

The Final Stages of Israel's Apostasy
Lesson 1 – Israel's Historical Path to Apostasy
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Introduction: The Bible's warnings of apostasy are widely ignored.

A. What is apostasy? (**2 Thess 2:3**) – “falling away”

1. **ἀποστασία** – *a falling away, defection, apostasy*; in the Bible namely, from the true religion: Acts 21:21; 2 Thess. 2:3; (Josh. 22:22; 2 Chr. 29:19; 33:19); Jer. 2:19 - Thayer's Lexicon
2. **ἀποστασία** as a condition resulting from changing loyalties *revolt, desertion*; as a religious technical term; (1) *apostasy, rebellion* (2TH 2.3); (2) *defection, abandonment* (AC 21.21) - Freiberg Lexicon
3. A “Changing of loyalties” is a good description of the term. (**Jer 2:19**)

B. This is a falling away from God and a rejection of His character. (**Jer 2:11-13**)

I. God's Prophets gave great emphasis to warn of apostasy

A. From the very beginning of the nation Moses spoke plainly (**Deut 28**)

1. Moses repeatedly and with great detail spoke of the consequences of disobedience. (**Deut 28:15-24**)
2. Even before they had a king Moses spoke of a future captivity of God's people and their king. (**Deut 28:36-37**)
3. God wanted the nations to know and for us in the New Testament era to know. (**Deut 29:20-28; 1 Cor 10:11**)

B. God warned Israel through Solomon when the temple was built. (**2 Chron 6:36-40**)

1. Note the simplicity of how to avoid apostasy. Be humble, repent and pray and listen!
2. God wanted all their heart and soul if they wanted to be His people.
3. This involved a relationship with God where people knew His nature and sought His fellowship. Prayer was a good barometer of where their hearts were at.

II. Israel was influenced by the nations around them

A. Social pressure may be Satan's most effective tool. (**Lk 9:26**)

1. By serving God they were very different than the nations around them.
2. God gave Israel what they needed and not what they wanted.
3. Because of this Israel often was overtaken militarily by a better organized and better equipped foe from a worldly stand point.
4. These times of suffering were actually for their good so that they might have the one thing that the other nations did not have - a relationship with God!
5. During the time of the Judges we see that very thing happening. (**Judges 2:7-23**)

B. Even when they were faithful they did not establish a genuine faith in their children. (**Judges 2:10**)

1. Historians have commented on the 3rd generation effect upon the church.
2. One of the great weapons we have against apostasy is our homes!

C. The day came where Israel rejected God's wisdom for centralized power in a king.

1. Samuel's own failure in his home provided opportunity for Israel to request a king. **(1 Sam 8:4-5)**
2. God explained that it was a rejection of God Himself. **(1 Sam 8:7)**
3. Centralization and a trust in human wisdom and power is a prime element in all apostasy. God's ways will not work to them! **(Isa 55:10-11)**
4. The problem with centralization is that the nation will go in the direction of the choices of one man or a few men.

III. How the kings led Israel into Apostasy

- A. There were mostly bad kings in the history of God's people.
 1. Bad kings would set examples for the people.
 2. Saul needed to show the people how to trust God and not for Saul to bend to the whims of the people. **(1 Sam 15:20-23)**
 3. Even king David did things that weakened the people of God. **(2 Sam 12:14)**
- B. Solomon's sin led to a divided nation.
 1. All of the "reasoning" about strength in centralization was shown empty.
 2. Still, Jeroboam gave shallow reasoning to follow idols and the people followed without questions. **(1 Kings 12:28-30)**
 3. Jeroboam was like all of Israel's kings (Northern Kingdom) in that they hid their real agenda and motives from the people. **(1 Kings 12:25-27)**
 4. Jeroboam attached God's name to an idol and the people followed!
- C. The actions and steps that the kings took had a cumulative effect.
 1. Apostasy is likened to drifting. It takes time but small steps will cover a lot of space given time!
 2. This is why God has given a written revelation and on occasions prophets to Israel. The reception of the message depended on the hearts of the hearers.
 3. The people had learned to defer guilt and responsibility to their leaders. **(Jer 5:30-31, Mt 15:13)**
- D. Manasseh took Israel past the tipping point. **(2 Kgs 21:1-6, 9, 16)**
 1. He set up idols in the temple! Where was the protest from the people?
 2. He killed his own children in the worship of Idols.
 3. Isaiah was likely killed by Manasseh.
 4. Even though Manasseh later repented, he had established things in the heart of Israel that would continue to be handed down through generations.
 5. Years after Manasseh's death his evil influence resulted in Israel's captivity. **(Jer 15:1-4)**

Questions to consider:

1. Are we being constantly warned of apostasy? Why or why not? **(Acts 20:29-31)**
2. How can we be guilty of giving our responsibility to others (centralization)?
3. How can you tell when people are following religious leaders rather than God?
4. How can we build a faith in our children where they can stand in a day of apostasy?
5. Make a list of trends leading to an apostasy.