

**Outline of  
the Messages for the Full-time Training  
in the Fall Term of 2016**

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**GENERAL SUBJECT:  
THE FAILURES IN THE CHURCHES,  
THE DEGRADATION OF THE CHURCH, THE OVERCOMERS IN THE CHURCH,  
THE RECOVERY OF THE CHURCH, AND THE STAGES OF THE CHURCH**

Message Three

**The Degradation of the Church**

(2)

**The Principle of Antichrist,  
the Way of Cain, the Error of Balaam, and the Rebellion of Korah,  
and the Straight Way—the Way of the Truth and of Righteousness**

Scripture Reading: 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7; Jude 11; 2 Pet. 2:2, 15, 21; Acts 9:2

**I. First John 2:18 says that many antichrists have come; the fact that there have been many antichrists implies a principle, the principle of antichrist:**

- A. First John 2:22 speaks of denying that Jesus is the Christ and also of denying the Father and the Son; here we see that the principle of antichrist is to deny what Christ is:
  - 1. What makes a person an antichrist in principle is that he denies an aspect of what Christ is.
  - 2. To deny that Christ is the eternal Father (Isa. 9:6) or that He is the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) is to be anti these aspects of Christ's person; to make such a denial is to follow the principle of antichrist.
- B. The Greek prefix *anti* has two meanings—1 John 4:3; 2 John 7:
  - 1. First, it means “against”; second, it means “in place of” or “instead of.”
  - 2. To be an antichrist is to be against Christ and to have something instead of Christ, something that replaces Christ.
  - 3. The principle of antichrist is first to deny something of what Christ is and then to replace Christ with something else.

**II. Jude 11 speaks of the way of Cain, the error of Balaam, and the rebellion of Korah:**

- A. The way of Cain is the way of serving God religiously according to one's own will, heretically rejecting the redemption by blood required and ordained by God, and according to the flesh envying God's true people because of their faithful testimony to God—Gen. 4:2-8:
  - 1. Cain did not follow the way of God's salvation through the anticipated redemption by the bleeding sacrifice (3:21; Heb. 9:22) but continued man's fall by presumptuously offering the fruit of his own labor to God.
  - 2. Cain's way of worshipping God was to invent a religion according to his human concept and opinion, which were motivated by Satan.

3. Throughout the centuries and generations there have been countless followers of Cain, people in every place and time who have invented their own religion.
- B. Balaam was a genuine Gentile prophet, not a false one, but he loved the wages of unrighteousness; this is the way of Balaam—2 Pet. 2:15; Num. 22:5, 7; Neh. 13:2; Rev. 2:14:
  1. The error of Balaam was the error of teaching wrong doctrine for reward, while knowing it to be contrary to the truth and against the people of God.
  2. This error involves abusively using the influence of certain gifts to lead the people of God astray from the pure worship of the Lord to idolatrous worship—Num. 22:7, 21; 31:16; Rev. 2:14.
  3. Coveting for reward will cause the coveting ones to rush headlong into the error of Balaam—Jude 11.
- C. In verse 11 Jude also speaks of those who perished in the rebellion of Korah:
  1. The Greek word translated “rebellion” in Jude 11 literally means “contradiction,” “speaking against.”
  2. The rebellion of Korah was a rebellion against God’s deputy authority in His government and against His word spoken by His deputy (like Moses); this brings in destruction—Num. 16:1-40.
  3. God always speaks through a deputy authority; to rebel against this authority and speaking is, in principle, to be in the rebellion of Korah.

### **III. In the Lord’s recovery we take the straight way—the way of the truth and of righteousness—2 Pet. 2:2, 15, 21:**

- A. To take the straight way is to live an upright life without crookedness and bias, without unrighteousness—v. 15.
- B. The straight way is the way of the truth—v. 2:
  1. The way of the truth is the path of the Christian life according to the truth, which is the reality of the contents of the New Testament—1 Tim. 2:4; 3:15.
  2. This way is designated by other titles: the way of peace (Luke 1:79; Rom. 3:17), the way of salvation (Acts 16:17), the way of God (Matt. 22:16; Acts 18:26), and the way of the Lord (John 1:23; Acts 18:25).
- C. The straight way is the way of righteousness—2 Pet. 2:21:
  1. Righteousness is to be right with persons, things, and matters before God according to His righteous and strict requirements—Matt. 5:20.
  2. Righteousness is the outward expression of the Christ who lives in us as the Spirit—2 Cor. 3:8-9.
- D. The straight way is the Way—Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:22:
  1. *The Way* denotes the Lord’s full salvation in God’s New Testament economy.
  2. It is the way God dispenses Himself into the believers through Christ’s redemption and the Spirit’s anointing, the way the believers partake of God and enjoy God, the way the believers worship God in their spirit by enjoying Him and follow the persecuted Jesus by being one with Him, and the way the believers are brought into the church and built up into the Body of Christ to bear the testimony of Jesus.