

The Description of Apostates

Jude 12-13

In our study this evening we find Jude describing the character and confusion of the apostates who sought to undermine the church. In the preceding verses he revealed the dangers associated with them. Jude wanted the church to be able to recognize them when they came in among the fellowship of believers. In these verses he uses word pictures to paint a vivid image of those who desired to destroy the church.

As I studied this passage I was reminded of Scripture in the book of Hosea. He was one of the “minor prophets” who preached and warned the Northern Kingdom, Israel of the coming judgment. As Hosea looked upon Israel in that day he saw a people that were very similar to the apostates of Jude’s day. He too used word pictures to describe what he saw.

1. **Morning Cloud** (Hos.6:4) – No stability or commitment, just all show.
2. **Half-baked Cake** (Hos.7:8) – Superficial commitment, no sincerity.
3. **Full of Gray Hairs** (Hos.7:9) – Unaware that strength is leaving.
4. **Silly Dove without Heart** (Hos.7:11) – Unstable, between passions.
5. **Deceitful Bow** (Hos.7:16) – Undependable in the fight.

Let’s take a few moments to consider the words of Jude as we think on: [The Description of Apostates](#). First Jude described them as:

I. Visible Spots (12a) – [These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear:](#) Notice:

A. Their Position – These were not among the world, railing from a distance. They had invaded the church, taking part in their sacred services. In the early church they often feasted and shared a time of fellowship prior to partaking of the Lord’s Supper.

B. Their Peril – Jude reveals two areas in which the apostates were particularly dangerous. He described them as:

1. Spots – “*rocks in the sea, a reef.*” This has the idea of stones that are hidden beneath the surface of the sea that posed great danger to ships that were unaware of their presence, often resulting in shipwreck. [1 Tim.1:19 – Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:](#)

2. Ravenous – [when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear.](#) This is literally a pastoral term. It has the idea of “*feeding or tending a flock, to nourish or supply for a need.*” Many held the position of pastors and failed to feed the flock, caring only for themselves. [Jer.12:10 – Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.](#) [Jer.23:1 – Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.](#)

C. Their Pride – [when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear.](#) The word *feast* reveals their self-indulgence, to “*feast sumptuously.*” These feasts prior to the communion service were especially beneficial to the poor and needy. They weren’t expected to contribute to the meal, just come and enjoy it. The apostates were unconcerned with the needs of others; they only sought to gorge themselves. Their only priority was their own gain and pleasure. This they did [without fear.](#) They literally had no conscience and no concern for the people of God or the ways of God.

I. Visible Spots (12a)

II. Deceptive Clouds (12b) – [clouds they are without water, carried about of winds.](#) This too reveals much to us concerning the apostates. We see:

A. Their Hypocrisy – [clouds without water.](#) Clearly they were not what they appeared. On the surface they looked as if they were filled with the Spirit, but within they were empty and dry. To many they appeared sincere and concerned, but they had no desire for the church or its benefit. Men are not always what they appear to be. I have learned to be careful with those who show up out of the blue and before they even get to know the church, they are revealing all they can do and seek a place of prominence.

B. Their Vanity – clouds without water. A cloud without water is of little benefit. I agree that they can provide shade on a hot day, but typically we see clouds as a sign of rain. That is what we expect from them.

▪ The apostates had nothing of value to offer. They desired to be seen of men, but they never contributed anything of service to the Lord. Have we not all met those who want recognition, but refuse to be useful to God? They want to be acknowledged as a Christian, but have no desire to advance the kingdom or support the church, unless it benefits them.

C. Their Instability – carried about of winds. That reveals exactly what it says. These were carried about with every wind of doctrine. They were like the silly doves of Hosea's day, unstable. They had no real conviction, but rather sought to promote what advanced their cause. If they could not manipulate the church to benefit their desires, they moved on.

▪ We need to be careful with those who have been in every church in Mt. Airy. I am sure that all churches are not bad. Maybe the church wasn't the problem at all. It likely stood for truth and the apostate doesn't seek truth. Eph.4:14 – That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

I. Visible Spots (12a)

II. Deceptive Clouds (12b)

III. Dying Trees (12c) – trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. Jude compares them to a fruit tree whose fruit has withered. What can we learn about apostates from this illustration? Notice:

A. Their Decay – trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead. There was what appeared to be fruit, but it never matured; it withered on the vine. We have seen those who talk a good talk, and it may appear that their lives will bear fruit, but eventually their hearts are revealed and the fruit withers on the vine. There is no life in them, no Spirit, hence no fruit. Mat.7:18 – A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Mat.7:20 – Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

B. Their Defiance – twice dead. These were born in sin, separated from God, as all men are. They have been exposed to the gospel, and even pretend to share it with others, but there is no

conversion in their lives. They are living a lie. They have been confronted with the Word of God that brings salvation and they have spurned it in exchange for the worldly lusts.

- Isn't it sad to see those who have been exposed to the gospel and yet spurn the offer of salvation? It is especially difficult to see those who attend church regularly, but come for all the wrong reasons.

C. Their Destiny – trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. Jude reveals that these will give account for their rebellion and denial of God. They will be plucked by the roots because they lack life and produce no fruit. **Mat.7:19 – Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.** **Mat.7:21 – Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.** This awaits those who reject the mercies of God and die in their sins. God will judge rebellion and denial.

I. Visible Spots (12a)

II. Deceptive Clouds (12b)

III. Dying Trees (12c)

IV. Raging Waves (13a) – **Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame.** Jude now speaks of another natural phenomenon that they reflect.

A. Their Fury – They are **raging waves**. This has the idea of “*wild, savage, fierce.*” They are dangerous to those who encounter them on the sea of life. They are ravenous waves that have caused many to face certain shipwreck and destruction. They never promote or expand the cause of Christ; they only bring about destruction and despair. Allowing apostates among us will result in much damage and harm. This is their desire. Notice also:

B. Their Foam – We find that they are **foaming out their own shame**. We have all witnessed the foam of a churning sea. When the waters are calm, the foam usually isn't there. It is a product of turmoil.

- They foam out their own **shame**. This means “*confusion, shame, disgrace, and dishonor.*” That is what they possess on the inside and eventually it will come to the surface. The turmoil that they cause among the church will always result in foam of shame.
- I have always heard the phrase, “if you give a man enough rope, eventually he will hang himself.” If you listen to an apostate long enough, eventually the truth will come out. That is why it is so important to keep apostates away from the church, especially the young and immature believers. They will spew their poison on all who will listen, corrupting the weak as they go!

I. Visible Spots (12a)

II. Deceptive Clouds (12b)

III. Dying Trees (12c)

IV. Raging Waves (13a)

V. Wandering Stars (13b) – **wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.**

A. Their Course – These are **wandering stars**. Much like the clouds carried about of the winds, they wander from place to place. For centuries man has used the stars for navigation and direction because of their stability and accuracy.

- The apostates are not stable and their light is never revealed. They are of no benefit to those who look to them for guidance and direction. They are not grounded in the truths of God’s Word and deviate from truth in order to serve their own selfish interests.

B. Their Casualty – For these God has reserved the **blackness of darkness for ever**. They have lived their lives apart from the Lord, embracing darkness rather than light and God will grant their desires in the end. They will be eternally separated from the presence of God in outer darkness. **Mat.25:30 – And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

- Sadly this will be the fate of all who embrace the false doctrine of the apostates and deny the truth of God. That ought to challenge us this evening. Eternity is too long and there is too much at stake to allow the doctrine of apostasy to take hold among us. May we ever take a stand

for truth and do our part to promote and defend it for the sake of those who need to come to Christ in salvation!

Just as it was in Jude's day, our world is filled with those who reject truth and promote a lie. There are those who seek to satisfy only themselves and have no concern for others.

We need to stand for truth without fail. Let us be diligent and observant in our service unto the Lord. I am committed to preaching and sharing truth with those who need to hear.

If there is a need in your life, Christ is able to help you. He can enable you to overcome adversity. He can strengthen you to stand. He can save you today if you have never accepted Him.