

Apostasy and Backsliding: Biblical Synonyms?

A Worksheet Designed for the Contextual Study of the Difference Between the Two Terms

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I have put the following passages together to facilitate your follow-up on the article “Apostasy and Backsliding: Biblical Synonyms?” As stated in the article, the terms used in Scripture to describe these two vastly different spiritual states are often *the same words*. More than anything else, this is probably the underlying reason for the sharp divisions that lie between groups that believe there is a substantive difference between apostasy and backsliding, and groups who see the two as completely synonymous words. Having failed to see the numerous clear distinctions between the terms, these latter groups have also unfortunately concluded that there is *no real apostasy* — *there is nothing an individual can do to voluntarily forfeit salvation once it is obtained* (Eternal Security; Perseverance of the Saints; Once Saved, Always Saved).

The following passages give readers opportunity to study this issue for themselves. This list helps readers practice their skills at *contextualization*: looking for clues in the immediate vicinity that clarify the meaning of a word capable of carrying multiple meanings. For example, when a word such as *m’shuvah* (“backslider/backslidden” or “apostate”) is surrounded by exhortations to repent and promises of forgiveness and/or restoration, it is clear that God is willing to receive those described by the word back into His fold. On the other hand, if the same word appears surrounded by statements regarding the impossibility of repentance, if the time for forgiveness has passed, if God declares that He is no longer willing to hear prayers of any kind from the wayward, and their judgment is sealed, it is equally clear that those individuals have removed themselves beyond the possibility of restoration.

The same dynamics still exist today. Once a pastor or teacher has demonstrated this truth to himself by completing the study on his or her own, he will be able to declare with clarity and assurance this message of God’s Word. It will be a relief to pastors and laymen alike to hear that if someone can still feel the sting of conviction, can still hear the call of the Word to repentance, and can still sense the need for reconnection to God, that person is not yet beyond God’s incredible grace. On the other hand, it is also helpful for all involved to know with assurance when an individual’s conscience is seared, heart is hardened, mind has become reprobate, and he has become completely calloused (Matthew 12:31,32; Romans 1:28; Ephesians 4:19; 1 Timothy 4:2, etc.), incapable of sensing the Spirit’s conviction or hearing the call of the Word. In most cases, we are then able to pray, counsel, instruct, preach, witness, and discipline in the wisdom that comes from knowing the Word of God and having the light it sheds on each situation.

Using your Bible, engage in the following Scriptures. Watch for the contextual clues, take notes, and compare passages with similar contexts and terms. Follow the cross-references in your version of the Bible at any point. After having worked through a sufficient amount of evidence from both the New and Old Testaments, review your findings and begin to make tentative conclusions of your own. If you sense the need for further study, return to the list, completing it if need be. Be willing to go back and revise those tentative conclusions as you encounter additional evidence. You may need to read some passages several times, each time revising your understanding of the Hebrew or Greek term employed as you zero in on the context clues that help to more clearly define its meaning *in that particular verse or passage*.

Ascertaining the truth of God’s Word is not a race to see who “gets it” first. Nor is it a sprint to see how quickly you can get to the finish line. Rather, it is a meal that is to be savored — a prize that goes to the committed and the disciplined who will spare no effort and settle for nothing less. Enjoy the journey, and retain the skills of contextualization honed along the way. They will stand you in good stead as you mine the riches of the Scriptures in the days and years to come.

May the blessing of “he who reads” (Revelation 1:3) be upon you without measure.

- 1) Genesis 14:4 — political rebellion, revolt [מָרַד, *marad*] (cf. also Ezra 4:12,15,19; Nehemiah 2:19; 6:6; the same word is used in reference to spiritual rebellion against God in Nehemiah 9:26; Ezekiel 20:38; Daniel 9:5,9).
- 2) Numbers 8:25 — priests will “return” [שׁוּבוּ, *shuv*, i.e., cease] from their work and not work anymore [עָדוּ, *od*] (cf. Isaiah 59:20 and Jeremiah 3:8–22; 5:6–10; 8:4–6; 11:10–17).
- 3) Numbers 15:30,31 — “But [in contrast to the unintentional, errant sinner who can sacrifice and be forgiven] the defiant, premeditated rebel ... is blaspheming the Lord and will be cut off [כָּרַת, *karat*, the same root used in the phrase סֵפֶר־כְּרִיתוֹת, *sefer-k’reetut* or certificate of divorce — a phrase that denotes legal, spiritual, and

- emotional separation, not physical death] from among his people. Because he has despised the word of the Lord and broken His commandment, ... his guilt shall be on him” (author’s translation); cf. also 2 Chronicles 36:16; Jeremiah 7:16; 11:14; 14:11; Ezekiel 14:14,20; Matthew 12:31,32; Romans 1:28; 1 John 5:16,17).
- 4) Deuteronomy 13:2–11 — death to the friend, prophet, or kinsman who leads astray to other gods.
 - 5) Deuteronomy 13:13–18 — for the apostate city: kill its citizens; (verse 15), but God will have compassion on you and show you mercy (verse 18) if you will listen to [His] voice, keep [His] commandments, and do what is right in His sight.
 - 6) Deuteronomy 17:5,7 — death to idolaters.
 - 7) Deuteronomy 24:1–4 — the certificate of divorce [סְפֵר־כְּרִיתוֹת, *sefer-k’reetut*] by which a man sends his wife out from his house (verse 4). She cannot return and remarry the first husband after marrying another and being divorced by him — this is an abomination before the Lord.
 - 8) Deuteronomy 29:18–20 — “turns [פָּׁנָה, *foneh*] away today from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of the nations; (verse 18) ... he will boast ... ‘in the stubbornness of my heart’ (verse 19); “The Lord shall never be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the Lord ... will burn against that man, and every curse which is written in this book will rest on him, and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven” (verse 20, NASB).¹
 - 9) Deuteronomy 31:16–20 — When they “turn [פָּׁנָה, *foneh*, used twice] to other gods” (verse 18); “play the harlot with the strange gods” and “forsake Me and break My covenant” (verse 16); and “spurn Me [נָאַץ, *naatz*]” (verse 20); “Then ... *I will forsake them and hide My face* from them” (verse 17, author’s translation and emphasis), [also in verse 18]; and they will say “*God is not among us*” (verse 17, emphasis mine).
 - 10) Deuteronomy 32:15–43 — “Israel forsook ... made jealous ... provoked... neglected ... forgot” [נָטַשׁ, *natash*], so the “Lord ... spurned [נָאַץ, *naatz*]” (verses 15–18). God hid His face, sent misfortune, famine, plague, sent wild beasts; their vine is from the vine of Sodom and Gomorrah. Thus judgment is laid up in store for them (verse 34); vengeance, retribution, their foot will slip, calamity (verse 15–35). There is no reference to mercy, forgiveness, atonement, but there is exaltation, atonement, and vindication for His “servants” (verse 43), His true “people” (verse 36).
 - 11) Judges 16:17,19,20 — “then my strength will leave me [סָרָה, *sar*]” (verse 17); “his strength left [יָסַר, *va-yasar*] him” (verse 19); “the Lord had departed [סָרָה, *sar*] from him” (verse 20). These denote a fundamental change in his relationship with God (cf. numbers 13 and 14 below for other specific examples).
 - 12) 1 Samuel 15:22,23 — “To obey is better than sacrifice (verse 22) ... for rebellion [מְרִי, *mehri*] is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected [מָאַסְתָּהּ, *maastah*] the word of the Lord, He has also rejected [וַיָּמַסֶּנּוּ, *va-yimas*] you from being king” (verse 23; see 16:14; 18:12; 28:15,16; 2 Samuel 7:15). “The Lord was with him [David] but had departed [סָרָה, *sar*] from Saul. Therefore Saul removed [סָרָה, *sar*] him [David] from his presence” (1 Samuel 18:12,13). In these contexts, the verb denotes physical removal from a trusted, covenantal status.
 - 13) 2 Samuel 7:15,16 — “but My lovingkindness [חַסְדִּי, *chasdi*, “my covenant loyalty”] shall not depart [יָסַר, *yasur*] from him [David’s son], as I took it away [הַסִּירְתִּי, *hasirti*] from Saul ... Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever.”
 - 14) 1 and 2 Kings — Cf. the lengthy lists of those who committed apostasy in biblical times in *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* and *ISBE*. These lists demonstrate that the possibility of apostasy is not merely theoretical: it happened to real people (cf. nos. 11 and 13 above for other specific examples).
 - 15) 2 Kings 23:25–27 — despite the acts of Josiah, who “turned to the Lord with all his heart” (verse 25), “the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath ... His anger burned ... because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked him” (verse 26). “The LORD said, ‘I will remove [אָסִיר, *asir*] Judah also from My sight. ... And I will cast off [אָסַרְתִּי, *u-maaste*] Jerusalem ... and the temple’ ” (verse 27).
 - 16) 2 Kings 24:3,4 — “because of the sins of Manasseh ... and also for the innocent blood which he shed ... the Lord would not forgive” (cf. Numbers 15:30 and parallels).
 - 17) 1 Chronicles 28:9 — David said to Solomon, “If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake [אָזַב, *azav*] Him, He will reject [זָנַח, *zanach*] you forever.”

- 18) 2 Chronicles 21:8 — “Edom revolted” [פּשַׁע, *pasha*’, as in 2 Kings 1:1, “Moab revolted (פּשַׁע, *pasha*’) against Israel”] against the rule of Judah”; “Then Libnah revolted [פּשַׁע, *pasha*’]” (2 Chronicles 21:10); cf. the same term used of spiritual mutiny in Ezekiel 20:38; Amos 1:6–13; 2:1–6.
- 19) 2 Chronicles 33:19 — Manasseh prayed, entreated, and humbled himself.
- 20) Ezra 4:12,15,19 — “Jerusalem ... the rebellious [מַרְד, *marad*, here in Aramaic] ... city” (verses 12,15); “rebellion [מַרְד, *marad*] and revolt have been perpetuated in it” (verse 19).
- 21) Nehemiah 2:19 — “rebellious [מַרְד, *marad*] against the king.”
- 22) Nehemiah 6:6 — “Jews are planning to rebel” [מַרְד, *marad*].
- 23) Nehemiah 9:26,27,31 — “But they became disobedient and rebelled [מַרְד, *marad*] against You, and cast Your law behind their backs (verse 26) ... But ... You heard from heaven, and according to Your great compassion You gave them deliverers (verse 27) ... For You are a gracious and compassionate God” (verse 31).
- 24) Job 21:14,20 — “[The wicked] say to God, ‘Depart [סוּר, *sur*] from us! We do not even desire the knowledge of your ways’ (verse 14). ... he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty” (verse 20, author’s translation; cf. a similar use of סוּר [*sur*] in Job 22:17).
- 25) Psalm 6:8 — “Depart [סוּרָה, *surah*] from me, all you who do iniquity”; cf. 2 Samuel 7:15; 2 Kings 23:27; Job 21:14; Psalm 139:19; Jeremiah 17:5,13; Daniel 9:5.
- 26) Psalm 10:1 — Sometimes in times of trouble, it seems God stands [עַמַּד, *amad*] far off.
- 27) Psalm 53:3 — God rejects [מַאֵס, *maas*] those who deny the existence of God, who do not fear God, who can do no good — the workers of wickedness who oppose the righteous and devour the godly.
- 28) Psalm 85:8,9 — “He will speak peace to His people, to His godly ones; but let them not turn back [יָשׁוּבוּ, *yashuvu*] to folly. Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him.”
- 29) Psalm 139:19 — “Depart [סוּרוּ, *suru*] from me ... men of bloodshed.”
- 30) Proverbs 1:32,33 — “The going astray [מִשְׁוּוּה, *m’shuvah*] of the simple kills/destroys [תְּאַבְדֵם, *t’abdaem*] them. But he who listens to me shall live securely and will be at ease from the fear of evil” (author’s translation).
- 31) Proverbs 6:12–15 — Describes one who is utterly reprobate, who in the end is destroyed without hope of healing (see Romans 1:21).
- 32) Proverbs 14:14 — “The backslider [גִּסְגֵּי, *sug*, cf. Zephaniah 1:6] in heart will have his fill of his own ways, but a good man will be satisfied with his.”
- 33) Isaiah 1:2–9 — Judah is so utterly corrupted and debased that God compares them to Sodom and Gomorrah. Only a few righteous will be left as a remnant; all others will perish (cf. Romans 1:21).
- 34) Isaiah 42:16,17 — “They will be turned [נִסְגָּו, *nasgu*] back and utterly put to shame” (verse 17), but God will lead them, light their way, make their paths level, and will not forsake them.
- 35) Isaiah 45:22 — “Turn [פְּנוּ, *p’nu*] to Me and be saved.”
- 36) Isaiah 57:17,18 — Even though God struck him for his iniquity, he “yet went returning [turning away, שׁוּבָב, *shovav*], in the way of his heart” (verse 17). God responds, “but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him” (verse 18).
- 37) Isaiah 59:9–20 — Provides a vivid description of backsliders (verse 9–19, but the Redeemer comes to Zion “and to those who turn [שׁוּבוּ, *shuv*] from transgression” (verse 20).
- 38) Jeremiah 2:13 — “My people have ... forsaken [עָזַב, *azav*] Me.”
- 39) Jeremiah 2:19 — “Your apostasies [מִשְׁוּוֹת, *m’shuvot*] will reprove you.” The result is the sentence of exile.
- 40) Jeremiah 3:8–22 — although God had given apostate [מִשְׁוָה, *m’shuvah*] Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her out/put her away (verse 8), He says, “Return, faithless [backsliding, מִשְׁוּוּה, *m’shuvah*] Israel” because He is merciful (verse 12). “Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God” (verse 13). “Return, O faithless [apostate, מִשְׁוָבִים, *m’shovavim*] sons ... and I will take you” (verse 14). ... and “they shall not walk away anymore after the stubbornness of their evil heart” (verse 17, author’s translation). “Return [שׁוּבוּ, *shuvah*], O faithless [backsliding, מִשְׁוָבִים, *m’shovavim*] sons, I will heal your faithlessness” ... “You are the Lord our God” (verse 22).

- 41) Jeremiah 5:6,7,9,10 [see use of מְשֻׁבָּה, *m'shuvah* above in Jeremiah 3:8] — Destruction will overtake them because their apostasies [מְשֻׁבוֹת, *m'shevot*] have become so strong (verse 6). God asks, “Why should I pardon you?” When He rebuked them, they only got worse (verse 7). “Shall I not punish these people?” (verse 9). God has given a divine command to destroy Israel and Judah, but not completely [a righteous remnant will be spared] (verse 10).
- 42) Jeremiah 8:4–6 — “Do men fall and not get up again? Does one turn away [יָשׁוּב, *yashuvu*] and not repent [יָשׁוּבוּ, *yashuvu*]?” (verse 4). “Why then has this people ... turned away in continual [נִצְחָת, *nitsachat*] apostasy [מְשֻׁבָּה, *m'shuvah*]?” (verse 5). They hang onto their sin, will not listen, will not repent, will not deny wrongdoing, harden their hearts, and do not even recognize that judgment is coming (verses 5,6).
- 43) Jeremiah 11:10,14,16,17 — “They have turned back [שָׁבוּ, *shavu*] to the iniquities of their ancestors who refused to hear My words, and ... have broken My covenant. ... Therefore, ... I am bringing disaster on them which they will not be able to escape; though they will cry to Me, yet I will not listen to them” (verses 10,11). “Therefore do not pray for this people ... for I will not listen” (verse 14). “A green olive tree ... He has kindled fire on it, and its branches are worthless” (verse 16). “The Lord ... has pronounced evil against you” (verse 17).
- 44) Jeremiah 14:7–9 — “Our apostasies [מְשֻׁבוֹת, *m'shuvot*] have been many ... we have sinned” (verse 7). “O hope of Israel, its Savior in time of distress” (verse 8). “You are in our midst, O Lord” (verse 9).
- 45) Jeremiah 14:10,11,12,15 — “The Lord does not accept them ... [He] will remember their iniquity and call their sins to account” (verse 10). “The Lord said to me, ‘Do not pray for the welfare of this people. When they fast, I am not going to listen ... and when they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I am not going to accept them’” (verses 11,12). But God says He will consume them by “sword, and famine” (verse 15).
- 46) Jeremiah 17:5,13,14 — “Cursed [אָרַר, *arur*] is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away [סָר, *sur*] from the Lord [YHWH]” (verse 5). “O Lord, the hope of Israel, all who forsake you will be put to shame. Those who turn away [סָר, *sur*] on earth will be written down” (verse 13). “Heal me, ... and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for You are my praise” (verse 14).
- 47) Jeremiah 18:23 — prayer for judgment to fall on the wayward without mercy.
- 48) Jeremiah 23:19,20 — Judgment on these is irreversible.
- 49) Jeremiah 31:21–23 — “Return, O virgin Israel. ... How long will you go here and there [keep turning back, חָמַק, *chamak*, in Hitpael], O faithless [הַשְׁוֹבָה, *ha-shovavah*] daughter? ...when I restore their fortunes, the LORD [will] bless you.”
- 50) Jeremiah 33:8 — “I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned against Me and by which they have transgressed [פָּשָׁע, *pasha*] against Me.”
- 51) Jeremiah 49:4,5 — “How boastful you are about the valleys! Your valley is flowing away, O backsliding [הַשְׁוֹבָה, *ha-shovavah*] daughter ... Behold, I am going to bring terror upon you ... and each of you will be driven out [נָדַח, *nadach*] ... with no one to gather the fugitives together.”
- 52) Ezekiel 14:5–8 — “the house of Israel who are estranged [separated, נָזַר, *nazar*] from Me through all their idols” (verse 5). “Repent and turn away from your idols” (verse 6). “For anyone ... who separates [נָזַר, *nazar*] himself from me and sets up his idols in his heart ... I the LORD ... will set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from among My people” (verses 7,8).
- 53) Ezekiel 20:32–38 — These verses provide a prophecy of restoration. During this time, however, “I will purge from you the rebels [מֹרְדִים, *mordim*] and those who transgress [פֹּשְׁעִים, *poshim*] against Me ... but they will not enter into the land of Israel” (verse 38).
- 54) Ezekiel 23:17–35 — “The Babylonians came to her [Judah] ... And she became disgusted [alienated, תָּקַע, *taka*] with them ... Then I became disgusted [alienated, תָּקַע, *taka*] with her, as I had become disgusted [alienated] with her sister [Israel]” (verses 17,18, author’s translation). “And I will commit the judgment to them” (verse 24) ... “And I will set My jealousy against you ... your survivors will fall by the sword” (verse 25) ... “I will give you into the hand of those whom you hate” (verse 28) ... “They will deal with you in hatred” (verse 29) ... “the cup of horror and desolation” (verse 33) ... “Because you have forgotten Me and cast Me behind your back, bear [נָסָא, *nasa*] now the punishment of your lewdness and your harlotries” (verse 35; cf. Leviticus 16:22; Numbers 15:30; Isaiah. 53:12, all of which employ the verb נָסָא, *nasa*).
- 55) Ezekiel 33:12–19 — Opportunity is given to return, but even the righteous, if they do not turn, will be judged and will die in their sin, especially verses 12,13.

- 56) Daniel 9:5–23 — “We have sinned [rebelled, מָרַד, *marad*] ... even turning aside [רָסַד, *sur*] from Your commandments” (verse 5) ... “To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled [מָרַד] against Him” (verse 9) ... “We have sinned, we have been wicked. O Lord ... let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away” (verses 15,16) ... “The command was issued ... for you are highly esteemed” (verse 23).
- 57) Hosea 1:6,7,9 — “Name her Lo-ruhamah [No-Mercy], for I will no longer have compassion [mercy] on the house of Israel, that I would ever forgive them. But I will have compassion [mercy] on the house of Judah and deliver them” (verses 6,7) ... “Name him Lo-ammi [Not-My-People], for you are not My people and I am not your [God]” (verse 9).
- 58) Hosea 2:23 — [In the restoration of another generation,] “I will also have compassion [mercy] on her who had not obtained compassion [No-Mercy], and I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My people!’ And they will say, ‘You are my God!’ ”
- 59) Hosea 5:5,6 — “Moreover, the pride of Israel testifies against him. And Israel and Ephraim stumble in their iniquity; Judah also has stumbled with them. They will go ... to seek the Lord, but they will not find Him; He has withdrawn from them.”
- 60) Hosea 11:7–10 — “So my people are bent on turning [backsliding, מָשַׁחַח, *m’shuvah*] from Me” (verse 7). ... “How can I give you up, O Ephraim? ... My heart is turned over within Me, All My compassions are kindled. I will not execute My fierce anger; I will not destroy Ephraim again” (verses 8,9) ... “They will walk after the Lord” (verse 10).
- 61) Hosea 14:4 — “I will heal their apostasy [backsliding, מָשַׁחַח, *m’shuvah*], I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from them.”
- 62) Amos 1:6–13 — “For three transgressions [פָּשָׁע, *pasha*] of Gaza and for four I will not revoke [turn back]. ... I will send fire upon the wall of Gaza and it will consume her citadels ” (verses 6,7; cf. 2:1,4,6 below).
- 63) Amos 2:1–6 — God pronounces the same punishment for Moab, 2:4; Judah and Israel, 2:4,6; that He had for Gaza.
- 64) Amos 8:2,3,7,10,14 — “Then the Lord said to me, ‘The end has come for My people Israel. I will spare them no longer. The songs of the palace will turn to wailing ... Many will be the corpses’ ” (verses 2,3). “‘Indeed, I will never forget any of their deeds’ ” (verse 7). ... “ ‘And I will make it like a time of mourning for an only son, and the end of it will be like a bitter day’ ” (verse 10). “ ‘They will fall and not rise again’ ” (verse 14).
- 65) Zephaniah 1:4–10 — “I will stretch out My hand against Judah ... And I will cut off the remnant of Baal ... and the idolatrous priests. And those who bow down ... to the host of the heaven. ... And those who have turned [drawing] back [גָּדַח, *sug*, cf. Proverbs 14:14] from following the Lord, and those who have not sought the Lord” (verses 4–6) ... “For the day of the Lord is near” (verse 7) ... “And I will punish” (verse 9). “The sound of a cry ... a wail” (verse 10).
- 66) Malachi 3:7 — “‘From the days of your fathers you have turned [רָסַד, *sur*] aside from My statutes ... Return [שׁוּב, *shuv*] to Me, and I will return to you,’ says the Lord of Hosts.”
- 67) Matthew 5:31 — “sends his wife away ... certificate of divorce” (ἀποστασιον, *apostasion*); cf. Deuteronomy 24:1–3 (LXX).
- 68) Matthew 7:25,27 — “yet it [the house] did not fall [επεσεν, *epesen*]” (verse 25). “And it [the house] fell” [επεσεν, *epesen*]” (verse 27).
- 69) Matthew 12:31,32 — “But blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven ... But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.”
- 70) Matthew 13:21; Luke 8:13 — “he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away” (σκανδαλιζεται, *skandalidzetai*, scandalized).
- 71) Matthew 19:7 — “give here a certificate of divorce [βιβλιον αποστασιου, *biblion apostasiou*] and send her way [put away, απολυσαι, *apolusai*]?” Cf. Deuteronomy 24:1–3 (LXX), bill of divorce (βιβλιον αποστασιου, *biblion apostasiou*).
- 72) Matthew 24:9–13 — “many will fall away” [σκανδαλισθησονται, *skandalisthaesontai*, be offended/scandalized] (verse 9) ... “Most people’s love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved” (verses 12,13).
- 73) Mark 4:16,17; Matthew 13:21 — “immediately they fall away” [be offended/scandalized; σκανδαλιζεται, *skandalidzetai*].

- 74) Mark 10:4 — “certificate [bill] of divorce” (βιβλιον αποστασιου, *biblion apostasiou*). Cf. Deuteronomy 24:1–3, “bill of divorce.”
- 75) Luke 8:13 — “received the word with joy ... believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away” [αφιστανται, *aphistantai*] (cf. Acts 19:9).
- 76) Luke 9:62 — “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”
- 77) Luke 13:27,28 — “And He will say ‘I tell you, I do not know where you are from; depart from Me, you evildoers.’ ... there will be weeping and gnashing of the teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out” (author’s translation).
- 78) Luke 20:18 — “Everyone who falls [falling, πεσων, *pesown*] on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter [crush, πεση, *pesae*] him like dust.”
- 79) John 6:66,68 — “Many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore” (verse 66) ... “You have words of eternal life” (verse 68).
- 80) John 15:6 — “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.”
- 81) Acts 5:37 — “and drew away [απεστησε, *apetaese*] some people.”
- 82) Acts 15:38 — “him [Mark] ... who had deserted [αποσταντα, *apostanta*] them in Pamphylia.”
- 83) Acts 19:9 — “But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the people, he withdrew from them and took away [separated, αφωρισεν, *aphowrisen*] the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.”
- 84) Acts 21:21 — “And they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake [falling away from, αποστασιαν, *apostasian*] Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.”
- 85) Romans 1:21 — They were unthankful, became vain in their reasoning, their hearts became darkened, they were undiscerning (verse 21) ... foolish (verse 22) ... idolatrous (verse 23). “Therefore, God gave them over [up]” (verse 24).
- 86) Romans 1:28 — “God gave them over [up] to a depraved [αδοκιμον, *adokimon*] mind (verse 28) ... filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice (verse 29) ... haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil ... unloving, unmerciful” (verses 30,31).
- 87) Romans 11:5,7,20–23 — There is faithful remnant that will receive grace (verse 5), but “the rest were hardened” (verse 7). For unbelief they [the branches] were broken off (verse 20). “If God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell [πεσοντας, *pesontas*] severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in” (verses 20–23).
- 88) Galatians 1:6 — “I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting (μετατιθεσθε, *metatithesste*) Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel.”
- 89) Galatians 5:4 — “You who are justified by law are released/discharged [κατηργηθητε, *kataergaethaete*, used almost exclusively by Paul in the New Testament (25 of 27 times), with the contextual meanings listed below; cf. also TDNT 1:452–454] from Christ — you fell from [εξεπεσατε, *exepesate*, were severed from/were canceled from/were destroyed from] the grace” (author’s translation).
- a) Romans 3:3,31 — nullify, destroy, invalidate
 - b) Romans 4:14 — devalued, invalid, and worthless
 - c) Romans 6:6 — rendered ineffective/powerless
 - d) Romans 7:2 — discharged, liberated, released from [the laws of marriage] — employs the same preposition with the verb: απο (*apo*)
 - e) Romans 7:6 — liberated, released, discharged from the law — employs the same preposition with the verb: απο (*apo*)
 - f) 1 Corinthians 9:27 — “but I buffet my body and lead it captive ... that [after] proclaiming to others I might not be rejected” (author’s translation).
 - g) 1 Corinthians 10:12 — “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall [as the unfaithful of Israel did in the wilderness].”
 - h) 1 Corinthians 1:28 — “that He might nullify [set aside/abolish/abrogate] the things that are.”
 - i) 1 Corinthians 2:6 — brought to nothing/come to nothing
 - j) 1 Corinthians 6:13 — destroy/do away
 - k) 1 Corinthians 13:8 — prophecy and tongues “will be done away [will be abolished/brought to an end/made to cease]” (same verb used 2x).

- l) 1 Corinthians 13:10 — “the partial [imperfect] will be done away with [will be abolished/brought to an end/made to cease].”
 - m) 1 Corinthians 13:11 — “I put away childish things.”
 - n) 1 Corinthians 15:24 — abolishes/negates all rule
 - o) 1 Corinthians 15:26 — death is abolished/abrogated
 - p) 2 Corinthians 3:7,11,13 — the glory from Moses’ face is done away with
 - q) 2 Corinthians 3:14 — the glory from Moses’ face is done away with; also: set aside, removed
 - r) Galatians 3:17 — annulled, abolished, made of no effect
 - s) Galatians 5:11 — removed, annulled, abolished
 - t) Ephesians 2:15 — annulled, cancelled, abolished, removed
 - u) 2 Thessalonians 2:8 — God will bring to nothing the man of lawlessness.
 - v) 2 Timothy 1:10 — abrogate/set aside/destroy/cancel death
 - w) Hebrews 2:14 — destroy [Satan] who holds the power of death
 - x) Luke 13:7 — the bad vine ruins the soil.
- 90) Ephesians 4:18,19 — “darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them because of the hardness of their heart ... having become callous [cast off all feeling], have given themselves over to sensuality.”
 - 91) 2 Thessalonians 2:3,9–12 — “For it [the Day of the Lord] will not come unless the apostasy [*αποστασια*, *apostasia*] comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed.” The man of lawlessness is Satan’s tool to deceive others (verse 9–11). He and all those who follow him will be judged (verse 12; no mention of repentance, grace, forgiveness, restoration).
 - 92) 1 Timothy 1:19,20 — “some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.”
 - 93) 1 Timothy 4:1,2 — “But the Spirit explicitly says that in the latter times some will fall away (*αποστησονται*, *apostaesontai*) from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience.”
 - 94) 1 Timothy 5:15 — “For some have already turned aside to follow Satan” (no additional context provided).
 - 95) 1 Timothy 6:10 — “Some, having lusted after [money] were seduced from the faith, and they themselves were pierced through by many pains” (author’s translation, no additional context provided).
 - 96) 2 Timothy 2:16–20 — “But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some. Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.’ Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.”
 - 97) 2 Timothy 4:3,4 — “they [Timothy’s hearers] will not endure sound doctrine, but ... they will heap up to themselves teachers tickling the ear, and they will turn away the ear from the truth, and will be turned aside to myths” (author’s translation; no further context).
 - 98) 2 Timothy 4:10 — “For Demas deserted me, loving the present age, and went to Thessalonica” (author’s translation; no further context).
 - 99) Hebrews 3:12–18 (see also Numbers 14:26–45; Psalm 95:7–11) — “Watch, brothers, lest perhaps there shall be in anyone of you a heart of evil, unbelief in falling away [*αποστηναι*, *apostaenai*] from the living God (verse 12) ... That not any of you be hardened by the deceit of sin. For we have become sharers of Christ, if truly we hold the beginning of the assurance firm to the end (verses 13,14). For ... some provoked Him ... whose corpses fell in the wilderness. And to whom did He swear they would not enter into His rest, where God judged and destroyed those who refused to do His will” (verses 16–18) (author’s translation).
 - 100) Hebrews 4:11 — “Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.”
 - 101) Hebrews 6:6,8,9 — “And falling away, it is impossible again to renew to repentance (verse 6) ... deemed unfit/disapproved and [is] near a curse, of which the end [is] for burning. But we have been persuaded concerning you, beloved, [of] the better things and having salvation” (verses 8,9, author’s translation).
 - 102) Hebrews 10:26–31 — “For if we are willfully sinning after receiving the full knowledge of the truth, no more sacrifice concerning sins remains, but a fearful expectation of judgment and of zealous fire being about to consume the adversaries. Whoever ignored the law of Moses dies without mercy. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God and has regarded as

- common the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.’ And again, ‘The Lord will judge His people.’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God” (author’s translation, cf. Numbers 15:30; Isaiah 26:11, which also point to the inexorable punishment of those who persist in rebellion).
- 103) Hebrews 12:15–17 — “See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau. ... For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.”
- 104) Hebrews 12:25–29 — “See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away [αποστρεφόμενοι, *apostrephomenoi*] from Him who warns from heaven (verse 25) ... ‘I will shake’ (verse 27) ... so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain (verse 28) ... for our God is a consuming fire” (verse 29).
- 105) James 4:8 — “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse you hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”
- 106) James 5:19,20 — “My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul and from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”
- 107) 2 Peter 2:20–22 — “For if by a full knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ they have escaped the defilements of the world, yet are entangled again and defeated by these, then to them these things [are] worse [than] the first ones. For better it was for them not to have fully known the way of righteousness than fully knowing [it] to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. [It] has happened to them that of the true proverb: ‘A dog turning back upon its own vomit, and a washed sow to wallowing in the mud’ ” (author’s translation).
- 108) 2 Peter 3:17,18 — “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand [that some distort Paul’s letters and the other Scriptures “to their own destruction,” verse 16], be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall [εκπείσητε, *ekpesaete*] from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”
- 109) 1 John 1:9 — “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
- 110) 1 John 2:1,2 — “And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins.”
- 111) 1 John 5:16,17 — “If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.”
- 112) Jude 6,7 — “And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah ... undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.”
- 113) Jude 22,23 — “And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.”
- 114) Revelation 2:4,5 — “You have left your first love. Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and to the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place — unless you repent.”
- 115) Revelation 3:14–19 — “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth” (verses 14–16). ... “I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire ... and white garments ... and eye salve” (verse 18). ... “Therefore be zealous and repent” (verse 19).

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Note

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