

Part 4: Jesus Our Redeemer

Lesson 6: Apostasy – The Great Falling Away

Lesson Summary

Apostasy, from the Greek *apostasia* (“to depart”), is the willful abandonment of the faith—rejecting Christ while often maintaining an outward appearance of religion (2 Thess. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1). Scripture warns repeatedly of apostasy in both the Old Testament (Deut. 13:6–10; Jer. 2:19) and New Testament (Heb. 6:4–6; 2 Pet. 2:20–22; Matt. 24:10–13). Unlike spiritual apathy, which dulls the heart, apostasy is a deliberate rejection of truth. Charles Ryrie emphasized that apostates never possessed true saving faith (1 John 2:19), while genuine believers remain secure (John 10:28–29). Hebrews 10:26–27 warns against willful, ongoing sin after knowing the gospel, pointing to rejection rather than mere weakness. Jesus described false converts in Matthew 7:21–23 as outwardly religious yet inwardly lawless, ultimately rejected. Apostasy is especially significant prophetically, as Scripture describes a great falling away before the rise of the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:3). The warnings call the Church to vigilance: test ourselves, guard truth, resist false doctrine, and cling to Christ with enduring faith.

Key Takeaways

- **Definition:** Apostasy = deliberate falling away from faith (2 Thess. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1).
- **Biblical Warnings:** Both OT and NT repeatedly warn against forsaking God (Deut. 13:6–10; Heb. 6:4–6).
- **Nature of Apostasy:** Willful rejection of Christ, not accidental sin (Heb. 10:26–27).
- **Ryrie’s View:** Apostates never had true faith; true believers cannot lose salvation (1 John 2:19; John 10:28–29).
- **False Converts:** Outwardly religious but inwardly lawless (Matt. 7:21–23).
- **Prophetic Significance:** A great falling away will precede the Antichrist and Tribulation (2 Thess. 2:3).
- **Application:** Examine ourselves, cling to Christ, reject false doctrine, endure in holiness (2 Cor. 13:5; 2 Tim. 2:19).

Questions & Answers

1. **Q:** What is apostasy according to Scripture?
A: A willful abandonment of the faith—rejecting Christ and His truth (2 Thess. 2:3).
2. **Q:** How is apostasy different from apathy?
A: Apathy dulls love for Christ; apostasy is deliberate rejection of Him (Heb. 3:13 vs. Heb. 10:26–27).
3. **Q:** What did Charles Ryrie teach about apostasy?
A: That apostates were never truly saved; genuine believers are eternally secure (1 John 2:19; John 10:28–29).
4. **Q:** What warnings does Hebrews give?
A: That willful sin after knowing the truth leaves only judgment (Heb. 10:26–27).

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5. **Q:** What traits mark false converts in Matthew 7:21–23?
A: Outward religiosity, inward lawlessness, and ultimate rejection by Christ.
6. **Q:** Why is apostasy prophetically significant?
A: Because Scripture predicts a great falling away before the Antichrist's rise (2 Thess. 2:3).
7. **Q:** How should believers respond to warnings about apostasy?
A: By self-examination, clinging to Christ, rejecting false teaching, and enduring in obedience (2 Cor. 13:5; 2 Tim. 2:19).

“Apostasy unmask false faith—yet true believers endure, clinging to Christ with assurance and hope until the end.”