



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Jude 11-13

“Christendom in the Light of the Epistle of Jude (4)”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We’re turning again to the Epistle of Jude, the brother of our Lord, and I’m going to read verse 10 as well as verse 11 through 13. So if you have your New Testaments, turn with me to Jude, the next to the last book of the Bible and verse 10. Jude, as you who have been attending the meetings know, is speaking about false teachers who are not only false teachers in the sense that they are proclaiming false doctrine, but are false teachers in the sense that they are also advocating immoralities, things that are contrary to the word of God in that sense as well. And so what he is speaking about is doctrinal and moral apostasy. And he continues in the 10th verse with his accusation of the apostates and he regards them as apostates and a description with illustrations of their errors. And so in verse 10 he writes:

“But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. 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. These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted. Wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.”

Certainly some of the strongest of the words of the New Testament writers directed toward apostasy and false teaching. May the Lord bless this reading of his word. Let’s bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for the gift of the word of God to us. The preservation of the writings of the prophets, the apostles, and the words of our Lord are surely one of the greatest, if not the greatest, benefits that Thou hast bestowed upon us. And Lord, we confess that so often we fail to take advantage of what Thou hast done for us, and the word of God has proved true in the fact that it presents us, outside of Christ, as being sinners who have departed from the truth of the eternal God in the heavens. O God, forgive us. Give us the desire to study the Scriptures, the desire to progress, not only in the knowledge of them, but also in the practice of the things that are pleasing to our Lord who has made it possible for us, though sinners, to enjoy the salvation that is eternal. We give Thee thanks. We worship our triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We worship Thee, Lord, for the righteousness and the justice that characterizes Thy nature and for the mercy, goodness, and lovingkindness that also characterizes Thy nature in which Thou hast shown to us in the gift of the Son of God to be our saving sacrifice.

We ask Lord Thy blessing upon our country, upon the whole church of Jesus Christ, not only Believers Chapel, but wherever the word of God goes forth in truth and in sincerity. We pray Thy blessing upon the bodies of believers who hear the word of God and for the unbelievers who come into the meetings of the saints who do not know our Lord. Lord, we pray that through the Holy Spirit Thou wilt touch hearts and turn them to him whom to know is to possess eternal life.

We pray for Believers Chapel and its ministries. We ask Lord that Thou wilt give guidance and direction to our elders. Bless our deacons. And for the members and the friends and visitors who are here today, we pray especially for them as well.

For those who have asked us to pray for them, we pray for them. We ask Lord that Thou wilt minister to them, glorify Thy name in the answer to their prayers and give them the willingness

to wait upon Thee for Thy work in their lives. We pray for those who minister to them and give them wisdom as they do.

Lord, we are indeed grateful for the Lord’s day and the privilege of honoring him who has made it possible for us to know with certainty the forgiveness of our sins. May the ministry of the word of God in this hour be pleasing to Thee Lord. May our hearts, the hearts of all of us, be open to Thee. For Jesus’ sake. Amen.

[Message] Our topic today is a continuation of our study of the theme “Christendom in the Light of Jude.” And this, I believe, is our fourth study in this remarkable little epistle. I think every time that I study the Epistle of Jude I become more convinced at how remarkable the epistle really is. And it is again impressing me with the magnificent way in which Jude, the brother of our Lord, has expressed his message and particularly in the light of the condition of evangelical Christianity, as well as professing Christianity as a whole with the applicability of what he is saying to the things that are happening among us and among others today.

Those of you who were privilege to hear the program “Primetime Live” recently, I was not, I was in Kansas City getting established for a meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, so I did not see it, but someone this morning told me that since my theology was therefore so deficient now that they were giving me a tape of it, and so, I’m looking forward to seeing it. But I’ve heard enough from some of you and others to know in general what has been said. But you will understand of course if you have seen that how applicable some of the things that Jude says in his book are to our conditions today.

The brother of our Lord in the section that we have read continues his volley of invectives in these verses. In fact he increases the severity of them a bit, both in number and in force. And I think as we read through and ponder them, I believe that each of us will be convinced of that fact. He follows the example of the earlier authors of Scripture, such as Moses, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, John the Baptist, and then the example of our Lord himself. And when we think of some of the things

that our Lord said, we can see that in this case at least the woe oracles ran in the family because you’ll remember in Matthew chapter 23 in one of the great sermons of our Lord, he speaks in the same language as his brother Jude by saying, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,” “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,” “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,” “Woe to you blind guides,” “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,” “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,” they must have gotten the message by about that sixth or seventh time that he said that. [Laughter] And he did not stop, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,” “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,” and then summed it up at the end with an additional statement directed to them, “You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?”

I want to say that there were many scribes and many Pharisees who were good and righteous men, and so we are not to think of all of them in the line of that language. Our Lord was speaking to the specific group that was before him. And we should remember that as believing Christians. And then also we should acknowledge this that in the professing Christian company today we have many, many individuals who fall under the same condemnation in spirit and in principle as is found in the language of our Lord. It’s not only our Lord, but Paul and Peter follow as well in the same kind of language. I made the statement and I think it’s true that the church age began with the acts of the apostles, and it ends with the acts of the apostates. Jude, 2 Peter, 2 Timothy, 2 Thessalonians, it’s interesting that they seem to gather with increasing force in the 2nd epistles of the New Testament, lay stress upon the fact that in the last days we are going to experience some of the things that we seem to be experiencing today. No one knows the times we are in. I would not be honest with you if I did not say to you I have no idea that this is necessarily the last times. We look only at trends. And we may see trends, and we should pay attention to them, but we do not know the precise time of the coming of our Lord.

Well we turn to Jude’s accusation of the apostates in verse 10 where he says, “But these men revile the things they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like

unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed.” Now when he says, “These men revile the things that they do not understand,” he seems to be talking about the angels which many of them have reviled the authorities because in verse 8 he had written, “Yet in the same manner these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.” So they spoke evil against the true beings of the heavenly world. So they slander the ones of whom they are ignorant. As a matter of fact later on in verse 19 Jude says about them, “These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly minded, devoid of the spirit.” And that of course is the fundamental reason why they are in the spiritual condition that they are in. They slander the truths of the word of God and the truth that the word of God says about the world about us and the heavens above and around us because they are ignorant of the word of God.

The Apostle Paul had said, “The natural man does not receive the things of the spirit of God, they are foolishness to him, nor can he know them for they are spiritually discerned.” And so when the gospel goes forth, the gospel goes forth to individuals who are born in ignorance of the truth of God. And it is only when the Holy Spirit works in the heart to remove the veil that we are able to understand truth. Otherwise we are devoid of the spirit, and these men are devoid of the spirit, and they slander the celestial powers above. But they not only slander the powers above, that is, misunderstand doctrine that the word of God talks about, but the individuals are also apostates morally because, as he says, the things that, “They know by instinct, like unreasoning animals,” that is, the things of the flesh, the things of the sexual world.

You know we often hear people speak about the condition of men today who are so involved in the sexual that they are like animals in their appetites and in their desires. Jude speaks to the point here when he says the things that they do understand, “They know by instinct, like unreasoning animals and by these things they are destroyed.”

This second condition that is the knowledge of things by instinct, like unreasoning animals and the destruction that they cause is the result of the failure to understand the doctrinal things. I mentioned last week in talking about our age which in the sixties began as a kind of sexplosion, a

word that was commonly used, was responsible for a great deal of the psychological difficulties, not only then, but of the present day. And I mentioned the statement of a former editor of the *American Journal of Psychiatry* and President of the American Psychiatric Association who said, “Premarital sex relations growing out of the so-called ‘new morality’ have significantly increased the number of young people who were in mental hospitals.” And he spoke specifically, and I’m quoting him now, that, “A more lenient attitude on campus about premarital sex experience has imposed stresses on some college women severe enough to cause emotional breakups.” This is the application of the same principle we find in the word of God here.

Now having made his accusation in verse 10 Jude, like a good preacher, illustrates it, and I think also like a good preacher, he illustrates it with the greatest of the illustrations, the best of the illustrations, the biblical illustrations. And he turns in verse 11 to discuss the departure, the apostasy of Cain, of Balaam, and then of Korah. Now this is called a woe oracle by scholars. The reason it’s called a woe oracle by scholars is for the simple reason that the term woe is used. Scholars, I don’t know whether my friends would call me a scholar or not, but I spent forty years in the scholarly world at least, scholars have the tendency of reducing something that is strong and forceful to an academic matter. And so this is called a woe oracle. But it’s much stronger if we just look at the language and let the language speak to us. Jude is saying, “Woe to them,” judgment is coming upon them. He describes them. He describes their fate. He illustrates it by some of the lessons from spiritual history. And like our Lord he utters his woes to illustrate the fact that these individuals today have advantages that they did not have and even more. May we expect judgment upon them? And we might also say this, I haven’t looked at the tape yet, but it’s certainly true that when we depart from the word of God in nineteen hundred and ninety-one, we may expect even more judgment than those who did not have the advantage that we have of the years of the pondering of the word of God and the many illustrations of the ways by which God demonstrates that he is still in control of our society. So here is a woe article and the lessons from history have to do with Cain and Balaam and Korah.

Now let me just briefly sum them up. We could, of course, spend a lengthy period of time for several Sundays on what Jude refers to. He regards his readers as knowing the story of Cain, the story of Balaam, and the story of Korah. So I'll just sum them up.

The way of Cain: Cain was the first heretic in the Bible. In fact, in Jewish literature he is called the first heretic. He was a rebel against God. It was evident from the things that God had said to Adam and Eve following the fall in the Garden of Eden that he was to be approached through a sacrifice. But Cain's sacrifice is not the kind of sacrifice that was evidently taught Adam and Eve. He brings a different sacrifice after all if God is to be approached by a particular kind of sacrifice, surely he will accept my kind of sacrifice. And you know the story, and you know that Cain's sacrifice was not acceptable. In it he manifested his spiritual unbelief and rebellion against God by not submitting to the teaching of the word of God.

We have many people today who still slander the way of approach to the Lord God through Jesus Christ and through his atoning sacrifice. It is our Lord himself who said, “I am the way, the truth, the life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” An exclusive way of salvation is taught plainly by our Lord and taught plainly by the other teachers found in the word of God and the individual who thinks that it is possible for him to come some other way will discover also, as our Lord also pointed out, that that way is not the way of life, but the way of death. Cain, we are told by the Apostle John, was of the evil one. And so as an emissary of Satan, he offers his sacrifice. His sacrifice is rejected. The apostates offer their interpretation of the Christian religion, but it's contrary to the truth and therefore they are apostates, they shall experience judgment, just as Cain did.

The error of Balaam: Balaam illustrates a man who is in the service of men, but not in the service of God. The story of Balaam is one of the most interesting of the Old Testament. In our tape ministry, Dr. Daniel has given some excellent instruction on Balaam, and I recommend it to you if you are interested in further discussion of the matter. The story of Balaam is primarily told out in Numbers 22 through 25, but then later on in chapter 31 some significant things are said about him as well. You remember when the children of Israel were journeying from Egypt to the land. They

camped in the plains of Moab beyond Jordan opposite Jericho. And Balak, who was the King of Moab, saw what Israel had done to the Amorites and evidently knew what God had done for them in coming out of Egypt, and he became very fearful because “They were numerous and Moab was in dread of the sons of Israel,” the Scripture says. And so,

“Moab said to the elders of Midian, ‘Now this horde will lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field.’ And Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time. So he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, at Pethor, which is near the River, (that is the Euphrates) in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying, ‘Behold, a people came out of Egypt; behold, they cover the surface of the land, and they are living opposite me.’”

And so, since Balaam was a well-known prophet, if we’d had “Primetime Live” at that time perhaps he would have appeared on it. At any rate, he was called in order to pronounce a curse against the children of Israel. Balaam was an avaricious man. He was a prophet. He was a religious man. He was the Reverend Dr. Balaam. If he wasn’t the Reverend Dr. Balaam before, he was the Reverend Dr. Balaam afterwards because no one has given us four greater prophesies of the Old Testament concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ than this man Balaam. Or well I maybe should take that back and say Isaiah did, but these are magnificent prophesies that Balaam utters out of the mouth of a false prophet because God has control of our tongues as well.

At any rate, Balak came to Balaam and ask him to curse the children of Israel, and Balaam, like all religious men, said Balak you know I’m a spiritual man. I have to consult the Lord. And so, I follow the Lord’s guidance. I wait for what the Lord says to me. And so, he went to the Lord, and the Lord said don’t go. And so he came back and he told Balak that he couldn’t come. And furthermore in telling him that he couldn’t come, he also intimated, I don’t know whether he realized what he was doing or not, but he intimated that there were some things that might influence his decision and perhaps he should ask for a second opinion. And so this is what he says, “Though

Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, (he’s already thinking about that, you see) I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the LORD my God.” I follow what the Lord tells me. The Lord tells me this. The Lord tells me that. I’m a prophet. That’s what I do.

Well, I don't want to develop the story. You know the story as well as I do. The story is simply the story of a man who was avaricious, who for the sake of money, disobeyed the Lord, and finally the Lord told him, all right go ahead, but you cannot curse the children of Israel because they are blessed. And so he went on his way, but the way in which he went on his way is so remarkable as a story that I want to just mention another thing. As he was going on his way he got on his donkey. And so they started on the way over to Balak, and we read in the word of God that:

“But God was angry because he was going, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him. (You can just see this spiritual prophet of spiritual things riding on his donkey. Then we read): When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand, the donkey turned off from the way and went into the field; but Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back into the way (a she donkey). Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path of the vineyards, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pressed herself to the wall and pressed Balaam's foot against the wall, so he struck her again. (What marvelous grace was shown by the Lord God to the disobedient prophet. And then we read): And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn to the right hand or the left. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam was angry and struck the donkey with his stick. And the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, ‘What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?’”

One of the great miracles of the Bible is not the donkey speaking, but that Balaam spoke back without being shocked and surprised [Laughter] so much that he couldn't talk. At any rate, the donkey spoke and Balaam spoke. Now the story, you know the story, but the point I want to make is simply this. This man is a man who put himself forward as in the service of God, not of men. But he really was in the service of men, not of God. He was an avaricious man. He was an antinomian man as we learn later on when he discovers he cannot curse Israel by giving prophecies against him, because God controls our tongues you know ultimately. But he finally persuades them to attack the Israelites by encouraging immorality, adultery and fornication. And Israel falls at the advice of Balaam.

And incidentally the fact that Balaam was where he was at the time where that happened was probably because he had come to collect his money. That's why he was there. He wanted to get that house full of silver and gold after he had failed to curse the children of Israel as God said. But now I want you to notice the text. It's written in such a way that you're sure if you ponder it to get the message. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, but the prophet didn't, when the donkey of the Lord angel of the Lord, the second time, but the prophet didn't. And for the third time when the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, but the prophet didn't. There could be no more beautiful illustration of the fact that even though a person is a prophet and knows about the Lord God, but if he does not have through the new birth the presence of the spirit within his life, he's blind to spiritual things. And even the ass has more spiritual understanding than the prophet of the Lord. Isn't that startling? When the ass saw the angel of the Lord, when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, and the prophet is blind and darkened.

That's the condition of our Christian church in many places today. We have individuals who do not understand, who do not know the gospel, who read the word of God but who do not know the truths of the gospel that concern our Lord Jesus Christ. Spiritually speaking, they're like Balaam. And even the donkeys have a better understanding.

There is one other thing I think here, and it's important for us to pay attention to. O, the danger of, what someone many years ago called, in my presence, the danger of trafficking in unfelt truth. That's what Balaam did. He trafficked in unfelt truth. That's what you or I do if in the companies of believing people we have fellowship but we do not know our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ but the words of the Lord and the words of the gospel and the words about the triune God in heaven and the words about salvation are upon our lips. And when we talk about our Christian lives if we do not have the reality of the presence of the Lord and the salvation that he gives with the knowledge of our sin, that's precisely what we do. We traffic in unfelt truth. And the history of the children of Israel and the history of the Christian church is to the effect that in the companies of believing people, professing believing people, there are always those who are doing just that. It's a word of warning to all of us that our profession must be a possession of the truth, the error of Balaam for reward.

The gainsaying of Korah: now the illustration of Korah is not as well known as the story of Balaam, but Korah was an individual who with two hundred and fifty other Israelites sought to claim for him and for his people a share in the political and spiritual rule of the children of Israel. Korah came to Moses and to Aaron and said you take too much upon you. You need help. You need others to be with you. And so Korah and the two hundred and fifty, the story is told in Numbers chapter 16, asked that they be given part of the rule of the children of Israel which God had given exclusively to Moses and to Aaron. The individuals, maybe I'll read a couple of verses,

“Hear now, you sons of Levi, is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them; and that He has brought you near, Korah, and all your brothers, sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking for the priesthood also?”

God had given the priesthood to Aaron and to his sons, and Korah now is objecting. He’s rebelling against divine revelation. It’s the same kind of rebellion except it’s different in form when we object to the teaching of the word of God and say salvation’s not through Jesus Christ alone; it’s through our good works. It’s not through Jesus Christ alone, it’s through our church. It’s not through Jesus Christ alone; it’s through the ordinances which have been given to us through water baptism. It’s not through Jesus Christ alone, it’s through culture, through education, through growing up in a Christian home begin taught as a young person in the faith of our fathers. All of those things are simply modern errors like the error of Korah.

And so, Jude when he speaks about the rebellion of Korah or the gainsaying of Korah, the objection of Korah is speaking concerning the classic example of an antinomian heretic, antinomian in the sense that he is against the word of the Lord, first place. God had given the work to Moses and to Aaron, and he intended for them to have it. And of course they did have it, but here is objection. His group of two hundred and fifty people were cezmatic [ph 36:28] and were seeking to draw the hearts of the children of Israel away from Moses and Aaron with persuasive words. They are the type of the heretical teacher of every day Old Testament days, New Testament days as well.

In 2 Timothy I think it is about verse 19, the Apostle Paul speaks similarly of those, “Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.’” But Korah and his two hundred and fifty refused to do that, and as a result they experienced judgment.

The early church subordinations, Jude said, are just like the subordination of Korah and those who were associated with him. And I’m sure that as Jude mentioned this there would have come before the people to whom he was writing the final solution of the problem by the Lord God when he called upon Korah and his two hundred and fifty to come out and stand and the children of Israel to stand on the other side and we read in verse 31 of Numbers 16, then it came about,

“As he finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them split open; and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah with their possessions. So they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. Fire also came forth from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense.”

Certainly, a very strong expression of the power of the Lord God and that his word is to be taken seriously. What they did was to defy duly constituted leadership, what might be called the establishment of that day. They gathered a mob. They invented their own way of approach to God, falsely claiming holiness. They were delighted to be different, and they were able by their persuasive words to gather followings. And incidentally, it's sometimes forgotten, Korah and the two hundred and fifty were not unbelievers. They were believers. They were believers in Yahweh. It's not a case of them not professing belief. They were believers in that sense. But their belief turns out to be simply a profession and not a reality, another warning for all of us who profess faith in Christ that our profession be real.

Well, now those are certainly vivid illustrations, but I must say the terms that Jude uses in verse 12 and verse 13 seem, if anything, to be more shocking. There is a diatribe in metaphors to describe the errors of the apostates, and Jude ransacks sky, earth, sea and heaven for his metaphors to describe the errors of the apostates. We'll just run through them, make a few comments before we close. He says in verse 12, “These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear.” The love feasts, incidentally, that statement is an evidence of the fact that in the early church their principle meeting was the meeting to gather and observe the Lord's Supper, “the love feasts.” And so characteristic of the early church was a great stress on the meeting at which the Lord's Supper was observed. So far as we know it was always observed in all their meetings.

So we can see the great importance that the apostles placed upon the observance of the Lord's Supper. We've lost a great deal of that. In the professing Christian church, the Lord's Supper is observed frequently only once a month in their meetings. Often quarterly in the church in which I grew up, quarterly. And sometimes semi-annually in our churches today, and furthermore it is observed usually in a way which causes one to think it's simply something attached to the meeting in order to say we have observed the Lord's Supper. Fifteen minutes in which a couple of prayers are offered and the elements are taken. Nothing like the great stress the early church placed upon the Lord's Supper. “These men,” he says, “are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear.” They are sunken reef, like sunken rocks which sailors feared because if you don't see the peril it's so easy to hit the rock or the reef. And Jude in using this striking figure stresses the fact that the apostates are dangerous. They're arrogant and selfish as well. Mariners and hidden rocks go together.

When I was preaching in Bellingham, Washington many years ago, about twenty-five, for a week in a Bible conference one of the men who was there was a captain with United Airlines. And when this passage was expounded he came up to me afterwards and he said, “Lewis you might be interested to know of an expression that we pilots use.” And I listened because all preachers are always looking for illustrations, and I remember his name was Tommy Graham, a fine Christian man. He said, “You know, the hidden reefs of Jude remind us of what we face when we fly into Seattle, for example. Seattle is a city that frequently has fog. There are high mountains right by Seattle and other mountains a bit to the east of the city and just a little bit east of it, so they have to know precisely the way into the airport in Seattle.” But not only that, out west there are many mountains with which, in those days, the pilots had to contend without radar that they have today. He said, “We have a figure of speech for flying into a cloud and discovering that the cloud is covering a mountain. We call them stuffed clouds.” Well that's what an apostate is. He's a “stuffed cloud.” You think when he opens the Bible and he talks about things that are found in the word of God that he surely is giving us some information from Holy Scripture. But the facts are he may be a

hidden reef, or a stuffed cloud. If you do not, in your own study of Scripture, like the Bereans, search these things daily to see whether these things are so. That’s why so many people follow individuals like Tilton and Lee and Swaggart and Bakker and all of the crowd of televangelists with some exceptions that lead astray so many people and impoverish so many people as well, hidden reefs.

“Caring for themselves,” the second thing about them, not caring for those to whom the minister, “Caring for themselves.” Feeding themselves, the text suggests, so they feed themselves, they don't feed you with the word of God, they feed themselves. Thirdly, they are “clouds without water.” This is the first of four metaphors from nature, all relating to the claims of false teachers to be prophets and teachers. They’re clouds without water. Any Texan can understand this. When there’s lack of water and a cloud appears on the horizon, gives the heart a lift, doesn't it? You ranchers, if you’ve ever been on a ranch or grown up on a ranch, you know that. When the times in which you need water come, you look at the clouds very seriously and wait for them to pour out some benefit, and when they’re dry clouds, “clouds without water,” what a disappointment. They are enlightened, so Jude says, but they are empty clouds. They don't really have the truth. But they give you the impression they have it. They stand behind the pulpit. They even open Holy Scripture. They read Holy Scripture.

What is so striking to me in some of our churches in which apostasy is taught from the pulpit and the audience does not realize it’s apostasy, they even sing the great hymns of the Christian faith in which the truth is expressed, but no one makes the connection because of the spiritual death that falls upon a congregation that after a lengthy period of time does not have the gospel preached within it. So they’re “clouds without water,” enlightened but empty.

I think the Proverbs in chapter 25 and verse 14 has something to say on the point. I didn't cite this in the first message, but the writer of the Proverbs, Solomon, says, “Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of his gifts falsely.” And then he says they are, “autumn trees without fruit.” That’s disappointing. I don't have much of an illustration of that, but we do have

several pecan trees, four of them to be exact, in our back yard and when the fall comes, this time, the month of November, that’s when you go out to gather your pecans, and it’s, if you love pecans more than I love pecans, it would be very disappointing, and it was disappointing this year because the pecans are not so good. They look good on the outside often, but on the inside there is nothing there. So they are “autumn trees without fruit.” “By their fruit, you shall know them,” Jesus said.

Now, he says they are, “Twice dead.” I’m not positive about what that means. One commentator has said it means dead in sin before their baptized and dead through subsequent misdoings. Well, of course, baptism does not bring life to anyone. But it might mean dead in sin before you are converted, but largely dead afterwards because your life does not reflect the truth, or it may mean simply you’re dead before you made your profession and you’re dead afterwards because it’s not a genuine profession. Or it may mean that they are dead while in this life and dead in the lake of fire which is their ultimate destiny, so, apostasy in the fall of the church.

They are “wild waves of the sea,” in which the continual production of those waves is a kind of filthy scum that litters the sea shore when the tide recedes. Isaiah talks about that in chapter 57 and verse 20 of his book when he makes this statement. Isaiah 57 and verse 20, “But the wicked are like the tossing sea, For it cannot be quiet, And its waters toss up refuse and mud.” Anyone who’s lived around the sea knows that after a storm one will find the scum and the muck and the mud and all of the things that have been washed up on the shore there evident.

There’s a constant change in modern theology. There’s a constant change in Evangelical Theology, as a matter of fact a serious change in conservative theology was expressed in the Evangelical Theological Conference of the past few days. But there is a constant change going on. Some of it is good, and some of it is not so good. If we look at the history of the Christian church we’ve had a great deal that is not good. Neo-orthodoxy came with its teaching on Scripture, its teaching on the resurrection, its teaching on some other points, it could be called simply driftwood. John Hick, one of the leading liberal professors and ministers of the day, when he writes on Christ’s person and Christ’s atonement and he’s highly respected, a Presbyterian minister for that matter, a

British Presbyterian even the Presbyterian church in the United States would not accept his ordination because they knew of his doctrines, but his doctrine is nevertheless popular. His comments on the person of Christ, his comments on the atonement, seaweed; process theology, so prominent and popular today, even among some evangelicals, dead fish. One well-known evangelical who does not understand the grace of God but who writes constantly, his writings could be classified as wet muck. The modern gospel of Universalism can be described by the litter, the beer cans, and the trash that one finds on the seashore after a storm.

And then a word directed to those today in evangelicalism who are abandoning the doctrine of eternal punishment for other forms of understanding of the future, notice the last clause, falling stars. “Wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever,” shooting stars that fall out of the sky into darkness. You remember as a kid how you went out and someone would say, “There’s a shooting star,” and by the time you looked it was gone. So you longed to see one yourself, until finally you saw one. You saw a star streak across the sky and suddenly there was darkness. What a vivid picture of an apostate. He looks like the real thing for a brief while, but it leads to darkness. But Jude doesn't stop with darkness. He says, “Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.” Darkness is the figure of the lost condition of individuals who pass out of this life without receiving Christ as Savior. It’s the place of the suffering of eternal torment.

The fire, another figure of the New Testament, describes the nature of the torment. Our Lord said it is prepared for the devil and his angels, but he acknowledges that others also will enter into that eternal fire, eternal darkness. And so Jude says the examples of the transgressions of nature's laws, the reefs, clouds without water, wild waves of the sea, wandering stars, all of these things parallel the lawless behavior of the wicked. This is the brother of our Lord. This is a man who speaks by the Holy Spirit. This is a man who speaks the word of God to us. Let us pay attention. Let us pay serious attention to it. And let us remember this is not simply for teachers. It’s for those who are so easily misled by the teachers.

I know you didn't know that I was such a great expert on the heavens, but I'd like to tell you one more thing and close with this. You didn't know I was such an expert on the North Star did you, or the pole star? This star of the Northern hemisphere, you're noticing I'm reading, has guided mariners for hundreds of years no matter where one may be in northern latitudes the direction north may be found by reference to the north star. It's easily located. Didn't you know that? It's located, there are two stars in the Ursa Major, the big dipper, or the great bear called the pointers. They always point to the North Star or the pole star. The star is about one degree from the celestial pole. Did you know that? I know that. It says that on the paper that I'm reading from right here. I got it from the encyclopedia. This star is about one degree from the celestial pole and it's the brightest star in the constellation Ursa Minor, or the little bear. It's of the second magnitude in brightness. The Greeks called the pole star “Cynosura.” That means “the dog's tail.” I'm sure that those of you who have looked you probably can see some resemblance. We have the English word “cynosure” which means “the center of attraction.”

So we have, ““Wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever,” but we have the North Star, the pole star, the pole star of the word of God. That's the pole star. That's the star that is to guide us. If we want to know where we are, open the Scriptures and ponder them and read them. Look at what they have to say about your condition. Look at what the Scriptures have to say about your future. Look at what the Scriptures have to say about Jesus Christ and the way by which you may be delivered from eternal judgment. Rejoice in what you find there for there is the offer of eternal life, eternal blessedness, and eternal fellowship with the triune God in the pole star of the word of God.

We invite you to turn to him and believe in him. And in so doing relying upon him and upon the word of God, you won't be misled by the false teachers that abound, those that often have the trappings of truth who know and are wise enough to know that there are people who still are impressed by the idea of the word of God, the idea of the Lord Jesus Christ, the idea of Christianity and the truths that are proclaimed Christianity. But if you turn to our Lord, believe in him; trust in

him who offers you and me eternal life, bound up in the merits of the cross of Calvary. And if that life becomes yours you have a confidence with which to face the future and the present as well. May God turn your heart to him whom to know is life eternal. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are so thankful for this little Epistle of Jude which is an epistle we need in the day in which we live. We thank Thee for the warnings concerning the apostates. We thank Thee for the encouragements that are given within it as well to turn to Thee through Christ and receive the comforting promises of the word of God concerning a relationship with the eternal God that is forever life saving forgiveness of sins. If there should be someone here Lord who does not know our Lord, O God, through the Holy Spirit touch them in their unbelief and ...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]