

## These People are Hidden Rocks at Your Love Feasts, Shepherds only Feeding Themselves, Clouds Without Rain Jude 12a-c and Second Peter 2:13 and 17a

**DIG:** How are these apostates like hidden rocks? What were the love feasts supposed to be like? What did they turn into? What happened in the Corinthian church? Why were these false teachers counterfeit shepherds? How were they like clouds without rain? What is their source? What will be their end?

**REFLECT:** Do you see any of these negative qualities in yourself? What can you do to change? Do you belong to a small group where you worship? How much is it like the original love feast? How do you contribute to it? How is Jesus the Rock of your salvation? **The good Shepherd who lays down His life for you? Coming with the clouds?**

These people are hidden rocks at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm. They are shepherds who only feed themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind (Jude 12a-c).

And they will be paid with suffering for the suffering they have caused. Pleasure for them is to do anything in broad daylight that will satisfy their bodily appetites; they are a shame and a disgrace as they join you in your love feasts, all the while enjoying their deceitful ways . . . These people are like dried-up springs, like clouds blown along by a storm; God has reserved a place for them in the deepest darkness (Second Peter 2:13 and 17a GNT)!

These apostates brag about their supposed superior knowledge and formed little cliques; in addition, they have no feeling of responsibility for anyone except themselves (see **Ac - The Book of Jude from a Jewish Perspective: Purpose**). Both of these negative attributes go together because they both stress their basic selfishness. **The seventh triad** is made up of three similes. As a result, these false teachers are like spiritual terrorists and are portrayed as hidden rocks, counterfeit shepherds, and clouds without rain.

**First**, these people are like hidden rocks (*spilades*) lying just below the surface of the water and since they cannot be seen, they cause shipwrecks; these false teachers were guilty of shipwrecking the faith of many. Indeed, it was upon reefs like this that the **agape feasts** did in fact sink in the second century. There is some doubt as to what *spilades*

means, since it is a rare word, occurring only here in the New Covenant. In secular Greek it was *a submerged rock on which a ship could be easily wrecked*. But words can change their meaning over time and by the fourth century it had come to mean **blemishes** as the NIV translates it. But the older meaning is preferable in this passage.<sup>72</sup>

Furthermore, **they** were intruding **at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm (Jude 12a)**. They were shameless and brazen in **their** participating in such meals, because **their** lives were not characterized by **love**. Lacking any sense of decency, and being adept hypocrites, **these wolves in sheep's clothing** were able to eat with believers **without the slightest qualm**. As Paul wrote to **Timothy**, such imposters are **liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron (Second Timothy 4:2)**. The fact that **their** actions did terrible damage to others was no concern to **them**.

**The agape feasts** in the early congregations of **the Church** were fellowship meals eaten by believers when they came together for worship on **the Lord's Day**. They greeted each other with a holy kiss, and brought whatever they could to be shared in the meal. No doubt, there were some who could bring more than others. For many of the slaves it was perhaps the only decent meal they would eat that week. **They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to breaking bread and to prayer**. In the first century this always took place at a person's home, since there were no official buildings until much later (**Acts 2:42-47**). But after awhile **the love feasts** began to go wrong.

The custom of holding such **feasts** had gone on for decades. But **the apostates** were like **hidden rocks** waiting to shipwreck the unwary. Paul wrote part of his letter to the church at Corinth about the abuses of **the love feast** found there. These meals were usually closed with the observance of Communion. Those were supposed to be congregational meals stressing fellowship, affection, and mutual caring among believers. The emphasis on oneness should have led into a celebration of the unifying accomplishment of the Savior on the cross. But **the arrogant false teachers** made a mockery of the entire gathering.

When Paul introduced the discussion of head coverings, he praised **the Corinthians** for holding firmly to the doctrines that he had taught them (**First Corinthians 11:2**). Now, however, he had no praise. **But in giving you this next instruction I do not praise you, because when you gather together it does more harm than good (First Corinthians 11:17)**! It would have been much better for those **Corinthians** to never have had a **love feast**, and even never to have observed **the Lord's Communion**, than to have so abused them. Instead of celebrations being times of loving fellowship and spiritual growth, they involved

selfish immorality, shaming the poor among **them**, mocking **Yeshua's** sacrificial death, and scandalizing **the church** at Corinth before the unbelieving nations around them.

**For in the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you.** The **Corinthians** apparently could not agree on anything, nor did **they** seek to serve each other. Instead of sharing fellowship and worship together, **they** spent their time in selfish indulgence, arguing and disputing. Perhaps because he suspected that some of the reports had been exaggerated, Paul wanted to give them the benefit of a doubt. So he added: **and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval.**

The focal point of this evil was Communion. **When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else.** **They** had the ceremony but not the reality, the form but not the substance. In the early **Church the love feast** and Communion were usually held together, but abuses such as those in Corinth eventually forced the two to be separated in order to protect the Communion. **The love feast** soon disappeared forever. **One remains hungry [while] another gets drunk.** **They** mocked the very purpose of the occasion, which was to bring harmony and unity among those who belonged to **Christ**. In seeming frustration, as if trying to find a rational explanation, Paul asked: **Don't you have homes to eat and drink in?** If they needed to selfishly indulge **themselves**, could **they** not do it in **their own homes?** **Or do you despise the Church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?** Again Paul tells them that he can say nothing in **their** defense. **What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not (First Corinthians 11:18-22)!<sup>73</sup>**

In contrast to the **hidden rocks** that shipwreck the faith of many, **Jesus is the Rock** of our salvation. David wrote: **My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from Him. He alone is My Rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will never be shaken (Psalm 62:1-2).**

**Second, they are like counterfeit shepherds who,** instead of feeding the flock of **God**, selfishly **feed only themselves (Jude 12b).** The Greek literally means *shepherding themselves*. This reference to **shepherds** points to the fact that **they** were leaders, claiming that **they** had the ability to guide and protect **ADONAI's people.** **The shepherd** is the epitome of a person who unselfishly watches over others. It is therefore a natural term to apply to **the Lord (Psalm 23; John 10:1-18),** to the leaders of **the people of God** in the TaNaKh (**2 Samuel 5:2**) and the New Covenant (**Acts 20:28; First Peter 5:2**). But **these imposters**

had no concern for anyone but **themselves**. **They** did not care for the flock, but instead used **their** positions of leadership to carve out a comfortable life for **themselves**. **They** had no fear of the righteous indignation or punishment of ADONAI. Instead of losing **their** lives, and thus gaining **them**, **they** tried to save **their** lives - and so lost **them** (Mark 8:35).

The **false teachers** abandoned **their** flock. How unthinkable for a **shepherd** not to **feed** his sheep - which was his primary responsibility! **Their** leadership was phony, for it was deceptive, hardened and selfish.<sup>74</sup> **Jude** was likely thinking of what **Ezekiel** said to the counterfeit shepherds of his day: **Son of Man, prophesy against the shepherds of Isra'el, prophesy and say to them, "This is what Adonai ELOHIM says, 'Woe to the shepherds of Isra'el who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock' (Ezekiel 34:2)?"**<sup>75</sup> The same point is made by **Yeshua** in John 10:1: **I tell you the truth, the person who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. Jesus declared: I AM the good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep (John 10:11);** but the false prophets felt no responsibility for the welfare of anyone except **themselves**.

**Third, they are like clouds without rain, the apostate teachers** had no water for thirsty souls; **they** only pretended that **they** did. And **they** were soon gone, unstable as wind-driven clouds, similar to those mentioned by Solomon in Proverbs 25:14, **"Like clouds and wind without rain is one who boasts of gifts never given."**

The term **without rain** (*anudros*) also occurs in **Matthew 12:43** in reference to the wanderings of **evil spirits** through dry and barren places (also see my commentary on **Revelation Em - Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She Has Become a Home for Demons**): **When an evil spirit (pneuma) comes out of a person, it goes through arid (anudros) places seeking rest and does not find it. Luke 11:24** uses the same word, **arid (anudros)**, that **Matthew** does. Thus, by describing the imposters in the same way that **Matthew** and **Luke** describe demons, **Jude** restated the connection between the apostates and **their** satanic sources.<sup>76</sup>

This position is strengthened by what follows. These **clouds without rain were blown along by the wind (Jude 12c)**. The word for **wind** and the word for **spirit** are exactly the same in the TaNaKh (*ruach*), and the New Covenant word for **spirit (pneuma)** is also used of the **wind** by **John**. **The wind (pneuma) blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the (pneumatōs) Spirit (John 3:8).**<sup>77</sup>

So we can see from **John** that the word **spirit** (*pneuma*) can be used for either **the Spirit of God** or **an evil spirit**: **Dear friends, do not believe every spirit** (*pneumati*), **but test the spirits** (*ta pneumata*) **to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit** (*to pneuma*) **of God: Every spirit** (*pneuma*) **that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit** (*pneuma*) **that does not acknowledge Yeshua is not from God. This is the spirit** (*to pneuma*) **of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world** (**First John 4:1-3**). And because the word for **wind** and **spirit** are the same, it can mean either **the Spirit of God** or **an evil spirit**. Therefore, we can conclude that **the false teachers** (*anudros*) that **Jude** wrote about were **blown along by the wind** (*pneuma*) of satanic forces.

In describing **the apostates**, **Peter** was inspired to choose a metaphor that represented **water**, the most essential natural resource in the Middle East. Because it was scarce and of vital importance, **water** provided the perfect illustration of spiritual existence. Without **water** **people** would die physically; without spiritual **water**, meaning **the Holy Spirit**, **people** would die spiritually. In fact, **Yeshua Messiah** used this same metaphor years earlier when He said: **Let anyone who is thirsty come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as Scripture has said (Isaiah 58:11), rivers of living water will flow from within them** (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Gp - On the Last and Greatest Day of the Feast**). Consequently, like mirages in the hot desert, **Peter** describes **the counterfeit teachers** as **springs without water** (**Second Peter 2:17b**), offering the spiritually thirsty nothing more than false hopes of relief.

**These people are mists driven by a storm** (**Second Peter 2:17c**). In the eastern Mediterranean region, sea breezes periodically bring in mist and fog that appear to signal rain. But sometimes the atmospheric moisture stays only briefly and produces no significant rainfall. The land is left dry and parched and **the people** are left disappointed. Here is a graphic example of the uselessness of teaching that is supposedly "advanced" and "enlightened" but has nothing to offer believers for their spiritual nourishment. Like those **mists**, the apostates offered more than **they** delivered.

**The Messiah** comes with the clouds to refresh His people forever (see my commentary on **Revelation Ai - Look, He is Coming With the Clouds**); the false teachers, however, are clouds that do not even bring temporary blessing.

**These apostates will be caught in their own web. And they will be paid with suffering for the suffering they have caused. God will do to them what they have done to others (Galatians 6:7). Although they tried to pass themselves off as spiritual leaders possessing a special level of knowledge, they did not even try to hide their orgies under the cover of darkness. Pleasure for them is to do anything in broad daylight that will satisfy their bodily appetites (Second Peter 2:13a). They count it a pleasure to live a life of ease in the daytime, which means they do not work for a living but live off of the money they get from those whom they lead astray into false doctrine (sounds a lot like today). They flaunt God's Word that says: Whoever doesn't want to work shouldn't be allowed to eat (God's Word Translation 1995).**

**They are a shame and a disgrace as they join you in your love feasts, all the while enjoying their deceitful ways (Second Peter 2:13b GNT). Like a stain on a clean shirt or a scratch on a shiny new car, they marred the Lord's Supper by their very presence.**

**As believers, however, instead of being lifeless, dangerous rocks, the righteous are living stones (1 Peter 2:5); in lieu of being counterfeit shepherds, ADONAI places true shepherds over His flock who will tend them (Jeremiah 23:4); and rather than being waterless clouds, the called, loved and kept (Jude 1) are sources of living water (John 7:38).**