



The Great Apostasy: Considered In The Light Of Scriptural And Secular History

James E Talmage

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The Great Apostasy: Considered In The Light Of Scriptural And Secular History James E Talmage **THE GREAT APOSTASY CONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURAL AND SECULAR HISTORY**

By James E. Talmage

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Chapter 1 Excerpt

1. A belief common to all sects and churches professing Christianity is that Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of the human race, established His Church upon the earth by personal ministration in the meridian of time. Ecclesiastical history, as distinguished from secular history, deals with the experiences of the Church from the time of its establishment. The conditions under which the Church was founded first claim our attention. 2. At the beginning of the Christian era, the Jews, in common with most other nations, were subjects of the Roman empire. — (See Note 1, end of chapter.) They were allowed a considerable degree of liberty in maintaining their religious observances and national customs generally, but their status was far from that of a free and independent people. 3. The period was one of comparative peace,— a time marked by fewer wars and less dissension than the empire had known for many years. These conditions were favorable for the mission of the Christ, and for the founding of His Church on earth. 4. The religious systems extant at the time of Christ's earthly ministry may be classified in a general way as Jewish and Pagan, with a minor system — the Samaritan — which was essentially a mixture of the other two. The children of Israel alone proclaimed the existence of the true and living God; they alone looked forward to the advent of the Messiah, whom mistakenly they awaited as a prospective conqueror coming to crush the enemies of their nation. All other nations, tongues, and peoples bowed to pagan deities, and their worship comprised naught but the sensual rites of heathen idolatry. Paganism —(See Note 2, end of chapter.) was a religion of form and ceremony, based on polytheism — a belief in the existence of a multitude of gods, which deities were subject to all the vices and passions of humanity, while distinguished by immunity from death. Morality and virtue were unknown as elements of heathen service; and the dominant idea in pagan worship was that of propitiating the gods, in the hope of averting their anger and purchasing their favor.

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