



“Stand Back”

Jude 5-16

Idea: Justice will be served against all who do evil.

Intro: Two horrific headlines this week broke my heart.

This first was an article on Chris Watts, who is serving three consecutive life sentences for the murders of his pregnant wife and two daughters. It described in detail his heinous actions. He confessed to strangling his wife in their home. He then drove her body along with the girls to a secluded oil field forty-five minutes away before smothering them with a blanket and dumping their bodies. Sickening! Appalling!

The second involved a fourteen-year-old girl in Georgia who was kept in a dog cage, starved, beaten, and then buried in the backyard of her home next to her older brother. She was tortured to death by those closest to her...the ones who should have loved and protected her.

As a dad of girls my heart filled with sorrow and sadness for those victims. And then it filled with rage and anger. My heart rate increased as adrenaline pulsed through my veins. I was ready for a fight. I thought to myself: “Give me five minutes with those people and justice will be served.” Then I thought, “No, their crimes demand more than a simple judgment. They tortured and terrorized their family. They deserve to experience everything they put their victims through.” Then, I was reminded of God’s promise, “*Vengeance is mine; I will repay*” says the Lord (Heb 10:30; Deut 32:35; Rom 12:19). They will get justice for their crimes through the state in this life. And if they don’t repent of their sin, they will experience the full extent of justice after death. God’s Word reminded me that justice is God’s domain. He will render it. I just need to stand back and trust in Him.

Standing back is easier said than done, but it is exactly what we must do. It feels passive, and perhaps that is why it so hard to stand back. It seems delayed because we want instant justice. But standing back and resting in God’s justice is never a passive act. It is a calm and assertive trust in God’s faithfulness to both His Word and His character.

Inquiry: Last Sunday we began a three-week study through the short letter of Jude. This early church leader was a half-brother of Jesus. And he called believers to “*contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.*” The greatest threat to the Church is not and has never come from outside but from within the church. It is not governmental or societal persecution and pressure that harms the church. In fact those often strengthen and expand the influence of the church. Tertullian wrote in the second century, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.” The greatest threat to the church has always been false teaching. It’s

subtlety and severity make it a spiritual poison unlike any other. Jude wrote his letter to believers to encourage them to stand strong against the spiritual deceptions that threatened to wreak havoc in their church. He also wanted to expose the false teachers and their heresy. He called believers to stand. We too must stand. Last Sunday we saw Jude's call for believers to stand up. Today, we will see Jude's call for us to stand back...stand back and trust in the justice of God against those who seek to harm and destroy the Church.

Read Jude 5-16.

As we cherish our salvation, champion our faith, and combat the perversion that comes against it, we do so by resting in the certainty of God's justice. We can stand back in a world that seeks to destroy our faith and future because of the three truths Jude presents in this passage.

1. The Lord sees. (vs. 8-13)

In these verses Jude described the false teachers who threatened the church, reinforcing Peter's depiction of them.

Read 2 Peter 2:1-3, 10b-19.

The false teachers are dreamers, living in a dream-world of Satan's delusion (vs. 8). They have rejected God's truth and feed their minds on false doctrine that inflates their egos and encourages their rebellion (vs. 10). They are fleshly, living to satisfy their animistic lusts (vs. 8, 10). They are blasphemers, speaking evil of God (vs. 8, 10). Blasphemy involves much more than taking the Lord's name in vain, though that is at the heart of it. A person blasphemes God when he or she takes God's Word lightly and even jests about it, or when he or she deliberately defies God to judge him or her. Jude describes them doing what even the archangel Michael dared not to do (vs. 9).

Jude assures us that the Lord sees and knows the sin of those who seek to harm His people. Verse 11 says, "*Woe to them!*" Then he describes their sin.

They walk in the way of Cain. It is religion without faith. God made it clear when he made clothing for Adam and Eve from the skins of animals that the only way of forgiveness is through the shedding of blood (Gen 3:21). This is the way of faith, not the way of good works. But Cain rejected this divinely authorized way and came to the altar with the fruits of his labor (Gen 4:3). The way of Cain is righteousness based on character and good works. It is the way of pride, the establishment of man's own righteousness and rejecting the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 10:1-4; Phl 3:3-12).

They abandoned themselves to Balaam's error. This way is merchandising one's gifts and ministry just for the purpose of making money (Num 22-24). It is using the spiritual for the material. According to Revelation 2:14, Balaam taught Balak that the fastest way to destroy Israel would be to corrupt the nation of Israel by having them defile themselves with the heathen nations around them. The error of Balaam is thinking that they can get away with this kind of rebellion. Our God sees; therefore, our God judges.

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. – Gal 6:7

They perished in Korah's rebellion (Num 16). Korah and his followers resented Moses' leadership and dared God to do anything about their rebellion.

Jude further describes the false teachers in verses 12 and 13. They project the image of holiness but are nothing more than blemishes (2 Pet 2:13). They are shepherds who only care about themselves. They

are empty clouds. They are trees without fruit and without roots...twice dead. They are wild waves that cast up shameful garbage on the shore. They are wandering and undependable stars that lead astray.

For these the gloom of utter darkness is reserved. Our God sees the sin that is committed. He sees the rebellion leveled against His Word.

2. The Lord will judge. (vs. 14-16)

All that we know of Enoch is found in Genesis 5:18-24; Hebrews 11:5; and Jude 14-15. Jude refers to him as “*the seventh from Adam*” to distinguish him from Enoch the son of Cain. Enoch lived in a society that was rapidly being polluted and destroyed by sin. In this society Enoch walked with God and kept his life clean. He ministered as a prophet and announced God’s judgment. Jude quoted from the apocryphal book of *1 Enoch*. Quoting from this nonbiblical book does not mean the book is inspired and trustworthy, but the Spirit of God did lead Jude to use this quotation and make it a part of the inspired Scriptures. All truth is God’s truth.

Enoch’s prophecy most likely referred to the coming Flood. In the godless age in which he lived, it seemed that the godless were getting away with their sin. Enoch made it clear that the Lord sees the sin of the godless and would judge their sin.

Today, in our godless and ever increasing culture of sin, it may seem that evil and evildoers are flourishing. To this Jude reminds us that “the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment on *all* the *ungodly* ones. Four times he says, “all.” And four times he mentions the *ungodly*. There is no escaping the judgment of God against all sin and all of the ungodly. We need to be reminded of this for our own sanctification and confidence in God.

One of the great characteristics of God is His immutability. That is God does not change (Mal 3:6). We can be know for sure that sinners will not escape and that God will judge their sin because He has judged sin in the past.

3. The Lord has judged. (vs. 5-7)

Jude cited three of God’s past judgments against other apostates: faithless Israel, rebellious angels, and immoral Gentiles.

The first example involved the exodus, whereby God delivered the people of Israel from bondage in Egypt. He brought them out by a mighty hand (Ex 3:19). Not all of Israel, however, believed in God. Many of them doubted and murmured against God. Despite God’s many demonstrations of power and provision, the people did not believe God. When the twelve spies brought back a report of the Promised Land, ten of them said it could not be conquered because of the giants (Num 13-14). God’s judgment upon faithless Israel was forty years of wandering in the wilderness until that faithless generation died off.

The second example involved the angels who left their proper position of authority. There is much debate as to which angels Jude referred too. Some argue the reference is of the angels who rebelled with Lucifer against God. Others argue these angels sought to invade earth. They interpret the Genesis 6 account of “*sons of God*” coming into the “*daughters of man*” as angels producing offspring within mankind. This does seem to have been Jewish thought regarding this Genesis 6. Regardless of which position and understanding one accepts, the main lesson is that the angels rebelled and thus were judged by God for their rebellion.

The third and final example Jude gives involves Sodom and Gomorrah. Peter also presented them as an

illustration (2 Pet 2:6). The description of the people living in these cities in both of these passages is that they were ungodly, filthy, wicked, unlawful, unjust, and given to fornication. They did not occasionally commit unnatural sexual sins; they indulged in them and gave themselves over to the pursuit of lust. This was their way of life, and as such, their death.

Today, we are trying to redefine and reinterpret Scripture in our culture to make it fit within the desires of our rebellious hearts. This perversion is taking place in our culture because it is taking place within our churches. How arrogant of us to think because we have changed our views on an issue that God has changed His position!

It is the immutability of God that calls sin, sin. And it is the immutability of God that calls a son, a son even when that son commits sin.

Read Malachi 3:5-7.

Conclusion: This passage grounds us. Sometimes we find ourselves adrift, wondering, “Where is justice?” When we hear of stories of parents torturing their children to death, dads murdering their entire families, and all kinds of evil it baffles. And we wonder, “Where is God? Where is justice?”

The changelessness of God assures us that He will strike against sin and the sinner. He will judge evil. We can stand back and rest in His justice. At the same time the changelessness of God assures that we as the children of God will not be consumed in His wrath because justice was served on the cross. We are also reminded that as Christ-followers, Jesus sees our sin and will judge it. We know this because He has judged sin in the past. We dare not live in sin. Instead, we ought to desire to have clean hands and a pure heart before God (Ps 24:4).