

Jude 24,25

24 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, **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.*

Jude concluded his brief epistle with a formal doxology. It included a prayer for his readers. ***He wanted to assure them of God's ability to help them remain faithful in spite of the apostasy that threatened them.***

The concluding doxology (vv. 24-25) is universally recognized as one of the fullest and most beautiful in Scripture. Stressing the security of the believer in the midst of apostasy, it brings the epistle to a marvelous conclusion.

It lifts the thoughts from earthly conflicts with which the author has been compelled to busy himself, up to the heavenly realms, where God is enthroned amidst eternal might and honor.

Tom Constable Notes

Jude is a book full of warning, but it closes with supreme confidence in God. Dangerous times should make us trust in a mighty God.

David Guzik

Jude concludes with a Doxology...

A doxology is a declaration that ascribes glory or praise to God while a benediction is usually a blessing that one prays God will give to another person.

Put another way, ***a doxology goes up to God while a benediction comes down from God.*** For example, compare the two statements below.

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace." '

Numbers 6:24-26

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21

The first is a benediction and the second is a doxology. Notice the difference. The verses from Numbers are a blessing that Aaron and his descendants were to pray over the Israelites. The verses from Ephesians are a declaration of praise to God which Paul makes after providing a panoramic view of God's amazing grace and blessings given to the church through Jesus Christ in Ephesians chapters 1-3.

Now, take a look at the concluding verses of Jude: To him who is able to keep you from falling 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. Which is it? Benediction or doxology?

If you said doxology, you would be right.

Most of this chapter is filled with warnings regarding false teachers who were infiltrating the churches. Using expressive language and examples, Jude describes the characteristics of these false teachers and the certainty of God's judgment on them...Jude wants believers to understand the dangers involved and to remain safe and strong in the faith once for all entrusted to the saints. That's probably the reason why at the end of his book, Jude lifts up a doxology of praise to God. He wants to assure believers that, despite the challenges the false teachers presented, God could carry them to heaven and for this reason he was worthy of glory, honor and praise.

<http://www.cagcobleskill.org/devotionals/Jude%20Chapter%201.pdf>

Doctrine leads to Doxology...

The Doctor (Martin Lloyd-Jones) communicated a remarkable sense of the reality of God in those occasional moments of emphasis and doxology. Most of the time, it was clear, steady analysis, reflection, correction and instruction, based on simple thoughts culled from the text, set out in good order with the minimum of extraneous illustration or decoration. He knew that ***God's way to the heart is through the mind*** (he often insisted that the first thing the gospel does to a man is to make him think), and ***he preached in a way designed to help people think and thereby grasp truth – and in the process be grasped by it, and so be grasped by the God whose truth it is.***

J I Packer

God...the Great Keeper

Numbers 6:24-26... Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²³ “Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, ‘In this way you shall bless the sons of Israel. You are to say to them:

²⁴ The Lord bless you, and ***keep you;***

²⁵ The Lord cause His face to shine on you,
And be gracious to you;

²⁶ The Lord lift up His face to you,
And give you peace.’

²⁷ So they shall invoke My name on the sons of Israel, and *then* I will bless them.”

Psalm 91:11,12...For He will give His angels orders concerning you,
To ***protect you in all your ways.***

¹² On their hands they will lift you up,
So that you do not strike your foot against a stone.

Psalm 121:3-8...*He will not allow your foot to slip;*

He who watches over you will not slumber.

⁴ Behold, He who watches over Israel
Will neither slumber nor sleep.

⁵ *The Lord is your protector;*

The Lord is your shade on your right hand.

⁶ The sun will not beat down on you by day,
Nor the moon by night.

⁷ *The Lord will protect you from all evil;*
He will keep your soul.

⁸ *The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in*
From this time and forever.

Proverbs 3:26...For the Lord will be your confidence,
And will keep your foot from being caught.

1 Peter 1:5...Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **⁴ to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,** **⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.** **⁶ In this you greatly rejoice,** even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials

John 6:39...Everything that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I certainly will not cast out. **38** For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. **39** And ***this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of everything that He has given Me I will lose nothing, but will raise it up on the last day.*** **40** For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”

John 17:12...*While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name, which You have given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.*

John 18:9...*his took place so that the word which He spoke would be fulfilled: “Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one.”*

John 10:28,30... My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; **28** and ***I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.*** **29** ***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.*** **30** ***I and the Father are one.***

Jude 1... Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,
To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ

Jude 24,25... ***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, **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.

- **To Him who is able...to be able, have power, capable (Romans 16:25)**

Romans 16:25-27...***Now to Him who is 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, **26** but now has been disclosed, and through the Scriptures of the prophets, in accordance with the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, ***leading to obedience of faith;*** **27** to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

- **To keep you...to guard or watch, to protect and preserve**
- **From stumbling...only occurrence in the NT**

The Greek word translated “stumbling” implies the results of tripping as well as the fall itself. NET Bible Notes

- **Make you stand...to place, set up, establish**
- **In the presence of His glory...3 occurrences including Ephesians 1:4 and Colossians 1:22**
- **Blameless...without blemish, faultless...often used of sacrifices without blemish (Ephesians 1:4, 5:27; Colossians 1:22; 1 Peter 1:19)**

Ephesians 1:4...just as *He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.*

Ephesians 5:27...Husbands, love your wives, *just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.*

Colossians 1:22...And although you were previously alienated and hostile in attitude, *engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His body of flesh through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach*

1 Peter 1:19...knowing that you *were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.*

- **With great joy...exultation, exuberant joy**

Hebrews 12:2...looking only at Jesus, the originator and perfecter of the faith, *who for the joy set before Him* endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Zephaniah 3:17...The Lord your God is in your midst,
A victorious warrior.

He will rejoice over you with joy,

He will be quiet in His love,

He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.

Psalm 16:11...You will make known to me the way of life;

In Your presence is fullness of joy;

In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

Amplified Bible... Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling or falling into sin, and to present you unblemished [blameless and faultless] in the presence of His glory with triumphant joy and unspeakable delight

God will exercise His infinite power to preserve His people through all temptations (v. 1; John 6:39; 10:28–29; 17:12) and bring them to enjoy Him forever with exceeding joy (Pss. 16:11; 43:4). his glory. The intense brightness of His holiness (1 Tim. 6:16).

Joel Beeke and Michael Barrett

Observations from Puritan Thomas Manton on Jude 24...

Jesus Christ will one day make a solemn presentation of his people to God; the apostle saith here he will present you.

Now two ways is Christ said to present us...(1) To himself and (2) To God.

To himself, Eph. v. 27, That He might present it to Himself a glorious church.' In that place our interest in Christ and His interest in us is represented by marriage; in the world we are contracted, but there presented, actually brought to Him when fitted for his use, as Esther when she was chosen out from among the virgins to be wife to the king, she was first purified and supplied with garments, fragrances and sweet ointments out of the king's house, and then when the months of her purification were accomplished, was presented to him, Esther ii. 9-12, so we are chosen, 'elected to grace,' and then purified and prepared, but at the king's cost; we have garments of salvation out of Christ's wardrobe, and fragrances and sweet ointments out of His store house, and then when spot and wrinkle is done away, we are presented to Him; He is said to do it, because He hath the main stroke in this work.

To God; so it is said, Col. i. 22, That he may present you in his sight;’ that is, in the sight of God the Father; for the antecedent you find in ver. 19, It pleased the Father,’ ... Thus Christ is said to give up the kingdom to the Father,’ 1 Cor. xv. 24-28...

Now Christ’s presenting us to God may be looked upon either...

(1.) **As an account of his charge.** In effect He saith, I have done the work for which thou hast sent me. Christ is under an office and obligation of faithfulness, He hath a trust of which He must give an account; He is to take care of the persons of the elect, to justify, sanctify, and glorify them in His own day. Now that it may appear that He is not unfaithful in his trust, He doth present them to God, as having fully done His work, so that to doubt of His willingness to pardon, or sanctify, or glorify, is in effect to charge unfaithfulness and disobedience upon Him; for Christ, as Mediator, is subordinate, He is God’s:’ 1 Cor. iii. 23, xi. 3, The head of Christ is God,’...namely, with respect to this office and charge; so He is under God and to give an account to Him. He hath under taken to make up all breaches between God and us. As to the merit and satisfaction, He gave an account a little before His going to heaven, John xvii. 4; but as to the application to every party concerned, He will give an account in the last day, when He will present Himself and all His flock, saying, Behold I and all the little ones which thou hast given me,’ Heb. ii. 13, when all the elect are gathered into one troop and company, and not one wanting.”

(2.) ***As an act of delight and rejoicing in his own success, that all that were given to him are now fit to be settled in their blessed and glorious estate.*** Christ taketh a great deal of delight to see the proof and virtue of His death, and that His blood is not shed in vain, as a minister taketh delight in those whom he hath gained to God: What is our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing?...If we rejoice thus in the fruit of our ministerial labours, surely Christ much more; We have not such an interest in them as Christ hath, and the main virtue came from His death and Spirit. It is said Isa. liii. 11, He shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied;’ That may be understood either of His foreseeing from all eternity, or of His actual seeing when the whole is accomplished. If you understand it of His foreseeing, the expression is not altogether alien from the point in hand. “When Christ foresaw the good success of the gospel, and what a company He should gain to Himself in all ages, He rejoiced at the thought of it. Well, saith He, I will go down and suffer for poor creatures upon these terms. But rather ***I understand it of His sight of the thing when it is accomplished, when He shall see His whole family together, met in one congregation. Now, saith he, I count my blood***

well bestowed, my bitter agony well recompensed; these are my crown and my rejoicing.

So Christ in the work of redemption, when His death turneth to good account, He will delightfully present you to God as the proof of it. These are those whom I have redeemed, sanctified, and kept...

(3.) *It is an act of his love and recompense to the faithful;* They have owned Him in the world, and Christ will own them before God, men, and angels; There is no saint so mean but Christ will own him: Luke xii. 8, The Son of man shall confess him...Father, this is one of mine. As for His enemies, Christ will see execution done upon them: Slay them before my face,' Luke xix. 27. To his friends He will own them publicly, and that they be honoured before the presence of His glory.'

Well, then, see that you be of the number of those whom Christ will present to God. If He hath purified you to Himself,' Titus ii. 14, He will present you to Himself. If you be set apart for God, Ps. iv. 3, you shall be brought to God. The work is begun here; privately it is done at our deaths, when the soul, as soon as it is out of the body, is conveyed by angels to Christ, and by Christ to God; and publicly and solemnly at the day of His coming; then He presents the elect as a prey snatched out of the teeth of lions; But spiritually the foundation is laid when you dedicate yourselves to God.' Rom. xii. 1, and walk so as Christ may own you with honour and credit in that great day.

Again observe, that when Christ presenteth the elect He will present them faultless,' that is, both in respect of justification and sanctification. This was intended before the world was: Eph. i. 4, He hath chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; but this is not accomplished till then. Now we are humbled with many infirmities and sins, but then presented holy, unblamable, and unreprouvable in His sight,' Col. i. 22. The work is undertaken by Christ, and He will carry it on till it be complete: Here the wedding garments are making, but then put on.

The work must be begun here; The foundation is laid as soon as we are converted unto God, 1 Cor. vi. 11. This work increaseth daily more and more, 1 Thes. v. 23, 24. We are not faultless; but Christ will not rest till we be faultless, He is sanctifying further and further, that we may be blameless at His coming; He will pursue the work close till it be done...In this great imperfection under which we now are, we are too apt to fetch all our peace and comfort from our own works, to the great neglect of Christ and his righteousness;

Therefore doth the Lord by little and little carry on the work of grace, that by the continual sense of our defects, and the often making use of justification, we may have the higher apprehensions of God's love in accepting us in Christ.

At the last day all is fully accomplished, Col. i. 22. Well, then, let us wait upon God with encouragement, and press on to perfection upon these hopes. Surely we shall be faultless; Christ would never have given us earnest, 2 Cor. i. 22, if He meant not to stand to His bargain.

The last particle in the words is that, with exceeding joy. From thence note the day of Christ to the godly is a joyful day. When others howl, you shall triumph; when others are dejected, and call upon the mountains to cover them,' Rev. vi. 16. You shall lift up the head, for your redemption draweth nigh,' Luke xxi. 28. Christ will be glad to see you whom he hath carried in his heart from all eternity, for whose sake He came into the world and died, and for whom He went back again into heaven, that He might negotiate with God in your behalf, and whom He now cometh to receive unto Himself, that you may be for ever there where He is. And surely you that have received Christ into your hearts, and loved Him though unseen, and served Him though with the loss and hazard of all, will be glad to see Him in all his glory and royalty, especially when you shall hear Him calling upon you, Come, ye blessed of my Father, enter into the kingdom prepared for you. Oh! surely our hearts should be warmed with the thought of that blessed day...

Eternal Praise...Before all time and now and forever

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.

Solo Christo...Through Christ Alone..”through Jesus Christ our Lord...”

Soli Deo Gloria...To God Alone Be Glory... Glory, Majesty, Dominion and Authority...”

Observations from Puritan Thomas Manton on Jude 25...

But let us more particularly take a view of this ascription, and so first what is ascribed...glory, majesty, dominion, and power. Let us open these words...

Glory is excellency discovered with praise and approbation, and noteth that high honour and esteem that is due to Christ.

Majesty is the next word, which ***implieth such greatness and excellency as maketh one honoured and preferred above all, therefore a style usually given to kings; but to none so due as unto Christ, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords.***

The third term is ***dominion***, which ***implieth the sovereignty of Christ over all things, especially over the people whom He hath purchased with his blood.***

The last word is ***power***, which ***signifieth that all-sufficiency in God, whereby He is able to do all things according to the good pleasure of His will.***”

A gracious heart hath such a sense of God’s worth and perfection, that it would have all things that are honourable and glorious ascribed to him; therefore are divers words here used. When we have done our utmost we come short; for God’s name is exalted above all blessing, and above all praise,’ Neh. ix. 5. Yet it is good to do as much as we can. Love to God will not be satisfied with a little praise: I will praise Him yet more and more,’ Love enlargeth the heart towards God. If there be anything more excellent He shall have it. Well, then, it is a sign of a dead heart to be stingy in praises, to be sparing, careless, or cold this way.

The next consideration in this ascription is the duration, now and ever. Thence note: The saints have such large desires for God’s glory, that they would have Him glorified everlastingly, and without ceasing. They desire the present age may not only glorify God, but the future. When they are dead and gone the Lord remaineth; and they would not have Him remain without honour. They do not take death so bitterly, if there be any hopes that God will have a people to praise him. And their great comfort now is the expectation of a great congregation, gathered from the four winds, united to Christ, presented to God, that they may remain with Him, and glorify Him for evermore. It is the comfort of their hearts to see this expressed in the congregation every day, that there are saints and angels to praise God, whilst others grieve and dishonour him. They prize their own salvation upon this ground, that they shall live for ever to glorify God for ever: see Eph. iii. 21; Ps. xli. 13. Now this they do, partly from their love to God’s glory, which they prize above their own salvation, Rom. ix. 3; partly in thankfulness to God for his everlasting love to them. God is from everlasting to everlasting, and His love is from everlasting to everlasting, Ps. ciii. 17.

He was their God, and will be their God for ever and ever, and therefore they purpose to be His people, and to praise Him for ever and ever. Well, then, get these large desires for God's glory, that He may be honoured in all ages, and in all places, Ps. cxiii. 2, 3.

What have ye done in a tendency hereunto, that posterity may praise God? Do you labour to promote the knowledge of Christ, and the succession of churches, all the ways that you can? As a master of a family, hast thou taken care to keep religion alive among thy children when thou art dead and gone? Gen. xviii. 19.

God will be glorious. The scene is often shifted, and furnished with new actors, but still God hath those that praise him, and will have to all eternity. Well, then, let your faith subscribe, and put to its seal, To the glory of God in Christ; and let earnest love interpose: Lord, let it be so; yea, Lord, let it be so. Heartily desire it, and with the whole strength of your souls; It is a request that cannot miscarry, and follow it with your hearty acclamations. The world shall continue no longer when God shall have no more glory by it. Here you may be sure you pray according to God's will, and therefore may take it for granted; only follow it earnestly; Say, Lord, whatever become of us and our matters, yet let thy name be glorified. Amen, Lord, let it be even so. Now Blessed be His glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory: amen, and amen, Ps. lxxii. 19.

Excerpts From: Thomas Manton. "Commentary on Jude." Apple Books. <https://books.apple.com/us/book/commentary-on-jude/>

What We Teach...Security of the Believer

We teach that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24).

John 5:24... "Truly, truly, I say to you, the one who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

John 6:37-40... Everything that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I certainly will not cast out. **38** For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. **39** And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of everything that He has given Me I will lose nothing, but will raise it up on the last day. **40** For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

John 10:27-30...My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; **28** and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. **29** 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. **30** I and the Father are one."

Romans 5:9-10...Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath *of God* through Him. **10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Romans 8:1,39-40...Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus...For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, **39** nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:4-8...I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, **5** that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, **6** just as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, **7** so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you eagerly await the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, **8** who will also confirm you to the end, blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ephesians 4:30...Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Hebrews 7:25...Therefore He is also able to save forever those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 13:5...*Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever abandon you,"

1 Peter 1:5...Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, **5** who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in *the* last time.

Excerpt from the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646)...Chapter 17 (Of the Perseverance of the Saints)

This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them...

Note the Trinitarian aspect of this very important doctrine **R C Sproul on “TULIP and Reformed Theology: Perseverance of the Saints”**

Writing to the Philippians, Paul says, “He who has begun a good work in you will perfect it to the end” (Phil. 1:6). Therein is the promise of God that what He starts in our souls, He intends to finish. So the old axiom in Reformed theology about the perseverance of the saints is this: If you have it—that is, if you have genuine faith and are in a state of saving grace—you will never lose it. If you lose it, you never had it.

We know that many people make professions of faith, then turn away and repudiate or recant those professions. The Apostle John notes that there were those who left the company of the disciples, and he says of them, “Those who went out from us were never really with us” (1 John 2:19). Of course, they were with the disciples in terms of outward appearances before they departed. They had made an outward profession of faith, and Jesus makes it clear that it is possible for a person to do this even when he doesn’t possess what he’s professing. Jesus says, “This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me” (Matt. 15:8). Jesus even warns at the end of the Sermon on the Mount that at the last day, many will come to Him, saying: “Lord, Lord, didn’t we do this in your name? Didn’t we do that in your name?” He will send them away, saying: “Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity. I never knew you” (Matthew 7:23). He will not say: “I knew you for a season and then you went sour and betrayed Me. No, you *never* were part of My invisible church.” The whole purpose of God’s election is to bring His people safely to heaven; therefore, what He starts He promises to finish. He not only initiates the Christian life, but the Holy Spirit is with us as the sanctifier, the convictor, and the helper to ensure our preservation.

TRUE CHRISTIANS CAN HAVE RADICAL AND SERIOUS FALLS BUT NEVER TOTAL AND FINAL FALLS FROM GRACE. —R.C. SPROUL

I want to stress that this endurance in the faith does not rest on our strength. Even after we're regenerated, we still lapse into sin, even serious sin. We say that it is possible for a Christian to experience a very serious fall, we talk about backsliding, we talk about moral lapses, and so on. I can't think of any sin, other than blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, that a truly converted Christian is not capable of committing.

We look, for example, at the model of David in the Old Testament. David was surely a man after God's own heart. He was certainly a regenerate man. He had the Spirit of God in Him.

He had a profound and passionate love for the things of God. Yet this man not only committed adultery but also was involved in a conspiracy to have his lover's husband killed in war—which was really conspiracy to murder. That's serious business. Even though we see the serious level of repentance to which David was brought as a result of the words of the prophet Nathan to him, the point is that David fell, and he fell seriously.

The apostle Paul warns us against having a puffed-up view of our own spiritual strength. He says, "Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). We do fall into very serious activities. The Apostle Peter, even after being forewarned, rejected Christ, swearing that he never knew Him—a public betrayal of Jesus. He committed treason against His Lord. When he was being warned of this eventuality, Peter said it would never happen. Jesus said, "Simon, Simon, Satan would have you and sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you, so that when you turn, strengthen the brothers" (Luke 22:31-32). Peter fell, but he returned. He was restored. His fall was for a season. That's why we say that true Christians can have radical and serious falls but never total and final falls from grace.

I think this little catchphrase, *perseverance of the saints*, is dangerously misleading. It suggests that the perseverance is something that we do, perhaps in and of ourselves. I believe that saints do persevere in faith, and that those who have been effectually called by God and have been reborn by the power of the Holy Spirit endure to the end. However, they persevere not because they are so diligent in making use of the mercies of God. The only reason we can give why any of us continue on in the faith is because we have been preserved. So I prefer the term *the preservation of the saints*, because the process by which we are kept in a state of grace is something that is accomplished by God. My confidence in my preservation is not in my ability to persevere. My confidence rests in the power of Christ to sustain me with His grace and by the power of His intercession. He is going to bring us safely home.