

The Fight: Ancient and Modern Transcription

The Fight: Ancient and Modern - Jude 5-11 - Skip Heitzig

[CHEERS]

[ALARM]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Good morning. Great to see you this morning. A few weeks ago I was so happy to see school buses driving down the street. I made a-- I made just a little announcement on Wednesday night. I said, yeah, I've never been excited to see school buses before. I always go, oh, it's school time. I got to slow down. I got to-- it's going to take more time.

But to see school buses up and running was so good, and I've always thought they should have been opened all along and not closed down. And I just want to say this. If you are a teacher in our public school system or private school, thank you for what you do. At the same time, I'm a little frustrated with the educational system and how it would seem the government tries to foist upon young children a sexual identity decision and a number of other things, and so it just sort of struck me a few weeks ago when all this was going on that what if we could have a school that taught kids the truth about science, the truth about history, the truth about social studies, that we could form the character of a child as well as provide a high academic threshold and really train and equip kids for the future. I don't honestly think they're going to get it in public school system as readily. I think the challenges are much higher.

So I say this, because a few years ago we attempted of doing some kind of a school. And there many fine Christian schools in the community. I think there should be oodles more. And so I just thought, well, what if we could help with that. And we tried to start one at one time. There wasn't that interest, but I just feel like we've hit critical mass, and we should move ahead with it.

So we're having an interest meeting over in the hub following this service at 1 o'clock. If you are interested, if you have ideas for it, if you have questions about it, Brian Dixon will be there. Dr. Nixon will be there answering questions and kind of showing you where we plan to go. We've had a lot of interest, and it looks good, but wanted to invite you to be a part of that.

Now would you turn in your Bibles please, to the book of Jude also known as, hey, Jude. Turn to the book of Jude. Just find the book of Revelation. Go left one block, and you will find a little book of Jude.

So after last week's message, I've gotten lots of feedback, positive feedback, lots of notes and cards and emails and texts thanking me for the message. And it's funny, because I thought, well, gosh, the feistier I am, the more they like it. So buckle your seat belt for number two. We're going to be in Jude verses 5 through 11.

Matthew Henry-- I'm going to throw this up on the screen. Matthew Henry, a Bible commentator, said hypocrisy is to do the devil's work in God's uniform. So just think about that, doing the devil's work in God's uniform. You dress the part, but it's not who you are.

Apostasy, which is the subject of the Book of Jude, is related to hypocrisy, except if hypocrisy is doing the devil's work in God's uniform, apostasy is where you just take the uniform off and let people see who you really are and have been all along. So if hypocrisy is putting on a show, then apostasy is leaving the theater altogether. And people can wear God's uniform for a long time until for whatever reason either they have their own crisis of faith or they come to a point where they just don't believe anymore or they never have believed can happen.

One of the outspoken critics of Christianity over decades has been a guy by the name of Ted Turner. Ted Turner is a media mogul. He's the founder of CNN and a number of other like portals and outlets, but he has criticized Christianity. He went on record in an Atlanta newspaper saying Jesus probably would be sick to his stomach over the way his ideas have been twisted.

Now I read that, and I thought, well, that's a little arrogant, right. It's almost like saying nobody has gotten it right in the past, but now I do. I understand what Jesus really meant. Everybody else, they've twisted it, but that's what he said.

He said that he had a strict Christian upbringing, and at one time considered becoming a missionary. I don't know. I have a hard time thinking of Ted Turner as a missionary, but I'll go with it. He said-- and he said this mockingly said, I've been saved seven or eight times, but then he said he became disenchanted with Christianity after his sister died despite all of his prayers.

But here's his closing remark the more I strayed from the faith, the better I felt. The more I strayed from the faith, the better I felt. He just framed apostasy. Don't be surprised when you hear of Christian leaders who say I don't believe that anymore. Don't be too shocked when you read of or hear of a Christian influencer who goes on social media and renounces his or her faith.

Don't be too astonished when a theologian starts deconstructing the truth. That's their term, deconstructing. And that has the idea of revisiting truth and rethinking beliefs that were once held as valid or true. That's not new. It's as old as the hills and twice as dusty.

I mean, it's been going on a long time. It's not novel. It's not new. According to Jude, it's been going on at least 2,000 years, and according to Jude's writing in this letter, it's been going on for about 4,000 years. It goes all the way back. So it's not new. It's not novel, but it is noteworthy, because Jesus predicted that there would be a period of time before his second coming that would be marked by spiritual deception.

In fact, you remember he gave a parable, the parable of the tares in the wheat. He said wheat was sown, but somebody came in through in tares. The tare is a weed, and the word he used, the [NON-ENGLISH] is a weed that even a seasoned farmer cannot tell the difference between the weed and the wheat until it ripens. And he has to get really close to mark the difference.

But the idea is you can have them growing together, one looks just as real as the other but it's fake. It's not real. It is apostate. And then the most haunting question I think I've ever heard from the lips of Jesus is when Jesus said when the Son of Man comes will he find faith on the earth. It's a scary question for Jesus to ask. When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?

Move forward to the book of Revelation, Jesus gives seven letters to seven churches in Revelation 3 one of the little postcards he writes to the Church of Laodicea. The entire church is filled with apostates. Jesus isn't even in that church. He's on the outside knocking to get in. That's where we get the text, behold, I stand at the door and knock. He's knocking on the door of the church, because he's outside of it.

In fact, there are no believers in that church except a few precious overcomers. Jesus gives them that name. Paul predicted that, as we saw last week. He said in the end times, there will be a falling away. That's apostasy.

He said many will depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. In fact, did you know this every single New Testament book except for one, the book of Philemon, has warnings against false teachings. So the whole New Testament says this is coming down the pike.

The book of Jude has as its theme that word I brought out last week, the theme of apostasy. The Greek word apostasia, a departure, a falling away. The renowned New Testament scholar Gerhard Kittel will define that as a rebellion, a rebel. He said it's someone who rebels against the faith they once claimed to believe.

Now that can happen as an individual. It can happen as a group. You can have a person who is an apostate. You can have a church assembly that by their statement of faith is apostate. You can have an entire denominational structure that is apostate.

And here's the thing. You can't like tell. Nobody carries a badge that says, hi, I'm an apostate. How can I help you?

People don't put bumper stickers on their car. Honk if you're an apostate. Nobody does that.

So the similarity is not going to be outward, but I remind you of what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 11. Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. It's no big deal if his ministers disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness. New Testament scholar RC Leonski-- I've always loved his books-- said the worst forms of wickedness consist in perversions of the truth.

So what I want to do is look at Jude verse 5 through verse 11 this morning, this paragraph, and I want to show you three basic lessons as we step into the ring and put up a good fight for the faith, defend earnestly the faith that was once delivered to the Saints. So the first truth is this is that truth needs a memory. Truth needs a memory. Let me take you to verse 5 and let me show you this. But I want to remind you, though, you once knew this-- and then he reaches back to the Old Testament that he supposes they knew that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

Jude is appealing to their memory. He's appealing to what they already learned presumably because it was a Jewish audience. I'm guessing Jude lived in Jerusalem, was writing to the Jerusalem church. He's writing to Jewish believers who heard and knew all of these stories from there growing up, all of these stories of the Old Testament, and Jude is going to bring out several Old Testament examples that they would have been familiar with.

And he goes, I want to remind you of this. I know you already know it, but I want to remind you. And here's the principal. Truth needs a memory. Lessons must be recalled for those lessons to be active.

For truth to have an impact in the present, we must remember the past. OK, this happens in a number of levels. Every September 11th for almost the last 20 years at Ground Zero in Manhattan, New York City, at Ground Zero the names of those people who died in the World Trade towers are read publicly. Why every year? Why every-- why go through that? So no one forgets that, so they'd never forget that.

Also it's the same with December 7th every year in Hawaii because of what happened in 1941, the famous words of FDR. Yesterday, December 7, 1941, a day which will live in infamy the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. So every year in Pearl Harbor the names of the dead are recited. There's a commemoration. Relatives come so that America never forgets.

If you go with us to Israel, we'll take you to Yad Vashem the Holocaust Memorial where you will see evidence of the Nazis decimating, killing six million Jews in the 1940s, and you walk out with such a heavy heart having seen the evidence but the overwhelming thought is I must never forget what has happened in recent history. And so he writes to them and he says I want to remind you, though you once knew this. Truth needs a memory.

That, by the way, is the goal of preaching. It's why we preach. Matthew Henry, again, said, "Preaching is not designed to teach us something new in every sermon, but to put us in remembrance, to call to mind things forgotten"

So didn't God do this a lot with the children of Israel? Deuteronomy, chapter 8, he said this. "You shall remember all the way the Lord your God led you these past 40 years. That's a commandment. I want you

to remember it." And what a God give to them so they could remember it? Passover.

Every year, the Jews were to meet in their homes, have a Passover celebration. It's still commemorated to this day. It's to keep the memory alive. Truth needs a memory.

Jesus took the Passover and used that to tell his disciples to do that. He said, "Do this in remembrance of me." when you take these elements, it's going to speak of my death, my suffering, and my subsequent resurrection. Truth needs a memory.

Paul wrote to the Romans, and said, "I have written to you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again." Peter did the same thing. Second Peter, chapter 1-- "So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I'm in this tent, this body, to stir you up by reminding you.

You know, it's a funny thing. I have taught the Bible almost my entire adult life. I've had the opportunity to teach every verse of every chapter of every book of the Bible a few different times, all the way through. And I even wrote a book called The Bible from 30,000 feet. So you think, this guy probably like knows the Bible.

You know, every time I read the Bible, you know what thought I'm struck? With how much I have forgotten since the last time I read that. Now, this came to my mind because I just finished this little Bible plan that I was a part of for 90 days, reading through the entire Bible, Genesis to Revelation, in 90 days. That's about 15 chapters a day.

So I did it. And every time I'd go through, I'd go, I forgot that was there. I forgot that was there. It's so good. But I've forgotten about it. And it was so rewarding. I thought, after I finished it, I'm going to do it again. So now, I'm on round two. And I don't know if I'll keep this up. But if I did, I suppose I could go through the entire Bible four times a year.

But the point is, truth needs to be reinforced, reinstilled, reintroduced, recalled, repeated for every generation. Because we forget stuff, right? Good teachers, like Jesus, often repeated themselves. I remember when I first read the New Testament. Cracked it open. It was just a New Testament. And the first book I came to was the Book of Matthew. That's the first book in the New Testament.

Start reading through it. I go wow. This is awesome. I'm really learning about this Jesus. Then I finished Matthew, and I started reading the second book, which is Mark. And my thought going through Mark is, didn't I just read this? Isn't this like the Book right before it?

And so I finished that. It was the same story, but a little bit shorter. Then I am in the third book, and it's the Gospel of Luke. And it's like, he's-- they're doing it again. They just like to tell the same story, over and over and over again. And I went to the Gospel of John. A little bit different, but same basic story.

And I just remember, as a young believer, going why is this thing repeated? And there's a number of reasons. But one great reason is that some stories are so important, you need to hear them over and over again. And one of the grand reasons is because what I just said. We forget stuff.

One development and journal and training journal I found said people will retain 25% of what they hear. That's at best. And that statistic is so discouraging to a teacher. It means that no matter how much I prepare and pour into and spend hours getting ready for this sermon or this teaching in a classroom, my students, if they're engaged and not reading their cell phones, and tuned in, and taking notes, are going to retain 25%.

So, I want to remind, you though you once knew this. It's the same truths they grew up hearing. We don't need new truths. We don't need novel truths. We need never changing truth. We need-- we need noble truth. And that's what we have here. So truth needs a memory.

The second lesson we come to in stepping into the ring for this battle is that judgment has a history. Now watch what Jude does. He goes back and gives them a few different examples from the past. Verse 5, I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt-- that is, the people of Israel, the Jewish people, the children of Israel-- having saved them out of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

And the angels-- so that's one. Here's the second example. The angels, who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, he has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day, and then there's a third example. Verse 7, as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality, and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Three examples from the past to warn them of this truth-- God is not afraid to judge even those in the most favored positions.

First on the list, nation of Israel. We know the story. They were in Egypt. God delivered them miraculously through the wilderness. He opened up the Red Sea. That's one miracle. Sent plagues on the Egyptians. That's another miracle. Fed them with manna that came from heaven. Gave them water out of the rock. Followed them around with a cloud by day, right? So that's important in the Sinai Desert. Think of Phoenix in summertime, with a cloud cover over it, permanently. So that's a nice feature to have. God did that for 40 years.

Not only that, but at night, it was a pillar of fire. So he tucked them in bed with a nightlight for 40 years. And he preserved them for 40 years. But at the same time, it says God destroyed those who did not believe. God destroyed the entire generation of the children of Israel aged 20 and above, except for two people. Joshua and Caleb were the only survivors of the original group that came out of Egypt. Everybody else died.

You go, well why did God do that? Because of apostasy. They kept turning away. They kept rebelling-- not once, not twice, over and over and over again. One of the things they said is take us back to Egypt. Can you imagine being a slave, and be set free, and then you want to go back to slavery?

And they even cried this out. This is one thing they cried out in the wilderness. They said oh, that we had died in the wilderness! And God said, OK, I'll answer that prayer. If that's what you want, I'll let you do that. And so for the next 40 years, it was a funeral march.

One person tried to figure it out. He figured there were at least 1.2 million people who died in the wilderness, given what we know in the historical record. That means there were approximately 85 funerals a day, or seven per waking hour. So they were reminded, day by day, as another person was buried, and another person, that God will judge those who turn away and do not believe.

And by the way, notice, these are unbelievers. He destroyed those who do not believe. It was their unbelief that led to their destruction. God wasn't going to let unbelieving apostates into the promised land. And Jude's point is that the deliverer of Israel became the destroyer of Israel, that the Savior can also be the judge, that the God of love is also a God of wrath, that both of those go together.

So that's the first example, the nation of Israel. The second example are the angels of God. The angels, verse 6, who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, he has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day. There's a dispute, a debate, about the interpretation of this. Some feel this is a reference to Genesis chapter 6, that fallen angels somehow cohabitate with human women to produce this odd race of giants known in Genesis six as nephilim in the Hebrew. And that's what brought the flood.

Others don't think that's what he is referring to. Others think it refers to the original fall of Satan from heaven with the third of the angelic beings in that rebellion spoken about in Isaiah chapter 14. And the reason for the debate is the angels mentioned here are chained and reserved for future judgment, which seem to be different from fallen angels that are Satan's agents, demons, that are at work in the world and are free to roam around.

I'm not here to solve that, because that is not the point. The point Jude is making is simply this. Even angels, God judged, not just the nation of Israel. God judge specially created beings, made by God, who fell away, who withdrew, who departed, who rebelled from him. They had, once, a position of privilege and authority and blessing and opportunity. But even angels don't get a hall pass poor judgment.

So the nation of Israel, the angels of God-- and then, the third example is Sodom and Gomorrah, the cities of the plain. Now, everybody knows about Sodom and Gomorrah. After it is recorded what happened there, the Old Testament and the New Testament give comment. So we have a body of historical evidence that know how people throughout history interpreted the events of Sodom and Gomorrah. And you wonder, well, why does he bring Sodom and Gomorrah up? Because one of the marks, remember in verse 4-- one of the marks of false teachers is they turned the grace of God into lewdness. They turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. They turned the grace of God into immorality.

They say God loves us we. Can do anything we want. God is a God who will certainly tolerate any type of behavior. So he mentions Sodom and Gomorrah. Because false teachers evidently felt the freedom either to endorse or practice immoral sexual autonomy. You know what I mean by that? Immoral sexual autonomy is look, I can love who I want to love. And you can't say that's wrong. It is my prerogative. Who are you to say my behavior, or my predilections, are wrong?

Well, notice that Jude calls this sexual immorality. The Greek word that he uses is [NO SPEECH]. It's a compound word that suggests a sexual deviancy-- that is, a departure from the original intent. And then he also uses the phrase strange flesh, a term that speaks of sexual activity outside of God's originally ordained intention.

Because he's using the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, we know that was, in that case, the sin of homosexuality. It's always been interpreted that way. It has throughout history been interpreted that way, until like the last decade. It has been challenged as to its interpretation. But we know the story, how the men of Sodom wanted to have homosexual relationships with two ambassadors that God sent to that town, and God judged that town.

Here's what's interesting. Amidst all of the mail that I got this week, after last week's message, one of the emails I got was from somebody I highly respect. Because he is a scientist, a historian, and the chief archeologist of the ancient city of Sodom. He is digging up, in the last decade, over the last decade, he has been digging up the city of Sodom in the country of Jordan. So he wrote me an email, and I wanted you just to see a part of that.

He said Skip, in listening to your teaching today, which was excellent, by the way, I had a thought. As an archeologist and a historian, I think there is something that current apostate church leaders, be they theologians or ministers, have completely missed, of which they are either factually or willfully ignorant. Their attack on embracing LGBTQ lifestyle always goes something like this. The Bible was written in ancient cultural milieus, and got accommodated himself to the people of those cultures.

That is to say we must therefore adapt to make scripture relevant to our evolving culture, realizing that the New Testament writers spoke to their day. Similarly, we must adjust for and speak to our day.

While this may sound logical, even reasonable, it is categorically wrong and entirely lacking in an understanding of history. Old Testament Revelation came at a time when sexuality was fluid, unfettered, and wives were kept for-- were for keeping households and having and raising children. The sexual lives of

men and women were often, if not usually, of a same sex nature, especially in military context.

This is what archeology reveals, and what the Old Testament presents as the ancient pagan reality. As Christianity eventually washed over the Roman world, Western culture shifted toward biblical morality. Judaism and Christianity were never accommodating to sexual perversion, but were clearly corrective to bring humankind in line with God's creative design. Now that the Western culture is moving away from the Bible, society is returning to what had been the old norms of sex without bounds.

God's Old Testament and New Testament revelation were prescriptive and corrective. To bend or reinterpret Revelation to accommodate meandering sexual norms not only ignores why it was given in the first place, but also strips Revelation of its power to keep humanity from destructive perversion. The LGBTQ movement is nothing more or less than the norms of ancient sexual license and perversion rising up in the guise of evolving morality, as if that is something noble. It is not.

Take away the corrective, the scripture, and humans readily return to their old vomit.

[APPLAUSE]The point Jude is making is that we need to remember-- truth needs a memory. We need to remember that God has never been afraid to judge even his own people called out of Egypt, even angels that he created, and even, in this case, whole cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding region. So truth needs a memory. Judgment has a history.

And then, the third basic lesson that comes from this paragraph is that corruption brings apostasy. Go down to verse 8. Likewise-- now, what he's doing is taking the past lessons bringing it into the present situation that he is dealing with. Likewise, also, these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. Yet Michael the Archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed over the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said the Lord rebuke you.

But these-- that is, these false teachers-- speak evil of whatever they do not know and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts. In these things, they corrupt themselves. Woe to them. Never a good word to hear. Woe to them. For they have gone the way of Cain. They have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

Notice again, he's reaching back into the Old Testament for examples. He again appeals to their memory. Now, he is speaking of the false teachers that he is dealing with in the congregation he is speaking to. And he speaks of their corrupt character, their corrupt thinking, their corrupt practices. That's verse 10. In these things, they corrupt themselves. So corruption leads to apostasy.

Now, I don't have time to unravel everything in these verses, because of time. But I want you to notice a few things as I untangle some of these verses. First of all, notice their authority. What was their authority? Now, I ask that because everybody has an authority base.

Why do you do what you do? If you were to ask me, Skip, what is your authority, it's not my mom anymore, right? She's in heaven. It's not my dad anymore. Both gone. My authority is the scripture. I'm not always perfect at doing it, keeping it, learning it. I still forget a lot of it.

But my aim in life is to be brought under the authority of the prescriptive, the corrective, the revelation of God. That's my authority. What was the authority of the false teachers? Notice in verse 8, these dreamers-- most every commentator will tell you, it probably refers to the fact that these false teachers use their own dream life as being of divine authority.

God spoke to me in a dream, and my dream says-- that was their authority base. A lot of times people will say gosh, I've had this weird dream. And I say, I always have weird dreams. Say I've been having this recurring dream. Do you think God might be speaking to me? Well, maybe. God can do anything he wants. But if you're going to live your life based on your dream life, you're going to be whacked.

I mean, my dreams are so weird and disjointed. I'm flying. I'm a winged creature, flying into a Volkswagen, driven by a dog, right? Doesn't make any sense. So translate that into real life. It can be quite dangerous. Somebody once said, dreaming permits each and every one of us to be quietly and safely insane every night of our lives.

So keep the insanity in the dream world.

Their authority is that they got dreams which superseded any authority that the church offered, that the elders offered, that the pastors offered, or that the scripture offered. That was their authority. Something else-- notice their vanity. He said they reject authority and speak evil of dignitaries. I don't exactly know what he's referring to. I'll take a stab at it in a minute.

But to sum it up, he's saying, whoever these people are and whatever they're speaking against, they are arrogant in their speech. They reject authority and speak evil of dignitaries. So we don't know if they were-- and commentators are very different in how they interpret it. Some think it's speaking against church leaders, the established authority within the church. People are mouthing off about church leadership.

Others think it's people who are against governmental authority. Be careful what you say about governmental authority. Because Paul said in Romans, it's all ordained by God. So it could be that they feel the hubris and pride and vanity to be able to do that. Others think that they're mouthing off against Spirit beings, angels or demons. Or it could be all the above.

I'll tell you this. Arrogant preachers love to stir up the pot. Arrogant preachers are equal opportunity haters. They just like to stir it up. They're angry at everything and everyone. But here's his point. Even Michael the Archangel, the most powerful archangel around, did not dare reproach Satan personally. He at least respected the authority structure, even though Satan was a fallen angel and has hell forever. Michael seemed to respect that, and said the Lord rebuke you.

Now, I'll tell you why this is important to me. I've been to enough Christian meetings where people talk to the devil. Satan, we bind you, and we want you to know-- I say whoa! Why are you praying to the devil right now? Why are you talking to the devil? The Bible says resist, the devil-- not carry on long conversations with the devil, not invite him to Starbucks for a nice latte and talk it out. Don't talk to him at all.

You can talk to God about him. But don't talk to him. By the way, just so you know, Satan is not scared of you. You do not intimidate him. It's not like, ooh, Skip walked into the room. Now the devil's-- he didn't care. None of us intimidate Satan. He is not scared of us. But he is scared of the God inside of us. And never forget this little quip. Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.

That's where you fight the battle. Get on your knees and talk to God about your enemy.

[APPLAUSE]

But these false prophets, they have dreams for their authority. They have vanity for their arrogance, speech. And notice their similarity. Verse 11, woe to them, for they've gone the way of Cain. They've run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and they have perished in the rebellion of Korah. I'm going to presuppose you know those stories from the Old Testament and just touch on them.

The way of Cain is religion without saving faith. That's the way of Cain. Cain brought his own little offering that he thought God should respect, and God did not. It is the way of pride in one's own works. I'm working hard. I produced this. I do my best. I attend. I give. I, I, I-- it is religion without saving faith. That's the way of Cain.

The error of Balaam-- you know the story Balaam, right? He was a prophet in the Old Testament. Very

gifted orator. The King of Moab hired him to curse the children of Israel. He ended up blessing them. Some of the most beautiful words in the Bible come from the lips of Balaam, the prophet. But he was money hungry, and he had a position of status. And he figured out a way that he could tell Balak, the enemy of the Israelites, how to watch God judge Israel.

He said listen, I don't need to curse them. Let's do this. Let's entice the young Moabite women, the prostitutes, to go into the camp of Israel, seduce the young men to have sexual relations with these women. And then they can bring out their little gods or little idols during that act. And that's idolatry. God will judge his people for that idolatry.

So listen, here is the error of Balaam. He leveraged his influence as a faith leader to lead other people astray. That's the error of Balaam. He leveraged his own influence as a faith leader. Today, he would have gone on Instagram or Twitter and announce to his followers who follow him and respect him or her why they should leave the Christian faith. That's the error of Balaam.

Then there's the rebellion of Korah. And Korah rebelled against God's authority by rebelling against the authority of Moses and Aaron, he and a few other people. I'm going to throw this. And this is very interesting. I thought you'd love to hear a tidbit. William Barclay, the New Testament scholar, said there was a sect of Gnostics in the early church, when Jude was writing. There was a sect of Gnostics called the Orphites who regarded Cain, Balaam, and Korah as great heroes, the three bad actors of the Old Testament, one that on every list of good people, they're not on.

And a group comes up and says, oh, these three bad actors, they're heroes. And that caught my attention, that you take people like that and say, they're my heroes. And I say that because that is a word I'm hearing more often when there's aberrant behavior. The trans community will say Caitlyn Jenner is a hero. Bruce Jenner, now Caitlyn Jenner, is a hero.

I think it was Newsweek Magazine that even said the new hero. And why? Because they've never taken the courage to make a stand. That is not a hero. A hero is somebody who puts their life on the line for somebody else. That's a hero. A firefighter is a hero. A police officer is a hero. A soldier who fights for our freedom on the battlefield-- that's a hero.

[APPLAUSE]

Not Cain, not Korah, not Caitlyn. Not Balaam, not BLM-- those aren't heroes. So what are we to do? What should we do? I'm going to give you a few take away practical things to maintain purity in the church.

Number one, be aware. Just know. Know the word of God. Let your life be shaped by the truth. Get some Bible plan going, where you are exposed and have the truth repeated over and over and over again, so your mindset, your worldview, is a scriptural worldview. Be aware.

Number two, be watchful. Jesus said, watch and pray. The enemy is already among us. We need to not go to sleep. We need to watch and pray. Be aware. Be very discerning when we hear things, and not just go yeah, whatever, right? So be watchful.

Number three, be careful. Be careful which ministry you support. Be careful which ministry you send money to. Be careful which candidate you support. One politician said the church needs to change what they teach to agree with the modern age. The church needs to change what they teach to agree with the modern age. Ain't going to happen. Ain't going to happen.

[APPLAUSE]

We don't need to change what we teach to agree with the modern age. We're here to change the modern age. I love what Billy Sunday said. Billy Sunday was a baseball player turned evangelist, and he was

pretty spicy. And he got up in the pulpit one day. And said, you know, they tell me I rub the fur the wrong way. Let the cat turn around, he said. So be aware. Be watchful. Be careful. Then, finally, be courageous. Know what you believe. Say what you believe. Don't apologize for what you believe in. Stand up for it. Defend the faith, once for all, delivered to the saints. It's going to take courage. It's going to take some backbone. It's going to take some bravery to maintain biblical separation.

So though Ted Turner said, the more I strayed from the faith, the better I felt, I say the more I stick to the faith, the better I feel.

[APPLAUSE] Father, thank you for the faith, the truth, once for all delivered to the saints. Thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ, who came out of love to save a world that could not be saved any other way. Thank you that he said, I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life. No one comes to the Father but by me.

I pray, Lord, that many will come, not by our compromise, not by accommodation, but by us loving and speaking the truth, and always setting forth the Gospel of a God who loves people enough to let his own son pay the ultimate penalty for their sin, so that he could shower them, and protect them, and preserve them in his love, all the way from Earth to heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen.

We hope you enjoyed this special service from Calvary Church. We'd love to know how this message impacted you. Email us at mystory@CalvaryNM.church. And. Just a reminder, you can support this ministry with a financial gift at CalvaryNM.church/give. Thank you for joining us for this teaching from Calvary Church.