

## "THE WAY OF CAIN"

In the context of discussing false teachers, Jude wrote: "Woe unto them! For they went in the way of Cain" (v. 11). Cain had the distinction of being the first human being to be born (Gen. 4:1). He was a religious man and a farmer by occupation (vv. 2–5). He also suffered a curse from God (vv. 11–12). The *way of Cain* (to which Jude alludes and for which God cursed him) hardly refers to his being religious or to his choice of occupation. When we identify the reasons God cursed him, we will at the same time learn the meaning of *the way of Cain*, which we will do well to avoid.

- **He substituted his way for God's way in religion.** He brought an offering unto God that God rejected, while Abel, his brother, brought an acceptable offering (Gen. 4:3–4). The Bible implies that God told them both what to offer (Heb. 11:4; Rom. 10:17). Cain apparently decided he would offer something of his own choosing. The "way of Cain" is to ignore God's will and do what one chooses in religion. The "way of Cain" is to reason, "my way of worship is as good as what God has decreed." The "way of Cain" supposes that God will be pleased with or is obligated to accept whatever one desires to offer in worship to Him.
- **He rebelled instead of repenting.** When Cain saw that God had rejected his offering, he became angry with God rather than searching his own soul and repenting (Gen. 4:5). When Nathan confronted David with his sin, David humbly said, "I have sinned against Jehovah" (2 Sam. 12:13). The usual response of those in any age, when confronted with immorality or religious error, is to react in the "way of Cain." His way is to refuse to accept responsibility for one's behavior.
- **He was envious of God's approval of Abel.** Cain killed his brother "because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (1 John 3:12). Instead of repenting and changing his behavior so God could likewise accept his offering, he flew into a jealous rage that led to murder (Gen. 4:8). The "way of Cain" is raw, uncontrolled envy and wrath.
- **He disregarded human life.** "Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him" (Gen. 4:8). Respect for God-given human life has never been lower in our nation than it in the last four decades. Abortionists have offered more than 53 million lives on their abortion altars since 1973. It is the "way of Cain."
- **He was ungodly.** Jude wrote that the ungodly deceivers of his day "went in the way of Cain" (vv. 4, 11). *Ungodly* connotes irreverence and impiety, demonstrated no better than by ignoring/rebelling against the Word of God. By this description, we understand that those who are "religious" are not necessarily "godly," meaning that very many religious people in our nation are living in the "way of Cain."
- **He was consummately selfish.** He did what **he** chose in religion. He imagined unfair treatment by God. His jealousy of Abel led to murder. He sinned exceedingly. Such are always the fruits of selfishness run amuck.

Let us all beware of the "way of Cain" and order our steps so as not to walk therein.

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