

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 2



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

A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF APOSTATES PART 2

Scripture Text: Jude 13

In the last lesson, Jude used words from nature to portray apostasy: clouds, winds, trees, and roots. In this lesson, he continues to use symbolic language: *raging waves of the sea* and *wandering stars*. These descriptive words are called metaphors.

As we study **verse 13**, we must remember that it is a continuation of the sentence that began in **verse 12**. The metaphors *raging waves* and *wandering stars* are only continued descriptions of the people meant by the word *these* in **verse 12**. Each of these metaphors has two common aspects: instability and action. The people represented by these symbols are active—constantly working to affect others.

MEMORY VERSE: *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness (1 Thessalonians 5:5).*

Who Are the Wicked?

Raging waves of the sea. Who in the Scriptures are represented as being *raging waves of the sea*? **Isaiah 57:20** says, “The wicked are like the troubled sea.” This verse equates the sea with the “wicked.” **Psalm 50:16-17** says: “But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.” In God’s sight, the “wicked” are those who do not take His instruction or regard His Word, yet they profess to be His followers. They are religious professors—ones who are teachers, preachers, and advocates of religion. Our lesson text calls these ones *raging waves of the sea*.

This is the picture Jude was portraying: these *raging waves of the sea* (ones overtaken by apostasy) would like to beat against the church with much fierceness and rage, hoping to move it from its position and submerge it from public view. In the morning-time apostasy, the church *was* hidden from public view for a time.

However, waves cannot maintain their positions permanently. **Psalm 104:9** declares, “Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over.” **Psalm 89:9** states, “Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.” The saint who has a clear vision of truth knows that apostates, in their assault upon the truth, will do just what a wave hitting a rock does: it becomes foam—and those who attack the church only foam out their shame.

Great Swelling Words

Foaming out their own shame. **Zephaniah 3:5** says, “The unjust knoweth no shame.” **Philippians 3:19** says that their “glory is in their shame.” In other words, as one translation says, “They are proud of what they should be ashamed of.” The Greek word that is translated *shame* in **Jude 13** is translated *dishonesty* in **2 Corinthians 4:2**. Ones who are in the condition of apostasy are there because they became dishonest, and their actions are *foaming out their own shame*. Those with honest and good hearts, “having heard the word, keep it” (**Luke 8:15**). They stay in the truth.

Notice the word *foaming*. It comes from the Greek word *epaphrizo*, which means “to foam upon, to exhibit a vile passion, to foam out.” Apostates exhibit their vileness and dishonesty by speaking against the way of truth. **2 Peter 2:18** says, “For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.”

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The Apostle Peter was actually saying that when assaults by apostates do not accomplish what they intend, then they will resort to flattery. They will appeal to people's vanity. **2 Peter 2:19** says that they promise ones "liberty"; but all they really have to offer is "corruption" and "bondage." These people are constantly shifting their positions as waves do. (Remember, **Jude 12** said they were "plucked up by the roots.") They no longer have a connection to the truth. They are unstable, and all they can do is work to deceive other unstable souls.

A Misguided Ministry

Wandering stars. This phrase is a very disturbing metaphor. It explains why so many people are spiritually off course. In the natural realm, *stars* are unchanging in their positions. A seaman can chart transoceanic courses and navigate by their predetermined locations. But these are *wandering stars*: ones that follow uncertain courses.

In the Bible, what do *stars* represent? **Revelation 1:20** says, "The seven stars are the angels [the Greek word is *aggelos*; it means 'messengers' or 'ministers'] of the seven churches." *Stars* represent the ministry. In **Matthew 2:9**, the "star" led the wise men to Christ and to the house in which He resided. Ministers are to lead men to Christ and to the house where He resides: the church. *Wandering stars* are a ministry whose position, or course, continues to change. Is it any wonder that the people who sit under such a ministry are confused?

Proverbs 21:16 states, "The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead." *Wandering stars* have gotten "out of the way of understanding." They had light, but they failed to walk in it while they had it. Apostate ministers, in essence, are spiritually blind. Jesus said, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (**Matthew 15:14**). While these *wandering stars* profess to be the true ministry, they have, in reality, deceived themselves and are misleading people.

A Great Darkness

To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. Part of this phrase sounds repetitious: *the blackness of darkness*. But notice the phrase before it: *to whom is reserved*. The Greek word for *reserved* is *tereo*. It means "to keep or detain as in custody." Something is keeping these *wandering stars*, or ministers, in this condition. These people are kept, or held, by the *blackness of darkness*. They are in *darkness* and are captives of a *blackness* of their own making.

The reason the *darkness* is so black is that they have walked away from light and "put darkness for light, and light for darkness" (**Isaiah 5:20**). **Matthew 6:23** says, "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Only light can bring them deliverance, but when ones believe that light is *darkness* and *darkness* is light, they are in an irreversible position as long as they hold to that way of thinking.

JUST A THOUGHT

Light is the most glorious thing if you walk in it; it is the most blinding thing if you do not!