

# Apostasy: The Deadly Danger of Walking Away (Part 3)

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 23 October 2023

Preacher: Tom Holland

[ 0 : 00 ] Music We've been looking in some detail at the phenomenon of apostasy! that are found in genuine believing churches.

! And this lesson this evening is actually part three of a three-part series on apostasy. As we finished our lesson last week, we came to our next topic concerning apostasy, namely the results of apostasy.

Let me read that to you in Hebrews 10, starting in verse 26. For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.

Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the one who is trampled underfoot, the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified and has outraged the spirit of grace?

For we know him who said, vengeance is mine, I will repay, and again, the Lord will judge his people. Another verse that every human should memorize.

[ 1 : 55 ] It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. As we examine the results of apostasy, we need to be mindful that there are probably many other results that we will not be looking at this evening.

But the first result that we're going to look at is huge. For the man or woman that enters into apostasy, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins.

I cannot understate the significance of this result. Neither are we going to be able to plumb its depths tonight or any night.

This touches all of God the Father, all of Christ the Son, and all of the Holy Spirit. It touches all of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

Pay heed to this, my brothers. When a person enters into apostasy, they abandon the cross. For the truly saved, the cross is the very instrument of our salvation.

[ 3 : 26 ] The cross is the only instrument by which we can be saved. The cross is where atonement occurred for our sins.

Apostates reject Christ as the atoning sacrifice for their sins. Apostates reject Christ as the propitiation for their sins.

What does that mean? Propitiation. The word propitiation means an appeasement or a satisfaction. On the cross, the payment for sins was made.

This action resulted in satisfying or appeasing or propitiating the wrath that God the Father had toward every sin of every person who now believes.

The very act of atonement secures in the true believer the restoration of fellowship between a holy God and the individuals who genuinely follow Jesus.

[ 4 : 48 ] But what does all this mean for the apostate? Having rejected Christ and His atoning work on the cross, there no longer exists a sacrifice that can atone for the apostate's sin.

They look elsewhere, but there's nowhere else to look. We learn this in our study of Hebrews chapter 9 and in verse 22.

Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. I was teaching that one time years ago and someone said, I have a problem with that passage.

I say, you need that, take that up with management. I'm just labor. And it died on the vine. Having rejected the shedding of Christ's perfect blood on the cross, the apostate now has nowhere to turn

for salvation.

Nowhere to turn for a relationship with the Lord. And He certainly cannot turn to the blood of, or the sacrifice of bulls or goats or turtle doves, such things like that.

[ 6 : 13 ] In fact, God says that He is sickened by those kind of sacrifices. The only sacrifice that can bring a person into a relationship with God is the sacrifice of Christ's blood on the cross in the new covenant.

Once that is rejected by the apostate and a person enters into apostasy, hope of salvation disappears.

It's forfeited. Those that reject the cross and say, I'm going to look for something different, or perhaps in their mind something better, lose the opportunity for salvation, and eternal life with Christ is gone.

Now it's not that they lost their salvation. They never had it. You think of Judas. He never was saved. And there are many examples in the Bible and in life of the apostates.

Now remember in our study, we are dealing with a congregation made up of Hebrew people. They're located somewhere outside of Israel. Greece has been suggested, but we don't know that for certain.

[ 7 : 34 ] And we're dealing with this congregation of Hebrew people. Some were now Christians. Babies at best, but they were Christians.

Others would become believers. Some would never believe. But the message to all three groups is that apart from Christ, everything that is worth anything is gone.

If you're apart from Christ. Besides which, the old and repeated sacrifices of Judaism were always ineffective.

They never saved anybody. And they would soon be stopped in 70 A.D. with the destruction of the temple. Christ's sacrifice was the only acceptable sacrifice, and it will be made only once.

Remember the words we studied earlier in chapter 10, and every priest, this is verse 11 and 12, and every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the sacrifices, and the Holy Spirit says, which can never take away sins, but when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.

[ 9 : 11 ] Position of power, authority, position actually of the great high priest. That's where he's at today. The only effective sacrifice has been made.

Past tense. It is never to be repeated. And to turn away from that sacrifice leaves no sacrifice.

It leaves only sin and the penalty for sin, which is eternal death. Conscious death. There's no such thing as soul sleep or annihilation, but it's eternal.

Apostasy brings greater judgment. All that is left is, in verse 27, chapter 10, a fearful expectation of judgment and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.

So that's the second result awaiting those who enter into apostasy. They flirted with Christ. They said, that sounds pretty good. I'm going to hang around a while. And then they depart.

[ 10 : 28 ] They depart. Apostasy brings greater judgment. There's an old saying, the greater the sin, the greater the judgment. It stands to reason that since apostasy is the worst sin, it will have the worst judgment.

Now, at this juncture in our lesson, let me remind everyone that apostate again is someone who's exposed to the truth concerning Christ, concerning His sacrifice on the cross.

They seem to embrace the truth unto salvation, but then for whatever reason walked away and rejected that cardinal teaching of the faith.

By walking away and looking for something different or better, they experience the worst possible judgment for eternity.

what kind of experience will that judgment be? Well, consider this. In Matthew chapter 8, verses 28 and 29, we read this. Talking about Jesus.

[ 11 : 37 ] And when He came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two possessed men met Him coming out of the tomb, so fierce that no one could pass that way.

And behold, they cried out. Now, we're going to learn these were the demons living inside these guys. Cried out, what have you to do with us, O Son of God?

Have you come here to torment us before the time? So in this familiar passage, we see Jesus confronting two demons, two demon-possessed men who lived in a cemetery.

You have to be demon-possessed to live in a cemetery. The demons recognized the Lord as the Son of God and wanted to know if He'd come to torment them before their final judgment. These demons were aware of the identity of Jesus. They referred to Him, O Son of God. They knew that they would one day face a terrible and eternal judgment filled with torment.

[ 12 : 55 ] And they also knew that the time of that torment had not yet arrived, but Jesus had the authority to bring it early if He wanted to. There is great irony here that demons know better than do professing Christians that God's judgment is coming and it will involve a fury of fire.

Now the judgment of demons is certain. So also is the judgment of apostates, those that have turned their backs on the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Matthew chapter 13, the Lord gives a frightening summation of what happens to unbelievers at the end of the age.

And He does so by explaining the parable of the fields. This is what He says in Matthew 13, verse 38 to 42. The field is the world and the good seed, that's the seed that was sown in that field, is the sons of the kingdom.

The weeds that come up are the sons of the evil one and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age and the reapers are angels.

[ 14 : 22 ] Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send His angels and they will gather out of His kingdom all causes of sin and all lawbreakers and throw them into the fiery furnace.

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. It's not a pretty picture. In the writings of the Apostle Paul, he gives a number of similar warnings concerning coming judgment.

we find this one in 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 verses 7 to 9. The Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might.

The Bible also speaks of degrees of sin and degrees of judgment. This is one concept that is difficult for us to wrap our hands around but the fact is that there are degrees of sin and of judgment.

[ 15 : 49 ] And while we may not fully understand that, it is nevertheless a truth taught in Scripture. Back to Hebrews chapter 10 verse 28 and 29.

Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severe a punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God and regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified and has insulted the Spirit of grace.

When the Lord Jesus stood before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, he told him that the one who delivered him over to Pilate or the ones were committing the greater sin.

Now, Pilate was a sinner and Judas was an apostate. Judas had received great light and he had far more evidence as to the identity of Jesus than Pilate ever dreamed of.

Both were sinners but Judas had far more guilt than did Pilate and he stood before a more severe judgment.

[ 17 : 17 ] Doesn't mean Pilate wasn't judged. He was. But Judas more so. And in the Gospels, Jesus made it clear that judgment like guilt is in proportion to sin.

12th chapter of Luke verse 47 and 48. 18. And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will will receive many lashes more severe punishment.

But the one who did not know it and committed deeds worthy of a flogging will receive but a few. From everyone who has been given much much will be required and to whom they have trusted much of him they will ask all the more.

I would have to say men we live in a time where we've received much. We've received much from the Lord and from the Gospel. Now the Old Testament is not as clear about punishment for offenders as is the New Testament.

Clearly sin was sin. Clearly those who committed sin face punishment. Every Jew lived in a measure of fear at the thought of breaking one of the Ten Commandments.

[ 18 : 47 ] They were abhorred at that thought. They even substituted names for God for fear they would blaspheme His name. They didn't want to commit blasphemy. Depending on a violation the

Jew could be put to death if it was serious enough.

that included murder and that included adultery. As hard and as harsh as this may sound it's really nothing compared to the person in our age that has heard the Gospel flirted with it for a time and yet ultimately rejects Christ and walks away.

I'm going to look for something better something different something not as demanding. Those are apostates and face an eternity in the Judas section of hell.

And the Bible clearly says they face a more severe punishment. How do we know who they are? Well they went out from us because they weren't one of us.

now we live in a world that tolerates and even glorifies sin but that doesn't include God.

[ 20 : 07 ] He neither tolerates it nor does he glorify it. One could argue that God is less tolerant with our age because we have received tremendous light.

there is a day fixed when God will judge all men and that is why repentance is an essential in our time and unfortunately little taught.

It just is not that much taught. We also need to deal with the rejection of God. In Hebrews 10 29 how much severe punishment do you think he will deserve who is trampled underfoot the Son of God and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified and has insulted the Spirit of grace.

Mark this down brothers. Apostates reject the Father. Apostates reject the Godhead. It is a conscious rejection of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

when we accept the Son, we are also accepting the Father. When a person rejects the Son, they are also rejecting the Father.

[ 21 : 27 ] It is impossible to reject the one and embrace the other. I've actually had people tell me, I believe in God, I just don't believe in Jesus. And then you try to explain it, well, you know, I've really got to go, I've got an appointment, I'm getting my hair done or my nails or something.

When people trample underfoot the Son, they are trampling underfoot the Father. Further, to reject the Son is to spurn the light that the Holy Spirit has given and therefore it is also a rejection of the Spirit.

I'd say that guy's in serious trouble. the phrase to trample underfoot means to have scorn toward someone or something.

It is a form of the word meaning to consider something as worthless. Can you imagine people that believe what Christ accomplished on the cross is worthless?

That the Father is worthless for sending his Son? I've heard people refer to the Father as a child abuser because he sent Jesus to the cross. You ever heard that? That's just like running your hands down a whiteboard.

[ 22 : 46 ] You younger guys, whiteboards, We used to call a black board. people walk by Christ and consider him worthless to their lives.

He could do nothing for them or so they think. It is a fearful thing to count as worthless the one person who offers eternal life to sinners.

So apostates reject the Father. They also reject the Son. The apostate considers his unclaimed the blood of Christ. It is declaring that the sacrifice at Calvary was worthless and has no impact on that person's life.

The apostate grows to despise the cross. He's rejecting the very blood that can save him. To the apostate, the blood of Christ is no different than anyone else's blood.

That which is of infinite value is considered as worthless. We used to have a young woman here. She later married one of our guys. And she became a Ferris, Charlie's wife.

[ 24 : 02 ] And before she was married, she was an accomplished pianist and organist. And she was a school teacher, so she only got paid nine months out of the year. She got a letter from, I'm not picking on the Methodists, but she got a letter from a Methodist church down in Norman saying, we understand you have the summer off, we'd like you to move down here, we'll put you in a nice apartment and you can play the piano for us at church.

And we'll pay you X number of dollars. Well, she needed the money for one thing, she likes to play. So she went down and she had to meet with the committee of seven Methodist women who were the music committee and they said, well here are the ground rules if you're going to do this.

We don't want any songs that talk about the fatherhood of God. We don't want any songs that talk about the sonship of Christ.

And we don't want any songs that ever mention blood. Other than that, you can play anything that you want. So I said, Penny, what did you do?

She said, every Sunday morning I opened with a Catholic mass. Just sound like classical music, you know, and she played that. And they said, that's the greatest music we've ever heard. But she got through the summer.

[ 25 : 30 ] To the apostate, the blood of Christ is no different than anyone else's blood. That which is of infinite value is considered worthless. And then apostates reject the Holy Spirit.

There is a pre-salvation work of redemptive grace whereby a person is brought to the threshold of repentance. Such a person has been energized by the Spirit of God.

He then insults the Holy Spirit by turning from Christ. This is a rejection of the gracious work of preparation done by the Spirit in the heart of the individual.

And once a person does that, he is entered into apostasy. Hebrews chapter 10 verse 31 and 32, for we know him who said, vengeance is mine, I will repay.

And again, the Lord will judge his people. it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The Word of God teaches that our Father is long suffering and patient.

[ 26 : 43 ] He loves people. He bestows grace, even on the wicked person. It rains on the just and the unjust. And we're supposed to get some tomorrow, by the way.

it is not God's will that any should perish. But how many people turn their backs on the grace offered?

When that happens, there's nothing left for God to do. All that remains is fearful judgment. Well, let's mention briefly the deterrence to apostasy.

We must be on guard from falling away from Christ. And falling into apostasy. Many would say that such a thing happening in their life would be impossible.

Those are probably the people at greatest risk. And we need to put this warning about apostasy in its proper context. This is the book of Hebrews.

[ 27 : 44 ] Many in this Jewish congregation were not yet saved. They'd not committed themselves to the Lord. They were seriously considering a return to the Old Testament style of Judaism after hearing the gospel of Christ in clearest terms.

To abandon such truth would be to enter into apostasy. Now, I've been at this church nearly 44 years. Some of you have been here longer.

There are people that were once connected to this church and they've slipped away. And I'm not talking about the guy that got mad because he couldn't drink beer, so he's a Methodist. I'm talking about the guys that have walked away from Christianity, walked away from Christ.

They were once connected and they've gone into apostasy. They risk not only eternal punishment, but also a more severe form of punishment.

So how do we keep ourselves from becoming apostates? How do we keep our spouses safe? How do we keep older children safe? Parents safe? One thing is to remember your suffering and your service.

[ 28 : 57 ] But remember the former days when after being enlightened you endured a great conflict of sufferings, partly by being made a public spectacle through the reproaches and tribulations and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.

for you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joy for the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

The people described here were members of the Hebrew church. Many were not yet believers, but due to their close proximity to real Christians, they had suffered reproaches and tribulations.

Now the world cannot differentiate between real Christians and those who are merely considering it. They look the same to the world. Believers suffer, but so do those who are considered believers.

Obviously the level of persecution when this passage was written had not yet driven the pretenders out of the church. They were still there. Being people considering the gospel, they had not yet rejected it totally, we could say that they were not yet ashamed of the gospel.

[ 30 : 17 ] Because of this they had been subjected to ridicule, persecution, their property had been seized. All this had occurred because they were associated with Christianity.

These are the people we studied earlier in chapter 6 that had been enlightened. They knew the basic truths concerning Christ. they were on their way to believing, but they never arrived.

Or had not arrived yet. Some would later believe. They are commanded here to remember. The word is much more expressive in the Greek language than in English.

It is more than simple recall. It means reconstruct in your mind the events that have led you to this point. review all the truth that you have thus far received.

By doing so, they were building a dam that could hold back the floodwaters of apostasy when it came. Looking ahead, they had a prospect of a better possession and an abiding one.

[ 31 : 29 ] They had given much up on their journey toward the new and better covenant, but since they were not yet genuine believers and safe with the indwelling spirit, they were still in danger of falling back into unbelief.

To do so would have been a permanent blow to them. So one way to prevent apostasy from happening is to look back. Look back.

Look how far you've come. Another way is to look forward. What do you look forward to? Well, your reward. Verse 35 and 36, Therefore do not throw away your confidence which has a great reward.

For you have need of endurance so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what was promised. We do know that there are great rewards awaiting believers.

The Spirit here says look forward to that time. Focus on that and do not drift into unbelief which leads to apostasy. to do this we need endurance to run the race.

[ 32 : 40 ] By securing endurance they would be able to do the will of God which they had not yet accomplished. If and when that happened they would receive what was promised eternal life.

And then finally in Hebrews 10 37-39 For yet a little while and the coming one will come and will not delay. But my righteous one shall live by faith and if he shrinks back my soul has no pleasure in him.

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Their suffering at this present time would not last forever.

For the true believer they never do. Now the Lord is coming back maybe this week. The Lord is coming back and when he does all will be made right.

Till then we are to live by faith for without faith we cannot please the Lord. This chapter 10 ends on a great note.

[ 33 : 54 ] Those whom the writer is addressing will have faith that they will preserve their souls.

And it's fitting that we end Hebrews chapter 10 tonight discussing faith because next time we're going to enter into a marvelous study appropriately named Hebrews chapter 11 because it comes after chapter 10 we're going to start on Hebrews chapter 11 and we refer to that as the faith chapter.

That's we're going to learn about great people of faith. What I call the hall of faith and it goes by a bunch of different names. And that's where we're going to pick it up next time. So until next time let's pray.

Gracious God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ we lift His name up to you Lord. There's no other name under heaven by which we can be saved. Lord if there's one man in here that's worried about his relationship with you I pray that he will settle that issue and a bunch of us in here to help him settle it but one thing I've learned over the years I've had people come to me and say I just I'm worried that I'm not a believer I'm worried that I'm an apostate.

People that are worried about it are not there yet. They don't care. They don't care. Lord may we be strong in our homes.

strong in our church strong in our faith and maybe be looking up for that upward call when the Lord Jesus comes back and takes his people home.

[ 35 : 52 ] We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

you