



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

“The Common Salvation”



The subject Jude had to leave aside temporarily in order to contend for the faith.

The synopsis of a sermon preached by Rev. Ivan Foster in Kilskeery Free Presbyterian Church on Lord’s Day evening, 1st February 2004.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, Jude 3.

Having considered Jude’s call to contend earnestly for the faith last week, when we issued a warning against the ecumenical movement and the so-called “Christian unity” services, I thought that we should return to this portion and consider the matter he had intended writing to them about, until he was overtaken by events and found it necessary to issue the powerful warning against evil men and their false doctrines that his epistle is comprised of. While it is necessary for a minister to mount a defence of the gospel against those who would seek to corrupt its purity and deceive their hearers regarding the purpose and will of God, it is absolutely necessary for the minister to present to all and sundry the message of salvation. Let us learn something very important at the beginning of this message.

I. THERE IS ONLY ONE SALVATION

Jude was going to write about the “common salvation.” It is a salvation that is common to all ages, all nations and all men who are true believers. God did not introduce a “new” salvation with the beginning of the New Testament age. That believed by Abraham for his salvation is the same basis for the faith of the present-day believer. We here tonight are linked to the believers throughout the ages by a faith in a common message of salvation.

1. There is a common Christ. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever,” Hebrews 13:8. He has not, will not, cannot change. He is the immutable One. We may say of Adam and Eve that they believed in the very same Christ as we believe in here tonight. The Lord Jesus is the only Redeemer of those who are the recipients of God’s mercy. All who enter heaven have done so and will do so by the merits of Jesus Christ alone. The Lord Jesus said to the Jewish leaders, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad,” John 8:56. When Moses and Elijah stood with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, Matthew 17: 1-8, neither of the two men required an introduction to the Saviour. They both knew Him of old! Modern religious thinking would differ with Jude. There are those who would claim that believers in Buddha, Mohammed and the many other false saviours and false religions this world has invented, will all be in heaven by virtue of their faith. That is not the teaching of the Bible.

2. We share a common choosing. The Christian has been chosen unto salvation. “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth,” 2 Thessalonians 2:13. The basis for God choosing Paul and choos-



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ing you, Christian, is common — free grace. It is the motive also behind the choosing of Adam, Isaac, David and all the host of those who presently surround God's throne in heaven. All of God's actions toward His people are born of free grace. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins," Isaiah 43:25. (See also Isaiah 48:9).

3. We share a common covering. Consider these words of Paul. "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference," Romans 3:22. What is it that gives the believer standing in God's presence? What is that makes a guilty vile sinner acceptable to God? The covering of the righteousness of Christ. Every boy and girl who is trusting in the Lord Jesus, every adult in this gathering, just like the saints of God in heaven, are covered in the robe of Christ's righteousness. In the old Levitical system of offerings, every Israelite was required to give an offering of money into the treasury. Consider God's command on this matter. "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls," Exodus 30:15. Rich or poor, prince or pauper — all had to give the same amount. It matters not what our social standing may be, there is only one covering that fits us for God's presence — the blood and righteousness of Christ.

4. We share a common code. "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God," Galatians 6:16. We are not left to make up our own rules as to how a Christian should act and speak. That rule is God's Word. Many today believe that believers may virtually do as they like and make up their own standards as they go along. There is no need, they would tell us, to be conformed to the standards of our forefathers. Not so. If our forefathers were living by the Word of God, then that is still the rule that governs us today.

5. We share a common communion. You are all aware, I am sure, of the imagery used by the Saviour in John 15 where He likens His relationship with His people to that of a vine with the branches all intimately united and being fed and supplied by that union. This truth was repeated by Paul. "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God," Colossians 2:19. All the body, every believer in every age, is linked to Christ and thus sustained and nourished by their fellowship and communion with Him.

II. THIS COMMON SALVATION WAS WROUGHT OUT BY THE TRIUNE JEHOVAH

Father, Son and Holy Spirit were equally involved in our salvation.

1. The Father sanctified. Consider what verse 1 says. "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father". The word sanctified means "to set aside." Believers were chosen of the Father and set aside as subjects of His grace and mercy. That was made abundantly clear by the Saviour in John 17:6. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word." Those that were set aside in eternity past will be visibly set aside in time and throughout all the eternity to come. They will be drawn out of their sin and rebellion to Christ by the Father. "No man can come



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to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him," John 6:44. The final act of sanctification will be our entrance into glory. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," Matthew 25:34.

2. The Son preserves. "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ," verse 1. Christ by His death has preserved His people from everlasting hell and will preserve them until everlasting heaven. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day," John 6:37-40. Thus Christ saves and keeps His people. "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand," John 10:28. What a glorious gospel we have!

3. The Holy Spirit calls. "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called," verse 1. Is it not interesting that while we have the work of the Holy Spirit mentioned here, we do not have His name mentioned. That is because "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come," John 16:13. We live in a world where Charismatics have elevated the name and person of the Holy Spirit above that which He would desire. I believe that the emphasis that some place upon His work is quite contrary to the mind of the Spirit and is an offence to Him! There is a reverse to that of course. Some hardly give place at all to the work and person of the Holy Spirit and that too is wrong and offensive. Let us note then just what work the Holy Spirit undertakes within the Covenant of Redemption. "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours," 1 Corinthians 1:2. The Holy Spirit calls the elect from self and sin to Christ and holiness and the instrument He uses is the gospel. "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Thessalonians 2:14. The Triune Jehovah is engaged in the salvation of sinners.

III. WHOLE-HEARTED EARNESTNESS OUGHT TO BE OUR RESPONSE TO THE MESSAGE OF THE COMMON SALVATION

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation."

1. The preacher ought to be diligent in presenting and promoting the gospel. Out of his love for the people of God, Jude acted. That diligence (the word means business-like care, 2 Corinthians 8:16) is what Paul manifested in his pastoral care of the flock of God. "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." 2 Corinthians 12:15.



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2. Christians ought to be earnest in protecting and preserving the gospel. It was delivered unto you, the saints for keeping. The gospel is given into our hands. It is not the invention of Christians and therefore must not be tampered with by them. It is not the property of Christians to be disposed of and used as they wish. It is a sacred trust for which we will be required to give an account one day. "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD," Psalms 147: 19-20. It was given once. It is not given repeatedly or upgraded or altered. It was given once for all. We are to continue in it. "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Timothy 3: 14-15. We must preserve it for ourselves, our children and for the generations unborn.

3. Sinners ought to be diligent in obeying the gospel. The sinner's state without the gospel is given in verse 23. "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."

a. Sinners are in the fire. The fire of hell is at your heels and you know it not. There is but a step between you and hell. How insensitive is the sinner! As the Christian has eternal life begun within him, even so has the wrath of God begun for you. It hangs over your head. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John 3: 36.

b. They need to be forcibly removed from danger. The sinner cannot save himself. He needs to be seized and carried forth from the danger he is in.

c. This can only be accomplished through the gospel. Those who refuse the gospel, refuse the only life-line to heaven. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him," Hebrews 2: 3.

Sinner, heed the gospel's warning and be saved from wrath to come.