

WARNINGS AGAINST APOSTASY (AGAIN)

Hebrews 10:26-31

Introduction: Who is the Most Famous Apostate?

I. What is an Apostate?

- A. Someone Who *Seemed* to Be a Believer (But Is Not)
 - o Apostates received “the knowledge of the truth” (v.26)
 - Refers to intellectual assent, but not true conversion
 - All apostates, at one point, *profess* faith
 - o Apostates were “sanctified” by “the blood of the covenant” (v.29)
 - Means they were part of God’s visible covenant community (the church)
 - Here, “sanctified” means they were *outwardly* affected/changed
- B. Someone Who Deliberately Embraces Sinful Behavior
 - o Apostates are people who routinely sin: “if we go on sinning” (v.26)
 - o Apostates are people who intentionally sin: “If we go on sinning deliberately” (v.26)
 - o **Apostates are not just people who commit sins (we all do that!), but people who are not fighting or resisting sin—they’ve embraced it
 - o **Thus, a sign of an apostate is someone who refuses to repent of their sin!
- C. Someone Who Spurns/Rejects Christ
 - o An apostate is one “who has spurned (*καταπατήσας*) the Son of God”
 - Means to “trample” or treat with disdain
 - An apostate mocks Christ, like those who crucified him
 - o Therefore, apostates are people who mock and ridicule what they once believed
- D. Key Clarification: Some Apostates Will Insist That They are Still Christians!
 - o Most apostates just admit they no longer believe



- o But many will claim to be Christians while embracing a life of sin or while affirming heretical doctrines

II. What Happens to Apostates?

A. Apostates Have No Sacrifice for Their Sins

- o Author has just shown how Christ is the one sacrifice that can actually take away sins.
- o But if a person rejects Jesus, then “there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins” (v.26)

B. Thus, Apostates Should Expect God’s Judgment

- o God is the Kind of God Who Judges Sin
 - “Vengeance is mine, I will repay” (v.30; Deut 32:35)
 - “The Lord will judge His people” (v.30; Deut 32:26)
- o This judgment is “a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries” (v.27)
 - OT Pattern of God judging with fire
 - Final punishment in hell will be by fire (Rev 14:10)
- o Key truth: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (v.31)

C. Moreover, Apostates Should Expect the Worst of God’s Judgment

- o Apostates are judged more severely: “How much worse punishment” (v.29)
- o Author makes argument from lesser to greater: if OT apostates received judgment, how much more would the NT apostates! (v.28-29)
 - Parable of Vineyard: Rejecting servants is bad, rejecting the Son is worse
 - Greater knowledge means greater accountability

D. Applications

- o Heed the warning!
 - Though true believers can’t lose their salvation, God uses warnings to help us persevere!
 - To avoid apostasy, return to prior passage: Guard your theology and stay in community
- o Rejoice in Christ—He took the judgment above for you



Discussion Groups

1. Do you have someone in your life who was an apostate? Are you comfortable sharing that story? Do you sense the tendency in your own heart to drift?

2. How can you tell the difference between a Christian struggling with sin and a Christian who might be headed toward apostasy? How does this passage help you know how to better help people caught in sin?

3. How does this passage help correct misconceptions about the difference between the God of the OT and the God of the NT? How does the rejection of God's holiness lead to so many other doctrinal errors?

