

Departing From the Faith ?

In a recent 'mid-Acts' Bible conference, a host preacher spoke about people **from among them** who have departed from the faith. He indicated that they have had **defectors** from their group. He also described how some had turned away from what-he-called 'Pauline doctrine'. Actually, **departing from the FAITH is not at all like leaving 'mid-Acts-hyper-dispensationalism'**. Paul encouraged people to do self-inspection to analyze their own faith to notice how they respond in trials:

2 Cor 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. (also see (1 Cor 11:28,31; Gal 6:4)
Know ye not your own selves,
how that **Jesus Christ is in you,** except ye be **reprobates?**

Reprobates are unfit. They do not verify themselves as they ought. They are rejected and castaway because they could not stand the test. We should each take a good look at our own life, and think if we show up to be a Christian or not. Do we have an active faith that works?

James 2:20, 26 But wilt thou know, O vain man,
that faith without works is dead?
26 For as the body without the spirit is dead,
so faith without works is dead also.

In a very definite, specific way in no uncertain terms prophecy particularly foretold that people would deny their faith in the last days:

1 Tim 4:1 Now the Spirit **speake**th (Greek <lego> meaning to affirm, to maintain, to teach, to exhort, to advise, to point out with words) expressly, that **in the latter times** some **shall depart from <aphistemi>** **the faith,** giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

The Greek word translated here 'shall depart from' <aphistemi> means

- to go away
- to become faithless
- to stand off
- to desert
- to shun
- to remove
- to withdraw
- to flee from
- to **fall away**.

Leaving the faith was not a subject that was exclusive to Paul.

It is the same problem that Jesus warned His disciples about, in the parable of the sower and the seed. Jesus explained it to them because **God reveals His secrets to His servants the prophets** (Amos 3:7; Rev 10:7, 22:6). The natural man thinks the things of the Spirit of God are foolish. He only has man's wisdom, and thus cannot know the mystery (or mysteries - same Greek word) of God. They are hidden from him, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:12-14):

Luke 8:10-15 And he said,
Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God:
 but to others in parables;
 that seeing they might not see,
 and hearing they might not understand. (also Acts 28:23-28)

11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.
 12 Those by the way side are they that hear;
 then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts,
 lest they should believe and be saved.
 13 They on the rock are they,
 which, when they hear, receive the word with joy;
 and these have **no root**,
 which **for a while believe**, and **in time of temptation**
fall away <aphistemi> (depart).

14 And that which fell among thorns are they,
 which, when they have heard, go forth,
 and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life,
 and bring no fruit to perfection.
 15 But that on the good ground are they,
 which in an honest and good heart,
 having heard the word, **keep it**,
and bring forth fruit with patience.

Personally, I believe the 'time of temptation' will be in the last days, when people will be forced to make a decision either worship the image of the beast and take his mark or be killed (Rev 13:11-17). Some people who have been among the church, and have claimed to be believers (see 1 John 2:18-19), when put to the test will deny the Lord and fall away:

Rev 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience,
I also will keep thee from **the hour of temptation,**
which shall come upon all the world,
to try them that dwell upon the earth.
(also see Luke 12:4-5, 21:12-16; Rev 2:10)

These things will happen during 3-1/2 years before Christ comes:

2 Thess 2:3-4 Let no man deceive you by any means:
for that day (**the day of Christ - 2 Thess 2:2**) shall not come,
except there come **a falling away** first,
and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;
4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God,
or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God,
shewing himself that he is God.

Ask yourself, "If Paul was teaching 'brand new material' (as 'mid-Acts-ers' say) exclusively for 'the body of Christ' WHY would he be telling saints not to be tricked concerning things that 'mid-Acts-ers' say will happen long after (more than 7 years later) they are 'raptured' off of planet earth?

Which would YOU choose? Temporary physical life or eternal spiritual life?

Even back during Jesus' earthly ministry, anyone who confessed Him was ex-communicated from the religious system:

John 9:22 These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for **the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.**

The great choice is to **confess** Jesus Christ or **deny** Him:

Matt 10:32-33 Whosoever therefore shall **confess** me before men (**see Rom 10:9**), him will I **confess** also before my Father which is in heaven.
33 But whosoever shall **deny** **<ameomai>** me before men, him will I also **deny** **<ameomai>** before my Father which is in heaven.

Paul warned of unreliable men with no back-bone that renounce the faith:

1 Tim 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, **he hath denied <ameomai> the faith,** and is worse than an **infidel**. (one who is unfaithful, not to be trusted)

Paul taught the same principles that Jesus did:

2 Tim 2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him:
if we deny <ameomai> him, (also Acts 3:13-14)
he also will deny <ameomai> us:

13 If we believe not (betray a trust, be unfaithful), yet he abideth faithful: **he cannot deny <ameomai> himself.**

We should **deny OUR selves and not deny HIM**

so we won't be ASHAMED when He comes:

Luke 9:23-26 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him **deny himself**, and take up his cross daily (see 1 Cor 15:31b, Gal 2:20), and follow me.

24 For **whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.**

25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be **cast away**?

26 For whosoever shall be **ashamed** of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be **ashamed**, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

Speaking of being **ashamed** in the context of the **theme verse** for 'mid-Acts-hyper-dispensationalists' which is about rightly dividing Paul told about 2 men who **swerved and deviated from the TRUTH by wrongly dividing.** They were teaching that the resurrection of the dead had already occurred. As a result, some people's faith was destroyed:

2 Tim 2:15-18 Study to shew thyself approved unto God (not some 'mid-Acts' judge), a workman that needeth not to be **ashamed**, rightly dividing the word of truth.

(2 Tim 2:) 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker (**ulcer, gangrene**):
of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

18 Who **concerning the truth have erred, saying <lego>**
that the resurrection is past already; and **overthrow the faith of some.**
(constantly wanting more -- can't get enough):

Insatiable desire for money can led people to go astray from the faith:

1 Tim 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they **have erred from the faith,**
and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Believing fraudulent science in the name of education

can cause people to question God's word of truth:

1 Tim 6:20-21 O Timothy, **keep** that which is committed to thy trust,
avoiding profane and vain babblings,
and oppositions of science falsely so called:

21 Which **some professing have erred concerning the faith.**
Grace be with thee. Amen.

(2 examples are the temperature of the earth [as long as it exists]:
Gen 8:22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold
and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night **shall not cease.**
and the movement of the sun [called 'geo-centricity]:
Ecc 1:5 The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to
his place where he arose. [also Psa 19:4b-6])

Paul repeatedly told Timothy to watch out for anyone who did not
endorse **the words of Christ.** He told him to depart from dishonest men:

1 Tim 6:3-5 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome
words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ (**that would include the KJV
words in red letters**), and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of
words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

5 Perverse disputings of **men of corrupt minds,**
and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness:
from such withdraw thyself <aphistemi> (depart).

Paul was concerned to protect Timothy from unethical men who take bribes and extort others by violence, threats, or misuse of authority.

Paul prophesied that perilous times will come **in the last days** (also see James 5:3, 2 Pet 3:3). Persecution will come from the religious crowd:

2 Tim 3:5-8 Having a form of godliness,

but **denying the power** thereof: **from such turn away.**

6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and **lead captive** silly women laden with sins, **led away** with divers lusts,

7 **Ever learning,**

and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses,

so do these also **resist the truth:**

men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

Paul predicted the future time when corruption will run rampant.

By example, Paul did not **depart** from the faith --- he **retained** it:

2 Tim 4:3-7 For **the time will come** when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 And they shall **turn away their ears from the truth,** and shall **be turned** unto fables.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have **kept the faith:**

Jude understood the unity of them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called (Jude 1:1).

He encouraged them to go forward in the struggle:

Jude 1:3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of **the common salvation,** it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should **earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.**

Yes, in the latter times, the saints need **patience** (also see Luke 21:9;

Rom 5:3-4, 8:23-25; **2 Thess 1:4**; Heb 10:36-37; James 1:3-4, 5:7-11;

2 Pet 1:6; Rev 1:9, 2:2-3,19) to **hold on to faith**:

Rev 13:10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity:
he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.

Here is the patience and **the faith of the saints**.

Rev 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints:

here are they that keep the commandments of God,
and **the faith of Jesus**.

All along the way, believers in Christ have had **tribulation** in the world (John 16:33) but in the last days, there will come an **intensity** of it, identified as **great tribulation** (Matt 24:21).

Believers in Christ have always had **persecution** in the world (John 15:20, Acts 8:1) but during the time just before the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Tim 4:1), "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall **suffer persecution**" (2 Tim 3:12).

Thus, it is no surprise that, over and again, Paul gave instructions to the saints to hang on to the faith and not default:

Acts 14:22 Confirming the souls of **the disciples**,
and **exhorting them to continue in the faith**, and that
we **must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God**.

Paul himself 'preached the faith which once he destroyed' (Gal 1:23):

Col 1:23 **If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled**,
and **be not moved away** from the hope of the gospel,
which ye have heard, (also see 1 Cor 15:1-11)
and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven;
whereof I Paul am made a minister;

We need to be firmly grounded in the faith, stable on the Foundation Rock:

Col 2:7 Rooted and built up in him, and **stablished in the faith**, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. (also Acts 16:5)

Peter taught the same doctrines that Paul taught:

1 Peter 5:8-12 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist **stedfast in the faith**, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, **after that ye have suffered a while,**

make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

11 To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose,

I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying

that **this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.**

1 Cor 16:13 Watch ye, **stand fast in the faith**, quit you like men, be strong.

We began this study about **departing from the FAITH**. Faith is what we need to **continue** in. We should **depart from SIN not from GOD**:

2 Tim 2:19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.

And, **Let <aphistemi>** every one that nameth the name of Christ **depart <aphistemi> from iniquity.**

Heb 3:12 Take heed, brethren,

lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing <aphistemi> from the living God.

As I said, departing from 'mid-Acts' error is not at all departing **from the faith**. Only a conceited 'mid-Acts-er' would think it was!

This is David Dowell, saying, "Think about it!"