

Examples of Apostasy

Some Christians deal with the passages concerning falling away by claiming they are hypothetical. "IF" a person **could** depart from God, he could not return. But, it makes no sense for God to constantly warn us against apostasy if it were not possible. These are not idle threats. The Word of God gives us examples of real people who departed from God through unbelief.

1 Tim 1:19-20

*19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some **having put away concerning faith** have made shipwreck: 20 Of whom is **Hymenaeus** and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*
(KJV)

Paul warned Timothy to guard his faith. He stated clearly that some had **abandoned their faith** and shipwrecked. Then he named two acquaintances, Hymenaeus and Alexander, who became apostates by blaspheming the Holy Spirit. In Second Timothy, written soon after, we find Hymenaeus is up to mischief.

2 Tim 2:16-18

*16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is **Hymenaeus** and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and **overthrow the faith of some.***

Apparently, Hymenaeus was not content to make shipwreck of his own faith. Now, we find him teaching false doctrine [eschatology] and thereby overthrowing the faith of others. It was common in the early Church for people to abandon the Apostle's doctrine in order to get their own following. Paul warned the Ephesian Elders of this very thing.

Acts 20:28-30

*28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. **Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.***

Paul knew both by revelation and experience that people like Hymenaeus would abandon Christ because of a lust for fame and power. Incidentally, did you notice what Hymenaeus was teaching? He was teaching false doctrine concerning eschatology. He taught that the resurrection was already past. False doctrine can lead people away from Christ and damage their faith. Others leave because they get their eyes off Christ and His Kingdom and on the sin of materialism.

2 Tim 4:10

*10 For Demas hath forsaken me, **having loved this present world**, and is departed unto Thessalonica; ...*

Paul warned Timothy extensively about the lure of materialism. Apparently, many believers had quit and become entangled in the lust for money.

1 Tim 6:10

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

This brings to mind the parable of the Sower. Remember, some fell among "thorns." Jesus said the "thorns" were the cares of this world and the love of money, which after the seed has sprouted, and begun to grow, they choke the Word, and the plant dies.

These examples of Christians whose faith failed because of a love of money or power demonstrate that the warnings in Scripture about falling away are real.