

The Doxology

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Jude ends his letter with a great doxology of praise to God
2. aim – to cause us to look to God to keep us from stumbling and to present us blameless before him
3. passage – Jude 24-25

b. outline

1. The Nature of the Doxology
2. The Substance of the Doxology
3. The Purpose of the Doxology

c. opening

1. a **summary** of the letter at its closing (**21 sermons** over **6 months** in **20 hours** of preaching)
 - a. written by Jude, a half-brother of Jesus, to an early church, c. 60AD
 - b. originally his intention was to write about an element of our “*common salvation*”
 - c. but, redesigned because he found it “*necessary*” to appeal to them to “*contend for the faith*” (**v. 3**)
 - d. because, “*certain people*” (**i.e.** false teachers) had infiltrated the church, who “*pervert*” the true gospel of grace into a message of “*sensuality*” (**v. 4**):
 1. they are “*designated*” for condemnation, like those who rebelled against Jesus amongst the Israelites, amongst the angelic host, and in Sodom and Gomorrah (**vv. 5-7**)
 2. they make up a gospel out of their imaginations, they place physical happiness above spiritual holiness, and ignore the evil spiritual realm *from which they are being manipulated* (**vv. 8-10**)
 3. they teach that we can come to God on our own terms, they twist the word of God to suit their selfish ends, and they make the gospel self-centered; they are worthless teachers (**vv. 11-13**)
 4. they (ultimately) turn people away from even Christ himself, denying what *he* has revealed as the core message of Christianity – they remake the faith *in their own image* (**vv. 14-16**)
 - e. so, Jude, reminding his readers of these “*scoffers*,” commands them to “*keep yourself*” (and others) in the love of God, building up your faith, praying, and anticipating his return (**vv. 17-23**)

I. The Nature of the Doxology

Content

a. the definition of these verses

1. **note:** these verses are often considered a *benediction*, but they are actually a *doxology*
 - a. benediction = a closing prayer or charge at the end of a religious service in which a blessing is pronounced over the congregation so that the people are sent forth to *live out* that blessing
 1. **i.e.** you have experienced the joy of singing unto the Lord, voicing your prayers to him, giving your gifts to him, and hearing of his greatness and his promises in the reading and preaching of the Word ... therefore, go now and *live* as those who have received much from God
 2. **LOW:** although the words of **vv. 24-25** can be *used* as a benediction, Jude is not *explicitly* charging his readers (**i.e.** he did that in **vv. 17-23**) – he is *concluding* his thoughts by offering *praise to God* in the form of a doxology
 - b. doxology = a statement of praise unto God in which a specific area of his nature, power, and purpose are highlighted (**e.g.** “praise God *from whom all blessings flow*”)
 1. *doxa* = glory; *logos* = to articulate; to speak; to reveal; to make known
 2. **e.g.** “*the glorious ones*” (*doxas*; **v. 8**) = a noun meaning glory; honor; splendor; might; praise; greatness; lit. the glorious; those possessing glory by virtue of their position and power
 3. **e.g.** “*the Word*” made flesh (*logos*; **John 1:14**) = the full revelation of God’s nature, power, and purpose in the person Jesus Christ; God “speaking” through his Son (**Hebrews 1:2**)
 4. doxology = to articulate praise to God for who he is and/or what he has done

b. the reason for these verses

1. **IMO:** the *best possible* ending to this letter – an act of praise unto God *which would encourage and strengthen* his readers while (at the same time) *pointing them to a proper view of his subject*
2. **thesis:** the perseverance of the saints (in the face of immense pressure from those who would falsify the gospel) is actually a *divine work of preservation by God to bring glory to himself*

II. The Substance of the Doxology

Content

a. the conjunction

1. “now” (*de*; in all except NIV) = a logical transitional conjunction; and; and then; and now; a marker of addition to or summary of a preceding statement; lit. *the next thing to say* (e.g. **my frequent use**)
2. **i.e.** based on what has come *before*, let me “now” add to (or summarize) my point
3. **ITC**: the *immediate* aspect of the letter (**see vv. 20ff**) in light of its *entirety* (**see above**)
4. **IOW**: Jude *finishes* the command to persevere by making a statement *that clarifies his main point*
 - a. **question**: how many of you, in hearing the command to “keep yourself in the love of God,” thought, “what if I *fail* to keep myself in the love of God” – how is it possible to do that, knowing who I am?
 - b. the doxology answers that question: *it’s not about you (or your ability) – it’s about God!*

b. the structure

1. the doxology consists of three (3) parts:
 - a. two (2) **identification** clauses – both begin with “to” – to *whom* is Jude referring?
 1. the first clause is the generic “to him”, the second clarifies it with “to the only God”
 2. the first to identify God as *able to do* something; the second to identify God *as* our Savior
 3. **IOW**: who is the *object* of glory – who is the *one* being praised for his glory?
 - b. one (1) **attribution** clause – beginning with “be” – what is Jude *attributing* to the one he identifies?
2. the structure of this doxology is *basically similar* to the phrase “to God be the glory”

c. the first identification clause (v. 24)

1. Jude begins by identifying God as the *primary cause* of our perseverance in faith
2. “*stumbling*” = to trip; to fall over; lit. to miss something that causes us to fall, particularly into apostasy
 - a. not *simple* sin, but the kinds of sin that cause a person to fall such that he cannot be restored
 - b. **e.g.** Jesus as the “*stumbling stone*” to the Jews (**Romans 9:31ff cf. Isaiah 28:16**)
“Because they did not pursue it [righteousness] by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, as it is written, ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.’”
 1. the Jews “fell” away because they “missed” Jesus for who he really was – Yahweh incarnate
 2. **i.e.** for us, temptations (**e.g.** doubt) that fester and cause us to fall away (apostatize)
 - c. Jude identifies God as the One who is able to keep you from stumbling – he is the One who keeps the elect from falling into gross sin and apostatizing (**John 6:39**)
3. “*blameless*” = without defect; without blemish; above reproach; lit. spiritually perfect
 - a. not *perfectionism* (in this world), but before his throne of grace *justified* and *glorified*
 - b. **i.e. the gift that God gives to himself** as the purpose of his decree – his eternal intention to create, redeem, and glorify a people *for himself* – to *present* his Son with a glorious “bride”
 - c. Jude identifies God as the One who presents the redeemed to himself in glory – he is the One who takes a people for himself as an eternal gift of glory
4. “*with great joy*” = the joy of God in holding a people and presenting them to himself
 - a. “*joy*” (**from James 1:2**) = the long-term recognition of true value in any given situation that gives us a strong sense of assurance, even when our emotional state runs contrary to that assurance
 1. **i.e.** the long-term intention of God through the realities of our lives *now* – even though we don’t *look* “glorified” (and continue to struggle, both with sin and with circumstances), God is looking beyond the “moment” to his eternal purpose, and knows the *long-term* reality that will occur
5. **Jude identifies the object of his praise as the God who preserves his own, who carries them all the way to himself faithfully, to his great purpose in them, and with great joy**

d. the second identification clause (v. 25a)

1. Jude continues by identifying God as our *Savior*, through the One who accomplishes this work
2. “*our Savior*” = the salvific work of the *entirety* of the Godhead, not just the Son
 - a. the initial use of “*theos*” (rather than “*Christos*”) points to the fullness of God as “*Savior*”
 1. **i.e.** the Father *decrees* to save and covenants with the Others to accomplish it, the Son takes the task of redemption to himself, and the Spirit *applies* that redemption in time and space
 2. or, the *entirety* of salvation is the work of God – from decree (election) → creation → incarnation → calling → preservation → glorification
3. “*through Jesus Christ our Lord*” = the *means* of our redemption is “centered” in the work of the Son
 - a. the Son is both the *means* of our redemption and the *focus* of it – it is the Son who “receives” the glory of the eternal decree from the Father by both *saving* a people and *receiving* them as his own
4. **Jude identifies the object of his praise as the God who saves his own, who accomplishes the entirety of the work to draw a people to himself and to glorify the Son**

III. The Purpose of the Doxology

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a. the attribution clause (v. 25b)

1. **note:** these are not things “given” to God *by us* (per se) – they are attributes of God **that we recognize in him** – they are things that Jude *acknowledges* that are true of God as he considers the reality of God preserving a people to the end of their glorification in his presence
 - a. **i.e.** they are a **testimony in praise** to who God truly *is* by virtue of what we have seen him *do*
2. “glory” (**see above**) = honor; splendor; might; praise – what God *deserves*
 - a. to give glory to God is to recognize that he is **greater than all else** – that he is *infinitely higher* in substance, purpose, and action than anything else
 - b. **i.e.** God’s glory is his *infinitely high nature* above all other things
 - c. **note:** the glorification of humans is for them to be raised *above all other created things* (including angels!) to the state of holiness designed by the Creator in his decree as a “communication” of his *infinite glory to finite, created beings* (not as God, but as creatures)
3. “majesty” = prominence; greatness – *where* God is
 - a. to give majesty to God is to recognize that he is **higher than all else** – that he is *infinitely higher* in place, knowledge, and intention above all other things
 - b. **i.e.** that he is *God* – that he has no equal and there is none other than him “at the top”
4. “dominion” = full of power; mighty in deed; of great strength = *what* God is
 - a. to give dominion to God is to recognize that he is **stronger than all else** – that he is *infinitely higher* in strength, capability, and in decree (to declare) above all others
 - b. **i.e.** that he sits in an *unmovable place*, where nothing can usurp his position or his declarations
5. “authority” = jurisdiction; rulership; control; right to judge = how God *rules*
 - a. to give authority to God is to recognize that he **rules over all else** – that he is *infinitely higher* in observation, control, and judgment above all others
 - b. **i.e.** that he rules over all creation *and that all created things answer to him and to his Law*
6. “before all time ...” = in every frame of “time” (including eternity) – *where* God is
 - a. to say that these things are true “before all time, etc.” is to recognize that he is infinite, **period!**
 - b. **i.e.** that these attributes of glory, majesty, dominion, and authority have always been true of God *and will always be true of him as we worship him forevermore as those he has drawn to himself*

b. the purpose of the doxology

1. **thesis: the perseverance of the saints (in the face of scoffers) is actually a divine work of preservation by God to bring glory to himself**
2. **good news: God is exercising the whole of his glory, majesty, dominion, and authority to bring you and me to himself in glory – he has purposed to give himself (and his Son) a gift of joy, we are that gift, and he is doing everything in his infinite power to see that we “make it”**
3. **therefore, our focus should always be on giving praise to him for his power and his purpose**