

Apostasy and the 'Ins and Outs'

Two different writers share their views:

Wheat and the Tares

A Catholic Mentality

I have come across many sincere and committed SDA members who have said that SDA members should not leave the church, and those who have left the church should return. In fact, two major biblical reasons given are as follows:

1. The SDA Church is the Remnant Church of God.
2. The wheat and the tares are to grow together.

If I were to take that same reasoning as mentioned, I would be thinking like a faithful Roman Catholic that sees no other church to be the true church of God except Catholicism. And because the wheat and the tares are in the Catholic Church, no Catholic should leave the church, and if they have left, they should return. In other words, you cannot be saved outside of the Catholic Church. You have to become a Catholic to be saved, yet the teaching is unbiblical.

When SDA sincere members start to think like Catholics, they are indirectly saying – You cannot be saved outside of the SDA Church. “No one should leave the SDA Church,” they said, “You must return to the fold.”

Should I return to the fold? Yes, to Jesus Christ, but not to an organized Church that is already teaching error, unless you knew it.

Can I Be Saved If I Am Not A Seventh Day Adventist?

Can I be saved outside of the Catholic Church? Off course!

Can I be saved outside of the SDA Church? Of course, yes!

Salvation is not found in a church. It is found in Jesus Christ. Am I going to be saved because I belong to the SDA Church or any church? No! Belonging to a church will not save one. If I accept Jesus Christ as my personal Savior, love and keep His Commandments and have the faith of Jesus Christ, I know I can be saved. And I can attend church in a movement that I know believes and teaches present truth.

Can I Leave The SDA Church and Be Saved?

Should I remain in the Catholic Church after discovering the teachings of the church in error? No! Many Catholics don't even know the errors. So they are still faithfully serving the system. Some knew the error but they can't leave because of tradition that the Catholic Church is the remnant, yet apostatized.

Should I remain in the SDA Church after discovering the teachings of the church in error? No! Many SDA's don't even know the errors. So they are still faithfully serving the system. Some knew the error but they can't leave because of tradition that the SDA Church is the remnant church, yet apostatized.

What Is The Right Question To Ask?

For those who don't know if the church has apostatized, they should ask – Can you tell us more of the teachings that the church is now teaching which is in error? If they knew that the church is teaching error, would they support a system that is contradicting the Scriptures and increasing error to send souls to hell? Of course not!

Why A Correct Interpretation and Application of the Parable Is Needed?

The parable of the wheat and the tares can be said of a church that has correct teachings with the tares inside. Those who do not live up to the truth as taught by the church, they are the tares and no one should uproot them if the sin is not obvious. If the sin is obvious, disciplinary action should be taken. In this case the church is not in apostasy but the tares are within because they do not live up to the truth as taught.

On the other hand, some may have some false teachings within the church and they are the false prophets and tares too. As long as the teachings of the church remain pure, the church may have tares within but she is not in apostasy, and no one should try to uproot the tares inside, if sin is not visible. We cannot read motives of people and that is why Jesus said we should not uproot the tares.

If false teaching arises, it should be dealt with and corrected as soon as possible. In the case of the SDA Church, the false teachings have spread like wildfire everywhere and it is so obvious nowadays. Many of those who stood for truth were cut off from the denomination. Unfortunately, in many cases, it is the leadership that took action against those who stood for truth. So what would you do if you can't preach truth anymore in the church? One has to find a church outside of the SDA Church that teaches truth and continue preaching the present truth there.

I hope we can see the misapplication meaning of the wheat and the tares by many sincere SDA members. A good sound logical and biblical reasoning is a must to all of us with the guidance of the Holy Spirit when we are seeking to know truth in Jesus Christ rather than seeking to be correct.

May God bless anyone who reads this brief note.

M A

Writer 2:

I would have to say that I completely agree with the principle stated that our salvation certainly does not depend on membership of a certain church, whichever church that might be.

But I find what I consider to be considerable misunderstanding of both religious history and principle, and the current situation.

While my membership in a certain church will not save me, God has put His people in groups from the time of Abraham at least, if not before. Why?

Membership in a group that worships the true God is the best way to insure salvation for the greatest number of people. I do not pretend to know all the reasons God has done this. But here are some:

A group (nation or church) can better preserve the truth about the true God and disseminate it to the world than can scattered individuals.

We are called to become obedient to God's law. That has to do with healing relationships between human beings, as well as our relationship with God. We can best learn the love and unity that God intends in a group of fellow-believers.

Usually God has had only one group at a time that were His "chosen people."

When God had a chosen people, was it historically the duty of individuals to leave the group as soon as it became apostate? The author of this article seems to believe so. It is certainly true that God has called ALL His true people to leave apostate churches in the last days, to avoid the plagues that are to fall on Babylon. But does this mean a call simply to leave these groups because of their apostasy, or is it a call to join God's chosen people in the last days?

There seems to have been no historic principle that God's true worshipers were to separate from any apostate group. The Jews were God's chosen people for centuries. How many times were they in apostasy, even worshipping false gods? Did God even once through His prophets tell His true worshippers to leave the group that was so apostate? Where would they have gone? To the heathen? God had no other group on earth that had more of the truth than the Jews, even when they were apostate.

If I believed as the author of this article does, then they should have gone off as individuals and small groups, and left the Jewish nation.

Didn't Christ call His disciples out of the apostate Jewish nation? No. Read the New Testament carefully. They were THROWN out. It says that everyone who confessed Christ was thrown out of the synagogue. The apostles stayed with the Jewish church and tried to reform it until they were cast out and eventually their lives threatened. God would very much have preferred to reform the Jews instead of starting a new movement.

Then the early church apostatized and became what we call the Catholic Church. Didn't the true believers leave her because of her apostasy. Yes, but again, their lives were under threat. Here we also see another principle. When one can no longer belong to the group without losing one's own salvation, or endangering the salvation of one's children, then separation becomes necessary.

During the time the church was in the wilderness was one of the very few times in history that God had more than one group which were His "chosen people." Because of physical separation, and the threat to their lives, there were a number of groups during that time that were true to God.

Then came the time of the reformation. Didn't the reformers lead out the true believers from the Catholic Church because of her apostasy? Actually, no. They tried to work within the church and bring about reformation inside the church. But they were thrown out of the church, and again their lives were threatened. Again God was forced to begin a new movement.

Then, as time went on, first one Protestant church, and then another, rejected light, and God had to begin again with a different group that would follow the light. But in each case that I have found the principle was the same. God's people stayed inside the church that was God's chosen people at the time until opposition to the new truth DROVE them out. Always their effort was to revive and reform the church they were in until they were driven out.

The Advent movement was the same way. All the Adventists tried to bring the truth of Christ's second coming into the churches of Protestantism until they were thrown out and ostracized. Then they were forced to band together and begin a new movement.

In each case throughout history, after God was forced to begin a new movement, then, at that time, individual Christians who were true to God were called to join the new movement which better followed the word of God.

God most definitely started the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The evidence is very plain. And He has sent a last-day message to His people in Babylon to come out and join his people of the last days.

Is the SDA church in apostasy today? I would answer yes. Not only are many members in apostasy, but the leadership has disobeyed the clear commands of God again and again, and defied the directions of God through His last-day prophet.

But, as we have demonstrated, God has never commanded that His people leave His chosen church or group if that group is in apostasy. They should stay and attempt to bring about reformation within the group unless they are forced out.

Are there times when they might be unable to meet with the organized church? If their own salvation, or that of their children is threatened by being a part of the group, then they must separate at least for now.

But is it possible that God will again be forced to raise up another people, a more pure one, so that we should leave the apostate Adventist church to join them? I have studied this question for many years. I'm sure that that would be a possibility, since man is given free will and if the Adventist church rejects light and throws out those who teach it, God would be forced to start a new group. But I do not believe from prophecy that that will happen.

First of all, it would be a great loss to God to have to start over. The message is to go to all the world, and in spite of the faults of the church, a lot of progress has been made in that direction. Can a small group carry out the great objective? Certainly it would be much more difficult, and cause yet further delay in Christ's coming. It would certainly be preferable to bring about revival and reformation inside the church.

This apostasy has not caught God by surprise. It was predicted by the prophets. The Laodicean church is the last church, remember? Also read the chapter on "The Seal of God" in volume five of the testimonies. A great apostasy within the church is brought to light here, along with God's chosen way of meeting it. We should be sighing and crying to God for His church, and reproving sin and error. No hint is given here of leaving the church, but rather that God's judgments will fall on those who refuse to reform.

The spirit showed by Daniel in Dan. 9 is a wonderful illustration of what God wants from His people. The closer we come to Christ, the less we will feel like pointing to the apostasy of others, and the more we will feel like confessing "WE have sinned!" We are all far from what God wants us to be!

In order to teach that we must leave the Seventh-day Adventist Church because of her apostasy, one must almost give up faith in God's last-day prophet also. The statements are so very clear. We are told EXACTLY WHEN THE SEPARATION BETWEEN TRUE BELIEVERS AND FALSE WILL OCCUR!

Read the following statement carefully:

"The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. IN THIS TIME THE GOLD WILL BE SEPARATED FROM THE DROSS IN THE CHURCH. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness. {5T 81.1}

"When trees without fruit are cut down as cumberers of the ground, when multitudes of false brethren are distinguished from the true, then the hidden ones will be revealed to view, and with hosannas range under the banner of Christ. Those who have been timid and self-distrustful will declare themselves openly for Christ and His truth. The most weak and hesitating in the church will be as David--willing to do and dare. The deeper the night for God's people, the more brilliant the stars. Satan will sorely harass the faithful; but, in the name of Jesus, they will come off more than conquerors. Then will the church of Christ appear 'fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.'" {5T 81.2}

God has chosen that the Sunday law "Mark of the Beast" test will be the final test for Adventists. Those who fail this test will be lost, and are certainly not going to want to subject themselves to persecution and derision by being called "Seventh-day Adventists." Those who are true to God will continue to bear that name with pride, in spite of the derision of the world!

Why, when God is so clear as to the time when the separation is to occur, should we show so little faith in God's word through His prophet that we think we must rush into a separation that God has not called for? Unless attending church will threaten your own salvation, or the salvation of your children, I plead with you to stay and help us hold the fort! Do not give up God's last-day church to the enemy! Stay and put your influence on the side of obedience and truth!

J M