

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN  
DR. ROGER BARRIER  
JUDE 11-13

Jude is about the pitfalls along the way of the Christian life. Some make it and some don't. Some fulfill their promise and some don't. All too often we observe the wrecks and are left to ponder what might have been.

Last week Glenn examined in Jude 11 the progression into evil as seen in the hearts of Cain, Balaam, and Korah.

Today in Jude 12-13 we will see the danger of these apostates as leaders who influence others—what they look like and how they end up.

• *“Blemishes at Communion”*

Just because we take communion or get baptized is no assurance that we will make it to Heaven!

How can we identify a real Christian?

1. Profession of faith in Christ
2. Personal behavior: Fruits of Righteousness

How can we identify an apostate?

1. Denial or a “mixed up” gospel
2. Empty, negative behavior finally manifests

Today's American Christian behavior is indistinguishable from that of nonChristians'.

• *“Shepherds who feed only themselves”*

The problem is not just selfishness. These shepherds mess up the message and assure the sheep that all is well when all is not. Read Ezekiel 34.

Unfortunately, American Christians have repositioned spirituality. Faith used to revolve around God and His ordinances; the faith that arrests our attention these days is that which revolves around us.

We have demystified God, befriended Jesus, abandoned the Holy Spirit, and forgiven and warmed up to Satan. Few Christians possess a sense of awe, fear, or trembling related to God.

The focus of our faith has shifted from the transcendent to the mundane.

• *Apostates have four distinguishing characteristics from the world of nature.*

1. “Clouds without rain, blown along by the wind”
2. “Autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead”
3. “Wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame”
4. “Wandering stars”

The description of these evil men contrasts with the description of true Christians. Instead of being lifeless dangerous rocks, true Christians are living stones (1 Peter 2:5). Rather than waterless clouds, they are sources of living water (John 7:38). Instead of dead trees, they are called “trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord” (Isaiah 61:3). Contrasted with raging waves, their peace is like a river (Isaiah 48:18). Instead of wandering stars with the blackness of heaven, true believers shine as the stars forever and ever (Dan. 12:3).

Jesus discussed the issue of apostasy and of what might have been in the parable of the four types of soils in Matthew 13 and Mark 4.

- *“For whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.”*

These apostates don't fulfill their promise. Who cares? God does. God says, “Destroy them!”

How does “darkness forever” square with the assertion that they will be “destroyed,” and with idea of the “eternal fire”? Read 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 and Matthew 25:41, 46.

Faithfulness means that we have a balanced view of a loving God and a holy God so that we proclaim both doctrines of Heaven and of Hell.

What are we to do to avoid apostasy?

1. Put mystery, fear, awe, and holiness back into our view of God.
2. Live like Jesus is our Lord—not our friend.
3. Interact with the Holy Spirit in producing a Spirit-filled lifestyle.
4. Believe in Satan and fight him continually.