

Descriptions of Apostates

29 July 2018 AM – Jude 1:12-15 – Jude18 – Scott Childs

- 2) Just because Jude quoted a fact from the book of Enoch in no way implies that he considered the book to be part of Scripture. In a similar way, in Acts 17:28, Paul quoted a secular poet.
- 3) Enoch prophesied that the Lord would come with myriads of his saints to execute judgement on the ungodly. This speaks of the final judgment of the human race.
- 4) Regarding Enoch's prophecy, Harry Ironside states, "It was partially fulfilled in the flood. Jude, by divine inspiration, declared that a more complete fulfillment awaits the return of the Lord Jesus, to take vengeance on all who have refused His grace and spurned the Holy Spirit."

b. **The meaning:** Jude applies Enoch's prophecy to the judgment of the apostates.

- 1) God will *judge* or sentence them and *convince* or convict them of their wickedness.
- 2) He repeatedly calls them *ungodly* (i.e., those lacking true reverence for God because of their disobedience to the Bible). A person may be very religious, but if he does not obey the doctrines of the Bible, he lacks reverence for God and His word. That makes him an ungodly person. A person cannot be godly if he disobeys God's Word.
- 3) God will judge the ungodly for their ungodly deeds that they have irreverently done.
- 4) God will also judge the *hard* or harsh things ungodly sinners have said against Him.

Conclusion: Jude's description of the first century apostates gives us a clearer picture of their character. They were like dangerous hidden reefs, rainless clouds, fruitless trees, foaming raging waves, wandering stars and they were destined to God's judgment. When evaluating a religious teacher, we must look beyond their charismatic personality, appealing words, huge audience and examine closely the product of their teaching. Are their actions biblical or dangerous and fruitless? Do not be fooled! We must know the Bible well and contend for the faith!

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Introduction: God had Jude write his book to inform Christians in the first century about apostates or false teachers who were sneaking into churches and leading ignorant Christians astray. We remember that Jude's theme is contending for the faith.

Transition: In verses 12-15, Jude gives us six descriptions of the first century apostates that help us identify apostates today as well.

1. They were Spots

a. The metaphor

- 1) The word "*spots*" literally describes dangerous hidden rocks in the sea or unmarked reefs.
- 2) The *feasts of charity* were fellowship meals eaten by the Christians when they came together for worship. ^{Wuest}
- 3) The word "*feeding*" describes the care of a shepherd for his sheep. The apostates feasted with the Christians; however, they fed themselves *without fear* or boldly rather than caring for others as a shepherd would.

b. **The meaning:** When attending church fellowship meals, the apostates were like dangerous hidden reefs as they boldly served themselves with no genuine care for others.

2. They were Rainless Clouds

a. The metaphor

- 1) The apostates were like clouds with no water, carried with the wind.
- 2) Dark rain clouds blowing in are supposed to tell us that rain is approaching. They promise rain, were followed by disappointment. ^{Barnes}

b. **The meaning:** These apostates made a big show of their spirituality but actually, they were spiritually empty. They made an impressive appearance but they did no good. (Proverbs 25:14) "*Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.*"

3. They were Fruitless Trees

a. The metaphor

- 1) Jude compares the apostates to worthless fruit trees.

- a) A tree is worthless if it has withered fruit
 - b) A tree is worthless if it has no fruit
 - c) A tree is worthless if it is dead. In a sense a tree may die twice, once when it becomes fruitless and again when it dries up completely.
 - d) A tree is worthless if it has been uprooted
- 2) **The meaning:** Every true Christian will produce some spiritual fruit as evidence of his new life in Christ. The apostates may look like a nice fruit tree, but in reality, the fruit they produce is withered or missing completely. Though they may appear to men to be spiritual, in God's eyes they are worthless and dead. They are of no spiritual value as if they were dead and uprooted.

4. They were Raging Waves

a. The metaphor

- 1) **Raging** or **violent** waves of the sea are impressive to watch, but fearful for those at sea. They rise high in the air and then crash on the shore producing only foam.
- 2) Raging waves cause much damage and leave behind unwanted debris that Jude calls shameful. They make a lot of noise, but are of no benefit.
- 3) The word "**shame**" speaks of **dishonour** or **disgrace**.

- b. **The meaning:** The apostates, like raging waves may look impressive. However, they are impulsive and restless men who are unstable in their character. They may make a lot of noise, but all they leave behind is damage and filthy foam and debris. (Isaiah 57:20) "*But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.*" The foam they produce is evidence of their shameful character. God warns us in (Ephesians 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;*"

5. They were Wandering Stars

a. The metaphor

- 1) In the first century, the stars were the GPS of the navigators. They relied heavily on the stars for direction.

- 2) The Greek word translated "*wandering stars*" is the word *planetes*. From this word, we get our English word planet, which means to wander about.
- 3) Unlike the stars, which are stationary, planets orbit around the sun. Because of their movement, "they cannot be relied on for navigational purposes." (New Testament Commentary 393)
- 4) Jude compared the changeable and unstable apostates to such wandering stars.
- b. **The meaning:** Like moving planets, Christians could not trust these false teachers to guide them on a straight course. They were untrustworthy. They were dangerous guides that led in the opposite direction of truth.
 - 1) These wicked apostates were seeking to mislead God's children. God has reserved for those unbelievers *the blackness of darkness* forever. This phrase is exactly (in the original language) the same as in 2 Peter 2:17 where it is translated, "*the mist of darkness.*"
 - 2) Darkness here is symbolizing spiritual darkness, which is the result of eternal separation from God who is Light (Romans 13:12) "*The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*" (Cf. Mat 4:16; 25:30; Jn 3:19). The dark separation of the wicked in the lake of fire will be literal, terrible and eternal. (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9) "*In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;*" (Cf. Mat 25:41, 46; Re 20:14-15)

6. They were Destined to Judgment

- a. Here, instead of using another metaphor, **Jude quotes the book of Enoch**.
 - 1) The book of Enoch is an apocryphal book, which is not part of the inspired Bible. Enoch was a man who lived during the early history of the world. He lived such a godly life that God took him to heaven without dying (Gen 5:24).