

The Error of Balaam

Jude 11

Numbers 22:1-22; Revelation 2:8-17



A Letter to Saints (Jude 1-2)

- Saints need warnings - they are God's way of keeping us on the narrow path. (Matthew 7:13-14; Psalm 119:35)
- Saints take their Father's instructions seriously. (Prov 1:8-10; 2:1-5; Heb 12:5-7)
- Saints experience God's joy when they keep His warnings. (John 15:10-11; Psalm 19:11)
- Saints who keep God's warnings are wise and not fools. (Matthew 7:24-27)

A Serious Call (Jude 3-4)

- A call to "contend earnestly" for **THE** faith.
- Warning against relativism and indifference (complacency). (Zephaniah 1:12)

WOE! (Jude 11)

- God pronounced a "WOE" on those who do not teach in accordance with His Word and on those who listen and follow false teachers.
- **God never tells us to tolerate different interpretations of His Word, but pronounces "woe" on those who mislead and deceive others.**
- **There is ONE interpretation of Scripture – GOD's – NOT what man thinks!**
- Jude points us to three examples:
 - ✘ **The Way of Cain** – approaching God the way I want not caring how God commands we are to approach Him. The way of Cain is anarchy - everyone doing what is right in their own eyes. (Proverbs 12:15; 14:12; 21:2; 16:2, 25; 30:12)
 - ✘ **The Error of Balaam** – today's sermon.
 - ✘ **The Rebellion of Korah.** Sins of rebellion against God's appointed leaders and covetousness.
- One must know these OT men in order to understand what the Holy Spirit is communicating in this NT passage.

Background

- Miriam, Moses and Aaron's sister dies. (Numbers 20:1)
- Israel sins **by complaining** to God about no water a second time. (Num 20:2-6)
- God's command and Moses' sin. (Numbers 20:7-13)
- Edom's refusal for Israel's passage. (Numbers 20:14-21)

- Aaron dies and Eleazar becomes high priest. (Numbers 20:22-29)
- Victory over the Canaanites. (Numbers 21:1-3)
- Israel **complains** against God and God sends serpents. (Num 21:4-9)
- Victory over **Sihon** and **Og**. (Numbers 21:21-34; Deut. 2:26-36; 3:1-4)
 - God causes nations to FEAR Israelites.
- Fear comes upon the Moabites and Balak. (Numbers 22:1-4)
- Balak sends for a pagan diviner called Balaam to curse Israel. (Num. 22:5-11)
- God **forbids** Balaam to go to Balak. (Numbers 22:12)
- God **forbids** Balaam to curse Israel **because** they are **blessed**. (Num. 22:12-14)

Behind the Scenes

- Israel has NOT STOPPED sinning since they left Egypt. (Deut. 9:6-7,24;31:27;1 Samuel 8:8; Jeremiah 7:25-26)
- *One might say, "Their tents are full of sin!"*
- Israel is UNAWARE of Balak's plans.
- God is *at work* for His people – despite them! (Rom 8:28; Eph 1:11; Lam 3:27-28)
- God has the right and exercises the right to *discipline* HIS people, **but will never** allow an enemy to curse His people. **MEDITATE ON THIS!**
- Consider Job, Peter and Pigs. Satan could do **nothing** unless God gave him the power to do it. (Job 1:8-11; 2:3-6; Luke 22:31; Matt 8:30-32)

A Second Request from Balak (Numbers 22:15-41)

- Balak's price. (Numbers 22:15-17)
- Balaam's response. Numbers 22:18-19
 - Balaam understands the power of Israel's God.
 - **YET** he tells the messengers to stay the night until he sees if the Lord has more to say!
 - If the LORD had more to say He would have already said it!!
- God's response. **NOTICE** the **IF** in verse 20! "If the men come to call you . . ."
- NOTICE Balaam's response in v. 21, "So Balaam rose in the morning and **went** to the men."
- The "if" in v. 20 is the answer to God's anger in v. 22.
- "Angel of the Lord" is God. (See v.32)
- A strange question in v. 34 – "If it displeases You, I will turn back." – Balaam is still hoping to get to Balak and his reward.

Beware of Balaam (Jude 11)

- **THE WAY** of **BALAAM**. Peter calls Balaam one "who loved the wages of unrighteousness" and mentions him with false teachers who "**secretly** bring **destructive** heresies" into the church. (2 Peter 2:1-2, 15-16; Jude 3)
 - (v. 2) **MANY will** follow their destructive ways!
 - (v. 2) Because of these teachers and their followers **TRUTH** will be

blasphemed!

- (v. 15) They have forsaken the **right** way and gone astray! **They have forsaken GOD's way for man's way!**
 - ★ "Forsaken" describes a rejecting of God's Word as it is revealed in Scriptures. (See Hosea 4:1, 6) They have strayed from the **old** way! (Jeremiah 6:16) **THIS IS WHAT IS HAPPENING TODAY! THE OLD WAYS ARE NO LONGER DESIRED BY THIS 21st GENERATION! Instead of God's Word being ETERNAL for ALL ages and ALL cultures, people change the word of God to say what they want it to say instead of obeying what God has revealed.** Many lies have replaced God's truth.
 - We are in the way of Balaam when we have selfish motives.
 - We are in the way of Balaam when we want it our way.
- **ERROR of BALAAM.** Jude calls him one who followed after greed. (Jude 11)
 - Jude repeats what Peter had said giving us a **DOUBLE WARNING.**
 - The error of Balaam was *thinking* that he could ignore the **will of God** and get away with it. He even thought that he could entice others to sin and they would get away with it.
 - This is what is happening today! People, who call themselves Christian, believe that it is not important to pursue holiness or keep God's commands as revealed in the Scriptures. (Heb 12:14; 2 Cor 7:1; 1 John 2:3-4)
- **THE DOCTRINE of BALAAM.** John calls him one "who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. (Revelation 2:14; Numbers 25:1-2)
 - The doctrine of Balaam is **compromise.**
 - This doctrine teaches that one can be a believer and live like unsaved people.
 - This doctrine teaches that bad company does not corrupt. (1 Cor 15:33)
 - This doctrine turns the **grace** of God in FREEDOM to ignore the Law of God.
 - It is getting harder and harder to tell the difference between believers and unbelievers in the world.
 - We are called to **BE SEPARATED** (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1)
 - We are called to live HOLY **LIVES.** (1 Peter 1:15; 2 Peter 3:11)
 - We are commanded to "flee sexual immorality" (1 Cor 6:18); "keep no company with the sexual immoral person" (1 Cor 5:11); "it is the will of God to abstain from sexual immorality" (1 Thess 4:3); sexual immoral people are BANNED from heaven (1 Cor 6:9; Gal 5:19-21; Rev 21:8)
 - We are called to "flee idolatry" (1 Cor 10:14) and to "keep ourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21)
 - Doctrine has been **given** to us so that we will live **godly lives.** (1 Tim 6:3-4)

Why Does God Allow False Prophets?

- False prophets are part of God's eternal plan. God has purpose for false prophets.
- (Deuteronomy 13:1-4) God uses false prophets to **TEST** us to see if we are **serious** about following Him.
- (1 Corinthians 11:19) Paul tells us that "there **must** be **heresies** (diverse opinions, divisions, factions, etc.) among you **that those who are approved may be recognized among you.**"
 - When different opinions come into the Church the saints are to test them by the Scriptures and by doing so they will be able to determine the truth.

What Must We Do

- ① We are living in the time of a GREAT FALLING AWAY from the God of the Bible along with all of His doctrines. (1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:1-4; 3:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:3). We must be STEADFAST, IMMOVABLE, ALWAYS **ABOUNDING** IN THE WORK OF THE LORD. (1 Corinthians 15:58; 16:13) **MANY** today have been, are being, and will be deceived. (Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24; 7:21-23)
- ② We are at **WAR! War is serious!** The enemy is deceitful! Unless we are SOBER and VIGILANT we, too, will fall from our steadfastness. (1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 3:17-18; **1 Peter 4:7**; 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8).
- ③ The two greatest danger of our age is **indifference** and **relativism**. Those who are truly Christ's **follow** Him in His doctrine and life. (John 10:27-29; Luke 9:23; Mark 8:34)
- ④ We must stay on the "**RIGHT WAY**" and the right way is the "**OLD WAY**" that does not change for culture, traditions or generations. It is the **ONLY WAY** that leads to LIFE. (Matthew 7:13-14; Jeremiah 6:16; 18:12, 15; 44:16) Those who say that the old ways are not for this generation are liars and deceivers.
- ⑤ This generation has gone the way of Balaam in the area of sexual immorality (sex outside marriage, cohabitation, homosexuality, etc.). We must not be **any** part of it nor approve of it in any way! (**See Romans 1:32**)
- ⑥ God has given us His Word and teachers to protect us from false teachers and false doctrine. (Ephesians 4:11-16)
- ⑦ Truth (God's Truth) is being **blasphemed** outside and inside the "church" today. We must "contend earnestly" and "stand valiantly" for the truth so that the next generation will have it. (Jude 3; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5)
- ⑧ Have nothing to do with ecumenicalism. (Jude 3; Jeremiah 9:3)
- ⑨ Followers will also be punished - the incident at Peor (Num 25; Psa 106:28-29)
 - 24,000 people died in the plague sent by God. (Num 25:1-9)