

**I. Introduction and review.**

**II. Who is the apostate? v. 26**

- A. He has enjoyed great spiritual privileges. v. 26b 6:4-5**
1. He has a thorough knowledge of the truth. I Tim. 2:4 II Tim. 3:7
  2. He once made a confession of hope in Christ. 10:23 3:1
  3. He has experienced New Covenant blessing. v. 29 6:4-5
  4. Greater privilege brings greater responsibility. Luke 12:48
  5. It is possible to have much knowledge without saving faith.
  6. It is also possible to have had spiritual experiences without being saved.
- B. He continuously and willfully sins. 3:12-13**
1. Our author isn't speaking of just any sin.
    - a. Not post-baptismal sins. I Jo. 1:8-2:2
    - b. Not the ordinary Christian struggles with remaining sin. 4:15 5:2 Ro. 7:14f
    - c. Not even a really big sin.
    - d. Nor the rejection of the gospel. I Tim. 1:13,15
  2. He sins with a high hand in defiance of God. 3:7f Num. 15:30-31
  3. He sins habitually and unrepentantly. I Jo. 3:9-10 Jo. 3:19
  4. He blasphemously rejects Christ. v. 29
  5. His fall is closely tied to his abandoning the assembly. v. 25
- C. What situation is being envisioned?**
1. It is not that the apostate was truly saved, and then lost. Jo. 10:28f Ro. 8:29-39
  2. He once professed faith, but was never really a believer. I John 2:19 Mt. 7:23
  3. This is not merely a hypothetical warning.
  4. Those making a profession of faith who enjoy the privileges of the new covenant community need to watch themselves, lest they fall away. 4:1,11 10:23 II Co. 13:5
  5. Causes of apostasy include persecution, being led astray by false teaching, temptation, neglect of spiritual opportunity, etc. 2:3 10:25 Mt. 24:9-11 Luke 8:13
  6. There are many examples of apostasy in Scripture and in history. 3:10f  
Mark 4:1-20 14:21 John 19:11 Pr. 2:13f I Tim. 4:1f Mt. 24:10f
  7. If you acknowledge Christ and are troubled by your sins, you are not apostate.
  8. The bigger problem in our day is that professing believers don't take sin seriously.

**III. What is the consequence of apostasy? v. 26b- 27**

- A. There remains no sacrifice for forgiveness of the apostate. v. 26b Num. 15:30-31**
1. Because he has willfully rejected the sacrifice of Christ, there is no way for him to obtain forgiveness (access to God). 10:18,4 John 14:6
  2. He has hardened himself beyond repentance. 6:4-6 Rom. 1:18f
- B. He faces the fearful judgment reserved for God's enemies. v. 27 2:2-3 9:27 10:25**
1. All those who reject the atoning sacrifice of Christ can expect nothing but the terrifying fury of the fire of God's judgment. 12:29 Isa. 26:11 33:14 Zeph. 1
  2. God has shown beyond a doubt that He judges sin. Gen. 7:1f 19:24f Num. 16:35  
Mt. 10:28 25:41f Mark 9:43,46,48 Lu. 12:46 16:24 II Th. 1:7 Rev. 21:8 Ro. 1:32
- C. All sin is punished either through the damnation of the sinner or through the sacrifice of Christ.**

#### **IV. Why does the apostate deserve such an awful punishment? v. 28-29**

- A. Those who defied the Mosaic Covenant were executed. v. 28 Deut. 17:2-7 13:6-11**
- 1. What does it mean to set aside the law? Deut. 17:2-5 13:6-7 Jude 1:8 I Tim. 5:12**
  - 2. Those who rejected God's authority were stoned to death. Deut. 17:6-7 13:8-11**
  - 3. Our author is making an argument from the lesser to the greater. 2:1-4**
- B. The punishment of those who reject Christ, the High Priest of the New Covenant, will be much more severe. v. 29**
- 1. They trample the Son of God. 1:1-3 Mt. 7:6 5:13 Luke 8:5 Mark 14:61-64**
  - 2. They treat the blood of the New Covenant as common. 9:13-14,20 12:29 13:20 2;17 Ex. 24:8 Mt. 26:28 I Cor. 11:25**
  - 3. They have insulted the Spirit of grace. 2:4 9:14 6:4 Mt. 12:32 Mk. 3:29 Zec. 12:10**
- C. Those who contemptuously turn their back on the salvation secured by the priestly sacrifice of Christ will undergo the severest punishment. Mt. 11:20-24 12:41,47-48**
- D. Who is sanctified and in what sense?**

#### **V. How can we be sure the punishment of the apostate is certain? v. 30-31**

- A. God has promised in His Word that He will avenge Himself. Dt. 32:35-36 Ps. 135:14**
- 1. How can it be right for God to take revenge when it is wrong for us to do so? Rom. 12:19f 13:4**
  - 2. What comfort is there in the vengeance of God? Gen. 50:19 I Pe. 2:23**
- B. God's character is holy, just, and wrathful. v. 31 II Th. 1:6-9**
- 1. Those who are at enmity with God should fear (and repent). v. 31**
  - 2. Many in our day have a false and inadequate view of God.**
  - 3. God has repeatedly shown Himself to be just.**
  - 4. Don't deceive yourself by thinking that you have some special family status which will protect you from God's wrath. Amos 3:2 I Pe. 4:17 Ezek. 34:17 Rom. 9:6**
  - 5. It is a fearful thing for an enemy of God to experience His just wrath. Rev. 6:15-17**

#### **VI. Concluding applications: Heed God's gracious warning. 3:12 4:1,11**

##### **Discussion Questions:**

- 1. What is apostasy?**
- 2. Can one be saved simply by knowing the gospel? Explain.**
- 3. To what kind of sin is our author referring in verse 26?**
- 4. What examples of apostasy can be found in Scripture?**
- 5. What are the two consequences of apostasy?**
- 6. Can an apostate repent and believe? Explain.**
- 7. Why do apostates deserve such an awful punishment?**
- 8. Why will their punishment be worse than that of apostates under the Old Covenant?**
- 9. How can we know that God will judge the apostates?**

**Appendix: The meaning of the blood of the covenant by which He was sanctified in Heb. 10:29.**

**A. In what sense is *sanctified* used in verse 20?**

- 1. Arminians suggest that the apostate was actually set apart unto God by the blood of Christ and then lost his salvation. 10:14 3:14 John 10:27f Rom. 8**
- 2. Some (paedo-baptists) claim it refers to his being externally and covenantally set apart unto God through baptism or external church membership. I Co. 7:14**
  - a. This would be in parallel to the Old Covenant external sanctification.**
  - b. One problem is that our author has taught that NC Sanctification, in contrast to the OC, is internal and effectual. 9:10-14,19-26 10:1-4,10,11,12-14**
  - c. It is not the covenant, but the blood by which he is sanctified.**
  - d. All those for whom Christ shed His blood are forgiven. 2:17 7:24-25 9:14-15 10:10,14-18**
  - e. If this text is applied to “covenant children” then it would pronounce fallen covenant children beyond recovery.**
  - f. Whatever sense the children are *sanctified* in I Cor. 7:14 also applies to the unbelieving spouse.**
  - g. Given the difficulty of this passage and the variety of viable interpretations, this is not the text on which to found your ecclesiology. (i.e. I Pet. 3:19f)**
- 3. Many think that this text merely refers to the person’s profession (that he is set apart by the blood of Christ), or what he appears to be to others, not that he was actually sanctified. 3:1 10:23 II Pe. 2:1 Gal. 2:16,21**
- 4. Others (including John Owen) think that it is the Son of God who is sanctified (set apart) through the blood of the New Covenant, just as Aaron was set apart unto God as the priest of the Old Covenant. 2:10 5:9-10 7:28 Ex. 29:9,29,33,35 Lev. 4:5 8:33 Num. 3:3 John 17:19**
- 5. It has also been suggested that the proper translation would be “he has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which there is sanctification.”**

**B. Another way of looking at the issue.**

- 1. Two questions:**
  - a. What is the nature of the sanctification (internal or external)?**
  - b. Who is the object of sanctification (the people of God or Christ)?**
- 2. Four options:**
  - a. Merely external sanctification of the people of God. (Problem: the whole theme has been contrasting OC & NC, inward vs. external).**
  - b. Internal sanctification of the people of God. (Problem, then some can be saved and lost).**
  - c. External sanctification of Christ as High Priest.**
  - d. Internal sanctification of Christ as High Priest.**