

Study 3. The Signs Of Christ's Coming.

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| A <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Religious Signs. 2. Universal signs 3. Social Signs 4. Jewish Signs: (a) <i>Scattering and (b) Re-gathering</i> | B. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. History of Nations 2. Europe. 3. Rise of Antichrist 4. The Great Tribulation 5. Fall of Antichrist |
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Note: The following signs are not meant to be a chronology of events, or to be seen in consecutive order. They are all signs that our Lord said would be taking place just before His return. Whether some in combination, or some individually, the Christian needs to take notice.

Religious Signs. (mainly words for the Church:)

Mtt. 24. 40 – 42;) (v42) *Watch (for the signs) therefore, for you know not what hour your Lord will come.* (It will be the sudden, dramatic separation, that will take place when Christ comes for His Church.)

(a) There will be an absence of true faith:

Lk. 18. 8; *'When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth.?'*

1 Tim. 1. 4; *in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith.*

Depletion of true Christian faith will be evident:

There were less than four million Christians in 2011 than there were ten years earlier.

Although Christians still remain the largest group out of all religions in the U.K. – 32 . 2 million - only represents 50% of U.K. residents.

The 32.2 million in 2011 compares with 37.3 million in 2001.

The overall percentage of the fall of Christianity globally is quite dramatic.

However, on a brighter note, there are pockets of Christians in the world, where Christianity is remarkably increasing - especially in countries where there is persecution.

Fiona Bruce *Easter News Letter 2014:* "...Even now in countries where politicians are trying to suppress the message of the cross and resurrection, the growth in the number of Christians is rapid. E.G. In Iran where proclaiming Christ in public is effectively banned, there are reported to be over a million Christians who will be worshipping at Easter Time (2014). In N Korea where even owning a Bible risks the death penalty, hundreds of thousands faithfully hold to the teachings of Christ."

Note: Following deceiving spirits. Turning away from true faith is rarely instantaneous. It is mostly caused by neglecting the things that truly matter e.g. Neglect of fellowship - see Heb. 10. 25; *'Do not forsake the assembling of ourselves together ...'* Neglecting God's word – see Ps.119. v,11; *'Your word have I hid in my heart that I may not sin against you. v.105; God's word is a lamp to your feet and a light to your eyes..'* Neglecting prayer and harbouring jealousy, malice, pride, envy etc. can leave you open to evil thoughts, in turn loss of spiritual nourishment, leaving us weak and vulnerable and before long, back in the world, being seduced more and more by the enemy.

(b) There will be apostasy:

2 Thes. 2. 3; *'Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come except there be a *falling away first and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. (4) who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he as God sits in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God.'*

What is Apostasy? The word is translated from the Grk. *apostasía [ἀποστασία] The biblical Def. *Defection from the faith.* An act of unpardonable rebellion against God and His truth.

In classical Greek it is a technical term for *political revolt or defection.* The word *'falling away' means to stand apart from.

In the Septuagint it always relates to *rebellion against God.* (Josh 22. 22; 2 Chron. 29. 19;)

Its origin is instigated by Satan, the apostate dragon of Jb. 26. 13;

The sin of apostasy results in the abandonment of Christian Doctrine and conduct.

It is turning ones back upon the cross and trampling beneath one's feet the body and blood of Christ. (Heb. 10. 29;)(Heb. 12. 12 – 17; see example – Esau. vv16,17) *'...who for one morsel of food sold his birth-right. For you know that afterwards when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it with tears.'*

There are other instances in NT. where the word apostasia, is used. One is found in Ac. 21. 21, where Paul is maliciously accused of teaching the converted Jews to forsake the *Law of Moses.*

Apostasy is a continual danger to the Church. The NT contains severe warnings against it: eg.

Mtt 24. 9 – 10; 2 Thes. 2. 3; 1Tim 4. 1 – 3; Heb 3. 12; 6. 4 – 6; 10. 26 – 31; 12. 12 – 17; 2 Pt 3. 17;

(c) There will be a rise of false doctrine:

1 Tim. 4. 1 - 3; *'The Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons,'*

Some 'seducing spirits' and doctrines of demons are listed:

Forbidding to marry – believing that an unmarried person e.g. Hermits and Ascetics etc. (*in modern times called Monks, Nurs, and Priests*) were seen as much holier than a married person.

V3; Abstain from certain foods. (In context with the previous verses 1 and 2). The notion that the eating of meat on certain days should be refrained from, because by so doing one could better master the desires of the flesh.

The Colossian Church (read Col. ch. 2 and 3.) was also hampered by such inc. Gnosticism, asceticism, Syncretism, eroticism, mysticism, religion – Judaism, superstition and 'will worship' i.e. neglecting one's body - a self imposed religion of physical abuse; philosophy e.g. 'the *pleroma' - totality of divine powers or Universe.

Seducing spirits come in various ways some that lead to homosexuality, living in sin outside of marriage.

Sexual seduction, believing it to be of God, sexualisation of infants etc. Read Col. 2. (note *v 9;).

Modern problems facing the Church: churches and organisation that come under *lesbian* and *'gay churches'* using the name *'evangelical'* and *'Christian'*.

Such people, the scripture says *'have their consciences .. seared like with a hot iron.'* (1 Tim 4. v2).

On the doctrinal scene: Liberalism, Higher criticism, Jesus only, modernism; which are in some main line denominations. Not to speak of all the false cults that are around.

Please read and take note of Col 3, vv 1 – 4; then vv8 – 11; and then vv12 - 17;