

THE SINS AND THE CHARACTER OF APOSTATES

Jude 11-13

Introduction:

- A. There are many "bad guys" in the Bible.
 - 1. Judas, Goliath, Belshazzar,
 - 2. There are some of the most familiar.

- B. Jude condemns the sins of these apostates by comparing them to three Old Testament characters.
 - 1. "woe unto them."
 - 2. woe = an announcement of doom.
 - 3. Cain, Balam, and Korah.

I. THREE MEN FROM THE PAST VS.11

- A. "for they have gone in the way of Cain."
 - 1. gone = to lead along.
 - 2. way = a way, a highway, road.
 - 3. Gen. 4:1-16. No blood and without faith.
 - 4. I John 3:11-12.

- B. "and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward."

WHAT IS THE ERROR OF BALAAM? "THREE MEN FROM THE PAST."

It will be remembered that Balaam was a prophet greedy for gold. As Israel came to the end of her wilderness wanderings and was about to enter the Promised Land, the chief men of the idolatrous nations Moab and Midian, fearing Israel, sought to hire Balaam to curse that nation. When the prophet sought counsel from the Lord, He said: "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed" (Num. 22:12). Not satisfied with this answer, which should have been sufficient had he honored the word of God, Balaam made further request to go, and was given permission, only to discover that God would not allow him to utter anything but blessings upon Israel.

As Moses summarized it: "They hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. Nevertheless the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy God loved thee." (Deut. 23:4,5).

Deprived of the rewards promised him by Balak, King of Moab, Balaam's covetous heart conceived an evil thought. If he could counsel the women of Midian and Moab to tempt the Israelites and cause them to sin, God would have to punish His people, Balak's purpose would be served, and Balaam would be rich.

Three brief quotations must suffice to describe the success of this plan to circumvent the Lord's purpose. The daughters of Moab and Midian seduced the sons of Israel. They "called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: (Num. 25:2,3). How this came about is recorded in Numbers 31:16: "Behold, these [women of Midian] caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord."

To these statements may be added Revelation 2:14: "The doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication."

Balaam took the way of Cain. He doubtless lived riotously afterward, but he perished miserably with the enemies of God at last. The inevitable day of judgment finally came for him. Israel overcame her enemies, and "Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them" (Josh. 13:22). He perished at the end of the broad way.

These old records tell us what Jude means by the "error of Balaam for hire." It is the error of all apostates, the sacrificing of eternal riches for temporal gain. It is running riot on the broad ways of earth. It is lust for "the pleasures of sin for a season," greed for "the treasures of Egypt" (Heb. 11:25). It is a compelling desire to gain some part of the world even at the loss of the soul. What does such an error profit a man (Mark 8:36)? Many have followed the example of Demas by forsaking God's people, "having loved this present world" (II Tim. 4:10).

1. ran greedily = to pour out, pour forth, passion, to rush into, give one's self up to.
2. error = a wandering from the truth.
3. reward = reward, pay, for gain.

Moses. Deut 23:4,5 "they hired against thee Balaam"

Num. 31:16 "Behold, these [women of Midian] caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord."

Rev. 2:14 "But I have a few things against thee [Pergamos] because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak (1) to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, (2) to eat things sacrificed unto idols and (3) to commit fornication."

C. "and perished in the gainsaying of Core."

1. perished = to destroy, to cause to perish, to be utterly and finally ruined and destroyed, to be lost, put to death.
2. gainsaying = speaking against, hostility, rebellion.
3. Korah. Num. 16:3 Rebellion against God's appointed leadership.

"..wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?"

Num. 16:13 "Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?"

I I . THESE MEN OF THE PRESENT . VS . 12-13 .

- A. "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear."
1. spots = hidden rocks, rocks close to the shore and covered with water.
 2. feasts = (love feasts) to come together to have a feast, These people took advantage of the people at these affairs to subvert them. This made them like hidden shoals on the ocean, ready to rip the hulls of ships that sailed too close.
 3. without feat =
 4. feeding = to exercise the whole office of a shepherd, without anxiety, they act as shepherds.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LOVE FEAST?

Sunday was the day of worship, chosen because it was the resurrection day. The original custom was to hold two services each Sunday, one early in the morning and one at night. The morning service was one of praise and prayer and preaching; the evening service was the Eucharist. The evening service began with a "love feast," at which the members of the congregation sat down together for a common meal. It was a social gathering of a religious sort, like the Passover meal which Jesus ate with His disciples on the night when He was betrayed. After the meal was over, a portion of the bread and wine that had been kept back for that purpose was used in the Eucharist. But the fact that these meetings were held privately and at night and that men and women sat down together at the love-feast brought the Christians under suspicion. Common rumor associated the gravest immoralities with these love-feasts, and secret societies had been prohibited by imperial decree. Little by little, therefore, the love-feast was abandoned and the Eucharist transferred to the morning service.

- B. "clouds they are without water, carried about of winds."
1. carried about = to carry by. The picture here is that of clouds being blown by and passing on without bringing the long hoped for refreshing rains.
 2. The errorists are all show and no substance. They have nothing to give those foolish enough to listen to them.
- C. "trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots."
1. fruit withereth = belonging to late autumn. The word describes trees such as they are at late autumn, dry, leafless, with bare branches, with all growth sapped at the approach of winter.
 2. without fruit = fruitless, It was the end of harvest, they would bare no fruit.

The harvest had come and gone and there was no hope of finding fruit among the barren leafless limbs.

3. twice dead = to die, These trees were "twice dead" in the sense of being without fruit and without life
 4. plucked up = to uproot; Such trees were commonly torn up by the roots and disposed of by burning. It is a favorite Old Testament metaphor of judgment. "The axe is laid at the root of the tree."
- D. "raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame."
1. raging waves = living in the fields, wild, savage, vehement, furious.
 2. foaming = to foam up = to splash like foam. The word refers to the sea weed and other refuse borne on the crest of the waves and thrown up on the beach, which are compared to the overflowings of ungodliness.
 3. shame = shame.
- E. "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."
1. wandering = one wandering about. Not one of the fixed stars, not in an orbit. Moving in a course of its own. Perhaps it is a "shooting star" falling out of the sky into total darkness.
 2. reserved = to keep an eye on, to guard, keep, to watch.

THE LESSONS WE LEARN

- A. The folly of choosing this course of action.
- B. We have lessons from the past.
 1. Cain, Balaam, Korah.
 2. Cain, farmer, Balaam a prophet, Korah a prince.
- C. We have lessons from nature.
 1. Hidden rocks = dangerous.

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2. waterless clouds = false promises.
3. raging waves = wasted effort..
4. autumn trees = barren profession.
5. wandering stars = aimless course.