

The Acts Of The Apostates – Part 1

Jude 1:8-11

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I want you to hold your place in the book of Jude. I was just going to read it, but I want you to see it. Turn to the book of Acts 20, and just be ready to flip right back. I'm going to read just three verses, Acts 20:28-30. One of my favorite sections of the book of Acts is this passage where Paul the Apostle is having a meeting with a group of pastors. There are two reasons why it's one of my favorites, well I can think of three real quick. First, it's pastors getting together, I love to meet with pastors. Second, they're meeting on the beach, I love to meet on the beach. We call it a "board" meeting. Thirdly, is because Paul opens his heart as a shepherd and is explaining what they need to be as pastors. He calls for the elders of the church of Ephesus, and they are meeting on a little beach there, Miletus, on the Mediterranean coast.

Paul says, Acts 20:28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost," Spirit, I love that, "hath made you overseers." That word "overseers" is also a reference to pastors, elders, and also bishops. They're all synonymous terms for the same individual, so these are shepherds, "overseers." They are "to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." That phrase "to feed," we actually get our word pastor from, means to shepherd; and a shepherd is a feeder of the sheep, to feed the church of God. It's what He has purchased with His own blood, which is interesting, God the Son purchased the church with His own blood.

Verse 29, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things," notice this, "to draw away disciples after them." Paul is meeting with these elders from Ephesus. He knows it's the last time he's going to be able to see and minister to them, and he wants them to know three things. First, that after he departs from them, in the flocks that they are shepherding, "...shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." This is danger from the outside coming against the church. We sometimes refer to them as cults. They knock on your door on Saturday morning. They sometimes wear white shirts and little skinny ties. They have a little badge that says "Elder" on it, and they ride bicycles. There are also sometimes Jehovah's Witnesses or some other groups that are very aggressive in coming in and finding Christians who are undiscerning and lacking Bible knowledge, and they want to destroy their faith. Their motive may be pure for some of them, but their doctrine is in error or wrong.

Secondly, Paul says, verse 30, "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things," and notice, thirdly, "to draw away disciples after them." Three things: they come from the outside; secondly, take note of this, this is where we're at right now, they will arise from within the church. They come from outside the church, and then they arise within the church. One of the great definitions, and really the most clear definition, of an apostate is someone who

claims to be a Christian, is a part of the church, they believe some of the same things we do, that is, they have the same vocabulary but a different dictionary, so it's so very important to be discerning. Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." These are apostates, and they're described at the end of verse 30, "...draw away disciples after them," that is, they draw away from sound doctrine and from sound teaching.

Now, note this. Jesus warned us of the same thing. He said there would be wolves in sheep's clothing. Jesus not only warned us, but Paul and Peter warned us. Peter warned us in 2 Peter, and John also warned us in the books of 1, 2, and 3 John. Jude is now warning us as well, "Beware of the apostates. They are coming, and they are here. It is a sign of the last days." In 1 Timothy 4:1, real quick, we're going to get back in the book of Jude. You say, "Why did you have us turn to Jude?" In 1 Timothy 4:1, it says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith," that is a description of apostasy, and "that in the latter times some," not all will actually apostatize, "shall depart from the faith," and notice it says, "giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils," or demons. They depart from "the faith," which they once professed but did not possess, and they are embracing doctrines that are from the demonic forces of hell. Beware of the apostates.

Now, turn back to the book of Jude, if you're not there, and we pick it up. This is a call to earnestly contend. I want to remind you, go back with me to verse 3, he says, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should," here it is, "earnestly contend for the faith which was once," and for all, "delivered unto the saints." The reference there to "the faith" is a reference to the orthodox body of truth that we believe—the Bible, the true teachings of the Scriptures, the true gospel. That's "the faith," and we are to "...earnestly contend," it's been "...once," and for all, "delivered unto the saints."

Just real quick review, in Jude 1-2, we saw the army, which is the elect, the chosen, the church, that is to contend; verse 3, we just read, we saw the commission to contend; and then we saw the enemy, verse 4, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation," and describes them as, "ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Again, that is perhaps one of the best definitions in the book of Jude of these apostates as he describes them there.

Notice, verses 5-7, that we were to remember God's judgment on Israel. They didn't in faith enter into the promised land, they went back. In verse 6, remember "...the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation," fell from their first position. Also, remember Sodom and Gomorrah, verse 7, "...giving themselves over to...strange flesh," so they're marked by sexual immorality as well.

Tonight we see the apostates—their present characteristics and their coming judgment. As I said, it really goes from verses 8-16. I encourage you, when you get home tonight, to maybe

read the rest of those verses, and we'll spend two weeks looking at them. Now, since the apostates come in with such subtlety, verse 4, Jude wants us to be able to identify them—he wants us to be discerning, to know their characteristics. We're going to see three different marks, but tonight we look at just one, verses 8-11, they reject divine authority. The overarching theme that runs through all these verses is that they rebel against God's authority revealed in the Word of God—God's authority in Scripture, God's authority in the church, God's authority in government. They are in rebellion to God and to God's authority.

Let's read verses 8-11. Jude says, "Likewise," that ties it into what we just read about, Israel and Sodom and Gomorrah, "also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh," we just read about Sodom and Gomorrah in verse 7, so they're also called "dreamers." Actually, the word "filthy" in my King James translation is italicized, the translators of the King James Bible put the word "filthy" in there just to kind of tie it in, I think accurately so, but it doesn't belong there. Then, it says, "...defile the flesh, despise dominion," that's that rebelling against authority, "and speak evil of dignities," again God's ordained authorities.

Verse 9, "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." Even Michael didn't say, "I rebuke you, Satan." He didn't have that authority. He said, "The Lord rebuke thee." Notice verse 10, "But these speak evil of those things which they know not," "these" are a reference to the apostates, "but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. 11 Woe unto them!" this is the pronouncement of a prophet bringing doom upon the apostates, "for they have gone the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core." Jude shows us the daring nature of the apostate's conduct and how it relates to the sin of Israel, verse 5, how it relates to the angels, verse 6, and how it relates to Sodom and Gomorrah, verse 7.

Lest I forget, I haven't touched on this yet, all the way through this little epistle of Jude, there are these groups of three, these triads. Jude loved three's and puts everything in little packages of three. When he begins to speak about the apostates in verse 8, he's tying it into the sin of Israel, the sin of angels, and the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. Notice he says, "Likewise," in the same manner or in the same way, and then says, "these."

I want you to notice the "these." Look at it with me in your Bible. In verse 8, "Likewise also these;" in verse 10, "But these speak evil of those things which they know not;" verse 12, "These are spots in your feasts of charity;" and we'll look at that next Wednesday; jump down to verse 14, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints;" verse 16, "These are murmurers;" verse 19, "These be they who separate themselves, sensual," that's the theme running through all of this, like Sodom and Gomorrah, "having not the Spirit," notice they have not the Spirit. That's a clear reference to the fact that they are not born again, they're not saved, they're not children of God, they do not have the Holy Spirit living inside of them. All of these "these" are a reference to the apostates, and we'll see the contrast, verse 17, "But, beloved, remember ye the words," where

he starts talking to the believers in the church encouraging them what to do about the apostates.

The book of Jude really divides into two sections: verses 1-16, the anatomy of apostasy, and verses 17-25, the antidote for apostasy. I want you to note these characteristics of these apostates. Notice, verse 8, the cause of their apostasy. There's this little phrase that they are dreamers. I think that's interesting, "Likewise also these dreamers defile," themselves. It indicates that they're living in a dream world. Did you ever have someone say something that is really bizarre and far from reality where you just say, "Man, you're dreaming," or "In your dreams," or whatever you might say. Dreams aren't reality.

I sometimes have some crazy dreams, and I'll tell them to my wife. She says, "It's just a dream. Why do you even want to talk about it or think about it?" It's just kind of interesting. I have a vivid imagination. I sometimes drink or eat things I shouldn't before bed. I remember when I was in my twenties I could eat chocolate cake and drink sodas, go to bed at night, and sleep really well. Now, about three o'clock in the afternoon, I can't do anything if I think I'm going to sleep at night.

Dreams...they're living in a dream world, so the reality is not there. They're not really thinking biblically. You know the only way to think truly about reality is to have God at the center of your focus. If you take God out of the equation, then you don't have reality. You can't think correctly. If anyone can think right, it's a born-again Christian with the truth of God's Word—the God of truth—and being able to look at all of life through the lens of Scripture. These are dreamers, so they live in an unreal world. They believe Satan's lies. So many today are influenced by the lies of the enemy.

In Romans 1, when it describes the degeneration of man, it says, knowing the truth, they suppressed it, "Who changed the truth of God into a lie," and end up down the road with what's called "...a reprobate mind," which is a mind that doesn't work at all. Their minds are numb to the truth of God's Word, so they claim that they have had visions from God, but they're living in a dream world. That's the cause of their apostasy.

Look at the course of their apostasy, verses 8-10. First of all, these characteristics, they defile the flesh. Verse 8, "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh." Part of the false doctrine and teaching that was going on with these apostates is what was known as gnosticism. Gnosticism is actually alive and well in the world today. Gnostic heresy was basically the concept that God is Spirit, which is true, and that being Spirit is good but He can't have any interaction or relationship with matter so they taught that God didn't create the world, that out of God came these demigods, these emanations that came out from God, until finally, so distant from God was an evil emanation or power it created the material world, the material universe.

They also believe that the physical body was evil and you couldn't really worry about what you did with your body, you could do whatever you want with it. You could use it for licentious sinful pleasure if you wanted to, God only cared about the spirit and the spiritual. They created a

dichotomy between spirit and matter. Christianity doesn't do that. The incarnation is one of the many powerful proofs of that, "...the Word was made flesh," and "...God created the heaven and the earth." Christianity is rooted in historical, objective truth. They had a false knowledge of God and Christian life, and they were mystical. Part of their doctrine was part of the gnostic teaching that the body is evil so, verse 4, as I pointed out, they turn "...the grace of our God into lasciviousness," sexual immorality, "God doesn't care about your body. You can do whatever you want."

Watch out for a preacher or a teacher or so-called Christian leader that says, "God only cares about your spirit. It doesn't matter what you do with your body." That's not true. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. Amen? They are to be dedicated unto God. Our bodies are not for sexual immorality. Our bodies are to be devoted and given to the Lord. They believed Satan's lies. They were also defiled by false teachers, and turned "the grace of God into lasciviousness."

In verse 7, as we read of Sodom and Gomorrah, they went "...after strange flesh." Let me give you a couple cross-references. I won't have you turn to them unless you can do it real quick, Titus 1:15-16. It says, "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. 16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." They profess that they know God, but in their works, or their lifestyle, they deny Him. They are reprobates.

Write down 2 Peter 2:10. Peter said, "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities." In 2 Peter 3:3, Peter says, "...walking after their own lusts," flesh.

Notice also they "...despise dominion," so first we see in verse 8 that they defile the flesh. Secondly, these are their characteristics, they despise dominion. Wherever there is false teaching, there will ultimately be false living. What you believe determines how you behave. You hear people say, "Well, it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you're sincere," but you can be sincerely wrong, and it can lead you to hell. You need to have an enlightened conscience and mind by the Word of God. They despise dominion, verse 8. It takes us back to verse 6, how the angels despised the authority of God and rebelled with the devil in their angelic rebellion.

The question is: What are these "dominion" that they despise? Well, there's a couple different concepts and ideas, and it could be that it's a broader general concept. The first one is they reject all authority, period. Do we not live in a day and age today when people reject authority? They reject governmental authority. They reject the police department. Did you ever think you'd live in a day in the United States of America where we would be chanting, "Defund the police"? I'd never imagined that. Are there problems sometimes with policemen? Yes, there's problems in every area. Thank God for the police department. Amen? They rebel against that authority. They come to church. They rebel against the authority of God, God's Word, and God's

ministers who preach the true gospel. As a matter of fact, they persecute them. They despise “dominion.” It could be civil authorities, spiritual authorities—ultimately, the Bible, the Word of God—and the ultimate is that of rejecting Jesus Christ.

Some of the commentaries that I read today felt that it was actually a reference first, foremost, and primarily to Jesus Christ Himself—His dominion as being Lord and Savior—but they do reject all authority, specifically and especially, do they reject biblical authority.

Thirdly, verses 8-9, they “...speak evil of dignities.” Look at verse 8. It says, “Likewise also these filthy dreamers...despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.” There's three things in that one verse. They are living in a dream world—they defile the flesh, they despise dominion, and thirdly, they speak evil of dignities. Again, they despise dominion, despise dignities, despise authorities. That word “dignities,” in verse 8 is actually glories, so it speaks of rulers.

In verses 8-9, I want to tie it in together with that, look at verses 9-10, “Yet, Michael,” who is in contrast to those apostates that “despise dominion and speak evil of dignities,” “the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.” Verses 9-10 is actually an outgrowth, an expression, or an explanation of verse 8, and I want to break it down for you for just a moment. Go to verse 9. It says, “Yet Michael the archangel,” he's just basically pulling Michael up as an example of one who had dominion and power and authority and glory, yet Michael in all of his power and position was submitted to God's authority and didn't even “...bring against him,” Satan, “a railing accusation,” he would actually just say, “The Lord rebuke thee.”

I want you to note that in verse 9, it's “Michael the archangel,” which means that there is only one archangel in the Bible. The concept of “archangel” means that he is actually the top angel who is in charge of other angels, so this is a heavyweight angel, Michael. He's mentioned in several other places in the Scriptures. “Michael” means who is like unto God. It could convey the idea that Michael is the Archangel that glorifies, honors, obeys, and does the will and bidding of God, thus glorifying Him who is like God.

It's interesting that this glory of God in Michael the Archangel are tied together in the way he gives us this story. He says, “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.” Now we have the reference to Moses. Here's a little footnote that I find interesting, and I try not to get bogged down in it. This information is only found in this verse in the book of Jude. If Jude had not written this, we would not know this. It's kind of something that Jude's kind of big on doing—he brings up references that we know about nowhere else. Just because it wasn't referenced in the Old Testament, doesn't mean it's not true.

Paul the Apostle gave us things that Jesus said that weren't referenced in the gospels. Do you know that Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive”? How do we know that? From the book of Acts where Paul let us know that Jesus said that. It doesn't mean that it isn't biblical, it just means that the Holy Spirit gave it to Jude, and we wouldn't know about that

unless we had it here in this passage. That's to say, we don't know a lot about what's going on here. This is the kind of verse that preachers love to talk about so that they can tantalize people's curiosity. When the Bible is silent, I think it's best that we're silent; when the Bible doesn't say, it's best that we don't say.

I'll tell you one speculation (I just said we shouldn't say it, and now I'm going say it). The speculation is, and I think it's a good one, that when Moses died, Satan wanted the body of Moses. The question is, it's implied in the verse, why? We don't know. The most likely concept is that he wanted to use the body of Moses to get the people of Israel to worship the body of Moses, that he wanted to turn them away from the true and living God of Israel, and that they would be all enamored with Moses, tied to Moses, and maybe worship Moses. They worshiped the golden calf, they worshiped the serpent of brass that Moses had to make and put on a pole, so they were easily led into idolatry. (In July we're going to start a series on Sunday morning on the Ten Commandments, and I'm really excited about that.) In the Ten Commandments, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness," unto Me. Man has a propensity and a tendency to want to substitute material, physical things for God.

Some say that Satan wanted to desecrate the body of Moses, I don't know, but the Bible says, concerning Moses, that Moses actually went into the hills and died. It says that God buried Moses, Deuteronomy 34. God just buried him.

There's another theory, and I think it's a fascinating one, because Moses appeared on Mount Transfiguration with Elijah and Jesus with Peter, James, and John, some feel that after Moses was buried that God actually resurrected him to take him to Heaven, like Elijah who was translated in the fiery chariot to Heaven, and that maybe this time of contention over the body of Moses, between Michael and the devil, took place when he was being resurrected from the dead. Again, there are kind of different ideas, but we can't really say for sure.

Another reference to Michael is interesting. In 1 Thessalonians 4:16, when the church is raptured, "...and the dead in Christ shall rise first," this is why they tie in the idea of the resurrection of Moses because in the rapture it says that He will come, "...with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first," so it could be that that's the case. We do know that when we're raptured that Michael will give a shout, "For the Lord himself shall descend...and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up," raptured, "to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Interesting that when Moses died, Satan wanted his body.

In the Old Testament we first meet Michael in the book of Daniel, where Daniel is praying and God sent Michael. It took a long time for Michael to show up with the prayer answer for Daniel because he was actually fighting with Satan in the heavenlies to try to get there. Michael is a fascinating study, if you want to do a cross-reference of him appearing in the Scriptures.

The theme and the purpose in the book of Jude is that Michael "...durst not bring against him a

railing accusation,” against even the devil or Satan, “but said,” respectfully to the devil, “The Lord rebuke thee.” It’s interesting that sometimes people want to think that God has invested us with authority, so they go around binding the devil, binding Satan and telling Satan what to do. I think Satan is laughing at that. Only the Lord has the power to bind the devil, so you can say, “The Lord...,” why not use the same verbiage that Michael uses, “The Lord rebuke thee.” “Lord, protect me. Lord, guide me. Lord, watch over me.” You go around talking to the devil, it’s a dangerous thing to do.

We used to sing a silly song about the devil, And if the devil doesn’t like it he can sit on a tack. I don’t think that’s the best thing to be doing, so we need to respect his authority, that he’s a powerful fallen angel, and Michael kept this respect of authority, even saying, “The Lord rebuke thee.” That’s really all that is implied here, is the idea of authority—that he respected authority even in contending with the devil over the body of Moses.

In verse 11, notice the characteristics of the apostasy, and we’ll wrap this up. “Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain.” Again, “them” in verse 11 are the apostates. “Woe unto them!” Another overarching theme seen clearly from verses 11-19 is that there is no reference in the book of Jude, or Peter or John or anywhere else, that these apostates repent, turn back to God, and are saved. They profess to believe, they deny the faith, they start on this path, they end up departing, they end up being judged and being condemned. There’s no reference in the book of Jude, or anywhere else in the Bible, that they come back. They’re kind of like the swine that Jesus cast out of the man of Gadara and they entered into the pigs—the demons came out and went into the pigs—remember the story? They ran down the hill and drowned in the sea. That’s a picture of the apostates. They turn from God and end up in destruction. There’s no reference. Peter says, “The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” They go back from the church, from Christ, and they end in destruction.

Three things, “for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core,” a unit of three. Remember I told you that Jude likes three’s and goes back to the Old Testament and basically describes these apostates are seen in these episodes of these Old Testament stories. Let’s look at them. First, we have the way of Cain. If you’re taking notes, that’s Genesis 4.

Now, the story of Cain, as it’s related here in Jude, is when Cain and his brother Abel brought a sacrifice to God. Abel brought the sacrifice of the flock, the blood sacrifice of the lamb. His sacrifice was accepted. Cain’s was the sacrifice of the fruit of the ground. His was rejected. Cain got angry and ended up murdering and killing his own brother Abel, which is again a picture, a historical story but a picture, of how the apostates persecute and in some cases even murder and try to destroy the true believer. It’s been the history of the church from the very beginning. The false believers, the false professors, the apostates have always persecuted and hated the true believer. You can read about this in Genesis 4. The application is that Cain rejected God’s salvation, the blood of the Cross, God’s prescribed method and way of redemption. This is what the apostates do, they rebel against God’s revealed Word which

regards the sacrifice of an innocent for the blood shed for the guilty.

In Hebrews 11:4, it says that Cain did not offer his sacrifice by faith. It wasn't just that it wasn't offered in faith, it was offered contrary to God's prescribed Word that it had to be a blood sacrifice, "...and without shedding of blood is no remission." Make the application. What do the apostates do? They reject the clear teaching of God's Word that we're saved by grace, through faith, in the finished work and the blood of Jesus Christ, and they teach that you can save yourself by good deeds, good works, and righteous acts. It's either we're saved by faith or saved by works. You can't blend the two together. Cain represents false religion. Jesus said there are two ways. Jesus said there are two gates. Jesus said there are two companies. Jesus said they lead to two destinies. Cain hated and killed his brother even as the apostates hated and killed the true believers, and he went on the broad road that led to the broad gate that led to destruction. Narrow is the road, narrow is the gate that leads to life, and Jesus said, "...few there be that find it." What a picture that is, the apostasy, in rejecting God's revealed Word in the area of salvation.

The second picture is "...the error of Balaam," verse 11. This is a reference to the story in Numbers 22-25. If you haven't read the story of Balaam, it's intriguing. Read Numbers 22-25. This is a rebellion against the authority of separation. The first is salvation, Cain; then separation, Balaam, living in godliness and true holiness. What was the thing with the story of Balaam? Well, the children of Israel were just about to get into the Promised Land and the Moabites and the Ammonites, particularly Moab and the king, Balak, were freaking out that Israel had conquered all the other tribes around them and they were coming into the land so they strategized that they were going to get this guy named Balaam, he's an intriguing Old Testament character. They were going to get Balaam to pronounce a curse. He was a prophet upon Israel because, "We can't win them in a battle, so we'll just have this prophet, Balaam come and he'll pronounce a curse on them," I'm making a long story short. They sent a messenger to Balaam saying, "Would you come and curse the children of Israel for us?" He had all this gold, silver, and all this money that they tempted him with. When he saw that loot, he said, "Yeah! That's awesome! I'll be glad to do that," that's a free paraphrase.

Balaam says, "Wait a minute. I probably better pray about it and ask what God's plan is for this." He's going to pray to the God of Israel, "Do you want me to curse Israel?" How do you think that's going to go? God says, "No," and he says, "Oh well, okay." He's kind of bummed out because he could still see all that gold, silver, and the money in his life. He comes back and says, "Well, bummer, the Lord says, 'No.'" They gave him more money, "How 'bout more money, more loot, more gold." He says, "Let me pray about it again." He went and prayed about it, and the Lord says, "No." Three times he went back to the Lord, and the Lord said, "No." If the Lord says, 'No,' I think that's enough to stop right there. Finally the Lord says, "Okay, you can go, but you only say what I put in your mouth," so Balaam said, "Okay! Goody, goody, goody, goody, I get to go," and tells Balak the king, "I'm cool. I'm clear. Let's go."

Balaam jumps on his donkey, it wasn't a Bronco, it was a donkey. He starts down the little path. He's on his donkey and goes around a curve. All of the sudden the donkey stops. He kicks and

hits the donkey, and the donkey wouldn't go. He's freaking out, so he hits the donkey a few more times. The donkey saw in the path an angel, a flaming angel of God, with a sword drawn. He was going to take off Balaam's head. Balaam is beating the donkey, doesn't see the angel, the donkey had more insight than Balaam did, and the donkey started to talk to Balaam. I actually believe this happened. I believe this is a true story. If God can create the heavens and the earth in six days, He can make a donkey talk. Besides, I used to watch the show Mister Ed, the talking horse, so I have no problem with this. I'm kidding.

The donkey says to Balaam, "Haven't I always been a good donkey? Why are you beating me?" "I do well to beat you, you smashed my foot against the rock," and "I'm going to beat you because you haven't done what I want you to do." The minute he started to speak to this donkey, his eyes were opened. Balaam, in his mad condition, didn't stop to think, Wait a minute! Donkey's don't talk! God spoke to Balaam through a donkey, which means, of course, God can speak through you. Amen? And God can speak through me. Balaam started to dialogue with the donkey. He was arguing with the donkey. The madness of the prophet, he's having like a conversation with this donkey, and then he sees the angel and says, "Okay, I'll go back. I'll go back." God was just warning him. He said, "No, you go ahead, but only speak what I tell you to speak."

Balaam gets up on the mountain with King Balak and he's going to pronounce a curse. He opens his mouth and blessings come out. The king's like, "No, no, no, no! We didn't hire you to bless them, we hired you to curse them!" Balaam said, "Well, I can only say what the Lord wants me to say," and then says, "Let's try another mountain, a little angle that you look down on them. Maybe it's the angle here, so let's go up on another mountain." He opens his mouth and blessings come out. It happened three different times, so he says, "Look, it's just not going to work. Every time I go to curse them, I end up blessing them." This is what's called the error of Balaam. I want to explain that the error of Balaam was greed and merchandising the things of God for gain. But notice the phrase, "the error of Balaam."

In the book of Revelation 2:14, we have the phrase, "the doctrine of Balaam," and that sheds light on what happened later in the story. Balaam couldn't curse the children of Israel, all he could do was bless them. But he thought of a way that they could be cursed and he could get the money. It's called the doctrine of Balaam. He said, "If you send the Moabite women into the camp of the Israelites, and entice the men sexually and draw them into their tents, then the women take out this false god, this false deity, this idol, and invite the men of Israel to worship this false god with these women, then God will curse them, and they'll be destroyed." They did exactly what Balaam had instructed them to do, and God did indeed bring judgment on those that were worshiping these false gods and these idols. You find it in Numbers 31:16. That's the doctrine of Balaam, and in Jude, verse 4, "...turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness."

Thirdly, and lastly, we see that they had "...the gainsaying of Core," verse 11. It says, "...and perished in the gainsaying of Core," Cain, Balaam, and Korah. The story of Korah is recorded in Numbers 16. I won't go into any detail with it, but basically Korah was a Levite, a cousin of Moses, and Dathan and Abiram grouped together a group of men. They went to Moses and

Aaron and said, "You're not the only leaders in Israel. God can speak through us as well as you," and rejected the authority of God in Moses and Aaron and rebelled against them. They rejected the mediator God appointed, Moses and Aaron. Moses said, "Okay, everybody in this rebellion against me and Aaron, whom God has ordained as leaders, stand over there, and everybody who wants to identify with Korah, stand over here. May the Lord show which one is right." So, they separated. They prayed, and the earth began to shake under the feet of Korah and his followers. The earth opened and actually swallowed them up and then closed. How's that for God taking care of your enemies? The earth shook, opened, they fell into the earth, then the earth closed back up, and Moses goes, "Anybody else want to rebel?" That's pretty radical.

Again, Cain rebelled against God's authority, Balaam rebelled against God's authority, and we see that Korah rebelled against God's authority, God's authority in service; so God's authority in salvation, God's authority in separation, and God's authority in service, those who are serving the Lord that God has ordained. Be careful not to rebel against God-ordained authority.

Jesus is One who is rejected today. As they rejected Moses, they reject Jesus Christ who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Someone said the apostates choose the way of Cain to the way of Christ, they choose the error of Balaam for the truth of Christ, they choose the perishing of Korah over the life of Christ—the way, the truth, and the life.

As I pointed out earlier, there is no suggestion in the book of Jude that these apostates were actually turning back to God and were saved, they are destroyed. The progression of thought in the verses is that first the apostates enter upon the wrong path, then they run riotously down that path, and finally they perish at its end. Notice verse 11, "...and perished in the gainsaying of Core," is present tense, so there's nothing for them but to be judged by God and to be destroyed. As I said, this is a very serious, serious matter.

The section is not over, we're just stopping right here and will continue it next week. He goes on to describe the characteristics of the apostates so that you and I will not be led astray and deceived. Let's pray.