permits righteous anger (“Be angry and do not sin”) and commands us to “hate what is evil.” Where have you felt righteous anger toward evil that appears to go unpunished? How can we keep that anger from turning into personal bitterness or a desire to take revenge?

4. John 5:22–29
Jesus says the Father has entrusted all judgment to the Son. What does this passage teach about who will stand before Christ and what the two outcomes will be? How does knowing that Jesus Himself is the Judge change the way you think about “Don’t judge me”?

5. Romans 14:10–12
Paul reminds believers that we will all stand before God’s judgment seat and give an account. How is the judgment believers face different from the judgment unbelievers face (see also the blood of Jesus covering believers)? What does “giving an account” look like for someone who is already secure in Christ?

6. John 3:16 and Romans 10:9–13
Jude’s warning about judgment is balanced by the clear offer of salvation. According to these verses, what must a person do to be saved from the judgment Jude describes? How does the simplicity of the gospel give you hope for people who currently seem far from God?

7. Application from the whole message
Jude says “no one is getting away with anything.” How does that truth both sober you and encourage you? What is one practical step you can take this week—either in your own heart or in your relationships—to live more consistently with the reality that Christ is the righteous Judge and the gracious Savior?