

APOSTASY: SINNING WITH EYES WIDE OPEN

Apostasy comes from the Greek word ***apostasia*** meaning “to fall away”. It denotes a departure from the faith once professed indicating the person was never a true believer (cf. 1 Jn. 2:19). Apostates on one level know the truth but then abandon it. Full blown apostasy sins against “full blown” light for which there is no remedy. People are accountable for the light given and to whom much is given, much is required (cf. Lk. 12:48).

- 1) ***Balaam***. Balaam was a false prophet in the Old Testament. He wanted to curse Israel, but God wouldn’t allow it. The sovereignty of God over the false prophet is shown in the fact that some wonderful prophecies came through Balaam entirely in spite of himself. His own confession was that he was a man who hears the words of God, has knowledge of the Most High, sees the vision of the Almighty and “falls down, with eyes wide open” (Num. 24:4, 16). Yet Balaam is clearly depicted as a false prophet who while having knowledge of the truth never truly accepted it (cf. 2 Pet. 2:15-17; Jude 11; Rev. 2:14).
- 2) ***Judas***. Judas served in the role of “apostle”. He had first-hand knowledge of the truth seeing the light up close and in person like few others have ever known. Yet Jesus said of the betrayer that it would have been better for him “if he had not been born” (Mt. 26:24). He flagrantly sinned against the truth with his eyes wide open.
- 3) ***Blasphemy of the Spirit***. In Matthew 12 the religious leaders ascribed to Satan the miracles that Jesus did in the power of the Spirit. This sin against the light was so egregious that Jesus said, “the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.” (Mt. 12:31)
- 4) ***Hebrews 6 & 10***. Hebrews 6 describes those who have had intimate contact with God and the things of God and yet apostatize from it. The writer says for those who sin against this level of light it is impossible to renew them again to repentance. They have crossed the point of no return. But having dealt with this level of apostasy in Hebrews 6:4-8 the writer then in verse 9 says, “*But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.*”

The previous things in Hebrews 6 were not descriptive of those who had salvation, but rather of those who, while knowing intimately the things of God, forsake it and take the place of rejection “*since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God*” (Heb. 6:6).

In like manner in Hebrews 10, willful rejection of *“the knowledge of the truth”* puts one in the position of rejecting the only God-provided sacrifice for sins and facing *“a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.”* (Heb. 10:26-27). The gravity of the sin is stated as having *“trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace”*. (Heb. 10:29). Sinning against the light of God’s truth in such a flagrant manner amounts to full-blown apostasy against full-blown light.

5) 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.

“A man can slip into hell with his hand on the door-knob of heaven.” -Billy Sunday