

## *The Descent into Apostasy*

### *Jude 4-7*

*"The greatest danger to the church today is not humanism, paganism, atheism or agnosticism. The greatest danger is not increasing hostility against our faith from the culture. Our greatest danger is apostasy on the inside, arising from false teachers- theological liberals who deny and distort biblical doctrine and lead others down the same path."*

**Mark Hitchcock**, *The Coming Apostasy: Exposing the Sabotage of Christianity from Within*

v4, Jude first defined the character of apostasy: The progression in this verse is significant. It shows how apostasy develops:

Apostasy *migrates* from ungodliness, to licentiousness, and then to denial.

Step 1- An ungodly person has deliberately refused to submit to God's authority over him. He may be a non-Christian *or a Christian!* He reveres himself and his rights higher than he reverences God and His rights. This involves a **volitional** (deliberate, involving one's will) choice. G. Campbell Morgan defined apostasy as "willful return to ungodliness."

Step 2- Having made that **volitional choice**, the apostate *acts on that basis*. Departure from God's Preceptive will\* begins to noticeably mark his behavior. He takes license. His conduct often becomes marked by unbridled lust, excess in the pursuit of fleshly satisfaction, and shamelessness. In doing this he denies the work of the Holy Spirit of conviction. His apostasy migrates from the inner **volitional** arena into the outer **moral** life.

Step 3- The final step off the dock onto the boat of apostasy is that he *justifies his behavior with intellectual rationalization*. *Notice that now the mind/intellect are deployed to serve the desire*. His conscience requires that he convince himself that what he is doing is right. So, he figures out a way to convince himself that "wrong" is "right." *In so doing, he must also convince himself that "right" is "wrong."* **This leads axiomatically to a denial of God's Word.** What God has said is wrong, the apostate says is "all right," and what God has said is right, he says is "wrong." In doing this he denies the work of the Holy Spirit of truth.

He has moved from volitional, to moral apostasy, and then free-fell into full intellectual apostasy – denial of some or all key aspects of the truth of the faith.  
All three steps of apostatizing run directly counter loving God with all one's heart, strength, and mind. This is why the religious affects are so important.

Thomas Constable: "This means that *heresy* in the church often has its ultimate source in personal failure to submit to God in some area of individual life. This is the essential characteristic of apostasy. Many people have observed that moral failure frequently precedes doctrinal failure."

\* For more on God's will: [www.gracebibleredwoodvalley.org/knowning-gods-will-with-certainty/](http://www.gracebibleredwoodvalley.org/knowning-gods-will-with-certainty/)