

How Fast is the Falling Away of the Church Accelerating?

Second Thessalonians 2:1-3 clearly states that the Second Coming of Jesus will not occur until many Christians will leave the faith and turn away from their belief in Christ. A new Gallup poll reveals that the “falling away” of Christians may be accelerating.

The poll, conducted in May and released in July that surveyed 1,011 adults nationwide, shows that Americans who believe in God, angels, heaven, hell and Satan have fallen to their lowest levels recorded over the past two decades. The poll shows that belief in God and heaven have made the steepest dips.

Gallup Inc. is a secular American analytics and advisory company based in Washington, D.C.

Second Thessalonians 2:1-3 reads, “Now, brothers, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and concerning our gathering together unto Him, we ask you not to let your mind be quickly shaken or be troubled, neither in spirit nor by word, nor by letter coming as though from us, as if the day of Christ is already here. Do not let anyone deceive you in any way. For that Day will not come unless a falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of destruction.”

In 2001, 90% of Americans were recorded as believing in God. Belief in heaven was at 83%; belief in angels was at 79%; belief in hell was at 71%; and belief in the devil was at 68%.

The new survey reveals that 74% of respondents said they believe in God; 69% say they believe in angels; 67% said they believe in heaven; and only 58% said they believe in the devil.

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According to 2022 Barna Group survey, 27% percent of Americans expressed their cause for doubt from past experiences with a religious institution. Those who have distanced themselves from Christianity, or the church, said that the “hypocrisy of religious people” was the top driver of doubt for them and is most likely driving the dip in the above numbers for Americans.

“As the percentage of believes has dropped over the past two decades, the corresponding increases have occurred mostly in nonbelief, with much smaller increases in uncertainty,” wrote Megan Brennan, a research consultant at Gallup. “This is true for all but belief in God, which has seen nearly equal increases in uncertainty and nonbelief.”

The Gallup poll also revealed that most individuals who seldom or never attend church also believe in God and angels, but less than half believe in heaven, hell and the devil.

Not surprisingly, individuals who attended church most often—and also Republicans—were more likely to believe in each of the five religious entities.

Wealth, the poll says, also plays a huge part in the belief in each of the entities. The poll revealed that Americans with annual household incomes under \$40,000 were found more likely to believe in God, angels, heaven, hell and Satan than those households whose incomes were of at least \$100,000 or more.

Adults without a college degree are more likely than college graduates to believe in each of the five entities, which is also not surprising considering the liberality of many institutions of higher learning, including many Christian colleges and universities.

Belief is not as strong in the 18 to 34 age group, more than half of those people expressed in all entities except the devil. Only 49% of adults age 18 to 34 said they believe in the devil, and only 58% of women surveyed say they believe in the devil.

✖ Members of those groups most likely have never read certain Scriptures of the Bible, including 1 John 3:8: “Whoever practices sin is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was revealed, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

Other studies, such as ones conducted at Lifeway Research in 2021, reveal that only 56% of Americans believe hell is real.

“The doctrine of hell, just like the doctrine of heaven, has staying power because it is so clearly grounded in Scripture and so prominent in the teachings of Jesus,” says Chris Morgan, professor of theology at California Baptist University and editor of several works on hell. “it is not a product of a culture or some holdover relic from American fundamentalism. Hell is what the historic and global church has consistently affirmed.”

*Read **Bill Wiese's** “23 Minutes in Hell” and awaken to the realities of hell, the afterlife and the urgency to live for Christ in your short time here on earth. {eo}*

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