

## DROWNING IN APOSTASY

*Tom's Perspectives*

by Thomas Ice

*Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*  
—Jude 3–4

I will never forget what one of my church history professors told us one day in class in the late 1970s at Dallas Seminary. He said something like the following: Those of us who will follow Christ and His Word, as opposed to the rising emphasis upon religious experience, will increasingly become a smaller group until one day we will be on the outside of the American Evangelical Church looking in. My reaction to my prof was, “No, things will never get that bad within Evangelicalism.” Well, my prof was certainly right. I believe that just such a day has arrived! Like Jude, I would have loved to write about our common salvation, but the times are pressing in on biblical believers. We must contend earnestly for the faith!

### NEW TESTAMENT APOSTASY

The English word “apostasy” is a transliteration of the Greek noun *apostasia* and is made up of two smaller Greek words, which are *apo* and *istemi*. *Apo* means “from or away from,” while *istemi* means, “to stand.” Thus, taken together, the compound word has the idea of “to stand away from,” “depart from,” or “departure.” The verbal form *aphistemi* is used in 1 Timothy 4:1 and means, “to cause someone to move from a reference point, go away, withdraw.”<sup>1</sup> “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith . . .” (1 Tim. 4:1a). Apostasy, as used in this article means to depart from the faith of biblical Christianity. In other words, to no longer believe what the Bible teaches about anything.

The following is a list of the seven major passages that deal with the last days for the church: 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:3-4; James 5:1-8; 2 Peter 2:1-22; 3:3-6; Jude 1-25. Every one of these passages emphasizes over and over again that the great characteristic of the final time of the church will be that of *apostasy*. The New Testament pictures the condition within the professing church at the end of the age by a system of denials.

- Denial of **GOD**—Luke 17:26; 2 Timothy 3:4-5
- Denial of **CHRIST**—1 John 2:18; 4:3; 2 Peter 2:6
- Denial of **CHRIST'S RETURN**—2 Peter 3:3-4
- Denial of **THE FAITH**—1 Timothy 4:1-2; Jude 3
- Denial of **SOUND DOCTRINE**—2 Timothy 4:3-4
- Denial of **THE SEPARATED LIFE**—2 Timothy 3:1-7
- Denial of **CHRISTIAN LIBERTY**—1 Timothy 4:3-4
- Denial of **MORALS**—2 Timothy 3:1-8,13; Jude 18

- Denial of AUTHORITY—2 Timothy 3:4<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder and first president of Dallas Theological Seminary, in an extremely insightful statement characterized the last days for the church in the following way:

A very extensive body of Scripture bears on the last days for the Church. Reference is to a restricted time at the very end of, and yet wholly within, the present age. Though this brief period immediately precedes the great tribulation and in some measure is a preparation for it, these two times of apostasy and confusion—though incomparable in history—are wholly separate the one from the other. Those Scriptures which set forth the last days for the Church give no consideration to political or world conditions but are confined to the Church itself. These Scriptures picture men as departing from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1-2). There will be a manifestation of characteristics which belong to unregenerate men, though it is under the profession of "a form of godliness" (cf. 2 Tim. 3:1-5). The indication is that, having denied the power of the blood of Christ (cf. 2 Tim. 3:5 with Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:23-24; 2 Tim. 4:2-4), the leaders in these forms of righteousness will be unregenerate men from whom nothing more spiritual than this could proceed (cf. 1 Cor. 2:14).<sup>3</sup>

As can be observed from the above characterizations, apostasy occurs in two basic areas: 1) doctrinal defection from the Bible, and 2) immoral or ungodly behavior. The clear course of the last days for the church consists of constant warnings to the believer, especially to pastors and leaders, to be on guard within the flock against doctrinal defection, commonly known as apostasy. Such a characteristic provides for the believer today a clear sign that we are in the last days of the church age.

#### CHRISTIANITY OR HINDUISM?

Caryl Matrisciana in her new video series exposing the new emerging Christianity entitled: *Wide is the Gate* says at the beginning of her presentation, "There are really only two basic worldviews. The Eastern mysticism of Hinduism . . . and the biblical worldview."<sup>4</sup> I have long realized this myself when I learned in the 1970s that Hinduism was the polar-opposite of true biblical Christianity. Thus, any time one moves away from the Bible and its teachings by necessity one has to move in the direction of Hinduism and mysticism. My belief has been verified and strengthened over the years as we have seen metaphysical mysticism increasingly come into the Evangelical church during the last 40 years.

I was amazed to read a similar view back in the early 1890s by a pastor who had developed the same belief, but wrote of it in the late 1800s. Samuel J. Andrews wrote a book entitled *Christianity and Anti-Christianity in Their Final Conflict*.<sup>5</sup> Andrews believes that the polar-opposite of biblical Christianity is what he calls pantheism and the church of his day was moving in that direction. Pantheism, which means that everything is god, is an excellent single term description of Hinduism.

Andrews noted that there are three stages in the history of ideas. "First, their origin the minds of individual thinkers, . . . Secondly, their popularization and general diffusion. . . . Thirdly, when generally diffused, these ideas find their embodiment in laws and institutions."<sup>6</sup> Andrews believed that the nineteenth century in which he

lived was the second stage of transition to Pantheism, which means that we are clearly in the third and final stage of transition.

When I look at the final form of the apostasy, which will occur during the seven-year tribulation in which the antichrist will be dominate, it appears to be a false system along the line of pantheism. There will be false signs and wonders that will be the basis upon which the False Prophet supports the Beast or the antichrist as noted in Revelation 13:13–15. This is reiterated in 2 Thessalonians 2:9 when speaking of the man of lawlessness, “the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders.” This will be the mysticism and magic of Satan himself. This deceptive apex is said to occur because unbelievers in the tribulation “did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved” (2 Thess. 2:10). One other passage of note in 2 Thessalonians 2 is verse 7 that tells us that “the mystery of lawlessness is already at work” during the current church age preparing the world for the entrance of the antichrist who is currently being restrained from making a full appearance until after the rapture.

### CONCLUSION

Such preparation explains why we are seeing all the world’s false religions and belief systems increasingly unite against Bible believing Christians. This is where the world is headed. Either one is for Christ or he will be against him. No middle ground.

The common denominator for all anti-Christians is human experience set against God’s revelation. Since biblical Christianity is rooted and grounded in the fact that Second Person of the Trinity became a man and entered history in order that He might die for man’s sin as a substitutionary sacrifice in order to provide salvation to those who believe, it is important for unbelievers to shift focus away from the God-Man to human experience. Biblical Christianity has to be stripped of the historical facts of Scripture like creation, the fall, the flood, the call of Abram, the exodus, the conquest, the Temple, the incarnation, the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, as well as His second coming. In its place is the self-discovery through some religious discipline of the inner self. Nothing more than human experience.

Human experience rather than God’s revelation is the common denominator that links all false religions and philosophies into a common bond. This is why the products of humanistic thinking is being brought into our Evangelical church through items such as psychology and psychotherapy, self-development, quietness and meditation exercises, Yoga, social justice, heath foods, and all kinds of metaphysical approaches that replace a biblical doctrine of holiness and sanctification. The gospel is taking a backseat to social programs and “do-goodism” since these metaphysical approaches seek to reform mankind instead of recognizing our sin and need for the Saviour. These kinds of trends being spearheaded by the emerging church within Evangelicalism are not making the gospel more relevant to the culture instead it is leading the way to hell by making the church no different than the world. It is also setting the stage for accepting the antichrist. Maranatha!

### ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> W. F. Arndt, F. W. Danker, F. W. Gingrich, & Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 158.

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<sup>2</sup>Taken from J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things To Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), p. 155.

<sup>3</sup>Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 8 Vols. (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), vol. IV, p. 375.

<sup>4</sup>Caryl Matrisciana, *Wide is the Gate: The Emerging New Christianity*, Vol. 1 (Menifee, CA: Caryl Productions, 2011), @ the 4 minute mark of the DVD.

<sup>5</sup>Samuel J. Andrews, *Christianity and Anti-Christianity in Their Final Conflict* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1898).

<sup>6</sup>Andrews, *Christianity and Anti-Christianity*, p. 201.