

Contending to the Ending

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[0:00] Jude was an accomplished author who wrote this brief book as a warning to the church concerning the apostates!

That it infiltrated the church. They were trying to destroy the fellowship and the worship of true believers. In our day, the descendants of these apostates have infiltrated the church with a geometric progression.

There are more apostates, false teachers, and false preachers on the planet Earth today than I would imagine in all previous centuries combined.

And if you get bored, and I don't recommend this, but you can turn on several different so-called Christian channels and you can see them. Jude, John, and other New Testament writers predicted that in the end times, apostasy would grip and plague the church.

John told us very clearly, if you ever want to know, are we in the end times? John said, we're in the end times. That was 2,000 years ago. Just think how end it is now, or what John might say.

[1:34] John told us very clearly that we're in the end times, and we have seen and bear witness to the fact that apostasy and apostates abound in the closing days of the church age.

Now, that doesn't mean I know when the church age is going to close. I tell people, Jesus may be back today. He may be back in 5,000 years. I don't know, but I think it's closer to today than 5,000 years.

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.

Doctrine is what the Bible teaches and what we believe about the Bible as has been revealed. I heard a good man of God read him, actually, reading one of his books.

And he said, you know, people come up and say, well, God spoke me this week. Be real careful with that. Because that may be the pizza from the previous night.

[2:39] You know, be careful. And he said, if you want to hear from God, read the Bible. And if you want to hear God audibly, read it out loud. That's good advice.

Because that's God speaking to us. Praying is us speaking to God. God speaks to us through Scripture, and the Scriptures are sufficient. They are sufficient for all things.

There are many marvelous doctrines in the Word of God, and they are all precious to the redeemed. But there's one doctrine that, in my opinion, stands head and shoulders above many of them, and that is the doctrine of eternal security.

Over the years, I've leaned more toward calling it the preservation or perseverance of the saints, because it is a grace gift of God.

Some of you guys come on Monday nights, and eventually we're going to get to perseverance. It may be next year sometime, but we're going to get there and talk about perseverance.

[3:40] Now, to be sure, all the doctrines in God's Word are beautiful. They're absolutely beautiful. Justification, regeneration, conversion, and adoption into God's family.

We could have added sanctification there, just to name a few. But without the assurance and confidence we find in this doctrine of perseverance or eternal security, the Christian would be filled with doubt, worry, and fear as to what the future holds for the individual.

It is unthinkable that Christ would command us to come to Him, that we would embrace Him, that we would 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.

I have very good, vigorous discussions with some of my Wesleyan friends, and they're good folks. And I tell them, you can't keep it for five seconds without the continuing grace of God.

You can't do it. You need Him. If you are a true follower of Christ, don't worry. Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is found in Christ Jesus.

[5:01] Just take a look tonight at Romans 8, 28 to 39. Fantastic section of Scripture. In fact, the faith that Christ has given us will ultimately produce an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.

Again, 2 Corinthians 4, 17. It is fitting that Jude closes out his great warning to the church about apostasy by reassuring the true church that they are safe in the arms of Jesus.

I can only imagine people reading this for the first time 2,000 years ago, and they're worrying, you know, what? Are we in trouble here? I mean, just like Paul had to deal with the saints were dying off, and they're all going, you know, what's going on here?

People are dying and the Lord isn't back yet. Are we all going to die before the Lord comes back? Well, in that generation, yes, as a matter of fact. In Jude, verses 24 to 25, we read this.

This is comforting. 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, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever.

[6:35] Amen. And that's how Jude closes it out, obviously prompted by the Spirit of God. There's a great truth about salvation that my Arminian friends do not have and don't seem willing to come to grips with.

We did not attain salvation. It's a gift of God. We didn't attain it on our own. And we cannot maintain salvation on our own.

It is the continuing grace of God, a continuing gift, if you will. We receive salvation by the grace of God through Christ and we are maintained by that same grace.

If it were up to us to keep it, I would falter in one second. We cannot even keep the greatest commandment for one second.

We live in unredeemed flesh and battle sin continually. The great apostle Paul described himself as the chief of sinners and said, what a wretched man am I.

[7:41] That's Paul. I'll probably be standing right behind him at the judgment. You know, and Paul goes and then I go. Oh man, I'm going to try to get to the back of the line. 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 do not cover ourselves. Our salvation is based upon the plan of God. You can see the Romans chapter.

The promise of God in Hebrews. The power of God back in Romans. And the provision of God in 2 Corinthians. And Jude closes out his letter with this doxology underscoring God's persevering work in His children.

A doxology in Scripture typically focuses on the glory and grace of God and can be seen as an offering of praise and thankfulness for the blessing of eternal life given to us by grace.

Now, Paul offered one of the most amazing and familiar doxologies in the New Testament at the conclusion of the book of Romans. And it's sad. You know, we read like a whole book like Romans and we get to the very end and we kind of skip over that or don't read it.

[9:01] And that's bad. We need to do that. Listen to how he closes Romans. I love the way it starts. Now, him who is able. Now, to him who is able.

Okay, Paul, able to what? Able to establish you according to my gospel and 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 nations leading to obedience of faith to the only wise God through Jesus Christ be the glory forever.

Amen. What a way to close a letter. So, in Jude's book we receive horrific warnings about encroaching apostasy and then Jude finishes with a doxology of comfort and encouragement whereby God reminds us that he is all-powerful and he is faithful to keep his promises.

And in spite of the unbelief that permeates many churches today even whole denominations we have every reason to be confident in the future.

I think the future is very exciting for God's people. Our confidence is or should be based upon two revealed truths concerning what God will do for his children.

[10:38] Truth one, God will preserve his beloved saints. He's going to preserve us. And truth two, God will present us blameless before his throne.

We're going to be blameless. That's a hard concept, isn't it? But you're going to have totally the imputed righteousness of Christ. His righteousness.

So, in the preservation of the saints, now him who is able to keep you from stumbling. Jude, the first part of Jude, verse 24. God is El Shaddai in the Old Testament.

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

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

[11:44] And a lot of times people inject there, well, what about Judas? Judas was not a believer. Judas Iscariot was never a believer. He didn't fall. He was fallen.

He was already fallen. But God will never allow his redeemed saints to fall away. This is the faith that he has given them. Additionally, God will never allow one of his redeemed to defect finally and fully from the gospel and be lost in their sin for eternity.

Now, the important word there is one of his redeemed. Now, redeemed people, we could be buffeted, battered, bruised, bloody, but God will preserve us.

He will preserve us. God is both willing and able to preserve his saints to the very end and actually, guys, it doesn't end.

He preserves us through all time and beyond. He preserves us in glory. You know, there were beings, created beings that fell from glory.

[12:52] A third of the angelic hosts fell. I tell people, security is not in a place. I have people tell me, if I can just get to heaven and close the door, I'll be okay. No.

Security is not in a place. It's in a person. Jesus Christ. That's where our security is. It's in a person. And again, that doesn't mean we won't enter into glory battered and bruised.

What did Paul say in one of the Corinthian letters that you may go in, but your coattails are going to be on fire. You're going to be singed. You're going to be singed on your way in.

But if there's any doubt in your mind as to being secure in the sovereignty of God, listen to the words of the Lord in John, John's Gospel, chapter 6. This is verse 37 to 40.

All that the Father gives me will come to me. Well, that's a pretty definite statement, isn't it? And the one who comes to me, now look how this builds, the one who comes to me, I will certainly not cast out.

[14:05] The Father's going to give them to me and I'm not going to cast them out. For I've come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. This is the will of him who sent me, that of all he has given me, I lose nothing or 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, that's has faith, in him will have eternal life and I myself will raise him up on the last day.

What a promise from the Lord. What a promise. These are powerful words 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, Christ at this very moment, is interceding for us before the throne of the Father.

I mean, I wake up often at two or three in the morning, you know, and I can lay there and say, I don't know what Jesus is doing. Well, I know what he's doing. He's interceding. He ever lives to make intercession for his people.

[15:29] That's why he lives. And this is what the writer in Hebrews told us. And if anyone truly saved, I'm talking about legitimate, genuine, saved people, are ultimately lost, then the Father had to reject that intercessory prayer of his Son.

And would you agree with me? That's unthinkable. That is unthinkable. God the Father never rejects a prayer of the Son.

And the Son ever lives to make intercession for his, his own. Our Jude passage tells us that the Lord is able to keep us from stumbling.

In the Greek language, the word to keep is a military term. It means to guard or to watch over. Like a good soldier, God the Holy Spirit is always present, standing guard over his children to ensure our ultimate safety.

When my youngest son was born, Rob, he had trouble breathing on his own. And here I am, I'm going home, I mean, he was born at 2.30 in the morning. I don't know why women can't do this at 2.30 in the afternoon, but he's born at 2.30 in the morning at about 5.30, I'm going to go home because I've got to get a little sleep and then go back to the hospital.

[17:00] I was not a believer. But I got on my knees before I got in that bed and I prayed a prayer and I said, you could be all places.

I can't, the nurses can't, but you could stand there and help him breathe and breathe for him if necessary. And I really, that was very genuine. I still remember doing that. I think that was one of my steps toward Christianity, actually.

And he was fine. And now he's 41. So the Holy Spirit stands guard over his children to ensure our ultimate safety.

This is true even when the enemy is assaulting. It is God who keeps us from stumbling into apostasy. But we have to be on guard, don't we?

We have to know the Word of God so we can identify the false from the genuine. I've said many times, that's how the Secret Service trains their agents and how do you know counterfeit money?

[18:01] You know counterfeit money by knowing what the real, the good stuff looks like, the real stuff looks like. That's how they train Secret Service agents. John MacArthur, I've heard him do this a dozen times.

You know, when the FBI is trained on counterfeit money, we don't do counterfeit money. That's a Secret Service, John. The FBI didn't have anything to do with counterfeit money. I'll have to tell him that someday, probably in glory.

Listen to the words of the great shepherd in John 10, one of my favorite sections of Scripture. My sheep hear my voice. Boy, that'll preach, preacher.

My sheep hear my voice and I know them. People ask you all the time, do you know Jesus? I ask people, do Jesus know you?

Jesus here says, I know them and they follow me. You know, I know a lot of people tell you that they're a Christian, but they're not following Christ.

[19:02] There's a problem, aren't they? Because Jesus himself said, they hear my voice, I know them, they follow me. And I give eternal life to them and they won't perish for a long time.

Is that what it says? They will never perish 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 my Father's hand.

And I use the image of Jesus' holiness here and then the Father comes and put his hands around Jesus' hands and we're in Jesus' hands I told that to a very good friend of mine who believes you can lose your salvation.

He said, well, maybe you could jump out. Well, okay. Why don't you try it sometime and see if it works? No, I don't want to do that. But I just think you could jump out.

Wow. Now, time does not allow us to cover all of God's promises concerning our security in Him. We could do that for months or even years.

[20:08] That's the overwhelming magnitude of the promises of God. It is He who establishes us in Himself. The enemy attacks, but it's God who perfects us.

There is always a point that needs to be made. Never is eternal security a license to sin. Our security in Christ is the freedom not to sin.

Show me a man or woman who believes they can sin all they want because they've been saved by grace and I will show you a person who does not truly believe because they've never been saved by grace.

Salvation is not a license to sin. It's the liberty not to sin. Before we were saved, we sinned because of our nature. After we were saved, it is done by choice.

We choose to sin. I think it was Dr. Rogers, Adrian Rogers, who said, unbelievers leap into sin and love it. Christians lapse into sin and love it.

[21:10] But unbelievers leap into it. But sin now for us is a choice. Does this mean we don't sin? Well, of course not. 1 John makes that abundantly clear.

Never say you're without sin. It goes on to say anyone who claims that they do not sin is a liar and the truth is not in them. But you know what happens when we do 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. Advocates, defense attorney.

Let me tell you how beautiful this system is. If you ever go pulled into criminal court and you're looking at prison even and you walk in and your defense attorney is the judge, that's a pretty good deal.

Christ is our judge and our advocate. He's our advocate. He's our defense attorney. He defends us. And now a final truth. The Lord presents the saints and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy.

[22:26] There's times I don't feel very blameless, but that's the blamelessness of Christ in me. To the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever.

Amen. So mark this down in your mental file. Genuine, saving faith endures to the end.

It is an enduring faith. To make you stand is one Greek word and it means to set, to present, to confirm, or to establish.

Now listen to this. It's almost poetic. Right now we stand in grace. One day we will stand in glory. Glory. Glory. Right now we're standing in grace.

The day will come when we will stand in glory. And that's a great, great promise of God. But let me tell you on our Monday night study when we get to preservation or perseverance we're going to read a lot of scriptures that I've kind of passed over over the years and it's about he who continues to the end will be saved.

[23:47] That's repeated over and over in the New Testament. Now, you're not saved because you continue you continue because you're saved. And I've got people in my own family that are not continuing.

Oh, they'll tell you they did something one day for five minutes worded a little prayer so they got their fire insurance policy but it ends there.

But there's no continuous. He who continues to the end will be saved. Right, the church members in the 21st century have an image that we kind of 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.

He said, woe am I. That's a curse. Isaiah cursed himself. Ezekiel came into God's presence and fell over like a dead man.

[24:51] Peter, James, and John saw the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration and faint. They went into a coma. The Father put them in a coma to save their lives because you can't come into the presence of the glory of God and live.

Remember, Moses, he has to see God's glory and God put him behind a big rock and showed him just his backside. And then John, beloved disciple, the youngest, he sees the risen and glorified Christ on the Isle of Patmos and it says, I became like a dead man.

Hit the ground. Why did these men react this way? Once they were in the presence of the Lord, they were overwhelmed by the glory of God and their own sinfulness and sense of unworthiness. They all fell to the ground. 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 the unbeliever who has rejected God's way of salvation, heaven is impossible.

[26:08] 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.

Great, great passage of Scripture. And I'll tell you, these guys that are going around saying, well, I was called up into heaven this week and I met with Jesus up there and I kind of straightened him out on a few things that were going on down here on earth and yada, yada, yada.

and they're all around. Those are apostates that are talking to you. That they got called up into, let me tell you, that's a heady thing.

Paul says, I saw things I can't even talk about. There's not human words, language, that I can even talk about it. One of them said he got called up to heaven and he ministered to Jesus because Jesus thought he was a failure.

Two years later they wrote his own autobiography and they forgot to mention the fact he was called up into heaven. I think that'd be my first chapter. You know? As believers in heaven we're never going to experience any terror of entering into God's presence.

[27 : 15] That'll be all behind us. When I was a child I played as late as possible with my neighborhood friends. My parents would call me in for the night. Never once did I fear being called home by my mom or dad.

I'd like to hear it one more time. Wish I could. 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.

One day every believer will be presented blameless before the throne of God. And you may say I just don't feel very blameless.

Well, cling to Jesus he is. Charles Spurgeon summed it up beautifully with these words preached in the Metropolitan Tabernacle. 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 neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.

[28 : 33] I must confess that the doctrine of the final preservation of the saints was a bait that my soul could not resist. I thought it was a sort of life insurance 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 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.