



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Jude 24-25

“Christendom in the Light of the Epistle of Jude (7)”

TRANSCRIPT

[Audio begins] This is the last of our series of studies in the Epistle of Jude, and we're turning to the doxology which is contained in the last two verses of this epistle. It's a rather interesting conclusion to an epistle. We do not have any personal notes from Jude, no kind of introduction to it, but just the doxology which is unique among the epistles of the New Testament. And so, this is our topic for this morning, and it's the seventh in our series of Christendom in the Light of Jude. So, will you turn to verse 24 of the next to last book of the Bible? And we'll read verse 24 and 25. And the brother of our Lord writes:

"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. Amen."

There is incidentally a little bit of a question of whether these verses form a prayer or a declaration. And I think it is probably more correct, although there is question, to call it a declaration. But at any rate, the difference between the two is not very great. May the Lord bless this reading of his word, and let's bow for a moment in prayer.

[Prayer] Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the ministry of the word of God that has come to us through Jude, the brother of our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for all that has been unfolded to us as by the Holy Spirit as we have read and pondered again this marvelous one-chapter letter that Jude wrote in the midst of great concern over doctrinal and moral apostasy in his day. We thank Thee too, Lord, for the way in which this has been preserved. And as we look about us in the Christian church today, we see the great need that exists for just such a word from Thee. And we know that thou hast preserved it for us to ponder and study and to use as a means of direction of our steps in the day in which we live. We pray for the church of Jesus Christ today. And we ask, Lord, that thou would deliver us from the errors that surround us. Give us, Lord, the wholehearted desire to follow the Scriptures as they portray our Lord and the ministry that he's accomplished for us.

We pray for the individual bodies who meet in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, worshipping the triune God over the face of this globe of which we are a part. We pray for each one of them wherever they may be located. Strengthen them, build them up. And again, Lord, we ask that thou wilt prepare us for the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray for this body of believers and ask Thy blessing upon them as well. Guide and direct them. And enable us, Lord, to fulfill Thy purposes for us as well. We thank Thee for the sick who have requested our prayers and for those who are troubled in various ways who've asked us to pray for them. We pray for each one of them, and we ask, Lord, that thou wilt give them the comfort that only our triune God can give, and the healing which is well within Thy power, we pray that thou would also give in accordance with Thy will. Encourage and strengthen and give, Lord, each one the sense of Thy presence with them and the sense of Thy participation in all of the affairs of their lives.

And then, Lord, we pray for any who may be in our midst today who do not know our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and may the ministry of the word of God in the Sunday school and the ministry of the word services be used by the Holy Spirit to bring true divine enlightenment concerning the things that have to do with eternal life. We pray Thy blessing upon us now as we sing together and as we listen to the Scriptures expounded. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Yesterday I had the privilege of attending two celebrations of Christmas in churches in North Dallas. And one of them was a magnificent presentation, four hundred and fifty people involved in it. All kinds of preparation that I know had gone on for months because I'd had contact with one of the persons involved four or five months ago. And he was involved in the preparation even then, a man who has listened to my tape ministry, incidentally. And it was really a very interesting experience and a very edifying experience. The music was outstanding in most ways. It was directed toward the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ, which I appreciated especially. It wound up with a very effective presentation of our Lord as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and went on for an hour and forty-five minutes. So, it was very entertaining and enjoyable and, I think, had a distinct Christian message that glorified Christ. The words that the pastor spoke afterwards for about ten or fifteen minutes were to the point and fruitful.

And then last night in Believers Chapel in this auditorium, I attended with Martha and with you, many of you I know, the Christmas program. Quite a bit different. And not four hundred and fifty people involved, not an orchestra of about a hundred people involved. But nevertheless, an extremely effective presentation of the things that have to do with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It was interesting to compare the two. And one was large and effective, but the meeting last night I thought was extremely effective. And I for one, and I know that I share this feeling with most of you who have had anything to do with what's involved in a presentation of even a program as small as ours, know the weeks of preparation that lie ahead of it. And we are very grateful for those who have participated, who have planned it, and then who have carried it off. And we have been able to enjoy it.

And I also made the comment to Larry Hairston before the meeting this morning that I think that some of our young people sang better than I have ever seen them sing. And for those of you who missed some of the things that were done last night, you missed something that was really worthwhile. We are very grateful for the labor and then for the blessing of the time together, in

which we sang some of the Christmas carols, listened to some music, heard the young people sing, and then enjoyed the fellowship afterwards. We are appreciative for those who have taken time out of their busy lives to make it possible for us to enjoy it.

Well, now we're turning to Jude verse 24 and 25. And this is the last in our series, as I've mentioned, on the topic Christendom in the light of Jude. The danger of an atmosphere of heresy and immorality is surely something that impresses all of us today if we're thinking about the kind of life in which our lives is set and about the things that are happening in our day. Twenty-five years ago, for those of you who remember, we were told that the sexual revolution had come and that we would look forward to the freedom of it and the blessing of it. And for a number of years afterwards, that was the theme of the things that we read in our newspapers and our periodicals and in some of the conversations of which we participated.

Today, the joy of the sexual revolution does not look so joyous. Over the fast, past few weeks we have had the appointment of a justice of the Supreme Court, and the hearings have fastened upon facets of the sexual life of the one who is now one of our justices. We have had New York City's Board of Education passing out condoms to high school students. Is this the freedom that we expect from the sexual revolution? We have, in addition, had recently now for a number of weeks a case in the legal courts of the state of Florida involving a close relative of a former president of the United States and of a present United States senator. And again the topic has been aberrant sexual behavior on the part of our public figures.

And then we've had in the athletic world, we've had an outstanding instance of the confession of sexual, radical life that has led to the admission of infection by the HIV virus. So I think you can see that what was portrayed for us in the sixties as a glorious time of freedom that lies ahead of us has been anything but that, and now we live in the bondage of failures to follow the principles that are found in Holy Scripture. And so, when Jude writes about the atmosphere or the danger of heresy and immorality, and when we see the atmosphere of it in our day, we surely should

see the hazards of it and pay close attention to what this brother of the Lord has to say with reference to the kind of life that you and I should not only live but should support.

Michael Green, who has been a well-known expounder of Holy Scripture, a teacher at a London Theology Faculty, has said, "It's a dangerous thing to live for Christ in an atmosphere of false teaching and seductive morals. It's a hazardous thing to try to rescue men for the gospel out of such an environment. If you get too near the fire, it will burn you. If you get too near the garment spotted with the flesh, it will defile you." And if we needed any illustration of that, we have surely seen it in recent weeks.

The Christian struggle, which the New Testament calls a warfare, is a warfare against error and evil. And as Jude puts it, that's the position of the mockers that will appear on the scene in the last days. And we may expect them to come, and they will come with not only doctrinal heresy and departure, but they will come with moral heresy and departure as well.

In fact, the Apostle Paul also wrote about it, for he said in 2 Corinthians chapter 10:

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but are divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."

In other words, the Christian struggle is truly a warfare, and we are in that warfare. And one looking over the past twenty-five years would gain the distinct impression that we have suffered some setbacks that are serious setbacks. And therefore, it's the time for us to pay careful attention to what the word of God sets forth for us, for this is the position from which we must fight.

I think one can also say that this Christian struggle or this Christian warfare can best be carried on from the vantage point of the light of the triune God in the Scriptures and from the

vantage point of his glory and majesty. The safety and the victory surely rest in the fundamental fact of the majesty, the glorious majesty, the glorious supremacy of our triune God.

In our meetings, frequently in the informal meetings, one of the choruses that is often sung is the chorus "Majesty." I think of all the choruses that I listen to today, most of them are largely theologically worthless. And it's unfortunate that that is all that our young people in some of their meetings can sing. These worthless choruses in which lines are repeated over and over again, which say the same simple thing and do not really give us any theological undergirding by which we could carry on our lives wisely at all. But I must confess that when the chorus "Majesty" is sung, it's a beautiful tune I think, at least for me, I enjoy that. But it should never be attached to Arminian theology, as so often it is. I'm astonished at times that we can in some of our gatherings, I'm frequently in gatherings in which the theology is Arminian, that "Majesty" is sung, because if there is anything that should connote the God of the Scriptures and the God of sovereign grace, it is "Majesty." And Jude writes his word from the standpoint of the majesty of the God in heaven. Notice he says,

"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, now and forever. Amen."

There's one thing you can say about Jude is that he's a daunting, gallant warrior who doesn't avoid the scandal of Christianity, the claim that its God is absolutely unique. He's not embarrassed to say, "To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ." He does not for one moment suggest that there are gods out there and our God is a little better God. There is only one God. In this, of course, he follows our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who said, "How can you believe when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God."

In John chapter 17 and verse 3 in the high priestly prayer, the Lord Jesus again makes the point that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus is the only God. “This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only genuine God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” So, Jude doesn’t at all withdraw the claim that Christianity is the worship of the one true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this doxology makes that most plain.

That has often been thought by some professing Christian preachers to be an embarrassment, that is, that we have to proclaim that there is only one God and that there is no salvation in any other God. That's no embarrassment. That's the glory of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, that it is only thorough him and his saving work that men may be saved. I do not feel any embarrassment whatsoever. I do not feel any negative feelings about the presentation of the fact that there is one and only one God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is precisely what he has said, "I'm the way, the truth, the life. No man cometh unto the Father but through me." So, Jude is gallant, brave in the day in which he lived to proclaim the same great truth.

Well now, the doxology begins with a kind of cause for it, if we put it that way. "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."

One might ask the question, What was the mood of Jude when he penned this short doxology? Well, I would suggest, while I'm not certain, for this is not stated specifically by Jude, but I would suggest that the mood which caused him to write these words was reflected in the preceding verses in which he has talked about the grievous failures of others. And so it's in the mood of the failure of professors of the truth that Jude gives glory to the great God in heaven.

For example, Israel, Israel called out by the Lord God from Egypt, great miracles performed in their path, the Red Sea opened that they might go through. And then, just a few moments afterwards speaking timewise, this is the same group of people who've experienced the greatest exhibition of the glory of God in the Old Testament, are building an idol. And then having built the

idol, are saying, Aaron and others to the people of Israel, these be the gods that have brought you out of Egypt. So Jude could not help have reflected upon that when he wrote this final doxology.

He must also have reflected upon the fact that the angels, as he says in the 6th verse, "did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, and He has kept them in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day."

And then Sodom, Sodom he calls an example, "Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities round about them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire." Sodom, guilty of rebellion against the Lord God and rebellion in a grossly sexual way incidentally, Jude, thinking of this writes, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless."

I confess that as I read something like this, and I reflect upon my life and my weaknesses, I want to say with others, O God, how can I stand? In the light of the fact that Adam in the garden of Eden did not stand, in the light of the fact that Israel did not stand, in the light of the fact that the angels did not stand, in the light of the fact that Sodom did not stand, how can I possibly stand in fellowship with the Lord God and be delivered from the kind of failure that they manifested in the day in which we live, in which the inadequacies of the sexual revolution and the rebellion reflected in it, those effects around us every day of our lives. Well, I gain comfort from this, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling."

I wonder also if in the mood of Jude, he was not also thinking about the one who had the same name that he has. For you know, Jude's name is really *Ioudas*, and Judas the apostate, his name was *Ioudas*. The precisely same name. In fact, we could have called the one who betrayed our Lord Jude, just as this one, the brother of our Lord is called Jude. Their names are identical. And surely, it's surely within comprehension to think that Jude may have thought of the great apostate, the one on whose grave one could have written "An apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ," but nevertheless, an

apostate who turned away from the Lord Jesus and ultimately betrayed him to his death, the ultimate apostate professor.

Well, when you think of this and you look then at the words: "Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling," what we learn is that the dangers are great. All of us can fall. If these great individuals and others like them can fall, surely we can fall. But at the same time, he can protect us from stumbling, but we need to exercise care and responsible concern as the examples indicate that he has used. In fact, I think of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 in verse 12 now, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."

But he's able to guard us. That word translated "keep" is a word that means to guard, to garrison, so, to Him who is able to guard you from stumbling. Incidentally, this echos the psalmist's descriptions of the disasters from which God has preserved them. If we had time, it would be nice to look at a number of the passages in the Psalms that express this thought, because it's a thought that all Christians who think about their Christian life must surely have constantly in their minds. Lord, deliver me from stumbling. Deliver me from falling after making profession of faith, coming to know, as I think I know, the salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me just read two or three of them, but I'm sure you'll recognize that this is one of the great moods of the psalmists who write. In verse 16 of Psalm 38 we read, "For I said, 'May they not rejoice over me, Who, when my foot slips, would magnify themselves against me.'" That's David in Psalm 38.

And then in Psalm 56 and verse 13 the psalmist again says, "For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, Indeed my feet from stumbling, So that I may walk before God In the light of the living."

In chapter 66 and verse 9 we read, "Who keeps us in life And does not allow our feet to slip."

In Psalms 73 and verse 2 we read, "But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, My steps had almost slipped."

In Psalm 91 and verse 12 we read these words, "They will bear you up in their hands, Lest you strike your foot against a stone."

And then in Psalm 94 verse 18, we'll stop with this, they're other passages that could have been cited, "If I should say, "My foot has slipped," Thy lovingkindness, O Lord, will hold me up."

So, as he has said just above, we may keep ourselves in his love, but only he can really keep us ultimately from stumbling. So, it's not surprising then in the days in which he lived, that he should say, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling," because any Christian who understands anything about the Christian life and Christian experience, knows the possibility of stumbling.

He continues to say, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory." "To make you stand," that's an expression that in the original text suggests a sacrificial offering. And so, the presentation is the presentation of an unblemished sacrificial victim, just as Paul tells us in Romans chapter 12, that that is characteristic of the kind of life that pleases the Lord. "I urge you, therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand," to present us as an unblemished sacrificial victim. One of the great promises of the word of God is that God can defend us from Amalek and the kinds of difficulties that are fleshly in nature as Amalek represented, and he can take us to the Promised Land as well.

He continues. I love this benediction; it's so magnificent to me. "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless." That's our condition to which he is able to bring us, blameless.

Well, what does that suggest to you? Well, it suggests to me things like this. It suggests the fact that by the sovereign grace of God I have been regenerated. God has given life. And the first manifestation of true spiritual life is to believe the word of the gospel. No one can believe the word of the gospel who has not been regenerated. The order is always regeneration, then faith. That's so

plain in the word of God; it's astonishing to me that people who have taught the word of God for years have not seen the point. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: they're foolishness to him: neither can he know them, they are spiritually discerned."

And so consequently there is life necessary before response positively to the Lord God. The mind of the flesh is enmity against God. It's not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. So it should be plain to us that the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit begins with regeneration, the communication of life to his elect people, and they believe. This is the plain teaching of the word of God.

So, to be presented blameless begins there with regeneration. There follows faith in the message concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. There follows the cleansing of the forgiveness of sins and justification, the communication of the gift of righteousness, the perfect imputed righteousness of God in the Lord Jesus Christ which makes us able to stand before God perfectly.

Pardon me, this is Christmastime. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. I'm able to stand in the presence of God with a righteousness perfect, perfectly acceptable to God in heaven. Talk about a gospel, that is good news. But not only that, I'm adopted into the family of God. I'm indwelt by the Spirit of God. And I'm headed for glorification, faultless, blameless, magnificent when you think of what we really are.

You know, when I go to England, one of the things that I puzzled over for a long time, I hate to admit this, it shows you that a man of such great intellect can miss the small things. But you know, when you go to England and you are there for a while, and you walk around, one of the things you're going to see are people bowling. And I watched bowling for a long time, watched it from the sidelines and wondered what was it that was happening to that ball until I learned, I hate to confess it, I'm glad the audience is small this morning, hate to confess it, but I didn't even realize for a long time that the ball had a bias in it. And so it's made to swerve. And bowling is the skill of making that ball go down the grain and go where it wants to even though it has a bias in it.

What a beautiful illustration of a human being. We're born with a bias. The bias is the sin nature. Everyone of us has the bias. And so consequently, it's impossible for us to please God. That's what the apostles tell us. We're born with a spiritual bias. And so to think that in Scripture we read, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory (without bias) blameless (faultless)," it is magnificent. A sacrifice acceptable to God.

Think of Namaan in the Old Testament who had the leprosy. And remember the little Jewish girl who had been taken captive who was the servant of Namaan's wife who suggested that the problem with Namaan might be cured if he would just go down into Israel and have the prophet deal with his bias, which was leprosy. And so you know what happened. Namaan went and Elisha wouldn't even bother to take a look at him. He said just go tell him to wash in the Jordan seven times and everything will be all right.

And Namaan was furious, outraged. Are not the Abana and Pharpar, those rivers of the Syrians much greater than that dirty little stream of Jordan? And one of his servants said, Look sir, if he had told you to do something great, you would have tried to do that. So why not this little thing of going to the Jordan, washing in the Jordan seven times. And Namaan got over his peak, and he went in the Jordan, and he washed seven times, and when he came up, he perfectly clean.

Can you not imagine what happened as Namaan drew near home, and the servants looked out, and called out to his wife, and said the master's coming. I wonder if anything's happened. Is he clean? Does he still have the leprosy? And then, when he came and the leprosy was gone, he was cleansed, magnificent joy in the home of Namaan, this great Syrian general.

Or the maniac that our Lord dealt with, who dwelt out on the land, chin chains. And no one could do anything with him until finally the Lord Jesus dealt with this man. Was filled with demons, so many demons that they were called Legion, one leader Legion but many demons indwelling him. And when the Lord came, they said, Don't have anything to do with us, Jesus. And then finally when it was evident he was going to do something, they said, Let us go into the herd of cows and oxen over there. And they went out. And they rushed down to their death. And the maniac of

Gadara, or the Gerasenes as some of the texts put it, came home with sound mind. Can you not imagine the surprise of his family and his friends to discover this individual, who was totally uncontrollable, is now acting just like an absolutely sound person? This is the kind of thing that the Lord Jesus Christ does.

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, to make you stand in the presence of His glory faultless." And then "faultless with great joy."

Now it's natural to think of the entry of a believer into the presence of the Lord as an entry in fear. But Jude says he's able to give us entrance in joy.

Now he's able to give us that sense of joy. But the Bible speaks of others experiencing this sense of joy as well. We know, for example, that those who've had the oversight over us and have ministered the word of God to us, they too will experience joy when we enter into the presence of God blameless. The Apostle Paul puts it this way in 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 in verse 19 and verse 20, "For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?"

And so, we will joy when we enter the presence of the Lord. Those who have shepherded us will joy when we enter into the presence of the Lord. The angels who rejoice over the salvation of one soul will rejoice in our entrance into the presence of the Lord. The Lord Jesus will rejoice, for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross despising the shame. And actually, the divine Godhead in Zephaniah spoken of as rejoicing also in the future that lies ahead for the saints of God.

And so, the Lord God with his sheep safely folded, all the given ones as the Lord Jesus puts it, the ones that the Father has given to the Son, all of those given ones saved from the lion's mouth of the evil one, all the covenanted believers in the Lord Jesus Christ effectually saved, all the purposes of God consummated, what joy. "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."

I like that statement that Spurgeon refers to an elderly lady who said, "If the Lord Jesus is going to bring me to heaven, he'll never hear the last of it." That's a beautiful response to the gospel message of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now you'll notice he says, "To the only God our Savior." As I say, Jude is not ashamed of the fact that there is just one God. And he speaks of him in his lonely uniqueness as the only God of the universe. Hosea in chapter 13 and verse 4 of his great prophecy of unconditional love puts it this way, "Yet I have been the Lord your God Since the land of Egypt; And you were not to know any God except Me, For there is no savior besides Me." The only God.

Some of the texts add the word "wise," for some of the manuscripts have that, but it's not found here. It is found in Romans 16:27 as I remember. So, "To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

You know, this text could be understood in two ways. It could be understood that through Jesus Christ our Lord are mediated the glory, the majesty, the dominion and the authority of God in heaven. You could read it that way, and in fact, many commentators do. And there is some justification for it.

Or you can read it this way, "To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord," in other words, with what has preceded: God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord. I like that. I think that that suits the tenor of the New Testament a little better than the other which is a bit strange. It may be true, and there is not a great deal of theological significance involved, for both of these ideas are found at least elsewhere in the New Testament. But I like to read this, "To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord." In other words, he's the Savior, but he's the Savior only through Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the only mediator. We cannot talk of salvation if we do not talk at the same time of the agency of the Lord Jesus in that salvation. That's why we celebrate at the Christmas season the incarnation of the Lord Jesus, a fundamentally important, one of the most important steps in the consummation of our Lord's work as Savior. The second person of the divine Trinity becoming man as a step on the way to the accomplishment of our redemption.

The content of the doxology is surely a limited expression, but it's nevertheless great in its limitedness. "To the only wise God our Savior," or "To the only God our Savior, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority." All of the great attributes of our great God, which are the attributes of his fundamental oneness of being, Jude expresses praise to the Lord God for: glory, majesty, dominion and power. His glorious majesty, his might and authority of essential being, what someone has called his awful transcendence, this Jude declares.

And then finally, in the last few words, speaks of the eternal celebration of what we are celebrating now at a specific point in time. He says, "Before all time and now and forever." That's really a striking ending. No salutation or greetings conclude, but the striking expression of the attribution of glory, majesty, dominion and authority to the Savior God through Jesus Christ before all time and now and forever. This threefold division of eternity, which cannot be divided, is expressed by Jude uniquely. Before all time glory, majesty, dominion and authority belong to God our Savior through Jesus Christ. Now all glory, majesty, dominion and authority belongs to him. And unto the ages all glory, majesty, dominion and authority belongs to him forever.

This traditional idea of Jesus Christ yesterday, today and forever is a traditional idea, but this is the only time, so far as I know in the New Testament, in which eternity is expressed in this way. There are some things in the Old Testament that might suggest it, and there are some things in the book of Revelation that come very close to it, but this is unique. "Before all time and now and forever."

Well, let me conclude with just a few pointed comments. I'm left as I meditated on this particular doxology with a great sense of my danger of stumbling, but also a great sense of my safety and security in the Lord Jesus Christ. Without him, we cannot stand. We have a bias that's still within our natures. Without him we cannot stand. With him, we stand upon a rock. Only grace can keep us from hell, but we have grace through the Lord Jesus Christ. "Oh Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself," Hosea said, "but in me is your help."

So, my unsaved friend, if you are in this audience, if the saints need him so, how much more you? If those who have believed in our Lord, and have cast themselves upon him for time and for eternity, still know that they can stumble, and they can fail, how much more you who do not have him? You can destroy yourself, but you cannot save yourself. You cannot make yourself faultless in the presence of his glory, but Jesus Christ can. He's opened the fountain for sin and for uncleanness, and I, with all of the Christians in this audience I know, call upon you, appeal to you, urge you to come to the fountain for sin and uncleanness. Come to the fountain, wash and be clean. May the Lord God accomplish that in your life. Recognizing your lost condition, recognizing what Christ can do for you, come to him. Give yourself to him. Believe in his atoning work for you and rejoice in everlasting life.

Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, what a magnificent doxology the brother of our Lord has given us: Now to him who is able to guard us from stumbling and to present us faultless before Thy presence, Lord, with great joy, not only the joy of heaven but our joy as well. Lord, we are indeed grateful at this time of the year when we reflect upon our Lord's incarnate life and death. O Father, cause us by Thy grace to cling even more closely to our only God and Savior through Jesus Christ. Lord, if there should be someone in this audience who has not yet believed, again we ask: Give them no rest nor peace until they rest in him who saves sinners forever. For his name's sake. Amen.