

CHURCH APOSTASY

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INTRODUCTION:

Dr. Scofield in his 1909 Reference Bible categorized the letters to the seven churches of Asia in Revelation chapters two and three as a chronological developmental exposition of a broad overview of Church history. He and the men that refreshed the notes in the Scofield Reference Bible in 1967 saw the letters as an accurate chronological depiction of the problems encountered throughout church history. The last letter, Laodicea provides an accurate picture of the apostasy of the visible Christian Church.

The Church of the Apostasy represents Church history from A.D. 1917-to the present.

*Revelation 3:14-22*¹⁴ *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;*¹⁵ *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.*¹⁶ *So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*¹⁷ *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*¹⁸ *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*¹⁹ *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*²⁰ *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*²¹ *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*²² *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*¹

The *destination* of the letter, in verse 14a is Laodicea, which means “people ruling.” This is set in contrast to God’s ruling in the church. It is a church entirely ruled by men, for the Holy Spirit is not present and doing His ministry of guiding, instructing and illuminating. The *description of Jesus* is in verse 14b and is taken from Revelation

¹ *The Holy Bible: King James Version.* 1995 (electronic ed. of the 1769 edition of the 1611 Authorized Version.) (Re 3:14–22). Bellingham WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

1:4, 6 and 7. He is described as the faithful and true witness, whereas this church is neither faithful nor true to the Word.

In verses 15-16, they are characterized by lukewarmness. The distinctions between hot, cold and lukewarm can be determined by the overall context. The *hot* are the truly saved believers. The *cold* are those who are not believers and do not claim to be believers. The *lukewarm* are those who claim to believe in Jesus but are not truly regenerate believers.

Many events have occurred within the large mainline denomination to qualify for apostasy. One event that seems important to recall and was important enough for the writers of the Encyclopedia Britannica to include is the inauguration as president into Union Theological Seminary of Charles Augustus Briggs. Prior to his inauguration he had initiated debates within the seminary over the authority of the Bible in 1876 and the authority of the Westminster Confession in 1885.

Union is a seminary in New York City. At that time it was part of the Presbyterian Church. In his speech on January 20, 1891 Briggs made some points, which are obviously destructive heresies. Union was a seminary that was devoted to training ministers for Presbyterian pulpits.

Briggs made six points. All of which fueled the split in American churches.

1. He asserted that there are three great fountains of truth: The Bible, the church and reason. So reason and mankind became equal with the revealed Word.
2. Some OT prophecies were fulfilled and some were reversed.
3. He questioned the Mosaic authorship of the first five books of the Bible.
4. He questioned the unity of the book of Isaiah.
5. Those unsaved who died would have a second chance at eternal life.
6. Sanctification is not complete at death.

This was the first *public* affirmation of liberalism in a theological seminary in the United States. The New York Presbytery brought Charges against Briggs on two occasions (1891 and 1893), but the charges were dropped, to preserve unity of the church

rather than to deal with what was actually said. There was a huge group that wanted peace at whatever the cost. The cost was truth and it was lost.^{2 3}

APOSTASY DEFINED

Apostasy can be defined as “the departure from the truth that one professed to have.” It does not mean that they actually possessed the truth. Apostates do not actually possess the truth, rather, it is a departure from a truth they *professed* to have because of an affiliation with a particular church. How does this happen?

One typical example of the apostasy occurring is the infiltration of the liberals into the hierarchy of the Presbyterian Church USA. Upon hiring a new minister into the denomination they were required to affirm their belief in the Westminster Confession of Faith. The Rev Milo F. Jamison, a premillennial dispensationalist had grown to not hold to it and was thrown out of the denomination in 1933 for daring to believe the Bible as it was written instead of following a creed or confession alone.⁴ He questioned a fellow Princeton grad applying for a ministerial pulpit position. Jamison knew that the man did not believe in the Confession either or any other creed. He was a liberal. Jamison asked him: "How could you tell the examining committee that you believe in the Westminster Confession when you really don't?" The man answered: "I kept my fingers crossed during the exam."⁵ So the liberal lied to get into the denomination. Once the liberals got in they took others in along with them and began to populate the hierarchy of the denomination. They wanted the church's money and power as well as its prestige. Soon they gained control and dominated the Presbyterians and caused schisms. So where did the denomination go wrong?

Presbyterianism and other denominations put earthly, man-centered pursuits in place of the entire “Whole Counsel of God.” They believed creeds, confessions, loved power, property, and money instead of the pure sweet milk of the Word alone. They

² *Britannica, Encyclopedia. A New Survey of Universal Knowledge.* In XXIV Volumes
Chicago: William Benton, Publisher: 1962, 1985. Vol 4, pg. 145-146

³ North, Gary. *Crossed Fingers – How the Liberal Captured the Presbyterian Church.* Institute for Christian economics Pub, Tyler, TX 1996 pgs.5, 204,208,222,224-25,236,243, 235-43 etc.

⁴ *Ibid*, pg. 19-20

⁵ *Ibid*, pg. 19

prided themselves on their educations especially the secular schools they attended. The liberals easily entered and caused dissention with the fundamentalists once they gained power. They captured Princeton Seminary in 1929 and Union Theological Seminary at least forty years earlier. The Episcopal Church had gone liberal a generation earlier than Princeton's departure from orthodoxy. They fell even before Union.

APOSTASY TIMING AND CHARACTER

The prophetic word says that there will be a falling away *in the last days*. This is a vivid description of the Laodicean Church.

The New Testament clearly predicts in two NT passages that there would be an apostasy *in the latter days*. The first is found in 2nd Thessalonians:

II Thessalonians 2:1-3 ¹ Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, ² That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. ³ Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;⁶

The second passage is: I Timothy 4:1:

I Timothy 4: ¹ Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;⁷

Three NT passages describe the *character* of the apostasy.

I Timothy 4:1-3 ¹ Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and

⁶ *The Holy Bible: King James Version*. 1995 (electronic ed. of the 1769 edition of the 1611 Authorized Version.) (2 Th 2:1–3). Bellingham WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁷ *Ibid*

doctrines of devils; ² Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; ³ Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.⁸

The source of the apostasy is demons, for apostates have essentially given in to seducing spirits and are preaching a system of doctrine, which is a doctrine of demons. Furthermore, they speak lies through hypocrisy, and their consciences have stopped working.

The second passage is found in II Timothy.

II Timothy 3:5 ⁵ Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away⁹

In verses 1-4 there is a description of the general character of the world in the last days, and it can hardly be denied that these elements are true in this present day. Verse five centers on the religious front, where the last days will be characterized by men having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. Apostate ministers, retaining the clerical garb and church titles, have a form of godliness. But they deny the power thereof, for they have denied the true power of godliness. They claim to trust in God but are actually trusting in worldly methodologies.

The third passage is found in II Peter 2:1-22

2Peter 2:1- ¹ But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. ² And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. ³ And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. ⁴ For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; ⁵ And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the

⁸ *Ibid*

⁹ *Ibid*

eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; ⁶ And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; ⁷ And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: ⁸ (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) ⁹ The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: ¹⁰ But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. ¹¹ Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. ¹² But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; ¹³ And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; ¹⁴ Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: ¹⁵ Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; ¹⁶ But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. ¹⁷ These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. ¹⁸ For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. ¹⁹ While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. ²⁰ For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. ²¹ For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. ²² But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. ¹⁰

Reading through the passage, one does not see Peter displaying any attitude of love or tolerance toward the apostates. The Bible and particularly the Lord Jesus do not

¹⁰ *Ibid*

display any toleration toward apostasy and both castigate it very severely, as these verses clearly show.

Marks of the apostate

Peter also tells us what the *mark*, (a recognizable characteristic or action) of an *apostate* is. The first mark is the teachings of *destructive heresies*. The content entails *denying even the Master that bought them*. In other words, the content of apostate teaching involves the denial of the Person (*the Master*) and work (*bought them*) of the Lord Jesus. Other NT passages provide more specific aspects of this denial. First, a denial of the Trinity is dealt with in 1 John 2:22-23:

1 John 2:22-23 ²² *Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.* ²³ *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*¹¹

1st John 4:2-3 comments on a denial of the Incarnation:

1 Jo 4:1-2 ² *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:* ³ *And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*¹²

The same is true of II John 1:7:

II John 1: ⁷ *For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*¹³

They also deny of the Second Coming of the Messiah, and this is the concern of II Peter 3:3-4:

II Peter 3:3-4 ³ *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,* ⁴ *And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*¹⁴

¹¹ *Ibid*

¹² *Ibid*

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ *Ibid*

So, the teachings of apostasy involve the destructive denials of the Person and work of the Messiah, especially with regard to His place in the Trinity, His deity, His incarnation as the God-Man by means of the Virgin Birth, and the fact that He is coming again physically. Basic to all these denials, of course is the denial of the God breathed origin of the Scriptures themselves.

ONCE THE SCRIPTURES ARE CAST ASIDE AS NON-AUTHORITATIVE ALL DOCTRINES DESIGNED TO PROTECT THE CHURCH CEASE TO BE EFFECTIVE.

The second mark of an apostate is at the heart of theological liberalism, and is an attack on the authority of the Bible. They will question the traditional authorship and historicity of the Pentateuch and other parts of Scripture. The result of questioning is to openly deny Old Testament prophecy and the dating of the writing of Old Testament books. Here are two examples of this. The first is from Julius A. Bewer, Union Theological Seminary Professor: “The dates and figures found in the first five books of the Bible turn out to be altogether unreliable” (Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament*, 1940). The second example is a more recent illustration of liberalism, and comes from the pen of John Shelby Spong, a bishop in the Episcopal Church in America.

“Am I suggesting that these stories of the virgin birth are not literally true? The answer is a simple and direct ‘Yes.’ Of course these narratives are not literally true. Stars do not wander, angels do not sing, virgins do not give birth, magi do not travel to a distant land to present gifts to a baby, and shepherds do not go in search of a newborn savior. ... To talk of a Father God who has a divine-human son by a virgin woman is a mythology that our generation would never have created, and obviously, could not use. To speak of a Father God so enraged by human evil that he requires propitiation for our sins that we cannot pay and thus demands the death of the divine-human son, as a guilt offering is a ludicrous idea to our century. The sacrificial concept that focuses on the saving blood of Jesus that somehow washes me clean, so popular in Evangelical and Fundamentalist circles, is by and large repugnant to us today”¹⁵

We all know that God is not the author of confusion (I Cor 14: 33).

A third mark of an apostate is mockery.

¹⁵ Spong, John. *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism: A Bishop Rethinks the Meaning of Scripture*, Harper, 1991, pp. 215, 234).

Jude 1:17-19 ¹⁷ *But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;* ¹⁸ *How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.* ¹⁹ *These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.* ¹⁶

They will mock the fundamentals of the faith such as the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, the Virgin Birth, the Substitutionary death of the Messiah, and His physical resurrection from the dead. II Peter 3:3-8 states that they will mock the doctrine of the Second Coming.

II Peter 3:3-8 ³ *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,* ⁴ *And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.* ⁵ *For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:* ⁶ *Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:* ⁷ *But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.* ⁸ *But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* ¹⁷

A fourth mark is that of *creating schisms or separations* (Jude 19). They begin denying some of the fundamentals of the faith, and convince some believers, but not all. In the course of time this produces a split within the church. Throughout this age of apostasy there has been *schism after schism*. Churches within denominations have split over denials of the Trinity, the incarnation and the Second Coming. These characteristics, heretical teachings and deeds of separations have become prevalent, as church history has progressed from about 1900 to the present day. This is a landmark of the age of apostasy.

One of the roots of this began in Europe, particularly with German Rationalism where the inerrancy of the Scripture was denied with the development of Biblical Criticism and particularly with the documentary hypothesis in particular. One Julius Wellhausen was the chief architect of this concept. He insisted that human reason only, not the Bible, could be trusted. He presented the idea that the Bible, far from being God's

¹⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁷ *Ibid*

Word was just a collection of human documents. His particular contribution to the “Closing of the Book” was a denial of the authorship of the first five books of the Bible by Moses. Dr. David Breese in his book, “The Seven Men Who Rule the World from the Grave” states that from these destructive heresies the church leaders quoted everything but the Bible and preached everything but the gospel, and reality was gone. Religious liberalism was born. Breese continues; “the calamities that came upon Europe such as Communism, Nazism, fascism, the world of the occult and other *diseased ideas* have been promulgated by the absence of a spiritual core made of divine life and spiritual blessing. Wellhausen and his liberalism destroyed the spiritual life in Europe and nearly succeeded in the spiritual destruction of the United States.” Today less than 1% of the population of Europe is made up of Evangelical Christians.¹⁸

Liberalism in theology is similar to liberalism in politics. Both want to secularize their respective societies to the Humanist tenets. They put their faith in evolution, historical relativism, progress through science, the benevolent state, and getting other’s money. To do this they must quiet the Bible fundamentalist with his revealed truth. They refuse to believe the miracles and their truth regardless of the evidence for them. Once the liberal has infiltrated the upper echelons of fundamental seminaries they can spew their poison to future generations of pastors and cause fights within the denominations. The doubt their baseless theories and criticism of the Scriptures ignites is enough to cause splits and finally the strong political force of the denominations bleeds into the political arena. People begin to believe the error that comes from the “authorities.”

The denominations lost their battles because they did not know how to fight and win. They should have left the denominations en mass immediately instead of fighting! Some did to be sure but not enough did and many stayed in because “this is where they have always been.” They were more wedded to denominationalism than Christ and His Word. Further they did not want the fight. They just wanted it to stop because it confused them. Lest you think that men are not able to negatively influence others to keep them out of The Kingdom listen to what the Lord Jesus had to say to the Pharisees:

¹⁸ Breese, Dave. *7 Men Who Rule The World Form The Grave*, Moody Press, Chicago, IL. 1990, pg. 102

Matthew 23:13 ¹³ *But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.* ¹⁹

The fifth mark of an apostate is a consequence of the fourth mark.

IT IS ALMOST A RULE OF LIFE THAT LIBERALS DO NOT LEAVE THE VISIBLE CHURCH! They stay and continue to spew their poison to whomever they can get to hear them. They attempt to create doubt in the marginal believer. They try and influence the one where the seeds did not fall on good ground. (Matt 13:5) THIS IS SATAN CONTINUING TO IMPART DOUBT INTO THE MINDS OF THOSE WITH MARGINAL FAITH. When the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church put Briggs on trial in 1893, he was suspended from the Presbyterian Church. As a result Briggs became an Episcopalian and the Union Theological Seminary withdrew from the Presbyterian Church and became independent. They still continued to train ministers for Presbyterian pulpits. This set the stage for the way the apostasy would develop in the course of the twentieth century. Apostasy would first begin in a denominational school and thus affect the training of ministers who were to fill the pulpits of the churches for those denominations.²⁰ Eventually, more and more liberals took over the pulpits, and more and more churches became liberal themselves. By 1901 the leaders of the different positions in the conflict within the Presbyterian Church did not hold to the Westminster Confession for different reasons yet all publically stated they did!

So throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century, apostates took over the schools and trained ministers for the denominational churches. In an effort to stem the tide, in 1910 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church issued the Five Fundamentals of the Faith, which included:

1. The inspiration of the Scriptures.
2. The Virgin Birth.
3. The Substitutionary Atonement.

¹⁹ *The Holy Bible: King James Version*. 1995 (electronic ed. of the 1769 edition of the 1611 Authorized Version.) (Mt 23:13). Bellingham WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

²⁰ *Britannica, Encyclopedia. A New Survey of Universal Knowledge*. In XXIV Volumes Chicago: William Benton, Publisher: 1962, 1985. Vol 4, pg. 146

4. The resurrection of Jesus.
5. The miracles of Jesus.

Those who subscribed to these five points were labeled “Fundamentalists,” and so a new word was coined. Those who denied these fundamentals were called Modernists or Liberals. The General Assembly issued these in 1910 and reaffirmed them in 1916 and in 1923. In more recent times The World Congress of Fundamentalists provided a definition of biblical fundamentalism. At their meeting in 1976 in Usher Hall, Edinburgh, Scotland they said; “Fundamentalism is militant orthodoxy set on fire with soul winning zeal.”²¹ They listed seven characteristics that define a fundamentalist. Note particularly the final two points:

1. Maintains an immovable allegiance to the inerrant, infallible, and verbally inspired Bible.
2. Believes that whatever the Bible says is so.
3. Judges all things by the Bible and is judged only by the Bible.
4. Affirms the foundational truths of the historic Christian Faith: The doctrine of the Trinity; the incarnation, virgin birth, Substitutionary atonement, bodily resurrection and glorious ascension, and Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ; the new birth through regeneration by the Holy Spirit; the resurrection of the saints to life eternal; the resurrection of the ungodly to final judgment and eternal death; the fellowship of the saints, who are the body of Christ.
5. Practices fidelity to that Faith and endeavors to preach it to every creature.
6. Exposes and separates from all ecclesiastical denial of that Faith, compromise with error, and apostasy from the Truth.
7. Earnestly contends for the Faith once delivered.²²

²¹ Internet, accessed October 9, 2012 <http://www.oocities.org/schfrs/congress.html>

²² Ibid.

The decade of the 1920's was characterized by the great Modernist-Fundamentalist battles. There were many attempts to fight Modernism within the church. But toward the end of the decade, it was apparent that the Modernists were firmly in control of both the denominational church positions (this included all the major denominations except the Southern Baptist Convention) and their schools.

This led to the separatist movement of the 1930's as the Fundamentalists pulled out of the denominations and started their own denominations or independent churches. Emerging from the United Presbyterian Church of the United States of America was a group led by J. Gresham Machen, which unfortunately split into three separate denominations (Orthodox Presbyterians, Bible Presbyterians and the Evangelical Presbyterians) due to internal struggles. Out of the American Baptist Convention came the General Association of Regular Baptists (GARB). Out of the United Methodist Church came the Evangelical Methodists.

THE SCHISMS THAT THE BIBLE PREDICTED WOULD OCCUR AS A RESULT OF THE APOSTASY, BEGAN TO OCCUR IN THE SEPARISTS MOVEMENTS OF THE 1930'S

Jude 1:17-¹⁷ But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; ¹⁸ How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. ¹⁹ These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. ²³

Ecumenical movements have characterized the 1940's to the present day. In 1948, the World Council of Churches was organized on two principles: *First*, the unity of all the Churches in the basis of liberal tenets; and *second*, the unity of all religions. In 1950, the old Federal Council of Churches was reorganized into the National Council of Churches, again attempting to unify all churches in the United States along liberal tenets. Consequently, the visible church is primarily apostate today. Even among conservative denominations, some can already see the threat of apostasy in the taking over of the schools and the supplying of liberal ministers for the pulpit. The Southern Baptist

²³ *Ibid*

Convention has not fully escaped this trend but in the decade of the ninety's there was a reversal.

The sixth mark of an apostate merits an entire section on its own, it is called The New Evangelicalism.

THE NEW EVANGELICALISM

Few movements of Satan in his fueling of apostasy are as destructive to fundamentalist Bible-believing churches as New Evangelicalism. People who are trying to be “with it” or up to date with “where Christianity is going” are confronted with it on every hand - through popular Christian radio and television preachers, at the local ecumenical bookstore, through members of other churches, through ecumenical evangelistic crusades, through political activity, and through interdenominational organizations such as Promise Keepers. The social good they seek to attain such as fighting abortion or same-sex marriage brings them together with Catholics, Mormons and others in their fight for social justice. Politics makes strange bedfellows. In the Bible we see the Pharisees making league with the Herodians for the sake of opposing Jesus (Mark 3:6; 12: 13). There is nothing new under the sun.

This is perhaps the most insidious of all the apostate's marks. It is characterized by catering to the desires of the people. Instead of being inculcated with God's Word and having our personal world view and behavior patterned after God's Word, The New Evangelicalism gives the people what they want. One NT passage clearly predicts this reversal of worship of God to worshipping man.

*Romans 1:25*²⁵ *Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.*²⁴

The idea with this new wave of apostasy is to soft sell the Bible and salvation. It is not attempting to save anybody from the fires of Hell but from an aimless and meaningless

²⁴ *Ibid*

life here on earth. Our experiences and quality of life here are more important than the total service to God and the blessed assurance that He will soon come to lift us out of this sinful decaying world. Salvation is given lip service and evangelism with real confrontation is thought to be too divisive. This apostasy does not want to upset anybody. There is never any mention of Hell, which is the outcome of an unsaved life. They may say that they believe strongly but their actions differ sharply from what they say. They want to flatter instead of present truth. The New Evangelicalism appeals to the carnal nature of man. Usually their Bible teaching is characterized by an over emphasis on application. This of course is the middle of the road approach. They avoid doctrine as too divisive. Paul warned us that the end times would be characterized as a departure from sound doctrine and a departure from the truth.

II Timothy 4:3-4 ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ⁴ And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables²⁵

Fearing divisiveness they believe that they will lose members of their congregation and therefore funds. They are concerned with money and man-made approaches to self-help. A total dependence on God for their resources is abandoned for “sound business” practices or “fundamental marketing techniques.” Total reliance on God by elders through prayer and patience is exchanged for parliamentary procedure and schemes for man made self-advancement and career goals. The pastor is considered as a CEO, not the teacher of God’s Word. Mission statements and strategic plans are formulated to accommodate personal plans. The Bible is subordinated to man’s desires.

The thought of prophecy is anathema to the New Evangelical for they say it causes division. This division of course is between those non-literal Bible expositors and the literal Biblical expositors. Some have characterized the New Evangelicalism as being seduced by the world spirit of this present age. It is evident in the leaders who are popularized. Usually they have a high degree of prominence in the government or sports

²⁵ *Ibid*

and their testimonies are sought after for paid speaking engagements and book endorsements.

You will never see a Sunday school teacher or poor inner city pastor held up by them as pillars of the faith. Christ went to the lowest members of society to bring the truth to the world. He did not go to the popular and prominent.

This is a spirit of disobedience and a mood of compromise. It is a rejection of many of the negative aspects of New Testament Christianity. It is an attitude of positivism. They would rather be diplomats not fighters, positive rather than militant, infiltrators rather than separatists. They would not be restricted by a separationist mentality. The New Evangelical would rather pursue dialog, intellectualism, and appeasement than Biblical Militantism. Psychology is fast becoming their guide. Some characteristics are in the following list:

1. A repudiation of separation.
2. Replacing separation with dialogue.
3. A love for positivism, by a repudiation of the more negative aspects (sin, Hell etc) of biblical Christianity, by a judge-not philosophy, by a dislike of doctrinal controversy.
4. Exalting love and unity above doctrine.
5. A pragmatic approach to the ministry.
6. A desire for intellectual respectability, by pride of scholarship.
7. An attitude of anti-fundamentalism.
8. The division of biblical truth into categories of important and not important.
9. Exalting social-political activity to the same level as the Great Commission.
10. A mood of softness, a desire for a less strict Christianity, weariness with fighting, and neutrality toward spiritual warfare.

THE USE OF SECULAR PSYCHOLOGY IS RAPIDLY BECOMING THE NORM IN CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES. Our culture has become deeply and extensively psychological. The weakness and carnality of the church in recent decades has allowed this psychological mind-set of the world to flow into the church. This process has brought

about a redefining of many foundational matters of the Christian faith. We used to correctly understand that man's problem was sin and God's remedy was His saving and transforming grace (Romans 5:12, 17). Now, the trouble is the disorder of codependency, and the solution is group therapy. Formerly, we understood that man tended to stray from God to follow his own self-willed path (Isaiah 53:6), and that he needed to deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Christ (Luke 9:23). Now, we think that man must esteem himself, affirm himself, and actualize himself. All of this new thinking is coming from psychological theory, which is primarily a philosophy of life. We are strongly warned in the word of the Lord not to be guided by the philosophy of the world.

*Colossians 2:8*⁸ *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*²⁶

One aspect of this movement is a wave of new music that has lyrics, which represent a lack of basic Bible doctrine. Most of the tunes themselves are not destructive but they have a repetition of limited lyrics. Of course there are some departures from this but the mainstream new evangelical music represents a lack of any solid doctrine.

Beware of the leaven of the new-evangelicals.

Fighting Back

There are several things real believers can do. First, we must separate from them. The Lord has commanded it. Separation is not an optional part of Christianity; it is a commandment (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 1 Tim. 6:5; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; 3:5; Titus 3:10; 2 John 7-11; Rev. 18:4). Separation is not mean or unloving; it is obedience to God. Look at what the following verses tell us to do:

“Mark them . . . avoid them” (Rom. 16:17)

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with” (2 Cor. 6:14)

“Have no fellowship with” (2 Cor. 6:14)

²⁶ *Ibid*

“Come out from among” (2 Cor. 6:17)

“Withdraw thyself” (1 Tim. 6:5)

“Shun” (2 Ti. 2:16)

“Purge oneself from” (2 Tim. 2:21)

“From such turn away” (2 Tim. 3:5)

“Reject” (Titus 3:10)

“Receive them not into your house neither bid them Godspeed” (2 Jn. 10)

We are to separate even from brethren who are walking in disobedience (2 Thess. 3:6). Separation is a wall of protection against spiritual danger. Failure to separate from error leaves one open to the influence of error (1 Cor. 15:33). The reason a shepherd separates the sheep from wolves is to protect them. Likewise, a faithful and godly Bible teacher will seek to separate his flock from spiritual dangers that are even more destructive than wolves. The Doctor of souls will do all he can to keep heresies out of the church. They are to the Church of Jesus Christ what disease is to a Medical Doctor that cares for human bodies in time and space. Both legitimate Doctors will do all they can to prevent or stop heresies, or “diseases” in their respective bodies. Unfortunately there are more quacks in the spiritual realm than in the physical temporal one. *This is because the prize for pure spiritual truth is eternal life. It is the greatest prize on earth to receive. Nothing has greater value.* As evidence of this we see many false prophets, corrupt denominations and seminary teachings. As a result few find eternal salvation. Then Satan has accomplished one of his goals; the eternal destruction of human souls.

We must not abandon the teaching of doctrine. What the Bible says about doctrine is very clear:

We are saved by believing from the heart the right doctrine of the gospel (Rom. 6:17). This shows why we cannot accept someone as a genuine Christian if they are committed to a false gospel, such as Rome’s sacramental gospel.

We are to separate from those who teach false doctrine (Rom. 16:17).

We must be careful of every wind of false doctrine (Eph. 4:14).

No false doctrine is to be allowed (1 Tim. 1:3).

The preacher is to take heed to the doctrine (1 Tim. 4:16).

The Bible is given for doctrine (2 Tim. 3:16) and is to be preached with doctrine (2 Tim. 4:2).

The preacher must be able to use doctrine to edify and protect the church (Tit. 1:9).

We abide in Christ by sound doctrine (1 Jn. 2:24-27).

Application can be taught, and it needs to be taught, but after the doctrine is made clear in our hearts.

A third action is to study the Bible one book at a time, line by line. Themes confuse believers, and they never learn the whole counsel of God. Studying whole books give us God's perspective, not man's.

A final action should be the choosing of music that is scripturally accurate, and focusing on God, not man, or emotions.

CONCLUSION

The apostasy and its adherents are upon us. Learn what the Lord has to say about the apostasy and the "marks" of an apostate. Finally realize choices we have as real believers, and actions we can take to not be entrapped by the apostasy of the latter days.

1Peter 4:7 reminds us:

⁷ But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer²⁷

²⁷ *Ibid*