

The Christian in a Lost World: Guarding Against Apostasy

*“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect”
(Matthew 24:24).*

It is clearly evident that the vast majority of people in the world are lost and on their way to hell. A very optimistic guess might put the total number of Born Again Christians at about 5% of the world's population. It is little wonder then if Christians, constantly being assaulted with the philosophies of the world, lose sight of the truths of God's Word. We must zealously guard “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

I. Biblical Warnings of Apostasy in the Last Days

*“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”
(2 Thessalonians 2:3).*

There is a popular belief among many churchmen that the world is in the midst of the greatest revival of true Christianity of all time. This idea however, stands in stark contrast to the testimony of the scriptures regarding “these last times” (Hebrews 1:2; 1 Peter 1:20). The scriptures state emphatically that apostasy will characterize our Church Age.

The fact that people believe they are seeing such a revival is really an indication of how far the apostasy foretold in the scriptures has gone. These churchmen are willing to call almost anything true Christianity in the interest of fostering unity and brotherly love.

The Bible, on the other hand, plainly states that believers enter in at the “strait” gate and “few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13–14).

A. Ecumenism

“And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? . . . And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:4, 8).

One of the platforms on which the final Antichrist, the beast of Rev. 13, will build his worldwide kingdom will be a single, all-encompassing religion. His mentor, Satan, wants very much to be worshiped as God is worshiped. To that end, Satan is even now fostering a movement to bring all the world's religions into one fold. The Roman Catholic pope has been actively meeting with leaders of other religions and declaring them all to be valid paths to salvation. Lines of demarcation and distinction are being broken down to allow them to come together in worship of a generalized “deity.”

Many voices in the Protestant movement have been calling for a return to the fold of “mother Rome.” Organizations such as the World Council of Churches have been calling all “Christians” to come together under one banner. The Ecumenical Movement is well planned, well funded, and very advanced.

The above mentioned forces are calling upon Christians to lay aside their differences. They are urging them to give up the very doctrines over which they were separated in the first place. These are biblically mandated doctrines which millions gave their very lives to protect. It was against just such pressures that the Apostle Jude gave this admonition:

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”
(Jude 3.)

Acts 20:28–31; 2 Peter 2:20–22

B. Departure from faith

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Timothy 4:1).

The Bible warns us that in the latter times some will depart from the faith and lead others into sin and error. These will be very dangerous people because they will appear to be godly men and will command the respect of the world at large. Their message will sound very appealing and very logical but it will not be scriptural. That is why we must know why we believe what we believe. We must also put forth the effort to test everything we hear against the scriptures.

1 Timothy 4:1–3; 2 Timothy 3:13; 4:3–4; 2 Peter 2:1

II. Forms of Apostasy

The last days apostasy has been well planned for centuries by a very clever adversary. Satan knows our weaknesses and has set up many methods by which he may trip the unwary Christian and render him ineffective in the battle for the souls of men.

A. TV Religion

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not” (2 Peter 2:1–3).

Sadly, one of the most powerful tools ever invented for reaching large numbers of people with a message has been employed by more enemies of our Lord than true servants. Television is too rarely used to present the true gospel and too often abused by religious hucksters operating ‘get rich quick’ schemes. These men and women take advantage of both the people of God and those desperately in need of the free gift of salvation.

*Luke 13:23–28; Acts 20:28–31; Romans 16:17–18;
Philippians 3:18–19*

B. Philosophies of the world

“I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8).

Many denominational elements within the established church have compromised their doctrinal stands in order to entertain the currently popular philosophies of the world. Many times these philosophies stand in stark contrast to the position found in the Bible. Rather than putting on the shield of faith (Ephesians 6:16), these churches “ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward” (Jude 11) in order to lure people to themselves rather than draw them to Christ.

1. Evolution

There is a dirty little secret about the theory of evolution that is rarely mentioned by the liberal establishment that controls our schools and our media. That secret is that there has never, ever been one shred of scientific proof produced to verify the theory. Its leading scientific proponents have repeatedly admitted that the theory has no basis in fact whatsoever. It is simply the only alternative that anybody has found to offer against a belief in a creator—God to whom all His creation is responsible. Belief in evolution, for those who study it, is the ultimate act of rebellion against God. They have made up their mind that they will not have Him. Christian author Dave Hunt, in a recent issue of his newsletter “The Berean Call” (P.O. Box 7019 Bend, OR 97708), had these comments on the issue:

Any possibility that intelligent life on earth or anywhere else evolved by chance can be quickly dismissed. Eminent British astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle points out that “even if the whole universe consisted of organic soup” from which life is made, the chance of producing the basic enzymes of life by random processes without intelligent direction would be approximately one in 10 with 40,000 zeros after it. (Mathematicians will tell you that this is the same as a zero possibility.)

Hoyle then explains why this completely impossible theory is still honored, and accuses the evolutionists of self-interest, unfair pressure, and dishonesty:

“This [mathematical impossibility] is well known to geneticists and yet nobody seems to blow the whistle decisively on the theory . . . because of its grip on the educational system. . . . You either have to believe the concepts, or you will be branded a heretic.”

In *Chance and Necessity*, Nobelist molecular biologist Jacques Monod gives a dozen or more reasons why evolution could not occur. For example, the essential characteristic of DNA is its perfect replication of itself. Evolution could only occur through a DNA failure, and it is absurd to imagine evolving even a single cell, much less the human brain, from a series of random and harmful mistakes in the DNA. Yet, after giving many reasons why life could not develop by chance, Monod concludes that it must have.

Monod has no valid reason for his “faith.” He simply refuses to accept divine creation. British Museum of Natural History senior paleontologist Colin Patterson declares:

Evolutionists, like creationists . . . are nothing more than believers themselves. I had been working on this stuff [evolution] for more than twenty years, and there was not one thing I knew about it. Its quite a shock to learn that one can be so misled for so long.

Evolution is an impoverished, morally bankrupt system designed by the enemy of all righteousness (Acts 13:10) to provide an alternative to belief in God. We need not view this system as a proof that the Bible is not true.

Romans 1:22–25

2. Pop or “Christian” psychology

Psychology has swept through the Church in recent years. Many pastors are either referring their people to psychologists or getting training in psychological counseling themselves. They reason that if a psychologist is a “christian psychologist” then he will counsel from a biblical perspective. However, psychology is not based on the Bible. It is based on the teachings of men who openly expressed either hatred for God or total agnosticism. Some of them were openly into encounters with the biblically forbidden spirit world. Christian psychologists must elevate the teachings of these men (Freud, Jung, Rogers, et. al.) to a level at least equal in authority to the Bible. The result is a totally unworkable, impossible system based on two belief systems as different as night and day.

In their book *The Seduction of Christianity*, co-authors T. A. McMahon and Dave Hunt expressed this very well in the following quotes:

The idea of man's innate goodness—of the innocent child that still resides within us all—is the cornerstone of psychology. Under that sponsorship, evangelical tradition is being replaced by a new humanistic view of man, which ridicules as “worm theology” the former emphasis upon conviction of sin, repentance, and humanity's unworthiness.

The new gospel of self-esteem has even been embraced by earnest Christian leaders with effective ministries (p. 192).

One thing is certain, however: The Bible never urges self-acceptance, self-love, self-assertion, self-confidence, self-esteem, self-forgiveness, nor any of the other selfisms that are so popular today. The answer to depression is not to accept self, but to turn from self to Christ (p. 195).

Not only is it the clear teaching of the Bible, but even non-Christians know in their hearts that the besetting sin of humanity is pride. We all tend by nature to think too highly of ourselves. That long-established biblical truth, however, has lately been discovered to be in error. Enlightened by psychology, pastors and Christian leaders are now proclaiming that the besetting sin of the human race is not pride after all, but humility. We don't think too highly of ourselves, but too poorly. We all have a bad self-image, or low self-esteem, from which nothing but psychotherapeutic rituals, which have been Christianized for the church, can rescue us (p. 198).

The authors go on to explode the myth that we think too lowly of ourselves citing Ephesians 5:29 which says:

*“For no man ever yet bated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church”
(Ephesians 5:29).*

Of course, there are many who express varying degrees of self-hatred. That they don't actually hate themselves can easily be seen. The person who says, "I'm so ugly, I hate myself!" doesn't hate himself at all, or he would be glad that he was ugly. It is because he loves himself that he is upset with his appearance and the way people respond to him. The person who grovels in depression and says he hates himself for having wasted his life would actually be glad that he had wasted his life if he really hated himself. In fact, he is unhappy about having wasted his life because he loves himself. . . . So it is with the person who takes his own life. Most of these tragic people consider suicide to be an escape; but who helps someone he hates to escape? It is the ultimate act of self attempting to escape circumstances without considering anyone else (pp. 199–200).

If your pastor doesn't give sound biblical counseling, you may come away from such sessions worse off rather than being helped.

Romans 1:18–23; 2 Timothy 3:1–7, 12–13; Ephesians 4:17–19

C. Opposing religions

This current age of apostasy is possibly the most religious era in the history of man. New religions have been springing up at an amazing rate over the last hundred years or so. These have drawn in many an unwary soul. However, possibly the most dangerous of all is the appearance of age-old religions repackaged with modern day terminology. The words have changed but they are still mired in old-fashioned satanic worship. As Hunt and McMahon have written:

Christianity may well be facing the greatest challenge in its history: a series of powerful and growing seductions that are subtly changing biblical interpretations and undermining the faith of millions of people. Most Christians are scarcely aware of what is happening, and much less do they understand the issues involved (p. 11).

1. The New Age

The New Age is one such religion. It is packaged in a large variety of forms. They are so varied that at least one may be found appealing by almost any searching soul. New Age religions are often founded on the concept that there are many paths to “God,” all of which are equally valid. The problem is that their god usually turns out to be themselves when you delve far enough into the system. The New Age often closely emulates Christianity but can be exposed when confronted with the Christian doctrine that there is only one way to salvation. It cannot accept the teaching of Jesus Christ where He said:

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

A New Age belief system may often be exposed by the discerning Christian because it has assimilated many recognizable “buzz words” and “catch phrases.” Although Christians may innocently and ignorantly use these terms, we recommend you proceed with caution if you find yourself involved with an organization where the following terminology is used reverently: self-esteem, holistic, New Age, Christian psychology, hypnotism, infinite potential (of the mind, etc.), higher consciousness, reincarnate, Positive Mental Attitude (PMA), ascended master, yoga, parapsychology, faith-seed offering, name-it-and-claim-it, positive thinking, possibility thinking, visualization, guided imagery, mind power, child within, god within, higher self, positive confession, and etc.

*1 Timothy 4:1–3; 2 Timothy 4:3–4; 1 John 2:19,22;
1 John 4:1–3*

2. The “establishment” churches

Another danger area is found within some long established Christian churches. Over the years, many churches have strayed far from the Lord God and His Word. They have compromised on so many issues so many times in order to accommodate differing views down through the years, that they have ceased to be true Christianity. Don’t be fooled by the name on the sign out front. “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20). These churches are very dangerous because they have a name that implies respectability in Christianity.

*Matthew 24:36–44, 48–51; 25:1–13; Luke 12:45–47; 1
Timothy 4:1–3; 2 Peter 3:3–7; Jude 5–19*

D. New Bible Versions

One of the most widely unrecognized forms of apostasy, and therefore one of the most insidious, in this age is found in the proliferation of new Bible versions. There are only two lines of Greek texts and all but one version follow the New Greek Text primarily established by two men named Westcott and Hort. These men were rank heretics in their doctrinal stands, unsaved by their own testimony, and dabblers in the occult and satanic rituals. They were successful, however, in infiltrating the ranks of the intellectuals of the church in their day. They were thus able to introduce a Greek text of the New Testament built from ancient, but inferior, manuscripts.

Only the King James Version has been faithful to the Greek text known as the Textus Receptus or received text. It is the only version that shows no evidence of tampering. We believe it is the ONLY reliable version of the Bible. If you have, or people in your acquaintance use, any other Bible versions you might find it very interesting to compare the following list of verses between them and the KJV which is also known as the Authorized Version. These verses are so worded that they change longstanding doctrines of the Church.

- Acts 8:37 baptismal regeneration is taught by removing this
 - Luke 2:33 exchanging Joseph for father attacks the
deity and virgin birth of Christ
 - Colossians 1:14 removes the blood of Christ
from the redemption process
 - Mark 3:5 vs. Matthew 5:22 by omitting “without a cause” Jesus would
appear to be a sinner. He was sinless!
 - 1 Peter 2:2 teaches salvation by works
 - 1 Timothy 3:16 attacks the deity of Christ
 - Mark 15:28 attacks the deity of Christ as the fulfillment of prophecy
 - Ephesians 3:9 “by Jesus Christ” is missing
 - Ephesians 3:14 “our Lord Jesus Christ” is missing
 - Romans 13:9 “false witness” is missing
- One final comparison you might look for is the copyright.

The Word of God—the KJV—is not copyrighted. All the other versions were written in hope of financial gain.

Proverbs 23:23; 2 Peter 2:3; 1 Timothy 6:3–5

III. The Rise of the Antichrist System

The Bible has warned us in Revelation chapter 13 that the entire world will be required to make worship of the beast their only religion. To accomplish this a false prophet will be raised up. This false prophet will, of necessity, have to be a man of immense religious prestige all over the world. In light of this it is interesting (and frightening) to watch as many Protestant churches have begun putting out feelers toward Rome, contemplating a return to the “mother” Church. At the same time, the pope has been meeting with the heads of all the other major religions of the world to discuss religious unity and points of common ground. This will bear close watching in the next few years. However, whether this scenario will produce the false prophet or not, it is certain that the right climate is being introduced to open the way for the one world religion of Antichrist (the beast).

Matthew 24:4–5; Mark 13:21–23; 1 John 2:18–19

IV. “Prove All Things, Hold Fast to that which is Good”

This quote, found in 1 Thessalonians 5:21, is good advice for the Christian who is determined to live righteously. You must, like the Berean Christians, search the scriptures daily to find whether the things you hear and see and read are true. There are more false prophets in the world today than ever before. You must not accept everything a man teaches just because he seems to be godly. Remember:

*“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves”
(Matthew 7:15).*

This may seem to be an impossible task when so many false prophets are highly educated and able to communicate so much more effectively than we are. But take hope in the following scriptures and know you can have confidence in your God to protect you if you will always ask Him to.

“In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight” (Luke 10:21).

James 1:5; John 14:16–17

