

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Survival Strategy for Apostate Times, Part 1

Scripture: Jude 17-19

Code: 65-12

We come now to the study of the Word of God and back to the epistle of Jude. And we find ourselves coming to verses 17 to 25 and there's definitely a turning point here. You will notice, if you go back, that starting in verse 4 we are introduced to certain persons who have crept in unnoticed, ungodly persons who turned the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ. These are the apostates, the defectors from the faith. They're not outside the church, they have crept in unnoticed. And Jude goes on to tell us about them. They are identified in verse 8, "These men." Verse 10, "These men." Verse 11, "They," and then again, "they." And then verse 12, "These men." And then verse 14, "These." Then verse 16, "These." And then all of a sudden, verse 17, "But you..." And here we come to a significant change in the direction of the writer. "But you," verse 17, one more comment on "these" in verse 19, and back to "but you" in verse 20.

This part of the epistle is addressed to us about how to survive in times of apostasy. Before we get into the text itself, when the church was born at Pentecost, the new life of the church was obviously exhilarating. It was pure. It was powerful. It was productive. They were devoted to prayer and worship and the apostles' doctrine. And they gathered every day to engage in all of those things including generosity with one another in patterns of giving. The result was a powerful evangelistic impact in those early days and the church grew in just a few weeks from the three thousand on Pentecost to an excess of twenty-thousand people embracing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. And, of course, the early chapters of the book of Acts chronicle the transforming days of the dawning of the church, the morning of the church when the Son of righteousness lit up its sky. The church was filled with truth, filled with faith, filled with love, filled with generosity, filled with passion for the lost, filled with hope. And all of that was influenced by the teaching and the preaching and the writing of the Apostles of Jesus Christ and those associated with them.

But even in the purity of those infant days when the passion was high and the truth prevailed and people were exhilarated in their new-found life. Even in those early days, the Apostles were given by the Holy Spirit the privilege of looking into the future and the not to distant future at that. And in looking into the future, the Holy Spirit allowed them to see something frightening, something terrifying, something mystifying, something frankly unbelievable. And what did the Holy Spirit show them and what did they prophesy? That Jesus would return? Yes. That the world would one day be destroyed? Yes. That the universe would melt in a basically an atomic holocaust? Yes. That sinners would finally be judged? Yes. They looked into the future and were given the privilege to see that. That believers would be raptured? Yes. That they would be taken to glory? Yes. That they would be rewarded? Yes. That there would be a messianic kingdom of glory and Christ would reign in it on the earth? Yes. That

there would eventually be a new heaven and a new earth? Yes. That the gospel would even be preached to the ends of the earth? Yes. That the church would grow and flourish? Yes. The Apostles preached about that, wrote about that, reminded them of the words of Jesus about many of those same issues.

But in addition to all of that, there was one rather unthinkable, unimaginable, bizarre and strange reality that the Apostles predicted and that was that the church would defect from the truth. That it would become perverted in its understanding of Scripture. That it would abandon the gospel and abandon Christ. Not all the church, but some. And it would effect whole congregations in the euphoria of those powerful days, days of miracles, days of proclaiming the gospel fearlessly and being persecuted for it, days of martyrdom, days of evangelism, days of turning the world upside down, days of living in the glow and the glory of transformed lives, days of worship, days of prayer. It must have seemed absolutely bizarre that there was coming a time when people who proclaimed Christ would defect. But it was true.

And that brings us to our text, verse 17. "But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ that they were saying to you in the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts. These are the ones who cause division, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit."

That had to be the biggest prophetic shock of all predictions about the future that were deposited upon the ears and the minds of the early church. Unimaginable that people would defect from the glory of this truth. But that's what the Apostles said. They will go so far as to mock it and scoff and pursue their own ungodly lusts. And was talking about inside the church, at least the visible church. Twenty-five years after Jude wrote this and Jude wrote his epistle just months, or at the most years or so after Peter wrote 2 Peter, but 25 years after Jude wrote, the Lord gave letters to the Apostle John on the island of Patmos. Those letters are included in the book of Revelation in chapters 2 and 3. And in the letters that the Lord sends through John to the seven churches of Asia Minor, we learn that the prophecies of the Apostles had already come to pass before they were out of the first century. Jude writes somewhere before 70 A.D. It's somewhere in the early nineties, as I said, about 25 years later that John receives letters from the Lord Himself to the churches of Asia Minor, five of those churches have already begun to fill the prophecy of perversion, corruption, and apostasy. The Ephesian church has left its first love. The church at Pergamos is full of corruption, immorality and heresy. The church at Thyatira is so wicked that the Lord threatens to kill some of them. The Sardis church is totally dead, murdered by apostates who defected from the church and from the truth. And then there is that famous Laodicean church that makes the Lord so sick, so nauseous that He will vomit them out of His mouth. And it's still the first century. It wasn't long, was it? It wasn't long until the story of the church became dark, the story of the church became gloomy and the smell of death is present And foreboding doom lurks in the air around the church.

Between the writing of Jude, of course, and the writing of John and even earlier than Jude is the writing of Paul, and Paul is already aware of the potential danger of defection and so in his epistles he warns and he warns and he warns and he calls them to sound doctrine. And depending on which

epistle you're reading, the doctrinal issues that they faced are addressed. Still in spite of the warnings of the Lord Himself about false teachers, in spite of the warnings of the Apostle Paul, in spite of the warnings and the prophecies of Peter, in spite of the warnings and the fulfillments indicated by Jude, the church continued to defect. And it was prophecy that came to pass. The apostasy came and it came fast and the church was corrupted before it ever got out of the first century. And since that time it has continued its defection in every generation.

Oh, there has always been a remnant. There has always been a core of the true believers. But always they have been earnestly contending for the once-for-all-delivered-to-the-saints faith. They've always been, we've always been engaged in a war. And that's why I've told you all along, if you look at verse 3 that Jude's epistle is a call to arms, appealing to us to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. The body of truth that constitutes the Christian gospel is in every generation under assault, listen to me, inside the church...inside the visible church. Faithful Christians have always been soldiers, they've always been warriors, they've always been battlers and we have always understood that the enemy is within.

Now Jude has presented to us the picture of apostates. He's given us their nature, their history, their characteristics. He's drawn out examples from the past. He's warned all of us about the insidious infiltration, even to the degree that they gather around the Lord's table with us. Verse 12 calls them hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear. So we are, in a word, as you've been learning, surrounded by them. They're everywhere inside the church. There are defectors and apostates outside the church, that's not the ones that Jude is concerned about. Those who abandon the Christian faith who mock Christ openly and deny Him openly and who turn their backs and leave the church are not a threat. It is the ones that stay that are the direst danger to us.

So here we are in the middle of it all. And the question that comes at the end of this letter is, "How do we contend for the truth? How do we preserve the truth? How do we protect the church and the people that are coming to the church desiring to know the truth? How do we protect ourselves? How do we survive in increasingly apostate times? And Paul, of course, told Timothy at the end of his life that evil men will grow worse and worse. And Paul indicated in his letter to the Thessalonians that the apostasy would escalate as you got closer to the end. How do we survive? How do we protect the truth? How do we engage in a triumphant battle in the midst of apostasy?

Jude's answer comes to us in four necessary elements...four. There are four things he tells us that will arm us for this battle. Number one is to remember. Number two is to remain. Number three is to reach out. And number four is to rest. As we go through these final verses, all of these will unfold for us.

How to survive triumphantly in a time of apostasy? First of all, remember. And I take you back to the passage that I read, verses 17 and 18, "But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ that they were saying to you, In the last time there shall be mockers following after their own ungodly lusts." And he's talking about inside the church, those who actually mock the truth and get away with it because of their subtlety. In other words, what he is saying is, "Remember that you were told it would be this way." That is very, very

important. Why? Why would the Lord bother to make such a prophecy known to us? Why would the Lord bother to inform the apostles about this so that they could tell us about it? The obvious answer is so that when it happens we are not...what?...surprised. As if something went wrong, you ought to remember nothing is happening that hasn't already happened.

He hints at this back in verse 5, "I desire to remind you though you know all things once for all that the Lord after saving a people out of the land of Egypt subsequently destroyed those who did not believe and..." And he goes on about the angels who didn't keep their first estate. Then he goes on to describe Sodom and Gomorrah. He says, "I have already reminded you of apostasy in the past, you know about that, you know about those in Israel led out of Egypt who subsequently defected and were destroyed because they turned on the very God who had delivered them. You know about the angels who were in the holy presence of God and defected and abandoned and are placed under judgment, darkness awaits them in that great day. You know about Sodom and Gomorrah and how they indulged in gross immorality and are set for undergoing the punishment of eternal fire into which they have already entered. So you know that apostasy isn't anything new. It was there in the past, it's always been there. And it will be there in the future. Don't be surprised. This is how it is to be."

On the one hand, while that seems discomfoting, it is really comfoting. On the one hand while it seems discouraging, it is really encouraging. On the one hand while it seems shocking, it is not shocking at all. And I almost feel myself sounding like an echo tonight rather than a voice because so much of what Jude is emphasizing in this text we have been covering in the last two morning services in the eleventh chapter of Luke. False teachers are everywhere all the time. Why would we be surprised that they would show up? Apostasy has always been present. It was present in Israel after God's greatest deliverance. It was present in heaven in the very throne room of God. Why would we expect the church would somehow escape such defection?

Jude, by the way, is by affirming that what they are seeing in the apostasy that's already visible is what was prophesied, he is by that affirming the inspiration and authority of Scripture. You can trust what the Scripture says, even when it predicts apostasy. And so, for the second time he says you ought to remember. I told you to remember back in verse 5 what happened in the past. And now I'm telling you to remember what was told was going to happen in the future.

You know, any good teacher knows how important this is. I'm often reminded of what Peter wrote because Peter understood the importance of remembering. In 2 Peter chapter 1 Peter writes in verse 12, "Therefore I shall always be ready to remind you of these things even though you already know them and have been established in the truth which is present with you. And I consider it right as long as I am in this earthly dwelling to stir you up by way of remembrance." In other words, he says until I lay down my earthly dwelling, until I die I will remind you. So verse 15, "That at any time after my departure you may be able to call these things to remembrance." It's very, very important to be reminded and it's important to be reminded of things that have been predicted so that when they come we're not surprised. And so, the first place we have to start is with remembering.

I tell you, as a teacher of the Word of God who has been at this a long, long time, who has fought the battle on all kinds of fronts, I and all those around me and those who are a part of this church and

many churches that stand with us and stand with the truth, we have been engaged in the battle for a long, long time. And I from time to time wonder why it has to be this hard. I wonder why it has to be this way. And then I remembered, this is the way God said it would be. And, frankly, I'm comforted in that. If He had not said so, I would wonder whether somebody had knocked Him off the throne, whether or not there had been another coup in heaven, only this one was successful and God had been dethroned. I would feel like Isaiah in the fifth chapter of Isaiah after God gives him all these horrible curses on Israel and he's scratching his prophetic head and wondering what is going on. God is talking all about judgment and he's wondering about promises and covenants and God is telling him how much destruction He's going to bring and how much defection there is in Israel and how much apostasy and how much sin. And in the sixth chapter of Isaiah, Isaiah goes to the temple and I'm quite sure he went there to pour out his soul to God to be sure that God was still on the throne. And as he goes into the temple, he's given a vision and immediately as the vision opens in chapter 6 verse 1, he sees the Lord high and lifted up, seated upon the throne. And that was amazing to him, that was a tremendous moment of comfort because the way things looked, it was as if somebody had dethroned God. His people were going the opposite direction from what the prophet wanted and from what he knew God wanted. Was God still in charge? Answer, absolutely yes. And here we are buoyed up, we are encouraged, we are held together by the fact that apostasy was predicted.

Notice then back in verse 17, "The words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." He's going back to the apostles of Christ and those associated with them who predicted apostasy. Now I'm not going to take time to go through all of the texts that do that. I..I will leave that to you, I'll just mention some. The first one to predict apostasy was the Lord Himself in Matthew chapter 24. He said, "As time goes forward there will be many false prophets and false Christs." But there are many other predictions about false teachers and false prophets. Most notably, the apostle Paul gives us one that I think is sort of a standard insight that we can go back to as a significant illustration of this kind of warning. Second Corinthians chapter 11 and we read this in verse 13, "Such men are false apostles, deceitful workers disguising themselves as apostles of Christ and no wonder, for even Satan himself disguises himself as an angel of light, therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness whose end shall be according to their deeds." Now there is the apostle Paul warning the Corinthian church about false teachers who are emissaries of Satan disguised as servants of Jesus Christ.

In the book of Colossians we are warned again about false teachers who come, verse 16 of chapter 2, and judge us in regard to food or drink or a festival or new moon or Sabbath day, Judaizers. And he goes on to talk about those who would defraud us of our prize by delighting in self-abasement in the worship of angels and taking stands on visions they've seen, inflated without cause by their fleshly minds. Those who are committed to the elementary principles of the world, the external elements of religion and not to Christ.

The apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians warns about those who come with flattering speech on a pretext of truth. And in 2 Thessalonians we are warned that there is coming a mystery of lawlessness which is already at work. There is coming in the future an apostasy and an apostate leader we come to

know as the Antichrist himself. In 1 Timothy chapter 4 Timothy explicitly says because the Spirit explicitly says that in the later times, that's the time since the coming of the Messiah, even to the end, some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits, doctrines of demons and hypocritical liars.

At the end of 1 Timothy there is even more warning. "O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called knowledge, some have professed and gone astray from the faith." In 2 Timothy chapter 3, "In the last days, difficult times will come." Why? "Because corrupters of the truth will come and they will, in chapter 4, tickle people's ears and turn them away from the truth and turn them to myths. And so it goes.

And Peter writes about them in 2 Peter chapter 2 which is almost a direct parallel to Jude, "False prophets arose in the past and there will be false teachers among you," 2 Peter 2:1, "who will secretly introduce damning, or destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction on themselves, many will follow their sensuality and because of them the way of truth will be maligned." And then Peter goes on to say, "In their greed they will exploit you with false words and their judgment from long ago is not idle and their destruction is not asleep." And Jude follows up Peter's warnings. And later on, 20 or 25 years later, when John writes, John keeps up the warnings. First John 2:19, "They went out from us, they were not of us. If they had been of us they would have remained with us, they went out in order that it might be shown they are not all of us, defectors." Chapter 4 of 1 John, verse 1, "Do not believe every spirit, test the spirits to see whether they're from God because many false prophets have gone out into the world. Second John, "Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ, this is deceiver and Antichrist." I mean all the writers warn us, all of them. And back to our text in Jude, "Remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ that they were saying, imperfect tense verb, meaning many of them on many occasions were saying, in the last time there shall be mockers following after their own ungodly lusts." No surprise at all. And Jude is particularly here focusing on 2 Peter because that's basically exactly what 2 Peter said in 2 Peter 3:3, "Knowing this first of all that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts." It's very close to a quote. But while he's quoting Peter, he is saying that all the apostles have been telling us this, it should be to us no surprise.

Peter uses the word mocker and Jude uses the word mocker in verse 18. And the word is only in those two verses in the New Testament, a clear indication here that Jude is quoting Peter. Since Peter is an apostle and Jude is not, that's one of the reasons we conclude that Peter wrote the second epistle before Jude. Jude is quoting this from Peter calling him an apostle.

But Peter wasn't the only one who said this. The message was everywhere and we know that because he says you ought to remember the words spoken by the apostles, so that we know that one of the elements of all the apostolic preaching summed up in what Peter said but an element in all of it was the coming apostasy. And they are mockers, they are scoffers. Back in verse 10 it describes their mocking, scoffing, they revile the things which they do not understand and the things which they know

by instinct, like unreasoning animals. By these things they are destroyed. They mock what they can't comprehend. They treat the truth with scorn. They treat the truth with derision. But it's truth they once professed and still profess, which makes them so dangerous.

Now notice that in verse 17 it says that we are to remember these words and summing them up we are told, "In the last time." Now again, that's directly out of Peter but that's very much what the apostle Paul said and it's very much what John will say later. Referring to the last time leads us into a very technical phrase. In the last time is a very specific expression referring to the period from Messiah's first coming, till His second. We are in the last times. This kind of language appears in the second chapter of Acts. It appears throughout the epistles. Paul uses it 2 Timothy 3:1. James uses it, chapter 5 verse 3. Peter uses it, 1 Peter 1:5 and 20. John uses it, 1 John 2:18. It even appears in Hebrews 9:26, as well as very familiar words, Hebrews 1, "God after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways has in these last days spoken to us in His Son." The last days began when God spoke through His Son, the last days began when His Son came. And so the prophecy is that in the last time and my little children, writes John, it is the last time, there will be apostasy. And the mockers and the scoffers are always driven by the same thing, following after their own ungodly lusts.

Now we've been learning all about that already, back to verse 4. They are ungodly persons who basically are driven by licentiousness. And also down in verse 15, "They are ungodly who do ungodly deeds in an ungodly way." And verse 16, "They follow after their own lusts." I mean, the bottom line is that if you parade yourself as some religious person, you parade yourself as a Christian teacher or preacher or whatever, but your heart has never been changed, then all there is in you is despicable and wicked passion and ungodly desire. That is all they are capable of. Peter says they mock the Second Coming. In 2 Peter chapter 3 Peter says, "These mockers that come in the last days mock the Second Coming." Here Jude says they mock the Law of God. They mock the Law of God and thus they mock the Second Coming, there is a real connection there. Do you know why people don't want to acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ? Because connected with the coming of Jesus Christ is...what?...judgment. And those who have mocked the Law of God and been driven by their ungodly lusts will certainly mock the Second Coming. They don't want any thought of having to give an account for their sins to a holy God.

So we're surrounded with these mockers. They mock the truth. They live by lust. They have no capacity for holiness. They give free reign to their own passions because they cannot do anything else. You can tell a false prophet if you can get close enough and see their lives, no holiness, only passion, lust and evil desire. They are, I may step on some toes here, more likely to preach prosperity than holiness. In fact, they are not likely to preach holiness at all. But they are very likely to preach prosperity which is a dead giveaway of the fact that they are driven by their own...what?...lusts.

You know, I said this a long time ago. Listen to a preacher and you'll know what's in his heart. It's that simple. They want to talk of material prosperity, they want to talk of freedom in Christ. They want to talk of personal satisfaction and fulfillment. And all of that is simply their inability to cover their own self-indulgence. The prosperity gospel, dear friends, is a form of justified lust that mocks those who

truly hunger for righteousness. As we learned last week in Luke 11, false leaders are wicked on the inside, caught up only in what is symbolic, simplistic, secondary, sinful and devoted to elevating their own status and they mock the truth, whether they do it overtly or covertly, they mock the truth and they live by lust. So we're not surprised when we find some horrific scandals behind the scenes, are we? We're not surprised that they are materialists to the extreme. We're not surprised that they live their lives to indulge their personal desires and know no limits cause that's what we're told will be the case.

Now Jude has more to say about these apostates whose arrival the apostles promised. Just to take you to verse 19 and then we'll have to finish. These are the ones, and he has one more "these" in here, one more reflection on them, "These are the ones who cause divisions," it says in the NAS, "worldly minded, devoid of the Spirit." This is so interesting. They always are the ones that claim to have the Spirit and think anybody who doesn't agree with him causes the divisions. These are the ones who cause divisions.

Now I want to talk about that because that's a very elusive idea there if you don't get down to the Greek word. It is true, apostates always cause divisions in the church because there will always be a division between truth and error, right? So they are divisive, no question...no question. But there's more here than just the effect. There is the essence of their particular pattern. The verb here, *aphorizo*, it means, it's only here, it's what we call *hapax legomena*, this is the only time it's ever used, it means to make a distinction. Okay? It's not so much that they create division, they do that. That's the effect of false teaching, the truth and lies are separate. But it's the idea that they make distinctions. To put it simply, they believe they're superior. They believe they're above and beyond. They're like the Pharisees. And I'm sure if they showed up at the love feast, as it says in verse 12, they sat together and didn't mingle with the riff raff. And they despised anyone in the church who had authority. Verse 8 says they reject authority. I'm pretty sure they attach themselves also to the rich. Verse 16, "They flattered people for the sake of gaining an advantage." They were arrogant. Apostates always are. They believe they have arrived at the truth. And if they're successful at duping people, it just feeds their egotism. They are the elite. Remember from the seventh chapter of John the text I read you this morning how the Pharisee says, "None of us, of course, believes in Jesus, only the stupid people who don't know the Law." They're condescending. They make a separation between themselves and everybody else. They had their own standards, their own set of rules. You remember I told you the derivation of the word Pharisee comes from the Hebrew word which means to separate, people who divide themselves off. And here Jude designates them as the very same. They separate themselves. They think they're at an elevated level. This is sort of like the Gnostics that came along later. They scoff at the simpletons in the church. They scoff at those who take the Word of God at face value and endeavor to obey it. They condemn true believers as non-intellectual, or lacking in faith, not being elevated. Maybe Diotrefes was one of those. Remember him in 3 John verse 9 who loved to have...what?...preeminence. Sure they cause division, but more than that, they have an elevated opinion of themselves, they see themselves as the elite. And the more successful they are at their deception, the more self-confident they become in their superiority and they become

so conceited and so superior in their own minds as to, in my mind, go over the top with their self-promotion.

Not only that, they're worldly minded. That's an interesting translation. I really don't know what they were thinking about in the committee when they chose that hyphenated word, worldly-minded, to describe the Greek term *psuchikos*. *Psuche* is soul. The word literally means they are sensual, they are soulish. To the Greeks it was the idea of they were physical, everything was about the *psuche*. And animals have *psuche*, and plants have *psuche*. Anything and everything that lives and breathes and is physical is *psuche*. They were sensual and soulish. *Pneuma*, very different word, *pneuma* is the word in the Greek for spirit and this belongs to man and man alone. He is able to reason. He is able to have relationships. He is able to communicate. He has self-consciousness and he can know God. The apostates are not *pneuma*, they are *psuche*. They are not *pneumatikos* we could say, of the spirit, they are *psuchikos*, of the sensual. And so you see them while claiming to be transcendental, claiming to see God, know God, talk with God, get these insights and get this revelation from God because they're so elevated above all of us. God talks with them, speaks with them, gives them private messages and private meetings with them. They have the superior knowledge, the superior insight. And the truth of the matter is, God isn't doing anything with them because the last comment on them is they are devoid of the Spirit. They are devoid of the Spirit. They are physically alive. They are spiritually dead. They are sensual, they are not spiritual. I mean, that's a hard sell. Take a group of false teachers, line them all up and tell them you don't know God, you don't know the truth, you don't have life and you can't lead anybody into the truth and you're not spiritual, you're not elevated. You have no spiritual life. The truth is you are sensual and soulish and empty of the Holy Spirit all together. In a word, you are a fraud, you are a fake. And that's the truth. And they parade themselves around as if they are some kind of sanctified aristocracy, the elite, the elevated, the people with the secret knowledge and the private messages from God and the deeper insights into Scripture. They are void of the Spirit.

Flesh dominated, sensual, religious frauds, they parade their religion, they parade their spirituality, they offer themselves as spokesman for God, spokesman for Christ and interpreters of the Bible. But they are not, but millions follow their teaching. They may pastor churches. They may head denominations. They may head movements. They may head councils, conventions, schools. They may be world religious leaders. They may be television heroes to many. They think they're the spiritually elite and so do the people that follow them. They are frauds dominated by lust, sensuality and void of the Holy Spirit. And their religion is a twisted kind of Christianity that accommodates their hypocrisy.

So, our first response then to the surrounding world of apostates is to remember, the apostle said they were coming and gave us discernable characteristics by which to identify them. When you wonder what's going on with Christianity, when you wonder how they could have commandeered Christianity in the way they have, remember the words of the apostles. They said it would be so. Two more things and we'll look at those next time.

Lord, we know that these things are clearly revealed in Your Word and to all of us who by the gift of the Holy Spirit understand how clear the Word is, we are stunned by the inability of people to see it. Certainly we understand the false teachers can't see it, but how many Christians are beguiled and led astray by these false teachers when the Word is so clear? May Your people be faithful to Your truth. May there be a great surge in interest in the Word of God. And even though we know this is to be so, apostasy is prophesied, may Your Word triumph and may Your church and this church go forth with power and boldness to earnestly contend for the truth. Thank You for this high calling. We accept the responsibility and desire Your Spirit to make us faithful. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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