

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** 110 The Error of Balaam- Part 3

WOSM Tuesday 04/08/08

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 we are continuing to look at the Error of Balaam so that we do not make the same mistake that Jude was crying out against. On the last broadcast, we saw how that the ancient "error of Balaam" has crept into the modern Church to make the House of God, in far too many cases, nothing more than a consumer driven business. The modern concept of the Church of Jesus being looked at and viewed and run like an American Corporation is an affront to the Lord that bought it.

To see the Gospel as a "product" that must be "marketed" is a carnal and wrong way to look at the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ and is the way that Balaam looked at the Word of God in his day. To seek to grow the Church with numbers at the expense preaching and teaching Divine Truth is not a good thing- but is the error of Balaam. This has resulted in many Churches watering down the Gospel so as to remain attractive to the lost world to keep their numbers up.

The "error or Balaam" is dulling the edge of the sword so that the Biblical Gospel will offend lukewarm and backslid people; it is trying to grow the Church by compromising the Truth; it is making

merchandise of the Word of God in order to allow the men of the Ministry to become fat and wealthy off the backs of God's people.

Beloved, we must repent of doing this and we must uphold the integrity of the Gospel and we must sharpen the edge of the sword and we must sound an alarm in God's holy mountain so that all men will see themselves as God sees them so that they may repent and flee from the Wrath of God that is sure to come to destroy the wicked.

Only the Gospel has the power to reveal sin to Man. Only the Gospel, when it is preached rightly and when it is preached fully, and when it is preached unashamedly from the lips of sanctified and humble clay pots, has the ability to uncover sins that hide and to show people where they stand with God.

And that is, by definition, offensive to every soul that does not want to be revealed; every soul that does not want to get right with God and every soul that wants to hide from the Presence of God.

But to those who are saved- the preaching of the Gospel so that sin can be exposed and revealed is the most thrilling and glorious event that can ever be. And although we still periodically sin- we, who belong to Jesus, do not *want* to be wrong; we are not *trying* to sin; and we don't *want* to do something that is offensive to God. We have been translated *out of* the kingdom of darkness and have been born again and we have received within ourselves the new, divine nature that loves the same things that God loves. And it is this new nature that now dwells inside us that gives us both the will and the power to do that which is pleasing in God's sight.

And without this new nature- you cannot serve God and without this new nature- you are not saved. So those of us that have been saved no longer desire to live unto ourselves, but we desire to serve and follow Jesus. Yet we are plagued by living in this carnal world and we are plagued by living in a fleshly body and we are plagued by being surrounded by lustful and sinful things and so we struggle.

So, when struggling saints go to Church- we don't want to see and hear more of what we struggle with out in the world being placed before us in the Church. We don't want to be subjected to the same thing *in* the House of God that we struggle with *outside* the House of God. We don't want more flesh- we have enough of flesh out in the world- what we crave is Spirit and Truth worship toward a holy and merciful and righteous God. We don't need more carnal programs

that have no supernatural power to transform our lives. We don't seek after our self-esteem being built up- we are fighting against that enough- we want to learn how to die to self; we want to learn how to *decrease* so that Jesus can increase; we want to learn how to submit and how to surrender and how to crucify our flesh and how to mortify the deeds of our bodies and how to exalt Jesus Christ.

We don't want more human ingenuity and fleshly logic- we wrestle with that every day- we want God breathed and God inspired, and God spoken Absolute Truth that has the ability to edify us and strengthen us and change us so that we may please our glorious King and so that we may walk this world in white.

Saved people hate their sin and so the last thing they need when they go to Church is more sin. Saved people want to hear from God. Saved people want to understand what God says. Saved people want to seek God's Face. Saved people want to be molded and shaped and formed into the very Image and Likeness of Jesus Christ.

Carnal, lost, unsaved, unregenerated people don't have any desire at all for those things. How could they?- they are not born again- their nature has not been changed. Lost people have no desire to study the Bible- they want the hype. Unsaved people have no craving for the Presence of God- they are impressed with the personality and charisma of the Pastor. Unwashed souls have no desire to listen to music that speaks of the Blood and the holy and righteous life of the Savior- and deliverance from the Wrath of God- they want to boogie to the beat, and they want to dance with groove.

To ask a lost person to spend time with God in prayer is like asking me to program a computer- they don't even know where to start. To try to get unsaved people to act like saved people is waste of time- until they are reborn they can't act any different than they really are. It is like putting a square peg in around hole- they just don't fit.

So when a Church has determined to follow the Error of Balaam and they use carnal, worldly tactics to try to get more and more people to attend so that they can finance their ministry on what the bank calls, "financial units"- they run into trouble immediately. When a Church begins to "market" their product to attract more bodies – it is inherent in the marketing strategy of that "church" that the Gospel must be watered down; and the impact of the Gospel must be

diminished and the demands that the Gospel makes on every soul must be compromised or else the people won't come. And if they *do* come- they won't stay.

So we begin to feel the pressure to accommodate the whims of lukewarm or lost souls and those who are saved do not get edified or fed.

Lost people have no desire to hear line upon line expositional preaching of the Word of God- so the Church and the Pastor feel the pressure to shorten the sermons; cut back on the exposition and make up for the lack of depth and spiritual quality with more tricks and more emotion and more music and more programs.

People who have not been reborn have no love for the Truth- so psychological messages about “self- actualization” and “self- fulfillment” and messages that seek to make people feel “empowered” and big and large and that meet their so-called “felt” needs are the order of the day. For a preacher to stand and call people to repent of covetousness and to bow before Jesus and to come to the Cross so that they can die in a Church that has bought into the Error of Balaam would be to empty that Church in record time or else they will just fire the preacher. Not that some lost soul wouldn't hear it- because they *would* hear and they *would* repent and they *would* get saved- but the leadership of the Church where Balaam is in charge would panic because they would believe that this kind of preaching will not meet their budgetary plans.

Yet that is the message of the Cross. The message of the Cross is not that we can come to Jesus so that we can be built up and feel good about ourselves and grow larger and prosper- no, the genuine message of the Cross is come to Jesus so that your life may come to an end so that you can have the honor and the privilege of becoming a bond slave so that you may obey Christ and do God's Will in the earth.

Those two ways of “doing” Church—Man's way and God's way are absolutely incompatible within the modern paradigm of Church growth models, and we are forced to choose which one to obey and follow. Either we are going to be faithful to Scripture and actually run the risk of alienated some who visit the Church because the power of the Gospel is not white washed and the impact of the Gospel is not dulled and the demands that the Gospel make are not compromised- or we are going to value human relationships more than we value

faithfulness and we water down the message so that it becomes more palatable to those who do not want to repent and follow Christ.

But make no mistake about it- this is the choice that we face in our day. We can run greedily after the Error of Balaam or we can take the straight and narrow path of the Lord's despised few.

Over the years, we have placed far too much responsibility on the success of the Church on the Pastor. Because we have left off the Biblical teaching of God's Sovereignty, we believe that Man is responsible for the results of our ministries and that is simply not true. Only God blesses or curses our Ministries. Only God honors our efforts. Only God uses us.

We are responsible for the *content* of our ministry. We are responsible to study to show ourselves approved unto God a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. We are responsible that we walk in godly integrity and that we actually live what we teach. We are responsible for assuring that those who hold leadership positions in the House of God are Biblically qualified to hold them. We are responsible for the content of our message. We are responsible that God's Word is preached rightly, fully, and fearlessly regardless of the consequences. We are responsible that what we say God said is exactly what God has said.

We are responsible that our Doctrine is Sound and that it is Biblical and we are responsible that we institute by laws and guidelines of Church discipline and that we do not expect less of believers than the Bible does.

But we are not God the Father; neither are we God the Son; and we are sure not God the Holy Spirit. We do not build the Church- God does. We do not add members to the Church- God does. We do not convict anyone of sin- God does. We do not save anyone- God does. We do not change their heart- God does. We do not empower them- God does. We do not monitor their lives- God does.

We are not responsible for how big or how small the Church is— God is. We are not responsible for how many people sit in our pews- God governs that. We are supposed to invite and we are supposed to work with anyone and everyone and we are supposed to be kind and gentle and loving and honest and sincere and doctrinally correct and pure and we are supposed to feed the hungry and clothe the naked and tend to widows and orphans and open our doors to the worst sinner

and the most impossible situation and the most unbelievable circumstance.

But we better tell them the Truth and we better not water that Truth down and we better not say that someone is saved simply because they attend our Church or because they prayed a prayer or because they walked an isle or because they signed a register.

If we give a lost man any comfort at all in his lost condition and he dies and goes to hell- he will perish in his sin- but his blood will be on our hands. We must teach every man and warn every man that God's wrath is coming and it is sure and it is certain and every soul that is not washed in the Blood will have to stand before a holy God Who has Eyes that burn like flames of fire and they will have to give an account of their sins before God. This is what the Bible calls "The Terror of the Lord" and it is this terror that compels us to preach the Gospel to every creature; it is this terror that is like a freight train bearing down on sinful man at 300 miles an hour that compels us to warn every man and to work with every man- even the worst of men so that they will repent and be saved and escape the damnation of an everlasting hell.

Following the Error of Balaam will put pragmatic monetary considerations above the preaching of the Gospel. It will dull the edge of the sword. It will break the back of the Pastor and make him a puppet of the people or the deacon board.

I tell you that we must be alert that the Error of Balaam does not enter into our Church. Jude says that this was a real threat to the Church and I tell you that we must take Jude's warning about this seriously and we must all earnestly contend for the 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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