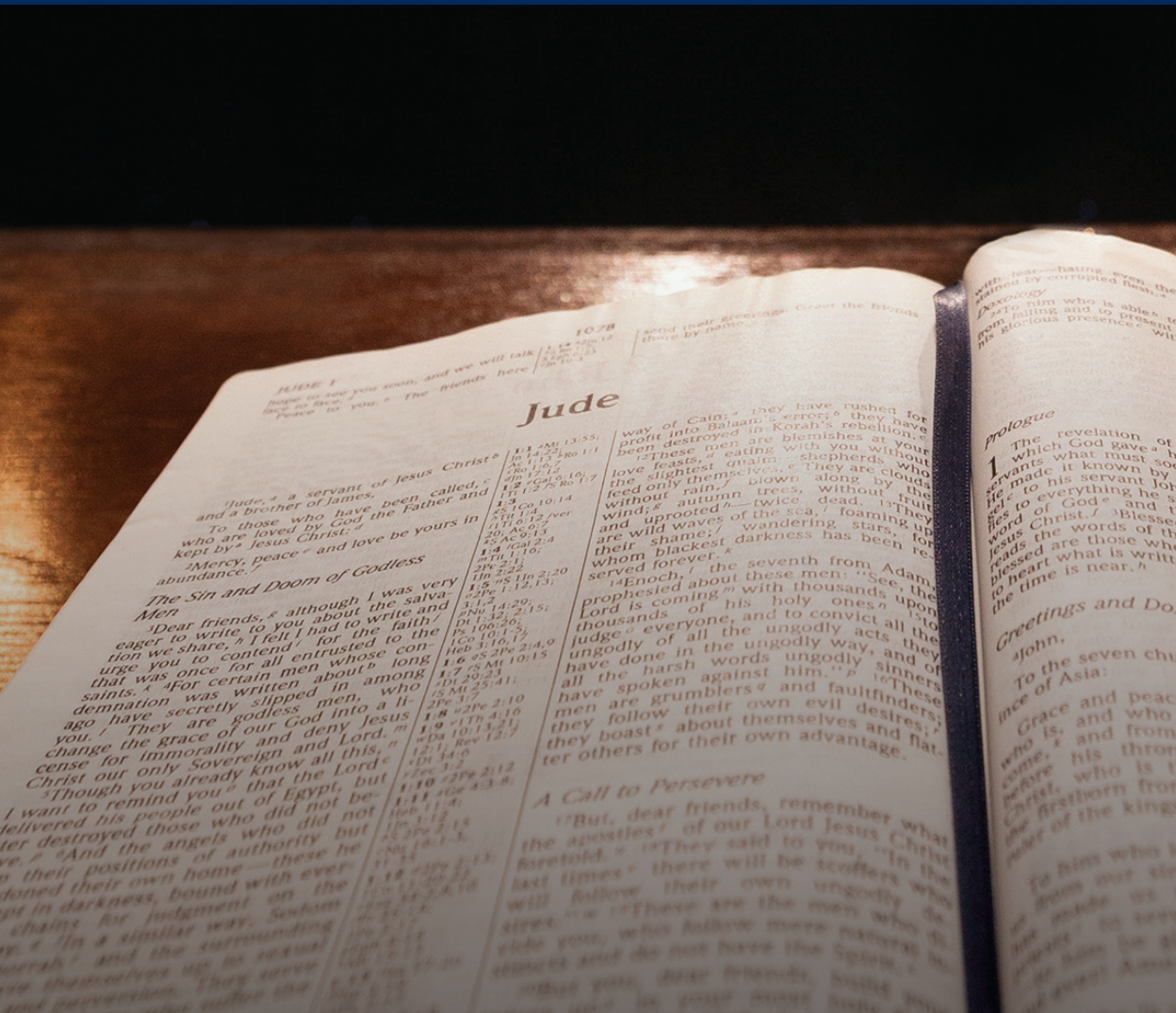


# JUDE



## SOUTHWESTERN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

## *Jude 6<sup>1</sup>*

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Hopefully, I will not be offensive to remark that there are two kinds of preaching: text-driven preaching and bad preaching. Some may say, “That is a pretty strong statement. Do you not know that people have been saved listening to topical preaching?” Yes, I know that. I have a dear friend, the pastor of a large church in Houston, who was led to Christ by a drunk Baptist sitting on a stool in a bar. The drunk Baptist turned and said to him, “I feel sorry for you.” To which Sal Sberna said, “Why do you feel sorry for me?” And he said, “Well, what we are doing does not please God; but, in your case, you are going to go to hell.” To which, Sal asked, “Why am I going to go to hell?” And he replied, “Because you have never been saved, and you are acting like you have never been saved.” I do not know how he thought he was acting; but Sal said, “I do not want to go to hell. What do I do?” The Baptist responded, “If I had a Bible, I would show you,” to which the bartender, overhearing them, asked, “Do you need a Bible?” He pulled a Bible out from under the bar counter and handed it to the man. The drunk Baptist then showed Sal Sberna how to be saved. Sal went home and slept off the drink a little bit and read from the Bible one more time; then he got down beside his bed and trusted the Lord. What do we conclude about a thing like that? Is this a new methodology for evangelism? Go to your local bar, get drunk, and witness to somebody? No, this approach is not a new method for evangelism but illustrates how God honors the presentation of the gospel whenever and wherever it takes place. It still remains true that the only good preaching is text-driven preaching.

The only unique responsibility a preacher has is to teach his people the Word of God. Many pastors today are building their congregations based on a “let-me-tickle-your-ears” theology and approach to preaching. But truthfully, if God has said anything in the Bible, for anyone to think he can improve upon it is downright unbelievable *chutzpah*. The responsibility of the preacher is to open the Word of God and to teach its message. In fact, my definition of text-driven preaching is this: *helping your people to read the Word of God*.

<sup>1</sup>This article is a transcription of an address by the same title delivered to the Advanced Expository Preaching Workshop, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2–3 March 2015.

Have you ever been listening to a preacher preach and even as he is reading down through the text without offering any commentary, all of a sudden you see something you never saw before? Something leaps off the page and grabs you around the neck and chokes you right down to your knees, and you ask, "Why did I never see that before? What is going on here?" Even without explaining the words of the text, the preacher has helped you read the Word of God. That is what ought to be happening in congregations Sunday-by-Sunday and week-after-week. Help your congregation get hold of the Word of God. One of the ways to do this is to enable the people to get hold of the doctrines of the Bible.

In the study, anything new will not likely be discovered. Two thousand years of Christian history and four thousand years of biblical history are recorded. During those four thousand years, the Prophets, the Apostles, and then the Christian theologians have pondered over almost every idea. Most of the bad ideas have been jettisoned, but many ideas were good and wonderful. There will not be anything new. If a preacher does come upon a once-in-a-lifetime insight, which no one has had before, on a verse, he is a miracle worker and has done an amazing thing.

Although this may appear to be discouraging, the truth of the matter is that preachers need to proclaim the clear doctrines of the faith accepted since apostolic time. Those who think they have discovered something new soon treat this thought as a hobbyhorse and preach on it until their people are hopelessly confused. Just preach the basic doctrines of the Word of God.

One of those doctrines has to do with the origin of evil. It is a topic on which one should not long dwell. Two mistakes are made in preaching on the origin of evil and the demonic. The first mistake is to become absorbed in it. The identity of the antichrist does not matter; rather, what is important is the identity of the Christ. Preach the Christ and provide only a little attention to the antichrist. The antichrist was not Hitler or Stalin, nor is he Barack Obama. We do not know his identity, nor is it our concern as to who the antichrist is. The other mistake is the exact opposite: ignoring the origin of evil and acting as though the demonic simply does not exist. This mistake also opens the way for the exercise of the demonic. Doctrine, which simply means "teaching," must be proclaimed from the pulpit. The person in the pew needs to be taught the doctrines of the Word of God, and what we know about these doctrines comes through text-driven preaching.

This important truth is clearly seen in the book of Jude, verses 5–6.

But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And 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” (Jude 5-6).<sup>2</sup>

That simple text, as no place else in the Bible, introduces the reader to an event that happened pre-cosmically, before God created the universe, or at least before God created humanity. In the dim, distant recesses of infinity, God had a confrontation with early evil, presented here in this passage.

This text provides insight into the origin of evil. Jude says, “The angels did not keep their proper domain [first estate].” What exactly is an angel? Often I ask my students, “How many wings does an angel have?” Some will say “two,” and others, referencing Isaiah, say “six.” To which I ask, “Well, what about the three men who approached Abraham at the oaks of Mamre? How many wings did they have?” Apparently they did not have any wings. Why is that? According to Hebrews 1:14, angels are “ministering spirits” who are not primarily physical beings. However, an angel may assume whatever physical appearance is needed in a given situation, which is why there is variance in the Bible about the appearance of the angels.

An angel is a spiritual being who is a creation of God, and he (like human beings) is made, apparently, in the *imago Dei*—in the image of God. What does it mean to be made in the image of God? There are many aspects to being made in the *imago Dei*, but above all else it means to be ceded an attribute that only God has, i.e., the ability to make choices: to choose to serve God or not to serve God, to select being a moral individual or becoming an immoral individual. God has that freedom; and, of course, He has always chosen righteousness. Evidently, when He created angels and human beings, He also gave them that ability. This truth is highlighted when one considers a dog. I have taught my dog many things, but he does not have morality. He does not have the ability to assess moral decision-making, nor does he have the ability to decide to worship and follow God or to reject and not follow God. He is not made in the image of God.

The next thing we learn about angels is that they are ἄγγελοι. This word was used in the earliest development of the Greek language without any connection to the Bible. An ἄγγελος is someone who brings good news—a news-bearer. Angels are spiritual beings who are created in the *imago Dei* with an obvious opportunity to choose, and they are messengers. Although God uses them as messengers, He does not need them for messengers any more than He needs humans. God, by definition, needs nothing; but as a matter of the grace that completely encompasses God’s being, He sees fit to share Himself with a variety of created beings, at least two of which—angels and humans—are made in the *imago Dei*.

Eventually with the passing of time, we can only conclude that a certain number of the angels, in choosing right and choosing God, had their natures perfected so that they no longer are able to do anything but choose

<sup>2</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the New King James Version.

God. There is coming a day when that will happen to all redeemed humanity as well. I look forward to that time. When I sin now, I am hating myself and say, "God, why did I do that? Please forgive me." I look forward to the day when I do not have to keep going back to God to say, "Lord, I was so rebellious. Please forgive me for what I thought. Forgive me for what I did." The day when our natures are made perfect will be wonderful indeed.

Although some of these angels chose good, the Bible also says that some of these ἄγγελοι did not keep their first estate. As a matter of fact, three different expressions in Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4 describe what happened to the fallen angels. First of all, these angels "did not keep their proper domain," or "their first estate" (KJV; the Greek word is ἀρχή). Gerhard Delling, in the *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (translated by Geoffrey Bromiley as *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*), states, "ἀρχή always signals 'primacy,' whether in time: 'beginning,' *principium*, or in rank: 'power,' 'dominion,' 'office.'"<sup>3</sup> John 1 contains the phrase, Ἐν ἀρχῇ, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The word has an emphasis upon primacy in this verse. John is saying, "At the very outset, the beginning, from the time that there was nothing else, there was always the Word." There was never a time when our Lord did not exist. From the beginning, the Word of God has existed eternally.

This use of ἀρχή is its temporal expression, but the word also may refer to a dominion, which is the sense in Jude. These angels did not keep their ἀρχή. Used in this way the word references a highly exalted position, a function that would logically be above all others.<sup>4</sup> When this usage is compared with the idea that "man was created a little lower than the angels" (Ps 8:5), there is a sense in which the angels, who were created before human beings, have authority over the human race. The fact is that angels exercise authority over humans. Angels are in a position of exalted authority, and God has ceded that authority to them. But apparently there was a problem. Before their natures had been perfected so that they would choose only God, there was a rebellion in heaven. The "anointed cherub" described in Ezekiel 28:14, identified as Satan, was looking into the mirror one day. He said, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the wisest in the land?" The mirror answered back and said, "Oh, anointed cherub, there is nobody like you. You are without a doubt the most beautiful of all the angels of God, and you are in fact so wise that there is no way to plumb the depths of your wisdom." Satan listened to it and said to God, "I am weary of your being God. Why should you be God? I think I am going to be God." God replied, "Probably not in my lifetime."

The Bible says that there was a confrontation in heaven, which is described in the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse. This fight is presented almost as though it were a future event, and some people think that it will be. However, chapter 12 of Revelation is actually the first case of instant replay,

<sup>3</sup>Gerhard Delling, "ἀρχω," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 478–89.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

that wonderful modern convenience that enables you to get a sandwich and something to drink and miss the most important play of the game, but without worry because you are going to see that strategic segment twenty-two more times before the end of the evening. Revelation 12 is instant replay. There was war in heaven. Satan and his angels lifted up themselves against God; and according to Jude 6, 2 Peter 2:4, and Revelation 12:9, the rebellion of Satan involved a certain number of these angels, and they were cast out of heaven. These angels did not keep their high standing. They forfeited their position.

Now I digress to address a pastoral issue. Pastors and preachers have been elevated by God to a high position—not so much a position of authority over the congregation but one of taking the authority of the Word of God and proclaiming it. In doing so, they must heed the words of James, “Let not many of you become teachers” (Jas 3:1). Why? Knowing you “shall receive a stricter judgment” or “greater condemnation” (KJV). Those God elevates to a high position need to take into consideration that their failure to discharge the duties properly will result in the judgment of God. This judgment will be more severe than any other kind of judgment known to the human family. To be called to be the pastor of a church is a serious matter. The work of the pastor of a church sometimes seems mundane, difficult, and sorrowful in every kind of a way, but being a pastor is the most exalted position in the universe. Vance Havner was right when he said, as I recall his observations, that the pastor of the smallest Baptist church in North Carolina would be stepping down to accept the presidency of the United States. God has granted to one called to be a pastor an honor beyond any other available. With that incredible honor, however, comes a responsibility so important that to fail to discharge it with the morality of your life, the sanctity of your soul, and the voice of God in your preaching, is to fail utterly and completely.

These angels did not keep their high estate, and they “left their own abode.” The word for “abode” is an interesting word, coming from the Greek οἶκος, meaning “house.” They left their own houses. Here is a clear application: In failing to discharge the duties to God, you will lose your home. That is exactly what happens. History is full of those who could be lined up and called by name because they have lost their ministries. All through my life I have watched preacher after preacher fall. During the great revival movement on the campus of Baylor University years ago, young evangelists from that school went all over the United States of America preaching, and God moved mightily in those revivals. However, a study on where these preachers are now and looking at their lives would reveal that very few of them stayed true to God until the end. Most of them embarrassed the kingdom of God by losing their homes, their families, and other unfortunate actions. They left their homes, and that is what the angels did here.

“He has reserved [them] in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.” Make sure you understand that the angels did not win. No one wins when he disobeys God. No one prevails when he rebels

against the Lord God. There is always a fearful price to pay. We must keep this truth ever before our eyes and become dependent upon God's grace and forgiveness. In sinning, our homes are lost along with our high estate, and we are left with nothing but waiting on the judgment of God.

In 2 Peter, the apostle uses a word that is absent in Jude's account. "God . . . cast them [the angels] down to hell" (2 Pet 2:4). This word in 2 Peter is a *hapax legomenon* derived from τάρταρος, a well-known concept in Greco-Roman mythology referring to the place for evil spirits. There were other Greek words available to Peter. Γέεννα, for example, was a word that actually arose out of Hebrew. It was well-known because of the Valley of Hinnom—the valley where sacrifices were made to Moloch. Hinnom was located just to the south and slightly to the west of the city of Jerusalem at the time when the Israelites entered the promised land. In the Valley of Hinnom was a large stone statue of Moloch where the children of Moab would come and place a newborn infant into the sizzling hot arms of that god as a sacrifice. The children of Israel were appalled by this practice and found nothing good about that valley. They would not build their homes there, nor would they go into the valley. They made it a trash receptacle, which burned constantly, day and night. When Jesus described the place of eternal punishment, He called it γέεννα—the closest thing anybody could imagine to what it would be like to be confined in everlasting judgment.

Peter could have used γέεννα, but he used τάρταρος. Why did he do that? I believe he was trying to communicate specifically to a Greco-Roman audience at that point in time. He knew they were familiar with the concept of τάρταρος, whereas the concept of γέεννα might have been lost on them. He used a reference from mythology known to them—a word that stood for a dismal, dark place, a dungeon where evil spirits were confined.

Thus far we have seen three things pertaining to these angels. First, they did not keep their high calling. Second, they lost their house. Third, they are chained in a place called τάρταρος forever until the Day of Judgment when they shall be completely judged. There are a few conclusions to be drawn.

First, although the passage does not answer all questions, this much is clear: Angels are a special created order of messenger-beings created by God, made in the *imago Dei*, and a group of them forfeited their position and are chained in τάρταρος until this day, awaiting the Day of Judgment.

Are all the evil angels there? Apparently not. We do not have any clear explanation about much in the world of the demonic. Lacking that, any other information about the origin of the demons, to see the demonic world as a spiritual world of fallen beings is a logical extension. Although we do not find this point expressly stated in Scripture, we may deduce that the vast majority of these fallen angels were confined in τάρταρος until the Day of Judgment.

How many of them were there? We do not know since the Bible nowhere records their number. We do know that most were confined; but for

reasons best known only to God, all were not confined. For this reason, we must deal with the world of the demonic. We know it best in terms of the work of Satan.

Satan is generally conceived as the “Tempter.” This is an appropriate title, but one must remember that according to the Bible we are tempted when we are drawn aside by our own lusts (Jas 1:14). In other words, Satan does not really have to “tempt” a person to sin. He falls on his own, following after his own lusts. What, then, is the principal work of Satan? The principal work of Satan and the whole demonic world is to deceive. Satan is the great deceiver who, in a thousand different ways, has perfected ways that the C.I.A. can only dream about to deceive people. His purpose is ultimately to deceive us into choosing to follow some way other than God’s way.

How does one deal with the Devil? How do we confront him, face him, and deal with demonic spirits that cross our paths? A further question may be asked if I believe in demonic possession, and I do. Furthermore, unfortunately, the work of the demonic is something that I see on a regular basis. This should not be surprising since other pastors are aware of the demonic at work. Jesus encountered the demonic, and those who follow Him will encounter the same. Demons are a clear and present danger but should never become the focus of our attention.

Some years ago, while I was a student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, a student became infatuated and so deeply involved in demon possession that he believed just about everyone had a demon. He would spend hours casting demons out of people. At that time Leo Humphreys and I were running a coffee house ministry in the French Quarter. I would go in every night about eleven o’clock and work until about two o’clock in the morning, witnessing to runaway kids from all over the country. One night this student was sitting with a young woman. They were across the table from each other, and both were obviously exhausted. I greeted him and asked, “How are you doing?” He said, “Well, not too good.” I said, “What is the problem?” To which he replied, “This young woman has twenty-three demons.” I said, “I understand the problem.” He said, “They are difficult and I cannot get rid of them.” I asked how many he had gotten, and he said, “I have only gotten two.” So I said, “There are twenty-one more.” He said, “That is right.” And I said, “Well, you look like you could use a cup of coffee. Allow me to take over, and I will work on those other twenty-one.” So he thanked me and shuffled off to get a cup of coffee. I sat down and said to her, “Has there ever been a moment that you have repented of your sin, placed your faith in Christ, and trusted Him to save you?” And she said, “No sir. I have never done that.” I said, “May I tell you how you can do it?” She replied, “Please.” So I explained to her how to be saved and asked, “Are you ready to do it?” She said, “Oh, I really am.” So she prayed and received Christ; a beautiful smile came across her face, and she relaxed. About that time, my friend came back and asked, “How are you doing?” I said, “I got them all.”



The great need of people is conversion, new birth, and salvation. There are rarely issues with demons when biblical exorcism is necessary, but what is usually needed is conversion and a personal relationship with Christ. One should be careful not to get too involved in the demonic, while having a healthy respect for its reality. These spirits are real and powerful. The work of Satan is well beyond the house of ill repute or the bar. Satan has all of that going his way. His activity is much more likely to be in an evangelical church. What Satan wants, above all, is to thwart the work of the Lord in saving souls. He will do everything he can to halt God's work.

Is there anything else in the Bible that would sustain this truth? Consider a passage from the Old Testament:

Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"You were the seal of perfection,  
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.  
You were in Eden, the garden of God;  
Every precious stone was your covering:  
The sardius, topaz, and diamond,  
Beryl, onyx, and jasper,  
Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold.  
The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes  
Was prepared for you on the day you were created.

"You were the anointed cherub who covers;  
I established you;  
You were on the holy mountain of God;  
You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.  
You were perfect in your ways from the day you were  
created,  
Till iniquity was found in you.

"By the abundance of your trading  
You became filled with violence within,  
And you sinned;  
Therefore I cast you as a profane thing  
Out of the mountain of God;  
And I destroyed you, O covering cherub,  
From the midst of the fiery stones.

"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty;  
You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor  
(Ezek 28:11–17a).

To whom was Ezekiel referring? Or consider Isaiah 14 where the King of Babylon is addressed in a similar way. To whom was he referring in Isaiah? There are scholars who may claim, “You are reading too much into that. This is just highly poetic, stylized language about the King of Babylon and the King of Tyre.” They are correct to claim these passages are highly stylized and poetic; however, the claims made in these texts go well beyond the evil capacity of either king. These passages refer to Satan as well as to the kings of Tyre and Babylon.

Now why does Ezekiel address the King of Tyre as if he is talking about Satan? Because he is talking about both. Consider Isaiah 7:14, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son.” Why does Isaiah not use the usual word for “virgin”? This question has caused all kinds of problems. There is a word in Hebrew that always means “virgin,” but it is not used in Isaiah 7. The prophet used a word that could mean a “young woman,” which is the way the RSV translates it—“a young woman shall conceive.” This translation rightly created a great controversy because the proper rendering is “a virgin shall conceive.” In the case of Isaiah 7, he used a word that had a dual applicability. It was once fulfilled by the birth of Isaiah’s second child and again much later in a far greater fulfillment with the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ from the virgin, Mary. It was a dual-fulfillment prophecy. Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 offer the same thing—an expression of dual fulfillment. There are judgments on both kings, but they become exemplary of the sojourn of Satan, the anointed cherub that covered and kept not his first estate.

In conclusion, let us address this question: How do you deal with the devil? Consider Jude, verse 9: “Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” Michael is in a battle with the devil over the dead body of Moses. Speculations abound as to what this means, but in consideration of the history of Israel, and the whole human race, these speculations do not have to go too far. If the devil could have procured the body of Moses, he almost certainly would have elicited the worship of the body of Moses by all of Israel. The history of Christianity points to the reality of this problem of false worship.

Some time ago I went to Annaba—the modern city where Hippo Regius was located—the home of the great Augustine. There is nothing left of the original church but the foundation. As you enter the large church, which is now on the hill, you will find part of Augustine’s arm, or so they claim. There is a bone there, and people come to the church to venerate it. There is a tendency for humans to worship physical objects in the place of God. What was going on here in the debate over the body of Moses is clear. But Michael, you will notice, does not even bring against the devil a reviling accusation: “You foul spirit, you. Get out of here!” He does not do that. All he says is, “The Lord rebuke you.”

In the church of God, to indulge in things that even Michael the archangel would not do brings shame. We are not to engage in name-calling or

gossip in our churches. We need to preach the truth. The preaching of the truth will carry the day. The first thing to do is not become too vile in the approach to Satan. After all, God created him. As Luther said, “Even the Devil is God’s devil.”

What are we to do then? Revelation 12:11 says, “They overcame him,” using νικάω—“to conquer,” giving us the word, “Nike.” “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.” I would like to think that I can whip the devil with my armament and be able to shoot him, but you cannot hurt a spiritual being that way. All my armament is totally useless against Satan. I could try to amass knowledge and try to out-think him, but he has been at this so long that he can thwart any argument. There is a weapon that the devil and his angels cannot stand. It discombobulates them. It weakens them. It cuts them down. “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.” What an incredible and unusual weapon! But that is what happened. “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.” This is how to defeat Satan.

Satan works as the ultimate deceiver. If he can deceive you into calling right “wrong” and wrong “right”; and if he can deceive you into preaching something that is half-baked and without biblical background or if he can deceive you into getting off the track just a little bit—just an infinitesimal quarter of an inch—that is all it takes completely to miss the moon, for a quarter of an inch here is 500,000 miles wide 250,000 miles away. We have a terrific responsibility with a very serious enemy. God help us to defeat him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.