

Christ in Prophecy
Apologetics 18: Jeff Kinley on Apostasy in the Church

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Opening

Tim Moore: Christian persecution is increasing in our nation and much of the Church seems to be intent on avoiding it by changing their doctrines to conform with the demands of society. In short, the Church is getting in bed with the world. This gross apostasy is prophesied in the Bible as a sign of the end-times. Stay tuned for an interview with an expert on Christian apostasy.

Part 1

Tim Moore: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. My co-host, Nathan Jones, and I have one of our favorite Bible teachers today, that is Jeff Kinley from Arkansas. Jeff was with us just a few weeks ago and has come back today to step into another arena of Bible prophecy. Jeff, welcome back to Christ in Prophecy.

Jeff Kinley: Thanks, Tim, it is good to be here.

Nathan Jones: Jeff, it is so good to have you on again, sir, you are one of our favorite guest. Tell us a little about the Prophecy Pros first, and then let's get into your book it is called, "The Coming Apostasy" you wrote it with Dr. Mark Hitchcock. And I have a follow up question to that.

Jeff Kinley: Okay. Yeah, the Prophecy Pros is Todd Hampson, another author, illustrator, and myself coming together. And we are basically attempting to reach the next generation with the good news of hope of Bible prophecy.

Nathan Jones: Oh, praise the Lord!

Tim Moore: Well, I think one of the things I did not mention in today's bio is you have expertise even in this arena because you were a student pastor for many years, and you know how to connect to young people. You were sharing with me how at one point they were knocking on your door saying, "Please continue devotionals and discipleship pouring into young believers' lives." So, I appreciate you continuing that ministry.

Jeff Kinley: Thank you. I do believe, and I've seen that it is true over several decades, that young people are a lot more interested in the truth than we are willing to give it to them.

Tim Moore: Wow.

Nathan Jones: And it's funny you have to be around a number of years before you realize how far we've fallen into apostasy. So, apostasy in the topic of this episode of "Christ in Prophecy." And you wrote this back in 2017, "The Coming Apostasy." We are now four years later, would you still say it is the coming apostasy, or have we already reached it?

Jeff Kinley: I think we are well down the road, Nathan, right now. You see when we wrote this book some of the things we referenced in the book have even been exasperated since then. So, we are really seeing an expansion of apostasy in our day.

Nathan Jones: And how would you define apostasy first? If someone is confused about it.

Jeff Kinley: Yeah, absolutely. Well, the word comes from 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, the word simply means to literally to stand apart from something. In other words, something that you were once next to or close to, now you are standing away from it. That is why it is called the falling away, or departing from the faith, that type of thing. So, it is a leaving of the faith, when someone was once close, now they are far away.

Nathan Jones: So, they were doctrinally sound Christians and now they have abandoned biblical Christianity and adopted something else.

Jeff Kinley: Absolutely.

Tim Moore: Well, within the church itself, I mean the title of our program today “Apostasy in the Church,” how big a problem is this? I mean is it an individual Christian problem, or is a corporate problem where churches are drifting, and at an accelerating rate, would you say in today’s day and age?

Jeff Kinley: No, I agree I think it is more of a corporate thing, more of a global thing, actually because people in churches are really opting for expediency. Because what has happened is we’ve seen a huge decrease in church attendance, specifically in America. So, that sends many pastors into panic mode saying, “We’ve got to do whatever it takes to get people into this building.” Instead of going out and being salt and light like the Bible tells to do, because there is not a single verse in the Bible that tells a non-Christian to come to church. But there are lots of verses that tell Christians to go out into the world. We’ve got it backwards, we think that there is an event that we put on on Sunday mornings, we’ve got to make it so exciting, so entertaining, so interesting that we will get people drawn in. So, what has happened is, as you said in the beginning, we begin to compromise some of the values, and scriptural truths that we see in the Bible, those doctrinal truths, in order for the expediency of getting people in the building.

Tim Moore: Wow.

Nathan Jones: I’ve noticed too in church services, just as I got older, and I realized that we’ve shifted from being Bible based and faith based, to being what they called Seeker Sensitive. And I mean we are all seeking unbelievers to come to Christ, but it is like we turned our church service as an equipping, and edifying, and sending organization, to send Christians out, so let’s got to a 101 level, invite non-believers in and hope they get saved, and that rarely ever happens. And it seems like since we’ve adopted the Seeker Sensitive Movement we’ve drifted away from mainstream Christianity. Would you agree?

Jeff Kinley: I would agree. And let’s be honest, we love technology. We use technology. It’s a great tool. But as one pastor recently said many churches today are nothing more than a light and rock show followed by a TED talk, it is something to really to just motivate people for their daily life kind of thing, when the Bible is much deeper than that. The Bible equips us, it gives us everything we need for life and for godliness, Peter wrote. And pastors are opting for entertainment more, instead of equipping the Saints for the work of service. And what is the result of that? We are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

Tim Moore: I’ve known pastors who thought they could not preach if the PowerPoint failed, or if the technology went dark. And I’ve said, “You know what, for many years the Church had no technology, the Word of God was proclaimed just from pulpits all across the land.” Well, I love your second chapter. I think you said that it was written by your co-author Mark Hitchcock, when it talked about a fifth column and that harkens back to 1939 when one of the Spanish generals, General Mola was going to march on Madrid he had four columns of troops and he was asked,

“What is the secret to your campaign?” He said, “It is the fifth column which is already in place.” In other words, there were these rebel sympathizers who were going to create sabotage and do things within the Capital even before he marched in. And you make a very strong point that we have a fifth column, people who are sympathizing with apostasy, and with leading the Church astray who are working right within our midst. Explain how you’ve come to that conclusion.

Jeff Kinley: Yeah, what has happened is we have adopted the world’s values and we think in order to reach the world we have to adopt the world’s values. Now, I’m not talking about again technology, and the way you dress and things like that. I’m talking really about the world’s values. So, what has happened is, is that people within churches have really begun to redefine the whole mission of the Church. What is the Church? What are we here for? And people think it is just to get people to come to the building, but it is to make disciples. I mean that is the whole command that Jesus gave us in the great commission. So, what happens is as we begin to compromise and chip away at really the structural foundation of what the Church is really all about we begin changing our very DNA, Tim. And I think it was my co-author, Mark Hitchcock says, “It is not so much about the ants on the outside, it is about the termites on the inside.” So, we are eating away at the core foundations of the Christian faith from within, and that is what we’re seeing happening.

Nathan Jones: And I think that seems to be accelerating of late even with the central revolution, we have some whole denominations who are embracing gender dysphoria, embracing the homosexual marriage movement, and thinking that they are going to be sensitive to people in the world, but really they are abandoning the core values of the Christian faith, and no longer pointing people to Jesus Christ.

Jeff Kinley: Right, we are accommodating people instead of preaching the Gospel. And Christ asked us to preach the Gospel, with love of course, but to never compromise on that truth. You know when I travel, I’ve been to the Philippines many times, and to China, and England, what I see over there is in some places the Church is actually thriving without all the trappings that we have here today. They’ve realized that really what we need is the fervent love of God, and the Word of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, and that is really what Church is all about. And if we’re just salt and light out in the world, and we have that aroma sometimes of death to people, sometime of life, but if we simply are the Church out in the world that is how people really reach. But here in America we tend to think that we have to put on the show to get people in and make it happen.

Tim Moore: Well, you spoke about personal testimony of doing just that in Little Rock, Arkansas where you established a church to disciple people, and you got a very eclectic group of folks who would not necessarily been exposed to the truth of the Gospel, but they were hungry for the truths that you were revealing just taking them to the Word of God and speaking the truth from scripture.

Jeff Kinley: Absolutely. And you know I don’t really think we have to make the Bible interesting; it is very interesting on its own.

Tim Moore: Certainly.

Nathan Jones: Yes, it is filled with stories.

Jeff Kinley: I mean there is so much. Everything that is fascinating to mankind is found in the Scripture, all we have to do is to be good at communicating it. And if we are good communicators, and we marry that with love, and a real relationships people are going to respond to that. And that is what I found in my own personal experience not only in student ministry, but also in this Gen X church that I pastored for ten years is that people respond if they

know that you really love them, you can tell them the truth. Now, they might not always respond positively to it, but most of the time they do.

Nathan Jones: Well, Jeff, wasn't this all prophesied. I mean you get into Revelation 3 the final phase of the Church Age is the Church of Laodicea, it believes it is rich, but spiritually it is poor.

Jeff Kinley: Yes.

Nathan Jones: To me that is an indicator of the end time church, would you agree?

Jeff Kinley: I would. We think that sometimes activity, and some of those churches in Revelation 2 and 3 had a lot of activity but no life. You think you are alive, but you are really dead. So, really the measure of a church or a congregation is not how many activities we have, what we do during the week, it is what is the spirit of that church, and what is really being communicated. And it was prophesied in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, Paul talks about the apostasy will come before the Day of the Lord. I think we are seeing really the fervency of that happen right now as we are beginning to chip away the foundations of the doctrines, and really the pillars of the faith itself.

Tim Moore: You had a great quote from Billy Graham who one time was criticized because a critic said he was going to set the church back 50 years. He said, "Well, I failed then because my goal is to set the church back 2,000 years," in other words to its very foundations and go back to that core message. Obviously, there are some today who call themselves Evangelical and are pursuing what they have labeled a new Reformation. And even proclaiming there are many routes to God. What is this so called new Reformation, and what about this idea of other paths to God?

Jeff Kinley: Yeah, what is happening is we think we have to redefine what the Church is. And I remember one famous mega-pastor at one point he said, on Oprah in fact, he said, "That we have to stop appealing to 2,000 year old letters to get our truth."

And you've seen lots of that. Some of these pastors who are waffling on things like abortion, and on absolute truth, and things like that. So, what we've seen, Tim are people coming into the church, they are leading the church now, and they are leading people really away from Christ. You know we talked about don't take Christ out of Christmas, they are taking Christ out of Christianity itself, and redefining even who the person of Jesus Christ is, so that He can be more appealing to a fallen mind.

Nathan Jones: I remember around the year 2000, that is when the Emergent Church Movement began, and you don't hear about it much anymore because it is now the church, it is the apostate church, but it seemed to be that's the case, that this driving idea that well, church doesn't work for some reason, and we need to reinvent it. It almost sounds like how we are treating our nation today. Oh, it doesn't work, even though it has worked successfully, we need to reinvent it. Why this desire to reinvent Christianity?

Jeff Kinley: Yeah, because we think that the bigger we are the more godly we are. That the more people we attract, the more God is pleased with us. Jesus disciplined twelve men. And as Charles Spurgeon famously said, "Twelve men is enough to be accountable for on the day of judgment." We think that it has to be huge. It has to be massive. It has to be phenomenal. But if we just focus in on the purity of the Gospel, and that is exactly what Paul warned the Corinthians in Second Corinthians he said, "I fear that you may be strayed away from the simplicity and purity of the Gospel."

Tim Moore: Well, I think you touched on the fact that Jude, even in his epistle recognized that he wanted to write about certain things, but already early in the church believers were drifting away from the truth. And he said, “I have to readdress things because you are already drifting, and you need to contend earnestly for the faith.” I find it interesting in our day and age, so much is about marketing, and so a lot of products are proclaiming themselves to be new and improved, and you find well, they really not that new, and they are definitely not improved. And the Church the Lord called us to be a part of, the Gospel that He called us to proclaim is nothing to be improved upon, it is what needs to be proclaimed as the truth of Scripture.

Jeff Kinley: Yeah, just ask Coca-Cola. They came out with their new formula; people just went into upright rebellion. Yeah, you think about it when Jesus wrote to the church in Ephesus and He said, “You have left your first love.” What did He tell them to do? He says, “Remember, repent, and return.” Return. Return to what? Return to that purity of the faith. There is nothing wrong with the original formula of Christianity. There is nothing wrong with what Jesus Christ did. It was good then; it is still good today. And that is what Jesus has prescribed for the Church, which is as Paul said to Timothy, “The pillar and support of the truth.” We are the truth tellers of this generation.

Tim Moore: Amen, and amen. Well, folks, we are going to take a brief break, and when we return we are going to look at something that Jeff and his co-author Mark Hitchcock have identified as a watershed moment for the Church.

Part 2

Nathan Jones: Welcome back to our interview with Jeff Kinley, the prolific author of the book titled, “The Coming Apostasy,” he wrote with Dr. Mark Hitchcock. Hey, Jeff, on chapter 7 it says, “The Watershed Moment for the Church.” Can you tell us, I don’t want to give your book away, but I think for the topic it would be good to know what it the watershed moment for the church?

Jeff Kinley: Yeah, I think we identified that as the June 2015 decision about homosexual marriage, represented really a hinge-point in our history as a nation. But also, for the Church because it gave the Church an opportunity to begin to address this issue. Unfortunately, instead of standing up for what Scripture says many churches have just simply taken their cues from these worldly decisions out there and forgotten that it is God who determines who we are, not the Supreme Court. The reason why it is such a watershed decision is because it is like a tsunami of values that are coming into our country right now. And the Church has a choice to stand up like Daniel, or Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego for such a time as this like Esther, or to simply assimilate into culture, which is what many churches have done. In fact, this past week I received a letter from an elderly pastor who is in a certain denominational church and he said, “We had to take a vote this week whether or not we were going to leave our denomination over this very issue.” And the reason why I think it is so critical, men, is because this issue essentially redefines not just marriage, but morality, and even mankind itself. If you were Satan and you really wanted to mess with mankind you would teach us or try to influence us to not even know who we are or what we are.

Tim Moore: And that is not just the Obergefell decision, that is the current fixation with gender dysphoria, and transgenderism, people abandoning the very DNA that defines who they are, and what their Creator has declared. And saying, “Well, I will make up my own gender. I’ll just be my own person.” Talk about personal autonomy run amuck.

Jeff Kinley: Absolutely. If gender is a malleable concept, in other words we can just think ourselves into one of the unlimited number of genders that are now out there, then literally we

do not know who we are, because there is no objective truth to tell us you are male or your female, it is not biology or science anymore, which is what the world appeals to, except in this case. And so, what happens is, is that we become a whole planet full of confused people. That is exactly where Satan wants us, because he is going to bring in now his solution, because as long as you serve yourself that is truth, that is righteousness.

Tim Moore: Be your own god. We have pop culture figures that are basically promoting that each and every day.

Nathan Jones: Doesn't it seem then that the root of apostasy is abandonment of truth.

Jeff Kinley: Yeah, it is, and this is why truth is so critical, Nathan, because if you think about it God made the human brain. He made the human mind. He created truth to interact with the mind. That is where it begins; not with our emotions, or with our feelings, it begins with the mind. That is why He wrote the Scripture so that we could engage with our mind, it would transform our hearts, and our whole lives will be changed. But when you take away the fundamental beginning step where truth is no longer objective, and it is no longer applicable or even authoritative in our lives, what happens? You have to think of some other thing to appeal to, and the only other thing you have is yourself. So, that is where we are.

Nathan Jones: And the Bible compares it to shifting sand.

Jeff Kinley: That's right, yeah.

Tim Moore: Certainly. I think the world obviously is going to come more and more against those who are willing to stand on the truth, the rock of God's Word, and declare us to be totally beyond the pale, and we are going to have increased persecution. I love one statement that you made in your book in particular where a person in another context was saying, "Well, in order to work, in order to have a livelihood, in order to live I must do certain things, I must compromise." And the question was returned back to them, "Who says you have to live?" Wow, that is really, that hits you between the eyes because in generations past Christians went to the guillotine, they went to the stake, they were burned, they were persecuted to the death of many multitudes of martyrs because they said, "I cannot compromise, and I will stand on the truth of Christ." And boy, that is a challenge to us in this modern era, who says that you even have to live if you are promised life eternal? Are you going to stand for Christ, or are you going to compromise with everything the world is proclaiming?

Jeff Kinley: That is so true, Tim. I believe that we are in a stage right now where we are witnessing a massive cultural shift. It has come in stages but right now Christians are having to have a huge gut check as to: What do I believe? What defines me as a Christian? Is a Christian just something that someone who believes in Jesus, as a concept or whatever, or does this Jesus have some sort of authority over my life? You know people will say things like, "Well, I don't like theology, I just love Jesus." And my response is, "Which Jesus do you love?"

Nathan Jones: Yeah.

Jeff Kinley: It's the Jesus that is describe in the Scripture.

Tim Moore: Yeah, you give a list of different Jesus. Is it the hipster Jesus? Is it the equality Jesus? The patriotic Jesus? Or one of your own making? I mean which version of Jesus, or do you go to the Jesus of Scripture, the Son of God, and the King of kings, and Lord of lords? And if He is Lord of lords is He lord of your life, or are you just kind of nebulous in your affinity for Him?

Nathan Jones: Well, that is like when we teach Bible prophecy here we bring up the fact that God judges, He judges sin. And we'll get people write in and say, "Not my Jesus. My Jesus would never." And you dedicate a whole chapter to that subject, right?

Jeff Kinley: Yeah, absolutely, and the thing is He's not my Jesus, He's Jesus. I get on board His agenda; I don't ask Him to get aboard my agenda. And that's what we are seeing right now. I mean we have been so blessed in this country, we've had culture to have our back, we've even had government to have our back for so many years. But now, culture and government are beginning to turn on us. So, Christians are going to have to make some really tough decisions; denominations, churches, pastors, and individual Christians are going to have to say, "What do I really believe? And what is it going to cost me to be a disciple?"

Tim Moore: I love the quote that you have on page 64-65 and I think we've used it before with William Booth who founded the Salvation Army and he had a prophetic word, he predicted that by the end of the 20th Century, and we are just past that point, he said, that the Church in America would be preaching Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, and Heaven without Hell. And certainly, we have arrived at that moment. You don't hear those topics in most churches, repentance, regeneration, Hell, that's not very seeker sensitive. So, have we gotten to that point?

Jeff Kinley: Well, we have, and Paul also prophesied that in 1 Timothy he said, "There will come a time, the Spirit says explicitly where some will fall away from the faith." And then later, of course, he wrote to Timothy as you recall when he says, "The time will come when they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires to tickle their ears." In other words, give them what they want. Make them feel good about themselves. Let them have their best life right now, right? I mean that is what we are seeing right now. And you know it sounds good, it sounds nice, it sounds loving, it sounds tolerant, but all these are Christian values that Satan is hijacking, redefining for his own purposes, and then putting a Christian label on top of it.

Tim Moore: I think John MacArthur said, "If you are convinced in the scope of eternity that you can have your best life now, you probably are."

Jeff Kinley: That's right.

Tim Moore: This is as good as it is going to get, because you are not pursuing the truth that will lead to eternal life with the Lord God.

Well, whatever danger signs should we be watching for in the Church? An individual believer who wants to be faithful, wants to be a faithful member and disciple others and be disciplined themselves, what warning signs should they be looking for? And how can we guard against apostasy?

Jeff Kinley: Yeah. I think the biggest sign is what is happening in the pulpit. When I say the pulpit that is sort of an old fashioned term, but what is happening upfront on Sunday mornings? What is the pastor actually preaching? What is he leading you to? Is he actually giving you just good thoughts for the week, kind of like a horoscope or a devotional? Or is he really equipping you in the Word? Do people have Bibles in their hands anymore at your church? Are people getting in the Word? Is he teaching you to be a self-feeder? Because I believe, gentlemen, that the greatest need in the Church today is biblical discernment. Christians today are much like my kids when they were small. And the characteristics of young children is they will put anything in their mouth, they'll touch anything, they'll walk anywhere, they have no idea what is going on. But when you grow and mature you learn what the dangers are out there. You learn how to feed

yourself. So, that is what we need in the Church today we need biblical discernment, and it begins with pastoral leadership.

Tim Moore: Wow, you know you just reminded me I have two grandsons, so far, one is three and the other is one-year-old, and the three year old has been trained not to leave anything laying around because he knows his brother is going to pick it up and put it in his mouth. And he'll say, "Oh, that is a choking hazard." And he'll remove it. And yet, we live in a society that there are choking hazards all around, and undiscerning people are just putting everything into their mouth, filling their minds. And we as Christians have to be discerning, and sometimes in a church setting we have to be very careful to guard against choking hazards for those around us who may not yet have the kind of discernment that they need to gain as they are discipled.

Jeff Kinley: That's absolutely true. And you know, according to George Barna only 19% of Christians read their Bibles every day. Eighteen-percent never read them at all. And some 20% read them once a week. So, with sort of biblical literacy, you talk about a pandemic, that is what we are experiencing right now. With that kind of illiteracy is it any wonder that Christians are just putting whatever philosophy, and values into their mouth, and taking their cues once again from the world.

Nathan Jones: Isn't it ironic that we live in a time period with so much education at our fingertips. You know you don't have to go to the church to read the one Bible that is chained at the pulpit.

Jeff Kinley: Right.

Nathan Jones: We've got Bibles and apps and stuff, but it seems like we are now a mile-wide and an inch-deep. How can we combat that?

Jeff Kinley: Yeah, well we combat that by getting back to the Word, and it begins again with leadership. I don't think that it is going to happen just on its own. There have always been leaders in the church to lead them. There have always been reformers. There have always been people to lead revivals. And that begins with books that you write. With shows like this that you produce. With podcasts that you do. We've got to get the message out to people and help them know that there is another way, a deeper way, a better way to live the Christian life.

Nathan Jones: Excellent.

Tim Moore: Well, I love the one reference that you make in 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 14, Paul has warned about those who would stray from the truth. And then he goes, and he says to Timothy he says, "But you." In other words, regardless of what everyone else is doing, wherever they are going astray he says, you need to do these things. But you need to live as I have taught you, and as you have learned and have been convicted throughout your life. So, we would say regardless of what the world is doing those who are watching today, but you, need to heed the words of Scripture and stay grounded to the rock, lest you cast yourself adrift in a sea of confusion and oblivion.

Jeff Kinley: Absolutely. As we see the signs of the times converging together that tells us we are living in the last days. And as 2020 was a heck of a year, 2021 might not be better, who knows? But we all know we are still leading that direction, so therefore Christians have to be grounded, build their lives on the solid rock of Jesus Christ.

Tim Moore: And as long as we have breath we must contend earnestly for the truth, once for all handed down from the saints to us and handed to a next generation. I love your message

that resonates even in the heart of young people, Millennials and so, if you know the truth, share it with those who are around you each and every day.

Closing

Nathan Jones: Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy. Folks, I hope you pick up, “The Coming Apostasy” on all the major bookstores. How can, Jeff, people connect with your podcast, the Prophecy Pros Podcast?

Jeff Kinley: Yeah, go to prophecyprospodcast.com, Todd Hampson and I are helping the next generation connect with Bible prophecy and have hope and confidence in these post-Christian times.

Tim Moore: Well, Jeff I want to thank you for being us today. And I would say to those who are watching today, but you, need to contend earnestly for the faith that has been handed down to us. Well, folks that is our program for today. I hope it has been a blessing to you, and I hope the Lord willing you will be back with us next week. Until then this is Tim Moore speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries saying, “Godspeed.”

End of Program