

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH
THE BOOK OF JUDE
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE APOSTATE–
OTHER CHARACTERISTICS
JUDE 12-13

I. THEY ARE RUINOUS! *“These are spots in your feasts of charity when they feast with you...” (Vs. 12a)*

The word that is translated “spots” here refers to “hidden rocks.” As in, when a mariner is unaware of hidden rocks that could quickly wreck his ship. So, the helmsman piloting the ship must always be alert, because even waters that look calm and safe can be dangerous!

In the same way, Spiritual leaders must constantly be on guard as well for these dangerous apostates!

Peter speaks of these as well:

2 Peter 2:13 – “...Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;”

The word that is translated “spots” there refers to “a stain or imperfection” and the word “blemish” refers to “a flaw or blot” and points to them being “a disgraceful person”.

Some of these apostates had invaded the “feasts of charity” in the local assemblies, but all they did was defile them.

The tragedy here is that many in the assembly did not realize the true character of these men! They thought the men to be spiritual!

However, instead of adding to the holy nature of these feasts, they detracted from them.

(e.g. Think of the last Passover that Jesus celebrated with His disciples. Looking back to that meal Jesus’ disciples would recognize that Judas was a spot and blemish, a disgrace to the word Disciple! Jesus saw that, but the disciples didn’t recognize it until later!)

THEY ARE RUINOUS...

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II. THEY ARE SELFISH! *“...feeding themselves...” (Vs. 12b)*
Their interest is only in advancing themselves!

The word translated “feeding” means “shepherding.” Instead of *shepherding* Christ’s flock and caring for the needs of His people, **these apostates are only interested in taking care of themselves!**

Jude may have had in mind *Isaiah 56:10-12* and *Ezekiel 34*, where the LORD sent His prophets to condemn the political and spiritual leadership of the nation (“shepherds”) for exploiting the people and caring only for themselves.

It is a serious thing to be a shepherd over God's flock. The example for the shepherd is Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep.

False shepherds use and abuse people in order to get what they want, and yet all the while, somehow the people love it!

Paul marveled at this when he wrote *2 Corinthians 11:20* – “*For ye suffer [i.e. put up with], if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.*”

III. THEY ARE IRREVERENT! *“...without fear...” (Vs. 12b)*

They are arrogant! There is **NO FEAR OF GOD** nor thought about the damage they are doing to the fellowship of the Lord’s Church.

The difference between a true shepherd and a hireling is that the true shepherd cares for the sheep, while the hireling cares only for himself. *Ezekiel 34:2* – “*Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?”*

These apostates have no fear of God when they ought to be afraid. They ought to be afraid because their judgment is coming.

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IV. THEY ARE UNDEPENDABLE!

“...clouds they are without water...” (Vs 12c)

This is a picture of these apostate teachers offering no hope to people that are desperately in need of hope!

They are like the clouds that appear to be a promise of rain, but then they blow over and fail to produce the rain that is needed...which turns out to be a great disappointment to the farmer whose crops desperately need water!

Apostates appear to be men who can give spiritual help, and they may boast of their abilities, but they are unable to produce.

Proverbs 25:14 – “Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.”

Peter said they promise liberty, but they can only give bondage!

2 Peter 2:19 – “While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.”

The Word of God is sometimes compared to the rain and the dew.
Deuteronomy 32:2–“My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew”

Isaiah 55:10 compares God's Word to the rain and snow from heaven that bring fruit on the earth.

Isaiah 55:10 “For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:”

Like the empty clouds in the sky, the false teachers may be prominent and even attractive; but if they cannot bring rain, what good are they?

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V. THEY ARE UNPREDICTABLE!

“...carried about of winds...” (Vs 12c)

They blow out about as fast as they blow in many times just leaving their damage behind.

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;”

VI. THEY ARE UNFRUITFUL!

“...trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit...” (Vs 12d)

The picture here is that of an orchard at harvest time, the time when the husbandman expects fruit. But these trees are fruitless or has withered fruit!

Oh they may have manufactured “*results*” that are sterile and dead, but without fruit.

VII. THEY ARE LIFELESS!

“...twice dead, plucked up by the roots.” (Vs 12d)

Not only are they fruitless, but they are also rootless (“*plucked up by the roots*”); this is why they are “*twice dead*.”

What a contrast to the blessed man in *Psalms 1:3*–“*And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*”

VIII. THEY LEAVE A WAKE OF DEBRIS!

“Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame.” (Vs 13a)

The picture here is that of sea waves that rage and foam under the fierce winds of a storm. Think of a tropical storm or hurricane. The winds and the waves make a lot of noise, but what do they produce?

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Have you ever walked along the beach the morning after a really bad storm and seen what the winds and waves deposited on the shore?

After the storm quiets down, there is all kinds of debris strung along the shoreline! There is debris such as driftwood, seaweed, scum, and all kinds of litter. It is not a pretty sight!

In the wake of the apostate there is nothing left but a destruction caused by their ways!

Isaiah 57:20– “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”

IX. THEY GIVE NO LIGHT OR DIRECTION!

“...wandering stars...” (Vs 13b)

Like “*shooting stars*” that move across the sky, they shine briefly, and then vanish without producing light or giving direction.

Fixed stars help guide navigators, but wandering stars are not really stars at all and are useless to one needing light and direction.

X. THEY HAVE RESERVATIONS IN HELL!

“...to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.” (Vs. 13c)

They will be swallowed up into the blackest darkness forever; eternal judgment is certain for them.

Conclusion

All that we have said about the apostates requires one to look and make some judgments about what is going on!

We’ve looked at a lot of different characteristics. You won’t find all these in every apostate, but we do need to know what to look for! Amen!

Oh how we need to beware of those that are of such character!