

JUDE:

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTATES



*A series of sermons by
Pastor David Legge*

preachthetword.com



David Legge is a Christian evangelist, preacher and Bible teacher. He served as Assistant Pastor at Portadown Baptist Church before receiving a call to the pastorate of the Iron Hall Assembly in Belfast, Northern Ireland. He ministered as pastor-teacher of the Iron Hall from 1998-2008, and now resides in Portadown with his wife Barbara, daughter Lydia and son Noah.

Contents

- 1. The Unintentional Letter - 3***
- 2. The Creepers - 11***
- 3. Remember, Remember - 19***
- 4. The Deathless Man And His Deathless Message - 26***
- 5. The Apostate's Final Fall - 32***
- 6. The Great Escape - 39***
- 7. Rescue The Falling - 46***
- Appendix A: Why God Used D.L. Moody - by R.A. Torrey - 53***
- Appendix B: Learn To Discern - 66***

The audio for this series is available free of charge either on our website (www.preachtheword.com) or by request from info@preachtheword.com

All material by Pastor Legge is copyrighted. However, these materials may be freely copied and distributed *unaltered* for the purpose of study and teaching, so long as they are made available to others free of charge, and the copyright is included. This does not include hosting or broadcasting the materials on another website, however linking to the resources on preachtheword.com is permitted. These materials may not, in any manner, be sold or used to solicit "donations" from others, nor may they be included in anything you intend to copyright, sell, or offer for a fee. This copyright is exercised to keep these materials freely available to all.

Jude - The Acts Of The Apostates - Chapter 1

"The Unintentional Letter"

Copyright 2000
by Pastor David Legge
All Rights Reserved

I want to begin a new series with you, it's a short series, just looking at the shortest book of the Bible, or the New Testament - I beg your pardon - the little book of Jude. I feel that Jude has a great deal to say to us in these days.

Now we're turning in our Bibles, first of all, to the Acts of the Apostles and chapter 20 - and as I said to you earlier, we want to begin a study in the book of Jude today, perhaps four studies, possibly five, and I want to entitle it: 'The Acts Of The Apostates'. The Acts of the Apostates, and we're going to look this morning at our first study, which I've entitled: 'The Letter That Jude Didn't Intend To Write' - the letter that Jude didn't intend to write.

But we're reading, first of all, from Acts chapter 20 and verse 28 - now as you read here, in this chapter, cutting into the middle of it, Paul is on his travels and he has called for the Ephesian elders to come to him, for he wants to warn them of something that was beginning to happen at that moment, and was going to come into more fruition in the future. We're going to read from verse 28, and Paul tells them: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers". Now, he has called the elders to himself and he tells them that the Holy Ghost has made them overseers over the flock - now there's a lot of confusion in these days about who are overseers. Are deacons? Are elders? What is an overseer? Is it a committee member? It's clearly stated, here in this verse, that an overseer is an elder, and an elder is not appointed by men, but appointed by God. Look at the verse: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears".

Now keep your finger in that passage of scripture, and turn with me to the little book of Jude - it's the penultimate book of the New Testament, just before the book of the Revelation. One of the smallest books in the Bible and, indeed, the New Testament - not quite the smallest, but only 25 verses - and we're going to take the first four verses this morning as our meditation. Beginning at verse 1: "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified" - that word literally means, or is better translated 'beloved' - "by God the Father, and preserved", or kept, "in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men" - now look at the familiarity of this verse, with what we read in Acts 20 - "there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ".

We'll not read the whole book, we'll be looking at more verses in the days that lie ahead - but let's just come before the Lord and ask His help as we come to His word, and let's all pray together that God will speak to us in a real and living way. Our Father, we thank Thee for the word of God. We do not know what we would do without it, it is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our pathway - and when we forget it, we forget God.

Lord, this is Thy revelation of who Thou art, of Thy directives to Thy church and Thy people - and Lord, it behoves us to study it, and to dig deep, and to find out what the Lord God Almighty is saying to us. Help us today, Lord, we want to be spoken to by the Holy Ghost. We are trusting, we are praying in the Holy Ghost, and we ask in Jesus name, that He would come and illumine these pages - that He would fill the preacher, and the listener alike - and that we may know that today we have met with the living God. For we pray these things in Jesus name, Amen.

This little letter is, perhaps, one of the most unpopular letters in the New Testament. It's important that we note as we look at it, first of all, that it is a letter - just as we would write a letter to someone we love, or know, an acquaintance far away, Jude was writing this little letter to the church of Jesus Christ. What is it about? As you read the first four verses of the book - and if you take time when you go home today, or at least in the week that lies ahead, to read all 25 verses - you could sum it all up with one word: Jude is shouting, 'Beware! Beware!'. There is something that the apostle here wants these people to know! He wants them to know that Satan, Lucifer, the Prince of Darkness, the Angel of Light, is alive and well! Now, that is a frightening thing. It is a frightening thing, when we think that this little book is so neglected within the church of Jesus Christ today. Indeed, this little book - perhaps you could use as strong a word to say - is hated by many. What is it? It is a call to arms! As you read the book, and read the language, the language is strong, it is harsh, it is scalding, it is severe - and perhaps that's why it's not popular because, in the politically correct age in which we live, strong language is not palatable. People don't like it, people don't like straight talking - we live in the age of 'spin' and 'spin doctors', moulding and being 'economic' with the truth. Something that is black-and-white, something that is absolute, something that is strong and harsh and scalding and severe is not popular! And in a 'mamby-pamby' church of Jesus Christ today, a cry for militant Christianity that we find within this book is not popular!

Now, of course, I'm not calling upon you all to go onto the streets and to throw stones and to shoot - that's not what militant Christianity is, that's not the call to arms that Jude is giving here. For our weapons of warfare, as the word of God says, are not carnal - we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. And we, as those who wrestle in that realm - and, may I say it, as the only ones in the world today who can wrestle in that realm! - Jude is a cry, a call to arms. Get up! Get doing! Be militant! Get fighting! Now why is Jude using such strong, severe and rousing language? Well, it's simple: the themes that Jude is taking within this book are issues of life and death. As you read the book, and as we study it in the next few weeks, you will see that what Jude is lambasting in this book is, first of all: a dishonouring attitude of Christ. Secondly: it is the deceiving of souls. I vouch to say, that there are no more things, in the eyes of God, in this day that we live more heinous than those two things. A dishonouring attitude, or regard, or view of the Lord Jesus Christ - and men and women, churches and movements around our world that are deceiving souls by the millions and leading them into an eternal hell!

We have the sentiment that Jude is expressing in Ephesians 5, if you want to turn to it - if you don't, listen as I read it. Ephesians 5:14, where he says to the Ephesians: 'Wherefore...Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light'. Waken up church! That's what Jude is saying! It's time to get your arms, it's time to get back to basics, it's time to start fighting again as the people of God. It's a bit like what Paul was saying in the book of Galatians chapter 3 and verse 1, where he exclaimed: 'O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?' - and the meaning there is, 'You would nearly think someone had cast a spell over you! I can't believe what I'm seeing, and what I'm hearing from your [lips]!' - 'that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?'. 'You've seen Christ crucified! You've been to Calvary, you've gazed on the altar and seen the blood, you've been born again by the Spirit of God - and as I am looking at you, as your spiritual father, Paul - I can't believe what's happening to you!'. Like today, Satan is loose in the church.

A few months ago there was a computer virus that went across almost the whole world, I think. I think, if memory serves me right, it started in Cuba, or somewhere around there - and it was called the 'I Love You' virus. (Now, some of you young people have that anyway - but this was on the computer!). And what happened was, when you go into it (now, I know nothing about this) but I'm told when you go into your computer, and you look at the e-mail that you have, there was a little sign that said 'I love you'. And everybody that was single, or maybe wanting a new boy- or girl-friend, switched on to it - and it was enticing, and it was a message, it was a virus and it went right throughout the whole computer, and anything that you had on the computer was probably messed up because of it. And it went right across Europe, right across the world and created havoc! Now that is the sense of what Jude is speaking about here: havoc caused! And it might be appealing at the first glance, it might be something that is wooing and attracting, but it spells trouble!

The thoughts of many Christian leaders today are that there are certain things that are evident, and observed, that are very troubling. Within the church of Jesus Christ - and I would agree with these - first of all: there is a lack of serious theology. Serious theology, and a lack of serious exegetical - that means verse by verse, word by word - study of the living God's word. There is a lack of it! And what inevitably comes from a lack of theology, and a lack of an understanding, systematic, book by book, verse by verse knowledge of the word of God is that, after a period of time, the church will be in problems! That's the first problem. The second problem is the condition of the church. Now I'm not talking about what's happening within the church. In the last century we have seen the rise of many para-church organisations - and I do not despise them, because I'm involved within some of them - but because of the failure of the church, the local church, that organism that God created and that we've been studying about in the book of Ephesians - because it has failed, in a number of fronts, to reach the lost, to go to the mission field and so forth - these little para-church organisations have sprung up, and many people have thrown all their money, all their energies, all their time into those organisations. That is the second problem of the church of Jesus Christ, because we can see clearly, from Ephesians as we've been studying it, that the church of Jesus Christ is God's ordained means to take the Gospel to the world. Young person, put the best that you have into your church, put the best time that you have into your church, put your money into the church - that doesn't mean you can't give your money elsewhere - but come to this place, because this is the way God has ordained that the Gospel should be spread to this town and this country.

That's the first thing: lack of serious theology. Secondly: the condition of the local church. Thirdly: a lack of general vigilance at the rise and the spread of apostasy. Now even to mention that word today sends the little hairs up our neck - isn't that right? Because we live in a tolerant age, we live in an age that does not use harsh words - except for those in Christ of course. Apostasy is a word that has been misused, misrepresented but a word, perhaps today more than ever, that is not used at all! Now turn with me to Acts 20 that we read, I want you to see this, because we must be men and women of the word of God, and we need to see the blueprint that the apostle used as he exhorted these elders and overseers in this church: 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood', verse 31, 'Therefore watch' - that is the third failure: not seeing the apostasy. Watch, secondly: remember - a lack of knowledge, exegetically, of the word of God, not knowing the things that have happened in the past. 'Three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears' - I think if I did that for three years I would get the baggage, I'd get thrown out the door, 'Long-playing record, has he not another message?'. Night and day! Day, after day, after day, night after night he warned them with tears, with tears, with tears! He was trying to impress upon them the need for them to be warned! The trouble there was ahead, if they were not vigilant about the false teaching, and doctrines, and the false pressures of everything around them that's said to come from the church of Jesus Christ. Do we do that? Do we warn night and day?

Now notice, there is a lot of censoriousness about, in other words legalism - and I hate legalism! Because God hates legalism! And this awareness of apostasy is not a bitter awareness - you see that Paul wasn't standing up lambasting these other people, and these other places in a critical, legalistic spirit, but he was doing it with tears, because he loved the church so much that he hated to see what was happening to it. That is the way we must see it, with tears, with a soft heart - but nevertheless, although it was with tears, it was constant: day and night, day and night. Now I want you to notice, look at this book Jude - first four verses, and especially verse 4, as you read it you will see that Jude is not talking about the evils of the world, this is not 1 John: 'Love not the world. If any man sin he is not of God'. This is not 1 John, this is Jude - he's not talking about those evils, but he is speaking about those who are in the church and claiming to be of Christ. It's not like Corinthians, it's not speaking of church discipline, it's not talking about reprimanding a person and disciplining them to bring them back into the church - as far as Jude is concerned, these people aren't even in the church. They're there, but they shouldn't be there, they are false brethren, they are apostates, they are the tares among the wheat, the weeds among God's people, they are the infiltrators of the church - distinct from true Christians, yet taking and claiming the name of Christ. They are seeking to destroy! Imposters! Synthetic, cosmetic Christians! People dressed up in 'Gospel-garb' that is only skin deep!

You see it, don't you? Superficial believers. Apostates! The great pretenders of the church of Jesus Christ today. The ministers, the movements, the denominations that contain abomination! People, places, things wearing the name of Christ! - and Christ hasn't anything in them. Believer, we are in a battle, and that is what the book of Jude is about - a battle cry. That great old modern puritan, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, was once interviewed in Westminster Theological Seminary, in America, about his life. And he quoted another great old divine who said - this is what he said, listen: 'My life's work, but now in blood and battles was my youth, and full of blood and battles is my age, and I shall never end this life of blood' - hear it again - 'Now in blood and battles was my youth, and full of blood and battles is my age, and I shall never end this life of blood!' His life was a battle for the Bible, his life was a crusade for the cross, for the Gospel, for Christ and His words - and we, if we are true to the word of God and true to the Gospel deposit as it has been trusted to us by the word of God and our forefathers, we will have a fight on our hands, and it will be a permanent lifetime task. Our youth, our middle-age, our old-age, you will never be free from this life of blood! That's why Paul warned them with tears, night and day.

This was the truth for Jude's time, this was a tract for his times - indeed, Moffat says: 'It was a fiery cross to rouse the churches'. A banner - come on! And perhaps that's why some New Testament scholars today don't even believe it should be in the New Testament - they don't like it! It doesn't fit in with their mindset and their philosophy. These apostates that Jude is speaking of were probably the Gnostics. The Gnostics were a group of people - 'gnosis' is the Greek word for knowledge - who believed that you knew God by a special knowledge, in other words there was this 'elite' type of people, that when they got to a certain sphere of knowledge and intelligence, and able to grasp the great things of eternity and life, God would reveal Himself to them. Gnostics - the people of knowledge. They believed antinomianism - the word 'Deuteronomy' has that little word in it 'nomi' (sp?), it's the Latin word for law - antinomianism, anti-law-ism. In other words they said: 'We are people of the grace of God. We have the grace of God, we've been set free, therefore we don't need to obey any laws at all, we can do what we like and go where we like'.

Antinomianism, it's about with us today. That's what Jude means in verse 4, they turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. They said, 'Because we are saved, and God has wiped the slate clean I can do as I please'. They denied the uniqueness of the Lord Jesus Christ, they denied that He was God, and some of them denied that He was human - He was like a ghost. Verse 4 says they denied Him not only in their words, but in their actions and in their theological viewpoints. They also, as we begin to read this book, [we] find out that they had an arrogant attitude to supernaturalism - they just didn't believe it any more! I find that among Christians today, and as J. B. Phillips put it in his title of his book: 'Your God Is Too Small' - isn't that right? For so many of us, we just can't grasp - we live in a rational age - we can't grasp that God could do the things that

He said He did in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, and we find it absolutely impossible to believe that God can do it again!

Now let's look at this letter as a letter. If you were looking at a letter, you would look at who's writing to you - most of us look at the bottom of the page before the top, to see who the letter's from. And if you were looking at this as a letter you would find, first of all - this is my first point: the writer. And the writer is found in verse 1, look at it: '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'. Jude: now what was Jude, and who was he? The first thing that Jude was, was a sibling, a brother - 'Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James'. Now that's right, but if you go to Mark chapter 6 and verse 3 you find that James was the brother of the Lord Jesus Christ - the half-brother, the same mother. So if James was the brother of the Lord Jesus Christ, that makes Jude the brother of the Lord Jesus also. If you go to John 7 and verse 5 you find that none of his brothers, 'His brethren did not believe in him' - now think of that! Jesus coming from this family, and the family, His siblings, brothers and sisters perhaps, did not believe He was who He said He was. James and Jude will be included in that - and therefore, you follow the story further and you find that after the resurrection these two were converted to the Lord Jesus Christ. You find them among the company, who were there and saw the Lord Jesus Christ. Then you find in Acts chapter 1 and verse 14, that they're in the Upper Room and they're part of the company, the apostles, kneeling on the ground and waiting, and waiting, and waiting until the Holy Ghost who was promised them by Jesus would come to them - they were among that number. They are called in 1 Corinthians 9 verse 5, 'The brethren of the Lord'.

Now let me ask you a question: if you were the half-brother of the Lord Jesus Christ, how would you begin this letter? 'David, the brother of the Lord Jesus Christ'? Isn't that what we would do? He says: 'Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, the brother of James' - why does he do that? Well, if you listen to his half-brother, the Lord Jesus, in the Gospels, He was the one who said, 'These are my sisters and my brothers, my mother and my father' - who was He talking about? He was talking about His brothers and sisters in Christ. Isn't it wonderful to think that the Lord had that idea that we have in the word of God, and spawned that idea, that that bond of the blood of Christ is greater than any blood bond that we can have in a family.

He is the sibling, but secondly he describes himself as a slave: 'the servant of Jesus Christ, the brother of James'. Someone has rightly said, 'Few things tell more of a man than the way he speaks about himself'. Jude, I love this in the New Testament, Jude - see the simplicity of it? Just 'Jude', not the 'Reverend Jude', not 'Pastor Jude', not 'Jude B.D. N.T.H. PhD', not 'Professor Jude' - just 'Jude'! To quote one man today, 'The church is being destroyed by degrees'. There's no pomp, there's no ceremony, there's nothing special about the way he tarts his name up - it's not a clergy or laity system - just 'Jude'! And the surprising thing about it is this: do you know what Jude is? It's the same name as 'Judas'! Huh! I wonder does the Lord have a sense of humour? Who was the greatest apostate of all time? Judas. And who does the Lord pick to write a treatise on apostasy? A 'Judas' - isn't that lovely? He is able - and you read this little book and you will find in verse 1, look at the verse, that he refers to himself as the brother of James. He's talking about himself - not 'the brother of Jesus', he doesn't believe in name-dropping, he avoids all familiarity and irreverence towards the Lord Jesus Christ! - sadly absent today. He speaks of himself as the servant, and it literally means the 'bondservant' - it's the same word in Exodus 21, the 'bond slave'. He didn't look at the Lord Jesus Christ, primarily, as his half-brother - he looked at Him as his Lord! And you remember when the Lord Jesus Christ said to His disciples, 'Ye call me Master and Lord' - did He refute it? - 'Ye say well, for so I am'.

He goes further, and I go further today, being the half-brother of Jesus Christ the Son of God didn't save him. Think about that - it didn't save him! He had to have a personal experience of salvation in his life, as you do! Young person, born in a Christian home, brought up in the church, taught the word of God - and perhaps you've gone along all your life, just blown along by your experience and your family history - and if you look back today, was there an experience with God? For you need it. For he needed it.

But secondly, if you were looking at a letter, you see the writer and then, because this isn't a letter that was primarily sent to us, we have to look to see who the reader is. It was sent to these first century Christians, and if you look at it you find something about the reader in the second half of verse 1, they're described as - as I've said - not sanctified by God, but 'beloved of God the Father, and kept in Jesus Christ and called', they were called of Jesus Christ. They had a wonderful relationship to Christ! Now as you look through this epistle, you will find that Jude is fond of threes - he clubs these clusters together in three: called, loved, kept. Now that word 'called' simply means 'an official summons'. We were thinking about it last week, where you are walking along life's pathway dead in trespasses and in sins, and then God's Holy Spirit comes and makes you unhappy in your sin. And then He gets you to such a low point in your sin, that He begins to take you to places, and crosses your path with people who are able to reveal to you the remedy for sin - the Lord Jesus Christ and Him crucified - and He enables you, by faith, to cry upon the name of the Lord and you're saved. You're called - isn't that what the church is? 'Ecclesia', the 'called-out-ones'. He calls them the loved, the beloved as it says - sanctified here - and you're not called because you look well, or because you talk well, or because you think Christian things well, or because you're good living, or because your parents were Christians - we all know that, that we're called because we're loved. Loved of God! 'For God so loved the world that He gave' - we are precious in His eyes. Now, I think this is lovely, we are loved of God the Father - we live in an age of a world of insecurity, a world where children are born into homes without a mother or without a father. And there are children that grow up with a complex, because they don't have a Daddy and all those at school do have a Daddy - but what a great delight to be able to sit down with those people, with the open word of God, and to show them that they have an eternal love of an Eternal Father!

You see, this book is enough for all. We're called, we're loved - and this is the seal on it - we're kept. 'Preserved', look at the verse, 'in Jesus Christ' - He hasn't bought us with His own blood to leave us, or to lose us. And I say, God help those who believe that you can be saved at this moment, and damned the next! But can you see the context of it, how relevant in the midst of apostasy - and he's talking about falling away - that he first of all reassures these believers: 'We're talking about those around you that are falling away. Those within you that are falling away, but if you're of God, if you're called, loved - you're kept! Because He is able to save to the uttermost!'

And then - there's the writer, the reader - and then there's the request that he has for them, and it's found in verse 2. He prays to God that they would know mercy, that they would know peace and that they would know love. Now I'm not going to spend much time on that, just to say that his prayer is that they would know that more and more, in abundance in their lives. It is ours, by right in Jesus Christ, to know the mercy of God, to know the peace of God in our mind and in our heart, and to have the love of God multiplied in us, toward us - and us [enabled] to multiply it to those around us.

And then fourthly, he talks about the reason why he wrote. Look at verse 3: 'Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation [but]', I'll put that little word 'but', 'it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith'. I've called this study, 'The Letter That Jude Didn't Intend to Write'. He calls them beloved, that's the voice of a shepherd, an overseer, one who cares and loves the flock - but notice, that love for the flock [wasn't] a spineless love, it wasn't a sentimental love that wouldn't say any harsh words or anything strong towards them that needed to be said. It was not a love that sees a child with a serpent wielding its way around them, ready to crush them and says nothing! This was a love that was willing to warn them.

Now I want you to see what this is like, I don't know where Jude was when he was writing this little book - but imagine him, perhaps, in Joseph's carpenter's shop, or in his own home, upstairs, or wherever, maybe outside, and he's sitting with his little parchment. And there he has his quill, and he probably has a copy of the second epistle of Peter, because it mirrors that little book, and perhaps some of Paul's letters that were

around at this time - and he's thinking about those who have just come to Christ. Babes in Christ, the called, the loved, the kept - and he thinks, 'What ought I to write unto them?'. And he's just about to write, put pen to paper, about the great things that God has done in salvation, and God says, 'No! That's not what I want you to write'. Indeed the sense of what it says here, that he was compelled - it was needful for me to write unto you. It literally means, 'I got necessity! I got necessity to write to you! I was compelled by God to write about something different!'.

Now can I say this to preachers, and Sunday school teachers, and children's workers here today: we need men and women that can feel the touch of God. We need people that are conscious that God is speaking to them, are able to change their walk and their ways, are being led and guided by the Holy Ghost of God, who are able to say, 'I got necessity! I was going to do this, but God pointed me in this direction!'. Now, what does he tell them? What does he write to them? Look at the verse: 'I got necessity to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend', vigorously defend, 'for the faith'. The sense of 'earnestly contending' is of agonising, of battling, of raging, of fighting for - it's a strong word, but what's it talking about? 'Fighting for the faith', what's that? You'll know that faith is believing, believing, having faith - you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and you were saved. But 'the faith' is the thing believed, it is the truth of what God has revealed to us, that we have believed in. Jude calls it, in verse three, 'the faith once delivered to the saints' - it literally means, 'once and for all delivered to the saints'. It's something that can't be added to, something that can't be taken away from, it is the Christian faith - Old Testament and New Testament revealed - and it cannot be changed! If you change it, or you tamper [with] it, you're guilty of theft - it's not yours to change! It's not mine to change! It is God's infallible word - once and for all delivered, not to be added to or taken away from.

You see, that's the problem with many cults and religions in our world today. A cult - one of the biggest signs of a cult - is that they have a 'prophet', someone who they say adds to the revelation of who God is. 'We have a special knowledge', like the Gnostics in this book, 'We know God in a better way than all the rest of you, because our prophet has revealed to [us]'. The charismatic movement is the same, the Roman Catholic church - they have to have the priest. The Muslims have Mohammed - and they all have their prophet that adds to the word of God. Now let me say this: theology, within the word of God, may evolve - it can evolve, for theology is our understanding of the word of God - but the word of God, itself, never changes! It is sealed in its contents, it is sealed in its Authorship, it is sealed in its historical setting, because in the fullness of time God sent forth His own Son - and whether an angel, a prophet, a priest or a patriarch preaches another gospel unto you, let him be anathema!

It's easy to be pleasant and tolerant, in small matters, in the day in which we live in this age - but do you know what toleration of wrong leads to? Its establishment. If you tolerate wrong, it will become established. As Harry Ironside said: 'Had men stood faithfully for the truth of the Gospel, the Dark Ages would never have been known'. My prayer for us today, as we close - I've more to say - but as we close here today, this is my prayer - grasp this, and in the week that lies ahead get to grips with this little book! Do you know what John Wesley said? 'God, make me a man of this book!'. Do you contend for the faith? Do you know the faith? Do you take your stand for the Lord and His word? For my friend today, if we don't know it we'll fall for anything.

May God bless His word to our hearts. Let us bow in prayer - and as we bow in prayer, let us consider the word of God. Do we neglect the word of God in our private lives? Do we read it, do we study it? Do we contend for it, no matter the cost? Standing up for Jesus, as soldiers of the cross. Our Father, help us to know deep in our souls that Thou art the one who is able to keep us from falling. Thou art the one who is able to shelter us from the avalanche of apostasy that we see around us in our world. And Lord, we pray in Jesus name, that we as Thy people - not in a legalistic way, but in a knowledgeable way - may be aware of the pitfalls and the strongholds of the evil one. And, as the Lord has taught us to pray, we pray: deliver us from

the evil one, lead us not into temptation and help us in these awful days to stand for truth, to stand for right and to stand for Christ like those of old who shed their blood, because what their Lord did for them, they would not refuse for Him. Hear us Lord, and bless this word to our hearts and take us home in safety, in Jesus name. Amen.

Jude - The Acts Of The Apostates - Chapter 2

"The Creepers"

Copyright 2000
by Pastor David Legge
All Rights Reserved

Now turn with me in your Bibles to that little epistle that we've been looking at, the epistle of Jude, and we looked at the first three to four verses last Lord's day morning. You'll remember that we looked at 'The letter that Jude did not intend to write' - and we'll read from verse 1 to get the context of our study this morning.

Verse 1 of Jude: "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God' - and you'll remember we saw that that word 'sanctified' would be better translated 'beloved of God' - 'the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me [rather] to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for', or vigorously defend, 'the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his 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, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage".

Let's take a moment's prayer, as we seek God's face, and as we come to His word this morning: Our Father, Lord Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit, who inspired these pages, we ask Thee - the Triune God - that Thou wilt come right now to our hearts by Thy word and minister to us. We live in terrible days, our Father, Thy word tells us that - we have been warned about it - and we ought not [to] be taken unawares by these things. We pray Thy help now, Lord, give us grace to understand - and more so, Lord, to put it into the practice of our lives - that we may live as He lived, and as He intended us to live, by His sacrificial death at Calvary. Fill me with the Holy Ghost, I pray, and meet us now in Jesus name, Amen.

Last week we looked at verses 1 to 3 and this week we're going to look at verses 4 to 16 - and we're going to probably take two weeks looking at these verses, and I'm not going to take them in the order that they're found, perhaps, in the book of Jude as you see it written down there in the chronological order of the verses. We'll be skipping through the verses one-by-one and skipping over some of them. Last week we looked at the title: 'The Letter that Jude didn't intend to write' - we saw how from verse 3, if you look at it, he didn't intend to write a letter about apostates. He said, 'I wanted to write to you about the common salvation', and you'll remember I put that little word 'but' in there: '[but] it was needful for me rather to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith'. You can see Jude - the half-brother, as we saw, of the Lord Jesus Christ - now a leader in the church of Jesus Christ, and sitting perhaps with a body of new lambs in the faith around him, and thinking of those who had just come to Christ across his whole county, if you like, across the land, and he thought to himself 'What could I include in a letter to write unto them, to encourage them? Surely it would be the great salvation that we all have, the common salvation that has brought us into the faith, the death of the Lord Jesus that makes us sit where we are sitting?'. And that's what we feel like, isn't it? We were sitting around the table this morning - and if you weren't there, why were you not there? - we were sitting there, thinking of the common salvation, how the Bible says Christ died for our sins. And what we were doing was obeying Him, to remember Him in His death, thinking of the common salvation - and you know, those who are thrilled with that salvation could sit for hours, and hours, and in every meeting thinking of the common salvation! That's why Jude wanted to write to believers about it - he was so thrilled by Christ and His gospel, that he wanted to talk about it and write about it all the time!

But, you know, God's Holy Spirit had something else in mind. Because that - although so important and intrinsic, and although they would do it week by week, Lord's Day, as they would remember the Lord in His death, and thinking of that common salvation - the Holy Ghost came to Jude and, you'll remember, impressed him: 'Jude, that's not what you're going to write about. It is needful...', or as we translated it last week, Jude 'got necessity' to write about apostasy. It's a scathing book, isn't it? You've read those words, and they're hard to digest for many of us - strong words, harsh words, words of condemnation, judgemental words. And as we read this book, such condemnatory language raises the question about what Christians are to do about judging. We're told today, over and over again, 'The Lord Jesus Christ said, Judge not that ye be not judged', and that is what He said. And as we read His words in the Gospels, and look at these words of Jude, it seems to be contradictory - the Lord Jesus, apparently, is telling us 'You're not allowed to judge anyone', but here Jude, His half-brother, is condemning those who are diluting the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in language that could not be stronger! So is it right, or is it wrong for Christians to judge? What do we do about this awkward verse, 'Judge not that ye be not judged'? And then we see the Lord, in another place, also said, 'But judge righteous judgement', He also said 'Cast not your pearls before swine'. Now that presupposes, that in order to know the swine, you have to make a psychological judgement about who are the sheep, who are the goats, who are the swine and who are true believers in God. There is a process of mental and, perhaps, spiritual judgement there - to know who is the genuine article.

Now I believe it is evident as you go through the whole New Testament, and indeed the Old Testament Scriptures, that when the Lord Jesus said 'Judge not that ye be not judged', He did not - categorically did not! - say, 'Do not judge between truth and error'. Indeed, when He speaks in Matthew chapter 7, 'Judge not that ye be not judged', He is speaking of those things - and look at the context - that we as human beings cannot judge, things that only God can judge - motives not actions. Do you understand what I'm saying? You can judge a man's actions - when you see a man lying drunk in the gutter, you know that he has been overwhelmed by the sin of drunkenness, but you as a human being cannot discern the motive that drove that man to do that. You can say an action is wrong, but you cannot discern or judge in your mind, or even condemn, what has driven a person to do a certain thing. But the Lord does say to 'judge righteous judgement' - you look at the book of Jude, you look at the first [chapter] of second Peter that mirrors the book of Jude in many ways, and there is such scathing language used concerning these things. You look in the Old Testament, look at the book of Deuteronomy, and Moses there says that you're not to exhort a false

prophet, he doesn't say that you're to rebuke a false prophet, or admonish a false prophet - he said that you are to stone a false prophet! Now we are not in the business of stoning false prophets today - but you can understand how strong God's prophet, and God at that moment, felt about such false prophecy. You go into the New Testament, and the forerunner of the Lord Jesus, the one who prepared the way of the Lord is standing, and he is speaking, 'Generation of vipers! Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?'. What language!

But I think it must be 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild' who utters the strongest condemnatory language that you will find in the whole of the word of God - now we don't want take too much time to go into all of this, but let's look for a moment at Matthew chapter 23. And it baffles me, you know, how men and women read the word of God in these days and have such a mamby-pamby, softness towards false doctrine if they are reading about the Lord Jesus Christ - there's so much He says here, that we can't even take time to read it all. But in verse 13, we read this: 'But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in' - 'You're not saved, but you won't even preach the real way to be saved. You're shutting up heaven! You're leading men to hell!' - 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves'. Verse 27: 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are whited sepulchres, appear beautiful on the outside, but within - in the depths of who you really are - you're full of dead men's bones, and uncleanness' - and He goes on, and on, and on as you see, 'Woe unto you! Woe unto you! Woe unto you!'. And this, perhaps, is the greatest outpouring of anger against falsehood that we find in the whole of the word of God - and who is it from? The Lord Jesus Christ. Why does He speak in such scathing terms? Look at Jude.

We looked at the writer of the book last week, and we looked at the readers, we looked at the reason why he wrote - and the reason why he wrote were the rascals that you find in verse 4. 'For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ'. I hear the cry today, and always, 'Let's get back to the New Testament church!' - do you really want to? Do you want to get back to Corinthians, where there was incest in the church of Jesus Christ? Do you want to get back to it? All the problems that they had, because the early church was far from perfect! And from Simon Magis right to today, there is a cancer - and always will be, until we get to glory - be a cancer, just there, ready to awake and destroy. Where does it come from? Well, the verse tells us, '...certain men crept in unawares...', infiltrators, someone has called them the active members of the Senate of Satan. Men and women who hide under the cloak of Christianity, but deep down in their souls are godless! They are good on the outside, they're maybe even - in a worldly term - godly and god-like on the outside, but within the inside they are as black as tar - dead! The frightening thing that hits me, is that outwardly many of these people - in a religious sense - get everything right. They follow the practices, they walk the walk outwardly speaking, and talk the talk - but they had sneaked into the church, and were servants of Satan himself. Like the alligator, you see it - and they're going down the river, on the TV, in the boat - and all of a sudden you see this part of the green at the side of the river that's a bit darker, and then it starts to move - and very slowly, it just creeps in underneath. That's the sense that Jude is using here of these people, 'crept in unawares', they sneaked into the church of Jesus Christ - another translation says, 'they wormed their way in'!

Outwardly they are members of the church, inwardly they are strangers to Jesus Christ - I have called them, and entitled this message this morning, "The Creepers". The creepers, who creep their way into the church! It's the perfect description, here in Jude, of a spy. I'm led to believe that in the Cold War between Russia and America, indeed Russia and the whole of the West, there were Soviet spies in the highest echelons of British and American government. People right at the top who were spies! They had crept their way in. Now what

does Jude say about these people? Look at verse 4, they are marked out by God, '...before of old ordained to this condemnation...' - that could be translated: 'long ago, beforehand they were marked out', or another translation says, 'their doom has been predicted long ago'. We shouldn't be surprised by all this stuff that's happening in the church today - why? Because not only Jude, but men before Jude - the Lord Jesus Christ Himself warned His own disciples, even in the Old Testament there are prophecies that indicate that these men are ordained for condemnation. That doesn't mean God didn't give these men a chance, or He had them marked for this one purpose, but it means this: that long ago they were prophesied to do such things - and of course, as always, God's word comes true. God had marked them out.

There are two features that show us these rascals. The first thing about them is: they lived lives of licence. '[They turned]', it says [in] verse 4, 'the grace of our God into lasciviousness' - there was an absence, in their personal walk and life, of moral restraints in their behaviour - they abused the liberty that they had in Christ. God had wiped the slate clean of their past, their present, and their future - and they thought that the slate wiped clean of their future was like a blank cheque, that they could fill in with sin for whatever they wanted. 'God's forgiven me! I can do what I like! I can live as I like! I can say what I like or go where like!' - but, of course, as Paul says 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?'. That's not what the grace of God is all about, the grace of God is not just forgiveness, the grace of God is a change of a person, where their heart is changed, their life is changed, their desires are changed - everything about them is changed, so much so that Paul says they become 'new creatures, a new creation in Christ Jesus'. And therefore the implication is that no man can have forgiveness if he lives a life of licence. These men had no shame, they were carnal, they flaunted their sin in a spirit of arrogance - and today we see people who take the name of Christ, churches and church leaders, who are sinning openly, and encouraging sin in the world around us. And what, perhaps, began with them as a lack of reverence for the word of God - they just didn't obey it - is now becoming an interpretation of Scripture that they take, that turns the word of God on its head and legitimises and legalises their sin. Oh, there are men who can get anything out of the word of God - using the word of God to justify their sinful lifestyle. And they were apostates that Jude is talking about - a man who thinks he's saved, but is not saved! The life of God is not in his soul, the grace of God has never reached his spirit or his conscience, and therefore Jude concludes that there is no place for such a man or a woman in the church of Jesus Christ. Oh, there are many confused, there are many who are true believers but they belong [to] churches that teach apostasy. And there is confusion about what they ought to do - 'Should I stay there and try and build the place up? Should I try and bring light into that place?' - and that is a very worthy, and noble motive. But, my friend, that is not what the word of God instructs of us, and indeed - I stand to be corrected - but I believe, studying church history, that there has been no church yet - no denomination now, I am talking about, or movement - that has ever apostasized [and then come] back, never. Martin Luther wanted to change the Roman Catholic Church from within, he didn't want to split - the word Reformation means 're-forming the church as it was' - he didn't want to leave, but he was driven out because of the truth of God! So the Holy Spirit gives us our instructions in 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 5 - this is the word of God - from such turn away! 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away'.

Living lives of licence - and then the second thing that you see about their character is that they lived denying their Lord. 'Turning the grace of our God', verse 4, 'into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ' - their so-called Master and Messiah, they were denying Him by their actions! It could be said of many in the church of Jesus Christ today, as the Lord Jesus said, that the last state of the man is worse than the first. There are many who started out well, and showed promise. One man, Bishop Pike (sp?), was the leading light of his denomination in an evangelical sense - for the first few years he was preaching the doctrines of grace and salvation, but in his end years he began to talk about the Trinity, the Godhead, as - listen - 'excess baggage'. His famous quote was when he cried for 'more belief and fewer beliefs' - it doesn't matter what you believe, it's the fact that you have this sort of 'Father Christmas, fairytale' belief! My friends, there are those who have ceased praying in the Unitarians - do you know why? Because they began to pray to God, and then they realised that there wasn't a God; and then they began to pray to

truth - because they believed, at least, in truth - and then they realised that truth wasn't a person, it was an ideal; so they stopped praying to truth, and they ceased praying at all, and now just have 'aspirations'! There are those who name the name of Christ today, and don't know if there really is a God, there are those who name the name of Christ, and don't really know if the Son of God was the Son of God, if there is life after death, if miracles really happen, if infidels really can be saved! There is one quite famous theologian who said, 'A corpse cannot come to life and climb out of the grave'. My friend, as one man put it, they have gone through the Bible and taken out its records; they have gone through the Nativity and taken out the virgin birth; they have gone through Christ's temptation and taken away His purity; they have gone through the miracles and taken out the miraculous; they have gone through Calvary and taken out the blood, they have gone through the tomb and taken away the bodily, literal resurrection; they have gone through heaven and taken out its riches; and they have gone through hell and taken out its fire!...and there is nothing left.

One of the greatest downfalls that has brought this within the church is that Christians forget to remember. You remember, when Peter was talking about these same things in his little epistle, he continually told those believers there, 'Finally...' - I beg your pardon, in Philippians 3 and verse 1, Paul - '...Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you', not something new, not some concocted new thing that God had revealed to them - it's better to say something true than something new! 'It's not grievous for me to write this unto you, but for you it is safe'. My friends, never get weary of hearing sound doctrine, never say 'Och, we've heard all that before', or, 'We know all that', or, 'We're sick hearing that' - because the moment you stop hearing it, and the moment you ignore error, as we said last week, that error and falsehood will become established! The Scripture teaches that there is no new thing under the sun, and these apostates weren't new, and their behaviour and their character weren't new at all - they haven't changed, in essence, from that day, in Jude's day, 'til today.

Now let's look, for a few moments, in more detail at their character. Verse 8 says this, 'Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities'. They rejected, first all, God's authority - they rejected God's authority to set up their own authority. We see it in the home, where the wife rejects the man's authority; we see it in the home, where the child rejects the parent's authority; we see it in the state, where loyalists reject the government's authority - doesn't mean you have to agree with them, but they reject the authority; we see it in the church, where members reject the oversight's authority - and the word of God teaches that that is a sign of apostasy. That is a sign of the age, and the spirit of the age, and this thing that the devil has dreamed up from all times, and we can see it in verse 8 that he calls them, literally, 'filthy dreamers'. They've been dreaming about themselves, to take away all God's ordained authorities and to set on the throne of their life: themselves! Isn't that it? It's the old lie of the devil right from the beginning - what did he say? 'Adam and Eve, come here...God didn't say that - ye shall be as gods!'.

Strange how we always get back to this problem of pride, isn't it? It's at the root of nearly every sin - in fact it's the greatest sin that God hates, if there is one - it is the mother of all sins because it was the one that spawned sin in the beginning! 'I shall be as God!', Lucifer said, and God tumbled him down! God will tumble down every man or woman that says, 'I shall be as God, I will rule my life, I will not let Him be Lord of my life, I will not be told what to do by the word of God or by those that believe it!'. As he will end in hell, so will you my friend, if you reject the authority of God's word and His salvation.

They rejected God's authority, they were physically immoral, as you see from verse 8. It says, 'filthy dreamers defiling the flesh', they lived lives of licence, they were ignorant people - look at verse 10: 'But these speak evil of those things which they know not' - they looked as if they knew everything, and they didn't know a thing! Ignorant, not knowing what they were talking about. 'What they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves', they don't use their minds, but they use their bodies, their natural instincts push them and drive them. Rather than using their minds, their feelings rule, rather than their facts. Oh, my friends, you can see it - can't you? I don't need to name anyone, I don't need to name any

churches, or organisations, or practices - although there's so many that I would name, and we would be here all day. Those that let the feelings rule, rather than the facts. They let their mind run away with them and, as one said, 'Their conscience is seared and they wallow in a sewer of their selves'. 'I want to be richer! Health, wealth and prosperity! Me, me, me! I want to have perfect health! I want to do miracles! I want to see miracles!' - and they wallow in the well, and the hole, of their own self!

'Brute beasts' describes the people of today, doesn't it? The people in our world, dead in trespasses and in sins, driven by natural affections rather than the mind and the spirit - sex mad, as someone has said, today there is a 'sexplosion'. Rules are made to be broken, the media and the entertainment are full of humour about the things of God, and things that they should be showing reverence towards. That's why Jude says that they have no respect for dignities, no respect for dominion - they despise dominion - it is an intellectual arrogance, 'I know better than that! You're not going to tell me there's a God, and He made the world, and there was Adam and Eve and they took a bit of fruit down, and sin came upon all men and death by sin? I don't want that! I've a degree, I'm a managing director in a company. I've no time for fairytales such as that!' - is that you my friend? If you have no time for that, God has no time for you, I'm afraid. Because the word of God is the truth of God revealed through the Christ of God - and we have among young people today in our society, it has now been etched in stone, a disrespect for authority and dominion - so much so that everything that is serious must have fun poked at it! There must be a joke about it, they've got to put it on the television set and make fun of it. Blasphemy, cynicism, no respect for God's appointed leaders, irreverence, and a lack of respect for dignities. Don't think that Jude is talking about the King or Queen when he talks about dignities - the word in verse 8, at the end of the verse, 'dignities' is the word for principalities and powers. It means those spiritual beings, angels and fallen angels, those authorities in the heavenly places. Listen to what Jude is saying here: that the church of Jesus Christ with the apostates in it, and those in the world who have the spirit of the age within them, don't believe in them! You know the people that go through heaven and say, 'Well, we can't believe all the measurements here', or, 'We don't know whether that's really going to be there', or, 'We're not sure about that, what that actually means'; and then they go through the miracles and they say, 'Well, Jonah couldn't be swallowed by a whale. And the Lord Jesus couldn't turn the water into wine, and He couldn't - with all those five loaves and two fishes - make all that big feed for everyone. That's not possible!'. Beware, my friend, of unbelief - because it is the spirit of apostasy.

There is so much that we could say upon this: how the angels are learning their theology from us here today, by our submission, by our headship of Jesus Christ as our Head and none other - how they are looking down, and seeing it, and learning the grace of God. And then in verse 9, look at it, he describes, he gives an illustration of what happened, how we can learn to respect these dignities, 'Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses' - now where is that? Well, you'll not find it in your Bible, because that story's not found in the Bible. And Jude obviously was reading another book as well - and it's alright to read other books, as long as you don't take them as the word of God. What was he reading about? It may have been the book "The Assumption Of Moses", but whether that book is true or not, I do not know - I have not read it - but I know this much, that this part of it is true, because God's Holy Spirit has put it into our word of God. And here it is: that when Moses died - and Deuteronomy tells us that no one knew where he was buried - when he died, obviously the devil, for some reason, I don't know what it was - it could have been to make some kind of a worshipful shrine, or high place to worship another god from - that's what he likes to do with truth, make it into something idolatrous. And that could be what he was doing - but whatever it was, it says here, verse 9, that even Michael the archangel, dared not to throw a railing accusation at the devil himself. Now that does not mean that he didn't know he was wrong - he judged him, yes, he judged him, he had discernment, but he knew it was not in his power to throw anything at the devil, but he simply said, 'The Lord rebuke thee'. Oh, we have so much in our world today, and in the church of Jesus Christ, there are those who believe that if they could face Satan, face-on, fisticuffs, they would beat him. My friends, beware of him, be sober, be vigilant for your adversary the devil is a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, whom resist steadfast in the faith - and you could put that 'in Christ'!

You also see from their character that they adopted sinful hypocrisy - and we need to look at this in a week that is later, because we don't have time really. But let me look very quickly at these descriptions that are given in verse 12, 13 and 16 - Jude calls them, first of all, 'filthy spots'. You know, ladies, how you're maybe going out in the morning to church, maybe the roast is sitting out and you accidentally hit it as you're going out the door, and there's a filthy spot - and what does it do? It destroys the whole garment, wrecks it! Jude says that's what they're like in the church, they're wrecking it - it's like Judas at the Passover, there was one among them who would betray Him, a filthy spot. Some scholars say that that is better translated, not 'filthy spots', but 'hidden rocks' - and you know what hidden rocks do, you know what a hidden ice-rock did to the Titanic, don't you? Then it says they're 'selfish shepherds' - selfish shepherds exploiting God's people to look after number one - you could put it like this 'good living for a living'! You can see it in the United States, in many places - men who are in it for the money! You can see it here - the unconverted clergy, those standing in the pulpits talking of Christ and His word and the Gospel, and they don't know Him, they've never met Him, they've never been converted to Him! Even Ezekiel, the prophet, way back then said, 'Son of Man, prophesy against those shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds, woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?'

Thirdly, Jude calls them 'empty clouds' - what's an empty cloud? Well, you can see them up there, they look as if they're going to rain, but they're not raining. These men have the promise of giving you something, but they've nothing to give. They're all words - all picture, but no sound! They don't have the life of God in them to impart it to your soul, or anyone else - as Proverbs says: 'Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like the clouds and the wind without rain' - they claim, but they can't produce! 'Dead trees', he says - he says 'twice dead', what does that mean? Well, he talks about them being fruitless, they have no fruit - but Jesus says 'By their fruit ye shall know them'. But how are they twice dead? They're dead at the roots as well! It's not simply that they can't produce fruit, but they don't even have life in their roots. 'Raging waves', the noise of raging waves, proud arrogant speech - and then, finally, he says they're like 'falling stars'. You've seen a falling star, haven't you? It's not a planet that goes round in its orbit, that's not what a falling star is - it's not even a comet. It's something that you see just for a moment, and then it vanishes. I'm sure many of you know a pulpit beacon that has become a falling star.

I will finish, but just to give you two illustrations of this fact. I read, and it was very impressive upon my life, the little book by R.A. Torrey "Why God Used D.L. Moody" - and it actually was a sermon* of his put into print. And under the chapter 'Humility' (which was one of the reasons why God used him) he says this, and I have it printed at the front of my Bible, listen: 'The entire shore of the history of Christian workers is strewn with the wrecks of gallant vessels that were full of promise a few years ago, but these men became puffed up and were driven on the rocks by the wild winds of their own raging self-esteem'. Oh, we can see it around us.

**See Appendix A*

Charles Berry (sp?) was a liberal minister, and he was called to go to the home of a woman who was dying. And she pleaded with him, 'Reverend, tell me - lead me - to salvation!'. He said, 'You've lived a good life. You've done well, you've been a church member' - and that's what people are going to hell hearing today. She said, 'Sir, that won't do! Lead me to salvation', and he was at his wits end, he didn't know what to do, because he had nothing. So he wrecked his brains to try and remember a song that his mother had taught him at her knee, and he found the words:

'There is a fountain filled with blood,
 Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
 And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
 Lose all their guilty stains.'

And she said, 'That's it!'. The next Sunday he got up to his pulpit and he related that story - and do you know what he said? 'I had nothing to give that woman, and as I recited 'There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins' - she got in, and so did I!'. My friend, there's nothing else, this is the faith that we ought to contend for. Let us go and do it in the power of the Lord.

Now let us pray together, let's bow our heads and we'll finish our meeting now. But I'm conscious that some of you here may not know that true Gospel that we've been preaching about: that Christ died for the ungodly and it is only faith in Him that can save a man from hell. It's time for you to get saved, my friend, while you hear His voice - harden not your heart, but believe in Him now, and have everlasting life. Backslider, it's time to give up the spirit of apostasy, and turn to Christ again for the restoration of the joy of your salvation.

Our Father, we thank Thee for this time. We thank Thee for the truth of God that was delivered to us by holy men as they were moved and inspired of God. We pray in these days, as the Iron Hall, that we will not move nor be shifted but stand steadfastly in the faith - not in men's tradition - but in the faith, once and for all delivered to the saints. Help us in these days to fight for it and defend it, for we remember the words of the one who said to those believers, 'Ye have not resisted unto blood, yet!'. Bless us now, we pray, in Jesus name, Amen.

Jude - The Acts Of The Apostates - Chapter 3

"Remember, Remember"

Copyright 2000

by Pastor David Legge

All rights reserved

Now we're turning again to the little book of Jude, and this is our third study in this little letter of the apostle, and we've entitled our study today 'Remember, Remember'. We're going to begin by reading from verse 1 right down to verse 16.

"Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, the brother of James, to them that are sanctified" - we saw that means beloved - "by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace and love, be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once and for all delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares", and we saw about them last week, the creepers, "who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of that great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying" - or the rebellion - "of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever", and we'll finish our reading at verse 13.

Let's take a moment in prayer: Our Father, we ask that as we come to Thy word now in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou wilt help us to understand and to hear the word of God to our hearts. Speak with us, we pray now, and be present by Thy Holy Spirit. In Jesus name we ask it, Amen.

You all know the rhyme: 'Remember, remember the 5th of November'. 'Remember, remember' is the topic that we see down before us from Jude the apostle. Many dates are remembered over the years, and Jack reminded us of some of them today, and we know all about dates here in Northern Ireland, it's either remember 1690 or remember 1916, depending on your persuasion. And why is [there that] call to remembrance of a date, or a time, or something that happened? Usually it is because, not of the year, or the number, or even the date, but of the occasion that took place and probably the principles that were set in motion, or set in concrete, for history and for the rest of time. Jude is asking these Christians to remember. We remember the Titanic, and ship builders from then on have remembered the Titanic, and they now remember to have enough lifeboats for those that are onboard. Something in the past has made them remember to do something important. And here in the book of Jude we see that the believers were about to commit the danger of forgetting to remember. Forgetting to remember!

It could be said that public enemy number one in the church of Jesus Christ today is apathy - forgetting to remember. Take for example the Lord's Supper: the Lord has asked us: 'Remember Me' - and on the first day of the week we are called as believers to remember Him. Yet that room up there is nothing [like] the size of the room down here as we were already hearing today, yet half of you are not there - you're apathetic, you're not too fussed about the Lord's Supper. And on this occasion in the book of Jude, the apathy was concerning the apostates, those who we read of in this epistle, verse 4, those who: 'Certain men crept in unawares who were before of old ordained'. These creepers - almost 'spies' - of Satan, that had wormed their way - you remember we saw that word means 'worming their way into the church of Jesus Christ' - and the believers were in danger of being apathetic towards the whole thing. 'Don't get too fussed about it! It's nothing to be worried about, they're in the minority! We believe the truth, they don't believe it, so there's no fear of any danger' - and Jude was warning them, you remember we saw that it's a trumpet call to arms to the church of Jesus Christ.

Now it's easy in everyday life, in the spheres that we live in, and in the political correctness that we have to listen to everyday, to opt for the statement: 'Let's go for the quiet life, let's not rock the boat, let's keep the status quo'. But we have to remember that, although we are the church of Jesus Christ and we believe in peace, we believe in love, we are also in a battle. And it is a spiritual battle, not with flesh and blood but against principalities and powers, and therefore our weapons are not carnal but they are spiritual. Can you imagine what General Montgomery, what a reaction he would have got from his battalions, if he had went out to the battle and he had shouted: 'Let's not rock the boat, let's not worry about the enemy, let's opt for surrender, for the quiet life, for the status quo, let's give them the ground that they have and not worry about it' - what would have happened? We probably, today, would have been enshrined in fascism.

My friends, it is the job of the church of Jesus Christ to teach Christians to know and to understand the Gospel. And once it is known and understood, it is our job to exhort you continually, over and over again, to remember what the Gospel is and not to budge an inch from it!

Jude knew his readers had a knowledge of the Old Testament. That's why some of the verses that we read together this morning, he is quoting from the Old Testament stories and incidents that he wants this people to remember. He wants them to see these aren't simply Sunday School stories that you tell to the children, this is something that is meaningful to you. The principles, the standards, what God was trying to tell His people in the Old Testament, there are lessons there for you and for me. We saw last week how in Philippians chapter 3, Paul told those believers: 'Remember! It is not grievous for you to remember, it is safe for you to remember' - why? Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. We saw how Paul, to the elders in Ephesus in chapter 20 of Acts and verse 28 on, continually told them: 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves, to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers. For after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. And of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember!'

Do you remember? The prophet told us that there is nothing new under the sun - and that is why apostates today are the same as apostates ever have been. They have the same characteristics, the same makeup and even the same beliefs - and in essence, Satan is not very original in his battle plans. He dresses them up in new ways, but they are old untruths.

The first thing I want you to see this morning are the comparisons that Jude makes of the apostates with those in the Old Testament, who were effectively Old Testament apostates. And the first thing that he shows us, from verses 5 to 7, are three apostates populations. Three apostates populations, and then we see further on in those verses, verse 11 on, three apostate people. So first of all, and we saw that Jude is fond of threes, there are groups of threes right throughout his little book. But first of all he shows us a group of people, three

of them that were apostates. And then, to narrow it in to individuals and to your personal experience, he brings before us three individuals who are apostates. Now let's look at the first of the three apostate populations, look at verse 5: 'I will therefore put you in remembrance,' circle that, 'though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not'.

Israel is the first apostate population. What is Jude getting at? You'll remember that Israel, as Jude said, were released and delivered - we read about it in the book of Exodus - from the slavery in Egypt and they sang the praises of God with Moses for their deliverance. And if you want to liken that to our salvation as believers, we have been freed from the slave market of sin, we're set free from the chains of our flesh, the world, and the devil - and the day we get saved we are rejoicing in the freedom that we have! But you know that for forty years the children of Israel wandered around in the wilderness. And I'm led to believe that the area, I don't know the exact calculations, but the area of the wilderness that they wandered around was extremely small, and they could have got across it in a matter of days perhaps, but they wandered round and round in circles for one reason: unbelief! They would not believe God. They wouldn't believe God that there was a promised land for them, they wouldn't believe His word that there was a place flowing with milk and honey, that He was going to defeat the enemies in the conquests. All the Amalekites, and the Hittites, and the Jebusites were going to be cleared out of the land, and there would be made a land for the people of God to dwell in, and worship God, and follow God - they would not believe Him! - and they rebelled against God's word. We see that in our nearer day, in the New Testament period, where their Messiah came to them and they did not recognize Him - and if they did recognize Him, they didn't want to recognize Him. They didn't want Him! 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not'. With every privilege that we are given as believers, there are responsibilities that are required of God, and they had been given the privileges but they failed to meet the responsibilities. And Jude was warning these Christians: 'You have been given many privileges of receiving the truth, but if you follow and listen to false teachers there will be consequences for you to pay!'

What a warning that is to us in these days. We have not time to go through the myriad of false doctrine, and false teaching, that we find in so-called Christendom today. But my friend, if you are unstable and double-minded in all your ways, the chances are that you are blown about in the wind with every false doctrine because you are not rooted and grounded in the truth. And when you hear something you think: 'Well I wonder is that right? I wonder is there an element of truth in that? They seem so sincere, they seem to be so loving and the truth seems to be in them' - but because you are not grounded in the promises of God, and the word of God, you're deceived.

The second apostate population are the angels in verse 6: 'And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he' - God - 'hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of that great day'. Jude is talking about angels that despised their rank, they wilfully rebelled against God's divine claims upon their powers. They chose to opt out of God's divine plan for their life!

Why do we have people in the pulpit that can't preach? Why do we have missionaries on the mission field that aren't really missionaries? Because many people want to opt out of the plan that God has for them: 'I want to be a preacher. I want to be this, I want to be in the front line, I want to be in the lime light, I want to do this, I want to do that'. And it's all 'I want, I want!', and they don't get before the face of God on their faces, and seek God for His way, for His divine plan!

Jude is speaking of what we read in Genesis 6 and verses 1 to 5, I'll read it to you quickly: 'It came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an

hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually' - and in a few chapters time we read of the flood, God wipes them all out. What happened? The angels kept not their first estate, they weren't happy with their own environment, they had to come down to our environment - fallen angels, cast out of heaven - but they came among men. And the book of Genesis chapter 6 says that they saw the daughters of men, and reading between the lines, they slept with them. And they bore up these monster children, that we read of within the word of God: 'Giants were in the land', they kept not to their own ground, they kept not to their own kind, but they caused this abomination in the earth.

Now look at verse 7 of the book of Jude, we looked at this verse last week. It says that they: '[gave] themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh', and they're, 'set forth for an example' - and then we read about Sodom and Gomorrah, at the start of that verse. And what God is doing here by His Holy Spirit, is saying: 'Do you see the way the angels came down from heaven, and they slept with the daughters of men and created an abomination unto God? It's just like what Sodom and Gomorrah did in My face'. Just like, look at verse 7, the fornication that they give themselves to, going after strange flesh. Now you might look at that and say, 'What was the strange flesh that the people in Sodom and Gomorrah went after?', and you might say, 'Well, it was their own kind. Man went with man, woman went with woman, homosexuality, sodomy' - but that's not what I believe it means. 'They went after strange flesh', and you remember how Lot had those angels come to his door, and those men of that evil city - Sodom and Gomorrah - came to his door and would have plundered the house down to get their hands on those angels' flesh, to know them! They'd got dissatisfied with their own kind, the man slept with the woman and got fed up with her, so he slept with a man and he got fed up with him, and he wanted angels now.

It's all in the word of God my friend, it speaks of the dissatisfaction of sin - how you cannot satisfy that yearning. That's why he says in verse 8: 'Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities'. Verse 10b says: 'but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves'. And Jude is saying this: that the characteristic of an apostate is that - sensually speaking, and sexually speaking - they are perverse! It's an interesting link, that on the one hand they are very religious, in the middle category they despise dominion - in other words, they rebel against all authority on land, assembly, everywhere - and on the other hand they're messing about sexually. I would say, on the authority of the word of God, that if you are despising dominion in any way the chances are you're messing about, you're messing about with sin. And the characteristics - we see it in our land today, we see it in the ecclesiastical system, men in garb claiming to be the men of God and they are perverts! They hide perversion, they move them to a different parish! Is the word of God not true? Is it not crystal clear what we see here?

The first population is Israel not believing God, the second is, are the angels who kept not their first estate, the third is Sodom and Gomorrah that we've been thinking about, they went after animal-like sin, Romans 1:28 says: 'And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient'!

I was listening, in the last fortnight, to 909 Medium Wave BBC Radio News and Sport, and there was a psychologist on speaking of the tragic death of Sarah Payne. Do you know what he said about human nature? Listen to this very carefully now, he is not a believer, but he says this: 'Man with no restraints upon him, and left to himself, is base and vile'. In someone's house yesterday I lifted Saturday's edition of 'The Daily Mail', and the front headline was this: 'Sex can be shown on TV at any time'. The sub-heading was 'New rules clear the way for explicit scenes when children are watching'. And the story is that the ITC, the Independent Television Commission, has practically scrubbed out the nine o'clock watershed for children. Now the sexual

scenes will be able to be shown in the daytime and in the morning and, even though parents think there's too much filth on the television at the moment, they continue to do this - why? They are brute beasts! Satisfying their own lusts, and God's word proclaims this judgement upon them: that they are set forth as an example suffering the vengeance of eternal fire! My friend, you note: eternal fire - and we have been exposed in recent days to what is called 'annihilationism', that when you die you're punished, and then when your punishment's done you're puffed out, like a cigarette, and that's the end of your existence. Listen to the word of God! Why will men not listen to the word of God? Eternal fire!

The book of Revelation, that speaks more about this subject, says that the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. And it warns us, as believers, against apostasy by saying at the end of that book of Revelation, 'I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book'. Do you know what Jude's trying to say to us? Listen very carefully believers: for Israel who just didn't believe the promises, for the angels who didn't believe God's will and accept it for their life, and thirdly for Sodom and Gomorrah that followed a way of sensuality, he's saying this: 'You can't sin and win'. Do you know that the believer is not to sin? Oh we excuse it don't we? 'If I do it God's going to forgive me. If I do it I have the blood to plead', and I know that's all true my friend, but there's something seriously wrong in your mentality if that's the way you think before you sin. You can't sin and win! You can't sin and see your father saved! You can't sin and see your children brought up in the fear and the admonition of the Lord. God is a holy God!

And so he moves from three apostate populations to three apostate peoples, and I'm going to take time this morning to go through them. Verse 11 we see it: 'Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core' - and he brings three individual people from the Old Testament to our faces, why does he do that? He does it to shake us and to shock us!

You know how a depressed person with a nervous problem goes to the psychiatrist and psychologist, and they activate upon them shock treatment. It shocks them! - and shocks them out of the state that they are in, and this is what Jude is wanting to do for us today. Waken up! Get out of the apathy! Realize the danger that we are all in. Don't beat around the bush, don't pussyfoot around or dodge the issue. Oh God, give us unambiguous, clear men! That's what we need. Men who will preach the word of God, not dilute it, just preach it as it is. Just tell it as God tells it! Is there a better way than God's way? Is there a better word than God's word?

He tells us of three men, Cain a farmer, Balaam a prophet, and Korah a prince. Cain a working class man, a working class apostate, Balaam an ecclesiastical apostate, Korah a royal, rich apostate - and apostasy, like all disease and just like sin, is no respecter of persons. He speaks of Cain, you all know the story of Cain, that Cain offered of the fruit of the ground - he was a farmer, he tilled the ground and he brought to God that sacrifice of his vegetables and his fruit - and Abel brought the sacrifice of a little unblemished lamb, and shed its blood and gave a burnt offering to God. But to put it bluntly: Abel was true faith and God's faith, and Cain was man's faith, the faith of the flesh, the work of the flesh. The religion of mankind, the product of man's mind, the product of rationalism, where he said in the depths of his being, whether he was conscious or admitting it or not, 'My way is better and more acceptable than God's way'! And I suspect that the Holy Spirit was whispering down on planet earth, 'There is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the way therefore is the way of death'. And Cain was grieved that God wouldn't accept his sacrifice - that's the same today isn't it? When you preach [that] there's one way to heaven and it's through the cross, the blood of the cross, people get upset. That's why men aren't preaching it today, when you tell them that if you don't accept God's way the alternative is hell, there's no inbetween, no limbo, that's the way it is and the hairs on their neck go up,

their backs get up and they're all antagonistic - why? Because no-one likes to be told that 'Your way is no good'. My friend that was Cain's problem, he rejected God's way for his own way. But the major difference between his sacrifice and Abel's sacrifice was blood. Have you got it? Cain's religion was a bloodless religion and do you know what a bloodless religion brings? A Christless hell!

Cain was the first murderer, and it happens to be that those that believe in the bloodless Gospel, as they did in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ through Judaism, they murdered. Right through from the Puritans, the Reformers, so many who were martyred because they believed in a blood Gospel - and the arms of Esau's flesh have always been round the neck of Jacob's faith. They want to choke the child of God and the child of faith - and can I say this to the Gospel preachers in our meeting? If you can preach the Gospel, and not mention the cross, it is well nigh to apostasy. Paul said to the Corinthians, 'I am determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified'.

The religions of the world are based on man's effort - and that's why Cain's effort was rejected, it was his own works, because faith saves. And my friend I want you to see this, that this is seen in the old Philistines, in the Old Testament where God was saying: 'There is My way and no other way, I am the God, I am the only God to be worshiped, I will not share My glory with another, I will not be put in a trophy cabinet of gods and worshiped in a pluralistic religion or society'. The Philistines saw Jehovah, the God of the Israelites, and they wanted Him - and they fought with Israel, and because Israel were in sin God let the Philistines beat Israel, and the Philistines went and took the Ark of the Covenant and they brought it into the temple where their own fish god Dagon was sitting on a stand. And they went to sleep that evening, and they came to the tent the next morning, and Dagon's face was on the ground! I think they probably said: 'We're not having this', and they put Dagon back on the stand. And the next morning Dagon was smashed to pieces - 'I will not share My glory with another! I am God and there is none other! There is none beside Me!'. Do you see Cain? Reject the religion of Cain whatever you do. My friend, we need to get back to the book, we need to get back to the old Gospel that saved your soul!

There was Cain and then there's Balaam. It talks, look at verse 11: '...they ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward'. Do you know who Balaam was? He was a false prophet, and Balak the king of the Moabites wanted him to curse Israel in the name of the Lord, but he did it for reward that's the only reason why he went, for a reward, to get money. God told him 'You're not going!', he said, 'I am going!', and he went. And as he was on his way, the angel of the Lord rose up in the way and the ass that he was riding on saw the angel of the Lord, but he didn't see him - he was the ass! He didn't see the angel of the Lord, but he wasn't having it either. He devised a plan and he went to the king of the Moabites again and he said 'I've got a way to get Israel to sin and to get God's wrath upon them. You get Israelites to marry your daughters', now that wasn't allowed. And it says that through that - we could call it a 'sexplosion' - God reigned His wrath and anger upon His own children, because Balaam got them to sin sexually. And we have men, naming the name of Christ, who are in it for the money - and I'm talking about evangelicals - and we have men that are legitimizing sexual perversion through the word of God.

Cain, Balaam and thirdly, and finally, Korah. He's called Core, C-o-r-e, here but in the Old Testament it's translated Korah, K-o-r-a-h, and you read about it in Numbers chapter 16. It's called the gainsaying, look at verse 11: 'the gainsaying of Korah', that literally means the rebellion of Korah. I preached on this [in a] sermon about last year, so I'm sure you'll not remember it, but what it talked about was this man Korah that was not willing to accept God's ordained leaders. He said 'Why can't we come to God? Why can't we bring the sacrifice? Why can't we offer the incense? Why can't we go before God? Why can't we call the shots and rule the people?', and they wanted to overthrow the Lord's servant. And the word of God says that this is what God said to them: 'Moses, Aaron separate yourselves from among this congregation that I may consume them in a moment...And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and

their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation' - do you know why? Because God has told us in 1 Samuel 15 and verse 23 that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. My friend, Israel, the angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, Cain, Balaam, Korah in his rebellion, all exhort us to flee from apostasy.

Do you know what Spurgeon says, and I close with this, I quote him: 'The new views are not old truth in a better dress, but deadly errors with which we can have no fellowship. I cannot endure false doctrine however neatly it may be put before me. Would you have me eat poisoned meat because the dish is of the choicest wear?'

It weighs heavily upon me that, humanly speaking, the church of Jesus Christ is one generation away from extinction. And unless we see Jesus our Saviour standing, saying: 'I will build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it', and we get up and hear the cry, the trumpet call of militant Christianity, and get on our knees, and get into the word of God, and fast from our food, and seek God for His reviving! - there will be consequences before God. The word of God is piercing isn't it? Where are we failing? Where are we falling short?

My friend, if God is speaking to your soul, you must obey Him. Let us get back to God, and my friend if you're here and you are trusting in yourself for heaven, and you don't see the great High Priest that has died for you, and prepared a way for you to glory, and you don't want God's High Priest, you want your own way. Will you not take Him today, who is able to save to the uttermost all who will come unto God by Him? Be saved today.

Our Father, we thank Thee for this time. The word of God is so searching, Lord we pray that we will let it search our hearts. Lord, that we will let Thee come within us and take all the dross away and the failure, and let Thy Holy Spirit come in in His fulness to make us the Christian that Thou hast ordained that we should become. Hear us Lord, in Jesus name. Amen.

Jude - The Acts Of The Apostates - Chapter 4
***"The Deathless Man And His Deathless
 Message"***

Copyright 2000

by Pastor David Legge

All rights reserved

Now we're turning again to our study in the book of Jude. We've been looking - this is our fourth study in the little book of Jude, entitled 'The Acts of the Apostates' - and we're looking at specifically two verses today, that tell us of one individual character. Well, let's read the previous verses to get the context of our verses today : "Jude", verse 1, "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: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you rather, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the rebellion of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his 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, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit [of God]".

Let's take a moments prayer: Our Father in heaven, the one who ensured that this book should come into our hands today. Holy Spirit, the Spirit who has inspired these pages before us, who exercised and inspired men of old to write the word of God. We turn to Thee afresh and ask that Thou mayest unctionise the preaching of this infallible truth. That the Holy Ghost of God may come among us, that the Christ of God may be preached and seen among all men. Help us Lord, and bind all spirits of oppression in this place. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

I've entitled my message this morning: 'The Deathless Man And His Deathless Message'. The man who never died, with the message that is still alive today among us. We've looked at these very harsh words in the book of Jude and I was amused by the saying of one man when he said: 'Silence is golden, but sometimes it's pure yellow'. Isn't that right? It's easy to be quiet about the things that are going on in the world and indeed the church of Jesus Christ. And there is this misconception that silence is graciousness, that silence is spirituality and that is the way we are to behave - that is not the scriptural understanding of grace. For when we look at the very person of our Lord Jesus Christ it is difficult, indeed, I find it is impossible to find words harsher than His, with regards to this subject of apostasy and false teaching. Therefore it is error to say that we are to be silent in the midst of apostasy. We see the prophets of God and that was their role - to stand against apostasy. John the Baptist - perhaps the greatest prophet that ever was, indeed the Lord Jesus described him as one that was born of woman that there was not another of. And he stood, you remember, just before the dawning of the star of the Lord Jesus Christ, upon the horizon of history, and there he stands in a wilderness crying, 'Repent ye! Repent!'. I've often thought how it is a strange scene to see a man standing in the midst of the desert. Why did the Lord not send him into the market? Why did he not go into the synagogue or the temple to preach this message? Because God was trying to relay to His people that they were like the desert. They were like the wilderness. And indeed the effectiveness of God's word upon them is like the effectiveness of John preaching to the dead plants and the sand.

When God's people were threatened in history by their own sin and corruption or by the deception, deceiving of false teachers and apostates, God came by His Spirit and raised up men. Messengers of God, with God's message, and that was the way that God counteracted and corrected false teaching - that was how God brought revival and spiritual renewal within the word of God. If you look at the book of Judges that I've been reading in recent days you can see that cycle within it. Nearly every chapter you come to, just as the word of God is introducing for us each individual judge, you find the same cycle. It says that the nations sinned, waxed in the face of God. Their sin and their wickedness was evil, the next stage of that cycle is that we read that the anger of God was kindled against them. And then when the anger of God was kindled against them, we find God's people groaning and praying and crying to God for mercy and the next step is God answers their prayer, God sends a deliverer. It's the same with the judges, the prophets, indeed we see it in the very person of our Lord Jesus Christ. That when we are in need, when we are at our wits end in our own sin, it is God that raises men to deliver. Indeed, Ezekiel said it when he quoted the Lord God Almighty Himself in chapter 22 and verse 30 of his prophecy, listen to what God says in his day: 'And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none!'

Would He find one today? Would He find one among us? In Esther chapter 4 and verse 14 she was raised to be a deliverer for her people, and Mordecai came to her and said to her these words, listen: 'For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place'. If you don't rise up and stand up for your people, God will deliver them another way. 'But thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and' - listen! - 'and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?'. Men - and women, by the way - raised of God for specific purposes, to counteract apostasy, to bring spiritual renewal, revitalization and revival to God's people.

The passage that we read today, the two verses that I want to concentrate on this morning, speak of a prophet just like that - and also it records his prophecy that he made. And if you want to sum that prophecy up it was the 'comeuppance of the creepers'. Those who had come in unawares, verse 4 tells us, the ones who had crept, weaseled their way into the church of Jesus Christ. Jude is saying through the prophecy of Enoch that there is a day coming when they will have their comeuppance.

I want us first of all to look at this prophet that is named in verse 14. Look at verse 14: 'And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints'.

Now we'll look at his prophecy in a minute, but I want us to concentrate on this man! Who was it that God used? What kind of a man does God raise up to face apostasy and to renew the church of Jesus Christ? We find three mentions of Enoch within the word of God, we read of him in Genesis chapter 5, Hebrews chapter 11 and then in the book of Jude. Now I want you, for a moment, to turn with me to Genesis chapter 4, Genesis and chapter 4, and we're not going to read it, but perhaps when you go home you can read this passage of Scripture which outlines the genealogy, the line, of Cain. You know who Cain was - we looked at him last week - that was the son of Adam, who slew Abel. And we look down all of chapter 4, and we find the godless line of Cain, down to the seventh generation of Adam, then the account closes. The end of chapter 4, the account closes and we begin in chapter 5 a new section, which traces the line of Seth. Now have you got it? Adam has Abel, then he has Cain, then he has Seth because Cain slew Abel, and God had to have a righteousness holy line to eventually bring the Lord Jesus Christ - Messiah - and the seed from the woman to deliver humanity. Therefore He had to give Eve another son, Seth. So in chapter 4 right to the end we're looking at the godless line of Cain - and then God does a new thing in chapter 5, and we see the godly line of Seth. From Seth, Noah would be born, from Noah his children would give birth to the nations of the world and the ark - the inhabitants of it - would replenish the earth for the future nations of the world. And if we look right back to our lineage, as we sit here in Belfast, in Northern Ireland, in Europe, we can look right back to Noah himself. And before the flood, and before Noah, we can look right back to Adam the first man - and as we sit here today, we are all related in that one lineage...and the tragedy of it all is this: that we have inherited sin. Oh, this is not preached today. Original sin, from the original sinner Adam and it traces its way down to his children, to Noah and his children, to us and our children - and before us we can see the universal depravity and degradation of all humanity!

And it's outlined - if you look at chapter 5 and the first verses right down to verse 21 - at least eight times you read these words: 'and he died', 'and he died', 'and he died', why? Because sin had come upon all men and death had come by sin! But when you look at verse 21, look at the difference, all this series, 'and such and such was born and he lived so many years and he died', and then verse 21: 'And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: and Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him'.

Enoch is described, in the epistle of Jude, as the seventh from Adam. He did not die, but the word of God tells us that he was translated out of this scene of time right into, ushered into, eternity without seeing death. Now don't confuse Enoch with Enoch in chapter 4 and verse 17, who was the son of Cain, they're not related at all. But this Enoch is a righteous man, he is a holy man of God! We could say that, in the light of the epistle of Jude, he is the rose among the thorns. We see him, and he is altogether other than what we read in the rest of the epistle, because Jude testifies of him - as the rest of scripture - that this man Enoch is the epitome of all godliness and holiness. He is one of two men in scriptures who it was said of they 'walked with God'. He was one of only two men who were taken to heaven without experiencing death - and he is the only man, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, who it is written of him that he pleased God! Now think of that for a moment: Jesus Christ, sinless, spotless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and it was said of Him, and He said Himself, 'I do always those things that please Him'. Yet the Holy Spirit of God could come of one called Enoch, and say: 'This man pleased Me'.

Now I want to say today, that this is the supreme preventative treatment of apostasy. This is the way we prevent apostasy, this is the cure, this takes it away and this makes it afraid of coming within us, it is called simply, within the word of God, 'Walking with God'!

Look at his biography in chapter 5 of Genesis verse 21 to 24 - look at it: he lived sixty and five years, he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God after he begot Methuselah 300 years, begot sons and daughters. He was not - God took him! He walked with God, what does that mean? Well, first of all, it means

reconciliation. For in the book of Amos we read these words, chapter 3 and verse 3: 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?' - and it presupposes that if Enoch walked with God, Enoch had to be reconciled with God to be in agreement with Him, to be in agreement about his sin, to be in agreement about the remedy for his sin - the grace of God, to be in agreement about God's holy law and God's standard and character of holiness. And he - if you like - had to be converted, he had to be reconciled with God, and a man cannot walk with God unless he knows God in reconciliation. Can two walk together except they be agreed?

Secondly there has to be correspondency to their nature. God is a holy God. The word of God tells us that light hath no communion with darkness - and in this man's life, as in all our lives, sin has to be judicially put away from the face of God, and that had to be done with Enoch - he had to have his sin dealt with.

Thirdly, he had to have a moral fitness, because God does not walk out of the way of holiness. God does not let His socks [fall] down in His standard of holiness. God will not look at another, God will not have another, He does not lower the standards to fit us. Is that not what the New Testament says? 'If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin'. He had to have a standard of a holy life to walk with God.

Fourthly, he had to have a surrendered will, because God does not force His company on anyone. He chose to walk with God. And you my Christian friend, must take His yoke upon you - that's what the word of God says, that's what the Lord testified to - and that is why, fifthly, he had constant communion with God. That's where the walking with God came from - and the word 'walk' suggests a steady progress, as he puts distance behind him, as he goes to the goal that he has in his mind and his soul - he walked with God!

Someone has said, Enoch did not take a turn or two with God and then leave His company. But he walked with God for hundreds of years! What a splendid walk! A walk of three hundred years, it was not a run, a leap, a spurt, but a steady walk with God!

Hebrews 11 verse 5 tells us that it was a walk of faith. He had a testimony, Hebrews says, of walking with God - that he pleased God, and in the next verse the writer to the Hebrews says this, 'and without faith it is impossible to please God'. Enoch pleased God, and the reason he pleased God is because he was a man of faith. How do you know if you're walking with God? I'm not asking you if you're saved, I'm asking you are you walking with God? If you're walking with God there'll be progress, because walking suggests it - and if you're in the same position that you were last year spiritually, or for that matter worse than last year, you are not walking with God. If you are walking with another, and in agreement with another, there will be a growth in the knowledge of that person as, day by day, you walk with them in their shadow. And Enoch had a knowledge of God that was creating more and more and more - it was self-reproductive!

Do you have that? Do you have a deep peace within your soul? That's what walking with God is - and we find believers wrecked with worry, wrecked with anxiety and one of the reasons is probably they are not walking with God! Many believers don't know where to turn for guidance, they don't know the road to take in their life, and if they were walking with God they would be being taken with God where He wanted them to go! Do you know the guidance of God in your life?

Then we see that he witnessed for God, for he preached, Enoch was a preacher. Now I want you to see this very clearly: that you cannot serve the Lord, until you first walk with Him. 'Oh, I want to be this, I want to do that, I want to take this road, or do this service, or be this type of person', my friend listen! You have to walk with God! If you don't walk with God, God'll not walk with you! God will not use you, God will not bless you, God will not fill your life with fruit unless you are consciously walking with God - and if you are going to fight apostasy in this land, in this church, in this church age that we are in, you must walk with God!

Now I want you to see this, and we're going to take time to look at it, if I preach nothing else this morning. In Genesis 5, if you look at it again, in verse 21 to 22 we see that Enoch had a son, '...he begat Methuselah 300 years and begat sons and daughters'. And that passage, that verse, suggests that Enoch only began to walk with God after the birth of his son Methuselah. Now the name 'Methuselah' in Hebrew means this: 'When he is dead it shall be sent, when he is dead it shall be sent'. What is he talking about? Well, he's talking about the flood that comes up in the chapters that come after chapter 5. When this child is dead the flood will come, and if you can see God saying to Enoch, through the birth of his son Methuselah: 'You see your little baby here Enoch? When its life is run I will judge the world for its sin'.

Cast your mind back to the birth of your child, cast your mind back to a significant experience in your life, and imagine if God named it Methuselah. And God said to you 'Now my child, and you are My child, you see when the life of this child, or the life of this thing, or this experience passes, when this thing is over? I'm going to come in judgement!'. Would that make a difference to your life? I think it's no wonder that Enoch began to walk with God after that. Imagine if God came and said to you, 'You see when this certain thing is over, or when this child dies, or when this thing happens', and you don't know when it's going to happen, so every single day of your life you're expecting it and when the child gets sick of a cold you're worried about it dying, incase the ends all done and you haven't a chance anymore! How would it change your life? If you're not saved here today, how would that change your life? How would it? If God came to you and said, 'As soon as this is over, I will require your soul at My hand. As soon as this is over, you'll not have another chance to be saved' - what would you do? My friend, listen: God has said that! Do you know what He has said? He has said that when we see apostasy in our world, that is the sign that He is at hand - and you're sitting here today and you're still not saved. You're sitting here today and you're backslidden in your sin, and you're not going to do anything about it, and you've no notion of doing anything about it - and Jesus Christ the Son of God is at the gate, you can almost hear the footfall! And where are you?

Oh, it changed his life alright and he began to walk with God. He started a walk with God, he began to prepare to meet his God. Do you know what Enoch means? It means 'dedicated', it means 'disciplined'. And we don't read within the word of God that Enoch was a father of a nation like Abraham, or a charismatic leader like Moses, or a warrior like Gideon, or a king like David, or a statesman like Daniel - and this thrills my soul! Do you know what he was? He was an ordinary 5' 8" man! Like you. Do you know what that tells me? I can be a man of God! I can walk with God! I can know God in the deepest, intimate fellowship and communion and sense of the word, and it doesn't matter that I'm not an apostle or a prophet. It doesn't matter that I'm not a great preacher, or a great intellectual, it doesn't matter that I don't know theology - I can know God! I can walk with God!

Do you walk with Him? Do you walk in the discipline of a life of prayer? Do you know what it says of Adam in the beginning? I think this is beautiful: 'Adam walked with God in the cool of the day'. Do you walk with God? Scholars tell us that when Enoch lived, Adam lived for some time - and I wonder did he not learn from his relative Adam, what it was to walk with God in the cool of the day. My friend, Enoch knew what it was to sing:

I come to the garden alone,
When the dew is still on the roses,
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known'.

I want to ask you - please listen! As a believer in Christ, do you meet with God? Do you? For we cannot take His name if we do not follow Him. You must walk with Him, you must talk with Him, you must seek His presence, you must eat His word, you must be in that place of continual fellowship with Him - and I believe

that Enoch met early in the morning with God, do you know why? Because every man of God that you find in the Bible did it. Moses rose up early in the morning, Abraham rose up early in the morning to meet God - when the world was shut up, when the world was dormant, when there were no influences of evil, and he could come before God, and he could meet with his God. I don't want to be superior, but I suspect that 95% of the church of Jesus Christ hasn't got a clue what that's about - to walk with God.

The miracle of it is, that he walked with God when things were so bad. Genesis, that we've been reading, says this in chapter 6 and verse 5: that during Enoch's days God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually - as one writer put it, listen: 'Socially it was the age of permissiveness, scientifically it was the age of progressiveness, and spiritually it was the age of presumptuousness' - everything was bad! And we say, 'How can I walk with God? How can I be holy in the age that I live in today? How can I be a man that God uses like the reformers or the revivalists? How can I possibly, when I see all the filth on the billboards, when the television is spewing out muck every moment of the day? How can I, with the pressures of my job?'. My friend, Enoch and Noah were the only two on the planet that walked with God - and they did it! Do you know why? Because it's a matter of choice. One man put it so lovely, that Enoch went out one day to walk with God, and he walked so far that the Lord said 'Enoch, you're so near home you might as well come in'. And the companion that Enoch had in life, was his companion in death. And I love this, it was almost as if Enoch lived with a consciousness of eternity so much in view, that it was one step from time into eternity. Have you ever experienced that?

I've nothing more to say but listen, I want to ask you - you ask yourself - have you ever experienced that? What it is like - don't shuffle [your Bibles], wait - what it is like to almost reach out your hand, and think that you could touch Him. My friend, if you want to please God, you're going to have to learn to walk with Him.

Now let us pray, you see, it costs us to walk with God. As an unconverted sinner it costs us our life of sin and our pride, and perhaps that what it's costing you this morning. As a backslider it's your sin again, the thing you won't let go of, the thing of pride that you won't admit. As believers that are carnal and cold, guess what? It's sin again. Oh, the desire of the Holy Ghost for us this morning is that we all be done with sin and be taken up with Christ. My friend, I often wonder what it would have been like for Enoch, hand in hand with God. I wonder how much different heaven would have been for him to earth, very little - because he walked with God.

Our Father we want to please Thee, and we know that the only way to please God is by faith and by the walk of faith. Lord some of us are walking backward, some of us are standing still, some of us are going forward but not quick enough, and some of us are running ahead of Thee, our God. And we pray, teach us to walk with God - and may Thy Holy Spirit take a dealing with all of us here today. And Lord for those who have not begun to walk, that today they would follow Christ. For it's in His name that we pray. Amen.

Jude - The Acts Of The Apostates - Chapter 5

"The Apostate's Final Fall"

Copyright 2000

by Pastor David Legge

All rights reserved

Now lets turn in our Bibles to that little book of Jude again, as we continue in the series: 'The Acts of the Apostates' - looking at the apostasy that was in the world when Jude was alive, and applying it to our world today and the church situation at large, not just in Northern Ireland but across the whole of Europe. Let me say, while you're turning to that passage, there won't be an open air this Friday night. I was wrong in announcing that, due to the children's meeting - or Wednesday night, even - there won't be an open air...there won't be one on Friday night either!

OK, Jude - and we're only going to read the verses that we looked at the last week that we studied it - and we looked at the prophet that was named in verse 14, the prophet Enoch. And we did a character study of his life, how Enoch walked with God, how it was said of Enoch that he pleased God. But this week we're going to look at what Enoch said, not the prophet, but the prophecy that he gave, verse 14: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his 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, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers', or grumblers, 'complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.'

Let us pray: Our Father we have turned to Thine inspired truth and we ask this day, as we read these words, that we would all apply them to our hearts. And for those who cannot because of their state apply them, that it would be applied by Thy Spirit. Help us to see into the mirror of Thy truth, help us to walk according to Thy law, help us to repent of those things we must repent of, and help us to waken up to those truths that we have forgotten or neglected. Lord meet our need today, and meet my need by the filling of the Holy Ghost I pray. In Jesus name. Amen.

Apostasy is alive and well in Belfast. I wonder what you would think if I said apostasy is alive and well here in the Iron Hall? Because in theory that is the case and, whether it be open apostasy or the seed of apostasy beginning to spring up or grow, the fact remains that the apostle Peter told us in 2 Peter 2 verse 1: 'There shall be false teachers among you'. And that is his emphasis there to make us realize that it is from among the church of Jesus Christ that false teachers rise up. We know through studying this little book, that the word 'apostate' simply means 'someone who has fallen away from the Christian truth', the faith found within the word of God. And as we study this little book, and especially the book of Romans, we find here, in verse 19, that these apostates are those that have not the Spirit of God. And the book of Romans tells us that those without the Spirit of God are not of God, they are not converted, they are not the children of God. So not only are apostates those who, apparently by the naked eye, fall away from the truth of the word of God, but they never had the life of God in them in the first place. They were never born of God, they never had a regeneration in their hearts, they never had a conversion, they were never born again of the Spirit of God. But as we look at this little book, you might ask the question: 'Well, have things got any worse? In the realm of apostasy are things as bad in the church of Jesus Christ as you are making them out to be?'

A careful study of the New Testament Scriptures, and indeed the whole of the word of God, will give you an outline of the calendar of God to the future. If you read the book of Revelation and some of Paul's epistles, you will find there that God has revealed, clear calendar of events to come at the end of the age. We read in the word of God that things are to get worse and worse. Indeed apostasy within the church of Jesus Christ, as we near the end of the age, is to increase and increase, year after year - and eventually it finally is personified in the person of Antichrist. He will be the epitome of all apostasy and all ungodliness. If you were to turn this morning to 2 Thessalonians 2 and verse 3 and 7, Paul writes here - listen to this: 'Let no man deceive you, for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first', you could translate that: 'until there come an apostasization'. The day of Jesus Christ, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth to reign, will not happen until there is a falling away within the church of Jesus Christ. Paul goes on to say, 'and that man of sin - the antichrist - be revealed, the son of perdition', he will be the epitome, the public representation of all apostasy, backsliding and falling away throughout the whole of church history. Paul goes on to say in verse 7, listen: 'the mystery of iniquity doth already work'. We ask the question, 'Is it worse than ever today?' - of course it is! As we approach the end of the age, the word of God teaches that things within the church of Jesus Christ, and indeed within the world at large, will grow worse and worse - until eventually all the evil and apostasy and false teaching in the world will be personified in one figure, one man who will be worshipped: the antichrist.

The spirit of apostasy is ripening. As we approach the end of the age, apostasy is getting more and more - and it is the chief sign that we need to get ready because Christ is coming! We were singing in the breaking of bread: 'Jesus is coming, is coming again' - and we don't even have to worry about that fact, it is something we can see in the signs that are around us - that as things get worse and worse we know for sure, according to the New Testament, that Jesus is coming again.

The situation that Enoch was prophesying to, we looked at a few of weeks ago, but let's recap in Genesis chapter 5 - I beg your pardon, chapter 6, Genesis 6 and verse 5. And God looked down at the situation of mankind at this particular time in history and He said in chapter 6 of Genesis verse 5: 'And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart'. Man's thoughts were only evil continually. And you'll remember we saw that there were only two men recorded within the word of God that walked holy lives before God, that was Noah and Enoch. Noah was saved in the ark through the flood, Enoch was taken as he walked with God one day, 'He was not', the Bible says. God translated him from earth to Heaven, took him without dying. Two godly men and both of them were saved from the wrath to come upon the earth.

But what was the occasion, what was the environment these men were living in? The verse tells us that it was a time, before the flood, which socially was permissive, scientifically was progressive, and spiritually was presumptive. Socially anything went, everything goes - as long as it feels good to you, you do it - whether you name the name of Christ or not, you can get away with anything. As Jude says they were turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, changing the grace of God, because they were freed from their sin they thought that they could live the life that they wanted to. There was scientific progressiveness, you remember we read how angels, fallen angels, had come down and procreated with the daughters of men - and they created monsters, half demon, half human, that roamed on the earth...something that we may see in a day to come. Thirdly, they were spiritually presumptuous, because we see in the book of Genesis that they began to go their own way after God. And they built a tower called Babel, and they made the top as heaven and they put idols in it, and they went there to worship God their own way, and their own gods, their own religion. They didn't want God's way, like Cain, they would not go by the way of blood and by the way of faith, they wanted the way of works.

Do we not live in an age such as this? Enoch was prophesying to that age, Jude was prophesying to that age, and we can see in our world around us that we are approaching - if not even in - an age such as this as we speak! Do you remember how Enoch was given a little boy called Methuselah? And that name Methuselah meant: 'when he dies it shall come' - and God was speaking to Enoch and saying, 'When this little child's life is run there will be a judgement upon the earth'. And the judgement came in the form of a flood - and the word of God testifies, that when that child was born, and Enoch was told that the judgement was coming, Enoch walked with God.

In Enoch's day there was a declaration of judgement, in Jude's day there was a declaration of judgement, and in our day there is the same declaration of judgement from God - and Jude's aim in these verses, 14 and 15 especially, is to impress upon the church of Jesus Christ the serious nature of apostasy. That there is coming a day, when apostasy will be severely judged by the hand of none other than God Himself.

William Gurnell said these words: 'None sink so far into hell as those who come nearest to heaven, because they fall from the greatest height'. Those who have a form of godliness, those who worship - they think God - in a way that they think they ought to worship God. They talk the talk, they seem to walk the walk, they have everything right, the Bible, prayer, 'churchianity' - but there is coming a day when those who are nearest the door of heaven, will fall headlong into hell. Why? Because they missed God's will. You my friend, if you're classed in that category, will have the highest of falls. And that is why Jude wrote, and I've entitled my message today 'The Apostates Final Fall'. They have fallen all along into false doctrine, into the sensuality, and sin, and religious permissiveness, and presumption - but there will come a day when they will fall for the last time, and they will not get up!

I want you to see two things today, in verse 14 the coming judge and His justice. And in verse 16, the condemned and their character. Let's look at verses 14 and 15: the coming judge and His justice - what is Jude saying? He is simply affirming to us, that Christ is coming again to judge. It's like that Christian gentleman that framed and printed in his room, in his bedroom, this little picture which said: 'Perhaps Today'. Jesus is coming again! It could be today, it may be tomorrow, but the fact is this: we do not know when He is coming - but we can read the signs and we can see that He is coming very, very soon.

And the first thing that Jude wants us to see about the coming judge and His justice is found in verse 14, and that's this: the reality of His coming. This is something that is real! Oh, it is denied by the apostates, they want to shear it out! But why do they want to do that? Because it says that He is coming to execute judgement! And if He is coming to execute judgement, it will be upon the apostates that He will do that. And men in the universities, men in high churches, many men of the cloth, and scholars, and theologians want to deny or dilute the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ - and I believe, spiritually speaking, underneath it all it is fear of the Judge and His justice. They fear that day.

And you know, it's not just the pagans who ask the question, 'where is the promise of His coming?'. Harry Ironside, that great preacher on the second coming was taking a meeting and, as he was closing in prayer, he heard the shuffle of a woman going down the aisle and out the door. And as he was standing at the door shaking hands he noticed that the woman was pacing to and fro at the door and she was muttering away to herself, 'How dare he say that! How dare he pray such a prayer!'. And he tried to remember what he had prayed at the end of his meeting and he had simply said, 'Come quickly, Lord Jesus'. As he questioned her more she said, 'I don't want Him to come quickly! I don't want Him to come now, because if He came now, He would break in on all my plans that I have'. Mr. Ironside replied, 'My dear young woman, Jesus is coming whether you want it or not'.

My friend, Jesus is coming whether you like it or not. It's not something you can stop, you can't make alterior plans for this - and I want to ask you today, are you ready? Enoch was ready when God called, and the word

of God says that he was 'translated' - that literally means he was carried across death. God took him away from death, God raptured him out of death, and Genesis 5 tells us that he was not found. Imagine! Enoch's wife running and looking: 'He's gone a long way today! Why isn't he coming in for his tea today?'. And the children, Methuselah and all the rest of them wondering: 'Where's Daddy?'. The neighbourhood looking and saying, 'Enoch hasn't come back tonight. That's two days he hasn't been back'. Listen my friend, there is a day coming when some will say that of believers! Indeed there's a day coming that you may say it of your family. 'Where's mother? Where's father gone? Where have the children gone? They've just disappeared!'. They are not found, they're looked for, they are missed because God has taken them when Jesus Christ comes again.

It's amazing that when God told Enoch, 'when this child dies it shall come' - the judgement of God. Do you know that Methuselah was the longest living human being that we have recorded? Nine hundred and sixty nine years long. Now we have one man today, who's a senior citizen, he's 65 today - but he hasn't reached that, 969! Do you see the grace of God? God had pronounced judgement upon that world, God had done it! But God was giving them all the chances that He could, in order that no one could turn to Him and say: 'You're not gracious!'. And my friend there is a day coming, when you will never be able to turn round and say to God: 'God, You never gave me a chance!'. For God says to you, 'I am not mocked. My patience is longsuffering, not willing that any sheep should perish, and I waited, and I waited, and I waited - and you didn't come in'.

My friend, are you ready? For there is the reality of His coming and secondly in verse 14, verse 15a, there is the reason for His coming. We have passages of Scripture such as John 14, 1 Thessalonians 4, we have many passages that depict for the believer what joy there will be when the Lord Jesus comes and they thrive on the theme of joy, satisfaction, glorification but this passage is not like that. This passage has a different aspect. And it is the reason for His coming and He doesn't speak of a separation between saved and lost, although there will be that, but His separation here is categorized between godliness and ungodliness. Not simply claiming to be a Christian, not simply claiming to be saved but the fruit of your life tested by the holy rule of God.

You see God never looks at salvation purely as a confession. He looks at it as a changed life. You will be judged by that. My friend, remember that the backdrop and the context of what is being said here is the life of Enoch. That holy life, the epitome of all godliness, the one who it is said, pleased God. The one who walked with God, and God by His Spirit is saying, 'You've got to exhibit those attributes in your life', if, when you stand before God, you are not [to be] counted among the ungodly sinners who have done all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed - in verse 15.

Do you do ungodly deeds? The way you live - I don't really care whether you call yourself a Christian or not, for it will be self evident through your ungodly deeds, the way that you live, the way that you behave. Jude says verse 15, 'ungodly words', that is audible words, the things you say and also the inaudible ones, the ones you think and would love to say but you don't. Taking the name of the Lord your God in vain - and I'm not talking about swearing, I'm talking about taking the name of God and Christ, but you're not His! God is not mocked, and He says in the book of Hebrews, 'follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see God', no one will see God without a holy life!

A man was murdered, and the murderer threw his body into Lake Michigan and, as far as he was concerned, the body floated away. Three days later it washed up right in front of the murderers cabin! And the guilty man got so troubled and convicted in his conscience, that he confessed his crime to the authorities and he surrendered himself - and all could be heard was his exclaiming, 'The tides did it! The tides did it! The tides did it!'. And there will be a day that will come, when the tides of God's justice will bring to shore every hidden thing that has been in your mind, in your mouth and in your life. It is a fearful thing to fall into the

hands of the living God because He is coming, and it's real and He is coming and the reason is to execute judgement against all ungodliness. The hymn writer put it like this:

Lo, the last long separation,
As the cleaving crowds divide,
And the dread adjudication send each soul to either side.
Lord of mercy, how shall I that day abide?

My friend that day is coming, how will you abide it? Are you prepared? You can know you're prepared by seeing the condemned in their character in verse 16, because they're described in three ways: Grumblers, lusters and flatterers. Grumblers, lusters, flatterers - all in verse 16. They murmur, they walk after their own lusts, they speak great swelling words having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. And Jude is saying these are the ungodly traits that you will see in your heart, not necessarily outwardly, but you will know them in your heart and you will know false teachers because of them.

Look at the first: grumblers. They are murmurers and complainers. Apostates grumble, they are busybodies, they are problem people, they are the thorn in the flesh of the church of Jesus Christ. Thomas Watson said, 'Our murmuring is the devil's music!'. My friends, if we murmur, whether as apostates or as Christians, we are dancing to his tune. We are doing his work! Another puritan said, 'Murmuring is the mother sin of many sins, just as the Nile brings forth scorpions, crocodiles, serpents and snakes of every kind, by one rush and one flood, so the sin of murmuring brings forth other sins'. It is like the mythological creature 'Hydra', that when you cut off her head three heads grow, four heads grow and the more you cut off, the more grows - and this is the mother sin to so many. For it breeds disobedience, contempt, ingratitude, impatience, distrust, rebellion, cursing, carnality and in the end it breeds blasphemy against the name of God.

The history books tell us that one day Caesar prepared a great feast. It was to be outside, and the greatest food and wine was all prepared, the greatest entertainment. And what often happens in Ulster, happened in Rome, and the weather didn't show up. Everybody was there, but the weather didn't permit the great feast and banquet taking place - and Caesar, in his anger, told every person at that banquet to take their bow and arrow and point it at Jupiter, their god, and fire it! And as they fired, in their anger and wrath against [their] god, those arrows came tumbling down upon them and thrust them through. My friend, that is what grumbling and complaining does. So much of your murmuring will not reach the person murmured at or will even reach the throne of God. But, my friend, in judgement one day they will reach you. They are grumblers, do you grumble? Don't grumble.

Secondly they are lusters. They walk after their own lusts, apostate, they lust. That's a characteristic of them. They want to move the bounds of marital morality, they want to let the homosexual into the pulpit, they want to canonize, and make holy, and sanctify a live-in relationship of an unmarried man and woman - and now two men and two women. They want to see it as morally correct, and they will even move the bounds of the word of God and misinterpret it, in order to allow their own perversion, wandering and pornography. Lust is a great problem and in a great company, as this, there are many who lust, but couldn't share it. And in the nation that we live in, in the 21st century, there are diseases and viruses and bacterias breeding on people that they couldn't tell their nearest and dearest about, because of their sin of lust. But the mentality of this sin is that they continually go back to it again, and again, and again. It's like the fool putting his head into the stocks, it's like the sheep about to be slain licking the knife of the killer. And like a dog returning to its own vomit, and a pig wallowing in the mud, lust conquerors. My friend is lust conquering you? For if you can't conquer lust, that is one sure sign that you are not in the kingdom of God. And if you are in the kingdom of God and lust is conquering you, that's one sure sign that you've got big problems.

The puritan said, 'What lust is so sweet, or so profitable, that it is worth burning in hell for?'. Do you hear me? What sin - and all sin starts from the lust within, not just sexual lust, but lust for money, lust for drink, lust for food, lust for pride, lust for status or business, lust for anything, all of it starts from within - but let me ask you the question: what lust is worth burning in hell for? A child when it pitter-patters on to the frozen river of ice, as soon as its father cups his hands and cries to it, 'Be careful, come back, you'll fall through it', it runs! But many of us, when we hear the warnings of God, go back, go back, go back.

There are grumblers, and lusters, and thirdly: there are flatterers. Look at the verse 16, at the end, 'speaking great swelling words having men's persons in admiration because of advantage'. They flatter, as Paul states, flatter. One man said, 'Flattery has turned more heads than garlic'. Isn't that true? It is intoxicating. Benjamin Disraeli, the prime minister, previous prime minister years ago, said, 'Talk to a man about himself, and he will listen to you for hours'.

My friend, it is so powerful for the devil to use flattery in your life - and men may say what a good person you are, and what good things you do, and it intoxicates, and flattery is telling a person exactly what he thinks of himself. That is why so many don't like the Gospel because it tells it as it is. It tells a man in his sin where he is heading, what is going to happen to him if he does not repent of his sin. It tells people what we are really like in the inside - we may have a façade, and like to think a certain thing - but it does not flatter, and the Lord Jesus did not flatter, but apostates flatter.

What does a chameleon do? It makes friends with everyone by changing to its present environment. And whatever is the nearest thing to it, it changes to that colour - and so many men are like that, whatever doctrine, whatever teaching is prevalent at that particular time. Whatever environment of people they are in, they change to that colour. Oh, the chameleon makes more friends than the porcupine, but the fact is this: eventually he doesn't know what he is.

Do you know what you are today? Flattery is the devil's net, and we need to beware that we do not fall into it. For at the temptation of Christ, the devil came to the Lord Jesus Himself and took Him to the pinnacle of the temple and he said basically, 'The world is at Your feet, You can have it all!', and He defeated the devil - do you know why? Because there was no sin in Him, there was no lust in Him. And the word of God tells us that the devil allures us through the lust of the flesh, that's how he gets us - through the lust, to be what we think we are, rather than to realize what we are in the sight of God, and begin to be what He wants us to be.

Grumblers, lusters, flatterers listen to the word of God. Romans 13:12: 'The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armour of light'. Ephesians 5:11: 'And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them'.

Christ is coming, and He is coming to judge with the justice of God. It is a fact that must be faced. Do you exhibit the characteristics of a child of God, or the characteristics of the spirit of apostasy? Let me encourage all those that name the name of Christ, be done with this spirit of the age, have the truth, love the truth, live for the truth. Can I ask you, Christian, are you contradicting and counteracting the spirit of apostasy, like Enoch, with a holy life that is pleasing to God? Are you? Because that is the only way you will counteract it. Because in the context of apostates, that Peter was writing about in his second epistle chapter 3 and 11, he tells us: 'Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved at the end of the age, what manner of persons ought ye to be in holy conversation and godliness'. Are you holy? I believe that the cup of iniquity, and apostate Christianity, is almost full. It's almost full to overflowing, and then will be the cry from Revelation chapter 18: 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven,

saying, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues'. There is the spirit of apostasy, and many here could be in it.

I'll finish with this story. Archbishop Cranmer was one of the first protestants, and one of the first fathers of the Anglican Church. During the reformation he was forced by the pressure of the Queen upon him and of the court, to renounce and to recant from his protestant beliefs. And his hand signed a declaration to say, that everything he believed about faith in God and justification by faith through grace alone was wrong - against the teachings of the Church. He signed it. And when he got free from all the pressure of the Queen and of the court, out of guilt he re-established his protestant beliefs. And the wrath of Bloody Mary came upon him, and he stood one day in the flames, the faggots burning around him, because of his faith in Christ. And do you know what he did? He thrust the hand that signed that damnable declaration right into the fire, and he held it in 'til the flames consumed it, and said: 'That unworthy hand!'.

Isn't it better for us to put that hand of apostasy in and watch it burn, than for at the end of the age, for body, soul and spirit to be cast into the lake of fire? My friend, believer, we live in dark days. But the Lord Jesus would say to us because he comes with ten thousands of His saints. 'Hold the fort! For I am coming'.

Our Father we thank Thee, for the great truth that Jesus told us, 'I will go but I will come again'. And Lord we pray, this morning, that everyone in this gathering will have that assurance that if He comes again, He will come as the Saviour and not as the Judge. And Lord for those who are Thy children, who are dabbling in the deadly sins of apostasy, whether literally or spiritually speaking, that Lord, they would be done with the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. Bless us now as we part and give grace for every decision whether of the saint or of the sinner. For Christ's sake. Amen.

Jude - The Acts Of The Apostates - Chapter 6

"The Great Escape"

Copyright 2000

by Pastor David Legge

All rights reserved

The little epistle of Jude, and we're reading from verse 14 this morning to recap a little bit on what we have been learning thus far in this study. Verse 14 and we enter again at this personality of Enoch: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his 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, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him". Now we saw last week 'The Apostates Final Fall', when they will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and be judged for those deeds that they have done, for the words that they have spoken and the devices that they have devised. Verse 16, we saw the character of these people: "These are murmurers", grumblers, "complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit". Now, these are the verses that we're going to concentrate on today: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life".

Let us pray: Father in heaven, who inspired these pages by Thy Holy Spirit, we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, that Thou mayest come to us through the word of God. By Thy Spirit, lift up these words and apply them unto our hearts. Feed us on the bread of heaven, we pray. Fill us with the Holy Ghost, we ask. In Jesus name, Amen.

I've entitled my message this morning: 'The Great Escape'. We have seen in last week's message, verses 14, 15, 16, the peril of those who are apostates. Those who fall away from the truth, and in theory those who never have the truth, in the beginning, in their hearts - they had a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof - and we saw that one day they will face God! They will have to answer to God for those teachings that they have taught, for the lives that they have lived. We saw that they will be left behind when the Lord Jesus Christ comes - as we see in verse 15 and 14 - with ten thousands of His saints, they will be left behind to face the tribulation that will come upon the whole earth. The apostates final fall.

But today we are looking at 'The Great Escape' - and thus far, from verse 1 right down to verse 19 in this little epistle, Jude has been talking to us about these apostates. He has been outlining who they are, what they believe, what they preach and teach, the way they live their lives - and we have an acute, beautiful picture of how we can recognize these individuals, even in our world today. But from verse 14 on, he begins to turn the tone of his letter and he begins to tell us how we, as believers, can do the injunction that he has given to us in verses 3 and 4, to defend the faith, to contend for the faith, to - as the church of Jesus Christ - militantly take up the arms of the word of God, and the whole armour of God, and fight the fight of faith against the devil and his false teachers.

He gives us the backdrop of the character of Enoch that we took some time to look at. Now he looks at us individually, and the verses we are going to look at today - verse 20 and 21 - give us a fourfold formula of how we can stand against apostasy. He tells us how we can make the great escape from false teaching.

Remember that this little book is a letter, and I want you to imagine that it was sent to you, and you're reading this letter - and he's making these scathing, judgemental, condemnatory remarks of apostates, all the way through - and it's addressed to you! And perhaps you start to panic, and think, 'Is Jude talking about me? Is he talking about our assembly? Who is he getting at? Do I show these characteristics in my life, of an apostate?'. What must it have been to get to verse 20, where Jude introduces this language: 'But ye, beloved'. He is making the distinction: 'You're different, I want to talk to you, you haven't reached the stage that these boys have reached - you are still holding on to the faith, but there is a danger that you will let it go, there is a danger you'll dilute it and you will fall away! So I want you to listen to these four things I'm going to tell you to do!'.

'Ye beloved' - what an expression! And it's put in concrete as we look at the doxology in verse 24: 'Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, or stumbling'. And any reason why we have not fallen into apostasy, in the day and age in which we live, is because He is able! Don't you think it's because of your Bible knowledge for one minute! Don't think it's because of the tradition of your fathers and the church that you have been brought up in! If you are standing firm in the faith today that is once delivered to the saints - God has done it! Glory be to His name! For He is able to save to the uttermost, and He is able to keep us from stumbling. So I believe, if we are standing on the word of God today, God can say to us: 'But ye, beloved'. He can make the distinction to us today if we are walking in His word, and if we are trusting and obeying - isn't that wonderful? We have an awful enemy, but He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world.

We read in 1 Corinthians 10 and verse 13, a wonderful verse: 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it'. And in the world in which we live, of apostasy, the world in which Jude lived, of apostasy, the world in which Enoch lived, of apostasy, before the flood - God is able! No matter where we live, no matter what time we are in, and no matter what environment is round us of sin and iniquity, God is able to keep us from stumbling and He can make a way of escape!

How? The example He gives us is Enoch - and we saw that Enoch walked with God, Enoch pleased God - and therefore, from that context, He comes to us in our age today, by the Holy Spirit, and in verse 20 and 21 He tells us His way of escape. God's way of the great escape from apostasy. 'Ye, beloved' - one - 'building up yourselves on your most holy faith' - two - 'praying in the Holy Ghost' - three - 'keep yourselves in the love of God' - four - 'looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ'. This is the way! God has given us His means of avoiding falling away!

There is actual apostasy and, I believe, there is spiritual apostasy. What do I mean by that? I mean that you can, not be apostate, but harbour within your heart the spirit of apostasy. I mean that you can be saved by the grace of God, but by your actions, your words and your thoughts you can be moving slowly away, falling away from the grace of God and the truth of God. I'm not meaning you can be lost, but I'm meaning this: you can be lost in your sin and not see Christ! This is how not to backslide. Jude is telling us today how not to apostasize, how to survive in an age in which we live, how to escape the spirit of the age and live holy and godly lives, like Enoch, when the whole world is against us!

I believe the Western church today is, perhaps, the least effective church - numerically speaking - in the whole of the world. If I was to put it in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ: 'The salt has lost its savour and it is therefore good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden underfoot of men'. The church of Jesus Christ, where we live and in Europe today, to a large extent, is trodden under the foot of the world! Yes! The church that our blessed Lord said He would build and the gates of hell would not prevail against it - that church can be trodden underfoot of men! You might say, 'That's very strong'. Most people I talk to who admit they're in a backslidden state, after a little while, admit to me that their backsliding did not start when they stopped

attending the meeting. It didn't start when they fell into open, public, heinous sin. But their backsliding started in the very presence of God, when they moved away from walking with God! I believe that the lack of spiritual progress in our city, in our nation, and in our continent is because the soldiers of Christ are absent without leave, with regards to prayer and the word of God.

That is why Jude tells us - now take this, take this from the Holy Ghost to your heart today - first of all his injunction is this: 'Build up! Build up!'. The amplified version says this: 'build yourselves up, founded on your most holy faith, make progress, rise like an edifice, higher and higher, praying in the Holy Spirit'. Now there are three questions I want to ask of Jude in this little verse. What is the structure that is being built? Secondly, who is the builder? And thirdly, what is the foundation that we are to be built upon?

One: the structure. Look at the verse: 'building up yourselves' - you are the structure, you are the one who must be built up to prevent apostasy, you are the building. Wasn't it Peter that said: 'We are lively stones making up the church of Jesus Christ'? 'This building', I hear this said in this hall, 'is the house of God'. Nonsense! This building is a building! You are the house of God! You are lively stones making up the temple of God, and your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit - and that is why we are told to build up ourselves upon our most holy faith.

That is the structure, who is the builder? 'Building up yourselves' - that's not just identifying who is being built up, but it's identifying who is doing the building. You must build yourself up, you have a responsibility before God to begin building. We have a 'coach potato' mentality in Christianity today. We are spoon-fed from the pulpit - and many Christians, all they know and understand is: 'If the Pastor says it, I believe it', and we have so many beliefs that we can adhere to and [put a] tick beside - but do we know why we believe them? Do we know the authority of the word of God that testifies that belief? Have we done what Paul has said to Timothy, 'to study to show ourselves approved unto God'? Not unto men now! Approved unto God! For so many of us, I fear the Bible is only opened on Sunday morning and Sunday evening. We are the structure to be built, we are to build ourselves up - ourselves, we are the builders, it is our responsibility.

What is the foundation? Look: 'on your most holy faith'. The faith! That isn't necessarily the faith that we exercise when we believe, but he's talking about what we read about in verse 3: 'The faith once delivered' - once and for all delivered - 'to the saints'. If you turn with me to Acts chapter 20, Acts chapter 20, and this possibly is what Jude is referring to which he reminded them - 'remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ' - for you remember in Acts chapter 20 he reminds the Ephesian elders, how he told them night and day and warned them that these men would come out from among them and bring false teaching. And in verse 32 he says: 'And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified'. What will build us up? The word of His grace! That is the faith, the word of God, the Bible, the Scriptures - and it is our most holy faith, and anything that is most holy we will treat with honour that is due it! We will give it the time, we will give it its rightful place in our lives, in our hearts, in our decisions, in our families, in our homes.

Can I ask you: there are four injunctions upon the Christian concerning the word of God, how many of them do you fulfil? One: read the word of God - do you read it? Do you read the word of God every day that you have breath? Secondly: we are to meditate upon the word of God. Not get our two or three chapters done for the day and say, 'Well that's my duty done to God for today' - but do you meditate upon the word of God, do you 'chew the cud' of God? Going over the word, letting it become part of you, be inwardly digested and make up your whole spiritual being. The Psalmist says in Psalm 1 and verse 2: 'In thy law do I meditate day and night'. Thirdly: do you memorise it? The Psalmist asks the rhetorical question of a young man, and maybe there's a young man asking this question today: 'How can a young man cleanse his way?', and he answers, 'By taking heed according to thy word'. Listen: 'Thy word have I hid in mine heart' - have you, that

you may not sin against Him? And fourthly, there is studying the word of God, understanding the word of God to show yourself approved unto God. What were the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in His temptation? Listen: 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God'. What did Job say? Listen: 'I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food'. The poet said:

Too busy this morning,
I'll say a prayer, quick.
Tonight I'll have time
To study and to think.

Tonight I'm too tired
To study God's word.
I'll wait till next week,
Then I'll worship the Lord.

Next week came to fast,
But it seems that I may
Have more time next month,
Lord, to read and to pray.

Next month, oh yes,
I just wonder why
My love for the Lord
Is about ready to die?

Do you know what Watchman Nee said? 'No prayer, no Bible: no breakfast'. He got to God's words before he got to his food. If we were to do that today, how many of us would have a breakfast? How many of us would be found before the face of God before we enter upon our lives - seeking God's face? Can you do without breakfast, without lunch and without dinner for too long? But Jesus says: 'That's not what you're to live by alone - it's by the words of God!'. It was an enlightenment upon me to realise that 72 hours is the time it takes to read the whole word of God, at reading speed. And that has been tested by the tape recordings that have been taken - you can buy them in the Faith Mission Bookshop, tapes of the Bible - and it lasts in length 72 hours. Do you know, that is the average time every human being takes to watch television for a fortnight? Two weeks television would get us through the word of God! Yet there are people who say to me: 'Oh, it's too much for me to read through the Bible in a year! I couldn't possibly do that!'

I almost was brought to tears when I read this story in a book entitled 'Disciplines of the Christian Life'. An example of a man who had just become a Christian, and in a freak accident had lost his sight and lost the use of many of his limbs - he couldn't read the word of God any more! He was only saved, he was beginning to enjoy reading the word of God, and studying it, and meditating upon it, and memorising it - and suddenly that was all gone. He heard about a woman across the water, who was in the same predicament as him, and she would get the Bible in Braille, and she would lift to her lips and read it with her lips every day of her life. So he got a Bible like that, and just as it came through the post and he couldn't wait to get it open, and he brought it to his lips - and when he brought it to his lips he found that the damage was greater than he thought! And his nerve endings had been severed and he couldn't do it. Can you imagine how he felt? But there was one time, as he was trying again, his tongue accidentally touched one of those little dots - and he felt it! And at the moment of the writing of that book that I read, he had read the Bible through four times!

It was said of Mr. Jeremiah Whitaker that usually he read all the epistles in Greek, in the New Testament, twice every fortnight. Mr. Robert Cotton read the Bible through 12 times in a year. Archbishop Cranmer is

said to have been able to repeat the whole New Testament from memory! Ridley, who was burned at the stake, said: 'The walls and trees of my orchard, could they speak, would bear witness that I here learned by heart almost all of Paul's epistles'. Oh, that we would get back to the faith of our fathers. There are some times when I read these accounts, that I ask of myself: 'Are you really in the household of faith?'.

I read a story this week about a prisoner who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. And he was imprisoned in a dark cell, [so dark] that he could not read, and the only time that light came into that cell was when the door opened and the prison guard came and put his breakfast before him, for a few seconds. And do you know what he said? 'I can find my mouth in the dark' - he esteemed the words of God more than his necessary food! Are you building up yourself in your most holy faith? Are you? Are you building yourself upon the foundation of the word of God?

Secondly, he tells us, verse 20b: 'Praying in the Holy Ghost'. The second edifice of how to prevent apostasy - what is the function he's talking about? It is prayer, to get before God, to pray before His face - and look at it, it is not an optional extra to salvation, but I believe it is a sign of it! If you were to be asked the question: 'How do you know you're saved?', I don't doubt that many of us would say, 'Well, on - for me - the 3rd November 1984, after Sunday School one day in this place, I trusted the Lord Jesus Christ'. But I'm not so sure that's what God goes upon - I believe that God goes upon the now, and God looks upon the life, to testify whether the life of God is in your bosom, whether it is being shown in the things that you do, the habits that carve out your life's practice. I believe that is how we know! Do you pray? E.M. Bounds was right when he said: 'No prayer, no blessing. Little prayer, little blessing. Much prayer, much blessing'. That is the function that we must get down to, and if you want to see the measure of a man or a woman's Christianity, look at their prayer life! Wasn't it McShane said, 'What a man is on his knees, he is, and no more'! What are you?

Can God look, as 24 hours goes by, under the roof of your home and find you not one minute on your knees? How can we call ourselves 'Christ's-ones' if we are not building up ourselves in our most holy faith, if we are not praying in the Holy Ghost? That is the function, but he also tells us of the unction: 'Praying in the Holy Ghost'. It's not empty words at a prayer meeting, it's not even words on our knees before God, to say a prayer to get it over with, to get our conscience salved - it is praying in the Holy Ghost! I'm not so sure that God answers all prayers, I used to think that - but I've come to the realisation that He can't answer prayer that's in the flesh. I've been reading, lately, the sermon on the mount again, and the Lord Jesus Christ over and over again, as He's talking about fasting, as He's talking about praying and alms giving and so many good deeds - He was saying that the Pharisees do these things to be seen of men. Doing good works to be seen of men, seen of men, seen of men! But He goes on to say that when we do it for God in secret, we will be rewarded openly! God does not answer prayer in the flesh, but in the Spirit. Some would say that is tongues - it is not. Some would say that is having a baptism of the Holy Spirit - it is not. As you look throughout the whole of the word of God and the Scriptures you find that to pray in the Spirit, first of all, is to pray in the will of God upon the word of God. Taking the promises of God and claiming them, knowing that you are praying in His will, according to His sovereign plan. Secondly, it is to pray in surrender to the Spirit of God. When your life is totally given over to the Holy Spirit you can know that you are praying in the Holy Ghost. And thirdly, when you are walking in the Spirit. For if you walk in the Spirit, what does the word of God say? 'You shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh' - and my friend, if you are fulfilling at this minute the lusts of the flesh - whatever they may be - your prayers will be hindered, and you can be sure you are not praying in the Holy Ghost.

Then he says, thirdly: 'Keep in the love of God'. Verse 21: 'Keep yourselves in the love of God'. Now that does not mean 'Keep God loving you', because God does love us! - and even when we didn't love Him, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Neither does it mean: 'Keeping us loving Him'. Let's see what it does mean. Well, it's personal - you see that, it's just like the building up your faith - verse 21: 'Keep yourselves in

the love of God'. The onus is on you, and I feel today that I, in much of my life, have 'Edenitis'. Do you know what that is? 'Edenitis' - God said, 'Why did you take of that fruit of that tree?'. What did Adam say? 'The wife that You give me told me to take it'. What did Eve say? 'The serpent that You made told me to take it'. And we blame this, we blame our family, we blame our work, we blame the high flying nature of business today, we blame absolutely everything, we blame a Christian that has hurt us - but we don't realise that the responsibility of our walk with God is yourselves! For we shall all stand and give an account to God.

It is not only personal but it is relational. What's he talking about in keeping yourselves in the love of God? He's talking about fellowship. He is saying walk consciously every moment in the enjoyment of the love of God. They weren't doing that, if you look at verse 11, they went in the way of Cain - the way of works, not the way of God. They ran greedily after the error of Balaam, that was not the way of the love of God. They perished in rebellion, that was not the love of God. They were not actively keeping themselves in the love of God - how do you do that? We don't have time to read it, but if you were to turn to 1 John 1 and verses 6 to 9, what does it say? 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light', that's how you keep in fellowship. If you're walking according to the word of God, if you're praying according to the word of God and in the Holy Spirit - God will show, and uncover your sins to you, and if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Oh, you'll not fall into apostasy, you'll not backslide - if you're reading the word of God, if you're praying in the Spirit of God, and if you're continually in fellowship with God. And as one Spurgeon said, 'Keeping short accounts with God' - when you sin, putting it under the blood! It is also relational in this sense: how can you expect to grow when you're absent from the body? If I chopped my arm off, and left it here for six months, it wouldn't grow, it wouldn't move, it wouldn't have life. If you sever yourself from this body you will not have life either - your life will disappear, because you are not keeping yourselves in the love of God, God's fellowship. Are you at the breaking of bread? For that's where you will see the love of God testified in the emblems of body broken and blood shed - that is where Christ is portrayed as dying! And if you're not there don't ask the question of God, why your Christian life is not on fire. Don't ask the question why you're succumbing in your mind and thinking: 'Can that not be right?', or, 'What about him? He's a very nice person, and that's what he's doing, surely that's OK?'. My friend, listen! Keep yourselves in the love of God, it's not something He'll do for you, for you can do it yourself.

And fourthly: 'Looking for', he tells us to build up, to pray in, to keep in and, 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life'. It means this: 'looking earnestly, earnestly expecting the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ'. Don't let any cold, calculated theologian or preacher throw cold water on the embers of the fire of looking for the Lord Jesus. Looking for Him! Waking every day and thinking, 'Perhaps today Lord?' - why? Because He is our Saviour, we look for Him - and by Him coming for us it is showing His mercy. For we are not appointed unto wrath, and we will not go through that great tribulation that will be poured upon the earth for its apostasy, for its unbelief - but we are to comfort one another with this fact: to look for the mercy of our Saviour!

What does the apostle say? 'And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure' - and the way to avoid apostasy is not just building yourself up upon the word of God, it is not just praying in the Holy Ghost, it is not just keeping yourself in fellowship with God, but it is looking for the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour and our salvation! Do you do that? For if we did that, I'm sure that there would be many things that we wouldn't do, and many things that we would start doing. Paul had the second coming of the Lord in mind when he said this in Romans 13 and 11 - let's look at it quickly, Romans chapter 13 and verse 11: 'Knowing that the time now is high - it is high time! - to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed'. Do you remember Enoch? Methuselah meant, 'when he dies it shall come' - and from that moment on he walked with God. Once God told him, 'I'm coming!', he walked with God. When are we going to start? It's possible, in the age in which we live, to avoid the apostasy and the rot in the

world and the church, by building up, by praying in the Holy Ghost, by keeping in the love of God, by looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. But, like much of Christianity, the onus is on you. These are things to do, my friend, and you must do them - and not to do them is sin.

The church father Chrysostom was arrested by the Emperor. He was tried and he was tortured, and they attempted to make him recant - and he shook his head! And the Emperor said to the guards, 'Throw him into prison!'. One of the guards shouted, 'No! He will be glad to go to prison, for he delights in the presence of his God in quiet'. 'Well, execute him then!', said the Emperor. 'He will be glad to die', said the soldier, 'for he once said that he wants to go to heaven. I heard him say the other day! There is only one thing that you can do to give Chrysostom pain', said the soldier, 'and that is to make him sin. He said he is afraid of nothing but sin, and if you can make him sin you will make him unhappy'. Do you know [that] not to build yourself up in your most holy faith, not to pray in the Holy Ghost, not to keep yourself in the love of God, not to look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ is sin. And if they are absent in your life, I would say - upon the authority of the word of God - it is doubtful if eternal life is up ahead for you. Look at the verse - all these things are 'unto eternal life'.

May we all, today, make sure that we are in the household of God.

Let us pray together. After our brother Jimmy's funeral yesterday, his brother said to me about the last hymn that we sang that he was once in a meeting that applied that to believers - do you know what the hymn was? Listen to it, believer:

Have you any room for Jesus?
He who bore your load of sin.
As He knocks and asks admission,
Sinner, will you let Him in?

Room for pleasure, room for business.
But for Christ the crucified,
Not a place that He can enter
In your heart for which He died.

Our Father, we pray today that we may hear the knock-knock of the nail pierced hand, looking to come in unto us and sup with us, and us with Him. And may we begin today, if never before - or in a way that we have never before - walk with God, that we may guard our hearts, our lives, and our minds from this evil age in which we live. And that it may be said of us, when we are not, 'He, or she, pleased God'. In Jesus name, Amen.

Jude - The Acts Of The Apostates - Chapter 7

"Rescue The Falling"

Copyright 2000

by Pastor David Legge

All rights reserved

Now, let us turn together in the word of God to the little book of Jude - and I want you also to find in your Bible, the book of Zechariah, near the end of the Old Testament, the book of Zechariah and chapter 3.

But first of all we'll take our reading from the book of Jude. You'll remember that last week we thought of the subject "The Great Escape", and how we all shall escape apostasy, how we shall escape falling away and backsliding from the most holy faith that we have received from our fathers. And we're going to begin our reading, taking it up where we left off last week, at verse 22. But to get the context let's just look at verse 20: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen".

Zechariah - Zechariah's prophecy and chapter 3, and Zechariah says: "And [God] showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan", the accuser, "standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment".

Let us pray: Our Father, we ask Thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that Thou wouldst help us as we seek Thy face through the word of God. That Thou mayest guide us through Thy holy word and help us this day, we pray, to see Jesus - the Author and Finisher of our faith. We pray that the Holy Ghost may testify of His teaching and of His person, and that we may be filled with joy as He talks and walks with us by the way. Fill with Thy Holy Spirit, we pray, in Jesus name. Amen.

I've entitled my message today: "Rescue The Falling", rescue the falling. You all know the hymn:

'Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave.
Weep o'er the erring ones, lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save'.

I think, possibly, that hymn was inspired by the text that we've read together today. But this text does not outline rescuing the perishing from hell, we're going to see that it has something else within its meaning. It does not talk about those who are falling into hell because they are sinners and because they are outside of Christ, they have never been born again of the Spirit of God - that is not who Jude is speaking of here. If you look at the passage of Scripture you see that the whole context of our little book - as we've entitled it - is the acts of the apostates. Therefore, if we take it out of its context, it becomes a pre-text - as we all know - but

we must keep it in its context. We must understand that Jude now, for 20-odd verses, has been describing the characteristics of apostates. And then he turns in our text last Lord's Day to verse 20 and 21, and he tells us how we avoid falling away - he makes the distinction: 'But ye, beloved', you are different and you will remain different by building yourselves up in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keeping yourselves in the love of God and looking for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in the air. And then he continues: 'And of some have compassion, making a difference' - and what he is doing, as we will see, is: he is turning to the apostates themselves, but specifically those who have wandered and followed those apostates. Those who have been laid astray by their false teaching and their false living.

What ought our attitude [to] be to apostates? What ought our attitude [to] be to those who follow apostasy? If we were living in the 1600's, perhaps the clarion cry would be: 'Burn the heretic!' - that is how they dealt with you, if you disagreed with them. They got the faggots, and they lit them, and they burnt you at the stake. But in the light of the New Testament, and in the light of our faith and Paul's epistles, especially in this little book of Jude - what does God say ought to be our reaction to apostasy and those that follow it? Should we be like Elijah and call down fire from God, from heaven, to devour them? Or should we obey the epistle of Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 verse 6, 'Rejoice not in iniquity, but rejoice in the truth'? What ought our reaction to be?

We're looking at the little book of Jude, but if you look at the whole of the New Testament scriptures you find that the apostles, primarily, make a distinction between two types of people. They distinguish between the teacher of apostasy and the follower of it. There is a difference to be made, turn back with me a page or two to 2 John and verse 10, and we see in this short epistle, the instruction that the apostle gives us to those who are the teachers of apostasy. He says: 'If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed' - we are to have absolutely nothing to do with the teachers of apostasy. We are not even to give them a daily greeting, or bring them into our home - it's quite clear, it's categoric, the Lord lays it down. But what about the follower? What about the person who has been duped? If we look at this passage in Jude, it is indicated quite clearly that those folk who have been fooled, these men and women and boys and girls who have believed the lie of the apostates, are to be sought and to be won.

Why? First of all, because often they have been caught by ignorance. They do not know the word of God, they do not know the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ and the doctrine of the apostles that we build upon. But my friends today, it is something worse than that, for the word of God testifies that we are drawn into temptation when we lust from within - and within every person that follows apostasy, it has been the choice of their perverse will not to walk in the paths of God. But what does Jude say we must do to them? Must we pray for the destruction, must we pray that God may judge them? 'No!' is the answer - we are to pray that God will save them.

There are the weak, and there are the wilful. The wilful are those who, Jude says, there is no hope for if they are unrepentant. If they continue to teach their false doctrine, Jude has outlined very clearly that there is no hope - God has condemned them and the wrath of God is upon them. Verse 19 testifies that they are not even in the faith, they don't have the Spirit of God, and therefore God will judge them in a day to come. But who Jude speaks to us about now are those who are weak, believers, those having the Spirit of God, those who have followed false teachers, those who have been led astray - they are saved by the grace of God, but they have come under the influence of corrupt teaching and even corrupt living. He told us to build ourselves up in our most holy faith, and these followers, these misled people, have left their most holy faith.

There is, therefore, needed for us - in the day in which we live - what I believe is a very scarce commodity within Christendom today, and it is this: the spirit of discernment. Discernment, being able to discern those who teach false teaching, and those who have followed false teaching - and to say that the word of God teaches that we treat all people the same, in every category, is not correct! It is blatantly ignorant! Many Christians are deceived today, and you may ask the question - as I often do: 'How can they be deceived?'.

The answer comes from last week: they have not built up themselves upon the word of God, their most holy faith, they are not men and women of prayer in the Holy Ghost, they are not keeping in fellowship with God, they are not looking for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. And Jude says those believers who have wandered astray, those believers who have listened to apostasy, and have walked in Bypath Meadows: Seek them! Win them! And bring them back to their first love and the household of faith.

We often quote in our gathering from Proverbs 11 and verse 30, and Solomon - the wisest man that ever lived - said this: 'He that winneth souls is wise'. I would translate that: 'He who would seek to win souls must be wise'. That is what it means, and do not make the mistake of thinking that I am talking about being saved and lost - for you cannot be. But what I am talking about today is what Jude is talking about, of men and women born of the Spirit of God, who are lost in their sinful backsliding, or lost in false teaching and false living, which is the spirit, or the actuality of apostasy itself. Jude is saying it is our duty to win these people who are led astray! And the New Testament answer to Cain's question, asked of him by God: 'Where is thy brother?', is this: 'We are our brothers keeper'. We are to look after one another in the household of faith - and as James says in verse 20 of chapter 5 of his epistle: 'He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins'. We are to look out for one another, we are to love one another - and to love one another is to come to one another, and to speak to one another honestly about our lives, about our problems, about our sins - and we are to draw one another back to Christ!

Who are we to draw back? And how are we to do it? I want you to look at this little passage that we have looked at today, verse 22, and I want to read it to you today from a different translation, the amplified version of the Bible - which is simply an extended translation, the translator is trying to bring out, by many English words, what the Greek is really saying, so I hope as I read it none of you fall of your seat. Verse 22, listen: 'And refute so as to convict some who dispute with you, and on some have mercy who waver and doubt. Strive to save others, snatching them out of the fire; on others take pity but with fear, loathing even the garment spotted by the flesh and polluted by their sensuality'. Now the King James version, and the New King James version, have two categories of people in those verses. But the great deal of other versions, and other manuscripts, deal with three groups - not two, but three. And I want to take those three from this passage today, three people that we have to deal with in their sin, three types of followers after apostasy that we have to try and win back to the love of God and the love of Christ.

They are, one: the argumentative disputer; two: the seriously endangered; and three: the sinfully degraded. Let us look at the first one: the argumentative disputer. Verse 22: 'And refute so as to convict some who dispute with you' - the argumentative disputer. Those who differ argumentatively with what we teach, with what we believe about everything concerning the Gospel. We have those who take the name of Christ that do not believe in the virgin birth, we have those who take the name of Christ that genuinely and sincerely in their own heart of hearts have come to the realisation, they feel, that it is impossible for Jesus Christ to atone for sin. They feel it is impossible for a corpse to rise from the dead, it is impossible that Jesus should ascend to heaven, and that one day there is the promise of Him coming back again - and they will argue their case sincerely before you, they are argumentative disputers of the truth of God. Some versions say that they are doubters, but if you look at verse 9 it says there that 'Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed' - he [the devil] argued with the archangel over the body of Moses, and it is the same word that is used here that ought to be translated 'disputer'.

What are we to do with the argumentative disputer? A person, with regards to the truth of God, that can't be taught, that will not see the truth of the Gospel message - what are we to do with them, if they categorically come face-to-face with us and dispute all the truth that we hold so dear? God says, 'Convincingly refute them' - don't bury it over, don't forget about it, and in the spirit of the age of tolerance in which we live say, 'Live and let live'. But it literally means: 'Convict them while you dispute with them' - they can only be rebuked, and we ought to pray that God will change them. Can I ask you: how do you convincingly refute an

argumentative disputer if you do not know the word of God? You cannot. That is why Jude tells us, build yourselves up in your most holy faith - you cannot pray that someone will come back to the faith, and the light of the Gospel will dawn upon their soul, if you do not pray in the Holy Ghost! We are to convincingly refute, not just pray, but rebuke! We must point out when wrong is wrong - and it may cause controversy, but it is necessary to be faithful to God. And on occasions the apostles themselves came face-to-face with argumentative disputers, and the word of God testifies that they faced it by convincingly refuting them to their face. We read in 2 John and 3 John that there was a malicious disputer called Diotrephes, one who loved, and wanted, the preeminence, one who went after the apostle John and told all manner of things about him - but we have no [indication] within the word of God that that man was ever silenced. Paul complained of evil workers, claiming to be apostles like he, claiming to have revelations from God like he - but we never find within the New Testament that these people were ever silenced. But nevertheless, as a testimony to the grace and the truth of God, we are told to convincingly refute - that men and women who deny the truth of God, men and women who would trod underfoot the blood, and the cross, and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, when they stand at that Great White Throne may be without excuse.

Oh, it is hard today to speak up. It is hard in the age of political correctness to speak of truth, to speak categorically and absolutely of the faith delivered to us, undiluted, unapologetically, not as advice but as a command to: 'Repent, or ye shall all likewise perish'. It is hard! And those who have wandered away from that faith, we must seek to bring them back. It is not good enough to stand by and say, 'It is a sign of the times'. Jude says, 'Make a difference! Go after these people! Have compassion upon them by rebuking them convincingly of the truth of God!'. Dr John MacArthur speaks of a phrase, and a person, that he calls the 'baby Christian'. Do you know who that is? Just as a baby wanders across the floor, maybe in the living room, and there's a penny on the floor, or a bit of dirt - what do they do? They have no distinction, they lift it and put into their mouth - that is what every Christian, perhaps - not every Christian, but most Christians - today in Christendom are doing. Whatever to the eye seems OK, they consume it, they believe it, they work within that system because they feel it's OK - and they are eating things that will kill them spiritually, and dull their spiritual walk with God. We must rebuke!

Dr A.T. Robinson wrote an article for the Southern Baptist magazine, and he described, as I have been describing, the biblical character of Diotrephes within the New Testament - and 25 deacons from various Baptist churches wrote to the editor cancelling their subscription because they contended that Mr Robinson was writing about them. There are disputers, and William Kelly says rightly, listen: 'Christ is generally represented with a halo about His head, and the apostles too, as if every man fell submissive at their feet - but that is just what imagination does. People do not realise all the terrible evils that had to be faced by them - how much more may we expect it now? As the Psalmist said, time was when the work of the sanctuary was regarded as a good thing for a man to have put his hand to, all the fine carved work, all the grandeur of gold that gleamed in the sanctuary - but now it has come to pass that a man is praised because he brake it all to pieces'. I say, in the age in which we live, it is easy to find the Christian who will pull down, but give me a Christian that will build!

There is the argumentative disputer, there is the seriously endangered that you find in verse 23: 'Strive to save others, snatching them out of the fire; on others take pity'. They are seriously endangered, they are in the fire, and we have to go actively and snatch them out of the fire! These are the seriously endangered, they are in more imminent danger, therefore they have to be snatched away before the false teaching grips their soul and kills their heart for God, before the wicked living of these apostates gets hold of them, and they go into their sensuality and their licentiousness. And if we don't save them - and I'm not talking about salvation, they're saved! - but if we don't save them from apostasy, who will? Many use this passage of scripture as a reference to the Gospel and hell, and that may be so - as Matthew Henry says: 'We are to go to the sinner and endeavour to frighten them out of their sins, preach hell and damnation'. But that is not the case in this passage, for the person referred to here has been saved from hell, and the fire that is described is not hell-fire

for all eternity but it is the fire of judgement, in verse 7 that you read of - of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them in like manner giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh, [they] are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. And apostasy, throughout this book, the whole Bible, is often described as fire - now listen: if you imbibe apostasy in your heart, if you imbibe the spirit of apostasy by not reading the word of God, by not praying in the Holy Ghost, by not fellowshiping with God and keeping the love of God in your heart, and by not looking for the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ - if you do that, my friend, you're imbibing the spirit of apostasy, and you will be eaten up with fire! That is why the backslider backslides - for whether it is literal apostasy, or the spirit of it in his heart, he has moved away from God and the fire will devour him - and we are told that we must go and literally put our hands into that fire, where they are, and pluck them out!

Turn with me to Zechariah 3 that we were reading together. Zechariah chapter 3 and verse 2, and this is the quotation that you have in Jude, and it's found here in Zechariah - Jude is quoting, again, the Old Testament, as he often does: 'And the Lord said unto Satan', remember Joshua's standing there in filthy garments, the high priest, 'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?'. And there Joshua is, in his filthy garments, and he has been plucked as a brand from Babylon, which is burning down with sin and sensuality, and literally with the judgement of God's eternal fire - but this man, this believer in God, has been plucked out, and he shows a smattering of filth, and sin, and dirt upon him - but he has been plucked out by the hand of God! Oh, we are to snatch men and women out of falsehood, my friend. We are to lovingly, and compassionately, grab them and pull them out of the dens of iniquity that they are worshipping in! We are to bring them to the truth of God, their most holy faith that they have left - we must snatch them! Thomas Manton said: 'When a fire is kindled in a city, we do not say coldly: 'Yonder is a great fire, I pray God it do no harm'. In times of public defection, we are not to read tame lectures of contemplative divinity' - we are to be in action! Not debating the intricacies of the word of God, but snatching those that need snatched to the truth!

We read in the book of Genesis and chapter 19 and verse 16 of Sodom and Gomorrah, we read of Lot who flirted with worldliness and apostasy - and we read this: that while he lingered as Sodom was being judged by the fire and brimstone of God, that an angel had to lay hold upon his hand, and the Lord being merciful unto him, He snatched him away! I wonder is there a backslider here today and you are lingering? You are lingering in your sin, you are lingering in your spirit of apostasy within your heart - you have been born of the Spirit of God, and you know it, you made a profession in your youth, or your childhood, and you're living outside of God, outside of Christ, outside of hope! But yet you are lingering, and it may take a believer to grab you, and to snatch you out of the fire! And I pray that God, today, would waken you up to your need, and that the Spirit of God would come and snatch your spirit and soul!

Oh, Joshua stood there in filthy garments, accused by Satan, who was throwing all the accusations at him - but what did God do? God says, 'I'll take the garment away', look at verse 4, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment' - and God today, my friend, no matter how far you've gone away from Him, God is able to do it! God is able to clothe you with pure garments, God is able to wash you in the blood of His own dear Son that was shed for you at Calvary - our God is able! He is able, and He can do it for you if you come penitently to Him today, He will cleanse you, He will release you, He will free you!

Believer today, there is an urgency that we need if we are to snatch our friends and our loved ones from the fire of false teaching, false living, false apostasy. It will not do to hear 'wet blanket' sermons. It will not do to preach 'high-faluting*' messages, that a man in the street cannot understand. There needs to be a spirit of urgency in our preaching, in our prayers. There needs to be that spirit, whereby the Puritan, learned and scholarly, as he would preach in his pulpit would turn his back as he was gripped and burdened with the burden of the people before him, and he would turn his back on the people and shout to God, 'Oh, Spirit do

Your work!'. Is that the earnestness and the urgency that you have, believer? Preacher, is that the way you preach? As someone has said, 'We should preach as though Jesus died yesterday, rose today, and is coming tomorrow!' It is urgent, for the time is short and there are those who are in the fire of this apostasy - whether they be believers or non-believers - and they need to be plucked as brands from the burning!

**highly complex or grand sounding, impressive*

But thirdly, there is the sinfully degraded. We read of them in the last half of verse 23: 'On others take pity but with fear, loathing even the garment spotted by the flesh and polluted by their sensuality' - and you can't argue with these people! They are sinfully degraded, they won't listen to arguments, they can't be convicted, they can't be snatched - but they are to be pitied by you, the children of God, but they are to be pitied cautiously. You are to pity them, conscious of their weakness, conscious of their simplicity, conscious of the sinfulness of their sin - my friend, if we could get a vision today of the sinfulness of sin! If we could see sin as God sees it! If we could see sin as Christ felt it! We would snatch them alright - and the thing is, we would be burnt in the process. We need to be careful, because there is a risk in snatching these people, and we may need to pay a [price] - but there is a greater risk as we look at the sinfully degraded in verse 23, we are to cautiously pity them, we are to realise that we can be contaminated by their garments spotted with the flesh, their inner garment that's close to the flesh, contacting defilement. We need to be careful, that when we go to win the sinner, the sinner does not win us! And that means, young people, you don't go to the pub to have a little drink and have a little witness. You don't go to the disco, or the club, to tell others about Christ - you don't do it! - and sit with them and partake in their sin. I'm not talking about giving out tracts, that's not what I'm talking about, I'm talking about people who are living socially in this mechanism whereby they are no different than the world, they say, to win the world - you can't do it! I'm reminded, tragically, of the story of a man - and he was a godly man - who was an evangelist to the street girls in America, prostitutes. And there was one night he went, seeking to win a lost soul on one of the beaches in America, and he went to her with that sincere objective and he has written, listen: 'I went to win her, and she won me!'.

Joshua was clothed in filthy garments, but I read in the book of the Revelation, these are they who washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! Christians, what is needed today for the blessing of God upon this land, and upon this corner of the vineyard, is one word - for you now, Christian: repentance. Repentance! 'I have repented' - no you haven't! Unless you have repented day by day, from the moment you were saved, every morning getting up, reviewing your life, saying: 'Lord, I will turn from that today. I will refrain from that, I will live for Thee' - day by day keeping yourselves in the love of God! My friend, my Christian friend, will you repent? Will you turn your life round to God again? Will you give Him your money, give Him your time, give Him everything? Will you win the lost, Christian? Will you convincingly refute, and critically save, and cautiously pity those who are brothers and sisters in Christ, and will you with urgency go to them and bring them home?

Listen to this today, as we finish this little book of Jude, and all the doom and gloom that we read of that is coming in the last day, and is already here, I believe - what a note to end on! That if you are backslidden, or you are a wanderer, or you are in the spirit of apostasy: God is able to meet your need. 'Now unto him that is able to keep you from stumbling', God has the power - He is an all-powerful God - to keep you, to keep you away from sin, to keep you away from backsliding and false teaching. He is a God that has the power to keep, He has the ability to set you before Himself! He is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you faultless, blameless, before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy - like Joshua the high priest, He is able today to strip you of all that filth, and to put you in a new garment, white, washed by the blood of Christ. And my friends today, if we should stand, after running through that finishing tape on that great day, and look into the laser, piercing eyes of our Lord Jesus Christ and hear these words: 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant' - do you know why we'll hear them? 'To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory' - to Him be glory, for when we get to heaven it'll be because of Him.

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Appendix A

"Why God Used D.L. Moody"

A sermon by R. A. Torrey (1923)

Close associate and friend of D. L. Moody

INTRODUCTION

D. L. Moody died in the last days of the 19th century. Dr. R. A. Torrey was probably his closest associate and friend. Dr. Torrey was the first superintendent of the Moody Bible Institute and set up a curriculum for that Bible Institute which has been a pattern for others like it. When Moody died, Torrey soon took worldwide lead in great citywide campaigns in Australia, England and America. In 1923 Dr. Torrey was asked to speak at a great memorial service on "Why God Used D. L. Moody," and this is that remarkable address about that amazing man, probably the greatest man of his generation, as Dr. Torrey says.

The reader will notice that R. A. Torrey and D. L. Moody both used the term, "baptized with the Holy Ghost" just as it is used in Acts 1:5 about Pentecost. Later, because of some wildfire and theological differences of people who used the term, "the baptism of the Holy Ghost," Plymouth Brethren said that that term should refer only to Pentecost and the origin of the church. Thus in retreating from other movements, they took out of the Moody Bible Institute and other Bible institutes the teaching of D. L. Moody and R.A. Torrey, and took out the emphasis which those great men of God had put on the fullness of the Spirit, or baptism with the Spirit. And so Dr. C. I. Scofield, in the note to the Scofield Bible, took the Plymouth Brethren position and forsook the position of Moody and Torrey which he originally held.

But Dr. Will H. Houghton, president of Moody Bible Institute, in an edition of this little book, *Why God Used D. L. Moody*, said, "But let no one quibble about an experience as important as the filling with the Spirit. In this little book Dr. Torrey quotes Mr. Moody as saying, in a discussion of this very matter, 'Oh, why will they split hairs? Why don't they see that this is just the one thing that they themselves need? They are good teachers, they are wonderful teachers, and I am so glad to have them here, but why will they not see that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is just the one touch that they themselves need?' " And Dr. Houghton further said, "The tragedy is that so many are technically correct and spiritually powerless."

God is looking for men whom He can mightily use in winning souls. We pray that many a reader of this booklet will earnestly decide to follow the pattern of D. L. Moody in the qualities which made him so God could use him with mighty power to win multitudes!

Eighty-six years ago (February 5, 1837), there was born of poor parents in a humble farmhouse in Northfield, Massachusetts, a little baby who was to become the greatest man, as I believe, of his generation or of his century -- Dwight L. Moody. After our great generals, great statesmen, great scientists and great men of letters have passed away and been forgotten, and their work and its helpful influence has come to an end, the work of D. L. Moody will go on and its saving influence continue and increase, bringing blessing not only to every state in the Union but to every nation on earth. Yes, it will continue throughout the ages of eternity.

My subject is "Why God Used D. L. Moody," and I can think of no subject upon which I would rather speak. For I shall not seek to glorify Mr. Moody, but the God who by His grace, His entirely unmerited favor, used him so mightily, and the Christ who saved him by His atoning death and resurrection life, and the Holy Spirit who lived in him and wrought through him and who alone made him the mighty power that he was to this

world. Furthermore: I hope to make it clear that the God who used D. L. Moody in his day is just as ready to use you and me, in this day, if we, on our part, do what D. L. Moody did, which was what made it possible for God to so abundantly use him.

The whole secret of why D. L. Moody was such a mightily used man you will find in Psalm 62:11: "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that POWER BELONGETH UNTO GOD." I am glad it does. I am glad that power did not belong to D. L. Moody; I am glad that it did not belong to Charles G. Finney; I am glad that it did not belong to Martin Luther; I am glad that it did not belong to any other Christian man whom God has greatly used in this world's history. Power belongs to God. If D. L. Moody had any power, and he had great power, he got it from God.

But God does not give His power arbitrarily. It is true that He gives it to whomsoever He will, but He wills to give it on certain conditions, which are clearly revealed in His Word; and D. L. Moody met those conditions and God made him the most wonderful preacher of his generation; yes, I think the most wonderful man of his generation.

But how was it that D. L. Moody had that power of God so wonderfully manifested in his life? Pondering this question it seemed to me that there were seven things in the life of D. L. Moody that accounted for God's using him so largely as He did.

(1) A Fully Surrendered Man

The first thing that accounts for God's using D. L. Moody so mightily was that he was a fully surrendered man. Every ounce of that two-hundred-and-eighty -pound body of his belonged to God; everything he was and everything he had, belonged wholly to God. Now, I am not saying that Mr. Moody was perfect; he was not. If I attempted to, I presume I could point out some defects in his character. It does not occur to me at this moment what they were; but I am confident that I could think of some, if I tried real hard. I have never yet met a perfect man, not one. I have known perfect men in the sense in which the Bible commands us to be perfect, i.e., men who are wholly God's, out and out for God, fully surrendered to God, with no will but God's will; but I have never known a man in whom I could not see some defects, some places where he might have been improved.

No, Mr. Moody was not a faultless man. If he had any flaws in his character, and he had, I presume I was in a position to know them better than almost any other man, because of my very close association with him in the later years of his life; and furthermore, I suppose that in his latter days he opened his heart to me more fully than to anyone else in the world. I think He told me some things that he told no one else. I presume I knew whatever defects there were in his character as well as anybody. But while I recognized such flaws, nevertheless, I know that he was a man who belonged wholly to God.

The first month I was in Chicago, we were having a talk about something upon which we very widely differed, and Mr. Moody turned to me very frankly and very kindly and said in defense of his own position: "Torrey, if I believed that God wanted me to jump out of that window, I would jump." I believe he would. If he thought God wanted him to do anything, he would do it. He belonged wholly, unreservedly, unqualifiedly, entirely, to God.

Henry Varley, a very intimate friend of Mr. Moody in the earlier days of his work, loved to tell how he once said to him: "It remains to be seen what God will do with a man who gives himself up wholly to Him." I am told that when Mr. Henry Varley said that, Mr. Moody said to himself: "Well, I will be that man." And I, for my part, do not think "it remains to be seen" what God will do with a man who gives himself up wholly to Him. I think it has been seen already in D. L. Moody.

If you and I are to be used in our sphere as D. L. Moody was used in his, we must put all that we have and all that we are in the hands of God, for Him to use as He will, to send us where He will, for God to do with us what He will, and we, on our part, to do everything God bids us do.

There are thousands and tens of thousands of men and women in Christian work, brilliant men and women, rarely gifted men and women, men and women who are making great sacrifices, men and women who have put all conscious sin out of their lives, yet who, nevertheless, have stopped short of absolute surrender to God, and therefore have stopped short of fullness of power. But Mr. Moody did not stop short of absolute surrender to God; he was a wholly surrendered man, and if you and I are to be used, you and I must be wholly surrendered men and women.

(2) *A Man of Prayer*

The second secret of the great power exhibited in Mr. Moody's life was that Mr. Moody was in the deepest and most meaningful sense a man of prayer. People oftentimes say to me: "Well, I went many miles to see and to hear D. L. Moody and he certainly was a wonderful preacher." Yes, D. L. Moody certainly was a wonderful preacher; taking it all in all, the most wonderful preacher I have ever heard, and it was a great privilege to hear him preach as he alone could preach; but out of a very intimate acquaintance with him I wish to testify that he was a far greater pray-er than he was preacher.

Time and time again, he was confronted by obstacles that seemed insurmountable, but he always knew the way to surmount and to overcome all difficulties. He knew the way to bring to pass anything that needed to be brought to pass. He knew and believed in the deepest depths of his soul that "nothing was too hard for the Lord" and that prayer could do anything that God could do.

Often times Mr. Moody would write me when he was about to undertake some new work, saying: "I am beginning work in such and such a place on such and such a day; I wish you would get the students together for a day of fasting and prayer" And often I have taken those letters and read them to the students in the lecture room and said: "Mr. Moody wants us to have a day of fasting and prayer, first for God's blessing on our own souls and work, and then for God's blessing on him and his work."

Often we were gathered in the lecture room far into the night -- sometimes till one, two, three, four or even five o'clock in the morning, crying to God, just because Mr. Moody urged us to wait upon God until we received His blessing. How many men and women I have known whose lives and characters have been transformed by those nights of prayer and who have wrought mighty things in many lands because of those nights of prayer!

One day Mr. Moody drove up to my house at Northfield and said: "Torrey, I want you to take a ride with me." I got into the carriage and we drove out toward Lover's Lane, talking about some great and unexpected difficulties that had arisen in regard to the work in Northfield and Chicago, and in connection with other work that was very dear to him.

As we drove along, some black storm clouds lay ahead of us, and then suddenly, as we were talking, it began to rain. He drove the horse into a shed near the entrance to Lover's Lane to shelter the horse, and then laid the reins upon the dashboard and said: "Torrey, pray"; and then, as best I could, I prayed, while he in his heart joined me in prayer. And when my voice was silent he began to pray. Oh, I wish you could have heard that prayer! I shall never forget it, so simple, so trustful, so definite and so direct and so mighty. When the storm was over and we drove back to town, the obstacles had been surmounted, and the work of the schools, and other work that was threatened, went on as it had never gone on before, and it has gone on until this day.

As we drove back, Mr. Moody said to me: "Torrey, we will let the other men do the talking and the criticizing, and we will stick to the work that God has given us to do, and let Him take care of the difficulties and answer the criticisms."

On one occasion Mr. Moody said to me in Chicago: "I have just found, to my surprise, that we are twenty thousand dollars behind in our finances for the work here and in Northfield, and we must have that twenty thousand dollars, and I am going to get it by prayer." He did not tell a soul who had the ability to give a penny of the twenty thousand dollars' deficit, but looked right to God and said: "I need twenty thousand dollars for my work; send me that money in such a way that I will know it comes straight from Thee." And God heard that prayer. The money came in such a way that it was clear that it came from God in direct answer to prayer.

Yes, D. L. Moody was a man who believed in the God who answers prayer, and not only believed in Him in a theoretical way but believed in Him in a practical way. He was a man who met every difficulty that stood in his way -- by prayer. Everything he undertook was backed up by prayer, and in everything, his ultimate dependence was upon God.

(3) A Deep and Practical Student of the Bible

The third secret of Mr. Moody's power, or the third reason why God used D. L. Moody, was because he was a deep and practical student of the Word of God. Nowadays it is often said of D. L. Moody that he was not a student. I wish to say that he was a student; most emphatically he was a student. He was not a student of psychology; he was not a student of anthropology -- I am very sure he would not have known what that word meant; he was not a student of biology; he was not a student of philosophy; he was not even a student of theology, in the technical sense of the term; but he was a student, a profound and practical student of the one Book that is more worth studying than all other books in the world put together; he was a student of the Bible.

Every day of his life, I have reason for believing, he arose very early in the morning to study the Word of God, way down to the close of his life. Mr. Moody used to rise about four o'clock in the morning to study the Bible. He would say to me: "If I am going to get in any study, I have got to get up before the other folks get up"; and he would shut himself up in a remote room in his house, alone with his God and his Bible.

I shall never forget the first night I spent in his home. He had invited me to take the superintendency of the Bible Institute and I had already begun my work; I was on my way to some city in the East to preside at the International Christian Workers' Convention. He wrote me saying: "Just as soon as the Convention is over, come up to Northfield." He learned when I was likely to arrive and drove over to South Vernon to meet me. That night he had all the teachers from the Mount Hermon School and from the Northfield Seminary come together at the house to meet me, and to talk over the problems of the two schools. We talked together far on into the night, and then, after the principals and teachers of the schools had gone home, Mr. Moody and I talked together about the problems a while longer.

It was very late when I got to bed that night, but very early the next morning, about five o'clock, I heard a gentle tap on my door. Then I heard Mr. Moody's voice whispering: "Torrey, are you up?" I happened to be; I do not always get up at that early hour but I happened to be up that particular morning. He said: "I want you to go somewhere with me," and I went down with him. Then I found out that he had already been up an hour or two in his room studying the Word of God.

Oh, you may talk about power; but, if you neglect the one Book that God has given you as the one instrument through which He imparts and exercises His power, you will not have it. You may read many books and go to many conventions and you may have your all-night prayer meetings to pray for the power of the Holy Ghost; but unless you keep in constant and close association with the one Book, the Bible, you will

not have power. And if you ever had power, you will not maintain it except by the daily, earnest, intense study of that Book.

Ninety-nine Christians in every hundred are merely playing at Bible study; and therefore ninety-nine Christians in every hundred are mere weaklings, when they might be giants, both in their Christian life and in their service.

It was largely because of his thorough knowledge of the Bible, and his practical knowledge of the Bible, that Mr. Moody drew such immense crowds. On "Chicago Day," in October, 1893, none of the theaters of Chicago dared to open because it was expected that everybody in Chicago would go on that day to the World's Fair; and, in point of fact, something like four hundred thousand people did pass through the gates of the Fair that day. Everybody in Chicago was expected to be at that end of the city on that day. But Mr. Moody said to me: "Torrey, engage the Central Music Hall and announce meetings from nine o'clock in the morning till six o'clock at night." "Why," I replied, "Mr. Moody, nobody will be at this end of Chicago on that day; not even the theaters dare to open; everybody is going down to Jackson Park to the Fair; we cannot get anybody out on this day."

Mr. Moody replied: "You do as you are told"; and I did as I was told and engaged the Central Music Hall for continuous meetings from nine o'clock in the morning till six o'clock at night. But I did it with a heavy heart; I thought there would be poor audiences. I was on the program at noon that day. Being very busy in my office about the details of the campaign, I did not reach the Central Music Hall till almost noon. I thought I would have no trouble in getting in. But when I got almost to the Hall I found to my amazement that not only was it packed but the vestibule was packed and the steps were packed, and there was no getting anywhere near the door; and if I had not gone round and climbed in a back window they would have lost their speaker for that hour. But that would not have been of much importance, for the crowds had not gathered to hear me; it was the magic of Mr. Moody's name that had drawn them. And why did they long to hear Mr. Moody? Because they knew that while he was not versed in many of the philosophies and fads and fancies of the day, he did know the one Book that this old world most longs to know -- the Bible.

I shall never forget Moody's last visit to Chicago. The ministers of Chicago had sent me to Cincinnati to invite him to come to Chicago and hold a meeting. In response to the invitation, Mr. Moody said to me: "If you will hire the Auditorium for weekday mornings and afternoons and have meetings at ten in the morning and three in the afternoon, I will go." I replied: "Mr. Moody, you know what a busy city Chicago is, and how impossible it is for businessmen to get out at ten o'clock in the morning and three in the afternoon on working days. Will you not hold evening meetings and meetings on Sunday?" "No," he replied, "I am afraid if I did, I would interfere with the regular work of the churches."

I went back to Chicago and engaged the Auditorium, which at that time was the building having the largest seating capacity of any building in the city, seating in those days about seven thousand people; I announced weekday meetings, with Mr. Moody as the speaker, at ten o'clock in the mornings and three o'clock in the afternoons.

At once protests began to pour in upon me. One of them came from Marshall Field, at that time the business king of Chicago. "Mr. Torrey," Mr. Field wrote, "we businessmen of Chicago wish to hear Mr. Moody, and you know perfectly well how impossible it is for us to get out at ten o'clock in the morning and three o'clock in the afternoon; have evening meetings." I received many letters of a similar purport and wrote to Mr. Moody urging him to give us evening meetings. But Mr. Moody simply replied: "You do as you are told," and I did as I was told; that is the way I kept my job.

On the first morning of the meetings I went down to the Auditorium about half an hour before the appointed time, but I went with much fear and apprehension; I thought the Auditorium would be nowhere nearly full. When I reached there, to my amazement I found a queue of people four abreast extending from the Congress

Street entrance to Wabash Avenue, then a block north on Wabash Avenue, then a break to let traffic through, and then another block, and so on. I went in through the back door, and there were many clamoring for entrance there. When the doors were opened at the appointed time, we had a cordon of twenty policemen to keep back the crowd; but the crowd was so great that it swept the cordon of policemen off their feet and packed eight thousand people into the building before we could get the doors shut. And I think there were as many left on the outside as there were in the building. I do not think that anyone else in the world could have drawn such a crowd at such a time.

Why? Because though Mr. Moody knew little about science or philosophy or literature in general, he did know the one Book that this old world is perishing to know and longing to know; and this old world will flock to hear men who know the Bible and preach the Bible as they will flock to hear nothing else on earth.

During all the months of the World's Fair in Chicago, no one could draw such crowds as Mr. Moody. Judging by the papers, one would have thought that the great religious event in Chicago at that time was the World's Congress of Religions. One very gifted man of letters in the East was invited to speak at this Congress. He saw in this invitation the opportunity of his life and prepared his paper, the exact title of which I do not now recall, but it was something along the line of "New Light on the Old Doctrines." He prepared the paper with great care, and then sent it around to his most trusted and gifted friends for criticisms. These men sent it back to him with such emendations as they had to suggest. Then he rewrote the paper, incorporating as many of the suggestions and criticisms as seemed wise. Then he sent it around for further criticisms. Then he wrote the paper a third time, and had it, as he trusted, perfect. He went on to Chicago to meet this coveted opportunity of speaking at the World's Congress of Religions.

It was at eleven o'clock on a Saturday morning (if I remember correctly) that he was to speak. He stood outside the door of the platform waiting for the great moment to arrive, and as the clock struck eleven he walked on to the platform to face a magnificent audience of eleven women and two men! But there was not a building anywhere in Chicago that would accommodate the very same day the crowds that would flock to hear Mr. Moody at any hour of the day or night.

Oh, men and women, if you wish to get an audience and wish to do that audience some good after you get them, study, study, STUDY the one Book, and preach, preach, PREACH the one Book, and teach, teach, TEACH the one Book, the Bible, the only Book that is God's Word, and the only Book that has power to gather and hold and bless the crowds for any great length of time.

(4) A Humble Man

The fourth reason why God continuously, through so many years, used D.L. Moody was because he was a humble man. I think D. L. Moody was the humblest man I ever knew in all my life. He loved to quote the words of another; "Faith gets the most; love works the most; but humility keeps the most. "

He himself had the humility that keeps everything it gets. As I have already said, he was the most humble man I ever knew, i.e., the most humble man when we bear in mind the great things that he did, and the praise that was lavished upon him. Oh, how he loved to put himself in the background and put other men in the foreground. How often he would stand on a platform with some of us little fellows seated behind him and as he spoke he would say: "There are better men coming after me." As he said it, he would point back over his shoulder with his thumb to the "little fellows. " I do not know how he could believe it, but he really did believe that the others that were coming after him were really better than he was. He made no pretense to a humility he did not possess. In his heart of hearts he constantly underestimated himself, and overestimated others.

He really believed that God would use other men in a larger measure than he had been used. Mr. Moody loved to keep himself in the background. At his conventions at Northfield, or anywhere else, he would push

the other men to the front and, if he could, have them do all the preaching -- McGregor, Campbell Morgan, Andrew Murray, and the rest of them. The only way we could get him to take any part in the program was to get up in the convention and move that we hear D. L. Moody at the next meeting. He continually put himself out of sight.

Oh, how many a man has been full of promise and God has used him, and then the man thought that he was the whole thing and God was compelled to set him aside! I believe more promising workers have gone on the rocks through self-sufficiency and self-esteem than through any other cause. I can look back for forty years, or more, and think of many men who are now wrecks or derelicts who at one time the world thought were going to be something great. But they have disappeared entirely from the public view. Why? Because of overestimation of self. Oh, the men and women who have been put aside because they began to think that they were somebody, that they were "IT," and therefore God was compelled to set them aside.

I remember a man with whom I was closely associated in a great movement in this country. We were having a most successful convention in Buffalo, and he was greatly elated. As we walked down the street together to one of the meetings one day, he said to me: "Torrey, you and I are the most important men in Christian work in this country," or words to that effect. I replied: "John, I am sorry to hear you say that; for as I read my Bible I find man after man who had accomplished great things whom God had to set aside because of his sense of his own importance." And God set that man aside also from that time. I think he is still living, but no one ever hears of him, or has heard of him for years.

God used D. L. Moody, I think, beyond any man of his day; but it made no difference how much God used him, he never was puffed up. One day, speaking to me of a great New York preacher, now dead, Mr. Moody said: "He once did a very foolish thing, the most foolish thing that I ever knew a man, ordinarily so wise as he was, to do. He came up to me at the close of a little talk I had given and said: 'Young man, you have made a great address tonight.'" Then Mr. Moody continued: "How foolish of him to have said that! It almost turned my head." But, thank God, it did not turn his head, and even when pretty much all the ministers in England, Scotland and Ireland, and many of the English bishops were ready to follow D. L. Moody wherever he led, even then it never turned his head one bit. He would get down on his face before God, knowing he was human, and ask God to empty him of all self-sufficiency. And God did.

Oh, men and women! Especially young men and young women, perhaps God is beginning to use you; very likely people are saying: "What a wonderful gift he has as a Bible teacher, what power he has as a preacher, for such a young man!" Listen: get down upon your face before God. I believe here lies one of the most dangerous snares of the Devil. When the Devil cannot discourage a man, he approaches him on another tack, which he knows is far worse in its results; he puffs him up by whispering in his ear: "You are the leading evangelist of the day. You are the man who will sweep everything before you. You are the coming man. You are the D. L. Moody of the day"; and if you listen to him, he will ruin you. The entire shore of the history of Christian workers is strewn with the wrecks of gallant vessels that were full of promise a few years ago, but these men became puffed up and were driven on the rocks by the wild winds of their own raging self-esteem.

(5) His Entire Freedom from the Love of Money

The fifth secret of D. L. Moody's continual power and usefulness was his entire freedom from the love of money. Mr. Moody might have been a wealthy man, but money had no charms for him. He loved to gather money for God's work; he refused to accumulate money for himself. He told me during the World's Fair that if he had taken, for himself, the royalties on the hymnbooks which he had published, they would have amounted, at that time, to a million dollars. But Mr. Moody refused to touch the money. He had a perfect right to take it, for he was responsible for the publication of the books and it was his money that went into the publication of the first of them.

Mr. Sankey had some hymns that he had taken with him to England and he wished to have them published. He went to a publisher (I think Morgan & Scott) and they declined to publish them, because, as they said, Philip Phillips had recently been over and published a hymnbook and it had not done well. However, Mr. Moody had a little money and he said that he would put it into the publication of these hymns in cheap form; and he did. The hymns had a most remarkable and unexpected sale; they were then published in book form and large profits accrued. The financial results were offered to Mr. Moody, but he refused to touch them. "But," it was urged on him, "the money belongs to you"; but he would not touch it.

Mr. Fleming H. Revell was at the time treasurer of the Chicago Avenue Church, commonly known as the Moody Tabernacle. Only the basement of this new church building had been completed, funds having been exhausted. Hearing of the hymnbook situation Mr. Revell suggested, in a letter to friends in London, that the money be given for completion of this building, and it was. Afterwards, so much money came in that it was given, by the committee into whose hands Mr. Moody put the matter, to various Christian enterprises.

In a certain city to which Mr. Moody went in the latter years of his life, and where I went with him, it was publicly announced that Mr. Moody would accept no money whatever for his services. Now, in point of fact, Mr. Moody was dependent, in a measure, upon what was given him at various services; but when this announcement was made, Mr. Moody said nothing, and left that city without a penny's compensation for the hard work he did there; and, I think, he paid his own hotel bill. And yet a minister in that very city came out with an article in a paper, which I read, in which he told a fairy tale of the financial demands that Mr. Moody made upon them, which story I knew personally to be absolutely untrue. Millions of dollars passed into Mr. Moody hands, but they passed through; they did not stick to his fingers.

This is the point at which many an evangelist makes shipwreck, and his great work comes to an untimely end. The love of money on the part of some evangelists has done more to discredit evangelistic work in our day, and to lay many an evangelist on the shelf, than almost any other cause.

While I was away on my recent tour I was told by one of the most reliable ministers in one of our eastern cities of a campaign conducted by one who has been greatly used in the past. (Do not imagine, for a moment, that I am speaking of Billy Sunday, for I am not; this same minister spoke in the highest terms of Mr. Sunday and of a campaign which he conducted in a city where this minister was a pastor.) This evangelist of whom I now speak came to a city for a united evangelistic campaign and was supported by fifty-three churches. The minister who told me about the matter was himself chairman of the Finance Committee.

The evangelist showed such a longing for money and so deliberately violated the agreement he had made before coming to the city and so insisted upon money being gathered for him in other ways than he had himself prescribed in the original contract, that this minister threatened to resign from the Finance Committee. He was, however, persuaded to remain to avoid a scandal. "As the total result of the three weeks' campaign there were only twenty-four clear decisions," said my friend; "and after it was over the ministers got together and by a vote with but one dissenting voice, they agreed to send a letter to this evangelist telling him frankly that they were done with him and with his methods of evangelism forever, and that they felt it their duty to warn other cities against him and his methods and the results of his work." Let us lay the lesson to our hearts and take warning in time.

(6) His Consuming Passion for the Salvation of the Lost

The sixth reason why God used D. L. Moody was because of his consuming passion for the salvation of the lost. Mr. Moody made the resolution, shortly after he himself was saved, that he would never let twenty-four hours pass over his head without speaking to at least one person about his soul. His was a very busy life, and sometimes he would forget his resolution until the last hour, and sometimes he would get out

of bed, dress, go out and talk to someone about his soul in order that he might not let one day pass without having definitely told at least one of his fellow-mortals about his need and the Savior who could meet it.

One night Mr. Moody was going home from his place of business. It was very late, and it suddenly occurred to him that he had not spoken to one single person that day about accepting Christ. He said to himself: "Here's a day lost. I have not spoken to anyone today and I shall not see anybody at this late hour." But as he walked up the street he saw a man standing under a lamppost. The man was a perfect stranger to him, though it turned out afterwards the man knew who Mr. Moody was. He stepped up to this stranger and said: "Are you a Christian?" The man replied: "That is none of your business, whether I am a Christian or not. If you were not a sort of a preacher I would knock you into the gutter for your impertinence." Mr. Moody said a few earnest words and passed on.

The next day that man called upon one of Mr. Moody's prominent business friends and said to him: "That man Moody of yours over on the North Side is doing more harm than he is good. He has got zeal without knowledge. He stepped up to me last night, a perfect stranger, and insulted me. He asked me if I were a Christian, and I told him it was none of his business and if he were not a sort of a preacher I would knock him into the gutter for his impertinence. He is doing more harm than he is good. He has got zeal without knowledge." Mr. Moody's friend sent for him and said: "Moody, you are doing more harm than you are good; you've got zeal without knowledge: you insulted a friend of mine on the street last night. You went up to him, a perfect stranger, and asked him if he were a Christian, and he tells me if you had not been a sort of a preacher he would have knocked you into the gutter for your impertinence. You are doing more harm than you are good; you have got zeal without knowledge."

Mr. Moody went out of that man's office somewhat crestfallen. He wondered if he were not doing more harm than he was good, if he really had zeal without knowledge. (Let me say, in passing, it is far better to have zeal without knowledge than it is to have knowledge without zeal. Some men and women are as full of knowledge as an egg is of meat; they are so deeply versed in Bible truth that they can sit in criticism on the preachers and give the preachers pointers, but they have so little zeal that they do not lead one soul to Christ in a whole year.)

Weeks passed by. One night Mr. Moody was in bed when he heard a tremendous pounding at his front door. He jumped out of bed and rushed to the door. He thought the house was on fire. He thought the man would break down the door. He opened the door and there stood this man. He said: "Mr. Moody, I have not had a good night's sleep since that night you spoke to me under the lamppost, and I have come around at this unearthly hour of the night for you to tell me what I have to do to be saved." Mr. Moody took him in and told him what to do to be saved. Then he accepted Christ, and when the Civil War broke out, he went to the front and laid down his life fighting for his country.

Another night, Mr. Moody got home and had gone to bed before it occurred to him that he had not spoken to a soul that day about accepting Christ. "Well," he said to himself, "it is no good getting up now; there will be nobody on the street at this hour of the night." But he got up, dressed and went to the front door. It was pouring rain. "Oh," he said, "there will be no one out in this pouring rain. Just then he heard the patter of a man's feet as he came down the street, holding an umbrella over his head. Then Mr. Moody darted out and rushed up to the man and said: "May I share the shelter of your umbrella?" "Certainly," the man replied. Then Mr. Moody said: "Have you any shelter in the time of storm?" and preached Jesus to him. Oh, men and women, if we were as full of zeal for the salvation of souls as that, how long would it be before the whole country would be shaken by the power of a mighty, God-sent revival?

One day in Chicago -- the day after the elder Carter Harrison was shot, when his body was lying in state in the City Hall -- Mr. Moody and I were riding up Randolph Street together in a streetcar right alongside of the City Hall. The car could scarcely get through because of the enormous crowds waiting to get in and view the

body of Mayor Harrison. As the car tried to push its way through the crowd, Mr. Moody turned to me and said: "Torrey, what does this mean?" "Why," I said, "Carter Harrison's body lies there in the City Hall and these crowds are waiting to see it."

Then he said: "This will never do, to let these crowds get away from us without preaching to them; we must talk to them. You go and hire Hooley's Opera House (which was just opposite the City Hall) for the whole day." I did so. The meetings began at nine o'clock in the morning, and we had one continuous service from that hour until six in the evening, to reach those crowds.

Mr. Moody was a man on fire for God. Not only was he always "on the job" himself but he was always getting others to work as well. He once invited me down to Northfield to spend a month there with the schools, speaking first to one school and then crossing the river to the other. I was obliged to use the ferry a great deal; it was before the present bridge was built at that point.

One day he said to me: "Torrey, did you know that that ferryman that ferries you across every day was unconverted?" He did not tell me to speak to him, but I knew what he meant. When some days later it was told him that the ferryman was saved, he was exceedingly happy.

Once, when walking down a certain street in Chicago, Mr. Moody stepped up to a man, a perfect stranger to him, and said: "Sir, are you a Christian?" "You mind your own business," was the reply. Mr. Moody replied: "This is my business." The man said, "Well, then, you must be Moody." Out in Chicago they used to call him in those early days "Crazy Moody," because day and night he was speaking to everybody he got a chance to speak to about being saved.

One time he was going to Milwaukee, and in the seat that he had chosen sat a traveling man. Mr. Moody sat down beside him and immediately began to talk with him. "Where are you going?" Mr. Moody asked. When told the name of the town he said: "We will soon be there; we'll have to get down to business at once. Are you saved?" The man said that he was not, and Mr. Moody took out his Bible and there on the train showed him the way of salvation. Then he said: "Now, you must take Christ." The man did; he was converted right there on the train.

Most of you have heard, I presume, the story President Wilson used to tell about D. L. Moody. Ex-President Wilson said that he once went into a barber shop and took a chair next to the one in which D. L. Moody was sitting, though he did not know that Mr. Moody was there. He had not been in the chair very long before, as ex-President Wilson phrased it, he "knew there was a personality in the other chair," and he began to listen to the conversation going on; he heard Mr. Moody tell the barber about the Way of Life, and President Wilson said, "I have never forgotten that scene to this day." When Mr. Moody was gone, he asked the barber who he was; when he was told that it was D. L. Moody, President Wilson said: "It made an impression upon me I have not yet forgotten."

On one occasion in Chicago Mr. Moody saw a little girl standing on the street with a pail in her hand. He went up to her and invited her to his Sunday school, telling her what a pleasant place it was. She promised to go the following Sunday, but she did not do so. Mr. Moody watched for her for weeks, and then one day he saw her on the street again, at some distance from him. He started toward her, but she saw him too and started to run away. Mr. Moody followed her. Down she went one street, Mr. Moody after her; up she went another street, Mr. Moody after her, through an alley, Mr. Moody still following; out on another street, Mr. Moody after her; then she dashed into a saloon and Mr. Moody dashed after her. She ran out the back door and up a flight of stairs, Mr. Moody still following; she dashed into a room, Mr. Moody following; she threw herself under the bed and Mr. Moody reached under the bed and pulled her out by the foot, and led her to Christ.

He found that her mother was a widow who had once seen better circumstances, but had gone down until now she was living over this saloon. She had several children. Mr. Moody led the mother and all the family to Christ. Several of the children were prominent members of the Moody Church until they moved away, and afterwards became prominent in churches elsewhere. This particular child, whom he pulled from underneath the bed, was, when I was the pastor of the Moody Church, the wife of one of the most prominent officers in the church.

Only two or three years ago, as I came out of a ticket office in Memphis, Tennessee, a fine-looking young man followed me. He said: "Are you not Dr. Torrey?" I said, "Yes." He said: "I am so and so." He was the son of this woman. He was then a traveling man, and an officer in the church where he lived. When Mr. Moody pulled that little child out from under the bed by the foot he was pulling a whole family into the Kingdom of God, and eternity alone will reveal how many succeeding generations he was pulling into the Kingdom of God.

D.L. Moody's consuming passion for souls was not for the souls of those who would be helpful to him in building up his work here or elsewhere; his love for souls knew no class limitations. He was no respecter of persons; it might be an earl or a duke or it might be an ignorant colored boy on the street; it was all the same to him; there was a soul to save and he did what lay in his power to save that soul.

A friend once told me that the first time he ever heard of Mr. Moody was when Mr. Reynolds of Peoria told him that he once found Mr. Moody sitting in one of the squatters' shanties that used to be in that part of the city toward the lake, which was then called, "The Sands," with a colored boy on his knee, a tallow candle in one hand and a Bible in the other, and Mr. Moody was spelling out the words (for at that time the boy could not read very well) of certain verses of Scripture, in an attempt to lead that ignorant colored boy to Christ.

Oh, young men and women and all Christian workers, if you and I were on fire for souls like that, how long would it be before we had a revival? Suppose that tonight the fire of God falls and fills our hearts, a burning fire that will send us out all over the country, and across the water to China, Japan, India and Africa, to tell lost souls the way of salvation!

(7) Definitely Endued with Power from on High

The seventh thing that was the secret of why God used D. L. Moody was that he had a very definite enduement with power from on High, a very clear and definite baptism with the Holy Ghost. Moody knew he had "the baptism with the Holy Ghost"; he had no doubt about it. In his early days he was a great hustler; he had a tremendous desire to do something, but he had no real power. He worked very largely in the energy of the flesh.

But there were two humble Free Methodist women who used to come over to his meetings in the Y.M.C.A. One was "Auntie Cook" and the other, Mrs. Snow. (I think her name was not Snow at that time.) These two women would come to Mr. Moody at the close of his meetings and say: "We are praying for you." Finally, Mr. Moody became somewhat nettled and said to them one night: "Why are you praying for me? Why don't you pray for the unsaved?" They replied: "We are praying that you may get the power." Mr. Moody did not know what that meant, but he got to thinking about it, and then went to these women and said: "I wish you would tell me what you mean"; and they told him about the definite baptism with the Holy Ghost. Then he asked that he might pray with them and not they merely pray for him.

Auntie Cook once told me of the intense fervor with which Mr. Moody prayed on that occasion. She told me in words that I scarcely dare repeat, though I have never forgotten them. And he not only prayed with them, but he also prayed alone.

Not long after, one day on his way to England, he was walking up Wall Street in New York; (Mr. Moody very seldom told this and I almost hesitate to tell it) and in the midst of the bustle and hurry of that city his prayer was answered; the power of God fell upon him as he walked up the street and he had to hurry off to the house of a friend and ask that he might have a room by himself, and in that room he stayed alone for hours; and the Holy Ghost came upon him, filling his soul with such joy that at last he had to ask God to withhold His hand, lest he die on the spot from very joy. He went out from that place with the power of the Holy Ghost upon him, and when he got to London (partly through the prayers of a bedridden saint in Mr. Lessey's church), the power of God wrought through him mightily in North London, and hundreds were added to the churches; and that was what led to his being invited over to the wonderful campaign that followed in later years.

Time and again Mr. Moody would come to me and say: "Torrey, I want you to preach on the baptism with the Holy Ghost." I do not know how many times he asked me to speak on that subject. Once, when I had been invited to preach in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York (invited at Mr. Moody's suggestion; had it not been for his suggestion the invitation would never have been extended to me), just before I started for New York, Mr. Moody drove up to my house and said: "Torrey, they want you to preach at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York. It is a great big church, cost a million dollars to build it." Then he continued: "Torrey, I just want to ask one thing of you. I want to tell you what to preach about. You will preach that sermon of yours on 'Ten Reasons Why I Believe the Bible to Be the Word of God' and your sermon on 'The Baptism With the Holy Ghost.'"

Time and again, when a call came to me to go off to some church, he would come up to me and say: "Now, Torrey, be sure and preach on the baptism with the Holy Ghost." I do not know how many times he said that to me. Once I asked him: "Mr. Moody, don't you think I have any sermons but those two: 'Ten Reasons Why I Believe the Bible to Be the Word of God' and 'The Baptism With the Holy Ghost'?" "Never mind that," he replied, "you give them those two sermons."

Once he had some teachers at Northfield -- fine men, all of them, but they did not believe in a definite baptism with the Holy Ghost for the individual. They believed that every child of God was baptized with the Holy Ghost, and they did not believe in any special baptism with the Holy Ghost for the individual. Mr. Moody came to me and said: "Torrey, will you come up to my house after the meeting tonight and I will get those men to come, and I want you to talk this thing out with them."

Of course, I very readily consented, and Mr. Moody and I talked for a long time, but they did not altogether see eye to eye with us. And when they went, Mr. Moody signaled me to remain for a few moments. Mr. Moody sat there with his chin on his breast, as he so often sat when he was in deep thought; then he looked up and said: "Oh, why will they split hairs? Why don't they see that this is just the one thing that they themselves need? They are good teachers, they are wonderful teachers, and I am so glad to have them here; but why will they not see that the baptism with the Holy Ghost is just the one touch that they themselves need?"

I shall never forget the eighth of July, 1894, to my dying day. It was the closing day of the Northfield Students' Conference -- the gathering of the students from the eastern colleges. Mr. Moody had asked me to preach on Saturday night and Sunday morning on the baptism with the Holy Ghost. On Saturday night I had spoken about, "The Baptism With the Holy Ghost: What It Is; What It Does; the Need of It and the Possibility of It." On Sunday morning I spoke on "The Baptism With the Holy Spirit: How to Get It." It was just exactly twelve o'clock when I finished my morning sermon, and I took out my watch and said: "Mr. Moody has invited us all to go up to the mountain at three o'clock this afternoon to pray for the power of the Holy Spirit. It is three hours to three o'clock. Some of you cannot wait three hours. You do not need to wait. Go to your rooms; go out into the woods; go to your tent; go anywhere where you can get alone with God and have this matter out with Him."

At three o'clock we all gathered in front of Mr. Moody's mother's house (she was then still living), and then began to pass down the lane, through the gate, up on the mountainside. There were four hundred and fifty-six of us in all; I know the number because Paul Moody counted us as we passed through the gate.

After a while Mr. Moody said: "I don't think we need to go any further; let us sit down here." We sat down on stumps and logs and on the ground. Mr. Moody said: "Have any of you students anything to say?" I think about seventy-five of them arose, one after the other, and said: "Mr. Moody, I could not wait till three o'clock; I have been alone with God since the morning service, and I believe I have a right to say that I have been baptized with the Holy Spirit."

When these testimonies were over, Mr. Moody said: "Young men, I can't see any reason why we shouldn't kneel down here right now and ask God that the Holy Ghost may fall upon us just as definitely as He fell upon the apostles on the Day of Pentecost. Let us pray." And we did pray, there on the mountainside. As we had gone up the mountainside heavy clouds had been gathering, and just as we began to pray those clouds broke and the raindrops began to fall through the overhanging pines. But there was another cloud that had been gathering over Northfield for ten days, a cloud big with the mercy and grace and power of God; and as we began to pray our prayers seemed to pierce that cloud and the Holy Ghost fell upon us. Men and women, that is what we all need the Baptism with the Holy Ghost.

The above is available in booklet form from:

Sword of the Lord Publishers, P.O. Box 1099, Murfreesboro, TN 37133-1099

Book Sales: Phone: 800-251-4100, Fax: 615-848-6943

E-mail: booksales@swordofthelord.com

Web site: www.swordofthelord.com

*Appendix B:**"Learn To Discern"*

Copyright 1998

by Pastor David Legge

All rights reserved

Let's turn to the word of God. This morning we're turning to 1 Corinthians, the book of 1 Corinthians and chapter 2. 1 Corinthians and chapter 2, and the subject we're thinking of this morning - it's quite a topical subject, and I mentioned it a few weeks ago when we were thinking of the subject of spiritual gifts, and you'll remember that when we were looking down the list of the spiritual gifts that we had on the overhead, one of the spiritual gifts was discernment. We have entitled our subject this morning: 'Learn To Discern'.

1 Corinthians chapter 2 and we're reading from verse 14 - we'll read from verse 12 to get the context: "Now we have received", Paul says, "not the spirit of the world" - now that's important - "we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth" - that's, again, important - "but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ".

I want you to keep your Bibles very handy because we're going to be flicking through a few verses this morning, as we think of this important subject about learning to discern.

This is how Newsweek - an American newspaper magazine - once described a Boston church which opened its doors to 1100 teenagers and permitted them to conduct a rock-and-roll festival inside the church. It quotes like this: 'A procession of boys and girls placed a Bible, bread and coca-cola, a pool cue and billiard ball on the communion table to symbolise religion, eating and playing. Then a dozen teenagers, some in shorts, crowded into the church aisles to 'frug on the rug and to do the waatoosie" - now I don't know what the 'waatoosie' is, but maybe some of you know what the 'waatoosie' is.

In Richardson, Texas this time, in a magazine called 'Christianity Today' - that town, Richardson, Texas, is still talking about the worldly ways of the First Unitarian Church. On a recent Sunday morning Pastor William Nichols invited Diana King, a Unitarian from Fort Worth, to take part in the service. She did - and when she was through, Miss King, an exotic dancer at a Dallas night-spot, wore nothing - absolutely no clothes. The congregation of 200 adults and children watched, in fascinated silence, as she shed her clothes in time to the recorded music. Nichols said: 'The dance fit', and I quote, 'very well into our service and no-one complained'. The Pastor also said that he '...didn't think anyone was aroused, but I don't consider the erotic aspect of the dance wrong', he said, 'after all that's the way we were conceived'. Miss King said it was something she'd wanted to do for a long, long time - and she would like to conduct classes for the women church members. She said, 'I would like to do a sermon using the exotic dance and members of the congregation could join me if they liked'.

[A poll on] Protestant clergy which was taken in McCall's (?) magazine recently reported on a survey of 3,000 Protestant clergymen and read like this: 'A considerable number of them rejected altogether the idea of a personal God. 'God', they said, 'was the ground of being. He is the force of life. God is the principle of

love, He is ultimate reality...', and so forth. The majority of the youngest group of clergy could not say to have believed in the virgin birth of Christ, or even to regard the Lord Jesus in the traditional way, as divine, as most Protestants were brought up to believe'.

You may say, 'All bad things come from America' - there is some truth and some error in that statement. But I want us all to be very aware this morning, and to waken up to the fact that if we believe that this could not happen here, we are very, very foolish. And, as the Lord exhorts us, we should take heed, those who think they stand, lest they fall. There is an organisation in America entitled 'ECT', Evangelicals and Catholics Together. There has now been formed, recently, in Ireland - and launched a fortnight ago - ECT in Ireland, Evangelicals and Roman Catholics Together in Ireland. And the force that was led by Chuck Colson and J.I. Packer in America has now taken force, and taken flight, in Northern Ireland. And you better believe it, that we are in days, brothers and sisters, that we need to learn to discern - for there are even those who would take the name 'Irish Baptist' who have put their weight, and signed their signature to such a document. Big journeys begin with small steps.

Martin Luther had many fears, but one of his fears he wrote of like this - he warned people, quote, 'I am much afraid that the universities will prove to be the great gates of hell. Unless they diligently labour to explain the holy scriptures and to engrave them upon the hearts of youth, I advise no-one to place his or her child where the scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution' - and Martin Luther includes the church of Jesus Christ - 'every institution where men are not unceasingly occupied with the word of God must become corrupt'.

I want us this morning, in the light of the word of God, which warns that in the last times - in fact even Peter and Paul, and all the apostles warned that in their time, the spirit of antichrist was already at work. He believed he was in the last times, he believed that the Lord was going to come at any time - and Paul and Peter, and all the apostles, saw false teachers that were coming into the church of Jesus Christ and were teaching things that were not according to the word of God. And if the truth be told, apart from the Gospels - apart from the Gospels and the book of the Acts - the majority and the rest of the letters in the New Testament are all written to counteract false teaching. Yet we live in a day, today, when to reprimand false teaching, or to reprimand false cults or religion, or to even name their names as all the apostles did, is frowned upon as intolerance, a lack of Christian spirit and love.

People love to tell you what to do you, don't they? We were thinking of legalism a few weeks ago - and that's people who love to tell you what to do - well, better than that is learning from the word of God what ought to be done, and learning for yourself. People are so willing, today, to sit in their pews and to drink up - and sometimes they like to be told what to do because in the end, it saves them bothering finding it out for themselves. I want to bring before you a few principles this morning, that can teach us how to learn to discern. How with the word of God, and in tandem with the word of God, how to - with the principles and the laws that are laid down there for us - how, for ourselves, to make our own minds up about the things that we face in the world today.

The first thing I want to bring to you is your need to discern. Simply that: you need to discern! Now, the word of God talks about spiritual discernment - it speaks of it as a skill. Indeed, spiritual discernment is a gift of being able to separate divine truth from false error. Indeed, the word of God in 1 Thessalonians 5 and 21, Paul tells these people to 'Prove all things'. Everything that comes across your path, Paul is saying, 'Prove them, see what they are, see if they hold any water, see if they're the 'Real McCoy' - Prove all things and hold fast that which is good. Abstain', he says, 'from all appearance of evil'. And I believe that today people would love to drop that little word 'appearance' out and say 'As long as you're not sinning the sin, it doesn't matter what people think' - but that's not what the word of God says, the word of God says that we are to go out of our way, we're to go the extra mile, to abstain from the appearance - the appearance of evil.

We need today, more than ever, we need to examine everything carefully. And I know how hard it is when, as young people and as older people, we are faced with a barrage of teaching. Different doctrines, different interpretations on this, that and the other - different ways of looking at the Bible, or practical ways of living out the Bible - and we look to ourselves, and we look to one another, and say, 'How can we make our minds up?'. We are faced with the world, and the world would love to push us into its mould, wouldn't it? It would just love us to be like it and then, when we become more like it, it points the finger to say, 'Well, there's no difference between you and me!'. We're faced with our own flesh. We're faced with the things that sometimes we want to introduce to the church of Jesus Christ - and we only want to do it, if the truth be told, to titillate our senses. And then we're faced with the arch-enemy, the devil. And you better believe it, that he is not interested in the world outside, because he has them! He's not interested in the millions that bow to idols - and Peter says they bow to demons! He's not interested in them, but Satan and all his hordes are putting all their energy, all their effort, to break down the church of Jesus Christ and to water down her Gospel. Lensky, the scholar, said this: 'The worst forms of wickedness consist of perversions of the truth'. You might think it's drink, or drugs - those are bad things, and they're sinful, but listen - listen to what he says: 'The worst forms of wickedness consist of perversions of the truth'. The worst wickedness you could get, could be dressed up in a collar and a cassock! Twisting the truth of the word of God. He says, 'Spiritual lies, although today many look upon these forms with indifference and regard them as harmless'. How many times have you heard the expression within the church of Jesus Christ: 'Live and let live. It's only a matter of personal taste. Tolerate these people, tolerate their actions, even tolerate their teachings. Don't criticise it even if it is against the word of God?'. If the truth be told, many in today's churches are indifferent about separating divine truth from error. They're indifferent about discernment because they lack spiritual discernment.

When was the last time you heard spiritual discernment talked about? Is that not a sign of the lack of it in the church of Jesus Christ? I was speaking to a Pastor recently, and this Pastor was mourning the fact that people in his own church, they had ceased from sitting down with one another and discussing the word of God. I've talked to those in Bible colleges who lament the fact that no longer do young men sit and debate the issues of the word of God - no longer do they strive, and flick through the word of God - there is an attitude of 'Live and let live, these things don't really matter'. I quoted to you last week about another Pastor, a young man came up to him one day and said to him, 'Listen, I don't believe in what you believe in, but at least you stand for something'. And listen, believers today, in these days that we live in as Christians, as soldiers, militant followers of Christ - if we don't stand for something we'll fall for everything!

The first thing I want to warn against is worldly values. Worldly values or a lack of doctrine. Now this can happen when theological or biblical terms are used loosely, or wrongly - when people use phrases, or address members of the Godhead in a wrong way, or talk about salvation in a wrong way, or the doctrines of the second coming, or the various aspects of the word of God in a wrong way - what happens? Error comes in. Confusion comes in. The word of God teaches that God is not the author of confusion, so if He is not the author, who is the author? You don't need to guess. To dilute doctrine has conditioned many people today to desire only what will make us feel good, make us feel comfortable and satisfy us. And we have evolved, at times, into a 'sound-bite religion' - where we don't want too much to think about, but listen, if we are to grapple and find out who God is, we can only do it through the revelation that God has given to us of Himself, and that's His word. And we only find God - I remember years ago, I used to pray that God would reveal Himself to me, that, almost, I would get a vision of God, that I would go into a deeper level with God - I still pray that, but how foolish I was to forget that God had already given to me His revelation! And the way I was to find Him, the way I was to know Him better, was to grapple with the deep truths of the word of God.

But you might say, 'Well, David that's OK, but doctrine divides. Doctrine divides - if you don't take a clarion call of a doctrine then you'll be united with everyone else!'. That's true, that is true, doctrine does divide - but

let me say to you this morning that if you lay truth aside, if you lay doctrine aside and remain silent for fear of man, for fear of opposition, all opposition to the Gospel will disappear but so will truth, holiness and - listen! - God will disappear. How many churches in our land, today, have their graveyards inside because God has disappeared? I was reading an article this week - and I don't know whether you want to take it or not, but I'll say it to you anyway - this article was suggesting that churches round about, churches anywhere, even across the world, churches who have rejected truth outright and become apostate, churches that have fallen away, never, ever come back. I don't know whether that's true, or whether you can generalise in such a way - but if you think about it, and I've thought about it, of all the churches that I know that have fallen to the dogs, denied the Gospel that has been given to them - and where are they today? Nowhere.

Jude gives us an exhortation in verses 3 and 4: 'Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and' - listen - 'and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend' - fight - 'for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints'. Not the faith that is a new faith now, but the old faith that is the historical Christian, biblical faith, based on the word of God. 'For there are certain men', he says, 'crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ'. Beware of worldly values that say doctrine is not important.

Secondly, beware of worldly thinking. Relativistic thinking - do you know what that is? Relative, everything's relative. It doesn't really matter, there are no absolutes, there's no right and wrong - 'You can't say that, everyone has their own right and wrong'. Someone perhaps thinks something is wrong, but the other person thinks it's OK and they can live with it, and it suits their lifestyle - relative thinking. And relative thinking has infiltrated the church, and the church today is developing a relativistic mind - and rather than seeing things as right and wrong, rather than seeing things as black and white, true and false it prefers to see things in an infinite shade of grey. Sure don't you know, so many grey areas! Now I'm not saying that there are no grey areas, and I'm not saying that everything is black and white, because everything is not black and white - but somehow, I fear, that today there is too much grey. But rather, Psalm 1 and verse 1 tells us something else, which is not relative thinking, it says: 'Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly' - now that implies something. Sometimes people think we're stupid! That implies that a man must know what is the way of the ungodly in order not to walk in it! Does God ask us to walk in a certain path and not tell us how to recognise that path? 'Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight, by day and by night, is not in philosophy, not in education, not in fashion, but in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night'.

Firstly: worldly values; secondly: relative thinking - and, thirdly, I want to warn you about worldly methods and worldly tactics. The church has spawned a preoccupation with image and influence. And on many occasions - now there's nothing wrong with advertising meetings and so forth, don't get me wrong - but on many occasions a business mentality has come upon us. John MacArthur writes, and I want you to hear this: 'Churches today believe they must win the lost by winning their favour. It no longer teaches the biblical doctrines of sin, hell, repentance or the cross - why? Because those would offend the lost and make them feel uncomfortable. Instead, it markets itself as a benevolent, non-threatening agency whose primary goal is to achieve prestige, popularity and intellectual acceptance among the lost. Its premise' - the one thing it wants to do, and beware that we do not do this - 'is to say this: If they like us, they'll like our Jesus'. Sometimes we get it the wrong way round, don't we? 'If they like us, they'll like our Jesus' - but listen, Christ and God does not need us to commend people to His Son! If we just present His Son in uncompromising zeal, and truth, and purity, and all that He said - the good with the bad - people will be drawn to Christ.

1 Corinthians chapter 4 that we read from - two chapters after it in verse 10, says this - and people are running around trying to find intellectual esteem and to be recognised in ways, and don't get me wrong I'm

not against intellectualism - but if we substitute the carnal and the fleshly for the spiritual, the church will die! 'We are fools', he says in 1 Corinthians 4 and verse 10, 'We are fools' - not professors! - 'fools for Christ, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised'. Why were they despised? Because they were uncompromising! Because when they preached in the open air of Christ, people laughed at them and spat at them! It's great, isn't it, to be like our Lord who, it's said of Him, that He was a man of no reputation. And what are men running around today trying to do? Get a reputation, be respectable in the eyes of church or state - but Christ was of no reputation and church and state rejected Him! But we are fools, 'Even unto this present hour we both hunger', he says in verse 11, 'and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we entreat: we are made' - listen - 'as the filth of the world!' We are the filth of the world for Christ! Is that the way we think of ourselves? Sometimes I wonder if Christians today read the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. For in John 15 and verse 18, he says these words: 'If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also'. Would we rather suffer the reproach of Christ, or would we suffer the reputation of men?

We need to beware of worldly values, we need beware of worldly thinking and worldly methods - worldly interpretation is the fourth thing we need to beware. Failing to interpret and read the word of God accurately - being indifferent to God's word, not caring about God's word. You know, the reading and the study of the word of God is a science! It is an exact science, it's not something that is to be done willy-nilly and off the top of the head! It is something that is to be taken care in, there is to be precision, there is a skill - and listen: you as believers, you need to learn the word of God! You need to read the word of God, you need to listen to good, sound preachers of the word of God, and read doctrinal books about the word of God - you need to do it! John MacArthur coined a phrase that: 'Today is a generation of baby Christians'. You know, you set the child down on the floor and it's crawling around and suddenly there's a coin - an old dirty coin - lying on the floor and he picks it up - and what does he do? Into the mouth! It's not edible, sure it's not? It'll do him no good - and we have Christians, all across our land today, all across the world, who are baby Christians - no matter what it is they lift it and stick it into their mouths and feed upon it for spiritual food, even if it's not helpful! But what does the apostle say? 'Oh! That we would go on, to cease to be babes and feeding on the milk - and go on to the meat of the word of God!' - and that's for everyone! Some Christians with stunted growth, they believe that they have to feed on the milk for all of their Christian life - that's not the way it works! You go on to the meat.

But worldly discipline, we need to remember that the church of Jesus Christ, fifthly, it could have taken in worldly discipline. You see in Matthew's gospel and chapter 18, we read about the sleeping giant of the modern church today - and that is church discipline. It's a sleeping giant! It seems to never happen! Now, church discipline is not for kicking people out, it's meant to be for bringing people back in again who have fallen into sin, or who are not the way they ought to be. But listen, it must be done! Because church discipline, as Christ laid down, when you have something against your brother how many of you ever go to him and sort it out? That's how little church discipline there is. But without church discipline, the world outside gets a travesty of a picture of the church of Jesus Christ - because it's meant to be a body of holiness. That holiness can only be safeguarded if we have discipline in our lives and in our churches.

How do we discern? I want to leave you with this, five short ways of discerning. Write them down if you wish. The first thing is: to want it - do you want to discern? Sometimes, you know, I ask the Lord to forgive me for my sins and I repent - I tell Him I'm repenting - but deep down in my soul I know that tomorrow, at the same time, the same place, I'm going to be doing the same thing. Is that your relationship to discernment? You know it's needed, but you think it's not needed for the church today, 'We don't really need that, and

there's enough people running about with doctrine' - well, quite frankly, I wish there were a lot more running about with doctrine today. Do you want - are you humble enough to show that you maybe don't have it, and that you need it, or you need to look to someone who has it and seek their guidance?

Secondly, you need to ask for it. You need to desire it first of all, but you need to pray for it and ask God, like in 1 Kings 3 and verse 9 - where Solomon prayed to the Lord for wisdom, and he said: 'Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?'. Now I wonder, when he says 'this thy so great people' is he really talking about the numbers? Or is he talking about the great problems that they had? The apostle exhorts us to judge all things. The other apostle exhorts us to test the spirits, all of the spirits, to see if they are of the Spirit of God.

But thirdly - you can want it, you ask for it - but you need to observe it. You can observe it in other people, because there are people who are good at this, discerning spiritual things. There are people who have the spiritual gift, that we read about weeks ago, of discernment. They think carefully, they think analytically - and what we can do is search the Scriptures and take their example. Fourthly, follow the Holy Spirit. For in 1 Corinthians that we're reading and chapter 2 in verses 1 to 16 - you can read it all when you get home - it talks about how we need to follow the Spirit's guidance when we are discerning. And we follow His guidance, fifthly, through knowing the word of God. This never ceases to amaze me, and I finish with this: that when Paul, Paul went to Berea - listen! Paul the apostle, Paul! If he was preaching here this morning, it would be great - I would be sitting with my notebook taking everything down as if it was the word of God, that's what we'd do! Yet these Bereans, in Acts chapter 17, it says that: 'they searched diligently the Scriptures to see if these things were so'. And for those Bereans even the apostle, his word wasn't strong enough - the only word that mattered was the word of God.

Can I leave you with one verse? 'Study' - yes, that's right, Paul said it to Timothy [in] chapter 2 of 2 Timothy verse 15 - 'Study' - all of you! - 'Study!'. You might say, 'Well I don't study, I can't study!'. It doesn't say there's an option, it says: 'Everybody who is a believer, study to show thyself approved unto God'. I have written in my Bible - and it's in my other Bible - a little saying that basically says: 'Test all things by the word of God. Weigh all ministers, all doctrines, all colleges, all churches, all books, all theories - weigh them all by the weight of the word of God'. And listen, when we do that we will never, like Belshazzar, be weighed and found wanting.

Let us pray: Our Father, may the mind of Christ our Saviour live in us from day-to-day, and may the word of God dwell richly in our hearts from hour to hour. Father, let Christ and His word be our meat and our drink, our downsitting and our uprising, our breath, our blood - and may, when our skin is opened, our blood be seen to be bibline. Lord, fill us, help us to read, learn, and eat and inwardly digest the word of God that it may become part of us. Father we pray, in these days of increasing darkness, in these days when, Father, people are double minded and unstable in all their ways - we pray, Father, that as the apostle James exhorted us, that those who ask for wisdom that You will freely give it to them. Father, we ask for that wisdom, we ask, in a day of darkness, for discernment that we may follow the path of light - not in a self-righteous, legalistic, proud way, but in a way that others may look upon us and see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven. Bless us now, and help us, Father, as we wait upon You now around the table of the Lord, in Jesus name. Amen.

Don't miss other booklets of sermons preached by Pastor David Legge, all available free of charge from



*www.preachtheword.com
info@preachtheword.com*