

2 THESSALONIANS

1:7-10 *What future event in time is Paul referring to here?*

Paul is referring to the second coming of Christ here, which is also known as the day of the Lord (CP Isa 63:1-6; Joel 3:1-2, 13-16; Zech 14:1-9; Mt 24:27-31, 40-42; 25:31-33; Mk 13:24-27; Lu 21:25-28; Jude 14-15; Rev 1:7). The second coming takes place after the Great Tribulation when Christ comes back to earth for the battle of Armageddon, where He defeats Antichrist and his armies (CP Isa 34:2-3; Eze 38:18-21; 39:8-20; Rev 14:14-20; 19:11-16, 19-21). It is interesting to note here that the battle of Armageddon will only last one day, yet the weapons of Antichrist's armies who Christ destroys will provide fuel for Israel for seven years afterwards. Also that it will take all Israel seven months to bury the dead killed in the battle, even after the fowls of the air have feasted on them (CP Isa 30:25-26; Eze 39:4-5; Zech 14:7; Rev 19:17-21). We also learn here that the blood of those killed at Armageddon will flow for two hundred miles (approx. 330 km) at a depth of 1.2m "... up to the horses' bridles" (CP Rev 14:20).

The day of the Lord signifies the end of the church age, and the Thessalonians thought that because of the severe tribulation they were going through at that time that the day of the Lord had come, and therefore they had missed the rapture, which Paul had told them would precede the Great Tribulation (CP 1Th 4:13-18; 5:1-11; 2Th 2:1-7; Rev 3:7-13). These scriptures all refer to the coming of Christ to rapture the church to heaven before the Great Tribulation. In 2Th 2:1-7; Paul reminds the Thessalonians of two things which he had previously told them must precede the day of the Lord: a falling away, and the revealing of Antichrist. The day of the Lord could not come until after these two things had occurred (CP 2:1-3). It is obvious from what Paul says here that the rapture of the church will precede both the Great Tribulation and the day of the Lord. (For a more detailed study on the falling away see comments on 2Th 2:1-3. See also comments on Jn 5:28-29, 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:51-58, Php 3:20-21, 1Th 4:13-18, 5:1-11, 2Th 2:6-8 and Rev 3:7-13 and author's study *The Rapture* in his book **Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith.**)

2:1-3 *What does the "falling away" refer to here which must occur before Antichrist is revealed?*

Most bible commentators teach that the *falling away* here refers to the church going into apostasy before Antichrist will be revealed. Yet the word **apostasia**, from which the term is derived, is only found in one other place in scripture and there it is translated "forsake", which involves a departure (CP Ac 21:21). The predominant meaning of the root verb **aphistemi**, which is found fifteen times in scripture, is that of a person departing from someone or something. It means to cause to withdraw, to go away, depart, withdraw from (CP Lu 2:37; 4:13; 13:27; Ac 5:37-38; 12:10; 15:38; 19:9; 22:29; 2Cor 12:8; 1Ti 6:5; 2Ti 2:19). **Aphistemi** is only used in the context of departing from the faith three times (CP Lu 8:13; 1Ti 4:1; He 3:12). The very fact that the qualifying words "from the faith" are added in 1Ti 4:1, shows that in itself **aphistemi** does not have the idea of a defection

from the truth. Also the neuter noun **apostasion**, is translated "divorcement", which also implies a separation or departure of one person from another (CP Mt 5:31; 19:7; Mk 10:4).

It is interesting to note that the Greek word translated "fall away" in He 6:6 is not **apostasia**, as in 2Th 2:1-3, but **parapipto** (CP He 6:4-6). **Parapipto** means to err, stray, lapse, fall away. Surely, if God had meant 2Th 2:1-3 to refer to a falling away (from the faith) He would have used **parapipto** instead of **apostasia** to avoid confusion. (See comments on He 6:4-6)

Furthermore, it must be ascertained from the context in which words are used in scripture as to what they refer. In a context where true and false doctrines are in view **apostasia** would certainly mean falling away from true doctrine, but that is not in view in 2Th 2:1-3. V1 clearly refers to the coming of Christ to catch away, or "rapture" the church to heaven (CP V1). The main theme in both 1 and 2 Thessalonians is the rapture of the church. Thus it is reasonable to conclude that Paul has not used **apostasia** here to signify the church falling away from the faith as it has been interpreted, but to refer to the departure or rapture of the church from the earth which he had told the Thessalonians about when he was with them, and had also described in his previous letter (CP 2Th 2:1-8; 1Th 4:13 - 5:11). See also comments on 2Th 1:7-10.

It is the church that is holding back the revelation of Antichrist "... for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man be revealed ... and now you know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time ... only he who now letteth (restrains), will let (restrain), until he be taken out of the way ... and then shall that wicked be revealed". The church must be raptured before Antichrist is revealed. The rapture is the blessed hope of the church (CP Tit 2:11--14). For a more detailed study on this subject see comments on Lu 21:36; Jn 5:28-29, 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:51-58; Php 3:20-21; 1Th 4:13-18; 2Th 2:6-8; 2Ti 2:18; Rev 1:19, 3:7-13, and author's study *The Rapture* in his book **Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith.**

2:6-8 *Who is the "he" Paul refers to here?*

Many Christians believe that the *he* Paul refers to here is the Holy Spirit. But that is not correct because the Holy Spirit will remain on earth during the reign of Antichrist to convict the multitudes of their sins who get saved during the Great Tribulation (CP Rev 7:9, 13-14; 20:4). Nobody can call Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit (CP Jn 16:7-11 with 1 Cor 12:3). The *he* of 2 Th 2:7 is the church, which is what we learned in our study on 2Th 2:1-3 (CP 2Th 2:1-3). The main theme of both 1 and 2 Thessalonians is the coming again of Christ to take all the saints of God, both living and dead, back to heaven with Him. This is called the first resurrection, of which the rapture of the church forms part (CP 2Th 2:1-8 and 1Th 4:13-18 with 1Cor 15:51-58). See also comments on Lu 21:36; Jn 5:28-29, 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:51-58; Php 3:20-21; 1Th 4:13-18, 5:1-11; 2Th 2:1-3, 2:6-8; 2Ti 2:18; Rev 1:19, 3:7-13, and author's study *The Rapture* in his book **Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith.**

The majority of Christians cannot reconcile the church with the *he* of 2Th 2:7 because they have always thought of the church as a woman – the bride of Christ. Yet nowhere in scripture is the church ever called a woman or referred to by a feminine pronoun. It is called a man though ([CP Eph 2:15; 4:13](#)). Furthermore, the bride of Christ is clearly identified in scripture as the holy city, New Jerusalem, "the mother of us all" ([CP Ga 4:26 with Rev 19:7-9; 21:2, 9-10](#)). See also comments on [2Cor 11:2](#), [Ga 4:21-31](#), [Eph 2:15-16\(B\)](#), [4:13](#), [5:25-32](#), [1Th 4:13-18](#), [2Th 2:1-3](#), [Rev 19:7-9](#), [21:2](#), and author's study *The Bride of Christ* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**.

2:9-12 *What profound truth does Paul underline here?*

There is a very sobering teaching underlined here and we must ever be mindful of it ([CP V7-14](#)). This teaches us that after the church is taken up from the earth, salvation will no longer be available to those still living who have already heard the gospel and rejected it. They will be lost forever if they do not repent and accept Christ while the church is still here. This includes members of our immediate family and other relatives and friends whom we dearly love, as well as professing Christians not truly committed to Christ, and others who are backslidden. Show them this scripture and explain what it means: that once the church is gone from the earth salvation will only be available to those who never had an adequate opportunity to receive the knowledge of the truth or to hear and understand the gospel ([CP also Mt 7:21; 12:30](#)). If they will not listen to us we must fervently pray God to send another labourer in the gospel unto them. We must never give

up on God for their salvation. We can claim Jesus' promise in [Jn 15:7](#) but we must make sure we meet the conditions first ([CP Jn 15:7](#)). There is no time to lose: the rapture could happen at any moment in time ([CP Php 3:20-21; Tit 2:13](#)). This teaches that there are no prophecies yet to be fulfilled for the rapture to take place ([CP Jn 9:4](#)). That means we still have to preach the gospel to other lost souls as well in the meantime.

3:6 *What does "walking disorderly" refer to here?*

Walking disorderly here has to do with refusing to work to keep one's self. Some of the Thessalonian Christians refused to work and were taking advantage of the generosity of the church to feed them. Paul commanded the church to stop supporting them and also to disfellowship them, but at the same time not to stop supporting those truly in need ([CP V7-15 and 1Ti 5:8](#)). See also comments on [Lu 3:10-14](#) and author's studies *How Christians are to Love One Another* in his book **Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith** and *Christians' Obligations to One Another Financially* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**.

3:14 *What is the purpose of disfellowshipping Christians?*

Christians who are blatantly sinning against God's word are to be disfellowshipped by the church in order to hopefully produce shame that will lead to repentance, so that fellowship can be restored ([CP Mt 18:15-17; 1Cor 5:1-13](#)). Once a person repents they must be forgiven and restored to fellowship ([CP Lu 15:11-24; 17:3-4; 2Cor 2:6-8; Eph 4:32](#)). See also comments on [1Cor 5:6-7](#) and [2 Cor 2:5-11](#).