

# Apostasy: Prophesied and Realized

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## *Prophesied Apostasies and Realized*

1. Warnings of Jesus—Matthew 7:15-23
2. Warnings of Paul—Acts 20:28-32; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; 2 Tim. 4:1-4; 2 Thess. 2:1-12
3. In the church: Gal. 1:6-9; 5:1-4; 1 Cor. 1:10-15; 1 Jn. 4:1-3; Phil. 3:18, 19; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; Jude 4; 1 Cor. 15:12-19

## *Immediate Threats to NT Doctrine*

1. Judaic legalism—taught that the Law of Moses was the highest form of Law and must be kept by Christians (at least Jewish ones)
2. Gnosticism
  - a. A form of Dualism—the belief in two opposing yet equal forces or philosophies
    - i. Seen in pagan religious literature
    - ii. This was a merger of Christianity and Hellenistic thinking.
    - iii. Sprung up sometime toward the close of the first century.  
Generally, the spirit is good but matter is evil. This was a philosophy that would haunt the church for centuries.
  - b. The good deity (the Unknown Father) is remote and unapproachable except through secret knowledge.
  - c. God as found in the Old Testament is viewed as being the evil side and having initiated creation. Within the physical created by the evil deity is man, with a soul trapped inside. This soul is a “divine spark”—part of the good deity. The goal of the soul is to get back to the good deity with the help of special knowledge.
  - d. Marcion (80 AD- 159 AD) supposed that the God of the OT was not really evil, simply inferior, imperfect and oppressive as opposed to the true and supreme God, Jesus.
  - e. Implications of Gnosticism
    - i. Denies the sovereignty of God
    - ii. In Dualism, creation is always from something. In the Bible, it is from nothing
    - iii. Evil is a cause rather than a choice
2. Changes in Biblical Order
  - a. This began as early as 110 AD, when Ignatius of Antioch wrote, “Do ye all follow your bishop as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery as the apostles, and to the deacons pay respect?”
    - i. The NT teaches a plurality of elders/bishops, Acts 14:23; 15:4; 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1; Tit. 1:5-7

1. Some have suggested Diotrephes may have been one of the first to try this, 3 Jn. 9-10
- b. This unapproved view of Biblical order would blossom into something far from what God intended within time.

***Questions:***

1. What warnings were given by Christ concerning future apostasies?
2. What warnings were given by the apostle Paul?
3. What was the first immediate apostasy that threatened the early church?
4. What was Gnosticism?
5. What was one of the first apostasies to develop in the eldership? Why was this an apostasy?