

# THE GREAT APOSTASY OF AMERICA

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**God's word tell us**, prior to the end of this age, a great apostasy was to emerge that would show to be irresponsible in the minds of men, women, an Christendom, which the Apostle Paul characterized as a falling away. The word "apostasy" means, 1). a standing away from; 2). in the sense of a falling away; 3). withdrawal; 4). or defection from the truth.

The Apostle Paul's listeners in 2 Thessalonians 2: 3 - 5, were afraid that the day of God's wrath had begun. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that you 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. 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; who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember you not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" The widespread forsaking of the truth, is devastating where the faith once delivered unto the saints is concerned. Reading from the New English Bible, listen to the rendering of God's spirit in Jude 3, where exhortation was inspired to state: "My friends, I was fully engaged in writing to you about our salvation which is yours no less than ours, when it became urgently necessary; to write at once and appeal to you to join the struggle in defense of the faith, the faith which God entrusted to His people once and for all. It is in danger from certain persons who have wormed their way in, the very men whom scripture long ago marked down for the doom they have incurred. They are the enemies of religion; they pervert the free favor of our God into licentiousness, disowning Jesus Christ, our only master and Lord."

Scott Powell, a senior fellow at "Discovery Institute" in Seattle, Washington, wrote in his article titled, "The Whirlwind is Already Here" said, "*The whirlwind is already here. To really grasp what's going on and Understand the sources of cultural transformation is to watch the Politics. Politics is after all downstream of the culture. Many older Americans hardly recognize the country of their childhood. The foundational institutions of American society—the family, the Educational institutions, manners and civility, respect for Law and Order, and merit based outcomes have been in concurrent decline.*"

Ideological forces have been subtly at work to transform society from within. They have been slowly and broadly working so as to be almost unnoticed. They knew it would be a gradual process of radicalization of the cultural institutions.

At this end time age, we find society's ignorant stiff necks, would need to be softened. Its political and economic foundation would be more easily undermined and restructured.

When looking back into God's history book, "the Bible," we find the Apostle Paul giving Timothy a description of conditions that will exist in the world prior to the Lord's of lord's coming. There will be a departure from the faith and heeding of seducing (misleading spirits) which would result in the acceptance of doctrines of devils during the same "last days" wherein the "falling away" would occur.

We are reminded and updated in 2 Tim.3:1-6, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to

parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts.”

America today, like the ancient “House of Israel,” thinks it has received its wealth and prosperity by themselves! They have become so proud of their blessings, they deceived themselves into thinking that they were the ones responsible for their blessings.

We are witnessing this same attitude in this nation of the United States of America today. America has forgot the One who is truly responsible, for its prosperous blessings.

Before God pours out His wrath on a nation, He patiently calls upon them to repent and warns them of impending judgment. The prophet Isaiah reports this judgment beginning in Isaiah chapter 5. There we read of 8 woes of sin which brings about the wrath of God: The first sin, is **the sin of injustice**: Isa 5: verse 7, “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the House of Israel, And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked **for justice**, But behold, oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry for Help” (NKJ). God expected to see a crop of justice, but instead He found oppression. He expected to find righteousness, but instead He heard cries of violence.

The second sin, in verse 8, he draws **a picture of greed**. Isa 5:8, “Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, Till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!” Here Isaiah was inspired to tell us, Covetous land owners will corner the real estate market till there is an acute shortage of houses and land leaving no place to live.

The third sinful woe Isaiah discovered, was **pleasure-seeking**. In verse 11-12, he said, “Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of His hands.” Isaiah is saying, they furnish great wine and lovely music at their grand wild parties, but they never think about the Lord or notice what God is offering them.

The fourth sin was **blasphemy**. We find in verses 18 - 19, Isaiah has a strong description here of that. “Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope: that say, let Him make speed, and hasten His work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!” Here these brazen liars are challenging God, even mocking the Holy One of Israel and daring the Lord to punish them. They say, “Hurry up and punish us, O Lord, we want to see what You can do!”

Looking at verse 20 – Isaiah points out the fifth sin: the shocking sin of **moral perversion**, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” Perhaps the worst of these sins here is what he said, “they say what is right is wrong and what is wrong is right; black is white and white is black; bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter.”

In the sixth woe – Isaiah lamented the sin of **intellectual pride** in verse 21, “Woe to those who are wise and shrewd in their own eyes **And prudent in their own sight.**” This is speaking about conceited men or women who cannot be told anything.

Next Isaiah identified the seventh sinful woe of **self-indulgence** in verse 22. “Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink.” In other words, woe to those who are heroes when it comes to drinking and boast about the liquor they can hold.

The final eighth sin Isaiah identified was **political corruption** verses 23, “Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!” They take bribes to pervert justice, letting the wicked go free while putting innocent men in jail. **Obviously they despised the word of God.**

Isaiah concluded his list with a summary of sins by identifying the fundamental reason for all of these sins. The fundamental reason is, they have thrown away the laws of God and **despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.**” That was the cause for all of Israel and Judah's sins.

The eight (8) sins again of Judah and Israel that Isaiah reported were: **1. injustice, 2. greed, 3. pleasure seeking, 4. blasphemy, 5. moral perversion, 6. intellectual pride, 7. self indulgence, 8. and political**

**corruption.** All of these Isaiah asserted were produced by contempt for the word of God.

Isaiah also reported that God's call to repentance were met with scoffing and mockery. Paraphrasing Isa 22:12-13, "The Lord God called you [speaking of Israel] to repent, to weep and mourn, to shave your heads in sorrow for your sins, and to wear clothes made of sackcloth to show your remorse. But instead, you sing, and you dance, and you play, and feast and drink. And you say, 'Let us eat, drink, and be merry; you say: 'What's the difference, for tomorrow we're going to die.'"

At a time when the Lord is calling them to repentance they live riotously and callously for this they will not be forgiven. Isaiah responded to this crass indifference with God's strong spiritual warning: Notice how Isaiah through God's eyes sees this in Isa 5: 24 - 25, "Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame consumes the chaff, so their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom will ascend like dust; because they have rejected the Law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore the anger of the Lord is aroused against His people; He has stretched out his hand against them and stricken them, and the hills trembled. Their carcasses were as refuse in the midst of the streets." These wicked men who have no respect for the word of God will be devoured like grass in a prairie fire.

God called a young priest named Jeremiah to preach the same thing, that had been requested of Isaiah. Notice in Jer 5:1, Jeremiah was told to perform a spiritual inventory of Jerusalem. This was sixty years after Isaiah's inventory, of looking at the sins of Judah.

When he reported back to God, he listed the same sins as Isaiah did, but he added three that Isaiah did not mention. The first was **immorality**. This, of course, had been hinted at in Isaiah's accusation of moral perversion. But, Jeremiah got specific. He declared that God had fed His people until they were full, but they thanked God by "committing adultery and lining up at the brothels. Jeremiah 5: 7- 8 reported, "They are well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for his neighbor's wife." Then Jeremiah mentioned the problem of **religious corruption** in verses 30 - 31, he said, "Horrible and shocking thing has happened in this land." The prophets give false prophecies, and the priests rule with an iron hand. Worse yet they said, "My people like it that way!" And finally, Jeremiah expresses, them having a **closed mind**. He declared the people are not listening when God speaks. "Their ears are closed, and they cannot hear. They scorn the word of God. They won't listen at all."

Jeremiah concluded his list with three fundamental, shocking summaries: 1. Their faces are harder than a rock. 2. They have a stubborn and rebellious heart. 3. And They do not know how to blush.

After hearing Jeremiah's warning report the Apostle John tells believers today, to strive to become an over comer! The Apostle John gave a final word of counsel in I John 4: 1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." The translation in the New English Bible, is to the point: "But do not trust any and every spirit, my friends; test the spirits, to see whether they are from God, for among those who have gone out into the world— there-are many prophets falsely inspired."

Our Lord Jesus, the Christ, gave specific information about the subtlety of the inroads of satanically motivated persons, who would come looking for God's followers as the end of the age drew near: Matt. 24: 24, "For there shall arise, false Christ's and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible they shall deceive [that is, cause to wander out of the Way] the very elect."

This is an explicit forewarning by our Lord which merits far greater attention than that is given to it who are those known as "false Christ's" and "false prophets?"

A false christ is a deceitful person and a prophet is an inspired speaker, one who gives; spiritual instruction, and the words "false prophet" are associated together.

In a specific Greek definition, he is a "pretended foreteller" or a "religious impostor." A false prophet may be a teacher as much as he is a foreteller. So those who teach error are false prophets. The designation need not be confined merely-to those called prophets.

In the scriptures anyone who instructs in spiritual matters, performs the work of a prophet; just as the word "disciple" refers to those who teach, and to the learners as well. An "Apostle" is one who is sent out on a mission, like a messenger or ambassador of the true gospel, God's good news, not counterfeiting the truth, that

which is false tends to mislead. The dictionary states that what is “false, in nearly all its senses, carries an implication of deceiving and of being deceived.”

In writing to the Corinthians, Paul expressed his deep concern for their spiritual welfare. Paul wrote in 2 Cor 11:3 suggest the possibility, of a very serious deviation from the way of truth: “But I fear, lest by any means; as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in Christ”

Paul warned new believers about being led astray by those who preach “another Jesus,”enticing them to-receive “another spirit” or “another gospel.” “For if he that cometh preaches another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if you receive another spirit, which you have not received, or **another gospel**, which you have not accepted, you might well bear with him” ((2 Cor.11:4). It is highly significant' that Paul mentioned “**another gospel.**” Paul referred to the purveyors' of impostures as not only “**false apostles,**” but as “deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.”

Paul informs us of that in 2 Cor. 11:13, “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the **apostles of Christ.**” Then Paul asserted: in 2 Cor.11:14. “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an-angel of light.” Paul's cautionary discourses are worthy of careful study.

Today, for since, we have arrived at nearing the end of the age, the call for alertness is more pressing than ever, because Satan knows, above all else, what is on the divine agenda. Rev. 12: 12 reveals, “**He [Satan] has but a short time**” Accordingly, it would be 'well' for all called of God to take Peter's advice in 1 Peter 5: 8, “Be sobers be vigilant; because your adversary the devil; as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: whom Resist steadfast in the faith.”

In order to be an “**Effective counterfeit teacher,**” a satanic doctrine, or a false personification of, any kind, it must so closely resemble that which is genuine, that there will be scarcely a hairs breadth of difference between them. To counterfeit or to transform means “to change the outward appearance.” Whether it is “deceitful workers” transforming themselves into seeming witnesses for Jesus, or Satan himself “Transformed into an angel of light,” the grave danger is that the disillusioning adornments sugarcoating the hidden error.

When given an atmosphere of spirituality can cause truth to be overcome through an appeal to the emotions. The latter are always in sharp contrast to the faculties of sound reason and good judgment.

In the Jerusalem Bible, Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 11:34, are effectively rendered wherein he cautioned believers **to watch out for** shams masquerading as spiritual truths. Paul explained: 2 Cor 11: 34, “Because any newcomer has only to proclaim a new Jesus, different from the one that we preached; or you have only to receive a new spirit, different from the one you have already received, or a new gospel, different from the one you have already accepted and you welcome it with open arms.”

Those who receive the “new spirit” find themselves no longer mentally or spiritually capable of accepting truth. Paul is saying, instead, they are embracing with open, - out stretched arms a counterfeit teaching that prompts them to give way to all sorts of unseemly conduct, luring them on toward the evil fruits of the ways of death. “There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Pro.14: 12).

Perhaps the most deadly of modern satanic devices is the supernatural trickery that persuades men and women to follow “another jesus” or “a new jesus,” which is in actuality a counterfeit jesus. A fraudulent impersonation of our Lord Jesus the Christ.

An extreme instance of this was reported by Paul. He urged the followers of the Lord to “beware of evil workers” (Phil. 3: 2).

The Apostle Peter added his words of admonition: in 2 Peter 3:17-18, “You therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before, Beware lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness, But grow in grace, and in the-knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Many generations ago the prophet Amos uttered a prophecy that looked into the far future: “Behold, the days come saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.”

This is a description of Christians in spiritual confusion, spiritually wasting away, because of their

starvation diet, where the knowledge - of the-truth of the word of the Lord is concerned. Solomon stated in Proverbs 29: 18, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

Yet our Lord Jesus Christ declared, what the function of the Holy Spirit would be throughout the Christian era in John 16: 13, “When it, the spirit of truth; is come, it will guide you into all Truth.” The truth includes the gospel of the kingdom, concerning which it was foretold: Matt. 24:14. “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the World for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

The proclamation of the gospel [good news] of the kingdom of God involves a recognition of the identity of the Israel of God in the world. Today—the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic and kindred peoples and a thorough review of the Commandments, Statutes and Judgments of the law of the Lord must underlie the return to National righteousness.

The final chapter of the book of Acts attests to Paul's devotion to his apostolic task, expounding the scriptures. We are told in Act 28: 23, ‘And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.’

Under the constant tutelage of the Holy Spirit, the closing verses states in Acts 28: 30 - 31, “And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house; and received all that came unto him; preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.”

We need to emulate Paul in acquiring full knowledge of the gospel of the kingdom of God on earth, as Peter exhorts us. All of us need “be ready at any time to give a quiet and reverent answer to any man who wants a reason for the hope that we have within us.” We read I Peter 3: 15, in the Phillips trans.) which states: “Testifying to the truth of the whole scriptures whenever and wherever an opportunity affords itself to do so!” ☞

James Russell