

Apostasy Pressure

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For Discussion: Walking Away From The Truth: How Does Apostasy Happen?
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<https://harbingersdaily.com/walking-away-from-the-truth-how-does-apostasy-happen/>

What is apostasy?

It is a falling away or departure from the faith.

- Apostasy, from the Greek word *apostasia*, means “a defiance of an established system or authority; a rebellion; an abandonment or breach of faith.”
- In the first-century world, apostasy was a technical term for political revolt or defection.
- Just like in the first century, spiritual apostasy threatens the Body of Christ today.

What causes people to depart from the faith?

- Persecution – other people’s opinions are too important to them (seed on stony places, Matt 13:21)
- Mixed devotion – fence-sitters, earthbound (seed among thorns, Matt 13:22)
- Just plain hard – Don’t understand God’s Word (seed fell by the wayside, Matt 13:19)

These are just a few reasons. The Bible lists many more, including laziness, Satan’s devices, an unbelieving heart, a hardened heart, rebellion, bitterness, immorality, disrespect of leadership, not mixing God’s promises with faith.

What is the prophetic significance of apostasy?

It is one of the signs of the end of the Church Age...

1 Timothy 4:1-3 – *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³ forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*

Indeed, it will represent the failure of man during this dispensation and will be so bad that Jesus said:

Luke 18:8 – *when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?*

There will literally be no faith on earth the instant after the rapture but this is also a comment on apostasy using hyperbole.

Where else have we seen Jesus using hyperbole in His teaching?

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? (Luke 6:41).

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God (Mark 10:25).

If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell (Matthew 5:29–30).

But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing (Matt 6:3).

Back to 1 Timothy 4, what are *doctrines of demons*?

They are teachings that contradict Scripture. Some heretical doctrines are: universalism, salvation-by-works, denial of Christ’s deity, theistic evolution, etc.

How have we seen apostates *forbidding to marry*?

This is certainly the case with the Catholic Church today forbidding their priests and nuns to be married.

- The Second Lateran Council approved a rule forbidding priests to marry in 1139.
- Woke churches have redefined marriage to the point where the institution of marriage is so altered that it is tantamount to denying it.

How have we seen apostates *commanding to abstain from foods which God created*?

It is trendy among global warming fear mongers that meat is bad for the planet. Woke churches have embraced this Gaia worship.

- In Greek mythology, Gaia is the goddess of Earth and the mother of all life

What different forms of apostasy are there?

According to gotquestions.org, there are two main types:

1. a falling away from key and true doctrines of the Bible into heretical teachings that claim to be “the real” Christian doctrine, and
2. a complete renunciation of the Christian faith, which results in a full abandonment of Christ.

The second form almost always begins with the first.

- A heretical belief becomes a heretical teaching that splinters and grows until it pollutes all aspects of a person’s faith.

What did the half-brother of Jesus have to say about apostasy?

Jude 1:3 – *I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*

He outlines how to recognize apostasy and strongly urges those in the body of Christ to stay true to what God has revealed.

- The Greek word translated “*contend earnestly*” is a compound verb from which we get the word agonize.
- It is in the present infinitive form, which means that the struggle will be continuous.

In other words, there will be a constant fight against false teaching and that Christians should take it so seriously that we “agonize” it.

- So, it is critical that all believers sharpen their discernment skills in order to recognize and prevent apostasy in their midst.

Why is it important for us today to be alert to apostasy?

Every New Testament book except Philemon contains warnings about false teaching. Why is this? Simply because ideas have consequences.

- Also, we live at a time when apostasy is increasing as a sign of the end of the Church Age.

What are 3 traits of apostasy and apostate teachers?

Jude 1:4 – *For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

(1) Apostates are subtle – clever argumentation stealthily infiltrates minds and corrupts thinking

- A.W. Tozer: “*So skilled is error at imitating truth, that the two are constantly being mistaken for each another.*”
- *For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No*

wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:13–14)

- Pastor R. C. Lensky: “*The worst forms of wickedness consist in perversions of the truth.*”

(2) Apostates are ungodly – who use God’s grace as a license to commit unrighteous acts... Jude describes 18 traits of apostates: they are *ungodly* (Jude 1:4), *morally perverted* (verse 4), *denying Christ* (verse 4), ones who *defile the flesh* (verse 8), *rebellious* (verse 8), people who *revile angels* (verse 8), who are *ignorant about God* (verse 8), those who *proclaim false visions* (verse 10), *self-destructive* (verse 10), *grumblers* (verse 16), *faultfinders* (verse 16), *self-satisfying* (verse 16), people who use arrogant words and *false flattery* (verse 16), *mockers of God* (verse 18), those who *cause divisions* (verse 19), *worldly minded* (verse 19), and *devoid of the Spirit/unsaved* (verse 19).

(3) Apostates “deny our Lord, Jesus Christ” – They deny who He is, what He has done and the importance of knowing Him.

How do apostates deny Christ?

Titus 1:16 – *They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.*

Through their unrighteous behavior, the apostates show their true selves.

Matthew 7:15, 20 – *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves... Therefore by their fruits you will know them.*

Unlike an apostate, a true believer is someone who has been delivered from sin to righteousness in Christ and who refuses to continue in sin (Romans 6:1–2).

What is the ultimate sign of an apostate?

They eventually fall away and departs from the truth of God’s Word and His righteousness.

1 John 2:19 – *They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us*

True believers continue in fellowship with other believers while the apostates fall away.

John 13:35 – *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*

If our salvation is eternally secure, why does the Bible warn so strongly against apostasy?

Apostates are people who made professions of faith in Jesus Christ but never genuinely received Him as Savior. They were pretend believers.

- Those who apostatize are simply demonstrating that they are not true believers, and they never were.

How do we know that those who are truly saved are eternally secure?

The Bible teaches that everyone who is born again by the power of the Holy Spirit is saved forever.

- We receive the gift of eternal life (John 10:28), not temporary life.
- Someone who is born again (John 3:3) cannot be “unborn.”
- After being adopted into God’s family (Romans 8:15), we will not be kicked out.
- When God starts a work, He finishes it (Phil 1:6).

God wants us to know for sure we are going to heaven; “Once saved, always saved” is biblical doctrine.

How can we know we are truly saved?

You can remember your experience being “born again.” Of course, some people may have been born again at such an early age that this memory may not be as clear. For those (and really everyone) there is this:

2 Corinthians 13:5 – Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?

How may we examine ourselves to know whether we are in the faith?

Take the test... that is the whole purpose of 1 John:

1 John 5:13 – These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life

There are at least 12 characteristics of God’s children:

1. We have fellowship with God (1:7)
2. We have sensitivity to sin (1:8)
3. We are obedient to God (2:5)
4. We reject the world (2:15)
5. We look forward to Jesus returning (3:2-3)
6. We have a decreasing pattern of sin (3:9)
7. We experience rejection by the world (3:13)
8. We love the brethren (3:14)
9. We experience answers to prayer (3:22)
10. We discern truth and error (4:1)
11. We confess that Jesus is the Son of God (4:15)
12. We have the ministry of the Holy Spirit (4:10)

What applications do we see from this discussion?

- Apostasy is growing in our day; it is a sign of the end of the Church Age.
- The Bible has a lot of warnings about apostasy; discernment is called for
- Apostates are merely professing believers
- True believers are eternally secure
- Self-evaluation as to whether we are in the faith is a healthy exercise.