

# “Book of Jude – Characteristics of Apostates”

Dr. Geoffrey Plummer  
Calvary Baptist Church

December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## Scripture

### Jude 8-13

“8 Yet **in the same way** these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.

9 But **Michael the archangel**, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed.

11 **Woe to them!** For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

12-13 These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.”

### Recap from Jude 1-7

## Contend for the Faith!

### Apostasy is:

- 1) knowing the truth
- 2) living in contrast to that truth, and
- 3) then leading others astray into error.

### Old Testament Apostate Examples:

False prophets attempting to lead Jude’s audience astray were just as bad

- 1) as those Israelites that rebelled in the Wilderness
- 2) the angels who contaminated the earth in Genesis 6 so that it had to be flooded
- 3) and the men of Sodom and Gomorrah

God’s judgment and the result to these creatures for all of these actions were destruction and an eternal punishment in the pits of darkness and Hell.

Why would we think that false teachers would be treated any differently than other actions?

## What Apostates Do

### Jude 8

“Yet **in the same way** these men, also **by dreaming**, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.”

“in the same way” -> signifies that the apostates of his time act just like the apostates in those three O.T. examples, by dreaming.

**What are they dreaming about?** -> They are fantasizing about their own passions and pursuits.

Jude **doesn't use the normal word** for a general dream here (*onar*)

He uses *enupniazomai* which means **an abnormal imagination** inflamed for the individual's sensual pursuits.

Lustful dreams are the idea here -> It could be lustful for sex, for fame and personal glory, or for power

These dreams are purposeful and from a perverted mind.

**Jim Jones was a passionate man who called himself a Christian and apparently taught from the Bible daily. He generated a tremendous number of followers to his ideals: a community of kindness focused on God. Internally, however, it was nothing like that. It was revealed that Jones was a sexually depraved man and was cruel to those closest to him.**

He was the epitome of an apostate, motivated by greed and self-glorification.

He put on a great act for years until the number of his victims grew to the point where he thought it best to kill them all. Sad, but true.

Apostasy has seriously destructive effects.

Jude says apostates defile the flesh and “defile” is *miaino* which means **to stain or mark**.

These apostates would **put a black mark on a piece of coal**.

They have serious moral issues that show up in perverse actions.

These passions may be hidden for a while, but they will eventually come to light.

Most modern apostates **show up on radio and television** where the character of their lives can be hidden.

**Anyone remember Jimmy Bakker whose PTL Club was the talk of the airwaves in the 1980s?**

He was on top of the world for a decade but was brought down as a convicted fraudster and sexually depraved man.

Bakker, in 2020, was trying to peddle a “Silver Solution” for the coronavirus before being shut down by the FDA and FTC.

The entire chapter of **2 Peter** references this type of behavior in apostates.

Not only is their moral character an issue, but Jude says they also reject authority.

Apostates show a contempt for authority of all kinds because they like to be a law unto themselves.

Specifically, though, **Jude is referencing the authority of the Lord**.

They reject the Lordship of Jesus Christ in order to pursue their own desires.

They teach pleasurable messages that people love rather than teach the truth of the Gospel message.

They want people to love and follow them because of their sensual pursuits.

**They won't preach any difficult to digest messages because that might detract from their audience.**

They hold the followers with fluffy messages and a multiple of smiles.

**Does this remind you of any TV preachers?**

Jude writes that they also revile angelic majesties.

"Revile" here is the word where we get our word blaspheme.

Majesties is the Greek word *doxa* where we get doxology and translate it as glory.

Apostates continually speak with evil intent against the glory of God and Christ.

They may deny that Jesus is God, deny His virgin birth, deny His resurrection, and simply intentionally fail to teach His word accurately.

They purposely lead people away from truth, not move them toward it.

They interpret Scripture, **not with historical conservative guidance**, but come up with their own viewpoints that suit their purposes.

If they want more money to come into the church, they preach a message where giving money to the church would net an earthly return on your investment, just as long as they receive their individual cut of the funds.

## **Jude 9**

"But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

**As an example of this reviling of authority**, Jude cites the archangel Michael in a dispute with Satan over the body of Moses.

The account of this interaction is not in our Bible but, instead, is recounted in the pseudepigraphical book the *Assumption of Moses*. There are only textual fragments of this book recorded today from the 6<sup>th</sup> century, but the earthly church fathers reference it in the decades after Jesus's crucifixion. We can find a portion of that at: <http://wesley.nnu.edu/index.php?id=2124> if you're interested although you will not find the specific text that Jude writes about there.

Why was Michael fighting Satan over the body of Moses?

We do not know for sure

Can you imagine what Satan would have done with Moses's body?

- Some believe that Satan wanted to take the body of Moses and setup some kind of an idol type monument to lead Israel further astray.
- Perhaps Israel would have made a pilgrimage each year to this monument and carry the people away from God and toward Moses.
- He would have probably had it embalmed and setup as a statue to be worshipped

This would **take away glory from God and give it to Moses** -> thus reviling angelic majesties

God purposely buried Moses's body where no one would find it (**Deuteronomy 34:5-6**).

Jude tells us that Michael was involved in this burial at some level.

Why is Jude referencing this interesting fact here?

Jude writes "did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!'".

Jude is speaking of the actions of the apostates rejecting specific lines of authority.

Michael, in Jude's reference, **did not attempt to rebuke Satan directly but instead entrusted that rebuke to the Lord Himself**.

Even though they were probably peers in the angelic hierarchy, and that Satan was a fallen angel, Michael left the rebuke to the chain of command to handle.

This should be an important item to point out when you hear anyone speaking directly to Satan or binding Satan in prayer. They have no idea what they are talking about in these matters.

## Jude 10

"But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed."

Jude has already called the apostates dreamers, but here it's as if they are talking in their sleep.

Have you ever tried to carry on a conversation with someone talking in their sleep?

Apostates talk about things they do not understand **because the Holy Spirit is not resident within them**

## 1 Corinthians 2:14

“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for **they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them**, because they are spiritually appraised.”

Apostates speak without understanding because the Holy Spirit is the one that gives understanding.

Apostates, literally, **are on their own in spouting biblical words** with no clue of the true meaning behind them.

They live by instinct, like animals, with no spiritual guidance to keep them in check.

They have no conscience to keep them in the proper path.

Jude calls them **unreasoning**. Literally, the Greek word for “unreasoning” is *alogos*, or negative words.

They do not teach the Word of God

**They teach against the Word** -> “ignorant or senseless” speech is the best interpretation of the Greek here.

I think we all know our favorite false teachers on the TV or radio airwaves.

We’ve heard them utter senseless words many, many times.

Jude tells us they do that because **they only have instinct to guide them**, like an animal, not reason.

**Why would someone reasonably choose to teach counter to the truth?**

They are deluded by Satan and their own sensual passions.

They are only **guided by the sensual, instinctive passions** for their own gain and pleasure.

They have no true spiritual reasoning ability and thus, they will be, destroyed. Apostates, eventually, will go off to destruction.

Also, Peter writes similarly:

## 1 Peter 2:12

“But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will, in the destruction of those creatures, also be destroyed.”

Jude writes, “**Woe to them!**” They are accursed and will experience nothing but calamity in their future!

## Jude 11

“For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam and perished in the rebellion of Korah.”

Like he did earlier in verse 10, **Jude gives us an example of this behavior** -> 3 of them

Cain is a well-known figure being the first human offspring on the earth.

**What was Cain's failure?**

God required a blood sacrifice and Abel provided it (**Genesis 4**) but **Cain** brought fruit from the ground.

Cain **rejected what God said and did what he wanted to do instead**.

God rejected Cain's sacrifice and his countenance fell. He then turned away from God and did the first thing that he wanted to do, kill his brother Abel. **Hebrews 11:4** simply called Abel's sacrifice "better".

Apostates always **do what they want to do** and think that it's enough and they teach others the same lies.

God's required payment for sin was blood, and Jesus's blood paid for our sins when He became our sacrificial lamb.

Apostates deny that the atoning blood sacrifice of Jesus is enough for salvation of us all, seeking to add something else that must be done. **It is the Jesus + syndrome**.

**Balaam** is another study in apostasy.

**Numbers 22-25** recount the story of Balaam and Balak. **Balak, the king of Moab, offered Balaam a large sum of money to curse the Israelites**. Try as he might, Balaam took the money but could not curse Israel and, instead, continued to pronounce a blessing on them. So, Balaam found another way to get God to curse Israel. He encouraged the woman of Moab to go into Israel and seduce the men into hedonistic relationships. His plan worked perfectly (**Numbers 25:1-9**), and Israel was led astray from God so that God judged Israel. Balaam, though, met his own personal end, too (**Numbers 31:8**). So, while the money may have been good for a while, it ended in destruction.

There are **many apostate false teachers that are in it for the money**. You know their names, and destruction is the end of their game.

The rebellion of **Korah**, from **Numbers 16** involved a palace coup, of sorts.

Korah was a Levite **who didn't think that the choice of Moses and Aaron to lead the people of Israel was necessary**.

Korah and three others led 250 Israelites against the leadership of Moses and Aaron against God's choice. They were going to have it their own way. God judged Korah and all the men that supported him by **opening a hole in the ground such that they and all their households were sucked into the earth**.

**Apostates do not adhere to the chosen path of God.**

They fight for power in the churches when they are not the first choice, and they want rebellion against God's chosen people.

They don't believe in the need for a Mediator between God and man, as Moses was, or as Christ is, thinking they are good enough on their own to merit the best of what God has to offer.

## What Apostates Are Like

### Jude 12-13

"These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever."

**First**, they are hidden reefs in your love feasts, that is, they look like the real deal, they speak like us for a while, they infiltrate the church, find out about us, and then slowly gain a following.

A "hidden reef" or a "sunken rock" is what a ship could run aground on, causing serious damage to the vessel.

In the early days, the church came together for a weekly meal where the rich brought a lot of food and the poor brought themselves. It was a way for the church to come together as one. It might have been the only good meal that a slave would have all week. But the apostates would create cliques in the feast, using the get together for their own personal purposes, get overly drunk with wine, and turn the feast into an orgy.

They only cared for themselves -> "care" in this verse is *pomaino*, the word meaning "to shepherd".

These individuals were **shepherding themselves and not the people**.

This description shows us the danger of apostates.

**Second**, they are clouds without water, that is, they look promising for a herdsman looking to feed his cattle or a farmer looking for rain to water his crops.

Instead, though, they have no water -> **There is no benefit from their presence in the church.**

### Proverbs 25:4

"Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts about his gifts falsely."

Apostates make bold promises that they cannot fulfill and take advantage of the people who hope, falsely, in them.

The people are led away from the True hope, Jesus.

This description shows the false promises of apostates.

**Third**, they are autumn trees without fruit, that is, they look like they will generate fruit, but they cannot.

The provide **the promise of spiritual nourishment**, but they cannot feed the people.

Like a dry, dead tree, they will be uprooted and tossed away into destruction.

Jesus described this situation in John 15 speaking of the branches with no life in them. They will simply be cut away from the vine and burned.

They are **doubly dead**. They will die on the earth and then they were experience spiritual death in Hell at the judgment.

**This description shows the fruitlessness of apostates.**

**Fourth**, they are wild waves of the sea casting up their own shame like foam, that is, dirty, mucky water that crash against the shoreline and create a miry foam with great stench.

If you've ever been to a shoreline where the grime and trash of the ocean comes home to rest against the rocks, you will get the picture here.

Apostates deposit the filth of their lifestyles and message into the people's lives and create an absolute stench among the people.

**This description shows the filth and waste of apostates.**

**Fifth**, they are wandering stars, that is, **a shooting star which flashes light across the sky** for a short time and is then gone.

Stars have a fixed orbit, but shooting stars are random in their path.

They **burn brightly for a time period** just as apostates burn brightly for a while in the church until their lifestyle and more deficiencies turn into a personal firestorm.

Their end will be a place of black darkness that has been prepared and planned for them from the beginning.

**This final description shows the short-term nature and aimless ways of apostates.**

Apostasy is a dangerous state and true saints can be led astray by apostates and then feel crushed when the apostasy comes to full fruition leading to death and destruction of faith.

**Apostates take many people with them when they go, just as Jim Jones did in Guyana.**

We need to be warned to look for these individuals and, again, contend for the faith!

**Prayer**

**Benediction**