

The Judgment of False Teachers – Part 7

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Jude applies the apocalyptic judgments of the past to the false teachers of the present
2. aim – to cause us to seek the purity of the gospel of grace and warn those who attempt to pervert it
3. passage – Jude 5-16

b. outline

1. The Judgments Upon Rebels (Jude 5-7)
2. The Judgments Upon Blasphemers (Jude 8-13)
3. The Judgments Upon Malcontents (Jude 14-16)

c. opening

1. some opening comments re: **Bryan**
 - a. **i.e.** listening in via Zoom while driving through Florida
 - b. **i.e.** his ability to bring the biography of five (5) men in a single sermon ...
2. **thesis: part 2 (v. 8) – those who come to pervert the grace of God in the gospel start from a basis of emotionalism rather than an objective standard of truth, and they ignore (or deny) the grave danger that they put themselves (and others) in by doing so**
 - a. **IOW:** those who “blaspheme” are belittling the evil spiritual realm by failing to grasp the danger of being manipulated by it – **i.e.** those who are **driven by emotion** are easy prey for manipulation
 - b. so, Jude continues this thesis by turning to speak more *specifically* of the danger the false teachers bring upon themselves and their hearers by using **three (3) examples** of such men
 1. he starts with **Cain** – a man who flirted with the danger of thinking that *he* set the terms of approaching God (**i.e.** the “fruit” of my labors should be accepted; take what I bring)
 - a. the false teachers teach the same: **come to God on your terms for your desires**

II. The Judgments Upon Blasphemers (Jude 8-13)

Content

d. the woe upon the blasphemers (v. 11)

3. the danger of abandoning oneself to the way of Balaam (**from Numbers 22-25, 31**)
 - a. the context of the story
 1. **because:** the events of **Numbers 22-25** are **part of the history of Israel itself**
 2. after the descendants of Israel come out of Egypt at the Exodus and cross the Red Sea,
 3. they come to the wilderness of Sinai and receive the law of God (**i.e.** he *relates* to them)
 4. then, they begin the Conquest, making an initial “spying out” of the land,
 5. but, they refuse to enter in because they are afraid of the natives and their strength
 6. so, God condemns the people to stay in the Wilderness of Sinai for 40 years
 - a. **question:** what happens to the *numerical size* of a people of millions across 40 years?
 - b. **answer:** it expands *dramatically* – two generations arise in replacement (**see below**)
 7. when it is time to go into Canaan, God leads the people to the E, around the Dead Sea
 - a. they “pass by” Edom when the Edomites refuse passage through their territory
 - b. they continue N into the Transjordan plains N of Moab (the NE quadrant of the Dead Sea)
 1. **i.e.** Moab occupies the SE quadrant of the Dead Sea (below the Arnon River)
 2. **note:** the Moabites are the ancient descendants of the incestuous relationship between Lot and one of his daughters after surviving the destruction of Sodom (**Genesis 19:37**)
 3. **note:** the Midianites are “integrated” with the Moabites, both physically and politically
 8. it is the encampment of millions of Israelites that is the backdrop to the story of Balaam
 - b. the details of the story (**Numbers 22 in paraphrase; Number 23-24 in overview**)
 1. **vv. 1-4a** – Israel encamps above Moab, and the people of Moab are terrified of them
 - a. (**again**) because of their size *and what they have done to other nations* (**e.g.** the Amorites)
 2. **vv. 4b-6** – King Balak calls for Balaam to come and curse the people of Israel (to defeat them)
 - a. Balaam lives at Pethor “*near the River*” = at the N end of the Euphrates above Canaan (in Syria), about **400 miles** from where the Israelites are encamped

- b. Balaam is a **world-renown prophet** or seer – an internationally-known practitioner of the “dark arts” (divination; **Joshua 13:22**)
 1. **i.e.** Balak calls for him because Balaam can “conjure” up evil spirits to bring calamity against people, or can use them to accomplish other, more *nefarious* ends
 2. **note:** a reason why Jude uses Balaam as an example is because of his own focus: false teachers “underestimate” the evil spiritual realm *and are manipulated by it*
3. **vv. 7-21** – the elders of Moab and Midian travel to Balaam, and Balaam hears from God
 - a. **note v. 8:** Balaam seeks a word from the Lord (**i.e.** the Hebrew term used is *YHWH*)
 1. however, Balaam knowledge of Yahweh is limited (**i.e.** he is not an Israelite)
 2. therefore, it is likely that Balaam *has* some sense of the True God, but it is undoubtedly mixed with forms of *pagan syncretism* – **note:** Balaam is *never* spoken of *positively*
 - b. so, although Balaam *does* interact with the Living God, **his motives within that instruction** is what is called into question (esp. in **2 Peter 2:15** and **Jude 11**)
 - c. **IOW:** although God instructs Balaam (and Balaam gives “lip service” to it), it is *likely* that Balaam is treating the word of the Lord simply as another aspect of his *profit motive*
 - d. **IOW: Balaam is a “prophet for profit”** – he will do/say whatever is necessary to *get paid*
 1. **e.g. v. 19** – what “more” does God *need* to say when the princes arrive a second time??
 2. **e.g. v. 22** – why does God become *angry* with Balaam after telling him to go (**v. 20**)??
4. **vv. 22-35** – Balaam travels to Moab, but is opposed by an angel of the Lord
 - a. **i.e.** the story everyone “knows” from this text, but filled with “mythology” in Christian circles
 - b. an “*angel of the Lord*” with a “*drawn sword*” (probably a cherubim, a *guardian* angel) blocks the path of the donkey *three (3) times*
 1. the donkey (a female) attempts to *avoid* the angel each time, but is beaten by Balaam when she does so, until she just lays down out of sheer frustration
 - c. the Lord “*opened the mouth*” of the donkey (**i.e.** gives her the power of speech)
 1. she is given an ability to communicate her “thoughts” – *probably* some sense in which God speaks “through” the animal (as her *proxy*; **e.g.** the serpent in **Genesis 3**)
 - a. **i.e.** since a donkey has no *cognitive ability* to rationally consider “the past” (**see v. 30**)
 - b. **i.e.** God grants her a physical ability to bring forth words, but it is likely those words are from the Lord himself “on behalf” of the donkey (he *anthropomorphizes* her)
 - c. **e.g.** Balaam *converses* with her *and does not find that odd* – he knows who’s talking
 - d. **question:** if Balaam is such a great seer, *why can he not see the angel in front of him??*
 1. **answer:** Balaam is a *fraud* – he is a huckster, only in it for the money – a “**useful idiot**”
 - a. **i.e.** someone used for a purpose and then discarded when no longer needed
 2. **IOW:** the angel is sent by God to demonstrate **to the entourage accompanying him to Moab** that Balaam is a fraud and that they *should not listen to his advice* – he’s only in it for the money, and he will not (cannot!) bring to Moab the purpose Balak desires
 - a. **e.g. v. 29** – Balaam is “*embarrassed*” by the actions of the donkey *before the others*
5. **vv. 36-41** – Balaam arrives in Moab, and tells Balak what he has heard from the Lord
 - a. **note v. 38:** although Balaam “appears” to be ready to speak *only* for the Lord (and will do so in chaps. 23-24), there is more going on than meets the eye ...
6. **Numbers 23-24** – Balaam pronounces four (4) oracles of blessing over Israel
 - a. **oracle #1 (23:7-10):** it is God (Yahweh) who has *brought forth this people* in great number
 - b. **oracle #2 (23:18-24):** it is God (Yahweh) who *leads these people*, and nothing can stop him
 - c. **oracle #3 (24:3-9):** it is God (Yahweh) who *blesses these people*, and they shall prosper
 - d. **oracle #4 (24:15-24):** it is God (Yahweh) who shall *use this people* to destroy the enemies of God (including Moab) who resist his ways and try to thwart his plans
 - e. **note:** reading these two chapters, one gets the distinct impression that Balaam is *indeed* speaking for God in obedience and allegiance to him
 1. **e.g.** each time, Balaam has altars built and sacrifices offered, which *appear* to be sacrifices unto Yahweh (**see 23:15**)
 2. **e.g.** Balaam repeatedly says that he is speaking *only* for Yahweh, and his oracles are *clearly* prophetic utterances of the blessings of God upon Israel (**see 24:13**)
 3. **e.g.** Balaam is (before his third oracle) “overshadowed” by the Spirit of God, such that he becomes a *proxy* for the Lord in blessing Israel with prosperity (**see 24:2**)
 - f. **so:** is it possible that Moses *only tells* the portion of the story that would *encourage* the Israelites in their relationship to God, *and leaves the back story out, for now?*
 1. **IOW:** although Balaam *appears* to be honoring God, he is simply speaking *publicly* what God wants him to say, but *in the background* is doing what he can to get paid ...

- c. the reality of the story (**Numbers 25:1-3 cf. Numbers 31:8, 16**)
1. **remember:** Balaam is *never* spoken of positively in Scripture, **and other references beyond Numbers 22-24 tell the rest of the story of his treachery ...**
 2. **Numbers 25:1-3** – while the Israelites are camped in this area, they “intermingle” with Moabite women (sexually and religiously) – they embrace Baal worship, the god of the Moabites at Peor
 - a. **note:** the rest of the chapter recounts God’s anger and punishment upon those who did so
 3. **Numbers 31:1-12** – once the Baal worshipers have been purged from Israel, God now instructs Moses to have the Midianites destroyed for this attempt to “defeat” Israel (**i.e.** to avenge them)
 - a. **note:** **Balaam is killed** in this campaign (**v. 8**), **implying that he is still around**
 4. **Numbers 31:16** – the *entire blame* for the sin of **Numbers 25** is placed on **Balaam’s advice**
 - a. **IOW:** after Balaam “speaks” for the Lord, **he continues to look for ways to get paid**
 - b. specifically, he incites the Moabites to use their women to “compromise” the Israelites to Baal worship (through sexuality), in order to defeat them *in a different way* (**Rev. 2:14**)
“[Jesus, to the church at Pergamum], But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality.”
- d. the application of the story to **Jude 11**
1. the false teachers “*abandoned themselves*” to the way of Balaam = they have *also fallen* under the **dangerous** belief that the gospel is all about our *temporal happiness*
 - a. “*abandoned themselves*” (*exechythēsan*) = to pour out; to sacrifice oneself; to go “all in” for “*the sake of gain*” (*misthou*) = reward; wages; recompense
 - b. Balaam believed that he could “speak for God” while (at the same time) use his influence to advance himself in the world – he could “pretend” to be one honoring the God of the Israelites while at the same time promoting the false god of the Moabites
 - c. **the false teachers “pervert” the gospel of grace “into sensuality” by twisting the Word of God – that what God *truly desires* for us is our temporal happiness, *even if that means compromising the truth of what his desires for us truly are***
 1. and, they do it in such a way that those “taken in” **are willing to pay for the advice**
 2. **principle: unlike Balaam, we must “take dominion” over our tendency to listen to those who would diminish that which God purposes for us (on his terms) in favor of a more “appealing” message of prosperity and temporal gain**
 - a. **unlike the people of Israel, we must understand that God demands self-denial, discipline and discipleship, the pursuit of his ways, not the “gods” of this world**