

Hallelujah! What a Savior

John Magnuson - September 22, 2024

Jude 24-25 (ESV)

*24 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,
25 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.*

Today we are going to cover two verses from the book of Jude. I'm sure this benediction is very familiar to most of you. It's important to realize that while we stumble, we will not fall. We are saved to a glorious end.

I remember as a teenager reading this passage. When I saw the words "without fault," I thought that was pretty amazing. But I didn't fully comprehend the significance of it. Now I understand that we are going to be presented blameless, and with great joy, before the presence of His glory. This morning, I want to remind you of the **graduation ceremony** that awaits us when Christ returns—the completion of our race, not by our strength, but only by His.

Another benediction in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 says:

"Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus. Faithful is He who calls you, and He will bring it to pass."

We will finish the race, but not in our own power—it is only through God's power. That is why I have entitled this sermon **Hallelujah! What a Savior**.

Jude: A Brother of James, Half-brother of Jesus

The book of Jude was written by Jude, the half-brother of James and also of Jesus. It always strikes me that neither Jude nor James believed in Jesus during His earthly ministry—they didn't come to faith until after the resurrection, even though they grew up with Him.

Jude is writing to what most scholars believe were Jewish believers at a time when Christianity was under heavy persecution. He begins his letter with comforting words, saying, *"To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ"* (Jude 1). The word **"kept"** here means "placed under guard." It is such a comfort to know we are guarded by God.

When God spoke to Moses in Exodus 3:12, He said, *"Certainly, I will be with you."* And in Isaiah 41:10, God said, *"Surely I will uphold you."* Psalm 91:11 reassures us, *"For He will command His*

angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.” Knowing that we are guarded and kept by God should bring us great comfort.

Jude originally planned to write about their common salvation, the blessings all Christians share. But he felt compelled to change direction because apostates had infiltrated the church. Like Paul and Peter before him, Jude warned of false teachers who had come from within the church. Paul had warned in Acts 20:29 that *“savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.”* And now, in Jude’s time, they were already there.

Jude is concerned about the purity of the church, about doctrine, and about the faith being distorted. He urges believers to **contend for the faith** (Jude 3), emphasizing that it will be a struggle, but it’s a struggle worth engaging in. It’s worth fighting for the faith because of what awaits us.

Three Certainties in Jude 24-25

As we reach the end of the book, we come to verses 24-25:

“Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy.”

This morning, I want to encourage you with **three certainties** from these verses: one that is comforting and two that are astounding.

1. **Believers Are Entrusted to a Divine Guardian (Comforting)**

The first certainty is that **believers are entrusted to a divine guardian**. Jude 24 says, *“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling.”* The idea here is not that we will never sin. We will sin—that’s part of our fallen nature. But this verse assures us that God will keep us from **falling away** from the truth, from losing our faith.

The RSV and King James Version use the word **“falling”** instead of stumbling, and I like that. The emphasis is on God’s ability to keep us from **falling away from the truth**. Without God’s power, we would fall away because, left to our own strength, we are prone to wander.

Thomas Manton once wrote, *“We do not fall because God does not let our hands slip from His.”* Our faith is fragile. We are prone to wander, as the hymn “Come Thou Fount” says: *“Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love.”*

The good news is this: we are not holding on to God. **God is holding on to us.**

You might remember the old commercial slogan from the dairy industry, *“Got Milk?”* In recent years, some churches have borrowed that idea and started saying *“Got God?”* But often, the God they promote is not the God of the Bible. They present a God who exists to solve all your problems and give you health and wealth. That sounds great—who wouldn’t want to sign up for that? But it’s completely contrary to Scripture.

Scripture warns us that following Christ will bring **trials and difficulties**. In Matthew 10:22, Jesus says, *“You will be hated by all because of my name, but the one who endures to the end will be saved.”* In 2 Timothy 3:12, Paul tells us, *“Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”* In John 16:33, Jesus says, *“In this world you will have trouble.”* And in Philipians 1:29,

Paul says, “For it has been granted to you for the sake of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”

Persecution, hatred, suffering— these are realities for Christians. They are not messages that churches who promote a “got God” philosophy want to address. But Christ warns us to expect them.

We also have commands from Scripture that require great commitment: “Take up your cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24); “Present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice” (Romans 12:1); “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

These demands remind us that following Christ is not easy—it’s a demanding commitment, which is why we need to be kept from stumbling. Without God’s divine protection, without the supernatural gift of faith, we wouldn’t survive the trials of Christian life.

Left to ourselves, we wouldn’t even **want** to follow Christ. Romans 3:10-11 says: “There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God.” Before God moved in our hearts, we wanted no part of Christ—we were His enemies (Romans 5:10).

Our **human faith** is weak. In Matthew 17:19-20, when the disciples asked Jesus why they couldn’t cast out a demon, He said: “Because of the littleness of your faith. For truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.” Even the disciples, who were with Jesus daily, had little faith. How do you think our faith compares?

Our human faith is also **ever-changing**. Experience can change what we believe. Think about the things you believed to be true when you were younger, and how they’ve changed over time as you’ve encountered life. For instance, young parents often have preconceived ideas about raising children, but when reality hits, they have to adjust those expectations.

Finally, our human faith is often **selfish**. In a “got God” mindset, God is there to serve us, but Scripture says otherwise. Paul Washer has said, “One of the greatest distinguishing marks of a false prophet is that he will tell you what you want to hear.” But what happens to your faith when the things you want don’t come to pass? A faith built on self-serving doctrines will crumble when trials come.

And we are weak. Even the apostle Peter, who confidently said, “I will never deny you” (Matthew 26:35), denied Christ three times. Our human faith is weak, but the good news is that **God’s power keeps us from falling**.

2. **Believers Are Presented to God as a Complete Project (Astounding)**

The second astounding truth is that **believers are presented to God as a complete project**. Jude 24 says we are presented **blameless** before the presence of His glory. This is astounding because standing in God’s presence is incredible in itself. Throughout Scripture, when people are confronted with God’s glory, they fall to the ground.

At the Transfiguration in Matthew 17, when Peter, James, and John saw Jesus with Moses and Elijah, they were terrified and fell face down. In Revelation 1:17, when John saw the risen Christ, he fell at

His feet like a dead man. Abraham fell to the ground in Genesis 17:3, Ezekiel fell in Ezekiel 1, and Isaiah cursed himself in Isaiah 6, saying, “*Woe is me, for I am ruined!*”

For us to stand in God’s presence—**blameless**—is unimaginable. Yet that is what will happen. We will be presented **faultless** before God, not just justified, but sanctified and glorified. Christ will present us without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:27). This is the ultimate **graduation ceremony**, the day when the work is finished, and all the cares of this world are gone.

Colossians 1:22-23 says, “*He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.*”

This is the **graduation ceremony**—the ultimate **retirement**, where the work is complete, and the cares of the world are gone.

3. **Christ Rejoices in Presenting Us to God with Great Joy (Astounding)**

The third certainty is that **Christ rejoices in presenting us to God with great joy**. Jude 24 says, “*to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy.*” This joy is not only ours—it is **Christ’s joy as well**.

Hebrews 12:2 says, “*Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross.*” Zephaniah 3:17 says, “*He will exult over you with joy; He will be quiet in His love; He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.*” Christ rejoices over us because He sees the fruit of His work.

Spurgeon once said, “*None will be so happy as the great Surety in that day.*” Christ will rejoice over the completion of His work, and we will be presented faultless before God.

The closing benediction in Jude 25 is a beautiful reminder of God’s majesty and power: “To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time, now and forever. Amen.”

Let us rejoice in the God who keeps us from falling, presents us faultless, and rejoices over us with great joy. Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Scripture References

1. **Jude 24-25**

Benediction: "Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling..."

2. **1 Thessalonians 5:23-24**

Benediction: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you..."

3. **Exodus 3:12**

"Certainly, I will be with you." (God's promise to be with Moses)

4. **Isaiah 41:10**

"Surely I will uphold you." (God's assurance to His people)

5. **Psalms 91:11**

"He will command His angels concerning you..." (Divine protection)

6. **Acts 20:29**

"Savage wolves will come in among you..." (Warning about false teachers)

7. **Matthew 10:22**

"You will be hated by all because of my name..." (Persecution for followers of Christ)

8. **2 Timothy 3:12**

"All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

9. **John 16:33**

"In this world, you will have trouble..." (Christ's warning of trials)

10. **Philippians 1:29**

"It has been granted for Christ's sake to suffer..." (Suffering for Christ)

11. **Romans 3:10-11**

"None is righteous... there is none who seeks for God." (Human depravity)

12. **Romans 5:10**

"We were reconciled to God while we were enemies." (Reconciliation through Christ)

13. **Matthew 17:19-20**

"If you have faith as small as a mustard seed..." (The power of faith)

14. **Matthew 16:24**

"Take up your cross and follow me." (Commitment to discipleship)

15. Romans 12:1

"Present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice."

16. Matthew 5:44

"Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you."

17. Matthew 26:35

"I will never deny you..." (Peter's pledge before denying Christ)

18. Ephesians 6:12

"Our struggle is not against flesh and blood..." (Spiritual warfare)

19. Psalm 141:3-4

"Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth..." (Prayer for protection from sin)

20. John 10:27-30

"My sheep hear my voice... no one will snatch them out of my hand." (Security in Christ)

21. 1 Peter 1:3-5

"Protected by the power of God through faith..." (Inheritance in heaven)

22. Romans 8:38-39

"Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God..." (God's inseparable love)

23. 2 Timothy 1:12

"I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced..." (Confidence in Christ's guardianship)

24. Ephesians 5:27

"That He might present the church without spot or wrinkle..." (Sanctification of the church)

25. Colossians 1:22-23

"Reconciled... to present you holy and blameless." (Reconciliation through Christ)

26. 2 Timothy 4:7

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race..." (Paul's reflection on perseverance)

27. Zephaniah 3:17

"He will exult over you with joy..." (God rejoices over His people)

28. Hebrews 12:2

"For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross..." (Christ's joy in His work of salvation)

29. Matthew 17 (Transfiguration)

Peter, James, and John fall face down in fear at the glory of God.

30. Revelation 1:17

John falls at Jesus' feet like a dead man upon seeing Him.

31. Genesis 17:3

Abraham falls to the ground before the Lord.

32. Ezekiel 1

Ezekiel falls like a dead man upon seeing God's glory.

33. Isaiah 6

- Isaiah cries *"Woe is me, for I am ruined!"* in the presence of God.
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Bibliography

List of Extra Authors Referenced & Quoted

1. Thomas Manton (1620–1677)

- **Quote:**
“We do not fall because God does not let our hands slip from His.”
 - **Description:**
Thomas Manton was an English Puritan clergyman and a prolific author of theological works. His sermons and writings focused on Christian piety, practical theology, and the importance of living out one’s faith.
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2. Paul Washer (1961–Present)

- **Quote:**
“One of the greatest distinguishing marks of a false prophet is that he will tell you what you want to hear.”
 - **Description:**
Paul Washer is an American pastor and missionary known for his bold preaching on the holiness of God and the gospel. He is the founder of HeartCry Missionary Society and is frequently cited for his uncompromising teachings on true discipleship and faith.
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3. John MacArthur (1939–Present)

- **Quotes:**
 - *“We are saved by God's plan and preserved for future glory, so our security does not depend on our ability to stay saved but on God's ability to keep His promises.”*
 - *“Today's churches are creating a long line of people who will come before Jesus, and He will say, ‘Go away, I never knew you.’”*
 - **Description:**
John MacArthur is an American pastor, author, and theologian who has served as the senior pastor of Grace Community Church in California since 1969. He is known for his expository preaching and has written numerous books, including *Hard to Believe* and *The Gospel According to Jesus*.
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4. Charles Spurgeon (1834–1892)

- **Quotes:**

- *“They will bring out their sweet morsels and delicate dishes in the hope of binding us to their service by means of our palates. The trap is baited with delicious meats, that we may be captured and become meat for their malice.”*
- *“Who will have joy? I ask again: Why, Christ will have the most joy of all. Angels and ministers and you yourselves, having more joy than you could ever imagine, will scarcely know such joy as He will have. All His sheep safely folded, every stone of the building placed in its proper position, all the blood-bought and blood-washed ones, all the Father has given Him delivered out of the jaw of the lion, all whom He covenanted to redeem effectually saved, His stipulations all carried out. The Covenant not only ratified but fulfilled in all its jots and tittles. Verily, none will be so happy as the great Surety in that day. As the bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride, so shall Christ rejoice over you.”*
- *“It will be a blessed hour when sin shall at last give up the ghost. When there shall be not even the tendency to sin within our nature, then we shall be presented faultless before the throne of God.”*

- **Description:**

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, often referred to as the "Prince of Preachers," was a British Baptist preacher known for his powerful sermons and theological writings. He remains one of the most influential preachers of the 19th century, and his works continue to be widely read and cited.

5. James Montgomery Boice (1938–2000)

- **Quote:**

“For those who have been brought to faith in Christ, having been foreknown and predestined to faith by God from eternity past, having been called, regenerated, and justified in this life, and having been so set on the road to ultimate glorification that this culminating glorification can even be spoken of in past tense—meaning it's a done deal—these persons never will and never can be lost. Perseverance is implied in each preceding doctrine of grace, and it's a logical consequence of salvation being the work of an eternally loving and ultimately unchanging God.”

- **Description:**

James Montgomery Boice was a Reformed theologian, pastor, and author. He served as senior pastor of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia and was a leader in the Reformed community, contributing greatly to biblical studies and theology, especially through his commentaries on the Bible.

6. Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758)

- **Quote (Paraphrased Reference):**

Jonathan Edwards describes hell as a place of “perfect hate.”

- **Description:**

Jonathan Edwards was an American Puritan theologian, preacher, and philosopher. He was a leading figure in the First Great Awakening and is considered one of America's most important and original theological minds. His famous sermon “*Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*” is often referenced for its vivid imagery of hell and judgment.

7. R.C. Sproul (1939–2017)

- **Quote:**

“Faith is not something that is naturally exercised by a fallen human being.”

- **Description:**

R.C. Sproul was an American theologian and pastor, founder of Ligonier Ministries, and a major figure in Reformed theology. He was a prolific author and teacher known for his ability to communicate deep theological truths in accessible ways.

8. Thomas Manton (Second Quote)

- **Quote:**

“All means without the Lord's grace will not keep us from falling.”

- **Description:**

(See above for full biography on Thomas Manton.)
