***The Marks of an Apostate - Jude 16  
  
JD11-02***

Our study of apostasy continues in Jude 16. We are going to look at some of the identifying marks of those who are negative to the Word of God and those who are the outright apostates from the Word of God. Apostasy is under such severe divine judgment that Jude, we have found, has been seeking to identify clearly for us from a variety of viewpoints. In Jude 16, we look at five hallmarks of an apostate. It is vital to the local church life and to local church ministry to recognize the marks of an apostate when they appear in our midst. You need to be on guard. Christians can act as apostates, and they can reflect these characteristics that we're going to look at now. They suffer discipline just like the apostate himself.

**Murmurers**

Jude 16 says, "These are murmurers." "These" refers to the apostates of the context. The word "are" is the Greek word "eimi." "Eimi" is a verb declaring a certain status that a person holds. These people are continually this because this is in the Greek present tense. It's active which means they choose to be this. What are they? First of all, they are murmurers. The Greek word is "goggustes." "Goggustes" is a noun, and it's found only here in the New Testament. It's a word to describe a person who grumbles. He is always muttering in his beard. We have the verb form of this in John 6 where the Lord Jesus uses it in verse 41 in speaking to a group of people around him. John 6:41 says, "The Jews then murmured at him because he said 'I am the bread of heaven that came down from heaven.'" This is the same word in the verb form when Jude 16 says that they "murmured." They were muttering.

What the word means is a sound like the cooing of doves or the buzzing of bees. There was just this mutter, mutter, mutter. It reflects somebody who is a malcontent. The reason these people here in John 6 were malcontented is because in verse 33, the Lord Jesus Christ described Himself as the bread which God has sent down from heaven to give life to the world. They said, "We want that kind of bread that will give us eternal life." In verse 35, Jesus said unto them, 'I am the Bread of Life. He that comes to Me shall never hunger. He that believes in Me shall never thirst.'" The Lord said, "I am the Bread of Life. I am the source of eternal life." What he was saying was, "I am God. I am deity."

These people understood that He, as the spiritual food from heaven to give them eternal life through believing in what He said in His promise of provision of eternal life, was claiming to be God. This is what they were muttering about. They were specifically grumbling about His deity. A little farther down, He commands them to discontinue this muttering into their beard (this complaining) about what he is claiming to be. "Stop it. Don't be muttering about what I have said to you that I am the Bread of Life that came down from heaven." The result was that they resisted Him, and they fought Him. These people tended to encourage one another in their muttering against Him.

So John 6:66 says, "From that time, many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him." This is what happens when an apostate resists and mutters against what the Lord is saying. In time, he stops following the Lord. When he resists the Word, he turns back from the Word of God. Ephesians 2:2 indicates to us that anybody who walks no more with the Lord has only one other course left to him. Ephesians 2:2 calls it "walking according to the course of this world." The world walks according to the course of human viewpoint. Walking by means of human viewpoint will result in rejecting the deity of Christ, and consequently, His Word.

So murmuring against the Lord also leads to murmuring against his true teachers. That's, of course, what usually happens in the local church. That's why Jude is trying to say this. When you find a malcontent who's going around grumbling, grumbling, grumbling, you want to mark him. It is no small thing for a person to do this, and it might be well for you to remember that it's a very dangerous thing to do. Maybe you don't like something that's going on. Maybe you think that something should be done better. Maybe you don't understand. I have had experiences both ways. Someone recently said, "I want to ask you a few things that I want clarification on. He asked me. I filled him in, and he said, "Now I understand." In the course of it, he indicated that I was the only person to whom he inquired about these matters. He said that he had not talked to anybody else. He was only interested in speaking in order to get informed, not in speaking to fulfill this role of this type of apostate who is a malcontented murmurer.

If you hear somebody in the midst of the assembly who is a grumbler, you mark him because the Word of God says, "That is an apostate type. That person is a hidden reef. That person will hurt you." In Psalm 106:24, we read, "Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not His Word; but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord. Therefore He lifted up His hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness." This is a warning that God deals with the murmuring apostate. The apostate is opposed to teachers of the Word because the Word simply condemns his views. It is not that the apostate is more in tune with God.

This is the idea that the murmurer (the malcontent) in the local church likes to give you. He likes to give you the idea that he is very much in tune with the Lord. He likes to give you the idea that he has spent hours on his knees praying this through. Then he has searched the Word; that he has the mind of the Lord; and, that he has been very receptive and very open. So when he goes around mumbling and muttering in his beard, he wants to give you the idea that all of this is because he is in closer touch with the Lord. This very word "goggustes" is used in that Greek translation of the Old Testament of Israel's attacks upon Moses in the wilderness. It is frequently used in reference to describing the attacks of Israel against the spiritual leadership of Moses. Alright, this is one characteristic of the apostate.

**Complainers**

A second hallmark of the apostates, Jude says, is that they are complainers. These are murmurers. These are complainers. The Greek word is "mempsimoiros." "Mempsimoiros" refers to someone who complains about his lot in life. He's dissatisfied with the lot that he has in life. It refers to spiritual discontent. This character is not simply muttering. He is vocalizing in a very definitive way his discontent and his unhappiness with his lot in life. We have this word used in its verb form in Mark 7:2: "And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled (that is to say, with unwashed) hands, they found fault." The word "fault" here is the verb form of this word for complaining. What displeased the Pharisees was the application of the Word to their hearts. So they came up with an objection about some point of tradition.

Mark 7:5: "Then the pharisees and scribes asked him, 'Why walk not your disciples according to the traditions of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?'" The Lord exposed the apostate Pharisees because they were substituting their human viewpoint for God's viewpoint. Mark 7:6: "He answered and said unto them, 'Well has Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written: these people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. However, in vein do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.'"

**Authority**

I want you to notice that these complainers, these apostates, who are discontented have something to say. They have doctrines to teach. They have viewpoints to propagate. That's what this word means they are doing: "I'm displeased with my situation, and I have a point of view to propagate to you that would please me for you to accept." These are complainers objecting to living under the divine viewpoint of Scripture. Actually, what you have here is an attack against authority. This type of apostate, who is in a state of being discontented, wants to reject authority. In the Word of God, there is a line of authority. This is one of the things that parents are obliged to teach their children. It is a pathetic child who grows up whose parents have never systematically taught him that there are lines of authority. Our society is going to pot in more than one way today because of the lack of authority and the lack of students having learned lines of authority.

Authority always begins with the Word of God. That's number one. Hebrews 4:12 places authority in God's Word. When God has spoken, that's the end of the line. There is authority in God the Father (Deuteronomy 6:4). God the Father is the author of the plan of grace. He is the one who conducts the plan that He has for you and me as we fit into that plan of grace. Then there is the authority of the pastor-teacher within the local assembly. Ephesians 4 speaks about that, as well as Hebrews 13. This authority is so violated today that we have, by and large, in Christendom, believers who are way out of touch with the Word of God, and consequently, they are way out of touch with the mind of God. They are way out of touch with everything that pertains to their own lives.

There is also the authority of the rulers of the state. The Bible does not envision people gathered together in one conglomerate group. The antichrist does that, and Satan does. They envision all humanity controlled by one man. That's called internationalism. However, the Word of God is very clear that it stands for nationalism. Therefore certain rulers are to be respected. The local police are to be respected. At the city level, the officials of the council and the mayor are to be respected. At the state level, the governor and the legislature are authorities to be respected. On a national level, the president and Congress are to be respected. Romans 13 and 1 Timothy 2 establish for us this line of respect for civil authority.

Then there is the authority within marriage. 1 Peter 3:1 establishes for us that a wife is to line herself up under her husband's authority. One of the first things to remember when you decide you want to marry somebody is that you have to call that man "lord." If you find in the pit of your stomach that there's a little leap there that kind of revolts against the idea, then you better think twice about marrying him. He may well not be your right man because marriage begins with the authority of the husband. This authority is often violated. We see it all around us--husbands who yield this authority to their wives. Consequently, the result is that the family is disoriented.

It is a very sad thing to even see men who put their tails between their legs and they run off after wherever their wives say. If their wives say, "I call the play here," that's where they go. Everything is shattered when this thing is reversed. Of course, the women's lib type of woman is very subtle. She knows how to play the game, and she's not going to be out there openly declaring to her husband that she's calling the play.

I heard on a program the other day a lady who was explaining her situation in her first marriage, and how unhappy it was. She said. "Now I'm married again, and I'm very happy." The moderator said, "What's the difference?" She said. "Well this time, my husband is wearing the pants. The first time, I wore them, and it was very uncomfortable. I thought that that's what I wanted. I discovered that what I wanted was a man to tell me what to do." So if you haven't awakened to the line of authority in marriage, and if your parents have not impressed this upon you, then you're going to be in trouble. You're going to be in bad trouble.

There's the authority of the judge on the bench. The Word of God tells us in 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 that this is a respected and recognized line of authority. There is also the line of authority of parents. Parents are supposed to tell their children what to do. This is the divine institution of the family. Genesis 4 through 10 describes this, as well as 2 Timothy 1--the authority that exists within the home. Here again the father is in the leadership role; the wife in subjection to her husband; and, the children in subjection to father and mother. This is another very very difficult thing for parents to understand. It is hard for parents to understand that the older their children get, the more they need to be under their authority. As the kids get older, that's when parents begin to break down in maintaining the lines of authority. Those are the youngsters who look back with regret that they could not lean on their parents and get the direction that they needed. All of a sudden they began resisting, and their father cracked and yielded to them.

There is the authority in business, and this could be quite a debate within itself. The head of the business is the boss (Colossians 3, Ephesians 5, 1 Timothy 6). In business, the boss is the head, and when he tells you to do it some way, you do it that way. If you don't like it, find yourself another job. It is fantastic how disoriented our society is in the business world. If somebody doesn't like how the boss is running his business, they go and have a lawsuit against him in order to tell him how to run his own business. That's because we are getting away from the authority inherent in the free enterprise system which the Word of God dignifies when it tells us that we are to work in order that we may earn, in order that we may have freedom to decide what we're going to do with the money we earn. If you cannot decide what to do with your earnings, which means private ownership of property and free enterprise of earning, you do not have liberty. This is at the heart of personal liberty. So the authority in business is the boss.

There is an authority in the military. That's easy for everybody to see--that the military operates by a chain of command. If it were not so, there would be disaster in combat (Matthew 8:8-10). There is authority in education, and we've seen a lot of revolting conduct on this point. Students don't like the way the administration is running the school, so they revolt. So the administration sits down and talks it over with the students to see if they can come to an understanding. They understand that what the students want is for you to turn the administration over to them. To turn a school over to the direction of students is something akin to turning an insane asylum over to the inmates. It violates the basic lines of authority.

Suppose that you're in a school and you don't like that school. You don't like the way the administration is running things. Then go find yourself another school. That's a scriptural line of authority. If you don't like anybody's school, then just start one of your own, and it'll be just perfect.

When you walk into a classroom, the teacher is everything, and the student is nothing. That's why, in the old days, they used to put the philosopher teacher up on a stool and put the students on the floor, in order to help them understand how nothing they were. In some of the superior schools of the ancient world, they had pits, and they put the students down in that, in order to help them understand they were less than nothing.

Now when you get that understood in the classroom, you're ready for somebody to teach, and you're ready for somebody to learn. There is somebody to open his mouth, because he is now in a teaching position of authority, and somebody else to keep silent with ears open to start listening. Somebody wondered if we object to people coming into our services with long hair. While we think that a certain length of hair begins to reflect a violation of authority between a man's role and a woman's role, the official pronouncement, if you are interested, is that we don't object to people coming into our services with long hair just as long as they keep it out of their ears, and they listen. That's what they're here for. That's the purpose of authority--to listen, and to learn. So this exists in education.

It exists in athletics. I heard this past year of an athletic team that was revolting against the coach. I'm sure they were revolting to him too. They objected to what the coach was doing because the coach had laid down certain specific rules on how he wanted them to conduct themselves in the course of their lives that he considered was important to their preparation for the athletic contests. If you're on a team, you do what the coach says.

So all the way down, and this could be multiplied many times, there are lines of authority. What we have here in these malcontents, the apostate discontent type, is that he is really rebelling against authority in some way or another. If you just sit and think it through, you can probably put your finger on what it is that bugs that person. Someplace along the line, he is chafing under somebody's authority, and that's really what he's bucking.

You also have this potential in the local church--people who respond negatively towards the Word will play this role. If they are Christians, they are in a state of carnality. The discontents in the local church are almost always displeased with something they hear from the pulpit, or some application from the pulpit. These want to neutralize the Word because they're discontented. It doesn't mean that the preacher is wrong. It doesn't mean that he has applied the Word in the wrong way. It's just not acceptable to them in their situation. Then they want to neutralize it in one way or another. Many a time, a minister will do this for them incidentally. He will present the Word in such a way that they will be able to walk out the door and say, "Oh, that was nice." It's very distressing to me if I find that my congregation, by and large, walks out the door and says. "Oh, that was nice."

We have long since learned that it is almost axiomatic that we should try to have something in every service to offend everybody. We're going to get closer to proclaiming the mind of God that way because we deal with old sin natures. I can tell you what is happening if you can sit here Sunday after Sunday and go out and say, "Oh, that was nice. That was nice. That was really nice." I happen to know that you are either not listening or you are lying. It's one or the other. If the Word is preached with any integrity, you are not going to sit there without your old sin nature bobbing up and bucking you back. Very frequently you're going to sit there, and I know exactly what's in your mind. I can see it in your eye. You're saying, "Same to you, fella." But you're not saying, "Oh, that is so good," because you love it so.

This is the pattern of the potential apostate in a local church. He's a discontented person, and he welcomes the preacher who makes it possible for him to keep his own opinions. That's what I'm saying--that you can so proclaim the Word of God that you leave the door open for this person to hold his own opinion. I don't know how many people I have, in my years here at Berean, come and say, "Well, the thing we don't like about Berean is that you make it sound like that's the way it has to be." And I say, "I make it sound that way? I didn't write the book. I don't even know the guy who wrote the book. I'm just explaining to you what's in there, so don't blame me for it." But this is what the discontented person does.

If doctrine is true, and if it is Holy Spirit application, then you should understand that a negative response is against God. This is a rock that will shatter your life if you don't get this: If what you have heard is true; if what has been said in the Word of God; if what has been proclaimed; if what has been preached; if the exegesis is indeed drawn from Scripture legitimately, and it is the mind of Christ; and, if the application is compatible with that truth, and is Holy Spirit application, then when you say, "No," you are talking against God.

This is what 1 Samuel 8:6-8 tell us. The thing displeased Samuel (the Jews wanting to have a king over them--an earthly king). They said, "Give us a king to judge us." It says that Samuel prayed unto the Lord, and the Lord's answer to Samuel indicates that Samuel was a little bit crushed by the response of the Jews. He took it personally: "And the Lord said unto Samuel, hearken unto the voice of the people and all that they say unto you. For they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them." God said, "Samuel, you told them the truth. You put it out to them. When they said, 'No' to you, they were saying, 'No' to me. So don't you feel bad about it."

Then, verse 8 made it clear that Samuel was to make application of the Word: "For the Lord said, 'According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this day wherewith they have forsaken me and served other gods, so do they also unto you. Now, therefore, hearken unto their voice. Howbeit? Yet, protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king who shall reign over them."

A pastor-teacher might find himself with a congregation who is way off base. The congregation is the stockholder in His corporation. They are the ones who are the ultimate voice. They are the ones who run the show and the local church. If that congregation, like Israel, should all vote to do something that is wrong, the pastor-teacher would then be obliged to protest strongly, and to seek to demonstrate the foolhardiness of that course of action. However, that congregation would suffer the consequences of its choice. That's what God was saying to Samuel: "Your job is to inform. If they resist (and the Jews did), you are to make clear to them that if you have a human king, he will do these certain things to you." And Samuel did. And, sure enough, history proved him exactly right.

So if the doctrine is true, and the application is Holy Spirit inspired, take care, lest you want to be a discontent against it. You are fighting an authority that is more than the speaker. You're fighting the authority of God Himself. God, in the Old Testament, judged severely complaints against His views (Numbers 11:1).

**Walking after Their Own Lusts**

Alright, the next type of apostate is spoken of as those who are "walking after their own lusts." The word "walking" here is "poreuomai." It is in the present tense which means this is their continual course of conduct. It is active which means that they choose to walk in this way. They walk after, which means according to a standard. That standard that they are walking according to is described for us by the word "lusts." The Greek word for "lust" is "epithumia." "Epithumia" could be something that is evil, but it could also be a desire that is good. It's just simply a strong drive. Usually, when we use the word "lust" today, we mean something that's evil. The Greek simply means a passionate craving or a desire which could be good or it could be bad. The context has to decide which it is.

This is the Word which Jesus used in Mark 4:18: "And these are they that are sown among thorns; such as hear the Word, and the cares of this age, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful." Now be careful when you read this verse which is talking about the lusts of other things. You shouldn't simply think of evil things because there are many good things for which you and I have strong cravings--things that we like to do which can fall into the category of lusts that will destroy our relationship to the Lord.

That is, you can think of any number of things. Think of the one that you like to do most of all. What possession do you have? What hobby do you have? Think in terms of your time and your life in relationship to that hobby; in relationship to that possession; or, in relationship to that activity. Think how often, perhaps, that thing has stood between you and the Lord; that thing has stood between you and having time to be in church; or, that thing has stood between you and having money to be able to give graciously to the Lord's work. These are lusts which in themselves are desires which are legitimate. These are things you like to do, and these can come in and choke out your relationship to the Lord.

The greatest desire of our hearts must always be learning God's point of view--the study of the Word of God. You can never get too much of Bible doctrine. You will never suffer from spiritual indigestion from the pure Word. However, if other desires are given priority in our daily routines, it will choke out the Word of God so that there will be no fruit in us. Then we will have little self-discipline and very little self-control. Morality and doing what is right will be a burden to us, and a nuisance, and we'll figure out ways to cut the corner. We'll have little sense of honor; we'll have little sense of duty; and, we shall certainly have a little amount of loyalty. We will be the kind that will easily desert rather than stand by. We will have little desire to serve. We will have little sense of responsibility. The prime motivation will be this pattern of lust, whatever it may.

**The Old Sin Nature**

The lusts that are within us originate with our old sin nature. Just briefly, to review once more, the old sin nature has a structure that has within it a point of weakness, and that gives us sins. It has a point of strength, and that gives us human good. It has a tendency toward asceticism, and we may put on a good front. It has a tendency toward lasciviousness, and we may put on an evil front. But here in the old sin nature resides a series of lusts. It is that group of lusts that actually move your old sin nature into action. It is these desires that actually move your life.

**Lust for Praise**

For example, there is the lust for praise. Ananias and Sapphira were moved by a desire for praise. Actually, they were moved by envy and jealousy toward Barnabas and others who had given gifts. So they wanted praise. They wanted recognition.

It took me a little while to figure out what was behind an expression that I would sometimes hear from people. They would talk about a church: "Oh, that is such an unfriendly place." I would know that the place speaks the Word of God and teaches the truth, and I would hear someone say that the people are unfriendly. The fact is that sometimes we advertise, "Welcome to the unfriendliest church in town," because I have learned that what that expression means is, "You didn't pay attention to me when I walked in the door. Here I took all the trouble. I got up this morning, and I dressed myself, and I really did something extra with my hair. I used my most expensive perfume--that same stuff that Ruth used--Midnight in Moab, and it made a big hit with her. And when I walked in here, everybody was aware. They could see me and smell me and everything. And the organist sat there and looked at me and yawned instead of playing "Here She is, Miss America." That's how most Christians want to walk in. This is what they mean when they say, "You're just unfriendly. You don't pay attention to me, and you should."

Now that's right out of the old sin nature, motivated by Satan. It's the lust for praise. This is the power package of the old sin nature. We suffer more from this desire than almost anything else.

**Lust for Power**

There is also a lust for power. "I am faithful in the operation if I can call the plays my way. I am a member here too, and I should have a voice." A great deal of Christian service is done by people who are in a position of power. But if they feel that their position of calling the plays is no longer their prerogative, then they are no longer interested in playing the game. People love to have economic controls over others. This is a type of power. You can exercise a lot of power if a person is economically dependent upon you.

I've been amazed how often I've seen in the ministry that here is some missionary who minds his own business and carries on his work and provides for his needs. Or some pastor who doesn't present the front that he's about ready to drop through the seat of his pants because everything is so thin back there, and he doesn't present a poor poverty picture, and nobody pays attention to him. But in comes the poor soul, the sad sack, and I have people rushing up who are just so eager to do something for this poor sad banana. There is the satisfaction of economic controls.

People love to have lust for money. 1 Timothy 6:10 warns us not to have an emotional attachment to money. I find that this hits a real raw nerve in a lot of Christians. They have a love for money, and it is distressing to them for you to say that God rejects it. People move around from job to job and from place to place in the country because they are pushed from their old sin nature by their lust for money. It is a refreshing Christian who will not even enter economic roles because he knows it will detract from his Christian service. I know people who could go into business for themselves who refuse to do it because they could not be engaged and have the freedom to be engaged in the Lord's work. What they are called to do, they consider that important. But a lust for money will drive you.

**Other Lusts**

Christians can have a lust for social status. You can spot the Christian who loves social status because that Christian is so competitive. That Christian is going to win no matter what has to be done to do it. That Christian is pushy. There are the lusts for immorality, sensual orientation, and vengeance to get even but smiling all the time while you're doing it. There is the lust for what you'd like to do--those good things and those legitimate things, but which gets you so preoccupied. Please remember that *Christian service always means not doing something else*. Christian service means not doing something else. Your lust for the things you like to do can be the greatest hindrance to fitting into God's plan.

So those who walk after their own lusts (2 Peter 3:3) openly become scoffers of the Word (2 Peter 3:4). This pattern of lust is something that you can get hooked on. It can be the primary motivation of your life. If you get hooked on this, it is really rough to get off of it. It takes a program with a pretty firm pastor-teacher for you to be able to get off operating on the old sin nature patterns of lust.

**Speak Great Swelling Words**

Also we are told that another characteristic of apostates is that they speak great swelling words. "Their mouth speaks great swelling words." This is in the present tense "laleo." It is active. They choose to do it. They continually do it. It's a technique of the apostate. He has fancy words. It's the professional preacher who is willing to dignify human viewpoint error (2 Peter 2:18). The greater the apostasy, the more the error from the pulpit. It says that these words are "swelling" or "huperogkos," which means haughty and bombastic--immoderate and over swollen. The apostate has a facility with words, and this facility is able to deceive the hearers. He's a double-talk artist in such a way that he can impress. He can promise great visions and pretend to have great insights. His big words always impress people with low spiritual IQ. But they do not impress those who are informed. It is surprising how God talk is all a person needs to be able to get around some Christians.

Sometimes Christians invite this deception on themselves. They'll say to someone who is being very truthful with them, "It's not what you say. It's how you say it." That remark means, "Say it, but fool me when you do it. Say it, but fool me so I don't know you said it. You see, I want you as a pastor-teacher to convey the impression that you are not against the things you oppose, and that you are not in favor of the things you are for. I want you to be middle-of-the-road. So say it, but fool me. I don't mind what you say. It's how you say it." This means, "Give me great swelling words to con me. Get up and call me something that I am not."

**Having Men's Persons in Admiration**

The last hallmark of an apostate is having men persons in admiration because of advantage. They hold persons in admiration for advantage. The word "admiration" is the Greek "thaumazo," and it means to be impressed with so that you cater, and the word "persons" is actually the word for "face"--"prosopon." It's the word for "face," so, in other words, it's saying to be admiring somebody's face. In other words, it's saying, "I know who you are so I flatter you accordingly." Now this is a common technique of professional ministry.

You can spot it by the word, "Fine." He loves to use the word, "Fine." And when he's really in there, pitching good, he'll use the words, "Fine. Fine." He'll speak, and he'll say, "Now I'm going to ask our fine young man to play for us. I'm going to ask our fine fine ushers to come and take up a fine fine offering from you fine fine fine people on this fine fine fine fine evening." And he just goes on and on. Once you get hold of that word "fine," you'll hear it all the time. I hear preachers speaking on the radio, and it's a favorite word. They use it more than they use the name of God. Everybody and everything is fine.

Here is what this word means. He's acting like an apostate because he is playing ball. This violates Colossians 3:17: "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." Now why do they do this? It says that these fine words are used in order to gain advantage--for the sake of advantage is what it says. It is for the sake of gain and for the sake of profit. The apostate flatters in order to get something out of you. The apostate makes people feel at ease so that they can hold false or neutral views. It is impossible to teach the Word of God and to cater to human viewpoint at the same time. The believers have to look to God the Holy Spirit to reveal the true motivations of those who are speaking to them. You should be able to spot when somebody is giving you what you want to hear. Beware of the sweet preacher who leaves you with the impression, "That was nice."

The deeper this age of apostasy dawns upon us, the greater the ministry becomes a business which is run by playing ball in the right circles with the right people. Many a preacher--any preacher--will learn very shortly in his career that if he does not play ball according to this principle of this hallmark of the apostate, and if he does not play ball with the right people in the right circle, they're going to quit. Usually they go someplace else under the delusion that someplace else people will play ball with them and the ministry will cooperate with them. I am amazed what fools people can be because when they get someplace else, it never occurs to them that the only reason they have the delusion is that now it's something they can approve and now it's going the way they believe it should. It's because the guy who is up there is putting it in such a way that he is using great swelling words of deceit, and he's conning them. He's often not deliberately trying to be deceptive. He is just not telling everything he knows. He is saying it in such a way that you don't know what he said. After he said it, all you can say is, "OK." But it is a wise and informed Christian who realizes that the best does not lie out there.

This upsets people. The old sin nature is obsessed with the idea that out there is where it's at. Out there is where it's at, and when I get out there, I'm going to find somebody who's willing to con me and who's willing to fool me, and they will be willing to say it the way I want to hear it said so that I can kid myself.

So here it is--five hallmarks of an apostate. They are murmurers. They are complainers. They're walking after their own lusts. They have mouths which speak great swelling words, and they will have men's persons in admiration for their personal advantage.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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