

Apostasy in the End Times

- ✓ **The NT warns there will be a falling away (*apostasia* – defection from the truth) prior to the 2nd Coming. 'Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed...' (2 Thes.2:3)**
- ✓ **How should we respond? Should we separate from all who do not agree with us on all points?**
- ✓ **Some think so, quoting verses like, 'And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues"' (Rev.18:4)**
- ✓ **To understand more let's look at another verse, also often used to call Christians to come out, 'Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach' (Heb.13:13)**

'Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them' (Heb.13:9)

There are a constant stream of various (many) and strange (foreign to the gospel; and what the apostles taught) doctrines

- ✓ **Meat and food laws have no spiritual value**
'...the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (Rom.14:17) '...food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse' (1 Cor.8:8) 'So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbath' (Col.2:16)
- ✓ **It is by grace, not legalism, that the heart is established (Tit.2:11-14). The more one departs from Christ the more he or she trusts in ceremonial and religious ordinances**

'We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat' (Heb.13:10)

- ✓ **Some offerings the priests alone were allowed to eat; not the offeror. In Christ, this is reversed**
- ✓ **If we have an altar here, we do not have one in heaven...high priest...sacrifice...etc.**
- ✓ **God meets His people at the altar 'And there I will meet with the children of Israel ...' (Ex.29:43)**
- ✓ **Our altar is the one we partake of 'Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?' (1 Cor.10:18)**

- ✓ **We partake of the blessings of the finished work of Christ.** *'Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him'* **(Jn.6:54-56)**

***This demarcation is emphasized by the terms
'inside the camp' and 'outside the camp'***

***'For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate'
(Heb.13:11-12)***

- ✓ **Everything unclean was taken outside the camp because God dwelt in its midst. Every dead body or dead animal, anyone with a bodily emission, lepers, Miriam, the filth, the condemned, cursed, scapegoat**

- ✓ To be inside the camp was to have a right and privilege to all the advantages of being in the commonwealth of Israel. To be outside the camp, even for a season, was to forfeit all those rights
- ✓ The blood of the sin offering animals was offered on the altar but their carcasses were taken outside the camp and burned there. This represented Jesus suffering outside the camp, numbered with transgressors, bearing our uncleanness and alienation. See 2 Cor.5:21
- ✓ He went there to sanctify us with His blood, i.e. by His death. To forgive and separate us from sin unto Himself

'Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come'
(Heb.13:13-14)

- ✓ **This isn't a call to separate from fellow-believers**
- ✓ **When Christians separate from one another it grieves the heart of the Lord**
- ✓ **All who believe in Jesus are saved and baptized into Christ's body**
- ✓ **'...the works of the flesh are ...dissensions, heresies...' Dissensions (*dichostasia* - to stand apart from, divide or separate from). 'Heresies' (*hairesis* - to allow particular beliefs to divide)**

- ✓ **There is one reason only for separating from other Christians and professing Christianity, as demonstrated by the Hebrews situation. That is, when Christ Himself has been rejected**
- ✓ **Jesus suffered outside the city of Jerusalem and Judaism, because inside that camp He was despised and rejected. To partake of Him the Hebrews had to leave that camp**
- ✓ **The emphasis is not on leaving the camp, but on going forth to Him. By going forth outside the camp unto Him we leave behind those who choose to remain inside the camp without Him**
- ✓ **This is what Paul did (Phil.3:4-10)**

Two illustrations of going outside the camp

1) Moses and the tent of meeting (Ex.33:1-11)

***While Moses was in the mount, Israel worshipped the golden calf. Blatant false worship**

***God told Moses to take Israel to Canaan. He would not go with them, lest He consume them**

***He said He would send His angel to go with them and He would deal with them from a distance. We can have angels giving us victories and be happy with this. But if God is not in our midst Canaan is of no use to us**

***The camp of Israel without God's presence?
Christianity without Christ?**

***The people mourned. They did value the presence of God more than His blessings**

***Moses interceded. God told him to pitch his tent far outside the camp. They were no longer a people with God in their midst**

***All who wanted God's presence had to leave the camp**

***It was a complete reversal. The camp was now unclean; God was outside. Where God is, is holy**

***Moses said, 'You ask me to take these people to the Promised Land, but You haven't told me who you will send with me.' God promised that His presence would go with him**

***Only this marks us out as the people of God – not prosperity, health, temporal blessings, etc.**

2) The Church of the Laodiceans

'Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne' (Rev.3:20-21). 'To the angel of the church of the Laodiceans,' 'Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea' (Col.4:16). It was not His church but theirs

****In spite of all its activity Christ was on the outside! Christless Christianity***

***The camp is any institution whose message is no longer Jesus**

***If we are faced with rejection because of this then we are to go outside the camp to Him. E.g. the Reformation. Mk.5:17**

***The call to go outside the camp was a call to the Hebrews to leave the OC; to leave a city that was crumbling for one that is eternal**

***The old securities the Jews were clinging to were about to crash. But those who leave the things which can be shaken have a continuing city**

***All man-made denominations and institutions can and will be shaken. So those who leave one only to establish another repeat the folly**

***The only reason to leave is to go forth unto Him**