

Three Apostates Exposed

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[0:00] Jude chapter 1, by the way, if anyone has any questions about what chapter we're in.

We're moving at breakneck speed. This is actually our eighth lesson and we're already at verse 11. And Lee asked me this evening, how many verses are you going to cover? And I said one. So that's where we're at.

We're going to look at verse 11 of this great book. We've already seen that the book of Jude is filled with warnings to the church over 2,000 years now about the encroaching presence of apostates within the fellowship.

And as I've said before, an apostate is someone who has been exposed to a certain level of truth, seemingly embraces that truth to an extent, even to the point where he's considered a fellow believer among many of the believers in the church, but then turns and walks away from the truth. And unfortunately, as tragic as that is, he tries to drag as many people along with him as he can. That's sort of the pattern of apostates and apostasy.

[1:36] Now, the Holy Spirit, who is the ultimate author of this book and the other books of the Bible, tonight is going to give us real-time life examples of past apostates.

And he identifies three such men who, after hearing the truth, embracing in some fashion the truth, turned and became apostates.

And the men I'm talking about are Cain, Balaam, and Korah, three Old Testament figures. The 11th verse of Jude says this, Woe to them, for they walked in the way of Cain, and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error, and perished in Korah's rebellion.

If you're not up to date on the Old Testament, some of these may not make sense, but they will before we leave here this evening. Woe was a word used in the Bible, in the Old and New Testament, and it was used by Christ and the prophets in the Old Testament.

And in that three-letter word, there is a pronouncement of ultimate and final spiritual judgment on apostates and apostasy.

[3:15] Woe reveals that something terrible is about to happen, often with far-reaching implications. Often it's not confined to one generation.

Probably the most familiar in the Old Testament, certainly of a woe, was when Isaiah saw the Lord in his temple.

You remember that in Isaiah chapter 6? And he cried out and said, Woe is me! That is a form of pronouncing judgment on yourself.

Isaiah pronounced judgment on himself. And if we come to a point in our walk where we, woe is me, you know, then we've pronounced a judgment on ourselves.

He had seen the Lord in his holiness, and he knew he wasn't holy, and he said, Woe is me! I'm undone! I've seen the Lord! He knew he was a sinner.

[4:23] He declared himself to be a man of unclean lips. As one pastor said, He was a potty mouth. He knew he was unworthy upon looking upon the Lord Christ.

And yet he did, and he said, Woe! I'm undone! As we look at these men this evening, remember they became apostates by rejecting truth.

They were given truth. Exposed to truth. And they ultimately rejected it. They turned from God, and as I guess always happens, followed their own man-centered system.

I didn't have this in your notes, but I guess one of the man-centered systems, the Jehovah Witness, they came to my door today. They never come in. I'm 600 feet off the road.

But I don't know if they didn't knock or ring the bell. I didn't hear it if they did. They just left a brochure in my... They're really... I think they're trying to pull a fast one. They're talking about how Jesus is God.

[5:31] Their Bible doesn't say that. I think it's a trap to get people to follow Him anyway. I threw that in for free. The first thing we want to talk about is Cain.

Remember him? He was the third person to be on earth. As far as the human family, Cain was the first apostate.

He serves as a prototype of those who have departed from the faith, once revealed. As an aside, he was also the first murderer.

We've had plenty since then. We know that Cain, the first child of Adam and Eve, was born after sin entered into the human race.

They were expelled from the Garden of Eden. He has a sin nature. He's fallen, as was his brother Abel and Seth and the other children Adam and Eve had.

[6:33] We read about Cain in the Genesis account in actually chapter 4. Let me read this, beginning in verse 1. A little lengthy, but it's going to be helpful. I'm losing a battery on my hearing aid.

It's gone dead, and someone will have to fill me in on what I said later. Genesis 4.1, Now, the man had relations with his wife Eve.

That's Adam, of course. And she conceived and gave birth to Cain. And she said, I have gotten a man-child with the help of the Lord.

I'm actually told in Hebrew that could be interpreted, I have gotten a man-child, even the Lord. And actually, she said it about Seth because she thought Seth, after Abel died, that he might be the Messiah.

Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

[7:41] So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part, also brought the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions.

And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering, but for Cain and for his offering he had no regard. So Cain became very angry, and his countenance fell.

Then the Lord said to Cain, Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up?

And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door and its desires for you, but you must master it. Cain told Abel his brother, and it came about when they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

Then the Lord said to Cain, Where is Abel your brother? And he said, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? I'm sure with a lot of disdain.

[9:01] And God said, What have you done? Now, was God confused? Did He not know what He had done? He knew exactly what He had done. What have you done?

The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you. You will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth. Cain said to the Lord, My punishment is too great to bear.

Behold, you have driven me this day from the face of the ground and from your face. I will be hidden and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth and whoever finds me will kill me.

So the Lord said to him, Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord appointed a sign for Cain so that no one finding him would slay him.

[10:09] And by the way, I don't know what that sign was. And neither does anyone else. When I was in college, there was a guy in the dorm that tried to sell me on the fact that the sign was black people, which is nothing but a racist comment.

There's no evidence of that and that's not true. That simply is untrue. I don't think there's any doubt that Cain knew the proper sacrifice that he was to bring in the worship of God.

I think his parents either told him this or perhaps he heard it directly from the Lord. But Cain knew the only acceptable sacrifice was one that required the shedding of blood.

Instead of obeying, he did what most people do today and that was to invent his own method of worship. Now, I can't be dogmatic that that's why the Lord rejected.

But I feel pretty strongly it probably has something to do with that. When Cain or anyone else tries to approach the eternal God with some man-centered, man-created form of worship, it becomes the very height of irreverent blasphemy.

[11:36] Now, Cain has a little experience in this because he heard the history of Adam and Eve. You know, the first thing they did when they sinned is they went and created fig leaf religion. They sewed fig leaves together trying to make themselves a presentable so they could again come into God's presence and walk in the cool of the garden with him.

And God rejected fig leaf religion. He went out, God went out, killed an innocent animal. We don't know what kind. People say, well, it was probably a lamb. It may have been. It might have been an iguana.

We just don't know. But I imagine it was a lamb and took the skin of the innocent lamb and made clothes for them. When Cain or anyone else tries to approach God, though, by man creation, it just doesn't work.

It just does not work. It is a very obvious form of rejecting God's revelation and operating instead on a works righteousness system and that's created by human pride.

We've got works righteousness all over. There's a lot of mainline denominations that have adopted works righteousness. I had a good friend of mine who were in the FBI together in New York City and I knew him in Oklahoma before.

[12:55] We used to have some interesting debates and I talked about grace and he talked about, you know, works and he said, well, and he finally caught the point and he said, I believe you're saved by grace but you're kept by works.

And I said, how you doing? He said, not too good this week but I'm going to get better next week. Well, you know, next week never comes, does it? It never comes. It's the continuing grace of God. God rejects works righteousness. Number one, it won't work and number two, it's based on human pride. people have always tried to approach God on the basis of not what He has done but on the basis of what they have done.

There are billions of people right now in hell or Sheol or Hades awaiting final judgment for trying to approach God in such a manner.

All of the world's religion are based on works righteousness. All the culture based on works righteousness. Just everything is works righteousness. There are just a few of us that understand it don't work that way.

[14:11] Jude describes such people as those who have gone the way of Cain. Like many today, Cain had a form of religion but disobedient.

He didn't follow the prescribed manner of his day. Learn from his parents or from God Himself. You can mark this down.

Religion is always man's efforts to reach God and it always falls short. I used to hang out in antique stores and Diane wouldn't let me walk around because I break stuff but she'd find the used books and she'd put me in there because I love books and I'd just stay in there the whole time and she'd come get me and take me by hand and get me outside.

But several times I've been in an antique bookstore and they have a Webster's Dictionary like a first volume or real old like 120 years old.

If you look up religion and I've got a 1828 reprint at home if you look up religion it says a return to bondage. Now you remember how Jesus He fought organized religion the whole time He was on earth?

[15:34] Pharisees and Sadducees that's religion is man's efforts to reach God. Christianity is God reaching down to man mankind. When God rejected Cain's offering for whatever reason Cain responded in a fit of jealous rage.

Boy you talk about jealousy just run amok. In fact he was so jealous and so angry that he killed his obedient brother Abel.

killed him. We learn about this in our study of the book of Hebrews which I haven't taught for many years. And this is actually a commentary on this episode.

Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous.

God testifying about his gifts and through faith though he is dead he still speaks. That just resonates with me.

[16:53] I mean when I want to invest in some ministries that after I'm gone they're still going on. You know and maybe what little bit of money I or time and effort I gave it's still helping out.

We can prove the truthfulness of that passage here tonight. Abel was killed 10,000 miles from here and thousands of years ago and yet here we are talking about him tonight.

We're talking about Abel. Been dead an awful long time but we're still talking about him. He still speaks. So Cain serves as the progenitor of apostates.

He was exposed to truth. He walked away. He knew a better way. He walked away satisfied that whatever he did was acceptable to God as he was.

I mean I have people tell me all the time that reject church. Well I can be a Christian can I without church? You know what my answer to that is? No. And then they say what do you mean no?

[18:09] I said when you're truly saved we can't keep you away. We can't keep you. You want to be here when the doors open. You want to be with God's people.

And he says you know do not forsake the fellowshiping together of yourselves. I have to deal with one of my boys like that. He'll come three or four times a year because his mom nags him. Not a good reason to come to church.

You know it's not going to get him anywhere. So he's exposed to truth he walks away and there would be others that would fit this mold down to our day even.

Well next we see a guy named Balaam. Never name your kid Balaam. I mean that's just something about Balaam. You're just kind of like naming your daughter Jezebel.

You know you don't want to do that. In the second part of verse 11 it says and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam.

[19:13] So we've seen an apostate Cain the third person on earth now we see a guy named Balaam. What is the primary motivation behind false teachers?

Jude refers to us in this passage in the case of Balaam three words and for pay. They have no comparison with God's true shepherds.

I'm sure when Willard was called to become a pastor he didn't say and we'll get rich. You know probably not going to happen.

Oh man I'll tell you what someone criticized John McCarthy the other day. He makes \$400,000. Of course John writes books. I don't know the church may get that.

I'm not sure. But remember he's in Los Angeles. I got a job offer once to be the police chief of a town way up in northern California.

[20:17] Beautiful little town. I went to high school with the mayor. I was a year older. We always liked each other. And he said I'd love for you to be our police chief and you'll make \$100,000.

Well that was when police chiefs in Oklahoma were making \$30,000. But he said but your house is going to cost about \$1.2 million. I said I don't think so. I don't think so.

The ministry of this apostate was based upon greed and envy. We have any greedy apostates today that are carrying crosses and turn on TV.

Well don't. The televangelists, the faith healers of our day, look at the bank accounts, look at the lifestyles.

You can look at the Roberts family. Of course Oral is gone. And it's dangerous to criticize Oral. We live in the shadow of Tulsa. Benny Hinn, Creflo Dollar, Kenneth Hagen.

[21:29] Kenneth Cobland may be the worst. Four houses, jets, an airport. Hagen. I can't remember which one. It wasn't Hagen. But one guy even said, when Jesus was on earth, he wore designer clothes and lived in a mansion.

Jesus said, I don't have a place to lay my head. Jan and Paul Crouch, of course, they've gone to their reward. We had a VOM director go and be on their program one time.

and he said it was real interesting on them, but they had like a 40-acre compound. They were living in separate houses. They never announced that.

They basically, I don't know if they formally divorced, but they were separated. And I can understand why. Such false teachers rush headlong into the error of Balaam and rush headlong into greed and envy.

We learn about Balaam in Numbers chapters 22 to 24 and 31. Now, there was a guy named Balak, the king of Moab.

[22:45] He hired Balaam to pronounce a curse on God's chosen people, Israel. And when Balaam started on his journey to do that, he had an encounter with his talking donkey, Balaam's donkey, I'll call it.

That's not what the King James says. And the angel of the Lord, the angel of the Lord was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Balaam, of course, is an interesting and pathetic figure in the history of the Old Testament.

He agreed to curse Israel on behalf of Balak and the Moabites. And you will remember from our study in here of Ruth many years ago that the Moabites were pagans birthed by the incestual relationship between Lot and one of his daughters.

I'll tell you, when you get drunk and have sex with your two daughters, you better give up alcohol. Well, you're really drunk if you do that. Well, the Moabites have been bitter enemies of Israel and are to this day, though we don't know them as Moabites anymore.

They are undoubtedly spread among the Arab nations that surround the modern Jewish state. God in his sovereignty turned Balaam's cursing of Israel into blessing for them and cursing for their enemies.

[24 : 21] He did these three times, much to the building anger of Balak. Finally, toward the end of his life, Balaam pronounced a curse on Israel and seduced them into idolatry, and the horrendous, vile abominations that follow such practices.

Because of the success of Balaam, God brought down a terrible judgment on Israel and 24,000 Hebrew men died.

Only when Israel acknowledged their sin and turned from idolatry back to the living God did the killings subside. and Balaam too lost his life.

Now, Balaam stands as a prime example of a prophet for hire. I'm not going to mention names, but Tulsa's a hotbed for these guys.

And a number of years ago, we had a lady came to our pastor here when Ed Saucier was our pastor, a great man of God. And said her husband was in the hospital and would he be willing to go pray for him.

[25 : 37] And he said, well, sure I will. I'm not a member of your church. That's okay. He said, well, thank you. I wrote a ministry in Tulsa and they said, we'd be glad to come pray for him, send us \$250.

Balaam is a prophet for hire. He's a prime example of our modern day false teachers that have so infiltrated the church.

These are men who love wealth, they love prestige, they love prosperity, they're into nice clothes, nice jet airplanes, multiple homes, and they love all these more than faithfulness and obedience to God.

So there's a third example in this brief verse in Jude of an apostate and his name is Korah.

And the last part of Jude 11 says this, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. If you didn't know anything else about Korah, you know there was a rebellion named after him.

[26 : 55] He led a rebellion and he led it against God. Probably not a good way to get on the good side of God, to lead a rebellion against him.

In the Old Testament book of Numbers, we are presented the story of Korah. He was actually a cousin to Moses, meaning of course he was also a cousin to Aaron, a Levite, specifically a Kohathite.

The Kohathites were responsible for being the doorkeepers and the musicians for the tabernacle and later the temple. That was their role in the Old Testament economy.

Korah was passed over for the position of priest and he was infuriated. Priests were held in high regard in Israel.

He wanted that. Boy, his ego was so big. He wanted that. Well, to show his displeasure, he enlisted the aid of 250 men.

[28 : 14] the most prominent of them was Dathan and Abiram. I went to look up the pronunciation of that and I forgot. They formed a rebellion against the leadership of Moses.

Now, you can already tell they're probably on thin ice because Moses was God's man. Right? Many times in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament, people spoke out against Moses. But Moses was God's chosen vessel. And any time you read in the Old Testament, people murmured against Moses, they weren't murmuring against Moses.

They were murmuring against God. Because Moses was his hand-selected guy. And we read about Korah's assault on Moses with these words taken in Numbers 16 verse 3.

They assembled together. This is that 250 guys and Korah. They assembled together against Moses and Aaron and said to them, You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is in their midst.

[29 : 32] Why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord? In an exercise of pride so prevalent in the hearts of false teachers, Korah, and if you've ever known a false teacher, they are full of pride, and I've known some.

Korah challenged the idea that Hebrew people needed a leader and a mediator between them and God.

Yet that is the very office that God has called Moses to fulfill. Guess what? We have a mediator, don't we? the Lord Jesus Christ between the Son and the Father.

Moses was the great teacher of Israel, and he taught them the law and the oracles of God. Korah was furious.

He had not been chosen a priest, and so he rebelled against all of this out of anger for not being chosen.

[30 : 40] He openly rebelled against God's authority that had been given to Moses. He rallies 250 men to this cause.

Well, God responds, and the response of God was to terminate the rebellion by terminating the rebellious.

Can God do that? You bet. I know one writer that I trust said this, you know, the church, if God applied the same standards, it would shake up the church in the 21st century.

Anyway, in Numbers 16, verses 32 to 35, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up and their households and all the men who belonged to Korah and their possessions.

So they, that's these 250 men, and Korah, I guess he's 251, and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly.

[32 : 06] All Israel who were around them fled at their outcry, for they said, the earth may swallow us up. I'd have been leading the pack, and I don't run.

Fire also came forth from the Lord and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense. When it says, that the earth opened up and swallowed them and their households, that's their families.

Their families went with them. God's serious about apostates hanging around His people and influencing them.

He doesn't like apostates. Well, the deaths did not stop there. Many in Israel had become very sympathetic to Korah and to the band of followers.

They were the people that grumbled against Moses. And again, I told you, when you grumble against Moses back then, you were grumbling against God. And they grumbled.

[33 : 18] And God knew who they were. And the Lord Himself sent a plague. and it consumed another 14,700 Israelites.

God's serious about apostates. He's serious. All I can say about the apostates that we have today, and many of them on TV, get on your knees and thank God you live in a day of grace.

thank God, thank the Lord, He's long suffering and patient. But judgment delayed is not judgment denied.

It's coming. It's coming. Well, given these numbers, it is apparent that Korah had a significant number of followers.

He had led many astray. And that is true about apostates, particularly the name guys. The name guys.

[34 : 28] I mean, we have in the Southern Baptist Convention, I read a statistic several years ago, I haven't read anything recently, but 265 Southern Baptists leave the Southern Baptist Convention every, I can't remember if it was every week or every day for a cult.

But 265. Many false teachers and false preachers today have significant numbers of their followers. And you know it's the easiest thing in the world to get a follower promising something. Promise them health, promise them wealth. You can get a follower real fast.

And like their counterparts of old, they too will share in the coming judgment. And judgment is coming.

There's a passage in the Old Testament, I have to look up which book I've forgotten. It says, Behold a disaster, a unique disaster, it is coming. Judgment delayed is never judgment denied. [35 : 40] like Cain and Balaam and Korah, one day all apostates will share the same fate.

Every one of them. And a lot of them are going to be shocked. Some of them are going to be those guys in Matthew 7 that says, Lord, Lord, didn't we do all these great things for you?

And cast out demons and do many wonderful signs and the Lord looks at them and says, I never knew you. You notice their testimony?

Lord, look at all the things I've done for you. I've done for you. I never brought anything to the Lord except a bucket of sins. That was my only thing I brought to him.

But one day they will share the same fate. They will all experience the eternal wrath of God. Thank you.