

The Epistle of Jude

Part 1

Speaker	Sidney Thurston
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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:01] Father, we thy children bless thee, for thy love on us is true.

The source of blessings we confess thee, now our Father and our God.

Wondrous was thy love in giving Jesus for our sins to die. Wondrous was his grace in healing for our sins that have not died.

Father, we thy children bless thee, for thy love on us is true.

The source of blessings we confess thee, now our Father and our God.

Wondrous was thy love in giving Jesus for our sins to die.

[00:01:15] Wondrous was his grace in healing for our sins that have not died.

Mother, spring of love have freed us, hastening onward to our rest.

Through the deserts of your fields, with thy founts and plains of earth, [00:02:07] while thy fruit and spirit guide thee, guarantee of what you are, and with daily strength provide thee, blood of me, thy children whole.

For fear when things be dreary, this is not a resting place.

Shall we all the way be weary when we see our God's perfect face?

[00:03:17] Lord, in love and dignity, in his hope our souls rejoice, and in proudest act of wit, should shall hear his well-done voice.

[00:04:04] Jews, listen. Jews, listen.

John Paul's book of Revelation, which is probably served as a kind of introduction, is epistled by Jews. Verse 1.

You, the servant of Jesus Christ, the brother of James, have been sanctified by God the Father, and served in Jesus Christ, and called.

Mercy unto you, and peace and love to thee.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you a poem of salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend [00:05:07] for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

For there are certain men, correctly not aware, who were full of hope ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into a seriousness, and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

I will therefore put you in remembrance, and though ye once knew this, are that the Lord, having saved the people of the land of Egypt after war, destroyed them that believed not.

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, ye have preserved in everlasting change, under darkness, under the judgment of the great day. [00:06:06] Even as Solomon Gomorrah, and the cities above them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication and going after the slain flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal life. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, the smile of the dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

Yet Michael, now angel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the quality of Moses, does not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord, the beautiful beast.

For they speak evil of those things which they know not, but what they know actually as beautiful beasts, and in those things they crown themselves.

Woe unto them, for they are gone from where they came, [00:07:03] went greedily after their availment of reward, and perished in the gainsaying of glory.

These are spotting your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear, clouds they are without water, carried about with wind, trees old spruce withereth without fruit, twice dead, sucked up by the roots, raging waves of the sea, foaming after a long shame, wandering stars, to whom is reserved the darkness of darkness forever.

And Enoch also, the seventh of Adam, prophesied of these things, behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of the saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, [00:08:01] and of all their ungodly speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against them.

These are the moments of gladness, walking after their own lusts, their mouths being at grace, willing words, and men's passions in admiration, because the Lord loves them. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, how that they told you there should be walkers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

These be they who separate themselves, central having not the spirit.

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, pray in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

[00:09:02] And if some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, pulling about the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

Now, under him who is able to keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, and dominion and power, both now and ever.

Amen. I don't know how it seems to God how familiar we would be with Hughes' epistle.

It's a very practical work.

We have all been struck, I doubt not, by the practical output that has been before us in the considerations of the matter [00:10:01] of the Bible readings.

And this is intensely practical.

June looks upon us as those who are on a journey, as our brother reminded us in his prayer, with the end shining brightly and messily before us, and then it closes, as you notice, with this beautiful doxology.

Although I'd like to start with it, indeed, naturally one starts at the beginning, Hughes starts at the beginning. And he, first of all, puts us, so to speak, upon a sound basis.

He provides encouragement and knowledge for all Christians. He makes clear, first of all, exactly where we are as regards God, and having established us, so to speak, in this manner, then he begins to unfold to us the desperate condition, the dreadful condition of things which are around us, besides the unfolding of that which is springing from within.

[00:11:03] That he is dealing largely with professions is abundantly clear. But, beloved saints who know, this is a dreadful epistle in this sense, that it opens our eyes to the condition of things around us. And I believe that we're not to walk here in any measure at all as being faithful to the rejected Christ. We will need, first of all, to know how we stand, and where we stand, and then to know the kind of opposition which we have to face, and then, through it all, encourage, as the line from the hill, you will recall, that it is a message telling of the Lord Jesus Christ for his own, and that our hearts, having, so to speak, drank in all this, will drown to the pleasure of God in thanksgiving and praise. I'd like to point out to you then, at the very first, that he says, addresses his letter to them that are sanctified by the Lord the Father. I believe, beloved saints of God, [00:12:01] that the details of the report before us in this epistle are so shocking. They are so dreadful to consider that God, first of all, sees to it that we are established in the truth for him.

That is, we should be, in any measure, shaken by the revelation of the awful conditions and what that is characterizing this day in which we live, and will characterize still more darkly the days which lie ahead. God, you know all well, I expect, that this epistle deals with what is called the apostasy. That is, it is an entire departure from the faith that was once given to the saints. Now he says, first of all, to them that are sanctified, those that are set apart by God the Father, and they're also preserved in Jesus Christ, [00:13:02] and they're also the core of us.

Three things said in one short verse about the saints of God.

Not about people we don't know, but about ourselves.

You, beloved saints of God, and myself here, standing on this platform, are addressed by the Holy Spirit in these terms, and we are heartily encouraged by the knowledge that God the Father has set us apart for himself.

And then we are encouraged by the knowledge that we are preserved in Christ Jesus.

It's a marvelous consideration, beloved saints of God, that when he picked us up in his soft and mercy and grace, he knew all well what he'd do on us. He would take us all the way home, in spite of every mark of unbelief and failure, he would take us all the way home, [00:14:02] because, beloved saints of God, it's perfectly true, his honor and his glory depends upon it.

If he set us apart for his pleasure, beloved saints of God, he's going to see that we're preserved all the way along the journey, which will end up there in the glory, with and by that blessed man whom he now adorns his throne.

Not only are we set apart and preserved, but we are his called ones.

Time does not permit going into detail about these three things, but in all of his central scripture, a three-fold wall is not readily or easily broken.

And here, beloved, I believe, is a three-fold wall. You can take your heart, and the wall, the Spirit of God begins to open up before your eyes. What lies ahead of the pathway, you can thank the blessing God has for yourself and his people. They are set apart. They are preserving Christ Jesus and their call. And having established the saints of God then, [00:15:02] on this ground, he wishes us mercy, because you and I need mercy every day of our lives. We need mercy in traveling. We need mercy as we go about. We need mercy in every detail of our domestic or business or private life, whatever it might be. And so he wishes us mercy. Thy mercies we read unto you every morning. Tell our hearts to answer the blessing of God as we realize how good he is to us day by day. Everything that you and I have, beloved saints of God, come to that blessed one who has picked us up in his sovereign mercy and grace and put us up there in his beloved Son. And if I may say so, takes a delight in us. You and I might feel, why should he find any favor at all in us? And the only answer can be this. He sent his affection upon us. Yea, he loved the people. I will never forget our brother there last year. He quoted this. Yea, he loved the people. [00:16:01] It's perfectly true today. As much as he loved us a month ago, the longer, beloved saints of God. And they will not be satisfied until we're up there with his Son and like him. Because I'm persuaded that he has always the awe and glory of the Son before him. And if that glory is to be enhanced by the addition of that which he has purchased by his own precious gift, well then we can be safely assured that we're going to be up there with him and like him. So anyway, mercy is your need day by day.

And this blessed Paul knows it and provides it. And then he says, assuming that you know something about peace and love, you will notice he wishes that it might be multiplied. He assumes you know in your heart of hearts the peace that comes from knowledge of sins forgiven, the first step in the ladder so to speak, and you know how to dream of peace. And it might be even you know the measure of God in peace. [00:17:01] But he says, peace and love be multiplied.

He wants us so to speak to flourish. He wants us to be on the move. We will say in the afternoon, life

means activity. There's certainly all kinds of life. The young child pounding on the sands is an example of exuberant life.

The dying maiden gone big is an example of expiring life.

But life is there, but in different measure. We want to be energetic for God's sake. I mean spiritually energetic. Because there's a dreadful path lying ahead. And all I mean by that is that all around us is darkness. And there is the anti-Christian attitude and the anti-Christ all around us. But along this path, let us be assured of this, there are no dark beings around us. This path is marked out for the blessing of God. It's been trodden by the beloved Son of the Lord Jesus Christ. And you're going to see that these people at the end of their pathway will be out there [00:18:01] with that man and like him forever. So peace and love, he said, will be multiplied. Now this is most moving verse in chapter verse 3.

I'm not going to take up every verse by any means. But I'd like you to look at verse 3 where he calls those people whom he addresses, love. On another page we read, love of God.

Do you ever sit down and think about these things? I asked a brother once, or I first rather insisted on asking a brother. He said, why do the cows lie down in the field? And the answer on that occasion was, well, it's a sign of bad weather.

Well, I asked the father, why do these cows lie down in the field? Well, he says, to chew the cover. They rest themselves and they chew the cover.

What's the result? The love of the Son of God. They get all the nourishment out of their clothes and the result is they produce this wheat milk, [00:19:01] which is your closest friend and mother. Well, he said, beloved, when I gave ordinance to write unto you of the common salvation, I found it needful to write unto you. That is to say, he's sitting down, there's a sheet of black paper, so to speak, on the table, the manuscript. There's a pen in his hand. He's just going to write a letter about the common salvation and then he's immediately directed into another part altogether and he opens their eyes to the terrible condition of things in the holy text.

Now that this is essential and necessary, there can be no doubt. Otherwise the Spirit of God wouldn't have turned his attention aside. It would have allowed him to develop what was upon his heart at the beginning, that is, the common salvation. He says, I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation. It doesn't mean at all that your salvation and mine is a common thing. It means that we share it together. It's the salvation that all the other saints of God have a part in. [00:20:02] It's a common salvation in that sense. And he says, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should honestly contend for the faith.

You know, beloved, we're all prone to contend for other things.

As far as I know, we are not exhorted to contend against anything.

Certainly here, we're not expected or asked to contend against anything or anybody.

We are exhorted to contend for something. Stand firmly and be active in military activities of the life. Prepare to be active until the faith of the Spirit of God directs you. But always in this direction, it's for

the faith.

It's contend earnestly for the faith.

Now in order to contend earnestly for the faith, we need to know what the faith is.

[00:21:02] And we come together and have Bible readings in order that we might learn from the blessed God himself. In the book that he himself has written, the only book that the blessed God has put his hand to is here. We stand here together, thankfully, gladly, in order that we might know something about this faith which was once delivered to the saints.

Here it is, beloved saints of God. I don't know what your definition of the faith would be. We saw one the other afternoon in Indonesia.

Where's Walter? I want Sean to declare after you.

Perhaps it's called extensive with the faith. I leave it to you. But the faith is that which he said was once delivered to the saints.

That is, I believe, his totality. There are those about today who would add something to it, it seems to me. But here it is, once delivered to the saints, in his totality handed over to you, to me, so to speak, [00:22:03] to carry through this wilderness with faithfulness to the one who has given it. I often think of the tabernacle in this connection and think that when it is dismantled, you remember, and all that precious furniture, some of it pure gold, you remember, some silver, some bronze, and all the fine, fine linen, and the curtains, you remember, so much reminiscence, reminiscence of Christ himself. And the altar, of course, never to be forgotten, as it goes through the wilderness, coloured white, clothed in blue, the precious enshrined Christ there, the heavenly man, walking down here through glory and pleasure of blessing God, just think how they carry death through the wilderness. With what diligence would I say to God? With what care would the carriers of the ark, for instance, lift it upon their shoulders? And with what care would the furniture of the tabernacle be wrapped up in their respective clothes [00:23:02] and carried in their bundles through the wilderness? I wonder if you all, the faithful of mine, are so wrapped up in this blessed man that we carry this faith with God with all our strides, as caring as they carry the furniture through the wilderness. But that's what we commit to us. He said, I want to write to you about the promise of salvation, and he said, I want to exhort you that you earnestly, heartless, earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Don't let us waste time allowing saints to go. We're so going to be gone. We're so going to be like that, just all Christ and the Lord. Don't let us waste time frittering moments, precious moments away by contending one against the other. Don't let us give way to this folly which will rob us of the ability to carry through this wilderness scene the testimony of the Lord Jesus. But if we want to contend, and we certainly ought to, let us do this deliberately and anxiously, [00:24:03] waiting upon the blessing of God. But as it says here, earnestly, let us contend for the faith. There's nothing else worth contending for. And if we are concentrating on contending for the faith, I earnestly, I really believe that all the other kinds of contentions will fall away.

I don't like telling this story, but somehow it's come into my mind three times as I've stood here. There's a story, and I've often heard it in England. You'll pardon me, won't you? A lot of you are violent, but it's said in England often enough, the story is told of the Irishman who sees a fight going on, and he guides him, and he says, I don't care who's side I'm on as long as I'm fighting. But the

Lord is saying to God, we must not be of that character. We must earnestly contend, knowing no side at all, knowing clearly what we are about, and doing it decisively, in the power and energy of God's permission.

So, the faith that we must deliver to us, [00:25:03] and then he goes on to warn the people about the thing we're quickly not aware of, and the conditions which would, or were prevailing and would prevail increasingly until the Lord comes.

But as time speeds on, I may take you down to verse 11, where false religion is referred to, false ministry is brought before us, and false worship.

False religion in Cain.

You and I don't have to look far to see false religion. Neither do you have to look far to see being called the true religion. This is why he goes back to the beginning. He says in effect, look, this is where man started, with Cain, and it's false, it's a lie.

Cain didn't remember all the truths of the earth. He thought he encountered God in the walking himself, [00:26:03] could produce by his own energy.

Abel, taught of God by Abel, comes to the blessing of God in the virtue of the death of another.

He says in effect, I can't approach God, somebody else must take my place, and he offers the land to remember. And the Spirit of God in the New Testament speaks of the excellency of the offering. And the loving saints of God, is it any marvel that the excellency of the offering is referred to when we know full well the delight that the heart of the blessed God must have had as he smelled this sweet savour ascending from his nostrils, because it spoke to him already. It's the birth of creation, so to speak, of the preciousness of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. So there is a false, there is a false religion. There is a religion that goes Cain's way, offering to God the product of the hand. [00:27:01] Do you know anything about the people of the holy saints? Of course we do. We see it all around us. Does it make us any better than them? God forbids it, we suppose. Rather, let us take apart what he says, get hold of what is true, and contend for that.

Then there is false ministry, in the case of Baal.

We see it around us, but that is false ministry. False ministry carried on for a while, and of course we do, on every hand. And then there is false worship, that is those who perish, in the case, say, of Korah. Do you remember?

Korah was destroyed.

He was destroyed by fire. And he is repentant of the earth, do you remember? And they went down into the abyss. But there is one delightful verse, which I put a great deal, because it brings joy and delight, and a certain amount of satisfaction, in my own heart, and that is the sons of Korah.

Now, beloved saints of God, [00:28:01] here is something for your perfection. This rebellious man, hoped to have perished, but they didn't. God came in, and into the salt of mercy, and he saved the sons of Korah. And the sons of Korah, if you don't know them well, take them all, and it is the

choicest of the songs, and sing the praise of the blessed God, for these people, singing on the temple steps, for these at the inauguration of the temple, who have prayed and worshipped the blessed God. Why, beloved saints of God, let those whose salt of mercy is picked up, and saved from hell.

Do you strike this one? Well, let's look at those. These are false assertions, and so on.

It tells you a great deal about them. But I want to go down now, to verse 17.

It says again, beloved, I want you to see that, besides the exhibition, of all that is evil, in the world, the spirit of God, again and again, [00:29:01] reverts to this truth, that the saints of God, are the beloved of God.

He says, beloved, remember, the words which were spoken before, of the apostle, the Lord Jesus Christ, how they told you, there should be mockers at the last time, who walk after their own ungodly lusts.

These be they, who separate themselves, so self-sensual, having not the spirit.

That little expression, of course, is the explanation, of those who have gone before, they don't have a spirit. It's a dreadful thing, not to have the spirit of God, because the spirit of God, is given to all those, who come, who believe, in the Lord Jesus. And all the activity, however much it is, however great it is, however great the publicity, and however startling, it might be, with the spirit of God perspective, there's nothing at all. You and I, [00:30:01] we've got nothing to do, with that kind of demonstration. Thank God, thank the blessed God, that we are in wealth, by God's revelation, and share in common this salvation, and now will assure us, where we stand, sanctified, and cared for, and the recipients, of the mercy of the blessed God, as we march, on our holy way, up to the door.

But then, he says, ye beloved, again he says, now I have three things here, at the end, three in verse one, three in verse twenty, building, praying, and verse twenty one, keeping yourselves, in the love of God. Building up yourselves, he says, on your most holy faith. It's something you've got, it's something you resist, it's something you resist, it's already told us, he said it once, to the limit of the saints, you are the saints, you are the set apart ones.

Now he says, building yourselves up, [00:31:01] on your most holy faith. What happens when you build? I know there are builders here, in the dark, but what happens when you lay the bricks? Why the building grows?

Building and growth goes together, beloved, go together beloved, saints and God, and the exhortation here is this, build up yourselves, it's growth that is in you, building day by day, we grow according to the truth of God, and we build on your most holy faith. We have not only a firm foundation, beloved saints and God, but a holy one.

It's a building on your, on your most holy faith, but this alone is insufficient, alongside with this, hand in hand, so to speak, my Lord, praying in the Holy Ghost.

Building on your most holy faith, immediately puts us, in relation to the blessing of God, praying in spiritual dependence, and a support, and encouragement to the heart, as this building goes on.

[00:32:03] In the word of God, you may remember it says, let no man put asunder, what God has joined together.

He's joined building, and praying together, as you clearly see, in verse 20.

And in verse 21, keep yourselves, in the love of God.

You live in, that's the grand point, but also, you live in the love of God, beloved saints and God. Yes, the atmosphere, into which you have been drawn, is the atmosphere, of this precious love, of God.

If you want to know anything, about the love of God, you look to the person, of the Lord Jesus Christ, or you only read about him, in the gospels, or you go back, to John 3, 16, the verse that everybody knows, and discover there, that God so loved, that he gave. What it says, keep yourself in that love. You're there, beloved saints and God. You'll realize it, where you are. Every one of us here, from the youngest to the oldest, we are in, the love of God. God's love surrounds us. [00:33:02] God's love, God's love, embraces us. You will have all the affection, freedom of this love, and enjoy it. Now he says, keep yourself in that love. It's there, beloved.

I go to it, to it.

Now he says, keep yourself there, in practice doing it.

And he adds one other thing, looking after all the mercy, of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.

Now this may be, called a low view, of the rapture, perhaps it's in future.

It's a view, often enough, the saints of God, of faith, choosing to take this ground, here literally. And that is, if the path is difficult, for the saints, if there are stairs, on every hand, so to speak, if you feel your stumble, nor must fall, well remember this, that he's coming. This, I say again, may be a low view, of the rapture, which in its highest, and most blessed view, is at the heart of this, Christ is going to be satisfied, [00:34:01] when he calls to be away, with himself, that he himself, has purchased.

And remember this, always do provide, that when he had nothing else to give, he gave himself.

He loved the church, and he gave himself to her.

And then, his divinity came out, in order that he might, present her to himself, and call himself.

Did you ever have, a man like this, beloved saints of the Lord, that after the rapture, as quickly as you meditate upon, his utter perfection, the glorious beauties of this man, of whom the Spirit of God, delights to take, and show him unto us.

When he says, keep yourselves, looking for the mercy, he's coming beloved, I say here, it's a low grade perhaps, but nevertheless, he is coming, if you keep this in front of your heart, it's the part difficult, have you got it?

Come to get you, and find, as you look ahead, you can't see away through it all, where I'll say it to you, keep yourself in the love of God, [00:35:03] looking for the mercy, that's how he looks at it. The

coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, is going to be a mercy, in this place, in the kingdom of the Lord. You say well, that's not a very good view of the rapture, well, Jude says, looking for the mercy, of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he says, and if some, have compassion, making a difference.

Everything of course, that comes out here, in these characteristics, are found in the blessing of God. You could perhaps read this verse about, reverting to Luke 10, isn't it?

Where it says, a man, who has, an axe, as he journeys along, Jerusalem, Jericho, you remember, it says, he came where he was, and he had, compassion on him.

Glory be to God, how do your patients, respond to this, that this blessed man, came where he was, [00:36:02] right down, where he was, and I'll tell you why now, or how did he, why? Stirring up, with your mind, says Peter, by way of Rebekah, may I tell you, glory be to God, because it brings joy, to my own heart, which all disbelievers, may, that that man, came down, that I was where you were, in order that he might, take you up there, to Jerusalem. Now tell me, love, that is, that is, superior to us, the one who, emptied himself, he says, came down, obedient, obedient, as it is, even against the cross, and then, raised by the glory of the Father, put up there, on that seat, of highest praise, of the Lord, and he's coming again, the language of love, although they don't often, I say, the language of love, I'm coming for you, myself, and I'm begging you, to a place, not only which is fit for you, but which, you are fit, to inherit.

Yes, they say to the Prodigal, remember, when the Father, clothed him, [00:37:01] in the vestal, with the ring on his finger, and the shoe on his feet, he had in all, every atom, of reluctance, to his heart, and I count on, he went, striding in, to sit down with the Father, to the crowning table, of all the delightful, heavenly things, that the Father, had prepared, full of, mutual, joy, and, because, you remember there, whatever we might say, about joy, in Bible readings, that do come to life, you better remember there, he said, they began to be merited, and this is a divine meriment, a child I know, has never heard, and will never hear, come to me, and it's a marvel, to me, that divine persons, should be so interested, in people like yourselves, that we bring pleasure, to their hearts, and they find pleasure, eternal merriment, so to speak, in the fact, that you and I, are going to be there, and share that place, with them.

Well, he said, make, out of compassion, make a difference, out of shame, that we are, and so on, and now, [00:38:01] he said, finally, unto him, that is able, to keep you, from falling, to present you, with all the rest, of all the presence, of his glory, with exceeding, joy. I read today, in our brother's house, with the liberty, of taking a book, out of his bookcase, and I opened the pages, and this is what I read, and he said, well, we often talk, about the finished work, of Jesus, and he said, we don't talk, much about, the unfinished work, the finished work, the atoning work, I love it, on the cross, for you and for me, that's, that's what we all, want to understand, but the unfinished work, why, I look at this, and go, caring for you all, you and for me, concerned with our welfare, going to church, all the way home, this is Jesus, this is him, he said, he said, he's able to keep you, from falling, this is, the confident Christ, this is the one, who always brings, all things according, to his hands, he's confident, [00:39:01] about his safety, of God, so all your problems, to make all your difficulties, to bring joy, to your heart, in spite of everything, so to speak, and not only so, he's confident, to take us, and he will do it, all the way home, so he says, keep you from falling, and then what are you, going to do with it, to get you home, he said, he's going to present, the importance, of all the blessings, of his glory, to receive you home, why he said, looking back on my life, there's nothing joyful, about it, I've got nothing else, to please him, but it's not a question, so much of what he's done, to please him, it's a question, of his

delight, in those, whom he's made love, and it's a marvel, to my soul, I doubt not, it's a marvel, to yours, and I'll make us, conclude, a few conclusions, that the blessing of God, has delight and pleasure, when we are, presenting, full place, before the throne, of his glory, is it any wonder, then, without incense, at all, that he doth, purify the prison, without sin, to the awful thing, [00:40:01] what I do call, our Savior, glory, and majesty, dominion, of, the crown, and ever, amen.