

## **Apostates Ruin Lives**

**by Fred DeRuvo – Study-Grow-Know Ministries**

Jude is not done yet in discussing apostates. He further defines these apostates as “*wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam.*” If you’ve ever been to the beach, you know that the ocean’s waves continually splash up onto the shore. The very head of the wave usually turns frothy as it “breaks” onto the sand in preparation for rolling back out to sea.

The apostate is like that. They are normally uncontrolled and uncontrollable. Because they can often be loud or overpowering in personality, they come to the point where they do not care who sees what they do or how they act in front of others.

Most people do not like conflict. We like to avoid it if at all possible. Leaders in churches are given the responsibility of having to *deal* with true conflict and should not turn away from it. To do so may ultimately mean harm for that congregation. Leaders should not shirk their responsibility of protecting the flock.

The apostate reaches a point where he will flaunt his lifestyle to others, and he’ll do so in a way that often pre-empts others from addressing the situation. Yet their shame is clearly seen if leaders will step back and simply look at the situation the apostate is creating. Once seen, it should not be avoided.

This is especially true when the leaders sense that the pastor they have hired is eventually seen as an apostate. If he is preaching a *form* of spiritual emptiness based on simple platitudes, he is not only doing nothing good for that church but is reducing the effectiveness of that church by not edifying the saints, which is his God-given role.

Many Emergent Churches are just like this as they have watered down the gospel to mean little more than being socially minded and aware of needs in society. Gone is the belief that salvation is available only through Jesus, replaced with an “all roads lead to God” mentality.

Any pastor or teacher who teaches this type of theology is anathema to God and should not be given any time at all. The leaders within a church who are afraid to deal with an apostate pastor or teacher will reap nothing but the eventual destruction of that local congregation.

Ultimately, apostates – if in pastoral positions – want to change the fabric of that particular congregation through their liberal agenda. They may do this slowly over time, but that is their end goal.

Years ago, when I attended Philadelphia College of Bible, Tony Campolo was a well-known teacher and speaker (and still is in some circles). At the time, there was little that caused red flags with respect to his teaching.

Now, however, it is very easy to see that Tony Campolo does not represent the truth of Jesus. He does not teach the same gospel that Jesus taught, or Peter, or Paul, or anyone else who wrote part of the New Testament. He preaches a socialized, liberal gospel that actually winds up keeping people *from* receiving Jesus because there is not necessarily a need for them to do so. There are many people like this, and Jesus warned that as the end approached, we would see an increase in apostates and those who claim to be the Messiah.

When I read books or articles by Campolo, or Rick Warren, Brian McLaren, Tony James, or some other leader within the Emergent or Postmodern Church movement, it is easy to see their shame as foam. When you stand on the shore and the next wave comes in, it rushes toward you with the foamy water enveloping your feet and possibly higher, depending upon how far up the shore it travels before it breaks.

As you stand there, you see and experience the power of the water just off shore. When you wade out into that water, it literally picks you up and moves you where it goes.

On the shore, this same wave has little to no power to move you at all. It simply rushes around your feet and splashes, but there you stand, feet firmly placed in sand. While you might sink in the wet sand a bit, that little wave and foam that was once a mighty wave, taller than you are, does nothing except wash up around your feet.

The apostate *seems* to have power. In fact, people are attracted to people like this because they seem to possess something that you don't have and it attracts you, so you move closer. Soon, if you are not careful, you are under their spell.

If you are eventually given the grace to see their shallowness, you come to recognize that what you once thought was power was simply boisterousness and impiety. In fact, they may now appear to you to be just as they are – *obnoxious* liars – and you wonder why you did not see that before.

Apostates present themselves as one thing but are quite the opposite. Whether Tony Campolo realizes it or not, he is preaching another gospel, and as Paul says, "*let him be accursed!*" (cf. Galatians 1:8-9). This is the apostate.

Jude's final description in this section of his letter refers to stars of the sky. He says these apostates are like "*wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.*"

A wandering star probably refers to a shooting star that has no solid trajectory, and while it may appear bright in the sky for a few seconds (or less), it is gone and forgotten

immediately afterwards. Like this star, apostates arrive with promises of spiritual growth and fulfillment, but offer little in the way of actually fulfilling those promises. They are proverbial flashes in the pan. Though they may be here today and gone tomorrow, the damage they cause can last for a long time.

With all of these references and metaphors, it appears that Jude really wants his readers to understand what he is saying and to grasp the importance of it. Apostates are no good at all. They bring nothing of eternal value and they leave only destruction in their wake.

Think of Jim Jones. He started out on fire and gathered many people to him. How did the whole Jim Jones debacle end? It ended with 900 men, women, and children dead in a mass suicide from cyanide-laced Kool-Aid in the jungles of Guyana. How could that happen, we wonder? It happens because of the fleshly power of the apostate and the lack of biblical knowledge by the average church-goer today.

How about David Koresh? He and his followers burned to death in his Texas compound after a fire began when the ATF flooded into the compound to take him down.

These are just two examples of how badly things can go. Thankfully, not all situations end like this, but the damage that apostates can do, whether they are pastors, teachers, or simply members of a congregation, can be devastating, and at all costs leaders should always be on the look-out for these wolves. Just as the shepherd is always watchful for the real wolf in the wild who comes at night to stalk the sheep, so should the leaders in a church be constantly aware of the fact that someone, somewhere, is out there, and they will do what they can to advance their own position, leaving problems and broken relationships in their wake. The church must guard against this onslaught.

We will back next time with the example of Enoch as highlighted by Jude. Please join me then and until we meet again, may the Lord open your eyes to show you how blessed you are in Him!