

APOSTATES ILLUSTRATED

Jude 12-13

INTRODUCTION

- Having used various characters from the Old Testament Scriptures to illustrate the character and activities of false teachers, Jude now opens up God's other volume of revelation, the book of nature.
- Metaphors from nature are used throughout the Bible to teach and illustrate.
- The Lord Jesus frequently used imagery from nature in His teaching, particularly in His parables.
- *You shall find books and sermons everywhere, in the land and in the sea, in the earth and in the skies, and you shall learn from every living beast and bird and fish and insect, and from every useful or useless plant that springs out of the ground. Like Solomon, see and consider them well — look upon them and receive instruction.*(C H Spurgeon)
- Verses 12-13 continue Jude's lengthy denunciation beginning in verse 4, of the "certain men" who infiltrate churches, teaching antinomianism and denying Christ's lordship.

In these verses he presents five striking metaphors describing these ungodly men.

I. THEIR SELFISH DECEPTION

A. A hidden danger

1. The Greek word for "spots" refers to rocks submerged under the sea, or along the shoreline by which unsuspecting ships could become stranded or wrecked.
2. Many professing Christians have become morally and spiritually shipwrecked by these ungodly apostates, and have abandoned Christianity altogether (1 Timothy 1:19-20)
3. Faithful churches must do their duty to expose and warn against error and those who teach it, just as the lighthouse warns ships of the rocks

B. Enemies in the midst

1. The “love-feast” was a communal meal where all the church met as equals, and the rich supplied the needs of the poor.
2. That these ungodly men were present at such feasts shows they had successfully infiltrated and been received into membership of churches
3. Like Judas’ presence at the Last Supper, they were “spots and blemishes” on the churches love-feasts (2 Peter 2:13)
4. Intended to be an exhibition of Christian love, the “love feast” became subject to abuse and was eventually discontinued (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:20-22)

C. Greed

1. They feed themselves, not others
 - a. It literally means “shepherding themselves” (cf. John 21:16; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2)
 - b. They resemble the leaders of Israel who “fed themselves, and fed not my flock” (Ezekiel 34:2; 34:8; Isaiah 56:11; John 10:12-13)
2. Sadly, many in churches today share this same selfish attitude – “What can I *get* from the church?”
3. They do these things “without fear” or reverence to God, which is a consequence of their denying His lordship (v.4)

II. THEIR SPIRITUAL DESTITUTION

A. Clouds without water

1. They promise much but produce little (Proverbs 25:14)
2. They are devoid of life-giving water
 - a. They do not have God’s word (Deuteronomy 32:2; Isaiah 55:10)
 - b. They have forsaken the fountain of living waters (Jeremiah 2:13)
 - c. They have no Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39; Romans 8:9)
4. They cannot satisfy the thirst of the soul (John 4:13-14)

III. THEIR STERILE DEADNESS

A. Trees without fruit

1. The godly are like fruitful trees (Psalm 1:3)
2. The ungodly have no fruit of righteousness
 - a. Jesus represented the Jews as barren fig trees that deserved to be cut down (Matthew 21:19; Luke 13:6-9)
 - b. They had the outward appearance and promise of fruitfulness, but were barren.
 - c. Their affection for the things of this world unsure they never bear godly fruit (Matthew 13:22)

B. Twice dead

1. All men enter this world spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1)
2. Sinners must be “born again”, or “born of the Spirit” to enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3)
3. Those who die in their sins will face the “second death” in the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8)
4. “Born once, die twice; born twice, die once”
5. There are some, through their wilful rejection of Christ, that are described as subjects of the second death even in this life (cf. 1 Timothy 5:6)

C. Plucked up by the roots

1. An “uprooted” tree is an Old Testament symbol of divine judgment (Psalm 52:5; Proverbs 2:22; Jeremiah 1:10)
2. They are cut off from any source of nourishment (Matthew 15:13)
3. They are not merely cut down, but plucked up, indicating they are irredeemably condemned
4. For the apostate, “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins” (Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26)

IV. THEIR SHAMEFUL DECLAMATION

A. Raging waves of the sea

1. The wicked are like the troubled sea (Isaiah 57:19-21)
2. They are swelled up with pride and vanity (Jude 16)

B. Foaming out their own shame

1. Sea foam is formed by agitation of seawater containing broken down organic matter or pollutants.
2. Their words are wrathful and obscene, their doctrines filthy, which end in uncleanness, shame, emptiness, and ruin

V. THEIR SWIFT DESTRUCTION

A. Wandering stars

1. The righteous shine as stars forever (Daniel 12:2)
2. But the ungodly, like falling stars, blaze for a fleeting moment, then are forever gone
3. They are not fixed or steadfast as true Christians, but are wandering (Psalm 57:7; 108:1; Hebrews 6:19)

B. Reserved unto darkness forever

1. They love darkness rather than light (John 3:19-20)
2. Hell is a place of "outer darkness" (Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30)
3. It is darkness because it completely devoid of God, who is light (1 John 1:5; Revelation 21:23)
4. It is certain – *reserved*
5. It is eternal – *for ever*

CONCLUSION

1. Jude's purpose is to warn us of these wolves in sheep's clothing.
2. Countless people have fallen prey to them.
3. Every one of us is in danger of their deception unless we are watchful, vigilant and on our guard.