

The Rapture or the Apostasy: Which Comes First?

“Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 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 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.”

(2 Thessalonians 2:1–4)

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1

- **The Apostasy**
- **The Revealing of the Man of Lawlessness**

2

- **The Coming of Our Lord**
- **Our Being Gathered to Him**

Some pretribblers claim that the Greek word *apostasia* here is actually referring to the rapture. They say the word should be translated in English as “the departure.”

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Teachers who make this claim have taken one of the clearest passages in the Bible concerning the timing of the rapture and they have twisted it say precisely the opposite of what it actually says.

Not only is this view demonstrably false, but it is also a profoundly deceptive and dangerous teaching.

“Some pretribulationists, like myself, think that the Greek noun *apostasia*, usually translated ‘apostasy,’ is a reference to the rapture and should be translated ‘departure’ Thus, this passage would be saying that the day of the Lord will not come until the rapture comes before it.”

—Tommy Ice, Pre-Trib Research Center



**This view results in a translation that is
bizarre:**

“Let no one in any way deceive you, for it (the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the rapture) will not come unless the rapture comes first...”

(2 Thessalonians 2:1–4)

2
Many Pre-tribbers Disagree

APOSTASIA

In 2 Thessalonians 2:3



Rapture or Apostasy?

Ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡμῶν ἐπισυναγωγῆς ἐπ' αὐτόν, εἰς τὸ μὴ ταχέως σαλευθῆναι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ νοῦς μὴτε θροεῖσθαι, μὴτε διὰ πνεύματος μὴτε διὰ λόγου μὴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ὡς δι' ἡμῶν, ὡς ὅτι ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, μὴ τις ὑμᾶς ἐξασπατίη κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον ὅτι εἰάν μὴ ἔλθῃ ἡ ἀποστασία, πρῶτον καὶ ἀποκαλυφθῇ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς αμαρτίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπερηπρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον Θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα, ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ ὡς Θεὸν καθίσει, ἀποδεικνύντα ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ἐστὶ Θεός.

II Thessalonians 2:1-11

Lee W. Brainard

Foreword by Mondo Gonzales

THE APOSTASIA

RAPTURE OR REBELLION

An in depth study of the meaning of ἀποστασία in 2 Thessalonians 2:3

Seth M. Knorr

EXPOSING THE SABOTAGE OF CHRISTIANITY FROM WITHIN

THE COMING APOSTASY



MARK HITCHCOCK
JEFF KINLEY

Bible Lexicons and Dictionaries Disagree

“Apostasy: Turning against God, as evidenced by abandonment and repudiation of former beliefs. The term generally refers to a deliberate renouncing of the faith by a once sincere believer rather than a state of ignorance or mistaken knowledge. Apostasy is distinguished from heresy (denial of a part of the faith), and from transfer of allegiance from one religious body to another within the same faith. Also, it is possible to deny the faith, as Peter once did, and then at a later time reaffirm it.”

– Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible

“APOSTASY: A falling away, a withdrawal, a defection. In the NT, in the Greek original, to express abandonment of the faith.”

**—The International Standard Bible
Encyclopaedia**

“Apostasy: A public denial of a previously held religious belief and a distancing from the community that holds to it. The term is almost always applied pejoratively, carrying connotations of rebellion, betrayal, treachery, or faithlessness.”

—The Lexham Bible Dictionary

“APOSTASY: In classical Gk. *apostasia* is a technical term for political revolt or defection. In LXX it always relates to rebellion against God, originally instigated by Satan, the apostate dragon.”

—New Bible Dictionary

The Main Argument:

Apostasia was translated as “departure” in some early English Bible translations.

Who Cares?

The fact that some very old translations use the word “departure” is irrelevant.

The only thing that matters is how these translations understand “departure.”

They all use it negatively, to refer to departure from the faith or apostasy

How is *apostasia* used in
the New Testament?

“...and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake (*apostasia*) Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.”

(Acts 21:21)

How is *apostasia* used elsewhere in
the Old Testament?

**“The Mighty One, God, the Lord, the Mighty One,
God, the Lord! He knows, and may Israel itself
know. *If it was in rebellion*, or if in an unfaithful
act against the Lord do not save us this day!**

(Jos 22:22 LXX)

“Moreover, all the utensils which King Ahaz had discarded during his reign *in his unfaithfulness*, we have prepared and consecrated; and behold, they are before the altar of the Lord.”

(2 Ch 29:19 LXX)

**“Your own wickedness will correct you,
And your apostasies will reprove you;
Know therefore and see that it is evil and bitter
For you to forsake the Lord your God,
And the dread of Me is not in you,” declares the
Lord God of hosts.**

(Jeremiah 2:19 LXX)



How did the Early Church understand it?

“Here Paul discusses the Antichrist and reveals great mysteries. What is the ‘falling away’? He calls him Apostasy; soon he will destroy many and make them fall away...”

—John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Thessalonians

3.19

**“Men, that is, have fallen away from the true faith...
So there you have the ‘falling away,’ and the coming
of the enemy is to be expected next.”**

—Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures 15.9.22

“And this is not the last hour, is it? Is apostasy finding an entrance through them, in order that now the impious one may be revealed, ‘the son of perdition, who opposes and is exalted above all that is called God, or that is worshiped’?”

—Basil the Great

**During the first century, it was
exclusively used in a negative sense.**



**The Bible Predicts The Last Days
Apostasy**

“...Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.”

(Matthew 24:9–13)

Now when the people saw that Moses *delayed* to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, “Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” Aaron said to them, “Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. He took this from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, “This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.”

(Exodus 32:1–4)

“Now while the bridegroom was *delaying*, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ... Later the other (foolish) virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open up for us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’ Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.”

(Matthew 25:5–13)

**“But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron”
(1 Timothy 4:1–2)**

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**This verse suggests that many
professing Christians will leave the
faith and worship the beast.**

Can you and I apostatize?

“The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, he falls away.”
(Matthew 13:20–21)

**“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is
thrown away as a branch and dries up;
and they gather them, and cast them into
the fire and they are burned.”**

(John 15:6)

“I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.”

(Galatians 1:6–7)

“You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.”

(Galatians 5:4)

“...do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, ‘Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.’ Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.”

(Romans 11:18–22)

**“If we endure, we will also reign with Him;
If we deny Him, He also will deny us; If we
are faithless, He remains faithful, for He
cannot deny Himself.”
(2 Timothy 2:12–13)**