

Meaning of Apostasy Part 1

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[0 : 00] Right, we're on. So we did a study last time that looked at the outline case for a pre-tribulation view of the rapture.

I would like to reiterate that although I'm going to carry on for a few more weeks with this making it clear what the case is, because we only did the outline last week. We will be looking at the other views. And Malcolm particularly has asked that he gets to do a session.

So I'm going to honor that and Malcolm will get to do a session or even two if he needs to or whatever. So it's not. Yes, it does seem more one sided because we're looking at my view and I'm actually responsible for what the church teaches.

So I have to take responsibility for what is taught. But that said, there are lots of other views and some very scholarly people that hold them.

And so one one shouldn't just disparage them unless there is a good reason to do so. And so by the end of the session, I'm hoping that we will have a clear view of what the Bible says and a clear view that we'll settle on.

[1 : 12] And by we, I mean all of us. And that might be a bit adventurous, given that we all have particular preferences and predilections. But I'm going to look, as I mentioned last week, I'm going to look today at the scripture that Malcolm pointed out, which was the scripture that says the apostasy must come first.

Hence the title on the screen. Just a brief recap. We've looked at what the rapture is, this period of history where Jesus removes his church from the earth, along with the restrainer, the Holy Spirit, whose restraint is removed from the earth.

And we also know that the rapture introduces, not necessarily the next day, but it happens.

And then after that, the great tribulation begins. At least that's the view of those who hold a pre-tribulation view. Those who don't will have the great tribulation beginning in a different place, if you like.

But what we looked at last time was how the great tribulation is the last seven years of Jewish history, which will culminate in the second coming of Jesus Christ, as opposed to the rapture.

[2 : 30] And that that is the last of Daniel 70 weeks. So there is a there is a seven year period of history owed to the Jews from the prophecy in Daniel 9, beginning at verse 24.

We pre-trib rapturists concluded that the whole of the tribulation represents an outpouring of God's wrath. Now, there is an argument about that, but we'll address that argument in future sessions.

But we did learn that according to the scriptures, the church is not to be the target of God's wrath and therefore won't be here when it happens. And today I want to look at 2 Thessalonians 2 and verse 3.

And in fact, I'm only going to look at half of verse 3, where we read that the rapture cannot happen until after the apostasy. And this is going to be a little bit technical, but I make no apology for that.

And you'll see why as we go along. But what the common translation of that is, the apostasy is that the church itself becomes doctrinally unsound and strays from the faith.

[3 : 56] And so the word apostasy is used to describe a strain from the faith of the church. So that's, and this is going to take two sessions, unless I really race through it.

And I don't want to do that because it's likely to kick up a lot of questions. There is an alternative translation to the word apostasy. And it's, first of all, let's turn to that scripture.

So it's 2 Thessalonians 2 and verse 3. And if we just set the context by reading the initial verses.

So the letter expresses itself as being from Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We are always to give thanks to God for you. I'm reading the wrong chapter, aren't I?

[5 : 02] But it's a good introduction. We are always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as it's only fitting because your faith is greatly enlarged and the love of each of you towards one another grows even greater.

Paul wrote two lessons, two letters to the Thessalonians, and he wrote them. He went, we'll look at it in more detail in a moment, but he went to Thessalonica.

And from what we can deduce from the scriptures, he was there about three or four weeks, maybe a bit more. It's a bit difficult to be sure. But he was there for three Sabbaths and they kicked him out.

And he then, by devious route, he went to Berea and he got kicked out of there. And then he went to Athens and then eventually finished up in Corinth. And when he was in Corinth, he then wrote to the Thessalonians from Corinth these two letters.

And so we'll be in these two letters quite a bit. But in chapter two, it starts. Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him.

[6 : 13] So this is about, as far as I can tell, the rapture. It's about when the church is gathered to Jesus, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

And the words, the day of the Lord always describe this period of the great tribulation. So it's the day that the Lord brings his wrath on the earth and eventually comes back to the earth.

And this is the verse that we're going to deal with tonight. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come. So what will not come? The day of the Lord will not come.

It will not come unless the apostasy comes first. And the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction. So. This word apostasia, apostasy, is a transliteration of the Greek word apostasia, which is in this passages in the noun form.

And it simply means if you actually look up a definition in the Bible dictionary, it means a departure. That's all it means. Now, it's like any word.

[7 : 31] It needs to be understood in context. And so what the Bible translators have done here in the context is they've they've looked upon the departure as a departure from faith or a departure from God's word.

However, it was not always thus. In fact, that change only came into Bible translations when the King James Bible was written. And it used to just read a departure or a departing.

And we'll go into this in more detail in a moment. But it's important to understand. You see, if this if this word means a departure from faith, then that gives us all sorts of problems in deciding what qualifies as a suitable departure from faith that you could treat as a sign.

Paul has said to the Thessalonians, it can't happen till the departure comes. If it's a departure from faith, how are they going to recognize that? How are they going to recognize a departure from faith when actually departures from faith have existed since the church has existed since you could argue that existed since the Garden of Eden?

But what makes a suitable, significant departure from faith that would make you go, oh, this must be it. This is a sign that we're due for the rapture.

[8 : 58] On the other hand, if this departure isn't a departure from faith, but a departure from the earth or a departure from the world, if it's a synonym for the rapture, then it's very obvious, isn't it?

Because you're not any longer here. You've gone. You've gone.

And so we'll see. So let's have a bit of background. And if we go to Acts 17. So Acts 17, and we're going to read the first 10 verses, which gives us Paul's situation when he visited the Thessalonians before he later wrote to them.

So now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica and there was a synagogue of the Jews.

And according to Paul's custom, he went to them. And for three Sabbaths, he reasoned with them from the scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead and saying, this Jesus who I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.

[10 : 37] And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women. But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the marketplace, formed a mob and set the city in uproar.

And attacking the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people. When they did not find them, they began dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, these men who have upset the world have come here also.

And Jason has welcomed them. And they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king, Jesus. They stirred up the crowds and the city authorities who heard these things.

And when they had received a pledge from Jason and the others, they released them. And a pledge is kind of, it's a bit like paying for bail, really.

They made a pledge and paid some money, which they would forfeit if they didn't carry out their pledge. But let's read on a bit.

[11 : 49] Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. And when they arrived, they went to the synagogue of the Jews. Now, these were more noble minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

That's what we should be like. Therefore, many of them believed, along with the number of prominent Greek women and men. But when the Jews of Thessalonica found out that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Berea also, they came there as well, agitating and stirring up the crowds.

Then immediately the brethren sent Paul out to go as far as the sea, and Silas and Timothy remained there. Now, those who escorted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they left.

And then you've got a passage about Paul at Athens. And if you then go, I won't take time to read the rest of that chapter, but if you go across to chapter 18, after these things, he left Athens and went to Corinth.

Now, it was in Corinth that he wrote his letter to the Thessalonians. So that just gives you a history of what happened. And when he got to Corinth, which was probably about a year after he left the Thessalonians behind, might have been less, could have even been a bit more, we're not certain.

[13 : 29] But that's where these letters were written. So these were among Paul's earliest letters.

As far as we know, the first letter Paul wrote was to the Galatians. And then he wrote one and two Thessalonians. And that becomes important later on.

It was an early letter. And we'll see why that's important as we progress. But it wasn't at a time when he was talking about great fallings away, for example.

It was a time when he was talking about the rapture of the church. So the context of the letters is he's talking to them about the rapture of the church. Now, what happened, we just read, go back to 2 Thessalonians.

So he's gone to the Thessalonians. And you may come across churches, you may have already come across churches, that when it comes to talking about end times and the rapture and things like that, they say, oh, we don't discuss that here because it's not important.

[14 : 47] But to Paul, it was important that he went to, as we just read, he went to Thessalonica and spoke in the synagogue for three Sabbaths.

So pessimistically, if he arrived and was there a week before he spoke in the synagogue, and then he spoke for three weeks, and then sometime during the following week, they kicked him out, which is a bit of an assumption, but it's there and thereabouts.

Then we're looking at a maximum of five weeks. And Paul thought it was important in those five weeks to talk about the rapture to these Christians.

So I'm with Paul, we should talk about it. He's far better placed than I ever was to make a really good fist of talking about it. So, but nevertheless, we should discuss it and we should get to grips with it.

And if we're wrong, we should say, I'm obviously wrong. And if we're not, we should say we're not. And actually, if we're not sure, we should say we're not sure. But it's there for us to understand.

[15 : 57] And there are lots of benefits to understanding it partially. I would venture to suggest that whether it's a pre-trib or a mid-trib or a post-trib rapture, at the time, if it's a post-trib rapture, it'll be flipping uncomfortable for all of us.

However, it doesn't change a lot in the great scheme of things. Eternally, it doesn't change a lot. However, I think for me, and I don't hold a pre-trib view because I think it makes me feel warm fuzzies.

I just think that God would not do this to his bride. That's another story. So we'll get to that in future weeks.

But at the moment, I want to focus on the Greek here because I think it makes some very, very important points. So he had visited the Thessalonians.

He had written them a letter. He'd written them two letters about somewhere between six and 18 months after the event. And in those letters, in chapter two, in the first letter, so go to 1 Thessalonians.

[17 : 22] In chapter two, verses seven to 20, he says, You are witnesses and so is God.

How devoutly and uprightly and blameless we behave towards you believers. And people should be able to say that of us. They should be able to recognize that whether we agree or disagree, we are not spiteful and we are not thieves in disguise.

We're not out for their money and all of that. Just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

For this reason, we also constantly thank God that when you receive the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you also endured the same suffering at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and drove us out.

[19 : 23] They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they might be saved with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins.

But wrath has come upon them to the uttermost. But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short while in person, not in spirit, were all the more eager with great desire to see your face, for we wanted to come to you.

I, Paul, more than once, yet Satan hindered us. For who is our hope or joy or crown or exaltation? And is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his coming?

For you are our glory and joy. And I read that for us to become aware of just how intensely Paul loved these people and how he wanted to get back to see them. He didn't want just to write them letters.

He wanted to go to them, but had been hindered from doing so. And in the end, they sent Timothy. And so in chapter three, verse two, and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith so that no one will be disturbed by these afflictions.

[20 : 42] For you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. So Timothy was sent to encourage them. For indeed we, verse four, for indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction.

And so it came to pass. As you know, for this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith for fear that temper might have tempted you. Sorry, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you and our labor would be in vain.

But now that Timothy has come to us from you and has brought us good news from you, he has brought us good news of your faith and love that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you.

So Paul has kept an eye on this crowd from afar and he sent Timothy there and Timothy's come back with a good report. So, so far so good.

He's been there, he's written, he's commended them on their faith and Timothy has sent a good report of their faith. And then if we go to chapter 413, there's a passage there that, but we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

[22 : 10] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of our Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout and with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up, harpazo, raptured, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

And so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. Now from this passage, and this is not me making something like, you can read this in just about any book on the rapture.

From what we can understand, they had become distressed because they didn't understand what would be the fate of believers who had died. And they were being told that they would be raptured.

But what about these people who've already died? What about them? So Paul is writing specifically, and this is an important point for context. He's writing specifically to put their mind at rest about the fate of these people who've already died and are going to be raised from the dead and are going to lead the way into the rapture ahead of those of us who are alive on the earth.

[23 : 34] So it's a... Paul is, if you like, he's doing a review board on what he's already taught them.

And he's reiterating that they don't need to worry about those who've gone before. They will be raised and they will be raptured just like we will. So he's comforting them about their future and about the rapture.

And there's a whole other discussion about would it be comforting to know that you were going through the greatest part of the tribulation and we'll come to that another day.

So... And then carrying on in chapter 5, As to the times and epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you, for you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord...

So that's the great tribulation leading up to the second coming. The day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying peace and safety, then destruction will come upon them suddenly, like labour pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.

[24 : 50] But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief. For you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness.

So then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. For those who sleep, do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night, but since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with him.

Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are also doing. So it kind of sets the scene that Paul is clarifying these end times for them.

And amongst it, he says, we are not destined for wrath. And you'll know from the view that I hold, and you'll hear, I'm sure you'll hear Malcolm express another view on the wrath in a future session.

[26 : 03] But from what I can see, the whole of the seven-year period is wrath, and we're not destined to receive God's wrath.

That's the way it reads to me. And he is encouraging them to believe that, and he is comforting them with that belief. And I think that's quite important.

So he writes the first letter, and then we go to 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2. And I think probably one of the main reasons he wrote the second letter, he says this in chapter 2, starting at the beginning of chapter 2.

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him, so same event, right, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy, the departure, comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.

[27 : 26] So what we can tell from reading that is that they were perturbed because they'd received a letter that purported to be from Paul. And he said, don't you lose your composure because of some letter that purports to be from us.

I've already taught you these things. Hence, these two letters are both reviewing what Paul has already taught them. This is not new ground for the Thessalonians. It is a reminder of what he said when he was with them.

And that will become more obvious as we continue. So they had this forged letter purporting to be from Paul. And the reason it was disturbing them is because they were being told, you're already in the day of the Lord.

It's already happened. Now, I've had this from both sides, from Christian brothers. I've had a Christian brother who said, the life on the earth is so terrible, we must already be in the tribulation.

And I'm thinking, you just don't know how bad the tribulation is going to be if you believe that. I've also had a brother, and he is a brother, and I love him to bits.

[28 : 32] But he tells me Satan's already bound. And that's an... He's got a very long chain, Malcolm, very long chain.

But this is a brother who loves the Lord with all his heart, but he is amillennial in his beliefs, and he believes we're already in the millennium, and Satan's already bound. And I said, if you're right, I'm really disappointed.

So this second letter was written to address the Thessalonians' disquiet at the idea that the rapture, not the rapture, the second coming, or sorry, the great day of the Lord was already in progress.

That period of great tribulation had already started. And you could understand why they would be convinced of that, because they were being persecuted. But they weren't receiving God's wrath.

They were receiving... Under persecution, they'd be receiving men's wrath, mostly because people didn't want to bow their knee to Jesus. So in that first letter, I think Paul had already indicated a pre-tribulation rapture because of his statement, these things will not overtake you like a thief, and God has not destined you for wrath.

[29 : 56] So there is something in that that I believe sits with a pre-trib rapture and I'm going to wait for Malcolm to show me how it doesn't.

Because I think that's fair, don't you? You look forward to that, Tony. On a future... All I'm going to do, Ray, is tell you, hopefully a few others here, why I believe what I believe.

Yes. I'm not trying to compete in any way with what you're saying. All I would like to do... Is put forward your view. ...why I believe what I believe.

And the natural outcome of that is that we'll all get to measure them and see, well, where are the conflicts and where are the contradictions, if indeed there are any. Because there aren't any contradictions in God's word.

And so, if we're left with contradictions, we need to find which is the path that doesn't have the contradictions. It's as simple as that. And I wasn't suggesting you were in competition at all.

[31 : 02] I just think if you believe you've got the truth then that's what you'll speak. And... I wanted to just make that point quite clear. I'm not...

I've always understood that. I don't... I don't believe you have shaky motives at all. So, in this second letter you've got Paul revisiting the matter.

See, in the first letter where he said God has not destined us for wrath, what he's saying by implication is what's coming is a time of wrath and you're not appointed to wrath so why are you worrying about it?

Or another way of putting it would be you're still here, aren't you? If you're still here you can't be in that time of wrath because you're not appointed to wrath unless the Bible is telling you lies.

So, that's the way I would read this. So then in the second letter Paul's revisiting the same matter and in chapter 2 he's evidently responding to this message carried by a forged letter about our gathering together to him and it's in that context that he says it cannot come it being the great day of the Lord cannot come unless the apostasy comes first.

[32 : 24] Now, as far as I know there's going to be no agreement up to that point. this is where the difficulty could begin. What is it that can't come before the apostasy comes?

Our gathering together unto him. So, no argument with that. We know without doubt that the apostasy will come after the apostasy sorry, we know that the rapture will come after the apostasy.

That's clear, isn't it? So, what we need to work out then is, is this an apostasy in the sense of falling away from faith, which is a legitimate apostasy, it's not, it's a common use of the word apostasy, or is it a synonym for the rapture as in, is it a departure from sound doctrine or is it a departure from the planet?

And that is an interesting one to work out, and there are lots of interesting facts in it that lead me to believe it's the latter. Can I prove it beyond doubt?

No. I certainly can prove it to the extent that it has convinced me, and I know that I'm not alone in that conviction. Arnold Fuchtenbaum rewrote this portion of the footsteps of the Messiah because of his change of view to this view, the view that I'm about to talk about.

[33 : 55] Some of you may have come across a pastor called Andy Woods, and he is someone who expresses this view and backs it up with an awful lot of scholarship, but there are others.

Pastor J.D. Farag holds this view. Thomas Ice is another man who writes widely on this subject, expresses this view. There are others.

We'll come to some of them. It must be said though, it is a minority view. I would be lying if I said this is a view that goes everywhere, but then we are in a minority view as non-Calvinists as well.

I'm not afraid of being in a minority view. If a thousand people say a wrong thing, that doesn't make it right. So we're in a minority view, but then you will always be in a minority view in a world that is becoming godless.

So don't be afraid of the minority. And some of the people in the minority are incredible scholars. And you look at what they've done and you look at what they say and you think, two things.

[35 : 03] Number one, I feel dwarfed by this man's intellect. And number two, I don't understand how he could get it that wrong. And that's not because I'm puffed up, it's because the Bible says something differently from what he's saying.

And it's a very simple, you don't need an ology to work that one out. If it says something different from the Bible, it must be wrong. And the first point I'd like to make is that being as Paul is stating this as something they can take to the bank, something they can hang their hat on, something they can say, I will know that the rapture is happening because of X.

I question how you can do that with an apostasy from faith because it's happening all the time and you get big ones and little ones and worldwide ones and narrow ones.

But first of all, an apostasy is a process. It's very hard to distinguish when it starts and when and if it finishes. So it's very difficult to go, there it is, that's our sign.

There's another point here and that is, the thing about the rapture is it is a signless event. There is no sign that you're told to look forward to. We went through that in the first session.

[36 : 25] These two groups of people, well three really if you count unbelievers, but there's Jews and there's church and there's unbelievers. And when you look at those three groups, the two main groups we're concerned with are the Jews and the church.

And we saw, didn't we, that they had two separate pathways through life, both leading to an eventual presence with God, but getting there by different routes.

And with the Jews, they were told, look out for wars, rumours of war, earthquakes, famines, pestilence, so on and so on and so on. The church, they were told, you'll be gone in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, it'll all be over and you'll find yourself in heaven.

In a new body, praise God. I need one of those. So these two separate groups of people, yes, if you've got these groups of people or you've got one group of people left, the group that's going to be raptured and is told there are no signs and yet you have to wait for this apostasy to start and you've got to pinpoint which one it is and sometime during the process of the apostasy, you've got to realise that you're in the right one.

And then you've got to notice when it comes to an end or perhaps you won't notice when it comes to an end because that's the point you'll be snatched away. But it's not a clear sign and Paul was trying to give these people a clear sign.

[37 : 53] If, however, the word apostasy simply means departure, which is its dictionary definition, if you look it up in a dictionary, it will say departure and then it will say things like falling away and it will say things like rebellion, these are ancillary meanings.

The word means departure and we'll see some examples in a minute where it's used to mean a person departing from one place and going to another. Simple as that. So the thing is, if what Paul means is a departure from the planet, there is no more debate.

So depending on which side of this discussion you come down, it either seals it forever in your mind or it's still, because you don't necessarily believe what I'm about to tell you, it leaves the question still open.

And that's fine because you don't need to believe this to be a pre-trib rapturist. There are other supportive scriptures that you can use. So in my view, it should be this latter view.

It should carry the meaning of a departure from the planet. And so we're going to go through some reasons why I believe that to be true.

[39 : 19] I first came across this teaching in the 80s from a teacher called Roger Price, who some of you older people may remember. But he didn't give any reasoning behind it.

He just said, apostasy in this passage means the departure, means the rapture. It's a synonym for the rapture. And he didn't say anything else. And so that kind of went in my mental filing drawer and never came out until more recently when I've read some of these other writers on the subject, including Arnold Fruchtenbaum, which when he got a hold of it and changed his book, I found that quite compelling.

This is not a new interpretation. The common understanding changed with the introduction of the King James Bible. Prior to the King James Bible, Bible translators commonly held the view that apostasia referred to a literal physical departure, not to departure from faith.

Now, of course, there's no reason why they should be exclusive. You can have a departure from the planet along with a departure from faith. You can have the faithful departing from the earth and the people on the earth departing from faith.

What I'm trying to say is both could be true. You don't necessarily have to pick one or the other. I'm going to go through 10 points, but I'm not going to go through 10 tonight because we'll be here all night.

[40 : 45] I think we might do six tonight. No, we might do four tonight and six next week. If this passage was referring to a doctrinal departure into error, a going off the rails, if you like, it would change nothing.

Historically, the church has... You see, when he's speaking to the Thessalonians, he's saying this is the change you've got to look for, the apostasy. Unless the apostasy happens, the apostasy is going to happen before the second coming or before the great day of the Lord.

But if you're looking for a doctrinal departure, I mean, there are loads going on right around us at the moment. And even worldwide ones like Calvinism, which is a worldwide error.

The vast majority of the church believes it. So is that the... And when did it start? And when does it finish? And how do... It doesn't tell us anything.

So these folks were looking for a departure as a sign that the tribulation could start. And so, to me, a departure from doctrinal soundness, if you like, of going astray, doesn't do that.

[42 : 02] It doesn't give them that clear sign. What would make it significant above all other apostasies? The second point is the use of the definite article in the Greek tense.

Now, you might think that's a small thing. When we use the definition... When we use the definite article in English, it doesn't carry a huge impact.

So we would say the apostrophe, just like we'd say the socks or the glass or whatever. Pass the glasses.

The definite article, the word the, is not impactful in English. But in Greek, it tends to make the subject very, very specific.

The apostasy. Not any old apostasy, not general apostasy, but the apostasy. And in the context of what we've read, I would submit to you, this can only mean the apostasy that Paul told them about.

[43 : 02] It couldn't just be generally sometime or other the church is going to go off the rail. The tenor of both the letters suggests that Paul is saying, the apostasy I told you about must come before the great day of the Lord.

if he was referring to general apostasy, that definite article would not be included. Normally means the one and only or the specific one we spoke about as opposed to something general.

So what Paul was saying here was the day of the Lord cannot come until the specific apostasy I told you about comes first. which would make in this passage the word apostasy a synonym with the word harpazo, which is the other Greek word for, and we'll deal with synonyms in a minute.

Thirdly, and it's a weaker point, but nevertheless, it's one we've already covered. These were two of Paul's earliest letters. And at this point in Paul's ministry, he was not warning about some great doctrinal apostasy.

The church was growing apace. They were still, the apostles were still changing the world. It was probably written in the 60s AD, this letter.

[44 : 29] Yeah. So even earlier than that. So Paul does talk about great falling away from faith and all the rest of it in some of his later letters.

But in these letters, he's not dealing with that subject. In these letters, he's dealing with the departure that I was telling you about. So that's, as I say, it's a weaker point, but nevertheless, significant.

That's easy, even early. First one was 52 and second one was 53. There you go. Well done. Oh no, it was a great name. Point four.

The meaning of apostasia in the noun form. And there is, so apostasia is the noun form of the verb ahistemi.

And both the noun and the verb form are clearly used, as we'll see in a minute, for examples of straightforward departures, not a falling away from faith, but a moving from place to place or a disappearance from a certain place or whatever.

[45 : 37] And if we put them together, because many, many nouns have a verb form. So for instance, if you said, I went for a run, that's a noun.

If you said, I was running, that's a verb. But they mean the same thing. You know, you put in one foot in front of the other faster than you should and get him puffed.

And similarly, with the verb ahistemi, and if you put the uses together, you have got some quotes in the notes there. One from Liddell and Scott, Greek lexicon.

It has these definitions for apostasia, defection, revolt, departure, and disappearance. And then the Greek scholar Gordon Lewis explains that the verb form, which is from which the noun is derived, supports departure as a translation.

Now, the verb form is used 15 times in the New Testament, and only three of these refer to a departure from faith. So it can be used for a departure from faith, but it is more often used for a simple departure, like, I departed because I went out the door, would be either a departure, noun form, or because I was departing, it would be a verb form.

[46 : 59] And so in the other 15 cases, it clearly meant to depart from something or somewhere. And there are those, we can look at some of these, 2 Timothy 2.19, return there.

And it's interesting because in English, they use all sorts of words to cover apostasia or ahistemi. Nevertheless, this is 2 Timothy 2.19, just let me double check if I've got the right scripture.

Yeah, 2 Timothy 2, verse 19. Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands having this seal. The Lord knows those who are his and everyone whose names and everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.

And that word abstain is the word ahistemi. To abstain means to depart from wickedness. And you begin to get a picture from this, how English can muddle things up no end.

So if you then go 1 Timothy 6.5, 1 Timothy 6, verse 5. And constant friction between... So if we go from verse 4...

[48 : 13] Actually, you've got to go from verse 3 or you've missed the beginning of a sentence. So if anyone advocates a different doctrine, does not agree with the sound words of those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing.

But he has a morbid interest in the controversial questions and disputes about words out of which arouse envy, strife, abusive language, and evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

But godliness is actually a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so can take nothing out of it. So it's a bit...

I'm struggling to remember which is the word that is ahistemi. But it means that we should withdraw from... I think it's withdraw.

I'm looking at King James. So where is King James in yours? Which verse? It's in verse 3. In verse 5. Right. And it says, because I'm destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness, from such withdraw thyself.

[49 : 26] Yes. And do you know, the NASB does not have that line. Has anybody else got the NASB? Oh, they need lots of bits, eh? No, I've got the NASB.

It doesn't say it at all. And the NASB says something else in chapter 2 of the two Thessalonians as well. What does it say? It says very clearly, or a falling away from the faith. Yeah.

Which is a misappropriate because it doesn't fit the context, does it? Well, it's interesting that they've written that in there because they do look at other manuscripts. What are you reading in there?

This is the NASB. So, for instance, the other thing they also state here is so all falling away from the faith, which is when they're talking about apostasy, and the man of lawlessness, you should read sin.

The man of sin, the man of lawlessness, yeah. Yeah. And that's the early manuscripts, and I think it's like all of these things, early manuscripts!

[50 : 35] can get in the way. Well, they can. And I think it's, you know, and I think it's like everything else. I think people that, I mean, I'm not a Greek scholar or a Hebrew scholar, but we do have things like vines and all the rest of it.

It's very interesting when you start looking at vines, for instance, the huge range one word can make. It's like everything. Are you exactly right?

We have an English version, and the problem is whether it's the King James or this version, but a good version in English. We don't always get the full meaning because we're looking at the English.

We're not looking at the words behind. Because I certainly, when I picked this scripture out, and I must have been looking at the New King James or something at the time, because it said from such men, withdraw.

And the word withdraw is a fist to my. And why it's not in the NASB, I am concerned. Yeah. I mean, I've been looking at some other stuff that we've been going through in previous studies, and I realized actually that sometimes the correct translation is actually in the King James, and it's not in the NASB, when you actually look behind the words.

[51 : 51] And I've even, to my shock and amazement, found correct translation, better translation, in the NIV, which is a version I almost never use, but it occasionally supersedes the others.

So the lesson from this is you can't, you actually need a raft of scriptures just to cover the mistakes of the translators, who all translate with a bias.

The King James translators were biased. The NASB translators, it seems. So they were in the 1900s, and the 1800s, the higher critics who talked about the NASB and the New American, or the New English, and the NIV, and about 54 versions of the Bible, which we have now.

Yes. And they are, they all tend to let their biases show. You get, you get study Bibles that are definitely Calvinistic in their leanings, and you get others that are.

You find that there's also a tendency in those who were affected by the higher scholars, Westcott and Horton, who have a definite bias towards denying the deity.

[53 : 09] Yes. Yes, they do. They do. And these fictitious manuscripts, J, E, D, and P, that they talk about, which are all made up.

Oh, it must have existed because of this and that and the other thing. Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's another aspect of it. Anyway, we're digressing. Let's pick a couple of others.

Let's go for Luke 2, 27, which simply says, oh, and it's from where he departs from the temple and came in the spirit into the temple when the parents brought him in, brought in the child to carry him out.

And that bit, carry him out, is a fist of my. It's, if you like, to make him depart, to carry him out of the temple. Oh, no, to carry.

I misread it. To carry out for him the custom of the law. Have you got that? Yeah. But the word carry out is a fist of my. So I think what we're doing, and I won't spend all night going through all of them, but what we're doing is we're showing that this word apostasy or a fist of my, which were verb and noun with the same meaning, can and do simply mean to depart, to take away, to go away, to depart in the sense of to rebel and also to depart, to depart in the sense of departing from sound doctrine.

[54 : 47] But this word has a whole panoply of meanings. And so there's no reason why it can't mean simply a departure. It doesn't mean that it does, but there's no reason why it can't.

In total, if you take noun and verb together, you've got 17 usage and only three of them refer to a falling away from faith. All the others refer to an actual departure of some kind, to leave, to go away, whatever.

And there's one example in Acts 21, verse 21, you don't need to turn there, but it references a departure from Moses. And you could put that in either camp, because departure from Moses could be from Moses' doctrine or it could be from Moses himself.

You can play that both ways. But the predominant use means a physical departure. So the rest of them, there are six more reasons to look at.

And we'll do those next week. And I think when you put all 10 together, you're left with a fairly convincing picture. Is that cast iron proof?

[55 : 58] No, I wouldn't claim that it was. But it becomes quite compelling when you then add that to all the other bits and pieces that we will look at, including a look at Crino and Orge, which is a...

Thilipsis and Orge. Thilipsis and Orge. Okay. Yeah, makes sense. Tribulation. Tribulation and Orge is wrath.

Yes. And Crino is judgment. Yeah, Crino is judgment and you are commanded to judge. Yeah. But the judgment of God is also referred to as Crino.

Yeah. In Revelation. But it's only judgment according to God's prayer and it's not judgment according to what you feel like. Oh, of course.

Yes. Yeah. But I think it's interesting to look at these things because sometimes you need to make large of these separations because they're really big and real and you can't mix them up.

[57 : 03] And other times they are just synonyms for each other. Just like apostasy understood one way as simply a synonym for the rapture.

But if you understand it another way, it isn't. What I didn't get to tonight, but I will get to next week is this thing about it was not used. You go right the way back to the 1300s.

It was not used to mean anything other than a straightforward departure until the King James Bible was published in 1611. Drafted in 1604, I think, and published in 1611.

Is that right? But that's for another day. I hope you've enjoyed it.