

## Apostasy – Various Religions, Cults

### Apostasy – Departing from the Truth

Apostasy means falling away, defecting, forsaking or departing from the faith **Apostasy** (see [2 Thess. 2:3-4](#)). Paul explained that there were certain events that would precede the introduction of the Antichrist. In particular, he warned that before the Antichrist could come on the scene, there would first have to be a great apostasy. The word apostasy comes from the Greek word apostasy which means, literally, “to defect, or to forsake the faith”. “Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed” (2 Thess. 2:3).

In this generation, we have set the standard for apostasy. There have always been heretical views of course, just as there have always been earthquakes, famines, and wars. But this generation has elevated it to an art form.

What would you think of an Episcopal bishop who loudly championed the views that:

1. The resurrection of Christ was not a real event but a legend.
2. There was no empty tomb, no angels, no appearances.
3. No reasonable person could believe in the literal interpretation of the Bible.
4. The virgin of a literal Bible, the virgin of annunciation, Bethlehem, and the manger “will have to go”.
5. The church should actively endorse and even celebrate homosexual behavior, as well as heterosexual liaisons outside of marriage.

John Shelby Spong, the Episcopal bishop of Newark NJ has enthusiastically promoted all of those heretical views in his many controversial books. He states that the first century ideas that shaped the New Testament are hopelessly outdated and provincial and must be discarded if Christianity is to survive in the modern world. A reviewer of this book wrote, “Oddly enough, Spong’s views do not seem particularly new. In fact, his views seem very much in keeping with the religious humanist variety of Unitarianism”. What is remarkable is not the beliefs themselves, but that an Episcopal bishop would be the one to embrace them.

**The Great Departing:** The apostle Paul predicted that a time would come when men and women would turn away from the faith and instead embrace heresy. He wrote this to the young Thessalonian church: “Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him,” “we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.” “Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs” (2 Thess. 2:1-3).

What he is saying is before the day of the Lord and the revelation of the man of sin, there will first be a “rebellion” or a “departing”. (Meaning “apostasy” which is a defection or departure from that which was given at the first). The plain meaning of this Prophecy is that before Christ returns, many who were entrusted with the truth will depart from it. (I understand this to mean those who are currently preaching the word will depart from the Word of God which was given us by the Holy Bible).

After the “catching away” of those in Christ (1 Thess. 4:17; Rapture), all who are truly in him will be gone. Conditions will be ripe for people, especially those who call themselves Christian but are not really such, to turn their backs on God in what they do as well as in what they already have in thought. Then their insincerity will demonstrate itself outwardly. This worldwide anti God movement will be so universal as to earn for itself a special designation: “the apostasy.”

Another biblical passage that speaks of departing is found in (2 Tim. 4:1-2). “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.” “For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. (1 Tim. 4:1-2).

In the seven churches (Rev. chapters 2 and 3), Laodicea, the final church in the series, illustrates what the church will be like just before the Rapture occurs. Here is what the Lord says about that apostate church.

“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!” “So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” “You say, “I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.” But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.” “I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see” (Rev. 3:15-18).

Does today’s church look and smell like the church at Laodicea? Tim LaHaye states that he believes the church at large today is in the same plight as those religionists described by Jesus (in Matthew).

Matthew 7:22-23 “Many will say to me on that day, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?” “Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!”

**The Drift Toward Apostasy:** The true church of Jesus Christ has always been plagued by apostasy, but nothing like the present. The bible makes it clear that doctrinal confusion will rise to a crescendo in the latter days, leading many to depart from the faith as they eagerly follow deceiving spirits and willingly adopt doctrines of demons. It has been well established that many of the false religions and cults of history have grown out of deceptions or apostate branches of Christianity.

Though the centuries whenever the church permitted theological error to creep in, God raised up reformers to call His people back to the foundational doctrines of Scripture. Or He raised up others who led movements to separate themselves according to the Scriptures; that is how many of our present denominations were formed.

In the middle of the nineteenth century certain individuals educated in Europe and influenced by German rationalism began teaching in denominational seminaries. The devil knew the best way to inject his apostate doctrine into the churches was to infiltrate the seminaries, indoctrinate young ministers, and send them into the churches to spread his false concepts across the land.

Tim LaHaye tells of a now deceased seminary professor that for more than 25 years occupied “the chair of Christian ethics” in what was the largest seminary in the nation. He helped to orient the thinking of thousands of present generation ministers. Several years ago, this man was identified under oath as a member of the Communist party. Is it any wonder that his denomination is the most radical and unbelieving in Christendom?

In some big denominations, local congregations have little to say about the calling of a minister, and power is centralized in the hands of a few. Under These conditions, aggressive apostates have gained much influence. Millions of members have faced the decision whether to stay in the denomination or pull out and start a new church. Most of those who have “stayed with the ship” have been unable to stop the continual drift toward apostasy.

**The Religions of the World Unite:** One world religion? However much we may agree with Pope Paul II on his stand against abortion, homosexuality, and other aspects of morality, we must oppose his promotion of unity among Christ denying religions of the world. In 1986 he convened a conference for 130 religious leaders of the world in Iccese, Italy, to “pray for world peace.” In attendance were Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Pantheists, the Dalai Lama, and a host of others who reject Jesus Christ. Who can they all pray to? They don’t agree on who or even what, God is or in whose name we should pray. Of one thing we are certain; You can’t reject or ignore God’s Son and still expect to have your prayers answered.

**Pantheists:** Most people also have a deep need to belong to a community, this is perhaps the main reason why people join or stick with religions they may privately doubt. The WPM (World Pantheist Movement) aims to provide a spiritual and social “home base” for people who love Nature and the Universe but do not believe in any supernatural entities. A home base that provides the community support of local groups, and facilitators to help celebrate natural weddings, funerals, and other special occasions in the style that people really want. A base where you can share your beliefs and your enthusiasm without fear of being ostracized or considered an outsider.

The idea that all religions point to the same god is blasphemy. So is the idea that there are many ways to God. Buddha, Mary, Gaia, Mohammed, and Christ are not in the same category. They do not all carry equal weight with the triune God of the Bible. Just one was God’s “only begotten Son,” and only He gives us access to God through prayer.

**How Close are We:** All it would take for the world's religions to unite under the leadership of Rome would be the Rapture of all true Christians. That would successfully strip the Catholic Church, the Orthodox church, liberal Protestantism, and the evangelical church of any true believers and would make religious unity without respect for doctrinal differences instantly possible.

What is interesting is that the only religious group not tolerated today is Bible believing Christians. They are seen as intolerant because they insist that "Jesus is the only way." Once we are removed by the Rapture, nothing on the religious horizon would impede the idolatrous worshipers of the world from uniting and becoming the Babylonian harlot that has for centuries been "drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Rev. 17:6). It is clear from Revelation that these idolatrous religionists will continue to hate Jesus Christ and His followers right into the Tribulation.

Based on John's prophecy of the rise of Babylon the Great and on the basis of the latest evidence of current events, I believe the stage is set for the resurrection of this great occultic religious system. Eastern culture has always been open to various forms of the occult, but now the West is also experiencing a great fascination with the black arts and dark religions. This truth really threw me for a jolt when I saw how prevalent the occult is in the lives of our children, our future leaders; says Hal Lindsey. But it's not just the kids. A whole generation which grew up in the 60's seems to have been brainwashed with an anti-biblical world view. Now even the Christian churches are being targeted for conversion by pagans.

A group called the Temple of Understanding, affiliated with the Gaia Institute and the UN Global Committee of Parliamentarians on Population Development, is behind a new push to inundate Christian churches with nature worshipping propaganda. The effort is organized under the auspices of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, which works with the U.S. Catholic Conference, the National Council of Churches, the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life and the Evangelical Environmental Network. The 5-million-dollar program, funded by Ted Turner and other liberal foundations, attempts to politicize 100 million Americans in 53,000 congregations.

"It is unmistakably clear that the new partnership is the brainchild of anti-Christian New Age pagans who promote an environmental religion known as Gaia," says Tom DeWeese, president of the American Policy Center. The partnership has sent to 53,000 congregations, including every Catholic parish and every Jewish synagogue in the nation, "education and action kits." The kits contain Sunday school and sermon resource material carefully planned to fit into the doctrine of the denomination targeted.

A pillar of the Temple of Understanding is a man named Maurice Strong, who was secretary general of the first UN Earth Summit, which called for 50% of the land in each of the 50 states to be turned into wilderness areas where no humans would be allowed to enter. Strong, a millionaire proponent of one world government, owns a ranch in Colorado where he has built a Babylonian sun god temple which serves as the center of New Age religious activities.

**Where is Everybody:** As you can well imagine, there will be considerable confusion following the Rapture of the Church, and it won't be confined to individual neighborhoods. Entire governments will be decimated as their best and the brightest join the Lord in the air. Those left behind will have to fend for themselves, without any moral compass to guide them. Nations will blame each other for using some secret weapon against them.

Others will point out the predictions of Nostradamus or find some sense in the argument that aliens came and took everybody away. There are certain New Age groups who have long held to the belief of a quantum leap in spiritual evolution. Here is an excerpt from one of the many New Age "explanations" for an event that defies explanation, apart from God.

1. "Expect much change to society, weather, yourself. This need not be negative, but exciting, leading to a new Galactic civilization by the year 2012.
2. "Time will seem to speed up (the Mayan calendar says we are moving beyond time and money).
3. "There will be an official announcement of contact with extraterrestrials in 1997-1998, probably from the US government.
4. "Earthquakes, eruptions will probably increase, but there will not be a massive rise in the water level. This is "Mother Earth" cleansing herself.
5. "There will be much jockeying for power over the next few years between the military, the secret government, New World Order, Illuminati, Vatican, and some extraterrestrials.
6. "The banking system will probably collapse (the Mayan calendar says we are going beyond time and money).
7. "The New World Order will attempt to be in power by 2003. This will probably be short lived. We may wake one day to the headline that the banking system has collapsed, we each have \$500.00 of credits, units in a central system and we must use a Smart card for all transactions.
8. "There is a possibility of a fake Second Coming (the return of Jesus Christ), staged by the negative Grey extraterrestrial. This could be an aerial hologram. This could be staged to divide us and distract us. The Second Coming is really within us.
9. "Some people will be "checking out" due to their inability to handle the new higher spiritual frequencies or energies coming to our planet. This will be their choice. (note: this is a blatant false prophecy designed to explain away the Rapture of the true Church).
10. "Expect newly born children to be intelligent, highly intuitive, and spiritual leaders.

"Use of the Mayan Calendar will become more widespread. It is a natural cycle calendar that stimulates synchronicity and telepathy. Use of the calendar in everyday life will help heal the

planet, break the vicious link between time and money and bring oneness and understanding to humanity.

The whole world was shocked in March 1997 by the story of the W.W. Higher Source cult when 39 Southern California members apparently committed suicide as part of their belief that they would leave their bodies and hook up with an alien spaceship trailing the Hale Bopp comet. Someone once said that when people stop believing in God, they start believing in anything. If ever there were a better illustration of that truism than the Higher Source cult, I can't think of what it is.

Even witchcraft, once a source of jokes in western culture, is getting new respectability in the New Age. Recently, witches won a court fight to use a non-denominational New Hampshire cathedral as a meeting place. The state human rights commission ruled that since the non-profit foundation that supervises the cathedral allowed a variety of religious groups to use the facility, it could not discriminate against witches. What goes on here? The answer is we are entering an age in which the ancient Babylonian religion will once again move front and center and reunify the whole world.

**Self-Serving Translations:** Here we must issue a word of caution. Unfortunately, some of the cults have tampered with the biblical text in order to promote their own peculiar doctrines. Obviously, any teachings that require an alteration of God's Word for their support are not authentic.

The Jehovah's Witnesses are an example. They deny so much biblical doctrine, including the deity of Christ and salvation by grace through faith, that they have found it necessary to produce their own New World Translation. It is not, however, a translation from the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, but a self-serving perversion, as a comparison with numerous other more widely accepted translations will quickly reveal. Their proprietary "Bible" was specifically designed to support their peculiar heresies.

The Catholic Douay Bible is another case in point. In its attempt to glorify Mary, it has long rendered this passage from Genesis as follows: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel". So Mary, not the Messiah, is presented as the one who will destroy Satan. (The marginal note says, "In art Mary is frequently pictured with her foot on the head of a serpent").

Note how close some of the drivel is to Bible prophecy. It was Hitler who said, "the best lie contains just enough truth to make it palatable."