Eternal Security in Temporal Conflict
Jude 1-2
65-2

We return to our study of the little book of Jude...little book of Jude, just 25 verses, but what a powerful, powerful epistle this book is. This book, as I said last time, gets lost in the shadow of Revelation. But if there's any letter in the New Testament that the church today needs to hear, it's this one...it's this one. The church today is weak and compromising and tolerant and shallow, unwilling largely to give biblical truth its rightful place and certainly disinterested, if not outwardly opposed to going to war to protect the truth. The church today seems to have very little interest in defending the truth against all the assaults.

In the face of that reality as the church gives evidence of having lost its will to fight for the truth, and is therefore more and more encroached on by error, the call of this potent letter comes at a critical time. And you'll notice verse 3 which, in a sense, is the theme or the heart of this letter. "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." It is a battle cry, this is. It is a call to arms, this letter. Jude understands that the times are critical, the truth is under assault and he is endeavoring to call together the people of God to become an army to fight for the true faith.

The times have been critical, as we noted last time, since the Lord came because with His first coming what the Bible calls the "last days" began. We are now living in the last days, the days when deceivers, doctrines of demons, hypocritical liars will pervade in their assaults against the gospel. This is the time when we are to expect apostasy, a falling away, a departure from the truth. And Jude's theme is apostasy, actually apostates. He doesn't really talk about the nature of the apostasy, that is what the doctrinal aberrations are. He is more interested in helping us to spot the apostates by looking at their lives.

Now to further kind of identify what an apostate is, an apostate is a defector from the truth. That is to say someone who has known the truth, been associated with the truth, around the truth, maybe even proclaimed the truth and still purports to do that. They know the truth but they reject it. And apostates often stay within the church. They pretend to serve God but they serve only their sinful desires. They pretend to belong to the church but they belong to Satan's kingdom. They pretend to believe the Bible but they pervert its teachings and use it for their own ends. They pretend to speak the truth, to have deep spiritual insight, even to speak for Christ but they are the agents of Satan who in reality deny the lordship of Christ in His church. What distinguishes apostates from other false teachers is their connection to Christianity. They are those who have known the truth, been exposed to the truth, who stay in some way around the truth and claim to hold to the truth but do not. And as I told you last time, apostasy is an inside job. That's why it's so dangerous. In fact, you will notice in verse 4, and I remind you of this, as he begins to describe these apostates he says, "Certain persons have crept in unnoticed." This is the MO for apostates. They take advantage of the people of God. They take

advantage of their labels, of their connections to the true church.

Verse 12 further defines them as those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts. They're there under the surface ready to tear up, as it were, the ship. In truth, the description of them in verses 12 and 13 is pretty amazing. "They are clouds without water carried along by winds, autumn trees without fruit doubly dead and uprooted." The picture here is that clouds give the hope of rain but these are clouds without water. Trees give the hope of fruit, but these have none. They come along telling you they have some spiritual reality to offer and they have none. They are, verse 13, "Wild waves of the sea casting up their own shame like foam, wandering stars for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever." And over in verse 16 they are described as "Grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts. They speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage. They are...in verse 18...seen as mockers following after their own lusts. They cause divisions, worldly minded, devoid of the Spirit."

Now this gives you the characterization of these apostates. The fact that they come in under the radar, that they come in under the surface of the water, that they creep in unnoticed and then begin their deception makes them very, very dangerous. And if you would notice verse 23, you get a little bit of an idea of how dangerous they are. We are given the responsibility to rescue people, to save others, snatching them out of the fire. In this battle for the truth, we're engaged in rescuing souls from the fire of judgment. And it even says in doing so in verse 23, have mercy with fear. In other words, you go into this battle, you go into this rescue operation with a healthy fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. You go in this very carefully for the reason that you don't want any of the corruption that exists among these apostates to stain you. You hang around apostates and you'll get your clothes dirty. You go in realizing that you can be polluted by this, that your mind can be corrupted, it can lose your confidence. You can begin to doubt and fear and wonder and ask questions. So we're engaged in a battle, we're engaged in a battle for the truth which puts us in direct conflict with those who need to hear the truth and are being exposed to those who are telling them lies. We therefore are engaged in a very close and intimate level in this battle and we have to be very careful because being so close to the enemy in our rescue operation, we can find ourselves polluted by the deceptions that they are being exposed to. So we're in a battle that's going to take some great wisdom and some careful preparation, lest we find our own garments polluted in an effort to rescue other people.

Now back to the beginning for a minute. The book of Jude then becomes a manual for us for waging successfully the war for the truth. As I said, it's a call to arms and since we live in the midst of growing apostasy and are called to engage ourselves in this battle for the truth, we need to know what Jude has to teach us.

Now in the opening verses, Jude greets the Christians to whom he writes and all of us who as believers will read and benefit by this epistle. The greeting is itself very powerful. Listen to this, "Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ....or kept by Jesus Christ...may mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you."

Now last week we took a little bit of a look at that but I can't leave it because there's just too much there. I covered some of it last time, but let me just kind of take you back into that opening greeting because it is very, very important. First of all, Jude, the common name, there are quite a number of them in the New Testament, the Hebrew version is Judah, the Greek version is Judas. Jude here

calls himself a bondservant of Jesus Christ and brother of James and thus he identifies himself. We know it is not Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of Christ. He can easily be eliminated. We know it is not Judas of Damascus mentioned in Acts 9:11. We know it is not Judas Barsabas mentioned in Acts 15:22 for there's no indication that either of these men was the brother of James. We know it is not Judas not Iscariot who was one of the Twelve, also called Labbaeus and Thaddaeus, he had a lot of names. And unfortunately if you have a King James Version of the Bible and you're reading in Luke 6:16 and even in Acts 1:13, Judas not Iscariot or Labbaeus, Thaddaeus, is said to be the brother of James, and that is a problematic rendering. The Greek construction in these verses should be translated "son of James," not brother of James. So this Judas not Iscariot, this Judas who is Labbaeus, Thaddaeus had a father named James, not a brother. The only other Judas you have, or Jude, you have to choose from in the New Testament is indeed the half brother of the Lord Jesus. In Matthew 13:55 and 56 it lists the names of Jesus' brothers, James, Joseph, Simon and Jude, or Judas.

And so, this is the half brother of Jesus because there is another half brother of Jesus named James. Judas, a bondservant of Jesus Christ who is the brother of James. James doesn't need any definition or description, it is the James that everyone knows, the James who is the half brother of our Lord and the James who is the leader of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, a leader really of the Jerusalem Church and the James who wrote the epistle of James. Really all we know about Jude is that he was the brother of James and thus the half brother of Jesus...and I say half brother because Jesus only had half the earthly parents that these men had. He only had an earthly mother, Mary, and God was His Father.

And you might wonder, why doesn't he introduce himself, Jude, the half brother of Jesus Christ? Wouldn't that give him more clout? Why did he say he was a bondservant of Jesus Christ?

Well I think the answer to the question sheds some light on Jude's character. Had he referred to himself as the brother of Jesus, he perhaps could have been accused of boasting and no doubt that was the farthest thing from his desire. He may have rather been ashamed of the kind of brother he was to Jesus through most of his life. Remember that His brothers did not believe in Him and it was not until after the resurrection that they came to believe. Then after the resurrection, the earthly relationship that he had had with Jesus ceased to be the important relationship. It didn't really matter after that what his earthly relationship to Jesus was, all that mattered was what his spiritual relationship to Jesus was and he was a bondservant of Jesus Christ, that took greater precedence than his physical relationship to Him. So he speaks, I think, the way he should speak about his relationship to Jesus. You remember one time when we pointed out last week in the third chapter of Mark, Jesus' mother and brothers were looking for Him and Jesus said, "Well, whoever does the will of God, he's My brother and sister and mother." We know that after the resurrection Jesus appeared to James because 1 Corinthians 15 says that. We know that Jesus' brothers and sisters who had come to believe in Him were in the upper room on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came, Acts 1:14. So there was a transformation but when the transformation came, all that was sort of physical was passed and he was no longer the half brother of this man named Jesus, he was bondservant of the Jesus who was the Christ, the Messiah...a servant of Jesus, Messiah, the Promised Messiah.

And the word servant is *doulos*, bondslaves. He knew what slave meant. He lived in a world of slavery. He was a slave in world of slaves. This was a very familiar way to designate oneself. Paul, Romans 1:1, a bondservant of Christ Jesus, Paul loved that designation, Philippians 1:1, Paul and

Timothy, bondservants of Christ Jesus. And even Peter saw himself the same way, 2 Peter 1:2, "Simon Peter, a bondservant and Apostle of Jesus Christ." And though we as Christians are free from the Law and we're free from its condemnation, we are still slaves to righteousness and slaves to the righteous One. And I love the fact that he began that way. It really suits this epistle so wonderfully because apostates cannot handle that kind of slavery. Apostates cannot handle the true slavery of the regenerate. Look at verse 4 and you will see that. "Certain persons...the apostates...have crept in unnoticed, these who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turned the grace of our God into licentiousness...see...and they deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ." That is to say they never will live under the authority and the lordship of Jesus Christ. They cannot handle this true slavery. They live, as it were, outside the boundaries because false salvation can't restrain the flesh. And so whenever you see an apostate, you look at his life, he will manifest himself. And that will unfold for us all through this epistle.

Jude sets himself then in stark contrast to the apostates. He is a willing slave of Jesus Christ. The apostates will claim the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and turn into license and licentiousness and, in effect, deny the lordship of Jesus Christ over them. And they live, as it were, as if Jesus was not Lord. They live in what they assume to be grace as if they had no responsibility at all. So Jude happily and properly identifies himself as a bondservant of Jesus who is the Messiah and he includes that he is the brother of James, just to give you an earthly identification. And he knows his readers will gladly track that back to the fact that he is the half brother of our Lord Jesus, but that is not the essential reality of his relationship to Jesus anymore.

And after Jude then is properly identified himself, he then properly identifies the believers to whom he writes. And I want you to notice what he says. He says, "you're called, you're loved, you're kept and you're blessed." This is a pretty obvious outline, called, loved, kept, verse 1, blessed, verse 2. This is very important against the backdrop, very important to understand why he does this because we're going to engage our minds in this discussion about apostasy. We're going to be faced with some very important questions. One of the questions that is going to come to mind is this...if all this is going on in the church, if all this corruption and apostasy is escalating and escalating and escalating and escalating, is God really sovereign? Are things running amuck because God really doesn't have control over all of this? And if that's the case, if this thing is out of hand, and if it's so potentially dangerous, we might be engaging in this battle exposed to deadly things and just in the process lose our salvation. But the fact that...listen...we are called, loved, kept and blessed in the midst of an escalating apostasy, protects both the sovereignty of God and the security of believers. Yes, apostasy escalates. Yes, it's dangerous. And that's why he begins by saying, "You have nothing to fear. You're the called, the loved, the kept and the blessed." That's how he begins and look how he ends, verse 24, a final note of encouragement, "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." The bottom line is, he begins by telling us we are the called and we are the loved and we are the kept and we are the blessed and he ends by saying God is able to keep us from stumbling and make us to stand in the presence of His glory, blameless with great joy. So front and back, the emphasis is on the security of the believer...the security of the believer.

In 2 Peter 2 which I said last time parallels Jude a lot, and we'll see that parallel as we go, we see two striking examples of how God protects and delivers the godly who find themselves living in an ungodly culture doomed to destruction. And one of them Peter looks back to is the time of Noah and this is 2 Peter 2:5 to 7. Peter tells us God did not let Noah fall to the horrible evil of his day, but

preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness with seven others...you remember Noah's wife and his three sons and their three wives, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly. God knows who belongs to Him. And then the second illustration in that same passage, he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, but He rescued righteous...whom?...Lot. And then Peter concludes, look at it in verse 9, 2 Peter 2:9, "The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment." God knows how to sort us out. He knows who to punish and who to protect so we can engage in this battle, realizing it's a serious one, realizing it's a dangerous one. We are literally snatching souls out of the fire, as it were, and we have to be careful lest we get stained because we get too close to this. But at the same time we need not fear that God is not sovereign over all of this and we need not fear that somehow the Lord might lose us in the battle. He knows how to rescue the godly. What a great statement. He knows how to keep us from stumbling.

And why are we so protected? The answer right there in verse 1, "Because we are the called, the loved and the kept." Consequently we are the blessed. We are the ones by God the Father called and loved and kept. This is just a tremendous insight into the great, great doctrine of election. And I've taught this enough that I don't want to go back through everything we've said, but I have to give honor to this incredible text. You will notice the word "called" there, to those who are the called, the *kletos*, verbal adjective from *kaleo,* to call. Every time this term is used in the epistles, every time it's used in Revelation, it means the same as chosen. It's a synonym for chosen and it is the main word, it's a verbal adjective, but it's the main word in the sentence. It is at the end of the sentence in the Greek. The other perfect passive participles are in apposition or explanation of this main one. Because we are the called, we are beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ. That's the way you would understand the grammar here. Or you could read it this way, "We are beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ since we are the called." It is this calling that sets us apart and makes us both loved and kept.

Now this idea of being called is really a rich part of the New Testament literature. In Romans 1:1 again, Paul says, "He was called as an Apostle." In verse 6 he talks about the obedience of faith among the Gentiles among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ. I'm called, you're called. You're also beloved, he says, in the next verse, and you're also blessed, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This language is then familiar to any reader of the New Testament. You see the 1 Corinthians again, 1:1, "Paul called an Apostle." And then in verse 2 , "To the church of God in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling....by calling." And down in verse 24, "To those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God." We are the called.

Now in Revelation 17:14, that's an important verse, you can jot that down because it ties these things together. It says here, "These will wage war against the Lamb and the Lamb will overcome them because He is Lord of lords and King of kings," listen to this, "and those who are with Him...believers...are the called and chosen and faithful." Those words belong together. If you're called, you're chosen. If you're chosen, you're faith sustains. Okay? That's really a great text, Revelation 17:14. The called are the chosen are the faithful. If you're called, it's the same as being chosen. If you're chosen, your faith sustains. There's only one time this term is used in the New Testament in a general invitation that means something other than being chosen and that's in Matthew 22:14 where it says, "Many are called, few are chosen." Every other usage of this word is synonymous with the election. This is a settled call. It means to be efficaciously called, as theologians say. That is called with the desired effect that God has predetermined in eternity past.

Now it's helpful for us to get a bit of a look at this, so let me help you with it. There is a general external invitation, no question. There is general preaching of the gospel, general preaching of repentance and the general offer of salvation. Isaiah 45:22 says, "Be ye saved all the ends of the earth." Isaiah 55:6 says, "Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near." These are general invitations. Ezekiel 33:11, "Turn ye, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, turn ye from your evil ways for while will you die?" That's a general invitation. Matthew 11:28, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." That's a general invitation. John 7:37, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." Revelation 22:17, "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come,' and let him that hears say, "Come.' And let him that is thirsty come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." That's a general invitation. And Romans 10 says, "Faith comes by hearing a word concerning Christ. Have they not heard? Yes truly, their sound went out into all the earth and their words to the end of the world." The invitation to salvation has covered the globe. This is a general, external invitation. This is the widest possible exposure of the gospel calling sinners to repentance and faith.

It is illustrated in a story Jesus told in Luke 14, verse 16. He said, "A certain man was giving a big dinner and he invited many. And at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything's ready now.' And they all alike began making excuses. The first one said to him, 'I bought a piece of land, I need to go out and look at it. Please consider me excused.' Another one said, 'I bought five yoke of oxen, I'm trying...I'm going to try them out, please consider me excused.' Another one said, 'I married a wife,...that's a bigger excuse....and for that reason I can't come,'"...couldn't get permission. Verse 21, "The slave came back, reported this to his master." That's an illustration of the general invitation. The salve comes back and says to his master, this is what happened... "The head of the household became angry, said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and the lanes of the city and bring in here the poor, the crippled, the blind, the lame.' And the slave said, 'Master, what you command has been done and still there's room.' And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the highways and the hedges and compel them to come in that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.'" I gave them the opportunity, I gave them the invitation...He's talking about Israel here. Israel received the general invitation and they wouldn't come. And the highways and the byways represent the Gentiles and the outcasts and the church.

And Jesus looking over Jerusalem in Matthew 23:37 says, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest those that are sent to you, how often I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings but you would not." I reached out, I reached out, and you refused. John 5:40, "You will not come to Me that you might have life." Acts 7:51, "You stiff-necked uncircumcised in heart and ears, you do always resist the Holy Spirit."

So here, you see, there are all through Scripture such invitations. And when you preach the gospel, you get two responses...2 Corinthians 2:16 says, "Sometimes the preaching of a truth is fragrance of death to death." Sometimes the preaching of the gospel just takes people from bad to worse. It heightens their condemnation. They go from one bad condition to a worse condition because they now have more knowledge which makes them more guilty which brings upon them greater punishment. And for others, the preaching of the gospel is a fragrance of life to life. People are always responsible for what they do with that invitation. It is a legitimate invitation. A sufficient sacrifice has been made on the cross. The offer is genuine and the offer is legitimate. And to refuse that offer is to bring upon yourself a just condemnation. People are responsible for their response to

God's general external invitations to salvation. Some will respond and believe.

And that takes us to the second category and the category of this concept that is being dealt with here. Not a general call but an efficacious internal call. Not an external call, but an internal call. This is the kind of call that we've been reading about in Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 1, the called. This is not just an invitation extended to them on the outside, this is a moving of God on the inside. This is the work of the Holy Spirit on what the Bible calls "the elect." This is the saving call. You will remember that Paul writing in 2 Thessalonians 2:13 says, "We should always give thanks to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God has chosen you form the beginning for salvation and it was for this He called you through the gospel." He called you because He had chosen you. First comes the choosing, then comes the calling. First the choosing, then the calling. And He called you through the gospel that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ because that's what He chose you for in the beginning, as Romans 8 says, that you would be conformed to the image of His Son. This is a call that the theologians have called irresistible. This is a call not apart from human will, but by the power of God the human will is awakened, given life and sight to embrace this call. And the caller is God. In this call the caller is not the preacher. In the general call, the caller is the preacher or the witness, or the missionary. This is God, 1 Corinthians 1:9, listen, "God is faithful through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son." This is a call from God. This is a call that awakens the dead. You were dead in trespasses and sins, when this call came you were awakened out of your deadness. It is what our Lord was talking about when He said, listen to this, John 6:45, "Every one who has heard the Father comes to Me." When you hear this call, you come. And this call is predicated on the fact that you were chosen. This kind of call, as I said, cannot be resisted.

Listen to 2 Timothy 1:8 and 9. "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord nor of me as prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God...key word God...who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works." In other words, this calling is predicated on anything we have done, it's like God's calling of Jacob over Esau before either of them were ever born, Romans 9. So, this calling has nothing to do what we have done...with what we've done, it is a holy calling not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which is granted us in Christ Jesus...listen to this...before time began. This is a calling predicated on nothing we have done, but according to a purpose and an act of grace predetermined to occur in Jesus Christ from before time began. This is so wonderful. This is the foundation of why we are secure. Our security is not found in anything we do anymore than our salvation is found in anything we do. Our security is found in the fact that from eternity past we have been chosen and we have been chosen unto eternal glory, we have been chosen to be conformed to the image of Christ, we have been chosen to be made righteous, we have been chosen to enter into the glories of heaven and worship there forever and ever. And to bring that original choice to its fulfillment, we must be called and justified, sanctified and ultimately glorified. And nobody gets lost, "All that the Father gives to Me," Jesus said, "will come to Me and I will lose none of them but raise him up at the last day." This is that calling. And if you look at Romans 8, for just a moment, I think it's important to have you see this. In Romans 8 he pulls this word "calling" as I noted a moment ago together with the big scheme of things. Verse 30, "Whom He predestined, these He also called. And whom he called, these He also justified. And whom He justified, these He also glorified." That is just a monumental statement. If you were predestined, you will be glorified because He will call you, He will justify you and He will glorify you.

No wonder the New Testament calls this a holy calling, 2 Timothy 1. No wonder the New Testament

calls this a high calling, Philippians 3:14. No wonder the New Testament calls it a heavenly calling, Hebrews 3:1. It is defined in some amazing ways. In 1 Corinthians 1:9 it says we're called to fellowship with the Son. In 1 Peter 3:9 it says, "We're called to inherit a blessing." In Galatians 5:13 it says, "We're called to freedom." In 1 Corinthians 7:15 it says, "We're called to peace." In 1 Thessalonians 4:7 it says, "We're called to holiness." In Ephesians 4:4 it says, "We're called to hope." First Timothy 6:12 says, "We're called to eternal life." That's the call. It's an efficacious call.

So our security against being washed away in the terrible tide of apostasy is that we are called and whom He calls He justifies, and whom He justifies He glorifies. We are the called. We have nothing to fear. The shackles of sin have been broken. We have been liberated and set free. The blindness has been removed and we see. The oppressing burden of sin has been lifted and we are released. And we who are dead have come to life.

And somebody might say, "Wow, what if I'm not called?" Well since the decree of God is secret, that's not a problem for you. Jesus said in John 6:37, "Him that comes to Me, I'll never turn away." If you don't come, you're responsible. You say, "I don't know how that can be. How can I be responsible to come and yet I can't be saved unless God chooses me? How can I resolve that?" You can't. You cannot resolve that. Don't try. In fact, turn to Romans 9, I'll help you with that, okay? This is going to be good help for you. This is the best help the Bible gives. Everybody asks me this question all the time. I can't understand how human responsibility fits with divine sovereignty. I can't understand how moral accountability fits with election. Well you can understand what the Bible says, right? So would you please notice verse 19 of Romans 9.

Somebody is going to say, "Okay, if God does the choosing, how can He hold me responsible? If I'm not chosen and I'm not called, how can I be responsible?" So you will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? How can God find fault with me? How could He punish me? How could He send me to hell, make me guilty for my sins and hold me guilty if I'm not chosen?" And you know what Paul's answer is? Verse 20, "On the contrary, who are you, O man? Who answers back to God? Shut your mouth." And then he gives this illustration. "The thing molded will not say to the molder, 'Why did you make me like this?' will it?" You know what he says? He says you going to God and saying, "Wait a minute, God, I don't like this deal, is as ridiculous as an inanimate pot asking for an explanation of the way the potter made it. Pots don't talk. Pots don't think. There is an infinite gulf between a pot and a potter, that is a gulf that cannot be bridged. The pot can't get there. Understand? There's an even greater gap between you and God. You have no more right to assume that you need an explanation than a pot does from the potter, there is an infinite gulf. It is out of your capability to grasp. And so what do you do with it? Stop, do not pass Go, do not collect $200, stop at that point and let God be God, right? And shall not the judge of all the earth do right? I can't harmonize all of that, but then again, I'm a pot and why would I expect to? But I do know this, God will do what's right and sinners will perish because of their rejection of a gospel actually presented to them truly offered and we go to heaven because God chose us. I don't know how all that works but I know that's what the Bible says and there's a time when you just stop and leave it with Him.

Well, we are not only called, secondly we are loved, "Beloved in God the Father." This is so wonderful. Some versions say "sanctified," but that's not the best manuscript word. It is beloved in God the Father. We rest safely in the fact that we have been called because we were loved, this is so amazing. It isn't a call of indifference. It isn't a call, you know, it isn't a lottery that got held in heaven. For reasons that are outside of us that may never be known to us, God uninfluenced determined to set His love on us. This is staggering. While we were His enemies we were loved.

Before we ever were born we were loved. And God demonstrates His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, Romans 5:8. We are loved. We are loved. It's a perfect participle that shows that the love was manifested in the past and continues now and in the future. That's what the perfect tense does, in the past and on. We were loved in the past, we were loved in eternity. We were loved in the eternal heart of God in the timeless past when our election occurred. God determined then to set His love upon us and that love toward us was openly demonstrated at Calvary when Christ died as a substitute for our sins. And that love continued on until the time that God convicted us and called us and justified us. And it goes on and it goes on and it goes on and we literally live in that love. We are loved in God the Father. We have entered into a relationship with God and it's a relationship of love. He loves us so much that He made us His own son, as it were. He loves us in the beloved one, Christ and we are joint heirs with Christ.

First John 3, we studied it a few months ago, 1 John 3 verse 1, "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us...See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God." This is such a great love. It actually in the original, it literally says, "See what kind of love," *potapon(?)*, the classical Greek means what...from what country? From what tribe or from what race? In other words, this is a love that's alien to us. I mean, God loves us with a love that must come from another race. So foreign it's outside the human realm. I mean, people just don't love somebody they don't know, they don't just choose to love people independent of how those people act, or particularly independently of how those people treat them. It's an unearthly love, it's a...it's a kind of love that comes from somewhere else.

In fact, I would like to show you...I can answer the question, what kind of love is it? Look at John 17 and I'll show you what kind of love it is. John 17, because He tells us what kind of love it is, verse 23, the Lord here is praying, He's praying that all of those who belong to Him will be brought to glory and that the Father, verse 22, would give the glory which He had given to Him to us that we'd all be one, just as the Father and the Son are one. This is incredible. "I in them and Thou in Me that they may be perfected in unity." The Son desires for us that we be brought to heaven and literally become one with God the Father and God the Son. And verse 23 then says, "That the world may know that Thou didst send Me and didst love them even as Thou didst love Me." What kind of love is it that God has for us? It's the same kind of love He had for whom? His Son....staggering. It's one thing to love the perfect second member of the Trinity, it's something else to love sinner. But God loves us with the same love that He loves His Son with. And He loved His Son so much that He brought about the whole redemptive story to get a bride for His Son who could serve His Son and adore His Son and worship His Son and love His Son forever and ever. It's just staggering to me...I want them to know that You love them as You love Me. "Father...verse 24...I desire that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am in order that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me, for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world." I want them to know the love with which You love Me and I want them to know that as You loved Me before the foundation of the world, so You loved them before the foundation of the world. Wow!

And then verse 26, "I've made Thy name known to them and will make it known and the love where with Thou didst love Me may be in them and I in them." Staggering stuff, folks. When you talk about being loved by God, you're talking about being loved....what manner of love? The kind of love with which the Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father...a love from all eternity. Staggering. Ask yourself, how secure am I in that love and let Paul answer it..."What shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Nothing. This is an eternal love. What do you think is going to separate the Son from the loving Father? Nothing...nothing. He loves us the way He loves His own Son and nothing will

ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Romans 8:39.

Thirdly, Jude says we are kept. And some translations, NAS says, "For," I prefer "By," it's a dative in the original language, could kind of go either way, but I think it's better to see the expression here meaning by than for. We're kept by Jesus Christ. Oh, that opens up a whole world of study. It's from the word *tereo,*to watch, guard, keep. We are kept by Jesus Christ. And that's again John 6, "All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me and Him that comes to Me I'll never turn away." And then Jesus says in John 6, "I'll lose none of them but raise them up at the last day." He knows who are His. John 10, I think it's about verse 28, yes, "My sheep...verse 27...hear My voice, I know them, they follow Me....listen to this...I give eternal life to them and they shall never perish and no one shall snatch them out of My hand, no one. 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." Once you're in the Father's hand and the Son's hand, nobody can take you out, you are kept and you are kept by Jesus.

How? Well first of all, because you are a love gift from the Father to the Son, He keeps you because that gift from the Father is an expression of the Father's love and therefore has infinite and eternal value. You don't really think, do you, that Jesus who is completely sovereign and omnipotent is going to lose someone who was given to Him as a love gift from the Father? And if the Father loves us and the Son loves us the way they love each other and we're caught up in that love and nothing can ever change that love, by what would we ever been lost? And it is also true that when any accusation is ever brought against us that bring about our salvation into jeopardy, we have a great High Priest who intercedes for us at the right hand of the Father. First Peter 1:5 says we are protected by the power of God...protected by the power of God. What does that mean? There's no greater power. If God holds us, there's no power that can break His hold...none. And Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us before the throne of God. That's Hebrews 7:25 . "And if any man sins...1 John 2...we have an advocate with the Father, a lawyer for our defense." And 1 Peter 3:18 says, "Jesus suffered the just for the unjust...listen to this...that He might bring us to God." He didn't just suffer to make sure that we had our sins forgiven temporarily, He suffered in order that He might ultimately bring us to God. That's glorification.

Then He gave us the Holy Spirit. Second Corinthians 5:5 is a guarantee, pledge, *arrabon*, engagement ring, seals us. You're talking about being kept. Jesus keeps us by interceding for us. Jesus keeps us by His power, never letting anything come upon us that is more then we can bear. Jesus keeps us by giving us His Spirit as a guarantee. Jesus keeps us by loving us as a gift from the Father and the Father keeps us because His power cannot be overcome.

So, it's a tough battle, it's frightening, it's fearful, it's dangerous, but you can join the army, folks. Are you ready for this one? There are no casualties in this army. Nobody perishes, nobody perishes. We win and we all go into glory together.

One other thing. We are the called, the loved, the kept and the blessed. See it in verse 2 and I won't take this all apart but just a comment or two. And Jude says, "May mercy and peace and love not be yours but be...what?...multiplied to you." May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you because you're the called and the loved and the kept. The verb here, *plathuno*means to be increased. May you just have a constantly increasing amount of this. It's like Peter said, 1 Peter 1:2, "May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure." Or 2 Peter 1:2, "Grace and peace be multiplied to you." It's the same thing. It's...it's the prayer and the pledge and the promise that no matter how difficult the battle is, no matter how hard, no matter how threatening it is, you're going to not only

survive but you're going to experience multiplied blessing. And mercy is part of it.

Now if you could...if you could lose your salvation, it would have to be due to sin. Is that right? It would have to be due to sin. Somebody could say, "Well if you sin you might lose your salvation." That's what people say who believe that. But whenever we sin, God multiplies...what? Mercy. God is rich in mercy. And I love Romans 9:23, he says that God has made known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy. Do you know what a vessel of mercy is? Do you know what a vessel is? It's a cup or a glass or a bowl. And God says that's what you are. You're a bowl into which I just keep pouring mercy. What a great idea. Just keep pouring it in and pouring it in and pouring it in. And you can always come to the throne of grace, Hebrews 4:16, to find mercy. So isn't it wonderful that we are blessed with multiplied, multiplied, multiplied mercy for all of our sin? And not only that, peace. Peace in every situation multiplied peace, My peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you, not as the world gives give I unto you, let not your heart be troubled. Do you believe in God? Believe also in Me. I'm preparing a place for you, in My Father's house there are many rooms. Rest.

Paul says in Romans 15:13, "My the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace." And when trouble comes into your life, He pours out peace. When sin comes into your life He pours out mercy. You're a vessel of mercy and you're in some sense a vessel of peace. And thirdly he says, "And may love be multiplied to you." Romans 5:5 says, "The love of God is poured out within our hearts." Whenever we lack mercy, He pours out mercy. Whenever we lack peace, He pours out peace. Whenever we lack love, He pours out love. He's just continually multiplying blessing. So here we are, it's not as if we're going to get into this battle. You say, "Ah okay, verse 1, we're going to survive, we're going to survive. I can see us, we're going to get through by the hair of our chinny-chin-chin, you know, we're going to barely get through. We're going to survive, we're not going to lose our salvation." That isn't the way to look at it. Get into battle, fight for the truth, understand that you're going to triumph in the battle because you're the called, the loved and the kept and know this, in the process it's not going to be a meager existence, it's going to be a lavish existence because as you go through this, all the time God is going to be multiplying whatever mercy you need, whatever peace you need, and whatever love you need. And I will tell you this, the more of that you need, the more of it you will experience, right? Now if that doesn't charge you up to get on this list, I don't know what would.

Apostasy is present in the church and it's going to get worse. It's bad now. You have nothing to fear. You're secure in Jesus. And more than that, you're not just called and loved and kept, but as you indicate your willingness to be faithful, you're going to have a multiplication of everything you need of God's mercy and God's peace and God's love.

Lord, there is much more to say about this and it's so wonderful and so rich. But that's enough for now. Thank You for these grand and glorious truths, that just overwhelm us. We are grateful. What can we say? Make us faithful in Your Son's name. Amen.

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