

Jude: Living in the Truth Part Four: verses 24-25¹

Today we come to the end of our series in the book of Jude, which actually started back at Easter. We began back then with a series on the letters of First and Second Peter that we called, "On This Rock," and we felt it was necessary to cover the letter of Jude also, because it is so similar in content to Peter's letters.

Throughout this series we've been challenged to watch out for false teachers – both their teaching and their lifestyle. We read these books of the Bible and we think that the false teachers were obvious, like you could look behind them and see their red devil's tail sticking out or something. But their teaching was extremely subtle and a real danger to people. The same mindset and philosophy today can be found in the syncretism of combining Christianity with American patriotism, or by those who buy into conspiracy theories, to Q-Anon, or to the prosperity gospel preachers. They all profess what looks and sounds like Christianity, and they even quote Scriptures, but they subtly get our eyes off of Jesus and onto politics or circumstances or rabbit trails or materialism or ourselves or – *anything* that will get us to stop focusing exclusively on Jesus Christ.

I heard the story of one preacher who, when he was retiring, said that he regretted that he spent so much time preaching on what *to* believe, that he didn't spend enough time teaching people what *not* to believe. Well the letters of Peter and Jude help us to know what not to believe. And the very same kinds of false teachers, who claim they have new insight, are still today offering the same packages. The wrapping might be different, but what's inside the box is still the same.

So these letters have also emphasized how vital – how *critical* – it is for us as believers to do the hard work of continuing in our salvation; Peter called it "being saved." We must continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ – the understanding of and relationship with Jesus. We must work hard to prove our salvation. We must work to keep ourselves in this most holy faith.

So now Jude concludes with verses 24 and 25. Scholars say that Jude probably borrowed a lot of his material from Peter's letters, but judging by Jude's writing style, some say he was not quite as intellectual as Peter. And yet Jude concludes with these two verses that are the longest, the most beautiful and the most poetic doxology in all of the New Testament. Honestly, there are not that many people who read the letter of Jude – they dismiss it

¹ Resources used for this series:

- *The Letters of John and Jude* (The Daily Study Bible Series), William Barclay
- *1 & 2 Peter, Jude* (New Beacon Bible Commentary: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition), Daniel G. Powers
- *Hebrews through Revelation* (Beacon Bible Commentary), Ralph Earle, Ed.
- *More Hard Sayings of the New Testament*, Peter H. Davids
- *James, 1 & 2 Peter, Jude* (The Communicator's Commentary), Paul A. Cedar
- *1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude* (A Bible Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition), David A. Case and David W. Holdren

because it is so small. But these two verses – these are the best known and most repeated of the doxologies in the New Testament, and this is really a fantastic way for us to wrap up our time in these letters. So open your Bibles or Bible apps to Jude, verses 24-25, and keep them open because we are going to try to get all the spiritual nutrients we can out of them. This is what Jude 24-25 says:

“To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.” (Jude 24-25, niv)

Earlier, Jude finished with some very dire warnings about false Christians, but now in closing he wants to affirm Christians. Most New Testament letters end with personal greetings or prayer requests or a final blessing given to the readers. But Jude departs from tradition and can't help but break out into an incredible song of praise to God. You've already heard me use the term “doxology” when referring to these two verses, and I want to make sure you know what that means before we dig into it. A doxology literally means “a study of glory,” where every word forces our attention to the glory of God.

Doxologies were often used in Jewish services to conclude prayers and sermons, and Jude's letter is essentially a sermon. Those doxologies typically had four parts: the person praised, the word of praise, the indication of time, and the word “Amen.” Jude follows this form with precision, but he is so full of praise to God that he expands his doxology a whole lot more than what was typical! There is incredible theology in these two verses. JI Packer, a well-known theologian, professor, and author, started every class by saying, “Arise, friends, let us sing the Doxology!” After singing and a word of prayer, he would then say to his students, “The goal of theology, friends, is doxology.” In other words, all good theology leads to praising God for who he is and what he does, and that's exactly what causes Jude to break out in song about God. So if there was a goal for this sermon, it would be the same thing: that it would give us a better understanding of who God is and what he does for us, which would lead us to love him more deeply and praise him more fully.

In Romans 16:25, the Apostle Paul gives praise to the God *who is able* to strengthen us. God is the One who can give us a foundation for life which nothing and no one can ever shake. In Ephesians 3:20, Paul gives praise to the God *who is able* to do far more than we can ever ask or even dream of. We can never exhaust God's endless supply of grace, and we can never get too much of it. And here, Jude offers his praise to the God who is able. Jude tells us, first...

1. What God can do.

Jude focuses on three things God can do, and the first is that God can *keep us from falling*.

Jude started out his letter in verse one affirming that believers are “kept in Christ.” In response to that, we were told in verse 21 to “keep” ourselves “in God's love.” Finally, here Jude re-emphasizes that God keeps us, using a word that means “standing guard.” So while we are to keep ourselves in God's love by staying close to Christ, at the same time we are hemmed in – before and after – being kept by God. He guards us from falling into sin.

Earlier this summer, Shelly and I went on a hike up in the mountains and took our black lab dog with us. She loves to hike and to swim, and this particular hike was supposed to be an easy one. It started out nice and wide without much climb, but before long we were having to cling to very steep rocks with very little footing. At one point, the rock was at about a sixty-degree angle, and there was a small crack across the smooth face of the rock giving us a space of about three inches to walk on; about forty feet below was a fast-moving river. For us, it took very cautious stepping, but I found out my dog must be part mountain goat, because she had no trouble at all! In fact, she just about pulled me across. That kind of sure-footedness is the word picture that Jude paints. God is powerful enough to protect us from falling into the sinful ways of the false Christians!

The second thing Jude says is that God is able to *present us blameless before his glory*. That word “blameless” is a ritual word; it’s used to describe an animal sacrifice that is without spot or blemish, and therefore is acceptable to be offered as a sacrifice in worship to God. So we are able to sacrifice ourselves in worship to God and to stand before God, because of what Jesus has done for us. When we submit ourselves to God his grace makes the way we live our lives bring glory to him!

The third thing God is able to do, is to *bring us into his presence with great joy*. Think about that! Most people, if they acknowledge that God exists, realize that they would enter his presence with fear and with shame because of their sinful lives. That’s how you and I were, too, before we accepted what Jesus did for us. But now, we can come before God without fear and in complete joy. And it’s not only *our* joy...one day when we come before God, there will be great joy in all of heaven, too. It literally means “a wild joy” and “leaping for joy”! Heaven will resound with songs of victory and great, triumphant joy when we stand before God! It will be a party! Whaaaaat!

In light of that, are there people that you know that *won’t* be in that party? How can we bear the thought? Let’s introduce people to Jesus so as many as possible will be there with great joy! I think about that old song written at the turn of the last century that says, “When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, we’ll sing and shout the victory!”

Remember, these promises of deliverance are not given to those who are far away in faith – only a sentence or two before verse 24, Jude says, “Keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ ...”²

So how can we *not* praise God when we think of what God can do in us and for us?!

Then Jude reminds us of...

2. Who God is.

First, Jude says that he is “the only God our savior.” This is a strong theological statement. The word “only” indicates the oneness of God – that God is one. But usually the term “savior” applies to Jesus. Jude is very simply and easily stating that Jesus is God, and God is

² David A. Case and David W. Holdren, [*1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude: A Commentary for Bible Students*](#) (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2006), 377.

our savior. The very idea of saving us originated with God the Father, way back at the beginning of creation with the very first sin. God the Father initiated the process of salvation and God the Son has made our salvation possible.

Then Jude lists *four* attributes of God. This is interesting, because up until now, Jude has been using literary triplets. He describes things in threes, because three indicates reliability or truth – like one witness to a crime *might* be true, but three witnesses is ironclad. In verse two he blesses us with mercy, peace, and love. In verses 5-7 he gives three examples of God's judgment against sinners. In verse 8 he lists three sins of the false Christians. In verse 11 Jude lists three examples of sinners from Israel's history. In verses 12-13 he uses three different metaphors to describe the false Christians. In verses 22-23 he tells us of the three different types of people we need to reach with the Good News of God's love. So time and again, Jude uses threes to make sure we know what he's saying is true. But now, when he describes God, three isn't enough; it takes FOUR to describe how awesome and great God is: glory, majesty, power, and authority!

- *Glory* is God's beauty and holiness; he is spotless in his purity and stunningly glorious.
- *Majesty* describes God's kingly status and greatness.
- *Power* is the absolute power of God that ensures that he will always have the ultimate victory; there is no one and nothing more powerful than he is.
- *Authority* is God's intrinsic right to rule all things. He has all authority in all things.

Doesn't the thought of these four things cause you to break out in songs of praise? It should, if you are a Christian. If you are not, it doesn't cause joy; it might actually be fear. Fortunately for you, God loves you and has sent his Son to die for you, so that your life could bring glory to him as you come under his loving glory, majesty, power, and authority!

Then, after emphasizing what God can do and who God is, to make sure we understand that God exists outside the realm of time and space, Jude tells us...

3. When God is.

Jude says that God exists before all ages, during this time right now, and after all time and forevermore. Glory, majesty, power, and authority belong to God in all three realms of time – past, present, and future – forever!

This God who loves you so much, who has done, and can do, all these things for you, the One whom no one can surpass in any way, has been that way for you forever; he was, he is, and he will be. Count on it. Count on Him!

Then, Jude concludes this incredible statement with a single word. At the end of traditional Jewish doxologies, the priest would make the statements, and then the congregation would affirm it and conclude it with a single word. It is a word that means "very truly," "so be it!", "very surely true!" It is the word pronounced, "Awmene" or, as we typically say it, "Amen." When you and I say that word, we are affirming that God is all things and more, that he does what he says he will do and more, that he is and will be forever more.

One scholar paraphrases this passage to say this to us:

From a people who are inclined to slip and fall, we offer praise and glory to God, who is able to keep us on our feet. From a people who experience pain and failure and the shame of sin, we exalt God who will deliver us innocent and with exceeding great joy. From a people who desperately need deliverance, we honor and worship the God who redeems and protects, empowers us and makes us ultimate winners, through Jesus Christ our Lord—from every yesterday, even today, and every tomorrow into eternity. Oh, Yes.³

I can't think of a better way to end this series than to give you an opportunity to add your own "amen." So, I'm going to declare this doxology again. And at the end, I will say, "And all the people said...." And that will be your cue to say with great force, great confidence, and great joy, "Amen!" Okay? Do you know your part?

Here we go:

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! (Jude 24-25, niv)

And all the People said....Amen!

³ David A. Case and David W. Holdren, [*1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude: A Commentary for Bible Students*](#) (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2006), 379.