

The Truth Concerning Apostasy

Hebrews 10: 26-29

There can be little doubt that we live in a day unlike any other. The moral climate of our day continues to deteriorate at an alarming pace. These are difficult times and yet it seems most of the people we meet profess to be a Christian. Most folks claim some affiliation with the church and almost everybody plans on going to heaven when they die.

If there are so many “Christians,” then why is our world in the shape it’s in? Why is there no longer a moral standard, while society continues down a path of destruction? I think the answer is clear; there are many professors, but few possessors. Many claim to be saved, but in reality they have never accepted Christ as their personal Savior. These are those who can live as they please and pretend all is well between them and God.

In reality these are apostates, those who have abandoned their faith and the principles of the gospel. These have heard the truth and even know the truth, but choose to walk away from truth. John MacArthur had this to say concerning this passage, *“This chapter could be titled, ‘The Tragedy of Getting over It,’ because it deals with those who had heard the gospel, had come face-to-face with the claims of Christ, had been associated to some extent with His church, but had gone away. These were people whose hearts had been warmed toward the gospel of Christ, who had made a superficial commitment of faith in Him, and had identified themselves visibly with the true church. But their enthusiasm was cooling and the cost of being a Christian was becoming too high. They were ‘getting over’ the gospel, and were in danger of becoming apostate.”*ⁱ

I want to consider the [truths](#) revealed concerning apostasy as we think on the thought: [The Truth Concerning Apostasy](#).

I. The Withdrawal of Apostasy (26) – We have already defined apostasy as the act of abandoning the faith and principles of the gospel. It represents those who have withdrawn themselves from truth. Apostasy is sin and must be dealt with. We discover it is:

A. Discernable Sin – [For if we sin willfully](#). It stands to reason if there is willful sin, then there must be an awareness of that sin. One must know the difference and choose to engage in that sin. The sin of apostasy is not a sin of ignorance or omission; it is a willful act of disobedience to God.

- The previous verses, [vv.22-25](#), give us a description of those things that the apostate abandons. **1) Drawing Near to God**. Many today willfully walk away from the Lord instead of drawing nigh to Him. **2) Sanctified Living** – [Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience](#). **3)**

Holding Fast the Faith – Those who abandon their faith and waver for the favor of the world. **4) Exhorting the Brethren** – Failing to love and encourage fellow believers; putting selfish desires above that of the church. **5) The Assembly and Worship with the saints** – An apostate has no desire for the church.

B. Deliberate Sin – [For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of truth.](#) This paints the picture of one who has heard the truth of the gospel and even agreed with its truth, and yet make the choice to willfully sin in spite of that truth. The word [willful](#) in the text has the idea of “*voluntarily sinning of one’s own accord.*” It pictures sin that was committed with a clear conscience of the wrong being committed. These know their sin is contrary to the gospel and yet they continue in that sin.

- Many want to lay the blame at the feet of Satan, but often folks sin because they choose to do so. They desire to satisfy the lust of the flesh and deliberately commit sin. Many times Satan doesn’t have to do a thing because folks are more than willing to do it themselves.

C. Dangerous Sin – [There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.](#) Clearly this verse is dealing with the danger of refusing to embrace the truth of God’s Word. It is a refusal to accept the finished work of Christ. It is denying the saving power of the blood of Christ. It is choosing to stand accountable for one’s sin rather than having that sin cleansed by the blood of Christ.

- This verse is in no way implying that the blood of Christ is insufficient to cleanse the apostate heart. If he sees the error of his way and turns to Christ, then God will be faithful to forgive. The only sin that will not be forgiven is the sin of blasphemy, rejecting the call of God in salvation. But, for the apostate who refuses to look to God, he is guilty of blasphemy. He has heard the truth and maybe even agreed with truth, but made a conscious decision to reject that truth. If one rejects the sacrifice Jesus made upon the cross, there remains no more sacrifice for sins. The cleansing blood of Christ is the only way to be forgiven of sin and restored to God. To reject the Lord’s atonement is to reject the only means of salvation!

II. The Warning of Apostasy (27) – When one rejects the tender mercies and loving sacrifice of Christ, judgment is all that remains. Here we find a detailed description of the judgment that awaits those who reject Christ.

A. Fearful Judgment (27) – [There is no more sacrifice for sins,](#) ^[27] [but a certain fearful looking for of judgment.](#) The word [judgment](#) is a judicial term regarding a just separation and condemnation of

the guilty. It brings to mind a courtroom setting with God being the judge and the lost the condemned.

- This will not be a happy time for the condemned, those who must stand before God accountable for their sin. They refused the sacrifice of Jesus that atones for all sin, and now they stand before God and must bear His wrath for sin at the Great White Throne Judgment. There will be no plea bargains or reprieve, just the wrath of a holy God poured out on sin.

B. Fiery Judgment (27) – This verse speaks of **fiery indignation**. We all know the meaning of fiery. It reveals just what it says. The word **indignation** has the idea of “*passionate zeal in pursuing or defending.*” The fire reveals the intensity of God’s wrath as it is poured out on those who denied His Son. Those who rejected the Lord will face the wrath of God as He defends the honor and sacrifice of the Son.

- This is judgment no man would want to face. God is holy and cannot look upon or embrace sin. He judged the sins of this world in His Son as He hung there upon the cross. During that time, the wrath of God was poured out upon Christ. Jesus bore the wrath of God in our place. He endured the penalty for our sin! We cannot imagine the fierceness of God’s wrath upon those who have rejected His sacrifice. The fiery wrath of God will result in a fiery, eternal death in hell.

C. Final Judgment (27) – **which shall devour the adversaries**. This refers to those who refused the Lord and His sacrifice. The apostates and all who reject the mercy of God will be devoured by His wrath. There will be no escape and no hope of a second chance. Those who go out to meet God unprepared will face Him in all His fury.

- **John 3:36 – He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.** Jesus spoke of the Day of Judgment when the sheep would be separated on His right hand and the goats on His left. **Mat.25:41 – Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.**
- The judgment of God is sure for those who reject Christ and it will be eternal. There will never be a moment of joy in hell. There will never be an end to the suffering and pain. It will be an eternal day of separation and misery. For the apostate this will be especially difficult, because they heard the truth but made the choice to reject it!

III. The Witness of Apostasy (29) – Man will not be condemned without a witness. As God the mighty judge sits upon the throne to pass judgment, the charges will be read. These verses reveal the witness against the apostates.

A. The Reproach (29a) – *Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy.* This speaks of those who attended the house of God and played church. It deals with those who professed Christ, but lived a life of sin, those who brought reproach to the name of Christ.

- You would have to agree that churches are filled with those who attend on Sunday morning, but if you were to hear them on Monday, you would have no idea they attended the house of God. These profess to be a Christian, but live no differently than the world. It is no wonder folks are skeptical of the church in our day. Many in the world live better than folks who attend the house of God on a regular basis. If you are unsaved and are simply playing games at the foot of the cross, God will judge you for being a reproach to Jesus' name.

B. The Rejection (29b) – *who hath trodden under foot the Son of God.* In Jesus' day this was the worst insult imaginable, for one to raise his foot against another. In much of the Arab world it remains that way today. Do you remember the people of Iraq beating the statue of Sadaam with their shoes?

- This speaks of those who have rejected and denied the Son of God. Many sit on a pew week after week, hearing the Gospel, and yet they are untouched. There is no regard for the sacrifice that was made or the mercy that is offered. These are characteristics of the apostate and stand in danger of judgment.

C. The Resentment (29c) – *and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing.* This refers to those who have belittled and mocked the blood that was shed for our salvation. They refuse to accept that Jesus is the only way of redemption. They are trusting in their own merit and refuse to accept that they need anything from God.

- There are churches and movements built on this ungodly doctrine. Many refuse to accept there is only one way to heaven. Jesus paid the ultimate sacrifice for mankind's redemption and for anyone to deny that is to mock and belittle the very plan and holiness of God.

D. The Rebellion (29d) – *and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?* The apostate chooses his own path. He goes his own way with no regard for the things of God. He does contrary to the will

of God for his life. He has the attitude that it is his life and he will live it as he chooses and no one will stand in his way.

- It is dangerous to live life in willful disobedience to God and His will. Many today are living as they please, but one day they will meet God face to face and give account of their lives. You can choose to rebel against the Spirit, but you could rebel for the last time. God could remove His Spirit from you and leave you to your sinful ways. Without the drawing of God it is impossible for man to be saved.

Conclusion: I don't want to leave you without hope. If you have never received Christ, you can. Maybe you have heard the truth, but up until now, you have rejected it. Jesus died for you as well. He wants you to come to Him in salvation. You can be forgiven of sin and restored unto God. Notice [vv.12-17](#).

Has God spoken to your heart? Do you know Christ as your personal Savior? Maybe you have been living a lie and just need to come to Jesus. Whatever the need is, would you come?

ⁱ The MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Hebrews.