

# Examples of Apostates Found in Nature

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[0:00] You may wonder why is he spending so much time on apostates.

! Jude is a book about apostates.! When we get to the last verse, we'll be talking about apostates and apostasy. So this whole book is about apostates.

So we're going to examine a couple more verses tonight, actually, 12 and 13. You'll recall last time, Jude showed us human examples of apostates.

The three that we looked at were Cain, Balaam, and Korah. Now, this evening, Jude will describe the characteristics of apostates.

He's going to use examples of apostates from the natural world around us. And then he's going to draw a correlation between things in the natural world, the created world, with apostasy.

[1:11] Here's verse 12 and 13. Talk about apostates. 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.

Now, the Bible often uses natural phenomena to describe spiritual truth. The Lord Jesus was famous for this in His earthly ministry, especially in His parables.

He talked about things like wheat and tares, fig trees, pearls, soil, and lost sheep.

Now, that's just a few of them. The Psalms are rich with language utilizing the natural to explain the spiritual.

And in our passage today, the Holy Spirit, working through Jude, uses five examples from nature to teach us spiritual truth.

[2:51] And these five naturally occurring phenomena are hidden reefs, waterless clouds, fruitless autumn trees, wild sea waves, and wandering stars.

So that's the five that we're going to look at. And the first one we come to are hidden reefs. These are the men, apostates, who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves.

So Jude here compares apostates to hidden reefs. Hidden reefs lurk below the water level in the world's oceans and seas, posing an unseen danger.

Reefs are made up of coral and are typically found close to the shoreline. Now, individually, coral is very small, extremely small.

But they join together. And when they join together, and by the way, they're like concrete, they're a living organism, they join together to form a barrier that could rip the bottom out of boats and ships in ancient times.

[4:22] reefs. And in actuality, in our day, reefs can tear the bottom out of iron ships. Just literally rip the bottom out of iron.

Imagine what they could do to wooden hull ships 2,000 years ago. And did. Often. Apostates are like hidden reefs.

they embed themselves inside a church and tear unsuspecting people to shreds.

and they do that with their lies and with their wickedness. Now, the love feasts in the first century, and you know, it's a shame in our day, 21st century, you hear that word and, you know, the mind can kind of run into areas where we shouldn't go.

So, a love feast in a church, I'll dare them. Love feasts in the first century church were gatherings of people to study God's word, to encourage one another, to care with one another if someone had a need, to confront somebody in the church if error, they were holding on to error, or if error was beginning to creep into the church.

[5:47] And, and what we do at this church could be described from time to time as a love feast. We call it fellowship. We fellowship. We are to be in fellowship with one another and with the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And, you know, you can have a fellowship without food. Even, even Baptist people can do that, but we don't often. But, you know, it's okay to have food too. The love feasts or the fellowship could become corrupted and widely abused.

This corruption was introduced by the defiling influence of false teachers that had come into the church and they were demonically inspired.

Demonically inspired. Though hypocrites and sinners, the false teachers were able to feast within the church without fear.

such corruption occurred 2,000 years ago and occurs in our day. And, you know, I really think we've gotten better, our church, but I remember a time if somebody showed up on Sunday morning, came forward, said, I want to join, he said, welcome.

[7:11] And they joined. We didn't know their first name, but we admitted them into membership. We had a vote right then. And if they came three Sundays in a row, we put them in charge of the bus ministry or had them teach a kids class.

We didn't know who they were. We don't do that anymore. We've gotten away from that. Now, Paul, I think, gave an accurate description of these human reefs that are hidden, that destroy.

In 1 Timothy 4.2, Paul said this, they are liars. Paul never did shade much. You notice that? They are liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron.

Well, that's strong language, an accurate language. These false teachers and false preachers had no concern for damaging those around them with their lies about the gospel.

And they plagued the church for 2,000 years. In Paul's day and in the days of the apostles, it was the Judaizers and the Gnostics. But we've had others down through the years.

[8:28] The church gatherings were for the purpose of caring for one another. The false teachers only cared for themselves. Very self-centered.

They cared for themselves. And the word caring in the Greek language comes from the word for shepherd. And we know shepherd is a very important concept, isn't it, for Christianity.

Well, false teachers do not shepherd the flock. Far from it. They shepherd themselves. They shepherd. They're the hero of all their own stories.

You ever seen any of those birds on TV named universities after themselves? False teachers do not shepherd the flock. They only shepherd themselves.

As one writer has said, the only interest false teacher has is called self-interest or self-gratification. And while the apostates would fill their bellies at the love feasts, they tried to destroy the church by filling the heads of unsuspecting members with blasphemous lies.

[9:44] And they were there to spread heresy. Satanically inspired and spread heresy. And they achieved this at the expense of everyone else.

As hidden reefs, these false teachers can and in fact have torn the bottom out of many churches. Many churches.

Well, Jude also talks about waterless clouds. That's really interesting. I found that fascinating. Jude 12, second part of that verse, clouds without water carried along by winds.

Very interesting. I wasn't going to talk about this. Then I said, well, I will. Then I said, no, I'm not going to do that. But I'm going to. One of the most amazing miracles of the Lord's creation is the hydrologic cycle.

And let me say to you, that was not created by Charles Darwin. Okay? The hydraulic cycle begins with the evaporation of water from the surface of the ocean or other bodies of water.

[11:06] The moist air is lifted. It cools. And water vapor condenses to form clouds. moisture, then, is transported around the globe until it returns to the surface as precipitation.

Once the water reaches the ground, then one of two processes may occur. Some of the water will evaporate back up into the atmosphere.

Some of the water will penetrate the surface and become groundwater. Groundwater either seeps its way into the oceans, rivers, and streams or is released back into the atmosphere.

The balance of water that remains on the Earth's surface is runoff. We've seen a lot of runoff lately in Houston, for instance, and other places. Runoff empties into lakes and rivers and streams and is carried back into the ocean and that's where we get the word cycle because the cycle begins again.

That is just an amazing, only God could come up with that. Only God could, and you know, there's no evidence on any of the other planets that that's happening or ever happened.

[12:27] I mean, they like to say, oh, there's water on Mars and there's water, and, show me. Clouds produce much-needed rain, but clouds without water only give the promise of rain and then fail to deliver.

Apostate teachers come on the scene and promise a refreshing spiritual rain on the church. As an apostate, I heard an apostate one day say this, if I say something conflicts with the Bible, believe me, because I have the latest information from God.

That's apostasy. They come on the scene, they make promises, I want to give you spiritual rain, but they don't deliver.

Jude said, these guys are like clouds that bring the promise of rain, and then they move on with no moisture dropping from above.

And that's why Jude said, they are without water. Have no water out. That term without water is interesting. In Luke's gospel, it is used to describe wandering evil spirits, demons, and it says they water through a dry, waterless, and barren place.

[13:57] I think that's in the 11th chapter of Luke. So we see the connection between demons in Luke and apostates in Jude.

There's a direct connection with those guys. The apostates come, originate from a demonic source. And then Jude talks about fruitless autumn trees. Autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted. Now, autumn is my favorite time of year. I love, if it was 40 degrees out there, I'd love it. I love the autumn.

I love the leaves that change and all that. Diane hates the autumn because of allergies. She's home now and she's just got these allergies. I mean, she likes autumn, but she doesn't like the allergies that go with them.

[15:00] Autumn is the time of year when farmers expect to harvest their final crops and bed down the land for the winter. When the harvest is weak or fails, the farmer must endure disappointment and suffer hardship through the winter.

During the winter, they turn their attention to the upcoming spring when they must begin anew the painstaking process of fertilizing, planting, watering, and then waiting for crops to mature.

And the Lord uses a picture here of autumn trees without fruit. fruit. This is a portrait of the disappointing reality of a barren harvest.

I remember when we moved to New Jersey courtesy of Phillips Petroleum Company when I was a kid. My dad worked in New York City. I lived in a little bitty town out in New Jersey. We had an apple tree. It had to be 100 years old.

It produced wormy apples six years in a row. Every apple had a wormy. We just piled them up and the deer came in and devoured them. But one year we had the most beautiful apples.

[16:13] And my mom used to tell me Johnny Appleseed planted that tree. She was convinced. I didn't know if there was a Johnny Appleseed but she thought there was. So Jude here is making a connection with the apostates that were invading the churches.

He likened their false and empty profession and their lack of spiritual life to a barren harvest. It's a bear harvest.

Not going to be any food this winter from these apostates. A barren harvest has no value. None whatsoever. Jude carries it even further by describing apostates as doubly dead.

It's one thing to be dead. Something else to be doubly dead. fruit. They were fruitless because there was no life in them and they were uprooted because their roots were dead.

Well if you've got dead roots you're dead. The life comes from the roots. Like Jesus said you know I am the vine my father is the vine dresser.

[17:25] The fruit on the branch we don't produce fruit. Jesus produces fruit through us. In the physical world fruit comes from the vine.

It doesn't come from the branch. It's produced by the vine. Jesus once told the Pharisees in Matthew 15 and 13 every plant which my heavenly father did not plant shall be uprooted.

Wow that's going to be a lot of uprooted plants isn't it? Someday. apostates produce no life changing fruit in themselves or in others.

They do not do it. People may ask if there's ever been a soul saved under the teaching of an apostate and the answer to that is there has been. There has been.

I don't think on a regular basis and I don't think on a sweeping basis but it has happened. And then people say well how can that happen? The guy was an unbeliever. He was an apostate. He was committing sexual sin against his wife.

[18:32] You can go down the litany of things. But the reason some people are saved under the teaching of an unbeliever, an apostate, is because the power is in the word.

It's not in the deliverer. I could have asked, I think I did ask you one day in here, how many people did you ever get saved? That was on Monday night.

You were quick to answer and Mike was quick to answer and nobody. You know, Billy Graham, Larry King asked Billy Graham one time, how many people have been saved under your ministry? He said one, probably two. I'm pretty sure about Ruth, his wife.

He said, I know about me and I'm pretty sure about Ruth. But Dr. Graham would tell you, I didn't save anybody. The power is in the word and it is not in the person who delivers it.

Now that doesn't mean that God wants his word delivered by corrupt people. But if it is, he can still work a miracle of rebirth in his sovereign, if it's his sovereign will.

[19:39] But the increase comes from the Lord and if he so desires, he can reach people through the mouth of a donkey. Remember that Old Testament example?

preach through a donkey. He did that in the Old Testament. But that is not the reason for a church to tolerate apostates. I mean, you don't say, well, our minister is an apostate.

Ours isn't. I say that because he sits there on Monday night. Our minister is an apostate, but we're growing and we've got plenty of money and so it's okay. No, it's not okay. It's not okay.

In Jude 13th verse, Jude says this, he's talking about natural phenomena, wild waves of the sea casting up their own shame like foam.

In scripture, the sea is often used to describe those who do not know God. Isaiah spoke of wicked people being like a tossing sea.

[20:43] He said those types of waters only produce refuge and mud. Reminds me of the tsunami that devastated Japan just a few years ago. Even now, the debris from Japan continues to wash up on the American shorelines of Washington, Oregon, and California.

Pretty amazing, isn't it? In the aftermath of a great storm, the seashore is littered with debris and mire. water. Absolutely littered.

When I was in Oman, which is right next to Saudi Arabia, we were down there on the Arabian Sea, and we were sitting there and we were 40 feet above the water on these cliffs, no shore, and the waves were like 30 feet high.

And it was because there was a raging storm in the Indian Ocean 3,000 miles away. That was just amazing. I threw that in for free. I don't know why I talked about that. But in the aftermath, the shore is littered with debris and mire.

None of that material is of any benefit. And it is certainly not life-giving. That is a graphic portrait of false teachers and false preachers.

[22:08] Such apostates are filled with empty talk and engage in self-serving activities. They are like wild waves.

Apostates are like debris on the seashore. They only cast up their own shame like foam. Eventually, their actions display all forms of heresy, deception, immorality, and insubordination.

And like foam, they're good for nothing. I mean, you can't corner the market on foam. You're not going to make much money investing in foam.

And then Jude talks about wandering stars. I really like that. I'm sort of an amateur astronomer. I mean, I like to go out and see the nice sky. That's about it.

wandering stars for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever. And this is the final natural phenomena, and he describes them as wandering stars.

[23:17] Now, in the original language, these are not heavenly bodies per se, and by that, I'm sure the writers meant stars that continually shine and have fixed and predictable orbits.

I had said, actually, stars and galaxies, but there's only one galaxy you can see, and they didn't know that 2,000 years ago, and that's Andromeda, and it's in the north, but it's real pale.

Now, I've tried to see it through a telescope, binoculars, and naked eye, and I can't find it. But it's there, and that's the only out-of-the-Milky way heavenly body you can see, and it's a galaxy of 200 billion stars, just like, looks like a little mist in the night sky.

But these are not galaxies, they're talking about stars. And like stars that continually shine, and they have fixed, predictable orbits, the stars were a timepiece.

They're literally a timepiece. These objects were so predictable that mariners used them to guide their ships at sea.

[24:28] That's how predictable they were. And you know, when Apollo 13 had the explosion, and they went around and got slingshot around the moon, they had to use the stars.

because they had to shut off the computers. And they were taking readings with the stars. These guys knew the stars to get back to Earth. Theologians have differed as to what Jude was referring to in this verse.

Some believe that the wandering stars were planets planets. They did not have fixed and thus predictable orbits. They noticed there were planets that every few months they would be moving and then they would kind of sit and then they'd come back.

And then after three months they disappeared. And a year later they would come back. So a lot of theologians believe the wandering stars are planets. planets. They don't have these fixed and predictable orbits every night.

They appeared but after a brief few months they were gone. And they could not be relied upon to guide ships at sea. You know it's interesting, I throw this in for free too, in the old mariners logs, they kept meticulous logs when they go to sea.

[25:51] We're talking about the wooden sailing ships, we're talking Christopher Columbus and that era. They talked about the moving bodies in the heavens. lights that move through the heavens.

And I figured they're not meteors because they're too fast. They could be planets but they may be demonic activity. I see moving objects out of my farm but those are satellites that are going over. Others believe that wandering stars are perhaps meteors that flash through the night sky but they only last for parts of a second. I mean you've all seen a meteor and then they're gone.

the flashing is caused by the fact that they've reentered the earth's atmosphere and are burning up. And you might see one that boy I mean it comes in and it's just really big and whatever and it turns out that that thing's like the size of a half a penny.

You know grains of sand coming in. When I lived in New Jersey I was a senior in high school. I looked up and there was something that had reentered the earth's atmosphere but I watched it for a good 30 seconds and it was burning up and then it kind of dissipated.

[27:07] Well I ran into the house. My dad was home early because he'd been overseas and I said I just saw something. I hope it was not an airplane. I think it was a meteor but it just landed a few miles.

I'm going to drive up there. He said okay. So I drove up there looking for it. Now I'm in New Jersey pretty far north from here and actually that was a meteor and it did hit the earth but it hit near the North Pole in the Arctic Circle.

I thought it was four or five miles north of where I was at but it wasn't. Did you drive up there? I did. North Pole? No, no. Actually, interesting to ask that.

I drove to Chatham, New Jersey. Does that mean anything to anybody? No. You remember War of the Worlds? That guy lived in Chatham.

Chatham was in that movie. And my English teacher, boy, I'm really getting off. My English teacher in New Jersey told us one day when that came on the radio, H.G.

[28:10] Wells, War of the Worlds, and it was a live broadcast, people believed it. My English teacher was a little kid and she had like six brothers and sisters.

her dad took them to the basement and he got out a bullet for his gun for every one of the members of his family.

And he was waiting for someone from Mars to come to his door and he was going to kill all his children and his wife and then kill himself. Yeah. I mean, that swept.

They still talk about that. It was amazing. Apostates appear on the stage of Christianity for a short period of time and then they burn up.

They wander off. Usually we give them the right Buddha fellowship, but we won't get into that. they are gone, though often they leave behind significant damage.

[29:18] Significant damage. They make all kinds of promises. They promise spiritual light, but they only flash for a moment and then they're gone.

Such men are described as worthless. The apostates have a place reserved for them in hell for eternity. They know the truth.

They rejected the truth. And now they're preaching their own truth or teaching their own truth. So we see in Jude various descriptions of apostates.

They are hypocritical deceivers, immoral sinners, materialistic, spiritual terrorists. They lie about the gospel of Christ. They spread lies through the church.

They can't get to Christ. He's seated at the right hand of the Father. So they go after the apple in his eye. They go after what is precious to the Lord Jesus, and that is his church.

[30:20] They are the ones who have chosen the way of Cain, the heir of Balaam. They will suffer death like Korah. And apostates reminded Jude of hidden wreaths, waterless clouds, fruitless autumn trees, wild sea waves, and wandering stars.

May the Lord Christ protect us from apostates. Thank you.