

“GOING DEEPER” SESSION 2: *The End-Time Crisis in the Church: Falling Away from the Faith*

I. PAUL WARNS US OF A FALLING AWAY FROM THE FAITH IN THE END TIMES

¹ Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (Second Coming) and our gathering together to Him (Rapture)...³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin (Antichrist) is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴ 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. ⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?...⁸ The lawless one (Antichrist) will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth... ⁹ The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth. (2 Thess. 2:1-10)

¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron... (1 Tim. 4:1-2)

- A. Believers will depart from the faith as their consciences are progressively seared.

² Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron... (1 Tim. 4:2)

- B. A believer can only depart from the faith when their conscience is seared.

⁴ For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. (Heb. 6:4-6)

II. JESUS PROPHESED OF A FALLING AWAY IN THE END TIMES (MATT. 24:10, 12)

³ The disciples came to Him privately, saying, "...what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" ⁴ Jesus said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many." (Matt. 24:3-5)

⁹ Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved. (Matt. 24:9-13)

²² You will be hated by all for My sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. (Matt. 10:22)

²⁶ He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give... (Rev. 2:26)

⁵ He who overcomes...I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life... (Rev. 3:5)

¹¹ I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. (Rev. 3:11)

III. PAUL WARNS US OF THE LAWLESSNESS THAT WILL INCREASE IN THE END TIMES

¹ But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. From such people turn away! ⁶ For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, ⁷ always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (2 Tim. 3:1-7)

IV. PETER WARNS THE CHURCH OF THE DANGERS OF FALLING AWAY (2 PET. 2:1-22)

¹ But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord...² Many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words... (2 Pet. 2:1-3)

⁴ For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵ and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah...a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; ⁶ and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; ⁷ and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked... (2 Pet. 2:4-7)

⁹ Then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, ¹⁰ and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed...¹² these, like natural

brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed...will utterly perish in their own corruption, 13 and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, 14 having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices...15 They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam... 16 who was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet. (2 Pet. 2:9-16)

¹⁷ These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. 18 For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. 20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. 21 It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to his own vomit and a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Pet. 2:17-22)

Going Deeper Session 2 Study Guide Questions

- What are some of the reasons Jesus gives for believers falling away in the End Times? How can I posture myself to stand strongly against falling away?
- Paul warns of perilous times ahead—how can I keep my heart pure in the midst of such pressures?