

How to recognize an Apostate Church

A). Definition of Apostate

- 1). **Oxford dictionary**: says it is a person who renounces a religion or political belief or principles. Abandoning one's faith.
- 2). **Merriam-Webster**: says it is an act of refusing to continue to follow, obey or recognize a religious faith. Abandonment of a previous loyalty. Defection.

B). Authentic Church (Ecclesia/body of believers)

1). **How did Jesus choose His disciples?**

- Not from the learned Pharisees.
- Instead, He choose mostly uneducated fishermen, a tax collector, a zealot and a thief.

2). **How does Jesus describe His Church (Ecclesia)?**

- He compared it to the human body. He is the head, and the body is the church/ecclesia.

-Ephesians 1:22-23 "And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be **head** over all things to **His church**, which **is His body** the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

-Ephesians 5:23-25 "For the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is **the head** of the Church; and He is the **Savior of the body**..."

-1 Corinthians 12:27 "Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually."

-Matthew 28:18 "And Jesus came and spoke to them saying: "all authority has been given to me in **heaven** and **earth**." * And He gave His power to no one as He expressed in Matthew 20:25-26 which says:

-But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles (unbelievers) lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; (the believers) but whoever desires to become great among you; let him be your servant.

i). How does this scripture align with Matthew 16:16-19?

Other Scriptures defining Jesus as the Rock:

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 (read aloud)

Ephesians 2:20

1 Peter 2:4-8 (read aloud)

And there are 23 verses in the Old Testament referring to Jesus as the rock.

ii). So, if someone tries to exercise dominion or authority over Christians do they put themselves in the place of Christ, according to the scripture?

-1 Corinthians 7:23: "You were bought at price; do not become slaves of men."

-He called the Church His Bride in the following scriptures:

- Matthew 25:1-3
- Corinthians 11:2
- Ephesians 5:22-33
- Revelation 19:7-9
- Revelation 21:2

3). **Structure of the 1st Century Church**

-Every apostle was a disciple, but not every disciple was an apostle. A disciple is a believer and follower. An apostle is one who is sent.

-The apostles went to the people to spread the gospel. They did not build churches/Temples.

-New converts met in people's homes. This took place in Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia, Rome, Thessalonica, Philippi, Colosse, etc.

Original Church Hierarchy

Head – Jesus Christ

Body – Believers/Followers*

*Elders/teacher existed
but servant/advisor roles not
leaders as we think of them today

Modern Church Hierarchy

Catholic

Pope
Cardinals
Bishops
Archbishops
Priests
Deacons
Body of Believers

Protestant

Denomination Leadership
Ministers – Senior Pastor
-Assistant Pastors
Deacons
Elders
Body of Believers

C). **Origin of The Tabernacle/Temple system**

- 1). See Exodus 20:18-19 (read aloud)(This is also found in Deuteronomy 5:23-27)
- 2). Because the people did not want God speaking directly to them, He created the Tabernacle (meaning dwelling place) so that He could dwell with His people. The tabernacle was mobile so that the Israelites could take it on their journey in the desert. Once the tabernacle was completed, God descended on it in a cloud.
- 3). The Temple was built by Solomon as a permanent structure to replace the tabernacle. But it served the same purpose. (See video 1)

D). What became of the Tabernacle/Temple system?

- 1). Jesus cleansed the temple twice. 1st in the beginning of His earthly ministry:
John 2:14-16 (read aloud). It was at this time that He called Himself the Temple (see John 2:19.)
He cleansed the Temple the 2nd time in Matthew 21:12-13- “It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a “den of thieves.”
- 2). After Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, the bible tells us that the body of believers (His Church) is now the Temple:
-I Corinthians 3:16-17
-II Corinthians 6:16-18

E). How Jesus ended the old covenant Temple system

- 1). In John 14:16-17 He said: “And I will pray the Father and He will give you another Helper that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He **dwells** with you and will be in you.
- 2). The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-31)
This is the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise to send the Comforter/Holy Spirit which was final act that ended the Tabernacle/Temple system of the Old Testament.

F). Where did the Apostasy begin?

- 1). Matthew 23:8-9 Jesus said: “But you, do not be called Rabbi; for One is your teacher, the Christ and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.
- 2). Did man restore the Tabernacle/Temple system? If so, how?
-Consider the number of denominations
-Consider the number of churches in America and how their attendance is declining
- 3). How effective is the modern church in spreading the gospel and building God’s Kingdom?
-Consider the impact that the 501(c)3 has had on the ability to teach the truth of the bible
-Has the church become an institution/business?
- 4). Why can’t man be the head of Christ’s body of believers?
-Romans 3:10 says: “There is no one righteous, not even one.”

G). What will Apostasy lead to?

- 1). ***The great falling away:***
II Thessalonians 2:3 says- “Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

2). ***Abomination of Desolation:***

Matthew 24:15-16*- In the words of Jesus: “Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

*This scripture is also found in Mark 24:15-16, and Luke 21:20-21.

3). ***Red Heifer project*** (see video)

The Red Heifer in Numbers 19 was a foreshadow of Christ.

Hebrews 9:11-28

Epilogue

Hebrews 10:24-25 says: “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhort one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Homework:

Read Jeremiah Chapter 3