

Persevered for to the End

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[0:00] You know, all good things must come to an end, according to the philosopher.

! Tonight, we end our study on the book of Jude. Great book. We hurried through it. Did it all in twelve lessons. All twenty-five verses.

Jude, you know, was an accomplished author who wrote this brief book as a warning to the church. And the warning concerned apostates that had infiltrated the church and were trying to destroy the fellowship, destroy the worship of true believers.

And Jude is as contemporary a book as you will find in the Bible. In our day, and here we are, 2016, the descendants of the apostates have infiltrated the true church, churches, I should say, scattered throughout the land and through the world, with a geometric progression.

Churches have been destroyed. Whole denominations have been destroyed in our lifetime. I would suggest there are more apostates, false teachers, and false prophets on planet earth today than all of the previous centuries combined.

[1:45] And Jude and John and other New Testament writers predicted that in the end times, apostasy would grip and plague the church.

John told us very clearly in the epistles that we are in the end times. And in fact, he even used this phrase. He said, this is the last hour.

And he wrote that 2,000 years ago. And that may be a slow ticking clock, but it's ticked. And it's still ticking. That we're in the last hour.

We have seen in our lifetime, and can bear witness to the fact that apostasy and apostates abound in these closing days of the church age.

This gripping apostasy is one of the signs that Christ's return for his church is imminent. Now, the true church over the centuries has been bonded together by doctrine.

[3:02] Never underestimate the importance of doctrine. And it's important in our day because doctrine is under tremendous assault. Tremendous assault.

I remember talking to a pastor in this town. What's your doctrine? We don't have that. It's divisive. We have no doctrine. To me, that's not like a club. They're in a club.

I've said before, doctrine is the glue that holds us all together. Links us in a common bond. Doctrine is what the Bible teaches, and what we believe about the Bible as it has been revealed to us in Holy Scripture.

And there are many marvelous doctrines in the Word of God. And they are all very precious to the genuinely redeemed.

But there is one doctrine, in my opinion, that stands head and shoulders above many others. And that's the doctrine of the Bible. And that's the doctrine of eternal security.

[4:07] More accurately known, I believe, as the perseverance of the saints. Some have even called it the preservation of the saints.

Now, all of God's doctrines are beautiful in His Word. Justification, regeneration, conversion, adoption.

I've been studying a great doctrine just in the last 24 hours on Christ as the mediator. Just a fabulous topic.

But without the assurance and the confidence that we find in the doctrine of eternal security, Christians and church people would be filled with doubt.

I know a lot of friends that they doubt all the time. They doubt constantly. They are gripped by worry and fear as to what the future holds for the individual.

[5:12] And it is unthinkable to me that Christ would issue a command to come to Him, to embrace Him, to pick up our cross and follow Him.

And after doing so, we could somehow mess it up at the end and be lost for eternity. And I've talked to some good friends of mine that are in Wesleyan churches and other churches that say, you know, death really is kind of a matter of timing.

If you could die at the right time and you're good with the Lord, then you don't have any worries. If you are a true follower, and isn't it a shame in our day, but we have to put those titles.

We used to not speak that way, but we do now. We have to. If you're a true follower, if you're a genuine believer of Christ, then my word to you is don't worry.

Do not worry. Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is found in Christ Jesus.

[6:24] And obviously I get that from that great section of Scripture, Romans 8, 28-39. If you'll read that, it's interesting because Paul says, nothing in life, nothing in death, and nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God that's in Christ.

What else is there? If nothing alive, nothing dead, and nothing that's ever been created can't separate us, what else is there? And I've actually had people ask me, so will yourself?

You can do it. And then I come back and say, well, why would you? Why would you want to do that? Unless it wasn't genuine. The faith that Christ has given us will ultimately produce an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

2 Corinthians 4, verse 17. Now I think it's fitting that Jude closes out his great warning to the church about apostasy by reassuring the true church made up of true believers that they are safe in the arms of Jesus.

And these are the two verses we're going to study tonight, the last two in Jude. Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of his glory, blameless, with great joy, blameless, with great joy, to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever.

[8:21] Amen. And we all know amen there means so be it. Let it happen. Now there is a great truth about salvation that our Arminian friends, and I have many of those guys, do not have, don't seem willing to come to grips with, and it's this.

We did not attain our salvation. And we can't maintain our salvation. We were saved by the grace of God, and we are kept saved by the continuing grace of God.

The grace of God doesn't come to a screeching halt when we take our first step as a new believer. Remember, we attain salvation by the grace of God through Christ, and we are maintained by that same grace.

If it was up to us to keep it, it wouldn't take long for us to falter. Maybe a second. Maybe a second. Guys, I've said this before. And I told one of my good friends that this loves the Arminian theology.

[9:47] I said, if you're going to lose your salvation, does it have to be something serious? I mean, it can't be throwing your gum out in the church flower bed like I did yesterday, could it?

Sorry, Mike. Let Marshall work that in down there. Diane really got on me for that. Surely it's not spitting on the sun.

I mean, it's got to be something serious, right? And you know, they'll all say, yeah, it's got to be serious. You can't. There's not a soul in this room and not a soul on this planet that has ever kept the great commandment for one second.

And if you're going to keep any of them, shouldn't you keep the great one? To love God with all, heart, mind, soul, strength.

We live, and the pastor preached on this yesterday morning. I was gripped by it. We live in unredeemed flesh and we battle sin continually.

[10:58] You know, 98% of men in the church battle sin and 2% lie about it. It's the battle. The battle's out here. It's everywhere. We battle unredeemed flesh.

The great apostle Paul described himself, and by the way, I wrote these words before the pastor preached, so I'm okay. I stole these from other guys. I didn't get this from you.

The great apostle Paul described himself as the chief of sinners. And if you look real close at your Bible, there's an asterisk there and down below it says until Tom Holland comes along. Paul said, I'm the chief of sinners and a wretched man.

What a wretch. What a wretched man am I. True salvation is not based upon the work of man, but upon the work of Christ.

We are covered by His righteousness. He covers us. We did not cover ourselves. Our salvation is based upon the plan of God, the promise of God, the power of God, and the provision of God.

[12:13] He did the work. Now, let me just say, people say, well, wait a minute. What do we do? We've got to believe. If you don't believe, you're not saved.

We have to believe. We have to have faith. That's the same Greek word for believe. Where does that come from?

Ephesians 2, 8, and 9. For by grace are you saved through faith that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any of us should boast.

Even our faith is a gift handed down to us from a loving God. So Jude closes out his letter with a doxology underscoring God's preserving work in His children.

Now, a doxology in Scripture typically focuses on the glory and the grace of God and can be seen, a doxology is an offering of praise, an offering of thankfulness for the blessings of eternal life given to us by grace.

[13:31] Do you ever thank God for the grace you've been given? this is what we should be doing. Paul offered, I think, one of the most amazing and I'm sure familiar doxologies in the New Testament when he was concluding the great book of Romans in chapter 16.

Now, to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel in the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested and by the Scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the eternal God has been made known to all the nations leading to obedience of faith to the only wise God through Jesus Christ be the glory forever.

Amen. Wow, what a conclusion to that great, great holy book of Romans. So in Jude's book, and we know over these last 12 lessons, we have received really horrific warnings about encroaching apostasy.

I'd love to know what Jude would say in our day. He'd look around if they'd let him in church. But he's warned us about this horrific approach of apostasy, and then Jude finishes with a doxology of peace, of comfort, and of encouragement whereby God reminds us that he is all-powerful and he is faithful to keep his promises.

Is there any promise God won't break? Not ever. I mean, he would cease to be God. He is a promise-keeping God.

[15:41] In spite of the unbelief that permeates a lot of churches, we have every reason to be confident in the future. Our confidence is or should be based upon two revealed truths concerning what God will do for his children.

Truth one, God will preserve his beloved saints. He is in the preserving business. And two, the Lord will present us blameless before his throne.

There are times, guys, I don't feel very blameless. But, I belong to one who is blameless. The Lord Jesus. Hide yourself in him.

He is blameless. And when the Father sees the blood applied, he can say to the Son, even though Satan may be interceding against us, he can say to the Son, I'm satisfied.

My wrath has been appeased. Propitiation is the satisfaction. God is satisfied. Not satisfied with Tom Holland, satisfied with Christ covering Tom Holland.

[17:06] Now, what about this preservation of the saints? Not to him who is able to keep you from stumbling. Let me, let me first of all remind us all, God in the Old Testament, among many other titles, was called El Shaddai.

That means he is the almighty God. He's the almighty God. As almighty God, he has perfect faith, perfect grace, infinite power, and unchanging love.

When God saves a person, he saves to the uttermost. God will never allow one of his redeemed saints to fall away from true saving faith.

This is the faith that he has given them. Additionally, God will never allow one of his redeemed, and by that I mean one that is saved, one whose name has been written in the Lamb's Book of Life in ink.

he will not allow them to defect fully and finally from the gospel and be lost in their sin for eternity.

[18:33] And we'll develop this toward the end. He may call some of us home to keep that from happening, and we may be disciplined as a father disciplines his son to keep that from happening, but God is not in the business of allowing one of his own to defect from the gospel.

Can I say this? There are times I think I've come close. But you know what? God is faithful. And boy, he has called me back, and he's disciplined me.

He's talked to me as a father should to a son. And when I come through it, though it is difficult at the time, I'm a better person for it, a better believer even.

And I can say for sure I don't ever go through that again. Lord, please, please don't. But if I have to, I will. He saves to the uttermost.

He keeps to the uttermost. God is both willing and able. You've got to link both those words. God wants to, and He's capable to preserve His saints, His children, dare I say it, use that horrible word, His elect, which I love that word, His chosen, to the very end of time, and guess what?

[20:06] Beyond time. You know, when we get to heaven, there's no time. Does that boggle your mind? I used to think Mike Durst would say, we're going to play softball on Thursday, and then I realized there's no Thursday.

We'll have to play right then. No, let's wait for Thursday. Oh, okay. If we can get to heaven and figure out what Thursday is, we'll... God is able. He is willing. Now, that doesn't mean that some of us won't enter into glory battered and bruised.

We may enter in battered and bruised. We may be saved so as by fire. Remember that passage? You know, our seat was on fire.

But if there is any doubt in your mind about being secure in the sovereignty of God, listen to the words of our Lord in John's Gospel chapter 6. If you've got to be on a deserted island, this is one of the chapters you want to take with you.

Chapter 6. You can work through it in four years and then you'll go to another one. All... How many? All...

[21:15] This is Jesus talking. All that the Father gives me will come to me. Is there any room for debate in that?

This is God in human flesh talking. God who cannot lie. incapable of lying. All that the Father gives me will come to me and the one who comes to me I will certainly not cast out.

For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. That's the Father. This is the will of him who sent me that of all that he has given me, I lose nothing.

So how many true believers is he going to lose? None. But raise it up on the last day for this is the will of my Father that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in him and by the way that's that word commit, trust, it's a strong, it's not intellectual assent, it's a strong word, believes in him, will have eternal life and I myself will raise him up on the last day.

Raise him up on the last day. When I do funerals and I know it's a believer, if I do the grave side, I give them a timeline of what's going to happen next. I talk about the Lord coming back for the church and seven years later we're coming back with the Lord.

[22:58] Those are powerful words by the Lord depicting the ultimate security and preservation of the true believer.

Even the present day ministry of Christ speaks to our eternal security in him. The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that Christ is at this very moment interceding for us before the throne of God.

Now I want you to think about that. People say, what do you think Jesus is doing right now? I know what he's doing right now. He's interceding for his children.

And I've burned a lot of his time. I've told him in prayer, Lord, I feel guilty. I've taken a lot of your time.

He's interceding for us before the throne. Let me ask you this. If anyone truly saved, truly saved, and for whom Christ is interceding is ultimately lost, does it not stand to reason that the Father rejected the intercessory prayer of his Son?

[24:24] If he's interceding for them, and the Father ultimately will cast them into hell, that's unthinkable. There's no prayer that the Father ever refused to answer for his Son.

And Jesus is interceding for you and I and every believer, even I would say future believers, whoever they are out there, and they're out there, he's interceding right now.

Our Jude passage tells us that the Lord is able to keep us from stumbling. In the Greek language, that word is to keep is a military term.

It means to guard or to watch over. Like a good soldier, God is always there standing guard over his children to ensure our ultimate safety.

He stands guard. This is true even when the enemy is assaulting. It is God who keeps us from stumbling into apostasy.

[25:41] Listen again to the words of the great shepherd. Another chapter you should take with you on that deserted island. John chapter 10. My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

You know, I've gotten to the point, I don't ask people, do you know Jesus? I say, does Jesus know you? That's really... He said, I know them. And they follow me and I give eternal life to them and they will never perish.

When are they going to perish? Never. And no one will snatch them out of my hand.

My Father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. We had a pastor here one time, it might have been Dr. McBride, I don't remember, but he preached on that and he said, look, here you are and Jesus has got you like this and then you're the Father tonight.

The Father wraps his arms around that, who's going to snatch you out of there? And I had one guy say, well, you can leap out. Why would you want to?

[27:06] You know, why would you want to? Time, of course, you can come back now, you're no longer the one. I kind of enjoyed that.

I know, I know. It was brief and enjoyable. Time does not allow us to cover all of God's great promises concerning security in Him. You know, there is one verse, though, it's not in my notes here.

I'm making this up as I go anyway. There's one great verse, I think, on eternal security, and you never read it in any of the books or articles. Is the church brick and mortar?

What's the true church? It's people. And Jesus said, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against my church.

That's a gathering of people. And hell's going to assault, isn't it? But it's not going to prevail. I like that. We could take months on eternal security, even years.

[28:11] Such is the overwhelming magnitude of the promises of God. It is He who establishes us in Him. The enemy attacks us, but it is God who perfects us.

Now, there is in all of this a point that needs to be made. never is eternal security a license to sin.

We don't have a license to sin. Our security in Christ, He has given us the freedom to not sin.

He's given us the ability to not sin. show me a man or a woman who believes they can sin all they want because they are saved by grace and I will show you a person who does not truly believe because they've never been touched by saving grace.

Never been touched by it. That's antinomianism against the moral law. Well, I don't have to keep the moral law. Well, yesterday he said it's forever moral law.

[29:31] People would say, I'm saved by grace. I'm not under the moral law. And there's churches that teach that. Not in Scripture. It's not in Scripture.

Salvation is never a license to sin. It is the liberty to not sin. Before we were saved, we sinned because it was our nature.

We inherited that in the garden from our parents. Adam and Eve. After we are saved, we are given a new nature, and yes, we do sin, and we battle unredeemed flesh, and the war rages all around us, but our sin now has become a choice.

We choose because our nature has changed. we're new creations in Christ. I sin too much, but I choose to do that. I don't have to do that.

I choose to. I'm going to inject here, because I don't want to leave any doubt or confusion on this.

These are the words of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and I mispronounced that Westminster, Confession of Faith.

[30:51] I think it's appropriate. and this is talking about saved people. This is talking about Christian brothers and sisters. Kind of written in the Old English. They may, through the temptation of Satan and of the world, the prevalency, I had to look that up in an Old English dictionary, it's widespread, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation fall into grievous sins, and for a time, continue therein.

Now, this is believers falling into grievous sin, whereby they incur God's displeasure, they grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgment upon themselves.

But you notice they never said and are cast out and their name is erased from the book of life. Does this mean we don't sin? Of course not. Anyone who claims they do not sin, John said in 1 John chapter 1, they are a liar.

But when we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous one who has atoned for that sin and made it right before God.

He's atoned. He's offered an atonement. Now, final truth. The Lord presents the saints. And to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless with great joy to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever.

[33:02] Amen. Mark this down in your mental file somewhere. genuine saving faith endures to the end.

It's an enduring faith. You know, the Bible, it's interesting, it says, he who continues to the end will be saved. Now, I always have to slow down here because I always get this backwards and then I have to back up and correct myself.

You're not saved because you continue, you continue because you're saved. See the difference?

And again, I'm adding stuff here that I didn't, one of the greatest examples, 15, 20 years ago, remember the Olympics where that black kid was running and he was a, nobody knew him.

And he ran the heats and he was qualifying and now he's in the finals of the 100 meter and he's qualified. He's racing for his country, which I think was a little island in the Caribbean.

They were having to try to look up biographies on him before the internet, before Al Gore created the internet. So here he is in the finals. The gun sounds and he's out of the box.

[34:24] Boy, he's going. He's booking. And about halfway or a little more out through the race, all of a sudden he goes like this. And you guys that were in athletics, you know what this means.

And he's hopping and he's holding on. That's a hamstring. I've had them. They're painful. It's a hamstring. He's pulled a hamstring.

And he goes down and he went down hard. Race is over. By the time he looked up, it's over. Doesn't take long.

He's going to finish the race. He gets up, hops three or four feet, yards. He goes down. It was agonizing to watch.

And I remember seeing the guy come over the wall and I remember security moving in. And it was like magic. With one hand, he goes like this. And security just backed away.

[35:23] And he goes out there and it's this young man's dad. head. And the boy rises and the dad puts his arm around him and they start for the finish line.

And they have to stop. The crowd is roaring. They don't even know who won the race. It's a standing ovation. Olympics. And they're getting close to the end.

And this kid isn't going to make it. And dad lifts him up. And they basically carries him. And the crowd goes wild.

Fellas, you're going to cross that finish line. But Jesus may be carrying you when you do. He may be carrying you when you do. But we're going to finish the race.

He who continues to the end will be saved. Genuine saving faith endures to the end. And Jude says to make your stand.

[36:26] That's one Greek word. It means to set, present, confirm, or to establish. And please listen to my next statement because it's almost poetically beautiful.

Right now, we stand in grace. One day, we will stand in glory. We will see Jesus as He is.

And we will marvel at His glory. I've been reading those prayers as we surround the throne in Revelation. And we gaze at the glory of Christ.

Church members in the 21st century have an image that we go skipping into the presence of God. That is not how God's mighty saints reacted when they came into the presence of the Lord.

Consider these facts. Isaiah came into the presence of the Lord and pronounced a curse on himself. I am undone. Ezekiel came into God's presence and fell over like a dead man.

[37:35] Fainted. Peter, James, and John saw the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration and fainted. John, the beloved disciple, the disciple whom Jesus loved, they used to make me mad at John.

Then I realized the Holy Spirit wrote those words. I better not be mad. The disciple whom Jesus loved. I think John was the youngest. I really believe this. I think Jesus got him closest to the fire,

gave him his blanket in the middle of the night, checked on him.

John probably got the extra food because he's the youngest. He's the youngest. John sees the glorified risen Christ on the Isle of Patmos and the scriptures say became like a dead man.

Just fell at his feet. Now, why did these men react in this manner? Once they were in the presence of the Lord, they were overwhelmed by the glory of God.

They were overwhelmed by their own sinfulness and sense of unworthiness and they all fell to the ground. And I can get real aggravated when I hear one of these guys on television say, well, we're up to heaven this week.

[38:47] Jesus was crying and I said, what's wrong? He said, well, I failed everybody. He said, no, we've got everything taken care of. That's blasphemy. That's blasphemy. That got him to go to heaven.

If he went to heaven, he'd be like Jesus. And he's not like Jesus. To stand in the presence of the Lord, we must be blameless.

We must be in a sinless state. Such a state is only provided by God to his children by grace for eternity. For the unbeliever who has rejected God's way of salvation, heaven is an impossibility. They wouldn't want to be there anyway. Can you imagine being in the presence of absolute purity and you're in a state of sinfulness?

That's hell. Nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying shall ever come into heaven, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, Revelation 21, 17.

[39:55] As believers in heaven, we will never experience any terror of entering into God's presence. I love that passage in Revelation 4 where he says to John, come up here.

When I was a child, I grew up on Queenstown, right over here. It was a dirt road. A few blocks from here. I played in the summer as late as possible with my neighborhood friends.

We fought World War II. I was born in 1948 and we were still fighting World War II. I can't even tell you how many Japanese and Germans I killed. Then I married a German. We had a German-Scottish.

But that's what we played. Army. World War II. And I'd be out playing and probably 8, 30, 9 o'clock, my dad or mom would come to the door and they would call me home.

You know, I never once feared being called home by my mom or dad. I wasn't afraid to go home.

[40:58] In heaven, we will experience great joy of the Lord calling us by name to come into his presence. We will dwell with God in perfect love and in perfect holiness.

So Jude closes out his great book of warning with the message of present salvation and future glorification. We have been justified.

We are being sanctified. We will be glorified. One day every believer will be presented blameless before the throne of God. And the Father will treat us and actually does now.

We like to say just as if we never sinned, stronger than that. Just as if we're Jesus. Just as if we're His Son because we're cloaked in His Son. Charles Spurgeon summed it up beautifully with these words.

He preached this at the Metropolitan Tabernacle on January the 8th, 1874. I think that was 142 years ago this week if my math is right.

[42:04] This is Reverend Spurgeon. When I heard it said that the Lord would keep His people right to the end, that Christ had said, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish nor shall any pluck them out of my hand, I must confess that the doctrine of the final preservation of the saints was a bait that my soul could not resist.

This is Spurgeon. I thought it was a sort of insurance, life insurance policy. An insurance of my character, an insurance of my soul, an insurance of my eternal destiny.

I knew that I could not keep myself, but if Christ promised to keep me, then I would be safe forever and I longed and I prayed to find Christ because I knew that if I found Him, He would not give me a temporary and trumpery salvation such as some preach, but eternal life which could never be lost. The living and incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever for no one and nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And we let Reverend Spurgeon end our study of Jude tonight.