***Three Categories of Apostasy - Jude 11

JD09-02***

We're going to look at Jude 11 now as we study three categories of apostates. Jude 10 pointed out the incapacity of the unbeliever to understand spiritual things by either the technique of empiricism (gaining knowledge through the senses), or through the technique of rationalism (gaining knowledge entirely from within man's own being by his reasoning capacity). The apostates that we are going to look at fall into three categories, and what they do may be true of believers. As a matter of fact, one of them is an unbeliever, and two of them are believers.

**Jude 11**

In Jude 11, we read, "Woe unto them." The word "woe" here is expressing a verdict of doom. "Unto them" refers to the apostates spoken of in Jude 10. This is in the dative case in the Greek language, particularly the dative of a disadvantage which means, "Woe unto them," because they are in bad trouble. Then there are three categories of apostates which follow.

**Categories of Apostasy**

1. **Lust For Praise**

The first category of apostasy is one having a lust for praise. First of all, they are described as, "They who have gone in the way of Cain." The word "have gone" is the Greek word "poreuomai." "Poreuomai" is a word which means simply to move along a certain pathway. Here it is a defection from the way of divine viewpoint which is in view. In the grammar, it is in the aorist tense. It means that there is a certain point when Cain followed this particular view or this particular defection from divine viewpoint. That point, of course, was when he killed his brother Abel.

It is passive which means that it was the result of the fact that he was operating on human viewpoint. Human viewpoint simply took its course, and carried him along with it. It is in the indicative mood which means that it is an actual historical event. In the Greek, the indicative indicates that this is a real historical event. This is not a parable. This is not a story. This is not an illustration. "For they have gone (followed a way of life) in (what is called) the way of Cain." The word "way" here means a course or a conduct or a way of life.

Now what was the way of life that Cain followed? Basically, the problem with Cain was that he had a lust for praise. It is common to the old sin nature within the human race to want attention. It does not come as any great surprise to you that you are inclined to want to have people pay attention to you. You discover this in your children from their earliest days. This in reality, however, is usually in the form of the invasion of somebody else's privacy. It's the invasion of the privacy of somebody who doesn't want to, and doesn't care to, pay any attention to you. However, you barge out because you want his attention. Abel, because he was a doctrinally oriented believer, lived his life as onto the Lord. He let his brother Cain mind his own business and his own life.

However, Cain resented the fact that God was paying attention to Abel and to his doctrinally oriented offering. Abel was ignoring Cain's sophisticated rationalism with his non-blood offering which he brought. Cain wanted attention. He resented that his brother was getting it and he was not getting it. So Cain lusted for attention in the form of divine approval. Divine approval for what? For his human viewpoint and for his negative volition.

In Genesis 4, we have the historical account recorded of the departure of Cain. Cain was the first child in the human race as you know. He was never born again spiritually. The provision of salvation had been explained to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15, and Genesis 3:20-21 indicates that they did believe. So God provided, through animal sacrifice, a representation of the death of Christ. In the skins that He gave them, He provided a covering for them representing the righteousness of Christ which would cover them.

Cain traveled the road of salvation by works rather than the road of salvation by grace which his parents had explained to him. Cain was proud, after the fashion of his father Satan, so he wanted to approach God on his own assumed merits. This is rationalism. Cain sat down and he said, "Now, let's see. How can a man be related to God. What should God be satisfied with in a man's relationship to himself? So he reasoned his way to a conclusion as to how God would accept him. He wanted what he felt was proper recognition for his merits. Since he was a successful farmer, he approached God with his agricultural achievements. He probably considered that his agricultural produce was a lot more aesthetic as an offering, particularly because of the artistic way in which he had arranged it upon the altar, than that bloody messy blood sacrifice that his brother Abel was bringing.

However, brother Abel obeyed God, and he was approaching Him on the proper ground of a blood sacrifice which represented the spiritual and physical death of the Lord Jesus Christ for our sins. God paid no attention whatsoever to Cain's act of religion, and that's all it was. As a matter of fact, He made it clear that he was accepting Abel's offering, but he was not accepting Cain's offering. In Hebrews 11:4, we have this declared: "By faith, Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts, and by it, he being dead, yet speaks."

What Abel brought testified that he was born again. What Cain attempted to bring testified that he was not born again. God rejected the way of salvation that Cain was offering to God. Cain was a legalist. He was going to make it with God on his human good that he could bring to God and offer in behalf of his sins. Of course, this is a violation of the grace method of salvation. People in the Old Testament were saved on a grace basis just as those of us in the New Testament (Ephesian 2:8-9).

So Cain's works were what he grew as a farmer. That's what he brought. In Genesis 4:3, we read, "In the process of time, it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord." However, Cain responded to God's rejection of this offering with mental attitude sins. In Genesis 4:6, we read, "And the Lord said unto Cain, 'Why are you angry? And why is your countenance fallen?" Here is a principle to remember. Whenever the old sin nature is crossed, whether it be in a carnal believer or an unbeliever, the results are the same. It is resentful, and it is hateful. You may count on it immediately to start making plans to cut someone down. Any time the old sin nature is denied its lust for praise, and some carnal Christian looks upon you and says, in himself, "You have it in your power to satisfy my lust for praise," if you refuse to do it, you can expect to be cut down. If it is an unbeliever, you can expect to be cut down. This is the lust for praise.

So Cain was driven to the mental attitude sin of jealousy against Abel. This is the old story of two children in the same family who are split on positive and negative volition toward the guidance of their parents from the Word of God. Two kids: one who grows up and is responsive and open to his parents; and, the other one who takes the way of Cain who is proud of his intellectual capacities. He's proud of his thinking abilities, so he begins to be critical, analytical, and cold toward what his parents are teaching him and what his parents are offering to him. Cain actually became hostile toward what his parents were teaching him. Consequently, because he was negative for the Word of God that they taught him, he was hostile also toward his brother as he watched his brother performing the prescribed ritual of the sacrifice of his lamb. He saw Abel cut the throat of this unblemished animal as a symbol for the sin covering that Jesus Christ was going to produce. As he watched the blood spurt out of the throat of that animal, there stirred within him a deep anger, hatred, and indignation toward his younger brother.

Cain expressed his hostility, as men often do in internal hatred, by killing his brother Abel. Because he was frustrated in the lust for attention, he committed the first murder in history. Genesis 4:8: "And Cain talked with Abel his brother, and it came to pass when they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him." Now exactly how he did this is given to us in 1 John 3:12: "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one (an unbeliever, belonging to his father Satan), and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's were righteous." He lusted for praise and did not get it, and it angered him.

No human being to this time had ever died. The only death that people living at this time had experienced was the death of animals. Longevity was the norm. People lived for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years. Part of that was due to the climatic atmospheric conditions which prevailed before the flood. The only death they had known, therefore, was the death of animals. The lamb which the parents would sacrifice and which Abel sacrificed was a visual aid concerning what God was going to do through the death of Christ. The animal sacrifice was, in effect, the Lord's Supper for Adam and Eve. The older son came and watched this, and he went negative every time the family performed this Lord's Supper ritual expression. He rejected the truth of what this represented.

1 John 3:12 tells us that he killed his brother. The word for "kill" here is "sphazo." The word "sphazo" means to kill in a specific way. Namely, it means to butcher or, to cut the throat. This tells us exactly how Cain did the job. He went up to his brother Abel when they were in the field, and he started talking to him. Perhaps the very knife that Abel had used to slash the throat of the lamb in the sacrifice was there at hand. Perhaps Cain even asked his brother if he could look at the knife that he was using. Abel perhaps, thinking the best of his brother, handed the knife over, hopeful that perhaps Cain was thinking this over, and that perhaps Cain was going to go positive toward what God had told him. Instead, Cain suddenly took the knife; walked around behind his brother; grabbed him by his hair; jerked his throat back; and, slashed him across the throat just as Abel had done to the animal previously. The blood gushed forth out of the throat of his brother Abel. It spilled on the ground, and in a few moments he was dead. In his lust for praise, Cain, in his hatred, treated his brother as if he were an animal sacrifice.

The tense here for "sphazo" is aorist which means it was that point of time in the past when the two were alone. Perhaps they had just finished their offerings, as a matter of fact, for all we know. So the two were alone, so to speak, in church, when he walked up and did this. It's in the active voice so it means that Cain deliberately chose to murder his brother Abel. It's indicative mood which means this is a true historical event. This actually happened. This is one of the things that the Word of God indicates to us concerning the book of Genesis. The same can be said of the other books of Moses. The New Testament always treats these books as historical events. This is one of the attacks of the higher critics, that these are not actual historical events, but the Bible--the New Testament--always treats them as such. Cain actually one day cut the throat of his brother.

Apostates do not like orthodoxy or believers who are positive to doctrine. They hate both. The first death in history was a believer murdered by an apostate in a hideous manner ridiculing God's symbol of salvation by grace through the blood of the sinless Son of God. Any time an apostate is denied his lust for praise, he will seek to cut down and to neutralize, in one way or another. One of the favorite ways is with character and reputation assassination. Many a Christian has been the brunt of some vicious slanderer who has been denied a place in the sun that he felt he had coming, and demanded with a vengeance and with a mental attitude sin, so that the time finally came when he could not restrain himself, and he did what he felt he had to do to get even--to cut down the character that he felt was denying him the praise and the place in the sun that he wanted.

Apostates will stop at nothing to neutralize those who stand for the Word of God. They will pervert the Scripture. They will run around to you with their open Bibles in order to share with you their deeper insights. They will cut down not something that is bad. They will cut down something that is good. Anytime somebody cuts down something that is good, you ought to go for his jugular vein. You ought to cut him down fast. That's what a godly Christian would do.

This is like one of our elders at a board meeting one time said, "What I don't approve does not keep me from being a builder, and I am a builder. Anytime I open my mouth relative to this ministry, I am a builder. I tell what I think and what I hope, and then I go along with the leaning of the Lord in the operating and functioning of this work." Now that's the attitude that God honors. But that's not the attitude of the apostate. He's got so much insight and so much wisdom to share with you that he's going to cut you down. He's going to cut anybody down that he thinks stands in the way of his superior insights.

This actually brings up a question to me as to why Christians are so eager to involve themselves with individuals and with organizations who are apostate, like the tongues and the healing crowd. Why would any believer want to associate himself with the tongues and the healing gang or to dignify them? Why would Christians want to get in with people who are emotionally dominated and to get in with churches that preach to the emotions of people--the "sweetness and light" crowd and the "love everybody" gang? Why would a Christian who is oriented to the Word even want to get himself mixed up with a group like that? The best haters are the Christian fellowship type. Remember that the best haters are the people who love Christian fellowship. You just watch what happens to their mouthful-of-teeth smiles and they're exuding manner when they discover that you're not a spiritually disoriented dodo, the sucker type that is carried away by them. They can forgive you most anything else, but they will not forgive you the fact that you have their number.

Some of you have told me of the dramatic changes you have noticed when you have run into this type, and they discovered that you're not the "sweetness and light" sucker type at all. Their mouthful-of-teeth smile just turns right off, and they become the nastiest characters this side of hell itself. You just get into some of these fine Christian groups in Dallas, and if you want the experience of your life, mention that you're from Berean Memorial Church. You will have an experience such as no liberal has ever had. You'll have the ultimate that you're looking for. The apostate has a calculating smile, but when he's smiling at you, take a look at the pupils of his eyes and see how they dilate because they're representing his mental attitude sins. Don't be taken in by them.

Cain was smiling all the time that he walked around his brother. He was probably saying, "It's a beautiful night, brother. Boy that knife is sharp. Beautiful. Really beautiful." And then he slashed his brother's throat, and that was it. That was the end of the mouthful-of-teeth smile of Cain. He had satisfied his lust for praise.

What did he learn by watching what Abel was doing? He was watching his faithful positive brother acting out the sacrifice that God had provided, and all he got from it was an idea on how to murder his brother. He had missed the fact that God praises only on the basis of that which is compatible with God's own character. God is not going to praise you and me on our legalism, or on what we are. He missed the fact that you can only approach God on the merits of the Lord Himself. You and I cannot approach God on our own human good merits. Isaiah 64:6 says that those are "filthy rags." He rejected the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, so he had no ground of fellowship with God (John 1:29). Actually what Cain was trying to do was to lay down the basis upon which God was going to accept him. That's what every rationalist does. That's what every liberal does.

However, I want to tell you that God cannot love us on the basis of some sentimentality. God can only love you and me on the ground which is compatible with His own righteousness and with His own character. How did Cain want God to love him? On the basis of that pile of produce that he brought him. When you stop and think about this for a moment, you'll see how insane an apostate usually is. He's about as dumb as they come. Suppose God said, "OK Cain, I'm going to accept you on the basis of the good produce that you bring me." What would happen next year if maybe he had a crop failure? Then where is the ground of his approach to God. You can see how infinitely better and wiser God is to say, "I love you because of who and what I am, and not because of who and what you are."

Yet, we are forever running around saying, "Oh God, praise me; esteem me; be kindly disposed to me. Show your love for me because of what I am; what I am going to do; what I'm planning to do; and, what I'm doing." Nobody ever really loves another person on the basis of what that person is, and you better learn this. The only way we love other people is on the basis of who and what we are. You better be glad that it's that way.

If you've got a girlfriend that you love on the basis of what she is, you're playing a very dangerous game. Right now she may be very sweet, vivacious, slim, and attractive. Ten years from now she may be a big fat slobby dump who is grim and grouchy and never fixes her hair. Are you still going to love her? Are you still going to be enthusiastic about her? Are you still going to call her your doll baby; or, your slob baby? You cannot love people on a long range basis on the basis of who and what they are. You can only love them on the basis of who and what you are. Then they can change, but your affections remain constant.

That's how God treats us. He loves us on the basis of who and what He is. In his grace, it makes no difference whether you and I are on positive or negative signals. He will deal with us and disciplined accordingly. But all through it He still loves us because His love is not based upon what He finds in us. That's much better, because this is lasting.

Actually you can see how insane the way of Cain was because this is the man, mind you, who refused to kill an animal in obedience to God's way of portraying faith in Jesus Christ. However, he was willing to kill his younger brother. He wouldn't kill an animal, but he didn't mind murdering his brother. Now that is insanity in the highest degree. It is sad to see within the same family such a stark contrast. Many a family finds one child who is motivated and obsessed by pride. He moves in a direction that is negative to his parents and negative to the Word of God. He is bound and determined to make a place in the sun for himself, fully confident of his rational processes. He needs to read and study a little history starting with Thomas Aquinas, and go right down to the philosophers, and see where rationalism led them. He needs to remember Cain who would not kill an animal but who, in his lust for pride and a place in the sun, was willing to kill his brother.

It is a joy to see the other child in the same family with the same opportunity who says, "Yes, I believe. I am positive to what my parents show me of the Word of God. I enter into those things and I thank God for this knowledge."

1. **Lust For Money**

There is a second category of apostate, and this represents a lust for money. The first category was represented by Cain in the lust for praise. The second category is represented by Balaam who was a gentile priest of God in the Old Testament. Jude 11 says, "And ran greedily after the error of Balaam." The word "greedily" is the Greek word "ekcheo." "Ekcheo" means to pour or to gush out. It connotes rushing headlong into something or abandoning yourself to something. It is in the aorist tense. Balaam abandoned himself to a lust for materialism in the past on the specific occasion when Balak came and propositioned him with a large sum of money to pronounce a curse upon God's people Israel. It is in the passive voice which indicates that Balaam was acting as the result of the fact that his soul was dominated by a lust for money. The reason it was dominated by lust for money was because his emotions were in charge of his soul. His emotions were enthusiastic for the hope of material gain. It is again indicative which means that it is a historical event.

The lust patterns of the old sin nature will influence our emotions to constantly want to take over our mentality. When the emotions are able to do that, the result is that the flow of doctrine is stopped. Here is the mind; here is the will; and, here are the emotions. The mind is supposed to tell the emotions what to do, and direct it like the right man directs his right woman. But when the reverse condition takes place, you have a toxic poisoned situation that develops. What happens when the emotions direct the mind is that there is a short-circuit here in the line, and the flow of doctrine is stopped. From that point on, I don't care what you know about the principles of God, when you're kicking it on emotion, what you have learned doesn't mean a thing. It will never be usable at that point until your emotions are put back in their right place. This is what Balaam had. Anybody who is hot for money is kicking around on his emotions.

Remember from our study of the doctrine of grace giving, the declaration that the love of money is the source of all kinds of evil. That work for love is an emotional attachment love. It is not a mental attitude there. It is an emotional joy in money. When this happens, the emotions have taken over. This is what happened to Balaam. In the emotions, there is no doctrine. Here's why this is a problem. There is no doctrine in your emotions. There cannot be. There is no character in your emotions. There is no power for living for God in your emotions. There is no good judgment in your emotions. Your emotions have no sanity. Consequently, there is absolutely nothing that your emotions can give you relative to the will of God.

Balaam was making his decisions on the basis of emotion, and not on the basis of doctrine. So he "ran greedily (he poured himself out) after the error of Balaam (materialism lust) for reward." The word "reward" literally means "for wages" or "for money." Balaam was a believer. He was a prophet of God. However, he was under emotional control of his soul, so he was greedy for money. His error was a lust for money and the things it would buy. Of course, a believer today can act in the same pattern. This is a believer who is out of fellowship. When he is out of fellowship, his emotions can take over. He gets emotionally attached to money, and he gets extremely greedy. I know you're thinking right now of all the justifications why you should be like that. I understand that, but I hope that you understand that it's your old sin nature kicking up answers to you to justify that kind of an attitude.

A believer today can act in the pattern of an apostate. Christians are often motivated by a lust for money to serve the Lord. They're even motivated to give offerings, as we found in our study of grace giving, in order that God will not take money away from them, or that they can get more in return. Believers who are dominated as Balaam was for money will do anything to justify their acts in their mind that this is for the Lord's work. They will lie; they'll steal; they'll embezzle; they'll cheat; they'll slander; they'll misrepresent; and, they'll close their eyes and cover up. They will do anything when they are in the status of emotional domination as the material lust of the old sin nature is pouring its poison up to their mind.

You can read about this in Numbers 22. That describes for us the departure of Balaam from the truth. Cain's departure from divine viewpoint was in traveling the road of salvation by works. He was motivated in this course by his own pride, and he wanted to be recognized for what a fine person he was. He had a lust for praise. Balaam's departure from divine point was his obsession with money. Actually, he said to Balak, "For that much money, I'll curse Israel. Where do you want me to do it?" He tried on three occasions to curse Israel. When he got to the point where he was going to let them have it, he opened his mouth and God intervened. Instead of cursing, he blessed Israel. This drove Balak up the wall. He said, "Every time you've made it worse than it was before. I asked you to curse them, and now you've blessed them. I asked you to curse them again, and you've blessed them again. Things are always better for the Jews after you open your mouth."

Balaam said, "Let me try it once more. I've had a little hard time. I haven't been getting much sleep. I'm just not up to form. But I'll get it right this time." So he tried it a third time, and it was a magnificent blessing again. So Balak says, "Forget it, fella. You don't get anything." But Balaam say, "Oh, I love that dough. Boy, I could do so much for the Lord's work. I could get so many of those bills paid off. I could resupply the tape room. There is so much I could do." He said, "I've got to do something." And he thought of an idea. He figured out how he was going to satisfy his materialism lust, just as you will if this dominates your soul. He suggested that the heathen women of Midian and Moab should lead the men of Israel into sexual immorality in the process of their worship. Balak said, "That's a good idea." So he sent the word out to all the gals in Moab. They got their perfume--Midnight in Moab. Then they hit the Israelite men, and they had a real sex orgy.

The result was that Balaam, because he was a doctrinally oriented believer, knew just was what was going to happen. If he could get them to do that, then God would be placed in the position of bringing discipline upon Israel. Then Balak would get the judgment and the curse that he wanted. Because they were unresponsive to doctrine, the men fell into the trap. Numbers 31:16, Numbers 25:1-3, and Revelation 2:14 tell you the disastrous results. However Balaam, in this act, committed the sin unto death. In Joshua 13:22, he is killed in battle fighting on the side of the Moabites.

Many a Christian loses his divine viewpoint unknowingly because he wants to start pursuing money. He gets an emotional attachment as 1 Timothy 6:10 warns us is the step to all kinds of evil with which we will pierce ourselves through with many sorrows. If you've been doing this for a long time, you're going to have a little trouble. If you're a young person starting off, I would strongly recommend to you that you hold your money very very loosely. You will discover that as you hold your money loosely, when you have it, that's good; and, when you don't have it, that's good. Blessed be the name of the Lord. You will develop that kind of a mastery of the details of life, and you will discover that God will come through and do everything that He has always promised to do. He will never leave you forsake you. He will provide for you in the pinch, and He will provide for you out of the pinch.

Many people who have been looking forward to their retirement, and have been getting ready for it, have suddenly awakened dead some morning in bed. They never get to their retirement. Long after that, many of you are still going to be around here enjoying the care, the sustenance, and the hand of God of provision upon you. I could tell you several sad sad examples within the circle of my own experience of people who were just sure that there it was--down the road. They would say, "I'm coming to retirement, and this is what I'm looking forward to." Then I would see the sadness of them never making it. The desire for things leads us gradually out of God's service, and it leads us into preoccupation with junk, so that we become spiritual junkies. That is sad to be said of any Christian. 2 Timothy 4:10 says, "For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and departed into Thessalonica." Demas became a spiritual junkie because he loved the material things of this world once his soul became dominated by his emotions, and he lost all rationality from doctrine. We, by nature, dear friends, are inclined to be willing to sell our souls to gain the world (Mark 8:36).

1. **Lust For Power**

There is one more category of apostasy, and this is lust for power. This is described in the final portion of Jude 11. It says, "And perished in the rebellion of Korah." This is a third kind of apostate. The word "perished" is "apollumi," and it means "to be utterly destroyed." Here the word means "to be put to death." It is in the aorist tense which means they perished here at the specific incident when they rebelled against Moses. It is middle voice which indicates that they brought it on themselves. Again it's indicative. It's a true historical event. You may read about it in Numbers 16:31-33.

This was the rebellion of Korah. It was actually a revolution against Moses, the spiritual leader by divine appointment over the people of Israel. Korah and some associates were jealous of the authority which was held by Aaron and the priesthood. Korah considered himself equally qualified and worthy for spiritual authority in Israel (Numbers 16:3). Korah was indeed of the right tribe for priesthood. He was of the tribe of Levi, but he was not in the right family. He was not in the Aaronic family. Therefore, while he was a cousin of Aaron, he was not qualified to be in the priesthood. Yet, he considered himself qualified to be in the priesthood.

Korah may actually have been smarter and more gifted than Aaron. Perhaps he saw in himself a more forceful leader because Aaron has reflected to us a certain lack of fortitude at times. For example, Aaron showed a lack of fortitude in the case of the golden calf incident. Korah was motivated by his lust to run things. He just had a passion to take over; to do better; and, to show how it should be done. Smart people often make this mistake. This is especially true if you go up to them and say, "Boy you're smart. Boy you've got ability. Hey, you're sharp. How about doing this?" You know people are stupid enough to believe that they are that smart; they are that sharp; and, they have that much ability. Pretty soon, they're ready to take over.

Korah and his associates concluded that they were entitled, and rightfully, to a greater voice and a say-so in the operation of the business of Israel. However, natural abilities and success out in the world don't count with God. I hope you will learn that. I don't care how capable you are. I don't care how much more ability you have than the person who happens to be in charge in some spiritual capacity. I don't care how much better insight you have than he has. The thing that counts is not that. The thing that counts is the appointment to the office. Only God appoints to the office.

What Korah had is described as his rebellion. The word "rebellion" is the word "antilogia." "Antilogia" was Korah's technique for taking over. What does it mean" Well it means "to speak against somebody." "Anti" means "against," and "logia" means "word." He started speaking words against Moses and against Aaron. This was his technique of revolution. He started criticizing. He started taking out of context. He started pushing things as if he knew what Moses and Aaron believed. As in most cases, people don't really know what their spiritual leaders think at all. The spiritual leaders have so much more information coming to them and their depth of insight is so much greater to begin with, that most people don't know what they think at all about a subject. They get a distorted representation almost inevitably. Korah ran down Moses and he ran down Aaron before the people, and he gathered himself a following (Numbers 16:2).

This should be a signal to you. Anytime somebody comes around and starts running down spiritual leaders, go for his jugular vein. Tell him to get out of here and never come back. You will be acting in the highest traditions of the Christian faith. Korah's speaking against Moses included blaming and resisting him for what was actually the doings of God. That's how insane this kind of an apostate becomes. Number 16:12: "And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, who said, 'We will not come. Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land that flows with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except you make yourself altogether a prince over us? Moreover you have not brought us into a land that flows with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up.'"

Do you see what these fools are saying? They are blaming Moses for what God actually had done. The reason God was short-changing them on blessing was because of their own mental attitude sins. The reason they never got into the land of milk and honey is because they would not respond and go through at Kadeshbarnea when God had brought them to that point. They were longing in their lusting for the leeks and garlic of Egypt. Woe to those who today teach men to approach a holy God apart from the mediator of Jesus Christ. That's what Korah was saying: "I am not qualified to be a high priest representing Jesus Christ, but I still want to be." In effect, symbolically, he was saying that you can get to God some other way.

The local church is plagued with this kind of apostasy. We have ambitious competitive members who speak abuse against those who are appointed to authority by God. These people are to be left to the Lord's judgment as was Korah. They are not to be listened to; they are not to be condoned; and, they are not to be tolerated. They are to be warned, and they are to be silenced, but they are to be delivered into the hands of the Lord (Numbers 16:25-28).

Korah and his friends (250 princes) paid a terrible price. The earth opened, as you remember, and it swallowed up the whole crew--Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and the princes of Israel who were in the revolution. Today's lust for local church power will bring the same thing. In your history, you may think of many people who have opposed God's established order and authority in a local church. God weeds them out. Very frequently they think they're going to something better. They will find themselves in a congregation which is willing to play ball with them and to permit them to exercise their lust for power. Many paid a price with them, but eventually the rewards in heaven have been canceled out. They're going to get the shock of their lives when they stand before the Lord. I kid you not. God will remove any local leader who is not faithful to his trust to which God has appointed him. Make no mistake that it is God who has appointed him. Nobody who takes over in the Lord's operation gets away with it.

Here's the problem as it exists in our day. The congregation recognizes that there is a pastor-teacher who is put in charge as the executive head of that work. When that congregation recognizes him as God's right pastor for that right church, he is now in charge. He is not their employee. He is not under the board of elders, though he himself is an elder. When there is a question of policy, who makes the decision? The members of the congregation. The pastor-teacher is the chief elder, and until he is removed by the stockholders (the congregation), he is invested with an authority for directing that work. Other elders may teach, but they are not pastor-teachers. He exercises his gifts as per Ephesians 4:12-16 in order to provide spiritual maturity.

Part of this misconception we have that boards rule is something that we pick up from the world. You may be sure that in any local structured organization, somebody rises to the top. I'll guarantee you that if it is not the pastor-teacher that this congregation has recognized as God's right man to be its executive head, I'll tell you who's going to run the thing because somebody is going to rise there. It is going to be some hotshot businessman from the board of elders who's going to move up because he's vocal and because he's personable, and he is going to be executive head. There is going to be somebody who's going to be executive head. You may count on that. That's the inherent structure of an organization. Never play the fool and never let anybody con you on this subject because he's an apostate out of line with the Word of God when he does it. This is God's order for blessing. Ephesians 4 lists for you the tremendous things that come when the church is structured on the right basis.

It is crucial that we understand this because we've got Korahs, Dathans, Abirams, and 250 princes running all over the place constantly. We've always got spiritual authorities who know how it should be done.

We have three types of apostates, and we can be guilty of every one of them: a lust for praise; a lust for money; and, a lust for power. Each of them is fantastically destructive.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

[**Back to the Jude index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/jude.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)