

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**

109 The Error of Balaam- Part 2

WOSM Monday 04/07/08

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 today's broadcast- I want to look closely at the "greedy error of Balaam" and examine exactly what Jude was telling his readers. And once again, I want to look at what God's Word teaches us about Balaam in **2Peter 2:12-16**:

12 But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed,

13 suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you,

14 having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children;

15 forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

16 but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, *for* a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.

Now this passage shows us that Balaam had forsaken the right way of the Lord because of money. This Passage teaches us that money was the motivating factor that caused Balaam to go astray. Money corrupted Balaam. The Bible says here that Balaam went astray over the **“wages of unrighteousness”**. He was offered money to prophesy; he was paid to speak on God’s behalf; he was hired to give a “word” and to proclaim a “word” that would please the people. The Bible says that this is a horrible sin and yet in spite of the many, many warnings in God’s Word about the corrupting influence that money brings to human beings- this sin is becoming more and more common in our day.

Now there is no way that I can possibly tackle such an important subject as money in one 15 minute broadcast- so, Lord willing, over the next several broadcasts, I will go into the Error of Balaam fully to bring to you the Word of God on this subject.

You need to know that this “error of Balaam” is not about a Church providing a pastor with an income to support his family. The sin of Balaam; the error of Balaam goes way beyond that.

The error of Balaam is when people are making merchandise of the Word of God. It is when God’s Word is simply a commodity that is bought and sold. It is when the Gift of God is for sale; when the Power of God is offered for money; when hearing from God or receiving God’s blessings; or obtaining God’s favor or receiving God’s forgiveness is bought and paid for with money.

When we speak about money in the Church- we have got to realize that we are talking about one the single greatest sources of corruption that exists. More ministers and more people have been corrupted and have sinned because of money in the Church than any other source- and so we must approach this subject with fear and trembling.

First of all, let me say that money is an important aspect in the House of God. Money is important to God’s people. Money is a tool that God can use for His Glory- so we cannot, and we should not simply do away with all money. But anytime anyone speaks about money- we must speak of it correctly and we must speak of it in terms that the Bible uses.

Money is one of the best and one of the worst things that has ever happened to Man. The Bible clearly teaches that more sin has

been committed over money than anything else. We must acknowledge that the root of every evil in the world in every human that has ever lived is due to the love of money. Now that means that the root of every sin that has ever been committed in believers and non-believers alike is when we love money. That is what God's Word teaches us about money and we must never, ever forget that when we talk about money.

The reason that this is true is that in our very nature- we are covetous creatures. We want; we desire; and we seek after things that we genuinely need- and that is fine- but we must admit that we also lust after things that we do *not* need- even things that are sinful- with equal passion.

And many, many times, the dividing line between what God wants for us and what *we* want for ourselves is blurred and hidden from us and we are blind to discern the difference. And this problem is compounded when we are not firmly grounded in an ongoing discipline of daily Bible reading and consistent times of fervent prayer. I would say that the overwhelming amount of people that I have personally met in Church have either been taught wrongly about money or they have not been taught at all about the Biblical and proper uses of money. And this vacuum is filled with worldly knowledge and training about money that does not, and which cannot glorify God.

Now we need to know that the inherent covetousness that every human possesses is supposed to be dealt with by Christ at conversion, and it is, and Christ has the ability to overcome all evil and when we are strong in the Lord and in the Power of His Might- we absolutely have the ability to overcome all evil- even covetousness.

But here's is the problem. We who live here in the United States are bombarded with information about money and we are saturated with thinking about money constantly to the point that we in this country have a hard time discerning what is right and what is wrong about money.

Our entire society is framed around money; our economy- while the greatest on earth- is based upon you being able to "get ahead" in life; it is based upon our accumulation of money and possessions- and that has a place in the earth- but that kind of mentality about money without submitting it to the clear Authority of Scripture causes us

who live here to become material and worldly minded and to begin to think that our relationship with God or our standing with God is based how much of this world's goods that we have- and that is a lie.

Let me give you a clear example of what I am talking about. In this country- especially since the end of the Second World War- more people began to have access to more money than any nation in the history of the world. Our country is enormously blessed and that is both good and bad. Our prosperity holds both opportunity and terrible pitfalls. Prior to this time, a Pastor and a Church was judged by how faithful he was to Scripture. Things that made for a good Pastor were how clear he taught Scripture; how consistently he preached the Gospel; how he loved the people; and how he actually lived what he taught.

Those are the things that made him or broke him. Those things are what people looked at to determine whether or not he was "successful". But after this nation began to prosper in unprecedented terms- this same worldly and lustful mentality began to infiltrate the Church. And when that happened- we began to use other criteria to judge a ministry and judge the success of the Church. Things like "How big was the building?"; "how large was the congregation?"; "how nice did everybody dress?" began to become as equally important to us as did the pastor's faithfulness to Scripture and his love for God's people and him actually living what he was teaching.

When Churches began to put more emphasis on appearance rather than faithfulness- Churches began to enter into what is called "spiritual competition". And when that happened- the damage was done, and it was now off to the races.

Pastors began to come under pressure to "grow the Church" meaning that the Pastor was now under pressure to make sure that more people came to church every Sunday and that the Church was constantly growing in numbers rather than making sure that the people were actually growing in Grace.

This pressure to increase the numbers began to be a great source of boasting and became the goal of the Church- to get as many warm bodies in the pews every week as possible. Of course, we tried to justify this huge change in the way that we conducted Church by saying that what we really wanted was to make sure more people heard the Gospel and were saved- as though all of the Pastors who

came before us were *not* interested in getting more people saved- but even that began to change. Those Churches who grew fast and furious were deemed to be “successful” and those Churches that did not grow or that did not grow as fast were deemed to be “unsuccessful”.

Of course, more people meant more money and more money meant bigger Sanctuaries and more Prestige and more acceptance by society as measured by the standard of a lost and unsaved society and the Pastor could then feel validated because he was “winning” and the Church members felt better because everybody loves a winner.

But the quality of what was being taught was already suffering and the genuine growth of the spirit of the believer was put on the back burner and the Church began to be more and more like the lost world in order to be attractive to the lost people.

So, in order to keep pace with the new demands of the success mentality- the Church couldn't possibly continue to do the same things that had been done since the Resurrection- we had to become “creative” and develop new and improved techniques that were based on human reasoning and human logic and which were designed to cater to the visitor in order to get more people to come. So, we took the same carnal, worldly, human, and pragmatic attributes and drawing cards that were used in Corporate America to grow their businesses and we brought those things into the Church.

And one of the things that we brought into the House of God was the same notion that had made American Industry so incredibly prosperous- the notion that “The Customer is always right”. In business, you learn to adapt to the desires of the customer; you start certain product lines and stop others as the whims and social concerns of the people evolve. So, the name of the game in business is “service; service; service” and if you can provide a product better and cheaper with less hassle on the part of the consumer- you will prosper. And those Companies that do not adapt- will die. Those who refuse to go the way of the consumer do not stay in business very long.

We have today in American Business what are called Marketing Agencies and Focus Groups. The job of these kinds of companies is to go and find out what people want. You want a hamburger that is bigger than the bun- we'll give it to you. You want bottled water in five flavors- we'll give you seven. You want a car that will get better

gas mileage without sacrificing comfort- done. You want television that can give you instant news- we'll give you 500 channels.

Now in and of itself, this approach to business is not wrong. This "mass marketing" of goods and services has made America the most prosperous nation in the history of the world. This approach to business has put more goods into more hands at a cheaper price than any other business model in the history of the world. And it has made us the envy of the world.

And by businesses catering to the demands of the consumer- we have better and cheaper gadgets than any nation in history. And because of this market driven economy- America has enjoyed unprecedented prosperity over the last 150 years and we have developed the science of free enterprise that we now export to other nations who seek to be as financially well off as we are.

But all of this prosperity has taken a toll on the soul of our nation. Our culture now is more coarse and more insensitive and moving faster than ever because it is driven by money and the accumulation of more and more possessions and success at any cost. Our every waking thought is either directly or indirectly geared around money. For the most part, the average American has bought into the lie that more stuff makes us happy and that acquiring more things in life is our first and foremost goal.

We feel good about ourselves when we have more money, and we feel deprived when we can't afford or cannot acquire the new gadget that has the power to make our lives validated.

Beloved, we can slice it any way that we want to- but what I have just described to you is the textbook definition of materialism and covetousness- and it is the greedy error of Balaam, and the Church of Jesus Christ is on record for denouncing the evil and wickedness of materialism for over 1950 years until just recently. I simply want to revive that historic condemnation.

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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