

## Sunday Morning Message

August 15, 2021

*Earnestly Contending for the Faith - Messages from Jude*

*Jude 1:5 – 16 – The Enemies Among Us – Characters from the Past - Part Five – Balaam (A Preacher Corrupted by Greed)*

Text – Jude 1:11

Congregational Reading – Jude 1:5 – 7 and verse 11

### Introduction

We have been examining this little Epistle of Jude, which was written not to a specific church or person, but was intended to be circulated and used to instruct all Christians in all local churches in Jude's day. Of course, the Holy Spirit superintended over this writing and included it in the canon of Scripture where it would be used for millennia to help churches fight off error. The great emphasis of this letter is the encouragement for us to "earnestly contend for the faith:"

*"3 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 earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 1:3)*

The reason for our defending the faith is given in verse 4:

*"4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness (ἀσελγειαν from ἀσελγεια – aselgeia – NASF – unbridled lust; excess), and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." (Jude 1:4)*

#### I. Characters from the Past (vs. 5 – 7; 11)

In the past <sup>four</sup> three sermons from this letter, we looked at the examples that Jude cites from the Old Testament that would serve as warnings for the people of Jude's day in the first century and for us today.

##### A. The Rebels Who Opposed God in the Wilderness (v. 5)

In verse five, Jude talks about the Israelites who were delivered miraculously out from the bondage of slavery out of the land of Egypt in the days of Moses, only to later rebel against the God who saved them by refusing to trust Him to bring them into the Promised Land in Canaan. They didn't think their God was big enough, wise enough, or

powerful enough to overcome all of the obstacles and giants that awaited them on the other side of the Jordan River:

*"5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not." (Jude 1:5)*

### **B. Fallen Angels (v. 6)**

Then in verse six, Jude reminds us of fallen angels that committed sins that were so heinous that God bound them in a spiritual prison until the great day of judgment:

*"6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." (Jude 1:6)*

Though we cannot be absolutely sure, we believe that these particular angels were the “sons of God” mentioned in Genesis six who cohabited with human women and produced offspring that were described in the Bible as “giants in the earth” and “men of renown” (Genesis 6:4) This period of time was just prior to Noah’s flood when the “wickedness of man was great in the earth” (Genesis 6:5).

### **C. Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7; Genesis 19)**

Next, we examined from verse seven the wickedness of sexual impurity in general, and homosexuality in particular through the Old Testament example of Sodom and Gomorrah:

*"7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (Jude 1:7)*

In verses eight through ten, Jude will make the connection to the problems and people that we may face today in our New Testament churches:

*"8 Likewise also these [filthy] dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. 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. 10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what*

*they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves."* (Jude 1:8-10)

Notice the reference to Michael the Archangel contending with a devil over the body of Moses. We have no account in the Old Testament that discusses this event, though we know that it did happen because God included it here in the New Testament. The point that Jude seems to be making is that the angel Michael did not take this devil on in his own power or authority, but deferred to the power and authority of God. We will examine these three verses (8 – 10) when we get to the next section of our study (Characteristics that are Present).

Three more Old Testament illustrations are given in verse 11:

*"11 Woe unto them! 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."* (Jude 1:11)

#### **D. Cain – A Works-Based Religion Rather than a Faith-Based Righteousness (v. 11a; Genesis 4)**

Last week, we examined the first part of this verse and considered Cain, the first of the three characters mentioned here. Cain tried to offer up to God the fruit of his hands – his own works as an acceptable sacrifice for sin. God was not pleased with his offering. Cain represents a works-based religion, or a works-based righteousness.

#### **Transition**

Today, we will look at the middle character from verse 11 – Balaam:

The subject of Balaam is first seen in Numbers 22 - 24, where Balak the king of Moab attempts to hire Balaam to curse the Israelites. The Lord speaks to Balaam and tells him that he could not curse the people of God, and He also tells Balaam not to go with them. The Moabites are persistent, and promise Balaam all kinds of rewards if he will curse the people, and though Balaam tries his best it seems to get God to curse them, God continues to bless the Israelites.

Read Numbers 22:1 – 21; Numbers 23; Numbers 24:1 - 13

Moab could not beat Israel militarily, but they were successful in attacking them from within:

*"And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And 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 Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel." (Numbers 25:1-3)*

At first glance, it does not seem that Balaam is all that bad, but when we get to Numbers 31, we learn a little more about his willingness to help the enemies of God's people by counselling the Moabites to mix together with the Israelites:

*"15 And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive? 16 Behold, these 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." (Numbers 31:15-16)*

Joshua tells us that Balaam was put to death by the people of God because of his complicity with the Moabites.

*"Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them." (Joshua 13:22)*

The New Testament Letter 2 Peter also sheds light on Balaam:

*"Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, **who loved the wages of unrighteousness**;" (2 Peter 2:15)*

Jesus wrote a letter to the church at Pergamos in Revelation 2:14 which opens our eyes a little wider:

*"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)*

Apparently, the people of God in Pergamos were also intermarrying with unsaved people and were participating in idolatry because of their relationship with them. The word "pergamos" actually means "married". The church is supposed to be married to Christ, and not be committing fornication with the world. Balaam who was supposed to be a prophet for God was hired by Balak, a man who hated God's people, and showed them how he could indirectly attack the Israelites by infiltrating the congregation from within. Balaam was trying to work against the will of God because of his love for money.

*"10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Timothy 6:10)*

*"1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight [thereof], not by constraint, but willingly; **not for filthy lucre**, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over [God's] heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." (1 Peter 5:1-4)*

*"11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 **But he that is an hireling**, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13 **The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.**" (John 10:11-13)*

Jude 11 tells us that Balaam was greedy for reward. Peter says he loved the wages of unrighteousness. Balaam loved money more than he loved God. He was a hireling.

Money itself is not the enemy within a church, but covetousness and greed – the love of money is.

## Conclusion

### 1. Put God in charge of your finances.

*"33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33)*

*"38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." (Luke 6:38)*

### 2. Tithe and give offerings to the Lord every time you get paid.

Tithing was commanded by the Law. In the New Testament there is no commandment to tithe, but Jesus commended tithing. It was a principle that preceded the Law. Abraham gave tithes, and Jacob gave tithes, all before the Law of Moses was given. Jesus stated

that tithing was something that ought to be done. I think that tithing is a good place to start for the New believer.

**Illustrate** – Dr. Bowen told me as a college student to tithe and put a dollar in each one of the offering allocation boxes.

**Illustrate** – Dave Ramsey, Larry Burkett, and all of the Christian financial management guys all recommend tithing as a means of becoming more financially secure.

### **3. Work to eliminate all debt – especially consumer (credit card) debt.**

Learn to save for the things that you will need instead of using credit to get them.

*"7 The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower [is] servant to the lender." (Proverbs 22:7)*

Also – all be careful about monthly payments. Gym memberships; XM radio; etc. All companies want to lock you in with automatic withdrawals from your checking account.

### **4. Live according to a budget.**

### **5. As a church – we never want money to become an issue.**

Illustrate – the building addition project. If God provides enough money to where we can afford the project, we will do it; but if we are going to have beat our people up constantly with special offerings and fundraisers in order to pay for it, I won't be in favor of building it. I don't like to take up special offerings.

### **6. As a church – we need to strive to pay our staff enough so that they won't have to worry about taking care of their families.**

*"7 Two [things] have I required of thee; deny me [them] not before I die: 8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: 9 Lest I be full, and deny [thee], and say, Who [is] the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God [in vain]." (Proverbs 30:7-9)*

Illustrate – The median family income in New Jersey is \$82,545.00 (according to worldpopulationreview.com)

I am not at all opposed to allowing people to work secular jobs as Paul did in order that they can live comfortably, but I don't think anybody who has given his or her life to serve God should be overly wealthy as compared to the people they are ministering to. They should not be rich, but they shouldn't be poor either.

- I. Characteristics that are Present (vs. 8 - 10, 12 – 13; 16)
- II. Cautions from our Predecessors (vs. 14 – 15)