

Eternal Security ~ Part 4

Apostasy ~ Part 1

In my last post, we began to look at the concept of **Eternal Security**. We will be coming back to that topic throughout this series as we discuss other aspects of it. In this post, we will explore the issue of **Apostasy** in more detail. We will, also touch on the issue of **Backsliding**.

In Part 2 of this series, I provided a brief definition of **Apostasy**. The Greek word is *aphistēmi* which means to “depart, draw (fall) away, refrain, withdraw self or falling away.”

In the Brit Hadashah its usual meaning is that of a religious defection. *“The Spirit expressly states that in the acharit-hayamim [End Times] some people will apostatize from the faith by paying attention to deceiving spirits and things taught by demons”* ~ 1 Timothy 4:1. *“Watch out, brothers, so that there will not be in any one of you an evil heart lacking trust, which could lead you to apostatize from the living God!”* ~ Hebrews 3:12. This is called “apostasy from the faith:” a secession from the kehilah and a disowning of the name of Messiah. The grave nature of **Apostasy** is shown by such passages as:

“For if we deliberately continue to sin after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but only the terrifying prospect of Judgment, of raging fire that will consume the enemies. Someone who disregards the Torah of Moshe is put to death without mercy on the word of two or three witnesses. Think how much worse will be the punishment deserved by someone who has trampled underfoot the Son of God; who has treated as something common the blood of the covenant which made him holy; and who has insulted the Spirit, giver of God’s grace!” ~ Hebrews 10:26-29

“These people have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Bil'am Ben-B'or [Balaam son of Beor], who loved the wages of doing harm but was rebuked for his sin — a dumb beast of burden spoke out with a human voice and restrained the prophet's insanity! Waterless springs they are, mists driven by a gust of wind; for them has been reserved the blackest darkness. Mouthing grandiosities of nothingness, they play on the desires of the old nature, in order to seduce with debaucheries people who have just begun to escape from those whose way of life is wrong. They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption; for a person is slave to whatever has defeated him. Indeed, if they have once escaped the pollutions of the world through knowing our Lord and Deliverer, Yeshua the Messiah, and then have again become entangled and defeated by them, their latter condition has become worse than their former. It would have been better for them not to have known the Way of righteousness than, fully knowing, to turn from the holy command delivered to them.” ~ 2 Peter 2:15-21

Apostasy as the act of a professed Believer, who knowingly and deliberately rejects revealed truth regarding the deity of the Messiah (see 1 Yochanan 4:1-3) and redemption through His atoning sacrifice (see Philippians 3:18; 2 Kefa 2:1) is different from error, which may be the result of ignorance (see Acts 19:1-6), or heresy, which may be the result of falling into the snare of Satan (2 Timothy 2:25-26). Both error and heresy may accordingly be consistent with true faith. On the other hand, **Apostasy** departs from the faith but not from the outward profession of it (see 2 Timothy 3:5).

Apostasy, in the kehilah is irreversible and awaits judgment. *“To the angel of the Messianic Community in Laodicea, write: 'Here is the message from the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the Ruler of God's creation: 'I know what you are doing: you are neither cold nor hot. How I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth!'”* ~ Revelation 3:14-16. As I have stated before, my wife and I broke fellowship with the

Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States as we believed it was representative of the church at Laodicea.

BACKSLIDING ¹

In the Hebrew, the idea is of "turned, turned away, going back, or turned back." "**A backslider is filled up with his own ways, but a good person gets satisfaction from himself.**" ~ Proverbs 14:14. In the Brit Hadashah backsliding is set forth as involving a change of the believer's **state** before God but not of his **standing**. The former (**state**) is variable and depends upon daily contact with Yeshua, "**if we are walking in the light**" (1 John 1:7) and many other factors of the spiritual life. **Standing**, by contrast, refers to the Believer's position "**in Messiah**," which is grounded in the unchangeable and perfect work of Yeshua for the Believer, whereas **state** describes the changing and imperfect condition of his soul from moment to moment as affected by backsliding on the one hand or spiritual progress on the other. In short, on this side of eternity, we are all sinners and fall short of the Glory of God.

Continued faith in Yeshua secures your **standing**. "**But to as many as did receive Him, to those who put their trust² in His person and power, He gave the right to become children of God**" ~ Yochanan 1:12. "**So, since we have come to be considered righteous by God because of our trust, let us continue to have shalom with God through our Lord, Yeshua the Messiah. Also through him and on the ground of our trust, we have gained access to this grace in which we stand; so let us boast about the hope of experiencing God's glory**" ~ Romans 5:1-2. "**Praised be Adonai, Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, who in the Messiah has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heaven...so that we would bring him praise commensurate with the glory of the grace he gave us through the Beloved One**" ~ Ephesians 1:3,6. "**You were buried along with him by being immersed; and in union with him, you were also raised up along with him by God's faithfulness that worked when he raised Yeshua from the dead**" ~ Colossians 2:12.

Observance of all the laws of the spiritual life alone assures protection against backsliding. Compare 1 Corinthians 1:2-9 (**standing**) with 1 Corinthians 1:11, 3:1-4, 4:18, and 5:2 (**state**). Backsliding not only results in a changed state or experience but involves corrective chastening (see Hebrews 12:6; 1 Corinthians 11:31), loss of rewards and fellowship (see 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Yochanan 3:10), curtailment of usefulness, and in extreme cases physical death (see 1 Corinthians 5:5; 1 Yochanan 5:16) that "**his spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord.**"

In my next post, we will continue to unpack the topic of **Apostasy** by examining Hebrews 6:4-6.

¹ The New Unger's Bible Dictionary.

² Remember that the CJB frequently translates 'faith' as 'trust.'