

“Apostates and Accountability”

Full blown apostates are hardened unbelievers who have known great spiritual privilege. It is because of great spiritual privilege that they are so very accountable. We note from Jude these examples....

1. They are in line with the example of those who knew first hand the great power of the Lord in the deliverance out of Egypt, but then turned back from God (v. 5).
2. They are like the angels who knew first hand of heaven, and then abandoned God (v. 6).
3. They are like the privileged Sodom and Gomorrah who knew of God’s great physical blessing, and yet rebelled (v. 7).
4. They are like Cain who had very privileged first hand revelation from God, but defiantly turned his back on it (v. 11).
5. They are like Balaam who was blessed with very special revelation, and yet abandoned it for a self agenda (v. 11).
6. They are like Korah who served in a very privileged role, and yet rebelled (v. 11).

The thing about apostates that makes them so very inexcusable is that they have had great light. They have had great opportunity, and yet with a high hand of rebellion, they have walked away from it.

It is similar to the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, which was so serious, because of the first hand evidence of the power of the Spirit working miracles through Jesus. There was no forgiveness for this level of rejection and blasphemy (cf. Mt. 12:31-32).

It is like Hebrews 6 & 10, as well as 2 Peter 2, where the accountability is so severe, because of the light they had experienced and then rejected.

Hebrews 6:4-6 (NKJV) 4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

Hebrews 10:26 (NKJV) For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

2 Peter 2:20-21 (NKJV)

20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.

21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.

This is the NATURE of apostasy. These are not those in deep dark Africa who have never heard. These heard. They knew full well, but then REJECTED. They rejected the clear light of God’s revelation. The more light, the more accountable. That is why apostasy is so very serious and why the writer of Hebrews so strongly warns those who are wavering – that if TODAY they hear God’s voice, not to HARDEN their hearts (cf. Heb. 3).

Jude writes concerning those who are no longer wavering. They are hardened apostates. They have thrown all caution to the wind and abandoned God with brazen boldness. And yet, they still mingle with God’s people. Therefore, Jude writes with PASSION. He is concerned because these wicked apostates have come into the context of the church family, where they are now exerting their influence.

Thot: Great spiritual privilege means great accountability!

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