

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** 112 The Error of Balaam- Part 5

WOSM Thursday 04/10/08

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 as we continue to look at the second Old Testament person that Jude compared the heretics to, we must look at what Jude meant when he said that those who creep into the Church to bring in damnable heresy would, **“for pay rush headlong into the error of Balaam”**

Now on the last broadcast, we saw how that when monetary concerns take precedent in a Church- then the integrity of the Gospel always suffers. And we also saw that the way that we use to measure spiritual success in the modern Church is laced with the error of Balaam and is not Scriptural.

We have taken carnal and earthly American Business concepts and brought them into the House of God and today we measure success by the bigness of our crowds; the influence that our Church has in political areas; and the wealth that we accumulate. None of those criteria are what we should measure success by. We should measure success by how faithful the ministry is to preach the Gospel rightly, fully, and fearlessly; how obedient the members are to Scripture and to what degree everyone in the Church has submitted

themselves to the authority of the Holy Bible. When those things are present- Christ is honored as the Head of the Church; God is glorified; the ministry is doing their jobs and that is real success.

Also on the last broadcast, we saw a Biblical example of a successful ministry that did not measure up to our modern standards of Balaam's greed. Last time we saw how that Noah obeyed God explicitly and God was glorified through him, and yet very few people joined themselves to Noah or paid any attention to what he said. The result was that after 120 years of preaching righteousness- only eight people were in Noah's Church and the rest were destroyed in the Flood.

You see, dear friends, as we study God's Word, we find that our sensual pragmatic human logic does not fit in with God's Will. We are moved by accomplishments and that is not necessarily wrong- but when our search for validation consists of worldly standards- we can run after the error of Balaam very quickly.

It is human nature to be impressed with bigness and visual demonstrations. To see thousands stand in a concert with their hands raised to God makes every Pastor dream that he could see that in his own Church. We dream about starting a new Church and within three weeks seeing it packed out with sold out believers who are earnestly seeking and serving Jesus Christ. We dream about preaching for ten minutes and watching thousands come forward to receive Christ and we visualize hundreds of people sitting on the edge of the pews hanging on every word that we speak; laughing at every joke and crying on cue at every story.

But for the most part; among almost every single minister of the Gospel since the Apostles- that view of ministry is a fantasy and is rarely found among anyone in Scripture. From Noah to Jeremiah, to Jesus to Paul, ministry was conducted slowly- one on one; day by day- in the trenches of life as faithful men labored on day in and day out proclaiming God's Truth and working with troubled souls.

You'll not find these faithful men hob knobbing with Presidents and Kings- you'll find them in hospital waiting rooms- weeping with families who just lost their loved one. You won't find these men walking through crowds surrounded by bodyguards- you'll find them kneeling by the bed of a dying saint. You'll not find these faithful pastors taking in the accolades of thousands- you'll find them working

with the down and out; the lost and undone; the worst that society has to offer weeping and praying and staggering and trembling at the enormity of the calling and the wonder of it all.

Christian Ministry is not a platform for men to become rock stars. Christian Ministry is not a tool for men to use to become wealthy off the back of God's sheep. Christian Ministry is not a way for slick talkers and snake oil salesmen to hawk their trinkets and sell their bottles of anointing oil and promote their secret methods of prosperity and by selling prayer cloths.

Christian Ministry is a calling; and it is a call to serve- not to be served. It is a call that will make you the laughingstock of your town and your community and your family. When I think about real Ministry- I don't envision some hot shot, self absorbed faith healer who knocks people down by blowing on them- no, I think about the prophet Jeremiah, who walked through the streets of Jerusalem weeping over the sins of God's people. I think about a man who labored faithfully for 40 years and never saw one convert. I think about a man that after prophesying the word of God in direct obedience to God for four decades was hung up by his thumbs in a latrine for his reward. Today in Israel I understand that they have built a statue to honor Jeremiah- but while he was alive- no one wanted to hear him or listen to him or even be around him.

But Jeremiah went on and continue to faithfully proclaim God's Truth- not because he thought that God was going to reward him with a large Church and with a world-wide television ministry- no, Jeremiah spoke what he spoke and did what he did because He knew in Whom he had believed and he knew that he was sinner saved by Grace and he knew that it was an honor and priviledge to proclaim God's holy Word- and that was enough reward for him.

Jeremiah didn't go into the Ministry so he could ride around like a prima donna on his own private jet – he labored tirelessly without any visible reward because he knew that he had been chosen before he was born, and he knew that he had been bought with a price and that his life was hid in God.

When I think of real Ministry, I don't think about the modern pattern of millionaire preachers who have been made wealthy off their books and their tapes and their preaching about a Man walking up a lonely dark hill- no, I think about men like Jonathan Edwards who

after faithfully pasturing his Church for 27 years was thrown out of his Church because he declared boldly that Scripture clearly taught that only saved people should take communion and that all saved people should be allowed to eat and drink at the Lord's table- even barbaric Indians who had accepted Christ.

America's greatest Theologian was broken by the actions of his Presbyterian Church—and he was banished to the fields and forests to preach among the Indians- but he loved his God and he served his Christ and he expected nothing more from Gospel ministry than to have the privilege to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the lost and dying of this world- and to his dying breath at 56 years old- he thanked God for the high honor of being able to preach and study and know and learn and love and obey God's precious Word.

When people mention a genuine model of Christian Ministry, I really can't agree that our modern success oriented concept of ministry that runs greedily after the error of Balaam for reward fits the bill. I am convinced that real models of ministry like that of Count Nicholas Von Zinzendorf and the Moravians is a much better pattern for us to emulate than the modern men of the cloth that brag about their possessions and of how God gives them revelations that are not Biblical and that contradict the Word of God.

Nicholas Von Zinzendorf was so in love with Jesus and valued Christian Ministry so much that he and others like him actually sold themselves into slavery so that both the slaves and the slave owners could hear the Gospel and be saved. Truly that model of ministry should be taught today and followed.

But the impact of Von Zinzendorf's ministry went further than the slaves and slave owners because it was when a disillusioned and backslidden Baptist by the name of William Carey read about Von Zinzendorf's exploits in Christ that the fire of preaching God's Word ignited his young heart, and he became the father of modern missions.

The point that I am making is that because the promise and the hope and the expectation of a great visible, and many times, monetary and personal reward has been so promoted today, we have lost sight of the real reward of ministry- that God's Word is preached; Christ is exalted; and as God wills, souls are saved. That is the real reward of Ministry and that should be enough.

But that real reward of genuine Gospel Ministry was not enough for Balaam, so he *sought* after- Jude says that he *ran* after- another reward. Balaam wanted to minister for personal gain. Balaam wanted the reward of earthly accomplishment and the pride and arrogance that goes along with that kind of human achievement.

Balaam Had forgotten like many have forgotten today that all Gospel Ministry is the sole property of Jesus Christ. It isn't *our* ministry- we cannot and should not take ownership of the ministry that Christ has placed into our hands. All ministry belongs solely to God, and we are but stewards of that great gift of ministry and we should treat the ministry as though we are the caretakers of it and not the owners. Paul put it like this in **1 Corinthians 4:1-2:**

1 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

The glorious honor of being able to preach God's Word and lead others to the Feet of Jesus is given to us by God and the Lord expects and demands that we be faithful to Him over that which He has entrusted to us and that we resist any and all temptation that would cause us to take ownership of the ministry or to make ourselves or our personality or our style or our opinions or our well being more valuable than the Word we are called to preach.

Beloved, we are certainly not the first society to be captured in the sinful web of materialism and covetousness and greed. We are not the first society that has sacrificed a stable home life and sacrificed the sanctity of motherhood and sacrificed our children on the altar of materialism.

Ancient Rome bought into the same pagan notion that acquiring more of this world's goods would make them better and even make them holy. Ancient Greece also promoted human achievement and material accumulation as a pathway to heaven. When the Roman Empire fell, materialism came under hard times until Europe resurrected it during the Renaissance. France promoted it during their wicked Revolution. But in every case in history when

materialism was promoted by a society- it was denounced by the Church.

During that time- godly people rejected the notion that more money or more stuff could make them happy, holy, or even make them better people. For many, many centuries, Bible believing saints knew that it was godliness with contentment that was the real gain. People from all over the world knew that what was really valuable was to be saved and to know and understand God's Word and the power of God was not demonstrated in flamboyant displays that brought attention to the minister- but *real* power was demonstrated in humble people actually living what the Gospel taught.

But this new manifestation of the ancient sins of materialism, greed, and covetousness disguised as the Error of Balaam has infiltrated the Church today and it has successfully dulled the edge of the sword and the Church is now, for the most part, silent about the sins of covetousness, greed, and materialism and in some cases these sins are even taught that they are spiritual and something to be sought after or they are the result of exercising faith.

Beloved I tell you that it is time to repent of the error of Balaam and it is time to return to Biblical Christianity and it is high time that we 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.

© 2007- 2023 by Enjoying God Ministries, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America
Enjoying God Ministries, Inc. PO Box 147 Saucier, Mississippi 39574 www.covenantofpeace.net

Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from *The New American Standard Bible* © 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

This is a single transcript in a larger series of teachings taken from a verse- by- verse Journey through the **Epistle of Jude**. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without cost or reimbursement to us with the stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this transcript without the express written permission of The Covenant of Peace Church and that this complete copyright statement be at the end of all copies.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.