

## Part 6. Our Enemy

### Lesson 5: Heresy, Apostasy, and Demonic Influence – The Battle for Truth

#### Lesson Summary

The Bible warns of deception that threatens the Church through **heresy**, **apostasy**, and **demonic influence**. Heresy is deviation from foundational doctrine—especially truths about salvation, Christ’s deity, and Scripture’s authority (2 Pet. 2:1; Gal. 5:20). History shows examples like Arianism, Gnosticism, and Pelagianism. Apostasy is willful abandonment of the faith after exposure to truth (1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 6:4–6; 2 Thess. 2:3). Scripture affirms that those who permanently fall away were never truly regenerated (1 John 2:19). Demonic influence often lies behind false teaching, as Satan masquerades as light to twist or replace God’s truth (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Cor. 11:13–15). God disciplines doctrinal rebellion (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20), yet trials are not always demonic but under His sovereign hand (Job 2:6–7; John 9:3). Believers defend the faith with the Word (Heb. 4:12; Jude 3), guided by the Spirit (John 16:13), standing firm in apostolic teaching (2 Thess. 2:15). The last days will intensify deception (2 Tim. 3:1–5; Matt. 24:12), but faithfulness, discernment, and endurance mark true disciples. Even when wrongly accused of heresy, believers must test all by Scripture, respond with grace, and trust God for vindication (Acts 17:11; 1 Pet. 3:15). Victory comes by clinging to Christ, the Truth.

#### Key Takeaways

- **Heresy:** False teaching that distorts core truths of salvation, Christ, or Scripture (2 Pet. 2:1; Titus 3:10).
- **Apostasy:** Willful rejection of the faith, revealing absence of true regeneration (1 Tim. 4:1; 1 John 2:19).
- **Demonic influence:** Satan inspires false doctrines and deception (2 Cor. 11:13–15; 1 Tim. 4:1).
- **God’s discipline:** He may hand unrepentant teachers to Satan for correction, yet trials are sovereignly permitted (1 Cor. 5:5; Job 2:6–7).
- **Defense of truth:** God’s Word and Spirit equip us to contend for the faith (Heb. 4:12; Jude 3).
- **Last days:** Apostasy and deception will increase, but endurance marks true disciples (2 Tim. 3:1–5; Matt. 24:12).
- **False accusations:** Standing for truth may bring charges of heresy—believers must remain faithful, test by Scripture, and trust God (Acts 17:11; 1 Pet. 3:15).

#### Questions & Answers

1. **Q:** What is heresy according to Scripture?  
**A:** Teaching that departs from foundational truths about salvation, Christ, or the authority of Scripture (2 Pet. 2:1).
2. **Q:** How is apostasy different from heresy?  
**A:** Heresy distorts doctrine; apostasy is a willful abandonment of the faith (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Thess. 2:3).
3. **Q:** What did Charles Ryrie emphasize about apostasy?  
**A:** That permanent departure shows the person was never truly born again (1 John 2:19).

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4. **Q:** What role do demons play in false teaching?

**A:** Many false doctrines are demonically inspired to twist or replace God's truth (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Cor. 11:13–15).

5. **Q:** How does God sometimes discipline false teachers?

**A:** By allowing them to face Satan's destruction to learn not to blaspheme (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20).

6. **Q:** What safeguards believers from deception?

**A:** Scripture, the Spirit, sound doctrine, and testing all teaching by God's Word (Heb. 4:12; John 16:13; Acts 17:11).

7. **Q:** How should believers respond if wrongly accused of heresy?

**A:** Remain faithful, defend truth with grace, test all things by Scripture, and trust God for vindication (1 Pet. 3:15; Matt. 5:11–12).

**“Heresy distorts truth, apostasy rejects truth, and demonic influence replaces truth—but God calls us to cling to His Word, contend for the faith, and endure in Christ until the end.”**