

Why do we need to know the warnings regarding the first generation of Israel? Esau? Balaam?

As we have already seen with the past Questions on this page regarding the reward of the inheritance of the kingdom, there is something quite *real* and quite *valuable* that we Christians stand to lose if we choose to live lives of self-centered unfaithfulness and disobedience. And God has seen fit to record numerous warnings in His Word to make sure that we pay close attention to this possibility.

We'll begin by looking at the first generation of Israel out of Egypt, for there is much written on the subject of their failures and ensuing consequences –

1 Corinthians 9:24-10:12

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

10:1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness [referencing the first generation at Kadesh Barnea, refusing to go in to the land]. 6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" [referencing the gold calf incident]. 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell [referencing Balaam and Balak]; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

- Paul likens our Christian journey on this earth to *a race*, and *a fight*, indicating clearly that being disqualified is a possibility.

- We are running in this race in order to receive a crown – signifying *victory* and *rulership*. Paul is not ashamed to say that indeed a PRIZE motivates one to TRAIN, in order to compete and finish well.
- Paul describes the need to discipline his body in order to attain this crown. He fears that even *he* could possibly get disqualified if he does not finish the race well. Therefore, we most certainly need to apply the same concerns to ourselves, for the same reasons.
- AS AN EXAMPLE concerning this possible disqualification from receiving a crown at the end of our race, Paul launches into a lengthy explanation concerning the first generation of Israel and states that their failure is an example to us, so that we do not fail in the same manner as they did.
- He says concerning the first generation:
 - DO NOT BE UNAWARE regarding their spiritual status and standing before God. They, as we, were partaking of Christ. (If at this point you still are unsure as to how the first generation could be considered “saved,” you need to go back and study the first few questions in this series.)
 - BUT, even though they were a spiritually alive group, God wasn’t well pleased with most of them....and so they fell short of their calling as a direct result of their rebellious actions.
 - Their actions are stated as being lustful and evil; they committed idolatry and sexually immorality. They tempted Christ and they complained. These are actions worthy of disqualification.
- NOTE THE WARNING: “Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall.”
- Now go back to the Old Testament and read exactly what this first generation did that God deemed to be so “evil” (Num. 13:17-14:35, Ex. 32:1-28, Num. 25:1-9). This is our handbook, so to speak, of what NOT to do. Pay close attention to NOT behave in this way, else your end will be the same as theirs (loss of inheritance in the land).
 - The first generation (all but two, Joshua and Caleb) refused to believe what God said about receiving their inheritance.
 - They (all but two) believed the words of their leaders, rather than the Word of God.
 - They (all but two) complained about wanting to go back to Egypt.
 - Concerning the idol they made in Moses’ absence, they decided Moses was gone too long; it was too hard to wait for his return and instead they made something that they called “God” (literally, ‘Elohim,’ “that brought [them] out of the land of Egypt” Ex. 32:4) that they could visibly see and enjoy in the moment. They ate, drank, sang and played (acted child-like) around this idol, all the while thinking that they were pleasing God.
 - The “plague” that is mentioned, in which 23,000 fell *in one day*, is the time when the men of Israel joined themselves with the women of Moab (due to the actions

of Balaam, which we'll be looking at next). Because of this (in direct disobedience to what God had said concerning them staying separate from the nations) they also started to worship the idols/gods of Moab. This is adultery in God's eyes, for they joined themselves with the world. Because they refused to see the seriousness of their entwining with the world, members of the congregation were told to slay each and every one who committed this act of adultery – including the Moabite women they committed the acts with. This “plague” was stopped, but not before they lost a huge number of their congregation. This sin of idolatry was extremely serious in God's eyes and had to be stopped immediately, for if left unchecked it would have permeated throughout the camp.

The Book of Hebrews is another place where we find reference to the first generation of Israel, and a warning attached to it exhorting us to not behave in the same manner as they did, else we will receive the same recompense as they did –

Hebrews 3:5-4:11

And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, 6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. 7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'"

12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." 16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

4:1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you ~~seem to have come~~ [literally, “may be seeming to come”] short of it. 2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. 3 For we who ~~have believed~~ [literally, “believe”] do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh

day from all His works"; 5 and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest." 6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, 7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts."

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10 For he who ~~has entered~~ [literally, "enters"] His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

- The warning begins with a reference concerning us becoming a partaker with Christ in His household ("co-heir") IF we hold fast our confidence, and the rejoicing of our hope, firm until the end.
- The example of what NOT to do is given with a retelling of the failures of the first generation of Israel out of Egypt. Of them the writer states:
 - They (all but two) hardened their hearts to the voice of God.
 - They (all but two) tested and tried God.
 - They (all but two) went astray in their heart; they did not know His ways.
 - They had evil, unbelieving hearts.
 - They fell away from the living God.
 - They were hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
 - They provoked God.
 - They sinned.
 - They were disobedient.
 - They did not enter His "rest," which was to be realized in the land, their inheritance.
 - They could not enter because of "unbelief," literally "faithlessness."
 - They had good news preached to them, but it did not profit them because they did not unite it with faithful obedience to what they heard (no action).
- We are then warned that we, too, will fail to enter the Sabbath Day Rest if we behave in the same manner as the first generation of Israel. The Sabbath Day Rest is the 7th Day, the Day of the Lord, the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ. (For more information on this, please read the Bible study titled, "The Word of the Kingdom" found on our Bible Studies page, particularly Part X, pages 73-81.)
- Pay close, CLOSE attention to what it is that the first generation did that so angered God. (Read the Num. 13:17-14:35 again if needed.) The congregation's leaders were appointed with the task of going in to the land which was promised to be the

inheritance of the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The leaders saw and experienced the land firsthand, and even brought back evidence of the land's bounty to the congregation. However, the report that the majority of the leaders (10 of 12) gave to the congregation was full of *doubt* and *unbelief*. They stated that *even though God had said that He would defeat the enemies in the land and would deliver the land to the people*, there was **no way** that Israel would be able to conquer the inhabitants of the land; therefore, the ten leaders swayed the group to be afraid and disbelieve what God had said. The two other leaders, Joshua and Caleb, remained faithful and confident – despite what their eyes told them – in what God had said. But the people followed the majority; they disbelieved God and His Word. They refused to do what God had said. They believed their leaders instead.

- Note, at no time did the people STOP believing in God's existence; at no time did they refuse God as their God. They, instead, refused to believe what He said concerning their inheritance, and they refused to do what He said was required in order to receive their inheritance. **This is what God views as evil and unbelieving.**

This picture of the failure of the first generation of Israel is, by far, the most serious of the warnings proclaimed in the Scriptures, for an entire generation (almost 2,000,000 by some accounts) failed just shy of the goal of their *redemption*. They failed after seeing firsthand God's redemption of this entire people out of Egypt; they failed after seeing visible proof of God's work on their behalf. They chose to NOT BELIEVE after being taught almost 2 years concerning God's plans, purposes and ways. They chose to believe the majority of the leaders, thinking that they were safe because they stayed with the majority, and this cost them their inheritance, *their life in the land*. This stands as a blatant picture of how easy it is to become lazy, evil, unbelieving, and disobedient, all the while thinking that you are making the right decision for God because so many others are making it with you.

Let's continue on with the warnings regarding Esau and Balaam.

The purpose of these warnings needs to be reiterated: there is something quite real and quite valuable that we stand to lose, should we not hear, understand, and HEED the warnings given to us. We Christians will never lose life unto the eternal ages with the Lord, but we *can* lose the reward of the inheritance of the kingdom, which is the opportunity to rule with Christ in the Coming Seventh Day, the 1,000 year reign of Christ in His kingdom.

Let's read the specific Scripture passages that contain the warnings of Esau and Balaam, and extract the details from the words themselves.

Hebrews 12:5-17

[Written to the church, *redeemed* people who make up the body of Christ.]

5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

12 Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. 14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; 16 lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears. The primary idea in this passage, just prior to the author talking about Esau, is that every son whom the Lord receives will undergo discipline.

- The author says if you *do not* endure the chastening of the Lord, you are not regarded by God to be His son; rather, you are illegitimate.
- The context is NOT that God takes away your initial salvation, nor do you lose your initial salvation (life with the Lord unto the ages of the ages). If you were to keep in context ALL of the Book of Hebrews you would see that the subject matter is mankind, with Jesus, ruling the heavens and the earth in the world to come (Heb. 2:5-10), being a partaker with Christ in God's household in the world to come (Heb. 2:5, 3:6). Furthermore, the subject matter in the prior chapter has to do with having the faith which leads to the salvation of the soul, which is a future salvation to be determined at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Heb. 10:37-11:40, 1 Peter 1:1-9). (Read the other Questions in this series to get more detail on the distinction between the salvation of the spirit and the salvation of the soul.)
- Keeping with the context, the author then goes on to tell his audience that they are to pursue peace with all men, for the purpose of sanctification. They are to watch over one

another and make sure that they do not become embittered with one another, so as to not come short of the grace of God.

- This bitterness can defile you, and he gives us the example of Esau.

It would be negligent of us to attempt to understand the warning to us (Christians) concerning Esau without first reading the account of him forfeiting his birthright in the Old Testament—

Genesis 25:29-34

Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. 30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom. 31 But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." 32 And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" 33 Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. 34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Genesis 27:38

And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me-me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

- You'll see in verse 34 that Esau "despised his birthright." His birthright was his inheritance from his father, a double-portion since he was the firstborn son; he counted it as a common thing, of little or no value. He gave it up to satisfy his fleshly craving. He wanted something *now*, and he gave up his *future* for it.

Now if we go back to Hebrews, we will see this correlation:

- A Christian can be immoral and godless like Esau. (And God "hated Esau" [Rom. 9:13].)
- The correlation is that our birthright can be forfeited, in the same manner as Esau.
- A CHRISTIAN CAN FORFEIT THEIR BIRTHRIGHT, which is their inheritance, which is the kingdom.
- It is no coincidence that this comparison is made right after the author of Hebrews talks about taking discipline as a son.
- Esau was a FIRSTBORN son, who forfeited that right.
- Christians are called to be firstborn sons of God, and that entails running the Father's household (in the age to come, see other answers in "10 Basic Questions for Christians").
- That status of firstborn son can be given away if it is despised (meaning, *treated like a common thing*). Christians can forfeit their birthright – future positions in the kingdom of Christ – for present gratification of their flesh. Just like Esau.

- AND PLEASE NOTICE that once Esau realized what he had done, he wept to his father, asking him for that blessing of the firstborn. And Hebrews tells us that there was (and will not be) repentance (a change of mind) on the part of our Father.
- This is the STERNEST of warnings to Christians.

And now we get to Balaam. Balaam was a man that God used in a most interesting way. He is called a “soothsayer” (Josh. 13:22) and a “prophet” (2 Peter 2:16). We first read about Balaam in Numbers in relation to the first generation of Israel. He is then mentioned throughout the Bible in a negative way, and God saw fit to record several warnings for us about him. Let’s read about him—

Numbers 22:4-6

So Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now this company will lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field." And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time. 5 Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying: "Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! 6 Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."

Balak, king of Moab, wanted Balaam to curse the people of Israel for him, so that he could defeat them and drive them out of the land. Balaam responded by telling these messengers to stay the night while he checked with God about it. Balaam asked God, and God responded—

Numbers 22:12

And God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."

Balaam smartly refused to go and sent the messengers back. However, Balak sent “more numerous and more distinguished” princes the second time with an offer of honoring Balaam “richly” if he would curse the people of Israel. Balaam went back to God a second time with the same request. And God said—

Numbers 22:20-22

And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men come to call you, rise and go with them; but only the word which I speak to you—that you shall do." 21 So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab. 22 Then God's anger was aroused because he went, and the Angel of the LORD took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him.

So Balaam went with the princes of Moab. The donkey started acting strangely, and Balaam reacted by hitting it and striking it. The donkey then spoke and brought attention to the angel trying to stop Balaam. Balaam asked God if he should turn around, but the angel said to go, but told him to “speak only the word which I shall tell you.”

When Balaam arrived at Moab, he told Balak to build some altars to God and offer up some sacrifices. Three times Balaam tried to curse Israel, and three times God put blessings in his mouth. Then—

Numbers 24:10

Then Balak's anger was aroused against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, and look, you have bountifully blessed them these three times!"

And then seemingly the story ends, with Balaam going his way and Balak going another. But the next thing revealed in Scripture is this—

Numbers 25:1-3

Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. 2 They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and **the people [Israel] ate and bowed down to their [Moab's] gods**. 3 So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel.

God's response was quick, and quite serious—

Numbers 25:5-9

So Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor." 6 And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 7 Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand; 8 and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. 9 And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand [total deaths, 1 Cor. 10:8 states 23,000 died in one day].

Then God told Moses to take vengeance on the Midianites and kill every male, burn their cities, plunder their goods, and capture the women, children, and flocks.

What happened in Moab and Midian? What was Israel thinking, intermingling with other nations? The Lord had expressly commanded Israel not to involve themselves in any way with other nations. *This is what happened—*

Numbers 31:5-6

And Moses said to them: "Have you kept all the women alive? 16 Look, these women caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD."

The women, because of the counsel of Balaam, caused the children of Israel to sin: to intermingle with them—*going strictly against what God had said*—committing sexual immorality and worshipping other gods.

This is how Balaam got rich from Balak, the king of Moab. Because God would not allow curses to emanate from Balaam's mouth, Balaam instead instructed Balak to tell the women of Moab and Midian to seduce the men of Israel and *join themselves sexually with them*, thereby neutralizing them from being any kind of threat against their enemies. And evidently, no Israelite gave any thought to the consequences of their actions, supposing that they could act in any way they wanted with impunity. And Balaam was *rewarded richly*, by Balak, for this counsel.

Balaam's actions were so wicked that God saw fit to record several warnings about him in the New Testament. Let's start with Peter's warning—

2 Peter 2:1-22

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; 7 and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked 8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) -- 9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, 11 whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

12 But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, 13 and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, 14 having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. 15 They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16 but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.

17 These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. 18 For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.

20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. 21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

Let's take this bit by bit:

- The subject of this passage is false teachers among the church body.
- These false teachers **secretly** bring in destructive heresies. Peter is bringing attention to them with his warnings.
- These false teachers are *redeemed*, part of the church body, because he says they "deny the Lord who bought them." They were already *bought*.
- These false teachers will blaspheme the way of truth, and *many* will follow them.
- These false teachers WILL BE JUDGED, eventually. God will not spare them, just as He did not spare the angels who sinned, the ancient evil world during Noah's time, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- God knows how to deliver the godly from among these false teachers, reserving these unjust false teachers for *punishment* in the day of judgment.

He goes on to describe these false teachers:

- They speak evil of things they don't understand.
- They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions *while they feast with the church body*.
- They have eyes full of adultery, always sinning, enticing unstable souls within the church body.
- They have a heart trained in covetous practices. THEY ARE ACCURSED CHILDREN. (They are children; *they are redeemed* yet disobedient and stiff-necked rebellious children, just as that first generation of Israel was.)
- They have followed the way of Balaam, who **loved the wages of unrighteousness**. They get **paid** to teach false doctrine, resulting in the downfall of many.

Peter specifically warns against those following the “way” of Balaam, and then Jude warns against these same type of false teachers following the “error” of Balaam—

Jude 1:3-19

3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. 5 Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day. 7 Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

8 Yet in the same manner these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. 9 But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." 10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. 11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. 12 These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

4 And about these also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, 15 to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." 16 These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.

17 But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, 18 that they were saying to you, "In the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts." 19 These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.

- Jude's letter to the church was intended to be about their "common salvation," referencing their shared *initial salvation* (meaning salvation by grace through faith). But his tune quickly changes to discuss "certain men" who have crept in unnoticed, resulting in him finding it necessary to exhort his brethren to ***contend earnestly*** for the faith, meaning they need to be aware of the imminent dangers that could disqualify them in their race of the faith.
- This letter is very similar to Peter's letter; they are speaking about the same type people who have infiltrated them unknowingly.
- These "certain men" are "ungodly," and he compares them to that first generation of Israel out of Egypt. Just as God did not spare those who did not believe at Kadesh Barnea (rebellious and disobedience, yet *redeemed individuals*), in the same way these "certain men" will not escape the judgment of God.
- These false teachers are said to have gone in the way of Cain and run **greedily in the error of Balaam**.
- What was the greedy error of Balaam? He took money to teach the enemy of God's people that God's people can be overpowered and subdued by causing them to intermingle and emulate the nations around them, thereby becoming entrenched in their sacrifices and worship, without receiving any repercussions for it.

And lastly we get to Revelation chapter 2, where John is taken "in spirit" to the actual, future "day of the Lord" in the heavens, where he views the Judgment Seat of Christ taking place. He is told by Jesus to record what he sees and hears and bring it back with him to his present day (around 68 AD), and send these letters to the corresponding mentioned churches. What is recorded in chapters 2 and 3 is the *actual scene* (still yet future for us) wherein Jesus judges His church—*every single individual of His church*—on their works of faithfulness, of lack thereof.

Revelation 2:12-17

12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this: 13 'I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith, even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. 14 'But I have a few

things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit acts of immorality. 15 'Thus you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

16 'Repent therefore; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. 17 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.'

- Again we see that there are false teachers among the church body who teach what Balaam taught—*putting stumbling blocks before God's people, inducing them to disobey God's commandments with immoral and idolatrous behavior.*

This presents to us another **severe warning**: we do not want to be the ones who receive those negative words from our Judge in that future day, and we certainly don't want to be on the receiving end of His *disappointment* and *chastisement*, and the corresponding loss of reward. We still have time NOW to heed these warnings, change our behavior, ask for forgiveness, and complete this race of faith *well*.

These warnings need to be heeded. Be on your guard whenever someone is teaching you about what God says; **arm yourself** with the knowledge of what God has said in His Word so that you will not be led astray.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

1 Corinthians 15:33

Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

DO NOT BE DECEIVED.