

Carolyn Roth Ministry

Volume 4, Issue 1

Newsletter



Neglect

I admit it! I have been neglectful! The last quarter of 2019, I did not write a newsletter; but, I have an excellent reason. I am taking graduate theology courses at Liberty University.

No, I do not want to get another degree. I only want to learn. Generally, I only focus on my study if I have an external driver. The driver in this instance is paying the money to take a course. Fall 2019, I took Systematic Theology 1 and this spring I am going to take Systematic Theology 2.

Systematic Theology 2 has more reading than I ever imagined. Between the end of fall semester and the beginning of winter semester, I am getting a running start on the hundreds of pages of assigned readings.

One book is about believer's baptism instead of infant baptism. Another is titled, "Can Gays be Christians." A final one is "The Judgement Seat of God." I am bound to learn something from these three books alone, but they are not the major text book. It is Erickson's Christian Theology.

New Church

Beginning October 2019, Bruce and I started to attend a different church. It is Cave Spring United Methodist Church. I felt comfortable in it primarily because so many of my relatives in Pennsylvania attend United Brethren church which have similar doctrine to the United Methodists. When we go to PA we attend these churches. Bruce is in love with the sermons. We anticipate joining the church this winter. The church has a library that I can give my books. What more could a woman want?

Devolvement

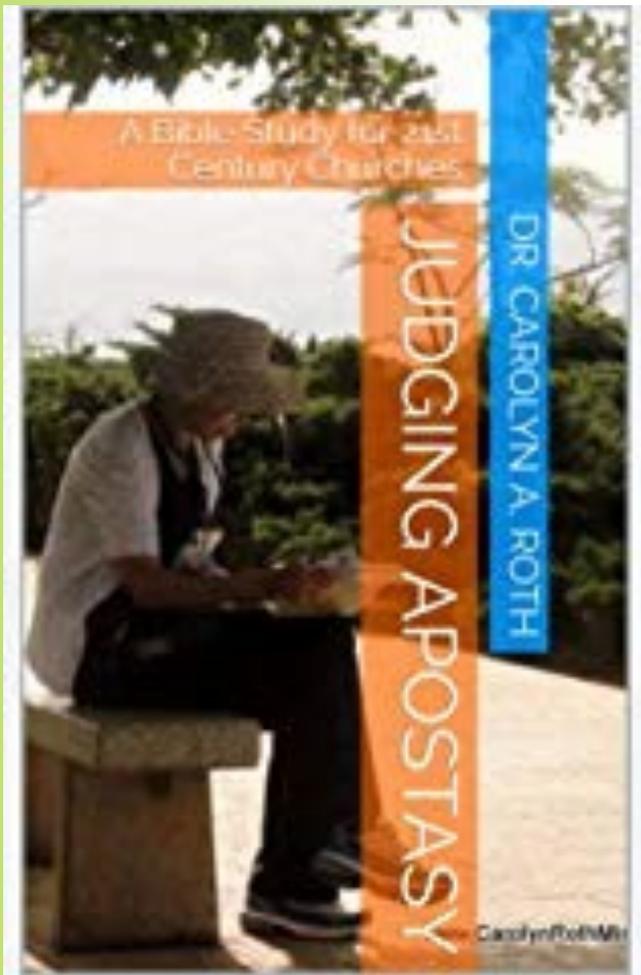
Historically, the domesticated grape vine was associated with Israelites. In Jeremiah's allegory (Jeremiah 2:21), Israelites devolved from being a choice vine to a strange (corrupt, foreign) vine. The alteration between a choice versus strange vine occurred because Israelites turned from God.

In the Ancient Near East, the grape vine was the *Vitis vinefera*. *Vitis orientalis* was the wild grape. The wild grape vine bears red fruit, like red currants. These small red, sometimes black, berries have an acid taste and are considered worthless. In contrast, the domesticated grapevine produces succulent, large grapes.

Degenerate means immoral, corrupt, perverted, wicked, or deteriorated. How did it happen that God's chosen people, who were to be his light in the world, devolve to such an extent? Israelites made a conscious decision to stop serving God. On high hills and under spreading trees, Israelites set up idols.

Jeremiah wrote that despite Israelites turning their backs on God. When trouble hit, Israelites begged God to save them. Jeremiah recorded God's response: get the gods you made yourself to come and save you in your trouble.

In the USA, most Christians don't relate to Jeremiah's message. They don't set up idols under trees and worship them. USA citizens would never act like Israelites acted! Most assuredly, they haven't degenerated! The USA is a Christian nation. Or, maybe not. Think about both scenarios, i.e., degenerating into a strange vine and remaining as a strong, productive vine. The distance between the two isn't all that far.



Judge Elon

Elon is the judge without a story. Elon was a judge over Israel between 1073 to 1063 BC and was buried in tribal lands of Zebulun. The Bible recorded less information about Elon than any of the 11 other judges over Israelites. Probably, he was a judiciary rather than a war leader as no national enemies were associated with his name in Judges.

All scripture is given by God (2 Timothy 3:16). The scripture is valuable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training Christians to be more righteous. What can we learn from this miniscule portion of scripture about Elon? How can Elon's life help individuals and churches to recognize and repudiate apostasy.

When congregates meet Elon in heaven and ask him what he did during his time as judge, Elon may tell them that he did his duty as a God-ordained judge.

Are there parallels between Elon's actions as a judge in Israel and apostasy in a church? Can apostasy be present in a church or in congregates that do nothing apart from what is expected of them? If a church does the biblical expectation, are those actions sufficient to avoid accusations of rebellion against God? Can our interpretation or a pastor's interpretation of the Bible lead to apostasy?

Think of the alternative to Judges 12:11. The verse could have described Elon as a corrupt judge, i.e., his judgements based on petitioner's ability to pay or bribe him. Judges could have said that Elon didn't enact Mosaic Law when he gave judgements. The writer didn't draw either conclusion. All that was written was that Elon did his duty as judge. He introduced no sin or apostasy into his decisions as judge.

In the first quarter of the twenty-first century, Christian commentators rarely focuses on what churches do right. More often the critique is what is lacking in the body of Christ. The good news is that Christ knows churches which have kept God's word and not denied God's name (Revelations 3:7-13). Regardless of the size, wealth, or influence if these churches are like Elon, they do their duty where and when God placed them.

My latest published book used the 12 judges identified in the Bible (book of Judges) to demonstrate how the ancient Israelites and congregates today identify and push back on apostasy in the church. This book contains actual events in the life of 21st century church. It is a must read for all of us.

Cost of book on Amazon is \$10.00 plus \$4.00 shipping and handling; I sell books for the same price from my website and get to keep more of the royalties. I do not mail outside of continental United States.

Thanks!

Happy New Year

Contact Details

Dr. Carolyn A. Roth

Carolyn Roth Ministry

CarolynRothMinistry@gmail.com