



JUDE: “The Acts of the Apostates”
Week 14: “Recognizing False Teachers, Part 4”
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Review:

- A. This week, we will continue our study of **Jude vs. 11**.
- B. It is in this verse that we read a statement of profound judgment against the false teachers and apostates of Jude’s era (“*Woe to them!*”)
- C. As the Bible remains the most relevant book of all time, we have seen that Jude’s concerns are just as applicable today as they were then perhaps even more.
- D. I am reminded of the sobering words of Jesus in **Luke 18:8**.
 1. “*However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?*”
 2. NOTE: Jesus’ words here do not suggest we will see trends of improvement. He is not affirming that things are going to get better.
 3. Rather, according to the truth of the Bible, we can expect to see further erosion and error concerning faith as we get nearer and nearer to the Lord’s return...
- E. Now, Jude is showing here that he is a masterful teacher.
 1. He explains his positions with clear statements.
 2. He is direct and confrontational. He is not politically correct. (Naturally, this is also uncomfortable for many in our time).
 3. He supports his arguments with illustrations that his readers know and understand.
 4. And Jude’s pattern is to use real-life examples from Old Testament history.
- F. Last week, we looked at the example Jude provides of Cain, the backdrop of which is found in **Genesis Ch. 4**.
- G. We focused on the phrase “*the way of Cain,*” and we learned several things about Cain and about this curious phrase:
 1. Cain was a religious man, at least by standards we often use today.
 2. Cain had an outward showing of faith, but it fell short of being the real deal.
 3. Cain had direct communication with God, however, his encounters with God and his discussions with God did not lead to a right relationship with God.
 4. Cain believed in God. Perhaps this is the hardest element to grasp in this example.
 5. Cain was SO close, yet he was SO far. His belief in God was limited to being an intellectual one.
 6. He knew God in his mind, but not in his heart. His belief in God was not one that brought about any essential change.
- H. **And so, we learned ‘the way of Cain’ is defined as Cain exercising his own choices against God’s choices.**
 1. God had prescribed a way to Himself which was by faith – that was God’s choice.
 2. But Cain came to God by his own acts and deeds instead – by his own desires and systems. That was Cain’s choice.

3. Cain tried to meet God on his terms, not on God's terms. He knew the truth, but he departed from it.
 4. Cain, by virtue of willfully departing from the truth, became the first recorded apostate in Scripture.
- i. **Jude 11 contains three focal points or key phrases. From these three Old Testament examples we have clear understanding.**
1. They are, in order:
 1. *"the way of Cain,"*
 2. *"Balaam's error,"* and
 3. *"Korah's rebellion."*
 4. As we will learn, these three elements are behavior patterns that show a heart's corruption.
 5. Hear me clearly: **These are outward choices of an inner condition!**
 6. They all share something in common. They all overlap at key points.
 7. At the same time, they are each unique in their own way, which is why Jude calls each one of them out separately.
 8. This week, we will look at the remainder of **Jude vs. 11**. It reads, *"...they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error, they have been destroyed by Korah's rebellion."*
 2. **Question: "What's the background to this phrase, 'Balaam's error?'"**
NOTE: It's mentioned in other places in the latter books of the New Testament.
 1. But in **2 Peter 2:15** it is called *"the way of Balaam"*
 2. In **Revelation 2:14**, it is the *"...doctrine of Balaam" or "teachings of Balaam."*
 3. As the Bible gives us perspective concerning the end-times character of churches and their leadership, this theme of Balaam receives focus.
 4. The reason is Balaam's problems will become more pervasive as the end times develop.
 3. **The full story of Balaam is contained in Numbers Chapters 22-24. Here are the high points:**
 1. Balaam was a prophet of sorts – the context shows he was a bit of a sorcerer. He dabbled in the ways of a dark culture.
 2. Balaam was summoned by King Balak to curse the Israelites as Moses was leading them toward Canaan. King Balak feared the Israelites.
 3. King Balak promised to pay Balaam handsomely for bringing evil upon the Israelites. This is probably a hint of the reputation Balaam had. He had perhaps brought evil on others before.
 4. God came personally to Balaam, telling him NOT to curse the Israelites. And so, Balaam sent the king's messengers away.
 5. The offer was increased to Balaam. He was pressed further by promises of more money, and this came from more prominent individuals. The terms became more tempting for Balaam.

6. Again, he had another visit with God about the situation. Here is where we can start to read between the lines. From our text in **Jude 11**, we know the offer had become tempting for Balaam.
7. This time, God permitted him to go, however he was to speak only the message that God would give him. (NOTE: The story makes it clear God was not happy with Balaam by this point).
8. So, Balaam went, and along the way he discovers he is riding a talking donkey. His donkey sees the Angel of the Lord in front of it and refuses to cooperate. (Angel of the Lord = "theophany:" a preincarnate manifestation of God).
9. Balaam mercilessly beats his donkey 3X, and the donkey miraculously protests. The donkey speaks to Balaam's in Balaam's own language.
10. I think the text is making clear that God was showing displeasure for the true condition of Balaam's heart.

SIDENOTE: There is no evidence of Balaam's surprise at the donkey speaking - - why?

- (Unlike a prominent donkey today, there was no 'word salad' here. This donkey spoke clearly and to the point.)
 - Perhaps Balaam is SO fixated on the reward he is going to get from the king that nothing else phases him. He is obsessed about his 'profit and gain.' His mind is elsewhere...
 - Remember also, Balaam was a bit of a sorcerer – perhaps he was used to some bizarre and otherworldly things.
11. Balaam offered to turn back and go home only after seeing the Angel of the Lord for himself. He was permitted to see what only the donkey had seen before.
 12. But God instructed him to go on, and He reminded Balaam once more that he was to speak ONLY God's message. (We can see here that Balaam was a 'wild card.')
 13. Balaam gets to where he's going. King Balak took him to the top of several mountains, ordering him to curse the Israelites that were visible on the plains below. Instead, Balaam announces God's covenant of blessing on the Hebrew people.
 14. Balaam also prophesied the deaths of pagan kings and he adds that a "star" would come out of Jacob. This was a Messianic prophecy.
 15. Balak and Balaam parted ways on unfriendly terms, and the story ends on a few interesting notes:
 - a. Israel continues to conquer the region's pagan rulers, and....
 - b. Later, in **Numbers 31:8**, the Israelites also kill Balaam by the sword.
 16. We subsequently learn in **Numbers 31:16** that Balaam had ultimately persuaded the Israelites to turn away from proper worship and turn to idolatry.
 17. He may have prophesied the right things about them at one time – but his fuller motives later came out.
 18. We are not given the details of how that all happened, but the full story makes this tragedy clear.

19. So, let's get straight to the lessons from this story of Balaam - we need to keep the subject of Jude in view: 'false teachers and apostates.'

NOTE: There are three points I want to make here: mixed motives, mixed methods, and mixed message.

D. LET'S START WITH MIXED MOTIVES

1. Balaam, at one level anyways, knew God much like Cain also did. But it was not a real relationship: it was 'arm's length.'
2. Balaam carried out God's commands, but he was much more driven by money and personal gain rather than a genuine love of God.
3. Money, benefits, and personal reputation lured him and were important to him: This is evident in **(Numbers 22:29 he cared too much what others thought of him...)**
4. Balaam's initial interest in Balak's "curse Israel" project was aroused by the enticing monetary offer **(Cf. Numbers 22:7)**.
5. Increasing this ante caused him to reconsider even though God's first instruction was "No, do not do it!"
6. Though Balaam gave voice against Balak's offer of money **(Cf. Numbers 22:18)**, it was clearly a major motivation in his life.
7. **2 Peter 2:15** says that Balaam "*loved the wages of unrighteousness.*"
8. Our primary text in **Jude 11** adds that false teachers have "*rushed for profit into the error of Balaam.*" Their motive is personal gain.
9. The greater counsel of God's Word makes it clear that Balaam's heart desired material profit and reward, and he was willing to compromise to get these things.
10. NOTE: Ironically, Balaam did not get his pay! **(Cf. Num. 24:10-11)**.

E. NOW, LET'S GO TO MIXED METHODS

1. Balaam blended knowledge of the One True God with occult practices **(Cf. 'fee for divination' in Num. 22:7)**. He had a reputation for doing this!
2. NOTE: Again, he was not surprised by a talking donkey! He'd seen some strange stuff.
3. His normal habits were ones of sorcery **(Cf. Num. 24:1)**. Said another way, Balaam broke his normal habits and patterns this one time.
4. Balaam's methods tried to build a bridge between the true religion of Israel and the religions of the surrounding nations. He blended culture and popular methods of his day with God's standards. He mixed deception with truth.
5. From God's perspective such choices were (and still are!) incompatible.

F. AND LASTLY, LET'S GO TO MIXED MESSAGE

1. NOTE: We can see this developing in **Numbers 22:32**.
2. Here is evidence that Balaam was thinking of compromising what God had intended him to do. His intentions were 'reckless,' and God was prepared to kill Balaam.

3. This *'reckless path'* was defined as one that was not focused on doing what God had intended for him to do
4. Here's the bottom line: God knows our hearts, and it is strongly implied that Balaam had little desire to do what God wanted.
5. He needed the miraculous words of the donkey and stern warning of The Angel of the Lord to get him to return to doing what was right.
6. NOTE: As I indicated, the Bible does not record how Balaam later and specifically strayed, but it does become clear that he strays at some great level.
7. He later corrupts Israel, leading them into sin and idolatry (**Cf. Numbers 25:2; 31:16**). **Revelation 2:14** also makes this clear.
8. Balaam, we learn, ultimately conspired with Balak behind the scenes (perhaps to get his fee?) in order to erode and bring down Israel.
9. If he could not have his own way with the first go-round, he evidently sought to have his way the second go-round.
10. Ultimately, Israel killed Balaam when they conquered the heathen nations to which he was evidently still allied (**Cf. Numbers 31:8**).

G. WHAT ARE OUR TAKEAWAYS? Let's remember a few things here....

1. Peter, Jude, and Paul all predicated (remember the words of **Acts 20:29**) that *'false teachers will arise among you...'*
2. The fact is we have all been warned! Right here – right now! These words are divinely-inspired to arrest our attention TODAY!
3. We often fail to recognize these false teachers because they appear on the outside – by cultural definitions - to have it all together.
4. We cut these false teachers some slack because every now and then they say something correct.
5. We let ourselves think the situation is OK. We suppress that 'still small voice' deep down inside that wisely says to us, "Things are not OK."
6. Balaam is given to us as an example of one who can SAY the right things, and appear to BE the right thing, but be very wrong and very misguided on the inside.
7. Motivated by money and personal gain, Balaam compromised his decisions, his standards, and his mission. His story should serve as a warning to all of us.

II. **let's look at "Korah's rebellion."** As we will learn, Korah's story shares something in common with the stories of Cain and of Balaam. Here are the basics of this story found in **Num. 16:1-35**.

- A. Korah was a great-grandson of Levi, and of the tribe of Levi (recall, this tribe was uniquely selected by God as being the one to do 'the Lord's work' (**Cf. Numbers Ch. 16**))
- B. Korah, for reasons we can only guess at, develops feelings of self-importance. He nurtures the wrong ideas and he thinks he's got it all figured out.

- C. Perhaps it's because he's a Levite; he knows he's been singled out by God for a special purpose.
- D. He obsesses over personal goals for himself, and over ideas ABOUT himself. The larger text suggests that these were born out of pride and a sense of entitlement.
- E. Like most people that have this sort of pride, Korah seeks out sympathizers for his cause. They agree with him and they all start murmuring together.
- F. Korah surrounds himself with a closely-knit people that will support his ideas, parrot his thoughts, and stand with him no matter what (**Cf. glance at details of Numbers 16:1-3**).
- G. In other words, like other apostates we are told of, he *'gathers disciples or followers around himself.'*
- H. Basically, Korah feels he's not getting enough credit and honor (**Cf. Numbers 16:3**). He feels he's not receiving what his position and credentials deserve. He feels he's not being heard.
- I. He thinks the leadership is at fault, so rather than looking at his own vices, he preferred to clash with Moses and Aaron.
- J. He's mostly upset that somebody else is getting the attention that he covets, that things aren't happening as he thinks they ought to. So, he takes his complaints to the top.
- K. Korah basically argues three points to Moses and Aaron:
 1. You are no better than anyone else.
 2. Everyone in Israel is also holy, everyone else also has 'their act together,' and...
 3. We don't need to obey you (Moses & Aaron), because you need to see me as I see myself. You need to see the bigger picture. You need to pay better attention to me – to US!
 - a. It should be concerning here to see how Korah twisted the first two statements – both are basically true - to reach the wrong conclusion.
 - b. As we learned with Balaam's example, saying the right words doesn't necessarily mean there is a right heart behind them.
 4. Anyway, Moses is alarmed at these developments! (**Cf. Num. 16:4a**). He falls facedown in response. He is totally taken aback.
 5. Moses – being a proper and righteous leader – sees the REAL spiritual problem underneath the words and actions of Korah.
- L. There are already SO MANY 'applications' in this story – but notice the contrast between Moses and Korah.
 1. Notice how humility serves without coveting recognition.
 2. Notice how pride always is concerned with what others think.
 3. Notice how personal opinions and a sense of personal rights always strives against God's plan.
 4. Notice how man's selfish wishes are adversarial to God's leading and God's way.

6. Moving on: Moses ‘vets out’ the situation; he is a wise leader, and he tries to deal with Korah’s issues with the least amount of public disruption.
7. He calls together the inner circle of Korah’s friends (these are Korah’s *‘followers,’* the ones who have listened to Korah’s grumblings over the leadership of Moses and Aaron – **Cf. Numbers 16:19**), and he visits with them.
8. But, Moses finds their minds and hearts poisoned too (**that is evident back in Numbers 16:12-14**).
9. Moses learns that the errors and attitudes of Korah have also become the errors and attitudes of Korah’s supporters.
 - a. This is always the pattern of grumblers and discontents – they spread their poison to others who have a spiritual problem as they do.
 - b. They do not pursue anyone whose faith and views are right. They go after those whose faith and standards are weak.
10. This is why Moses transitions from alarm in **vs. 4** to anger in **vs. 15**. **WHY?**
 - a. Korah and his ‘followers’ had rejected God's order of having an appointed priest and leader before Him on behalf of the people.
 - b. This priesthood pre-shadowed the Messiah as our high priest, who would be the intermediary for the people according to **Heb. 4:14-15**. There was a Divine intention behind the way things were!
 - c. Korah essentially believed that he and the people did not need God’s direction. They did not need God’s design.
 - d. They felt they did not need an intermediary, and they felt they could approach God their own way. They didn’t need God’s order of things.
 - e. In the process of following their own selfish and short-sighted views, their view of God got smaller, their view of themselves got bigger, and they diluted a picture of God's promise of the coming Redeemer.
11. Moses understands the situation with Korah is very bad. It’s an infection – a cancer – within the entire body, and so he turns the whole matter over to God.
12. He summons Korah, his allies, and all their sympathizers (250 in all...) to appear before the Tent of Meeting the next day along with himself and Aaron.

(NOTE: The fact that all 250 appear as directed – and don’t pick up on the hint that something bad is about to happen. This suggests how much Korah’s attitudes had infected them. They had become marinated in their personal grievances and discontents. They think they are right and the leaders are wrong).

13. Moses ‘traffic cops’ the entire assembly (**Cf. Num. 16:22-27**) and separates out Korah, his allies, and their families from the rest of the Israelites. NOTE: This was a bad time to be standing with the wrong crowd.

14. Moses basically 'lays out the fleece' in front of all of Israel, and he tells them how God will determine if 'Korah and company' are right - or whether they are wrong (**Numbers 16:28-30**). There is an instantaneous miracle!
15. The story wraps up with everybody that had a 'wrong attitude and wrong heart' in this situation getting cursed by God.
16. Korah and his inner circle get instantaneously buried, 250 of their fellow grumblers get burned, and a whole host of Israelites die from the plague (**Cf. Numbers 16:41+, 49**). That tells you the problem of Korah's discontent had spread quite a ways.
17. A bright spot in this story is seen in **Numbers 26:11** – Not all Korah's line perished; some of them clearly did not agree with Korah.

III. **Question: "Why is Korah's example provided to us in Jude 11?"**

A. **To answer this question, let's remind ourselves of core issues of Jude:**

1. Remember, Jude is feeling urgent about the need to '*contend for the faith.*'
2. He's feeling passionate enough about all this that he's changed his intentions. He was going to write about one thing in **vs. 3**, but he confesses he's being led by God to write about another instead.
3. This is because '*godless men*' who were among the congregants (**Cf. Jude 4**). They were misrepresenting Jesus Christ, and they had departed from the truth.
4. Jude called these men '*dreamers*' in **vs. 8** because they don't see and don't understand themselves accurately.
5. They don't really see and understand God and the duties of wholesome service to God. They don't understand that they don't understand. They are clueless dreamers.
6. And so, to illustrate and reinforce his passion, Jude gives multiple historical examples so his vitally important points do not go unheeded.
7. Jude's conclusion (and this is repeated several times in his book) is that such men – such apostates and false teachers - will be divinely judged and destroyed. This is clearly seen in the various examples Jude provides.

NOTE: So, what are the takeaways from this story of 'Korah's rebellion?' NOTE: I have three to offer as I wrap up here, and these are not in any particular order....

B. **First, the effects of apostasy are not limited to the original party - -**

NOTE: Many others were brought to destruction by Korah's rebellion.

1. We see this in other examples too (Cain killed his brother, Balaam led Israel into idolatry, and so on)
2. The effects of sin (especially apostasy) are destructive. The damage goes well beyond the original point or person of infraction - - nearly always!
 - a. This is why Jude exhorts us to "*contend for the faith*" (recall, that is as much about offense as it is defense)

- b. A passive response to apostasy, or looking the other way when it is evident, is neither neutral OR proper.
- c. Apostasy, a willful departure from truth, must be dealt with directly. It must be confronted or apostasy's destruction will always spread.
- d. Just as "...sin entered the world by one man" (**Cf. Rom. 5:12**), God warned Cain in **Gen. 4:7** that "sin was crouching at the door, desiring to have him..."
- e. Apostasy spreads quickly and easy – we must actively contend against it.

C. Second, an obsession with a personal agenda usually expresses itself in opposition to what is right and proper.

1. Ultimately, this sort of posture is against God's order of things and against God's authority. This is a posture that is very difficult to correct.
 - God confronted Cain and gave him a second chance, but Cain would have nothing to do with it. He chose to express his anger instead.
 - God gave Balaam the message to say, but this did not stop Balaam from doing what he REALLY wanted to do after that.
 - God had set up a proper leadership structure and a proper order of things, but Korah was obsessed with his rights and wishes, and he wanted the honor and attention instead.
2. Not only is a strict personal agenda in opposition to God's authority, but it nearly always ends up violating one's conduct within personal relationships.
 - Cain deceived Abel. He lured him into a field where Cain killed him.
 - Balaam circled back around to King Balak after the fact. Balaam instructed the king on how to corrupt the Israelites.
 - Korah gathered around him a group of murmurers and supporters which reinforced his 'safety in numbers' feeling. But those people were destroyed along with Korah because he had convinced them to think and react as he was doing.

D. And third, it is easy to let partial truth have the same effect as full deception.

1. Remember Korah's three points to Moses and Aaron:
 - (1) You are no better than anyone else;
 - (2) Everyone in Israel is also holy; and...
 - (3) We don't need to be accountable to you
- c. The 'truth' of his first two statements was twisted and manipulated so Korah could reach and defend his wrong conclusion – not just to himself, but also to his followers.

2. Many people have received a 'tincture' of the right doctrines, but not the essential 'whole enchilada.'
 - d. It's like a TRUE AND HONEST vaccine. You receive a tiny bit of polio in order to keep you from getting the whole condition of polio.
 - e. Many people get a tiny bit of the truth on Sundays, and this keeps them from receiving the full counsel of God's Word as they most need to.

3. HEAR ME CAREFULLY AND CLEARLY:
 - f. One of the most effective ways of keeping people from a right relationship with Jesus Christ is to declare just a part of the Gospel.
 - g. One of the most effective ways to keep people from the full accountabilities of the Word of God is to emphasize just portions of it.
 - h. And one of the quickest ways to fall into the perils of apostasy is to believe certain parts of Scripture are more important than others (we need to remember and apply the words of **2 Tim. 3:16**)

"ALL Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,"

Put another way, ALL Scripture is useful for:

- Showing us what is right
- Showing us what is not right
- Returning us to what is right, and
- Keeping us in those things that are right