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WARNINGS AGAINST APOSTASY (PART 1)

Hebrews 5:11-6:3

Introduction: Whatever Happened to Susan Pevensie?

I. What is Apostasy?

A. What an Apostate is Not:

- o An apostate is not just a non-Christian
- o An apostate is not just a struggling Christian

B. What an Apostate Is:

- o Someone who seemed to be a believer, was part of Christ's visible church, participated in the community of faith, and then later rejects Christ, turns away from sound teaching, and leaves the church.
- o Key point: Apostates are those who were once *inside* the church

C. Some Important Observations about Apostasy

- o It reminds us that there are people in the church who seem to be true believers but are not
 - "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord did we not prophesy in your name' ...then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me.'" (Matt 7:22)
 - Apostates are *not* people who "lost their salvation"—they never had it to begin with.
- o We cannot look at a person in the church and know they are (or will become) an apostate—that only becomes clear when they reject Christ and leave
 - When Jesus said one of his disciples would betray him, none suspected Judas! (Matt 26:20-22)
- o Everyone needs to heed the warnings against Apostasy
 - Don't say to yourself, "I don't need to listen to these warnings since I am true believer." No, many apostates thought they were true believers!



II. A Somber Warning: Spiritual Immaturity Can Lead to Apostasy (5:11-14)

***Author wants to give them the “solid food” about Christ’s priesthood but they are too immature to receive it—like spiritual “toddlers” who still drink milk*

- A. They didn’t listen: “you have become dull of hearing” (v.11)
 - o Author is saying audience’s lack of growth is not due to the subject being too hard, but due to their unwilling to listen and learn. They are “lazy” in their hearing!
- B. They were forgetful: “ you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the Oracles of God” (v.12)
 - o They don’t learn well and keep forgetting what they were taught
 - o They should’ve been teachers but were still students
- C. They were unskilled: “unskilled in the word of righteousness” (v.13)
 - o They did not know how to handle God’s Word
- D. They were undiscerning: they lacked “power of discernment...to distinguish good from evil” (v.14)
 - o They could not reliably tell the difference between right and wrong

***Big Point: Spiritual Immaturity is dangerous because it could be a first step toward apostasy*

III. A Hopeful Encouragement: Keep Striving towards Spiritual Growth (6:1-3)

- A. “Elementary doctrine” is an important foundation (v.1b-2)
 - o “repentance and faith”—understanding how one becomes a Christian
 - o “instructions about washings”—understanding baptism and entrance to church
 - o “resurrection of dead and eternal judgment”—understanding the second coming
- B. But, we must move past “elementary doctrine” toward maturity (v.1a, 3)
 - o Doesn’t mean we abandon basic doctrines of Christ, but that we build upon them
 - o In other words, we can’t just keep learning our A-B-C’s—eventually we have to begin writing words and sentences
 - o What can we be doing to move ourselves beyond the basics?



Discussion Groups

1. Do you know people in your life that apostasized? How'd that impact your own spiritual life?

2. Honestly appraise your spiritual maturity. In what ways are you still like a toddler and need to grow? In what ways do your areas of immaturity make you vulnerable to attack?

3. Talk about a plan for the coming year for spiritual growth. What are some concrete steps you can take to move beyond the A-B-C's of the Christian faith?

