

Jude 1:12-13

“Five pictures from nature that demonstrate false teachers”

- I. Intro.
- II. Illustrate, represent and contrast

I. Intro.

In our study in this brief letter by Jude that deals with the “*acts of the apostates*” the reader at any age must be impressed with the exact nature and extent of the illustrations and examples that Jude employed to describe the charter and nature of false teachers. The Holy Spirit prompted Jude to use illustration from the whole of God’s creation when looking at **corporate departures from truth**. This morning Jude will take his readers into the realm of poetry in the form of **five word-pictures**. Jude brings before his readers the earth, air, trees, sea, and the heavens to show the reader the complete panorama of conditions facing the church in false teachers. I notice **three general observations** with regards to these two verses:

- A. **These five word-pictures are natural phenomena!** None of these five word-pictures are outside the realm of reality; they are NOT supernatural in nature as they normally occur. I believe that the church can discern from this fact that “*false teachers*” happen in a fallen world and are in fact part of the consequences of fallen humanity.
- B. **These five word-pictures are meant to compliment BUT NOT complete the truths with regards to false teachers.** These five-word pictures are **not duplicates** of what Jude has already wrote. Instead they **offer further revelation** on false teachers! They say nothing on what Jude already wrote with regards to: *Defiling the flesh, Despising dominion, or Disregarding dignities*. Neither do they say anything more on the “*Way of Cain, Error of Balaam or Korah’s Perishing*”.
- C. **These five word-pictures offer five other characteristics of false teaching and teachers.**

These five word-pictures can be best understood when we consider them from three different perspectives:

1. **As five characteristics of false teachers**
2. **As five conditions that plague fallen humanity**
3. **As the exact opposite of what Jesus offers humanity in the giving of Himself**

When we examine these five word-pictures from these three different perspectives we will realize a powerful truth as it relates to both false teachers as well as fallen humanity! It is this: *False teachers only offer what they are already plagued with. And this comes at the cost of deflecting people away from the only ONE truth that can transform their condition, Jesus, and His Word.*

II. Illustrate, represent and contrast

First we will examine these five word-pictures from these three perspectives based upon three criteria: **What they illustrate**, **What they represent** and **What Jesus is in contrast**. Next week we will look at them individually.

1. **“Spots in you love feast”**: The words “Spot” in the Greek only appears here in the NT and refers elsewhere in ancient Greek literature as a reef or hidden rock.
 - a. **What they illustrate**: So in the Greek understanding this word-picture represents **“Unseen danger”**. What makes this characteristic to deadly is that it is primarily invisible to our own hearts.
 - b. **What they represent**: The greatest unseen danger in fallen humanity is **“selfishness”** ours as well as those around us. Selfishness is the most “dangerous” because it is often what we notice about others while being ignorant of our own selfishness. What is called **conceit** in others is simply **confidence** in us! We are so unaware of our own

selfishness that *even when someone else crashes into us we blame them for scrapping our rock all the while their boat is taking on water!*

- c. **What Jesus is in contrast:** Jesus is described as “*The Rock of Salvation*” pointing the right way to live the “*unselfish life*”. While fallen humanity is plagued by the invisibility and hidden danger of their own self-centered life Jesus is the beacon and guiding light to the possibility of being *visibly other’s centered* as the basis of true joy and happiness.
2. “*Clouds without water*”: This word-picture is best interpreted based upon the location of where it was first offered. Israel is a very arid climate with little water while being an agrarian society which was almost completely dependent upon rainfall as they practiced “dry farming”.
 - a. **What they illustrate:** So with that as an interpretation “*clouds without water*” is a word-picture that is meant to speak to the “*False promises*” that comes with false teaching. Few things are as debilitating as a “*false promise*” as what is offered looks so promising only not to produce what it offered, hope. This especially true when it is offered as being truth!
 - b. **What they represent:** When we notice “clouds without water” and the “*False promises*” that they offer they can only produce a “*helplessness*” for those who trusted in what was promised. And to make matters worse; what was promised was said to be TRUTH while in reality its only similarity was in likeness of shape not of life-giving substance.
 - c. **What Jesus is in contrast:** Jesus comes as “*Living Water*”! His clouds can only refresh the weary but not just temporarily but for all eternity. The clouds of false

teachers can't even bring temporary relief while the clouds of Christ bring rivers of living water upon parishad souls. Furthermore they are always come to pass!

3. "**Late autumn trees**": The Greek word for "autumn" is a word used for a season where fruit is harvested.

a. What they illustrate: It is clear by the use of this word-picture that Jude was illustrating that these false teachers are like fruit trees that offer fruit in its season only to produce nothing. They are "**barren in their profession**" making promises, causing expectations only to not having that which is necessary to sustain life!

b. What they represent: Because of the above, it isn't about what they produce, instead it is about what **they don't produce namely SPIRITUAL FRUIT!** They are "**Fruitless**"!

c. What Jesus is in contrast: And in Jesus we have come to the One who alone is the "**Tree of Life**" who only and always produces fruit in its season as He only does wonderful things in our life. He can make that which has never been fruitful and has no natural inclination to be fruitful bare much fruit!

4. "**Ragging waves of the sea**": Here we have often used word-picture in the bible and a symbol of those who don't know God. These waves wash upon the rocky shores methodically with great show and fanfare but the rocks they crash into thousands a time a day are not defeated by their constant attempt to erode there stability.

a. What they illustrate: From the perspective of the false teachers their efforts to erode truth at best indicates naivety of character but more to the point they are engaged in "**wasted effort**" in spite of all their performance!

b. What they represent: Such effort with all their engaging performance and bluster

indicate a character of “shamelessness” that is far too often modeled by others who pound upon the truth thinking that such passionate performance can cause the altering of the truth of the character and nature of God who alone made the waves, the rocky shores they beat upon and has placed the sun, moon, wind, and current all as He wishes!

c. What Jesus is in contrast: And our Lord is the “One that calms the seas” and leads us beside still waters. His character is such that John the Baptist wonder if He was the promised Messiah. Jesus is the bruised reed; it was *never His performance that revealed His identity*. It was His character that revealed the TRUTH that no human wave of emotion can ever erode!

5. “Wandering stars”: Stars in the heavens were our forefathers GPS system used to navigate the seas of life and the rocky terrain and desert valleys of life. All that were lost and left to wander in this world needed to follow that which they can count on to be fixed and certain.

a. What they illustrate: Based upon this truth we can see what “wandering stars” are to a lost world as they create an “*aimless course*” that take the follower on a helter-skelter path that leads us by the same landmarks over and over again. We often call this a treadmill life with much effort all the while staying in the same place in life!

b. What they represent: Any person who has followed these “wandering stars” along for any amount of time has come to an emptiness that produces such a despair of “hopelessness” that can destroy the soul. These were NOT stars of navigation, fixed truths but were only moving across the horizon taking our attention away from TRUTH that if followed would have set our course in the right path in life!

c. What Jesus is in contrast: Our Lord is the “**Bright Morning Star**”...He not only knows the way He alone is the WAY, TRUTH, and LIFE! He has never lost one soul who has used Him to navigate the paths of life and there has never been any geography that He cannot navigate!

These five word-pictures present these three different perspectives:

What they illustrate: *Unseen danger, False promises, Barren profession, Wasted effort and Aimless course!*

What they represent: *Selfishness, Helplessness, Fruitless, Shamelessness, and Hopelessness*

What Jesus is in contrast: *The Rock of Salvation, Living Water, Tree of Life, One that calms the seas and Bright Morning Star!*