

Contend Earnestly For the Faith Which Was Once For All Handed Down to the Saints

An Expository Study of the **Epistle of Jude**

Chapter 10- The Error of Balaam **Jude 11** 113 The Error of Balaam- Part 6

WOSM Friday 04/11/08

Welcome again my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing in our Journey through the Epistle of Jude and today I want to see what Jude meant when he pronounced an everlasting and eternal condemnation upon the heretics who bring in false doctrine and ungodly teaching into the House of God. So, let's read verse 11 of Jude again together:

Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

For several broadcasts now we have been going over the error of Balaam. The error of Balaam is covetousness; greed; and the lust for money. As I have said before, money in and of itself is not bad or wrong- it is the *love* of money- not simply money- that is the root of all evil. Money is a useful and necessary tool. We have to have money to live. We work and earn our money. We endeavor to accumulate and to save and to provide for our families. Most of those who listen to these broadcasts, give money to your Church and to other worthy causes.

All of that is good and fine and is a wonderful thing, but even though that is true- we cannot, and we must not ignore the fact that human beings are tempted greatly by money. Greed and covetousness and materialism lurks inside the flesh of fallen man. And to feed those lusts is to guarantee destruction. The promise of the increase of money- especially the *sudden* increase of money is almost always destructive to the human soul- and the Christian Church has a 2,000 year public and written track record of crying out against the sins that

money brings into our lives- until just recently. For some reason- I believe that it is part of the Great Falling Away that was promised in Scripture to occur in the last days- the modern Church is practically silent about the horrible sins of greed and covetousness and materialism- and that is not because we have matured past the need to warn people about these sins- no, this silence is caused by two things- so many ministers today are neck deep in materialism and greed and we no longer look at sin the same way that God does.

During my years as a Financial Planner, I personally witnessed the tragedy of the error of Balaam. I personally knew several people who were humble and gracious before their sudden accumulation of wealth. But the sudden and dramatic change in their financial condition was as intoxicating to them as crack or heroin is to an addict. These people became drunk with the rush that the increase of money provided for them and the wealth that suddenly dropped into their laps absolutely destroyed them.

Better that these people stayed poor than to be overrun with the effects that money brought to them. Better that they ate brown gravy and biscuits and served God than it was for them to become vain and arrogant and prideful and leave their first love and go back out into the world and serve the devil.

Beloved, faithful ministers have been warning God's people for 6,000 years about the bad and hurtful and evil effects that money can and oftentimes does bring to good and lovely people. Only in our lifetime has their voices been muffled by the false teachers who say that gain in godliness. I am often rebuked when I talk about the evil effects that money has on people by well meaning souls who tell me that ministers and churches and God's people need money in order to prove their spirituality. They tell me that money is a sign of God's favor and that the more that they get- the more in favor with God they are. Is that so?

One man even told me that the reason that he wanted to drive around in a Cadillac was not because he was vain in his own mind, no, that could never be, but he told me that God wanted to bless him so that he could prove that he was blessed by God so that the sinner will want what he has. I see, so driving a Cadillac is now the new tool for evangelism.

These people tell me that I am promoting poverty- which I am not. They tell me that God wants to bless them so what is wrong with being blessed? Nothing is wrong with being blessed. I preach and teach hard and strong that God does indeed want to bless His children. But God wants to bless His children within His own set parameters and for His own glory- not to build up the pride and arrogance of Man.

When blessings build up Man and light the fire of arrogance and pride and covetousness that hides in every soul and when money and blessings in any way promote or magnify the self of Man- then those so-called blessings are, in fact, the enemy of all that God wants to do in the heart and soul of that man and those so-called blessings are not blessings at all- they are curses and God didn't give them- the devil gave them- and they are not good they are real bad and they are ugly and wicked sins that capture and pollute the soul of man.

Now I realize that the modern Doctrine of Wealth and Prosperity promises big and great things for you. And I realize how good it feels to have lots of money and more and more possessions. I've been there and done that and I walked away from it.

I know what it is to get the feeling that you get when everything is going your way and you feel empowered by the rush of financial and material gain. It makes you happy; it makes you sing; it thrills you to your very soul. You feel so good; your flesh is empowered; your carnal mind is awakened; your dreams and ambitions are all just ahead.

But I also realize that the Bible is clear that most of all of that is a lie; and that it is false and that it is a diversion from the real purposes of God in your life and most all of that is very destructive to your spirit and that the very things that it promotes are the very things that God said were bad for you and destructive for you and that does not in any way bring glory to Him.

And I also realize that I am in the minority about this subject. I realize that many will misunderstand what I am saying about the Error of Balaam and think that I am promoting poverty or that I am just a glutton for pain and sorrow. Not in the least. That is not what I am saying at all.

But I do want to set the trumpet to my mouth and I do want to sound an alarm in God's holy mountain and I do want to blow the trumpet clearly to you today that whether you hear or whether you

forebear- you will know that the according to the teachings of the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of the living God, the overwhelming majority of the teachings that are going on today in the modern Church about money and wealth and prosperity and the accumulation of this world's goods is of the devil and it is sinful and it is wrong and it is the enemy of the Cross of Jesus Christ and it is causing Gods' people to sin and it is causing covetousness to look spiritual and to look attractive and it is damning souls into hell.

I have said for years that if the devil can't get you to backslide- he will get you to front slide. Lucifer doesn't care what he uses or who he uses- all he wants is for you to cease or even slow down your walk with God. All he wants is for the joy in your heart to die; the peace that passes all understanding to vanish; and the love that flows like a river to dry up.

The devil does not have to get you to go commit mass murder in order to win in your life- all that the devil has to do in your life or my life is to get us off the mark. All he has to do is capture your eye; motivate your actions; or bring your mind into captivity with wrong thoughts. If prosperity and blessings and peace and safety will cause you to get fat, dumb, and happy; if prosperity will cause you to increase and Jesus to decrease; if money will cause you to lose your desire to fast and pray and seek God's face; if more of this world's goods will dry up the desire in your heart to follow Jesus, then rest assured that satan will be glad to share what belongs to him with you.

When the devil tempted Jesus, one of the things that he used was power and glory and possessions. Let's look at this in **Luke 4:5-7:**

5 And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

7 "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours."

But Jesus was not impressed with the glory of man; he was not impressed with the wealth of this world; he was not moved by the prospect of gaining earthly power- and Jesus responded to satan with these words in **Luke 4:8:**

... It is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

The logic of the Prosperity Theology says that wealth encourages godliness; that prosperity promotes God's business; and that having more stuff makes us happier, which in turn makes us more spiritual. The statements go like this, *"I sure want to be blessed because I need it and I will give all glory to God for my prosperity"*. And I don't doubt for a minute that people who say things like this are very sincere and I am not challenging their salvation or their walk with God- but what I am challenging is the logic and the Biblical soundness of their argument.

That logic is faulty for several reasons. First of all, it is patently false to say that wealth encourages godliness. That is Biblically untrue and it is historically untrue. We have enjoyed unprecedented prosperity in this country for over 50 years. And until 9/11, we lived in relative safety and peace. If the modern Doctrine of Prosperity was true- then America should have seen a corresponding rise in godliness during the last fifty years. Did we, in fact, see such a rise in godliness? No, we did not. What did we see? We have witnessed the utter collapse of Biblical morality and godliness in this country during the very same time that our wealth and prosperity has increased. We have seen the rise of wicked and unholy behavior during our fantastic prosperity that has amazed the world.

Organizations like The American Family Association and Focus on the Family and the Family Research Council and many, many others have been organized and created during this time frame to try to combat the degradation of morality and the rise of wickedness that has come about at the same time that we have prospered.

In the Bible, every time Israel began to be blessed and prosper and live in peace- they forgot God. They began to build altars to other gods and began to go a-whoring after false religions- kind of like we do here in America. So God, in His Mercy and love and because it is more important to God that His people are holy than they are blessed would send in trouble to His people to shake them and awaken them out of the apathy and sleep and ungodly living that their prosperity and peace brought to them.

But the logic that the modern promoters of Prosperity use is faulty for another very important reason. Since money is a necessity; since we need money in order to live; money is needful for us. So it is

God that provides our needs and it is God that already knows what we have need of. So to try to twist God's arm to get more blessings or to think that by praying special prayers or by following certain ancient secrets or by exercising faith, that God is suddenly going to awake to our needs and begin to bless us is to disavow everything that the Bible teaches us about God.

The Bible says that God is good. He is already good without any help from us. The Bible also says that God already knows what we have need of. Your prayers do not make God more aware of what you need. Your prayers do not enlighten God. Your prayers do not give God information that He doesn't already possess.

No, the reality is that God knows more about your need than you do. The reality is that God is more willing to give than you are to receive. The reality is that God already wants to bless you- and He already has.

Oh I tell you that the Error of Balaam has caused us to forget that prayer is not about reading off a laundry list of things that we need God to do for us or give to us. God already knows everything. Prayer is about developing trust. Prayer is about learning how to lean on Jesus and how to surrender your life to Him and about learning how to submit to His ways and how to decrease and how to die to self and how to throw out your dreams and your ambitions and your plans and to follow Jesus- regardless of the cost.

I tell you that the Error of Balaam makes sin look attractive. It promotes self and it will ruin your walk with God and bring dishonor to Jesus Christ. Jude warned us that it was sin and we must wake up and return to Biblical Christianity and we must all earnestly contend for the one single Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints. Well, I've got to stop right here. But please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our Journey through the Epistle of **Jude**. May God help us all.

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