

Biblical Insight

Verses 20-21 (repeated from session 6)

- These verses describe three activities to perform continuously while fulfilling one imperative: **keep yourselves in the love of God**.
- The activities to perform while keeping yourselves in God's love:
 - **building up yourselves on your most holy faith**. The Greek word for **building up** is ἐποικοδομέω [epoikodomeo], which has the prefix *ep* (upon) *oikos* (house) and *domeo* (roof). That is, "start at the bottom and work all the way to the top."
 - **praying in the Holy Ghost** - Jesus prophesied of a time when people would worship in spirit (Jn 4:24-25). We pray "in the Holy Spirit" but not actually in the presence of the Lord. To **pray in the Holy Ghost** is simply to pray in the *absence of the physical presence of the Lord* but in the *reality of our spiritual presence with Him*.
 - **Looking for the mercy of our Lord** - this statement reflects both the early date of writing and the Jewish nature of the book. The recipients were not looking for the "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13) of the rapture but the **mercy** of the Lord toward Israel in the Second Coming.

Verse 22

In v. 21 Jude gave the imperative: **keep yourselves in the love of God**. The activity to do so was **building up yourselves...**, **praying...**, and **looking for the mercy of our Lord**. Here he adds a second command: **of some have compassion**. With this, Jude tells both *what to do with yourselves* and *what to do with others*.

- Compassion is ἐλεος [eleos] is most often translated *mercy*. See, for example, Matt 5:7 and 9:27.
- Many times Christians fail to be merciful. Typically, those who are compassionate are:
 - Able to recognize their own frailty.
 - Able to prioritize their agendas.
 - Able to view the world through the eyes of Jesus.
- Those who fail to have compassion are often either:
 - Young - and too inexperienced to have seen enough failure and know its hurt.
 - Pharisaical - too "holier than thou" to care about a person's heart (and future).
 - Hypocritical - using condemnation of sin to cover up their own.

Verse 23

- Verse 23 provides a great example of where we need to be careful with interpretation. Here's what we *could* do:
 - The word **save** is σωζω [sozo], and is the word that means salvation. In theology, the doctrine of salvation is called *soteriology*.
 - We are to save them by **pulling them out of the fire**, speaking of the fires of hell.

- The problem with this kind of thinking is that it makes salvation a work of man. The thinking that brings about this kind of mistake is called "gospel-centered," and reads the eternal salvation of man into every passage.
- As in English, *save* has more than one meaning, and context is critical. Also as in English, to "pull someone out of the fire" is an often used metaphor speaking of the danger they were in. In this passage, Jude speaks of the need to snatch those who are going into apostasy from the dangerous flames.
 - How can we save them? The best thing we can do is teach them the Word of God, with compassion.
- **hating even the garment...** Jude continues speaking figuratively. When we are **pulling them out of the fire** we should do so **with fear** because it would be easy for us to be taken in by the apostasy. The believer needs to develop a *healthy hatred* of the flesh (that is, the sinful nature).

Verses 24

- **To keep you from falling –**
 - As in v. 22, we must not read "falling from grace" into these words.
 - Other passages teach our security, and no word of God can contradict another word of God.
 - **Falling** is ἄπταιστος [aptaistos], and could literally be "apostasizing"
- **present you faultless - Present** is ἵστημι [histami], *to stand*. Thus **falling and standing** are contrasted in the Greek text, but this does not come through in English.
- Jesus did this by becoming sin on our behalf (2 Cor 5:21). Now the righteousness of God is our spiritual DNA. This is the essence of Salvation.

Verse 25

- **glory** - The word δόξα [doxa] is the basis of our English word *doxology*. All things glorious belong to Jesus Christ, who was glorified because of His work on the cross (Phil 2:8-10)
- **majesty** - The word μεγαλωσύνη [megalosuna] is "that which is *mega*."
- **dominion** - The word κράτος [kratos] is a *power* word. All of our English words ending in *-cracy* are based on this word, such as democracy, aristocracy, bureaucracy, theocracy, gerontocracy (rule by old men), gynecocracy (rule by women). All *kratos* ultimately belongs to Jesus Christ.
- **power** - The word ἐξουσία [exousia] "based on property" and is power due to ownership.

Translation Comparison

Verse 22

The Critical Text changes *some* to "those who doubt," thus all modern translations will have a note about doubters.

Verse 23

The Critical Text moves the generic "on some have mercy" of v. 22 to the middle of v. 23, thus, as NASB, "save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh."

Verse 24

Rather than **without fault**, *The Message* says, "standing tall in his bright presence, fresh and celebrating." This is theologically bankrupt.