

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## How Does God Keep Us?

(Jerry Fite)

**J**ude opens the epistle to his recipients by describing them as being... “*called, beloved of God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ*” (Jude 1). At the close of the letter, Jude exalts the Lord as He who “...*is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy...*” (Jude 24). While God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die for man’s sins (cf. *John 3:16*), those who have heeded the “call of the Gospel” (2 *Thessalonians 2:14*) are the “beloved” of God. As in Rome, they are “*beloved of God, called to be saints*” (Romans 1:7). Jude is writing to saved Christians.

Some believe the elect who are called will be glorified in Heaven unconditionally; it is He who exercises His authority and power to “keep” and “guard” His elect “from stumbling”. The elect cannot help but be kept by the Lord’s dominion and power. Therefore, the word of praise is offered “*to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, before all time, now, and for evermore. Amen*” (Jude 25).

While the Lord deserves all the praise for our salvation from sin, and our prepared home in Heaven, does Jude reveal God’s “keeping” to suggest that we have nothing to do ourselves in remaining “kept”? Or, does God establish his eternal and omnipotent power to encourage the Christian to keep himself close to God?

What encouragement it is to know the God I serve has dominion and authority over all now; has always had it; and will always possess it when I am being tempted to turn away from Him. No, I dare not go the way of those false teachers who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness (Jude 4); promising me liberty to live like I want in my fleshly lusts; but are in reality “*bondservants of corruption*” (2 *Peter 2:19*). Thank you Jude for revealing to me that God has exercised His dominion over the disobedient angelic host, and has “...*kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the last day*” (Jude 6).

If God saves and keeps His elect unconditionally, why does Jude remind the saved and kept that God “*having saved a people out of the land of Egypt,*

*afterward destroyed them that believed not*” (Jude 5)? Could it be that saved Christians who have initially heeded the call of the Gospel in obedience must now continue to manifest obedience of faith in order to enter into the promised land of Heaven (cf. *Hebrews 3:19, 4:11*)?

Yes, God keeps us and guards us from stumbling with revealed Truth and Divine warnings, but we must heed the Lord’s exhortation: “*keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ into eternal life*” (Jude 21). We keep ourselves in His love by keeping the Lord’s commandments, continually building ourselves up in our most Holy faith; and praying as the Holy Spirit has directed us to pray in His Word (John 14:21, Jude 20).

The reason God reveals to us His power to keep and guard us is to keep us living close to Him. We remain like sheep, hearing His voice, knowing no one can snatch such followers from His hand (John 10:27-28). Heaven is reserved for those who continue to believe. It is guarded “*by the power of God through faith*” (1 *Peter 1:5*).