

Meaning of Apostasy Part 2

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[0 : 00] So, we've got this session and one more before we start to look at the other views of the rapture.

And when we start to look at the other views of the rapture, Malcolm's going to do the first session because he's asked if he can and I said yes. And we'll see where we go after that.

Let's just pray. Father, there is so much going on at the moment in the world. There's so much going on that is contrary to Christ.

There is so much going on that is an abomination in your sight. And the one thing that we know we can do and always be in the centre of your will is to study your word.

And so we just ask, Lord, that you come in on the back of this study and that you change us. That we don't just learn stuff for the sake of learning it, but we learn to be critical in our thinking.

[1 : 10] And we learn to go back through the scriptures again and again and again until we find the truth. So we ask you to be with us as we study your word tonight to bless the study in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. So if you remember, we've looked at what the rapture is, which is this period of history where Jesus removes his church from the earth.

and at the same time the restrainer is removed the restrainer being the Holy Spirit it introduces this period of time called the Great Tribulation which is a fulfillment of the prophecy of the 70 weeks of Daniel so without going back through that basically God has got seven years worth of history to play through with the Jews the outcome of which is that all Israel will be saved so whatever remains of Israel at the end of that period of time they will all be believers and then when the kingdom of God is established they will have accepted their king and so they'll be entitled to enter the kingdom and whilst we may disagree over when we all understand that the church at some point will be raptured the point of view that I'm putting across is that we'll be raptured before the tribulation starts we'll hear other views in weeks to come but the fact that we will be raptured is not really in question it's going to happen and then last time we looked at 2 Thessalonians 2 verse 3 and we were exploring what Paul meant when he said the apostasy must come first first before what?

first before the great day of the Lord or first before the great tribulation and if you remember I said there were 10 points that we were going to look at and we covered four of them last week so the question is was this a departure?

the word apostasia means a departure was this a departure from faith or was this a departure from the earth? and if it was a departure from the earth leaving the planet then the apostasy is a synonym for the rapture if it wasn't then the apostasy is a sign of the coming rapture you follow that?

[4 : 08] and so we looked at the first four points the first one was an apostasy from doctrine a departure from the word would be a very bad signpost for Paul to give because it's very indistinct how do you judge when an apostasy starts?

how do you judge when it finishes? how do you know at what point it's progressed? so to say to the Thessalonians that when the Lord comes to rapture us the apostasy must come first they wouldn't be able to judge very easily particularly as there have been apostasies great and small since the fall of man you know there have been lots of departures from faith over those periods of time although in fairness we're because it's in Paul's writing we're only dealing with New Testament history but that's still 2,000 years of I mean what would you call the the massive turning towards Roman Catholicism I mean that's an obvious apostasy what in various ways the church in the Middle Ages would be seen as an apostate church so it's very difficult to pinpoint which apostasy is the one that counts or do they all count and when do you start counting from and at what point can you say that's it that's a sign that we're about to be raptured so it would be very difficult to work out it wouldn't have been helpful to the Thessalonians for Paul to use that example the second one was that the use of the definite article which in English is no big indicator of very much but in Greek it's very pertinent that when Paul said the apostasy it would be the apostasy the specific apostasy that I've already told you about when I was with you the departure as opposed to any general departure and an apostasy would be a general departure from faith no they don't they don't but no but he could have left the definite article out and normally normally would have done because that's why that's why the definite article in Greek do you know what a definite article is it's the word the we just say oh the grocery shop around the corner or whatever if we if we leave out the definite article in English it's fairly meaningless but in Greek you only use the definite article when you want to be very specific so it's much more important word in Greek by the way

I remind us that none of the points we're making in and of themselves are no single point wins the day the cumulative effect of all ten points makes it worthy of consideration we looked at the fact that at this point in Paul's ministry he was not this is very very early in his ministry the earliest letters apart from Galatians that were written and so he wasn't he wasn't warning people about apostasy in those days what he was doing he was he'd been there for three weeks four weeks maybe five and had taught them about when the Lord was going to come for his church and so he was teaching them about departure not about an apostasy from faith he did teach about apostasy from faith later in his ministry but not at this point and then the fourth one we looked at the use of the word apostasia apostasy and also its verb form a fist of my and 80% of the time it's used it's used to denote an actual departure somebody or something leaving somewhere not a departure from faith that that doesn't mean it can't be used to describe a departure from faith but it's much more common for it to be used to indicate a departure so that brings us up to today and there are six more points to look at remember the Blair government

I think that started in 97 didn't it the Blair government and he said he's got these top three priorities education education and education famously and in Bible interpretation we have three similar priorities context context and context context is the thing that should drive if you don't apply context you can read almost anything into any scripture so you need to look at the context and when you look at context you need to look at the extended context context and the immediate context and so reason five here comes from the immediate context and what does that mean well the immediate context is the letter itself even the chapter or the verse to whom was it written and why was it written and what were they supposed to get from it the wider context is in the wider context of scripture or the extended context now we've got we've got one and two thessalonians so we've got two books to consider context but we've also got to consider where it fits in the wider range of scripture and if we take

Paul's visit to thessalonica and take both letters together the teaching emphasises the return of christ if we look at first thessalonians and what you have this is just setting the context but at the end of every chapter you've got in verse 10 chapter 1 verse 10 probably have to read verse 9 and 10 so they're waiting for Jesus to come and rescue them from the wrath to come is the context then if we look at the end of chapter 2 best start reading at verse 17 but we brethren having been taken away from you for a short while in person not in spirit we are all the more eager with great desire to see your face for we wanted to come to you

[11 : 14] I Paul more than once yet Satan hindered us but who was our hope or joy or crown of exaltation is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his coming for you are our glory and joy so again it's predicting and it's yeah so the end of the second chapter it talks about the coming of Jesus and we go to the end of the third chapter just read verse 13 so that he may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints so that's referring to the second coming the second ad but it refers to the Lord coming with all his saints so those must be saints that have already been raptured for them to come back with him then at the end of chapter four verse 16 onwards for the

Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout 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 together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we always be with the Lord therefore comfort one another with these words the Thessalonian church was under persecution and were also confused because they were thinking that they were already in the day of the Lord and so Paul offers this as comfort he's talking about the return of the Lord to take his saints away and when he comes to take his saints away that's an actual departure not just a departure from faith and then chapter 5 I can't remember the verse 23 now may the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ faithful as he who calls you and he also will bring it to pass so that's verse 23 so in every single chapter the chapter ends with a reference to Jesus coming for his church or the second coming treating them as separate events but it's clearly referencing the end times and talking about a departure not a falling away from faith but an actual leaving and then in second Thessalonians is there a difference between falling away and departing well only in the sense that if the reason I use the two different phrases is because if I say a departure you're left thinking does he mean a departure from faith or a departure from the planet so I use the word departure to talk about leaving the planet and falling away to reference a departure from faith yeah the word is the same word yeah but if we had let's say a political discussion and you might say to me

Ray I know you believe X about the Labour Party and I might say to you yeah I don't believe that anymore I've I've I've gone away from that line of thinking that would be a suitable use for the word apostasia yeah because I departed from what I used to think right but if I said no I don't want to talk about this now I'm going that would be a different kind of departure same word yeah but different kinds of departure yeah is that is that clarified yeah so in 2nd Thessalonians we've got the broad sorry before we move on a falling away from faith is something that takes place as a process it happens over a period of time it doesn't you don't wake up one morning and everybody's fallen away from faith but if it's an actual departure you could wake up one morning and find a lot of people who've gone so and the thing about that is that apostasia in that sense if you did wake up one morning and everybody had gone that is not a sign of the coming rapture that's a sign that the rapture has happened whereas the falling away from faith gives you a sign to look out for in the future that brings the rapture into focus and the rapture is not taught as an event for which there are signs it's a sign-less event you'll be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye in an atom of time so the Bible doesn't encourage us the writings of Paul don't encourage us to look for signs of the rapture but if apostasy is one of them

I've got out of kilter with my notes but if the apostasy is falling away from faith and the rapture can't happen until the apostasy happens then we're left looking for this apostasy as a sign of the rapture which is I think contrary to the teaching of scripture but I'm open to further persuasion then we get into two Thessalonians and in chapter two now we request you brethren with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto him clearly talking about rapture 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 this broadener letter we talked about last week to the effect that the day of the Lord has come that no one in any way deceive you for it will not come unless the departure the apostasy comes first and I think it breaks the context to interpret apostasy there as a falling away from faith it fits the context to interpret apostasy as a departure because that's what he's been teaching them thus far and he goes on he goes on to teach more about that he says it the apostasy it will not come unless the apostasy comes first sorry the great day of the Lord will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed the son of destruction who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called God or object of worship so that he takes his seat in the temple of God displaying himself as being God and another thing that kind of nails this down to something of Jewish history is the fact that it talks about the temple because the church doesn't have a temple and at this moment there isn't a temple and they're getting all the materials together and starting to build it but the temple of the church is us it's the body of Christ and the individuals in it the Holy Spirit indwells us there isn't an edifice a building that is a temple at the moment although there will be it would be interesting to see them how long it takes them to build it actually because the first one took 40 odd years and they still haven't finished it it could be with modern building techniques they could they could knock it up in about three months and Paul goes on to say in verse 5 do you not remember that while I was still with you

I was telling you these things and you know what restrains him now so that in his time he will be revealed for the mystery of lawlessness is already at work only he who now restrains will do so until he's taken out of the way so we're looking at this time that and I made the point that the Holy Spirit indwells the church indwells us and he is taken out of the way at the same time as the Great Tribulation starts which is coincidental with us I believe being raptured now was it Malcolm or Enoch who made the point that you believe the Holy Spirit is on earth during the Great Tribulation he's on earth yes he's on earth during the Tribulation but he is not hectic right yeah not restraining he's not restraining he's not carrying out what he is what he originally came for which is to convict of sin righteousness and judgment righteousness and judgment yeah absolutely he's not doing those things anymore but he is still indwells the saints interesting well you get your chance on that by the way some of you weren't here but

[21 : 08] I'm going to do one more session next week and then Malcolm's going to do the next session because that's when we start to look at other views of the rapture so he's going to give us well give us the view he thinks the scripture I was going to say give us his view but that's not quite right I think that that doesn't do it justice so the point that's being made is that the context demands that apostasia is interpreted as an actual departure not falling away from faith because everything through the book of 1st Thessalonians and up to this point in the book of 2nd Thessalonians is all about Christ coming back to rapture his church and what he's saying is the great day of the Lord can't happen until that happens or another way of putting it when they say when the Thessalonians were saying to Paul through letters we've been told the great day of the Lord has come what he's effectively saying is it can't have come because you're still here that's one way of interpreting what's written what do you call the great day of the Lord the great tribulation which is a seven year period now that's an area where I'm sure you'll provide a different explanation in two weeks time but that's fine we'll deal with that when it comes in fact

I'm not going to try to deal with it immediately when it comes because I think it's fair that you should be heard through and then we can examine both views or four views because there are actually four prevalent views of the rapture pre-treatment trip post-treat pre-rath pre-rath and there's one other which is called partial rapture which is really well that's not and there's one which is interesting oh but that's that is a post-rath view is it not no it's not pre-rath no and it's pre-rath no it's similar but yeah explain that explain that so the immediate context also suggests a physical departure rather than falling away from faith if Paul was writing about the rapture in verses 1 and 2 why would he suddenly change tack so in 2 Thessalonians 2 verses 1 and 2 we request you brethren with regard to the coming of our Lord

Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto him about the rapture that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or 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 or it will not come unless the apostasy I think that should be the departure or the leaving comes first so he's he's making reference to something that has immediate application why would he suddenly then refer to something that was a process over decades or even centuries because it often takes decades or even centuries for people to fall away from faith possibly it's still not it's still not I mean if that was the case surely that would indicate a pre-trip rapture because the people would lose faith because everybody's gone and they're still here

I don't know to me Paul is addressing this immediate problem you think the great day of the Lord has come it hasn't and it can't until the departure comes first sure yeah so that makes far much more sense to me rather than the day of the Lord can't come until this process of falling away from faith comes first that doesn't that doesn't gel in my head and the process we're talking about has arguably been happening since the fall of man although it's not fair to use that analogy because we're talking New Testament history here so it's been happening for 2,000 years I mean the falling away from faith started happening very soon after the resurrection I would say yeah don't you think the falling away from faith might be something like the replacement theology now

I agree and yes it could be and what I'm not saying I do believe there will be a great falling away from faith but I don't think this is the scripture that refers to it this scripture refers to the snatching away of the church now there will be you know false false christs would arise and false prophets would arise and so on and so on well one can't argue that it's happening right before our eyes and we seem to be overtaken by vast tidal waves of one thing and another I think Calvinism is another one where although it doesn't cause people to veer away from the gospel so much but it's still an error which causes people to lose the assurance of salvation that they've got sorry it's the birth pangs of a woman yeah exactly that and the birth pangs as you ladies will be able to testify enough men mercifully know nothing about they get stronger as you get closer don't they so replacement theologies and churches for goodness sake something that calls itself a church embracing gender ideology embracing homosexual priesthoods and single sex marriages and all of this is part of a massive apostasy

[27 : 32] I don't deny that a massive apostasy will happen what I don't think though is that this particular scripture is referring to that I think this scripture is referring to when the lord snatches his church and in that sense it's talking about a real departure a physical departure not just a spiritual departure reason 7 the letters to the Thessalonians that was 6 6 top left corner 5 5 5 context didn't you add anything to context so we looked at extended context and immediate context 5 was the extended context and 6 is the immediate context which is those particular verses and the context that they're written in point 7 is that the letters to the

Thessalonians represent a revision course where Paul revises and revisits the teaching he gave when he was with them he actually says verse 5 2 Thessalonians 2 verse 5 do you not remember that while I was still with you I was telling you these things so there was a he's going over what he's already told them so it's not an introduction of anything new and many critics actually say well if Paul had been talking about the rapture here would you just use the word harpato but there are such things as synonyms and Paul uses I mean if we look at 1 Thessalonians 1 verse 10 where he says and to wake for his son from heaven whom he raises from the dead that is

Jesus who rescues us from the wrath to come he's talking about the rapture there but he didn't use harpato that word rescues is the word royomai in 2 Thessalonians 2 verse 1 with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto him again it's a rapture passage but he doesn't use harpato he uses the word parousia and he also uses episunogogae the gathering together unto him is episunogogae in 1 Corinthians 1 7 I'm going to go through these even though it can be a bit tedious but it makes the point that Paul doesn't just use this one word to express rapture so 1 Corinthians 1 verse 7 so that you are not lacking in any gift awaiting eagerly the revelation of our

Lord Jesus Christ and awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ the word for revelation is apocalypsis and it refers to the revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ but it doesn't use harpato it could do but he doesn't in Titus 2 13 we have epiphania looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and savior Jesus Christ that word appearing is epiphania yes now obviously in 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 17 he uses harpato and he also uses harpato in 2 Thessalonians 2 verse 3 he uses apostasia but these are all words that have they're not identical in meaning but they are synonyms they can be interchanged somewhat they give different nuances and so the only point I'm making is that

Paul doesn't stick to just one word to describe something he was probably an arguable point but probably the most intelligent man on the planet in his day and if he were around today he'd have a degree in Greek or something but he was a very very he was a great wordsmith and so he would use synonyms and so actually the word apostasia can easily be a synonym for the rapture you don't have to bend things to make that fit in fact as we've seen from the context argument it fits better than any other now the next thing and this is more to do with bible translations and I made this point loosely in an earlier session but early bible translations didn't translate this as apostasy they translated it as a departure or a departing up until the King

[33 : 24] James version was written so that 1384 Wycliffe translation it was translated departing it will not happen until the departing happens first similarly with the Tyndale bible in 1526 he used departing the Coverdale bible in 1535 also used departing so did the Cranmer bible the Breaches bible the Beza bible the Geneva bible and even the Reims or it should be Ramps bible which was how do you call it it was a reformed was the first of the truly reformed translations after Luther and it was used in the Protestant revolt in France against the Catholics but they translated it departing and the King James version was the first version to ever translate it as falling away from faith which in terms of bible history is quite late on but since that time we have the new

King James version we have the new American standard version the English standard version the new international version in fact almost every version that we use today came from the same batch of manuscripts that was used to translate the King James bible and a lot of the King James habits of translation were followed by these other translators so once it was launched in the King James bible it kind of stuck and it didn't even exist before the King James bible that's my point you couldn't find a translation before the King James bible that translated this as a falling away from faith now the idea was around because the idea came from Augustine who was the first who started to put allegories in instead of a literal translation and he wasn't the biggest sinner in that regard but he was among the first and you had people like

Cyprian of Carthage was an allegorist but some of these early church fathers started to go over to allegorical translations rather than literal translations and they had an influence on the translators of the King James bible even though that was a few hundred years later so it's interesting to me that if you go back to where it started you don't find this word apostasy used in English you find the word departure used in English I also find it interesting given what I've just said that you know if you listen to people talking about the pre-truth rapture view one of the arguments that is often thrown up completely erroneously is it only existed since John Nelson Derby 1896 or 1886 1886

I think this man John Nelson Derby invented the pre-truth rapture that's absolute codsworth he simply brought back to the fore a doctrine that had been around for centuries and in according to John Nelson Derby himself he brought forward what Paul used to teach that was his view of what he was doing but when you get people who disparaged John Nelson Derby he was the founder of the Plymouth Brethren and you can argue with the Plymouth Brethren but in each day if you wanted to get the unadulterated word of God you went to the Plymouth Brethren so he wasn't some ne'er do well he did a huge amount for the Church of Christ so number nine this is not a majority view that we're talking about

I get used to when you start to study scripture you find yourself in the minority a lot of the time I think Matt would agree with that we are in the minority because we don't believe capitalism for a starter so this is a minority view the majority would go with other views but nevertheless there are some very credible scholars who support this view and like all credible scholars you have arguments with them from time to time but all of the ones on the list Kenneth West E.

[38 : 24] Charlotte English Dwight Pentecost Wayne House Stanley Ellison JS Mabel JD Farag you know he's still around today David Hocking have you come across David Hocking he's a pretty sound teacher and do you disagree he's very biased yes very much so very much so but the point is when you hear his have you heard him teach on pre-trip I've heard him teach I've seen him teach he was on pre-trip conference I was at no he didn't actually preach on pre-trip but he did make it quite clear that that was his yeah oh and he's unapologetic about holding that view exactly but he makes a very good case that's the point he's not he's not just you know he heard someone else say it he's done his own research on it so

Adam McRae similar Gordon English similar all of these people by the way have written quite large Bible commentaries of one sort or another or the systematic theologies that doesn't mean they're right of course but what it does mean is that they are credible scholars Tim LaHaye you may well disagree with Tim LaHaye because he was he was the the man who brought forward the left behind stuff and actually Tim LaHaye is a very good scholar he just missed a trick when it came to the left behind stuff Thomas Ice I've read and listened to Thomas Ice I rate him but I haven't listened to him a lot so could be wrong Arnold Fruchtenbaum I know well and it was him who turned me from my early days of Kenneth Copelandism so these are all prolific writers well recognised scholars and they also support the use of departure as a translation of

Apelstasia in this particular case Arnold Fruchtenbaum came to this in the last two or three years whenever he did his most recent rewrite of his book The Footsteps of the Messiah review and the passage that covered this he changed because he believed this to be he changed his mind believing that this to be correct so you don't believe anything just cause people with letters after their name say it but it does help if some of them have worked out the same thing you've worked out it's a logical fallacy to say oh we don't want to listen to that guy he fries his eggs the wrong way around it's kind of to say he hasn't got a degree or he hasn't got a doctorate doesn't mean he's wrong it's a logical fallacy to assume someone's wrong because they don't have letters after their name you assume they're wrong because you chased it down in the word like a true Berean and discovered holes in their argument and if you haven't done that then you shouldn't disparage them and number ten finally and this for me is a key thing the rapture is a signless event if apostasia means a falling away from faith rather than a departure it presents us with yet another sign to look for we have to look for this sign of an apostasy that's going to happen before it can happen does it say that it's a signless event well it's inferred from thank you that's what

I need to do it doesn't say this is a signless event I can't base any doctrine on what's inferred I think you probably base all sorts of doctrines on what's inferred but we'll get to that but the reason it's inferred is because Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 15 verses 15 to 58 you will be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye as against the Jews who were told to look for wars rumors of wars famine earthquake and all the rest the church is told you're going to be gone no signless we'll wait for a couple of weeks on that one yeah sure but if Jesus if Jesus can't come for his church at any time and that is certainly the majority view and certainly when you put together changed in a moment in the twinkling of a night and not appointed for God's wrath it indicates that God can rapture the church any time he likes there is nothing that has to take place before the church can be raptured so the falling away if that's what it is becomes a sign that you have to look forward to before the rapture can happen and I think scripture leads away from that view to an instantaneous signless event now if apostasia means departure that's not a sign of the coming rapture that means the raptures happened apostasia was a synonym for the rapture so how are you doing something wrong here might be

I might have misspelled miss it's worth it saying Jesus cannot come for his church if it has come for his church Jesus cannot come for his church at any time he says if you accept the view that the apostasy is a falling away from faith and Jesus can't come just at any time he has to come after the falling away from faith so the falling away from faith becomes a sign of the rapture to come yeah but you're saying that the apostasy is the taking of the church away yes because it's a departure so if apostasy means if apostasy means a departure and that's a synonym for the rapture then apostasia is the event of the rapture it's not a sign of the rapture and this latter view fits with the doctrine of imminency whereas the other view doesn't fit with the doctrine of imminency and it fits with Paul's narrative as a natural follow-up from the teaching he gave him when he was in

[45 : 15] Thessalonica and it brings comfort to Paul's audience and fits in fits with the idea we already discussed in that it effectively says the day of the Lord has not come and you can tell because you're still here the departure hasn't happened and that is the end of those points so next week we're going to take a brief look at the Matthew 24 25 the Olivet Discourse we may finish up having to take a much more in-depth look at that depending well if I'm honest depending on what Malcolm shows up at me I can't say anything right I should let you explain how you understand it and then I don't agree with it because you've already said things which I don't agree with about Matthew 24 yeah and I would hope that I would explain what I believe and why I believe

I should have called it so next week we're going to look at the Olivet Discourse briefly I think I did I'm not going to reproduce this next week but I think I did about 25 hours of study on that just to get to what I think is a common sense view but and it's interesting because we've got it coming up because we're going through Matthew's gospel on the Sundays and at some point we're going to get to 24 and 25 again and we can preach it and laugh and throw tomatoes at me one thing about it it's been making me look into scripture a lot it's just there's no point being coming and saying this is what I believe it show where

I'm better from so I did do some revision I will I will also take another look at the doctrine of imminency because that's what I believe just very briefly as far as I'm concerned imminency means that the Lord can come and take us anybody likes that is he can take an individual no bother that's interesting that is imminency as far as I'm concerned imminency doesn't mean the taking of the church it means taking away at any time of an individual member of the church that's interesting and therefore I don't think it's got a lot to do with the rapture it's because we could all otherwise if it's only taken away the church you could ask well what happened to all those who came before the church was taken everybody explains that doesn't he says they will rise first