

Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

Volume 31, Number 13

March 30, 2014



God is Able

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 24–25, KJV 1900)

Scripture consistently teaches a balanced message of truth for the lasting, reliable benefit of those who go to it with hungry, believing minds. Its message is clear, not buried in endless mystical symbolism.¹ Few examples could more clearly than our study passage draw the line between simple, straightforward interpretation of Scripture and one or another mystical meaning. The only limit to the Alexandrian view of Bible interpretation is the limits of one's imagination. However, Scripture makes the point clearly. Man's imagination is not a reliable source of anything spiritual or right. (Genesis 6:5; the point was true before the flood, and it is no less true today)

Jude deals as directly as Peter (2 Peter second chapter) with the obvious fact that false teachers exist, and they often find fertile soil in naïve, unlearned believers who will abandon reliable Biblical truth in favor of imaginative errors. If error

¹ Augustine held to the Alexandrian (All of Scripture is presented in allegorical, symbolic form) view of interpretation. He interpreted the parable of the Good Samaritan according to the Alexandrian allegorical method. "The man who fell into the hands of robbers is Adam. Jerusalem is heaven, and Jericho signifies man's mortality. The robbers are the devil and his angels who stripped man of his immortality. In beating him they persuaded him to sin, and in leaving him half dead the devil and his angels have left man in a condition in which he has some knowledge of God but is yet oppressed by sin. The priest represents the Law, and the Levite represents the Prophets. The Good Samaritan is Christ who, in bandaging the man's wounds, seeks to restrain sin. Oil is hope and wine is a fervent spirit. The man's donkey is Jesus' incarnation, and the man being placed on a donkey pictures his belief in the incarnation of Christ. The inn is the church. The next day pictures the Lord's resurrection, the two coins represent either the two precepts of love or this life and the life to come. The innkeeper is the Apostle Paul." (Zuck, Roy B., **Basic Bible Interpretation**, (Victor Books, SP Publications, 1991), p. 216) Here we have a classic example of unbridled human imagination overruling any meaning God might have intended in this lesson? ("Who then is my neighbor?")

exists, and if sincere believers at times follow those who teach error, what do we make of God in these situations? Is He helpless on the sidelines? Can He not prevent the promoters of error from their insidious spiritual cancer? In Verse 3, Jude reminds us of the necessity for us to work at maintaining the faith once delivered to the saints. None of us is immune to deceit or error. God instructs us regarding the "...common salvation," as well as the need to earnestly contend for the faith so as to avoid the snares of the many false teachers who abound. Do we use His resources?

To "earnestly contend" urges a strong and consistent effort, not an occasional or passing concern about false teachers. Along with Jude, Peter prophesied in 2 Peter 2:1 that many false teachers would come in our age just as they abounded in the Old Testament era. God is not responsible for our sinful choices, either moral or in the faith. And when we do fall, either morally or in our faith, in what we believe, we must face the man or woman in the mirror. We cannot blame God for our own mindless abandonment of the faith "...which was once delivered unto the saints." We, not God, are responsible. Had we used the knowledge and truth that God gave us in Scripture, as well as His law written in our hearts and minds, we would have readily distinguished truth from error and would never have entertained error. (Isaiah 59:1-2) The checkered past of church history records the fickle stream of various beliefs that came and went, even as Biblical truth remained a quiet, peaceful, but ever-present reality for the faithful. (Ephesians 3:21)

Our study passage takes us to a place far above our daily struggles of mind and heart, a place where God rules and prevails, a place where we shall eventually join with Him in this precious "...glory with exceeding joy." In either contemporary English or in first century common Greek, "and" or its first century equivalent may be additive or emphatic. An example of the additive use of "and"; Jim and Tom went to the market. The sentence adds two names, Jim and Tom, to the common action taken. An example of the emphatic use of "and"; John's attorney called the family together to read John's last will and testament. The attorney didn't read two documents, but one. He read a document that bears witness in legal form to John's personal intent

for distribution of his estate after his death. In either use of the connective word, the two items or persons joined by “and” have something in common.

Our study passage connects two thoughts with “and.”

1. God is able to keep you from falling.
2. God is able to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

At the Second Coming, Jesus will present His chosen people to the Father, “Behold I and the children...” (Hebrews 2:13) If our presentation to the Father in glory with exceeding joy occurs at the Second Coming, the logical implication of “and” teaches us that God is able to keep “us,” all of the “us” included in His chosen family, from falling and losing the final outcome of His will and work, our standing with Him before the Father “...faultless...with exceeding joy.”

When Paul warned Timothy that profane and vain babblings are not nearly as harmless as the unlearned believer might think, but that they lead to ever increasing ungodliness and errors in what people believe, he made the same point that Jude makes in our study lesson. Jude reminds us that God is able to keep us from falling. Paul reminds us that the most convincing false teacher may and does overthrow the faith of some of the Lord’s children. Their present stumbling and falling into the false teacher’s error does not compromise the Lord’s keeping them safe from final or eternal ruin.

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. (2 Timothy 2:19)

We might observe someone who appears to blindly and wholly believe the most egregious of errors and ponder that person’s spiritual standing with the Lord. However, despite the false teacher’s influence and the gullible child of grace’s stumbling and falling into that error, the Lord still knows His own and shall not surrender even one of them in the end. He shall claim them all when He comes again.

Because of God’s law imprinted in our hearts and minds, we long for the day of His return. We confront our sins and grieve over them. Despite the grief, we often fall yet again into the snare and must pick ourselves up, confess our sins to the Lord, and try to grow stronger in grace so as to avoid falling again. At best when compared to the perfect model of God’s righteousness and truth, we walk a checkered, staggering course. As you honestly—and painfully—assess your own besetting sins, your own moments of spiritual failure, you think of that glorious day when the Lord shall raise your body, that same body in which you sinned, but He shall

raise it without sin. In the resurrection, you shall no longer stumble, falter, and fall into the tempter’s snare. He shall present you “...faultless before the presence of his glory.” And He shall rejoice. But don’t stop. As He presents you faultless before the presence of His glory, after untold eons with Him in glory, you shall still be as faultless as the moment He raised you from the grave. Ah, and not only shall He rejoice with exceeding joy at His glorious and finished work in your redemption, but you too shall rejoice with exceeding joy!

...be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Scripture commands us to live our lives so as to glorify our God and Savior, in both our body and our spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) And His grace within teaches us to do so. (Titus 2:11-14) Yet we shall in that final glory do fully and perfectly what we only did imperfectly in this life. That is the weight of “...both now and **ever**.”

My friend, not only shall we no longer struggle with sin and unbelief in that day, but there shall be no false prophets there. If the false prophet was a deceived child of grace, he shall then know the truth, and he shall then seek to praise God, not gain followers to himself. If the false prophet was not a child of grace, he shall be securely locked away where he can no longer deceive and corrupt the faith of any child of grace again.

...glory and majesty, dominion and power. The word combinations are unusual. **Glory** defines our worship and praise to God. True worship only occurs when redeemed people lift up blood-washed hearts in grateful praise to God’s glory. **Majesty** reminds us that He deserves the glory that we ascribe to Him. When we glory in ourselves or other people, our glory is vain and vainly misdirected. When we glory in God, our glory is legitimate. **Dominion** refers to His rule over His created universe and His glorious rule in heaven. Satan carries on a disruptive turmoil against God and His people in this world, but his power is limited. He never wins in the end. He may win a skirmish here and there, but the last, epochal battle shall witness his utter, final defeat. **Power** reminds us that our God does none of these things from the base of weakness or incompetence. Jude reminds us at the beginning of Verse 24 that God is “able.”

We shall praise our God gloriously in heaven. Why not begin the process today in the here and now. That is Jude’s intent with “...**now** and ever.” All of God’s glory, majesty, dominion, and power are not reserved for heaven. He deserves them all now. He commands them now. Shall you and I be among the blessed people who so worship Him now? What a glorious place to be!

Little Zion Primitive Baptist Church
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Worship service each Sunday
Joseph R. Holder

10:30 A. M.
Pastor