

# 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** 115 The Error of Balaam- Part 8

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WOSM Tuesday 04/15/08

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.**

Now on the previous broadcasts I have shown to you that the Word of God denounces much of the thrust and the purpose and the results of the modern Doctrine of Prosperity. The Bible is clear that God *does* indeed bless his people- and God also blesses those who do not belong to Him. He rains upon the just and the unjust and the reasons and the whys of it all are left to God.

So exactly what is God's Will concerning prosperity? We know that the Error of Balaam is wrong, but what is right? There is absolutely no time for me to go into this subject in any great depth, but I will try, by God's Grace, to touch some high points for you and then refer you to trustworthy sources that can give to you the depth that you will need.

In order to find out what is God's general Will concerning New Testament prosperity, let's look at what the Holy Ghost inspired John to write in **3 John 2:**

**Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.**

Now this verse is used mostly to justify financial and material blessings- but that is not what the main thrust of this verse is about. By going back to the Greek here and by putting this verse in context with the general subject that John is talking about in this entire Epistle- it isn't really hard at all to see that the "prosperity" that John is talking about here is a *spiritual* prosperity- that we who are sinners prosper in our relationship with Jesus Christ; and the "health" that John speaks about in this verse is a *spiritual* health.

Brothers and sisters, it is an absolute twisting of the Scripture to suggest that financial and physical prosperity is the main thrust of God's Word or even in the top ten. Here are the facts.

First of all, the overwhelming teaching that is found in God's Word about money is to warn saved people of the danger that wealth and financial prosperity brings to our soul. How it makes us worldly; how it corrupts our walk with God; and how it cause us to lose sight of eternal matters.

Now we can argue about this until the cows come home but when you read about the sincere pleas of Paul and Peter and James and John and Jesus about the dangers of the love of money- you can see that things like covetousness and materialism, and worldliness were never good; they are always bad; they are terrible sins that always dishonor God and the Church of Jesus Christ is on record for over 1900 years of crying out against the danger of us having too many blessings.

Now I realize that when I talk about money like this that this must sound so strange to many of you who have never been taught the Word of God before. And I am also fully aware that what I am saying is the exact *opposite* of what many of you have been taught for years.

But check out what I am saying. Study for yourself what the Bible teaches about people in the last days trying to make merchandise of the Word of God and of the people of God and how they will teach that gain is godliness and how that people will grow cold in their love toward Jesus because they love this present life, and they love the things of this life more than they love Jesus.

I didn't write the Bible, dear friends, and I am not the one who cried out against the sins of covetousness and worldliness like those who wrote the Bible did and it was Jude- not me- who said that the

heretics- who would creep into the Church to bring in false Doctrine- would run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward.

But there is another way you can check out what I am saying. Read sermons by those who came before us. Read what Augustine, Martin Luther, Jonathon Edwards, and Charles Spurgeon wrote about money and covetousness and materialism. Read what the Puritans wrote about these subjects and see how they defined what it meant to be worldly and what it meant to be guilty of running after the error of Balaam and you will see that I am absolutely in line with what the Church has always taught about these issues until lately.

So, my question is this. If the modern Doctrine of Prosperity that we hear all the time taught from the preachers of our day is right- then why did all the people who led the Church before us preach so hard against this very issue? Are we to assume that everybody in the Church was wrong for 1900 years and suddenly we are right today?

I have no problem at all with people saying that Blair might be wrong about this issue- but I trust that you don't think that John and Paul and Peter and James and Jude and Jesus were wrong about it.

God's Plan for Prosperity is very simple, dear friends. First, go get a job. God hates laziness. Slothfulness is a horrible sin to God and the early Church never had one single member that was able to work that didn't work. Unemployment with a person who is able and healthy is a sin. Jesus response to laziness was very clear in **Matthew 25:26-30:**

**26 "But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no *seed*.**

**27 'Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my *money* back with interest.**

**28 'Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.'**

**29 "For to everyone who has, *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.**

**30 "Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

Paul was equally brutal against lazy people. Let's read **1Timothy 5:8**:

**But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**

... and again, in **2Thessalonians 3:10**:

**For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.**

Now as we get our job, we must remember that we are not allowed by Scripture to work in a job that will promote ungodliness in us or in someone else. So, Christians should never accept employment that promotes sin or that *causes* sin in themselves or in others. It is better to starve to death than it is to make money with sin. But you know- I really don't believe that any of us has ever had to make that kind of choice even though many who came before us absolutely had to choose between working in a sinful occupation or not eating- and thank God that most of them chose not to eat.

During the Reformation, there was always 100% employment in all of the Puritan Churches. You see, the Puritans simply did not allow anyone to continue to be a member of the Church who was lazy and who would not provide for his family.

So step one of God's Plan for Financial Prosperity is, "get a job". Step 2 is equally important: work hard without bellyaching.

In order to be blessed by God, God's people must labor with their hands and labor as unto the Lord. There is no provision in Scripture for a Christian to take payment for work that he hasn't earned. This is one reason why gambling is such a wicked sin. Gambling winnings are not the blessing of the Lord- they are the reward of the wicked. God did not bless you with that money from the Casino, dear friend- no, you have sold your soul in order to take that money. In order for you to win one penny by gambling- a whole lot of people had to lose that money.

For a Christian to be paid for work that he didn't do is to steal that money from your employer. Christians should be the best and most diligent workers that any boss could ever hire. They should come early and stay late and give eight hours of productive work for

eight hours of pay. And it really doesn't matter whether your boss is a jerk or not- you are not working for him- you are performing your duties as unto the Lord. So, if it okay with Jesus for you to lay around and slack off on your job, then it will be okay for you to treat your boss like that. But if it is sinful for you to slack off on Jesus- it is equally sinful for you to act that way toward your boss. Let's look at what Paul said in **1Corinthians 10:31**:

**Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**

... and in **1Corinthians 4:11-13**

**11 To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless;**

**12 and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure;**

**13 when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, *even* until now.**

...and again, in **Titus 2:9&10**:

**9 Urge** bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative,

**10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.**

The word, "pilfering" means to "set apart or divide". So, we are not to set apart or divide on our jobs in the sense that we should not take what is not ours- either by stealing stuff or stealing time. But as Christians, we are to our work without murmuring and complaining.

So, step two in God's Plan for Financial Prosperity is to do our jobs as unto the Lord without being argumentative and without murmuring and complaining.

Step three is equally important: Exercise self control over your spending.

It is a sin to spend all that you make, beloved. It is a sin to waste your money. It is a sin to throw your money into ungodly and unholy activities and it is a sin to have no self control over what you

buy. Let me say it as clear as I can- impulsive buying is sinful and it dishonors God.

But we live in a culture that promotes all men to “keep up with the Jones”. And that type of monetary competition is based in pride and ungodly arrogance and believers should not participate in it. We are commanded in Scripture to exercise self control over our lives. We are different from the animals that God made in that we don’t do everything that we want to; and we don’t say everything we want to say. We don’t engage ourselves in every activity that we feel like; and we don’t buy everything simply because it’s on sale. We who have been washed in the Blood of the Lamb have received the Holy Spirit that will give us discernment and power to spend our money wisely and after a godly manner.

To live in constant debt and to have no control over your spending is a reproach to the Gospel. The Puritans taught that how a man tends to his money is how he tends to the things of God. You show me a person who cannot control his spending and is irresponsible with money, and I will show you a man that is unfaithful to God.

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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