

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 1



Contend
for the faith
which was
once delivered
to the saints
Jude 1:3

A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF APOSTATES PART 1

Scripture Text: Jude 12

In the last quarterly, we learned that the Epistle of Jude is a gateway to The Revelation because it introduces us to highly symbolic language. The tone of **verse 12** is almost totally symbolic. Jude called apostates *spots*, *clouds*, and *trees*. These figurative expressions were used to bring certain images to our minds so that Jude could convey the truth concerning the description of apostates.

MEMORY VERSE: *That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:27).*

Spots Among God's People

These are spots in your feasts of charity . . . feeding themselves without fear. These words are referring to people spoken of in the previous verses. In the original Greek, the word used for *spots* is *spilas*. It means “a half-submerged rock on which a ship could be easily shipwrecked.” This teaches us that associating with apostates could cause us to make a spiritual shipwreck of our faith (see **1 Timothy 1:19**).

In the morning time, apostates used the *feasts of charity* to influence others. There may be times, such as at weddings or funerals, when you will meet ones who will be *feeding themselves without fear*. Another translation of this phrase is, “They have no feelings of responsibility for anyone except themselves.” Be careful! Although apostates are friendly, they are deadly. They are *feeding themselves without fear* only “because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily . . .” (**Ecclesiastes 8:11**).

Clouds and Winds

Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds. **Proverbs 25:14** says, “Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.” Apostates boast of gifts and callings that they do not have. Their professions are as false and empty as *clouds* with no water. The words *without water* come from the same Greek word that is translated “dry places” in **Matthew 12:43**. “Dry places” are where unclean spirits wander. People who are in an apostate condition are there because they gave heed to unclean spirits. In turn, these spirits have given them false gifts.

The next part of our text are the words *carried about of winds*. **Ephesians 4:14** speaks of being “carried about with every wind of doctrine.” When ones come under the power of unclean spirits, they are led to believe in “doctrines of devils” (**1 Timothy 4:1**). Seducing spirits cause people to be *carried about*, or be moved from one position to another. Their spirit changes and they alter their beliefs.

The Spiritual Trees

Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit. These *trees* are people who, spiritually speaking, were once good *trees*. They once produced good spiritual fruit, according to **Matthew 7:17**. Unfortunately, their fruit died. Now, they are *without fruit*. What type of fruit was Jude speaking of? **Romans 6:22** says, “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness . . .” When one’s spirit changes from the Holy Spirit to an unclean spirit, he is committing iniquity, and “all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned” (**Ezekiel 18:24**). Why? His fruit of holiness has withered; and when a spiritual tree is without the fruit of holiness, it is known as having died twice.

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A Tragic Condition

Twice dead. The term *twice dead* sounds strange. It describes those who were once spiritually dead in their sins, then they were saved by being “born of the Spirit” (**John 3:8**); but tragically, they died spiritually, again. The sad thing about the condition of being *twice dead* is that it can be final and irreversible.

What could possibly make this condition so hopeless? The fact that God cannot renew someone’s experience while that one still professes to be saved. One who is spiritually dead must first acknowledge his condition, then he can be made alive. When David was confronted with his sin by the Prophet Nathan, he acknowledged his sin (**Psalm 51:3**). When old Israel was in apostasy, she said, “I am innocent . . . I have not sinned” (**Jeremiah 2:35**). There is no help for ones who will not admit their condition! They are, as **Proverbs 30:12** declares, “pure in their own eyes, and yet . . . not washed from their filthiness.”

The Horrible Deception

Plucked up by the roots. This description shows the sad permanence of the condition of one overtaken by the spirit of apostasy. Jesus described this condition in **Matthew 15:13**: “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.” What causes these plants to be “rooted up”? The answer is found in **Matthew 15:12**. Jesus’ disciples came to Him and asked, “Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?” The religious Pharisees were offended at Jesus’ Word!

When ones become offended and begin to profess and will not take the Word, that same Word will cause them to be “rooted up.” Study the Scriptures; you will see that this is the historical record. (Read **Deuteronomy 29:28, 1 Kings 14:15, Psalm 52:5, Proverbs 2:22, and Jeremiah 1:10**.)

The words *plucked up* imply a deliberate action. They reveal the fact that when people persist so far in their folly, God Himself will take action. He will send them a man with a message. If that Word is rejected, it will root out, or pull up, the ones who are offended by it, and they will leave. **2 Thessalonians 2:11-12** says: “And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

What is the “lie” that apostates believe? They believe that their unrighteousness is truth. This is why they are “damned” and cannot get any help. They continue to think they still have the truth! May God help *us* to keep our hearts “with all diligence” (**Proverbs 4:23**), for we are not immune to the power of this spirit.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Truth is not truth because honest men consent to it,
but honest men will consent to truth because it is truth.**