

Apostasy – What is it?

By Stella Paterson

In this article we will cover the subject of apostasy. Following this, there will be the answer to apostasy – Revival. Does the Bible tell us there will be apostasy, or does the Bible tell us there will be revival? We will explore both – according to the Bible and according to the evidence we see all around us. Some of the evidence of apostasy will be very shocking. Please read this full article. My purpose is to shed light on some areas of great danger.

Paul foretold, in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, how apostasy would occur before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The word apostasy comes from the Greek word “apostasia” which means “defection from truth” and is translated “falling away.” If apostasy is “defection from truth,” that tells us that Jesus, who is Truth, has been forsaken by those who are “apostate.”

On ekklesia4him.net the word “apostasy” is very prominent, as is “deception.” The two go together. Apostasy results in deception and deception results in apostasy. As long as I have breath, and as the Lord leads, I will continue to write of the things He reveals in His word. It would appear that my “calling” is to expose the underlying cause of apostasy – not simply to point out something that is already apparent to so many.

The apostasy of which Paul spoke has its root in flesh and the knowledge of good and evil, as can be read in *Calling Forth The Remnant*. With the knowledge of good and evil, death came upon all mankind. This we can see in Genesis where God told man he would die if he partook of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man’s newly acquired knowledge served only to reduce him to a creature of mortal (and sinful) flesh – flesh that ultimately will die.

How has the apostasy taken place?

Hebrews 3:12 is a warning to the Hebrew people regarding unbelief. It is a warning we all should take to heart because it says, “*Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any of you an **evil heart of unbelief, in falling away** [Greek: #868] **from the living God.**”* The same Greek word was used in Jesus’ parable in Luke 8:13: “*And these on the rock are they, which, when they have heard receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in the time of temptations [Greek: adversity] **fall away.**”* How many are there who start out receiving the word with joy but fall away because their faith has no deep root? They defect from Truth because Christ is not their true Foundation.

The “Church”, as it is commonly called, has sunk to a devastatingly apostate condition. Those in the apostate church cannot see or recognize the state they

are in. Some even see the “apostate” as those who have left the institutional church system. The majority of those who have departed are in a quest to follow after the Living God. But this is not how the remaining “insiders” see it – they see themselves as the “true believers” while those who leave are “backslidden.” Even among those “outside the camp” we can know assuredly that many will falter and depart from the faith. At the same time, there will be some within the church system who have a deep and abiding love for the Lord. I believe many of these will eventually respond to the call to turn wholly to Jesus, and escape the ever-increasing bondage of organized religion.

Recognizing the cause

How can we know and recognize this much talked about end-time phenomenon called “apostasy”? Is it what so many web sites describe, naming fallen ministers, or pointing out corruption in high places? All these obvious things are the evidence of apostasy and are highly visible even to unbelievers, or “the world.” There are too many web sites devoted to making defamatory remarks against individuals who have been labeled as “apostate” by the author of the web site. Too often these judgmental watchdogs go so far as to reveal a bias against the working of the Holy Spirit and speak dreadful things against some true men of God.

The real apostasy is something so insidious that it is hard for our finite minds to comprehend. Those within the apostate church will point to “the world” outside, believing that those are the only sinners of whom the Bible speaks. But the most disturbing thing is that there are sinners in the “church” who have not truly surrendered to Jesus Christ and received His Life. They present themselves as “Christians.” But being in church cannot make us a Christian any more than being in a barn can transform us into a cow.

Here is a quote from Andrew Murray’s “*Absolute Surrender*”:

*“Let us bow before God in humility, and in that humility confess before Him the state of the whole Church. No words can tell the sad state of the Church of Christ on earth. I wish I had words to speak what I sometimes feel about it. Just think of the Christians around you. I do not speak of nominal Christians, or of professing Christians, but I speak of hundreds and thousands of honest, earnest Christians who are not living a life in the power of God or to His glory. So little power, so little devotion or consecration to God, so little perception of the truth that **a Christian is a man utterly surrendered to God’s will!**”* (Emphasis are mine.)

Now let me take you back a few years to the time when the Holy Spirit was undoing all the old, dead doctrines with which I had grown up. I was very “religious” – entrenched in the typical, traditional, institutional church system. At one point the Lord began to draw us away from that system, but it has taken years to get that system out of us, starting even before we left. It is something so

ingrained in the minds of those who are, or have been, a part of organized religion that only God's Spirit can remove it. That is when true regeneration takes place. That is when the Holy Spirit can finally "feel at home," for lack of a better description. That is when we turn from double-mindedness to single-mindedness – or at least a beginning, since it is an on-going work of God with our decreasing and His increasing. Once the Lord had pointed me on a path to Him, there was no turning back. All I wanted was Him. And with my desire for all that He is, He began to open my eyes to His heart-breaking view of the "church" as He sees her.

The "picture" of the church that the Lord so indelibly etched on my heart became even clearer, as He took me through His word and caused me to follow the word studies on flesh, apostasy, deception, sin, forgiveness, spirit, and on and on. His word revealed His heart. His word revealed the condition of the modern-day "church." His word revealed the truth as the Spirit of Truth quickened more and more God's plan for me when He launched me into those studies. I do not claim to be an authority on anything, nor do I want to be seen as an authority on anything. All I know is that He shared with me His heartbreak over the apostate condition of those who believe they are a part of the Body of Christ. It is out of that heartbreak that I wrote my book. There is a desire, deep down, to continue writing a call for the remnant to come forth, out of apostasy, and become Christ's pure, spotless Bride.

Earlier, I used the word "insidious." I found an interesting and vitally important definition while studying 2 Peter 2:2, which says "*And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of [Greek: through] whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of [also 'blasphemed']*." How intuitive the translators were in using the word "*pernicious*." Webster's dictionary shows that it "*applies to that which does great harm by **insidiously undermining or weakening***." Now look at the meaning of "*insidious*." Webster's defines it as "*operating in a slow or not easily apparent manner; **more dangerous than seems evident***."

That definition of "pernicious" very accurately describes the deceptive apostasy that has crept into the Body of Christ over the past two centuries. It is not a new thing – it has literally crept in upon us unawares, distorting everything so insidiously that we have come to accept it without giving it a thought. And that is the danger. Some will even blaspheme "*the way of truth*," as the above verse said. They believe they are correct and it sounds correct to the hearers, but read what verse 1 shows: "*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in [Greek: introduce surreptitiously] damnable [same as 'pernicious'] heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction*."

If the apostasy had been obvious to us, we would not have been deceived. If we were discerning, the deception would not have led to apostasy. Those two words are so intertwined they have become almost like a strong cord that has choked

the life out of the unsuspecting. Lest anyone think I am being rather melodramatic, the Life I am speaking of is the Life of Jesus – the One we have forsaken in pursuit of anything and everything that has come across our path in the name of “ministry.” It matters not what the ministry teaches, even “from God’s Word,” unless it points us to Jesus, requiring that we forsake self and flesh to follow Him, we are forsaking Him. How many times have we followed some preacher who tickled our ears, sounding so believable that we just “knew” we had found a preacher of truth. Yes, many can sound very convincing, quoting scripture to back their claims. But if we check closely we can almost guarantee that we will find they have taken verses out of context.

We can also become so embroiled in issues we believe are important to our faithfulness to God that the issues take center stage and Jesus is forsaken. We may try to justify our actions and call them “defending the faith” or “pointing others to truth.” Just recently, an email exchange over the KJV issue included my affirming the Holy Spirit’s roll to reveal the written word because He, God’s Spirit, inspired the word in the first place. The KJV defender’s response was “*it is first degree heresy.*” He also told me that because I am not KJV-only, I am “*not Bible-based*” (his words). An additional thing he said completely shocked and saddened me. His words were, “*The Spirit by itself is ineffective and wishy washy. The Spirit must line up with the word.*” What a tragedy it is that this man would utter blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. He and many others believe the King James Bible is the “only preserved word” of God for us today. They have become almost militant in their stand – to the point where their KJV Bible has been elevated to a place even higher than God the Holy Spirit. That is idolatry!

Even now, a shock still goes through me when I read those words spoken against the precious Holy Spirit. Can you see how even defending beliefs can eventually become a stronghold that comes between us and our God? I cannot emphasize enough the insidiousness of the deception that leads to even greater apostasy.

Aside from the ever prominent KJV debate, there are the issues of “women in ministry” that are vigorously defended by some; the issue regarding the absence in public places of “The Ten Commandments”; the issue of abortion with the extremes we have witnessed – the list of issues is endless. There may be some value in every issue but is it what God values? Or have we taken on a project, believing we can enforce “righteousness” – something that only God can accomplish? We must remember that Jesus is our Righteousness. We need only to lift Him up. And if we would seek Him about the issues, He is more than able to work His will in every one of them. We need to be a praying people first, and He will lead us to any action He wills for us to take.

There are countless things in everyday life that we believe we “should do.” But those things can start to replace Jesus in our heart until we begin chasing after “mammon” which is not only about money. The Greek word is of Chaldee origin

and primarily means “confidence.” Our confidence can be in what we think is a work for God and even begin to believe He will bless us because of our efforts. But they will be just that – OUR EFFORTS – efforts having their origin in the knowledge of good and evil; the same knowledge that brought death to man. The Book of Hebrews speaks of “*repentance from **dead works***” and the purging of “*conscience from **dead works** to serve the living God.*” (Hebrews 6:1 & 9:14) Although the words were spoken to the Hebrews regarding the dead works of the Law, they would also apply to any works according to our own man-made “laws.”

How many “good” things take us away from our devotion to Jesus? He set the example of always going aside to pray to the Father. Like Jesus, we, His followers, must always seek His face so that we can be faithful at following Him. How many times do **we** make a decision then expect the Lord to bless it? Imagine where we would be if every preacher and every believer were to seek God first, in humble surrender, before doing or saying a single thing? The Lord showed me a “picture” one day. He was sitting, waiting for someone – anyone – to seek His will “on earth as it is in heaven.” But, instead, people all over the earth were running here and there, doing their thing, completely oblivious that He even existed. They all assumed they were “working” for God, or “living the Christian life.” They wanted no part of Him even though they claimed to be His. Their “Christianity” was mere lip-service.

Here is another quote from Andrew Murray:

“How much Christian work is being done in the spirit of the flesh and in the power of self! How much work, day by day, in which human energy - our will and our thoughts about the work - is continually manifested, and in which there is but little of waiting upon God, and upon the power of the Holy Ghost! Let us make confession. But as we confess the state of the Church and the feebleness and sinfulness of work for God among us, let us come back to ourselves. Who is there who truly longs to be delivered from the power of the self-life, who truly acknowledges that it is the power of self and the flesh, and who is willing to cast all at the feet of Christ? There is deliverance.”

If Andrew Murray recognized the apostasy in the church in his day, I wonder what he would write if he were to see the state of the church today? I believe he would be very articulate in addressing the lack of the Holy Spirit’s power in modern-day preaching.

How many are there who have been deceived by “ministers” who never seek the face of God? Or, worse yet, how many are there who say they have sought the face of God and say “He said....” Jeremiah spoke these words: “*Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I*

sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.” (Jeremiah 23:31-32 KJV)

There is a battle going on for our souls. And as the end nears, we will need to be more and more diligent in our relationship with Jesus and make it a priority to seek Him daily, praying without ceasing. We must keep our spiritual ears attuned to the voice of the Holy Spirit who will never lead us astray. Our faith must be firmly in Christ Jesus – not only for our salvation but for our moment by moment spiritual existence. It’s called “entrusting our spiritual wellbeing to Christ.” Jesus said this: “*Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*” (Luke 18:8b)

The apostate church is a church without faith. It is a church without the Life of Christ, having fallen back into the knowledge of good and evil – the source of death. The things we do result from what we are. Without the Eternal Spirit dwelling within us, we are dead in our sinful flesh – separated from God. The evidence of apostasy we see all around us comes from the “falling away” that has taken place. What a tragedy it is! No wonder the Father’s heart is broken when we consider the vast numbers of the “lost in the pew” that I “saw”. Without question, an apostate person is an adulterer against God.

But the good news is: When the Holy Spirit comes in, we go from death to life and the Spirit’s fruit will be seen in us because we are now a “new creature in Christ Jesus.” The Bride of Christ is made up of those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells.

Check out the study of “apostasy” and see the similarities in the Greek words for apostasy and divorce.