

THREE NOTORIOUS OT APOSTATES

TEXT: JUDE 11

Introduction:

1. We preachers like our three-point outlines, and Jude 11 lends itself to an easy three-point outline.
2. Tonight, we are going to look tonight at three notorious OT apostates (Jude 11).

I. THE WAY OF CAIN

II. THE ERROR OF BALAAM

III. THE GAINSAING OF CORE (KORAH)

I. THE WAY OF CAIN

1. Cain was the first son born to Adam and Eve (Genesis 4:1).
2. He is mentioned three times in the NT.
 - “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain...” (Hebrews 11:4).
 - “For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous” (I John 3:11, 12).
 - “Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain...” (Jude 11).
3. What is “the way of Cain”? It is the false way. It is the way that seems right to the worldly-minded man.
4. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Pro. 14:12; 16:25).
5. It is the worldly religious way – good works, sacraments, join the church, keep the Golden Rule, etc.
6. It is the Masonic Way, the RC way, the liberal Protestant way, etc.
7. It is the way of the false cults and false religion. Illustration: Mormon bishop told his Baptist son that he could not believe in salvation by God’s grace through faith in Christ.
8. When you get right down to it, there really are only two ways: salvation by God’s grace through faith in Christ; and salvation by man’s own efforts.
9. The “way of Cain” is the worldly way. It is the proud way. It is the way of the self-willed, arrogant, unregenerate religionist who thinks he can approach God on his own terms.
10. But beloved, it has to be on God’s terms. Cain refused to approach God in God’s prescribed manner. And ever since, man has devised his own form of

- worship, rather than obeying God and worshipping God in the way God has instructed.
11. Merrill Unger has written, “Cain’s false worship represents the fountainhead of all spurious religion, the essence of which is man’s approach to God in his own way rather than in God’s prescribed way” (*Unger’s Commentary on the OT.*)
 12. In Genesis 3:15, God said to the serpent, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman (Eve), and between thy seed (children of the devil) and her seed (children of God); it (good seed) shall bruise thy (Satan) head, and thou (Satan) shalt bruise His (Christ’s) heel” (cf. Romans 16:20).
 13. Then in the very next chapter, Genesis 4, we see this enmity developed right away – this enmity between the two seeds – the wicked Cain and the righteous Abel. What a vivid picture of the strength of sin!
 14. Cain was a tiller of the ground, whereas his younger brother Abel was a keeper of sheep (4:2).
 15. “And in the process of time,” Cain offered up a sacrifice to God, and so did his brother Abel. Cain offered up the fruit of the ground, and Abel offered up the firstlings (firstborn) of his flock (4:3, 4).
 16. But God was not pleased with Cain’s offering (4:4, 5). Some offerings are not acceptable to God.
 17. From the earliest pages in Genesis we see that God is to be worshipped through sacrifice, and this sacrifice must be appropriated by faith. “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain...” (Heb. 11:4).
 18. Cain’s worship was unacceptable to God because Cain did not acknowledge the necessity of an atonement for sin. The Scofield Bible says Cain is a “type of the religious natural man, who believes in a God, and in ‘religion,’ but after his own will, and who rejects redemption by blood” (pp. 1328, 9).
 19. God did not accept Cain’s offering because Cain refused to come by faith through grace.
 20. Cain assumed that he was deserving of the Lord’s acceptance, but Cain did not do it God’s way. Hebrews 9:22 says, “And without shedding of blood is no remission.”

II. THE ERROR OF BALAAM

1. Balaam is one of the strangest men who ever walked across the pages of the Bible. We are introduced to him in Numbers 22:1-5.
2. A few chapters later, we read that Balaam was killed by the Israelites when they defeated the Midianites. His death is recorded in Numbers 31:8.
3. Like Cain, Balaam is referred to three times in the New Testament.
 - “Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the

wages of unrighteous-ness; But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet” (II Peter 2:15, 16).

- “But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication” (Revelation 2:14).
 - “Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward...” (Jude 11).
4. Numbers 31:16 refers to “the counsel of Balaam” (cf. Rev. 2:14).
 5. Peter refers to “the way of Balaam.” In his letter to the church of Pergamos, our Lord refers to this “doctrine of Balaam.” And Jude refers to “the error of Balaam.”
 6. And going back to Numbers 31:16 we see “the counsel of Balaam.” The counsel of Balaam refers to Balaam’s suggestion to ruin by fleshly seduction the people who cannot be cursed by divine permission.
 7. Revelation 2:14 applies it to corruption in the local church – modern day Balaams advocate an unholy alliance with the worldly and with the ungodly. Its emphasis on the flesh pollutes and defiles the church.
 8. Balaam is certainly a complex character. He had a great reputation as a soothsayer (fortune-teller), and is referred to as a soothsayer in Joshua 13:22. Numbers 24:1 tells us that Balaam used “enchantments” (magic spells, sorcery).
 9. Divination, sorcery, and fortune telling are strongly condemned in the Bible. Peter refers to Balaam as a “mad” prophet (II Peter 2:16).
 10. There is no doubt but that Balaam acknowledged the true God of heaven, and that God came and spoke to him (Num. 22:8, 9).
 11. Therefore, Balaam is an enigma. He was a soothsayer and a hireling, and yet he uttered some of the most beautiful words in the Bible (Num. 24:17).
 12. “To good and evil equal bent, And both a devil and a saint” – Ralph Erskine.

III. THE GAINSAYING OF KORAH

1. HA Ironside said, “The way of Cain is false religion. The error of Balaam is false ministry. The gainsaying of Korah is false worship and rebellion against Christ’s authority.”
2. Korah was a Levite who conspired against Moses. The Bible says in Numbers 16:2 that Korah and his fellow conspirators, Dathan and Abiram, “rose up before Moses.” And some of the wicked rebels that

- followed Korah were “princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown” (16:2, 3).
3. Influential troublemakers are far more dangerous than your regular run-of-the-mill troublemakers. This is why we must be careful to put humble people in leadership positions.
 4. Moses was humble and he handled this crisis in a wise manner. Numbers 16:4 says, “And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face.”
 5. God judged Korah and his fellow rebels. “And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense” (Numbers 16:32—35).
 6. Jude refers to this in verse 11, where he says they “perished in the gainsaying of Core.”

CONCLUSION:

The stories of these OT apostates remind us that God’s work can only be done by those who are spiritually qualified (saved and walking with God).