

Apostasia - The End Time Departure

By Robert I. Adams

In conjunction with the end time, the apostle Paul wrote:

“. . . the falling away comes first . . .” (2 Thess. 2:3)

What is “the falling away”? The Greek term Paul used is “apostasia.” To arrive at what he had in mind, let’s begin by seeing how this word is used elsewhere in Scripture. It occurs only one other time in the whole New Testament, and that is in Acts 21:21. In this verse, we find the words “to forsake [apostasia] Moses.” The issue here concerned leaving or departing from the law of Moses. This helps us to understand that when Paul wrote of the falling away he had in mind some sort of forsaking, leaving, or departing. So what kind of departure was Paul thinking of? I believe Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 4:1, where he wrote, “In latter times some will depart from the faith.” Here, Paul talks of a departure from the faith that will happen in latter times.

It is very likely that when Paul mentioned, “the falling away” he was referring to what Jesus said in His end time discourse. In Matthew 24, Jesus said there will come a time when “many will fall away” (Matt. 24:10). The verse before and the verse after informs us that this will happen due to hateful persecution (v.9), and false prophets leading many astray (v.11). Jesus implies there will be a discernible falling away from the faith in the end time. This appears to be “the falling away” Paul wrote about. The “apostasia” is therefore a departure of a spiritual nature, a departure from the faith. In line with this, the KJV New Testament Greek Lexicon defines “apostasia” as ‘defection, apostasy.’

Let’s take a look at the context where the end time “apostasia” is mentioned:

“Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first . . .” (2 Thess. 2:1-3)

Paul informs the church that the day of Christ, “will not come unless the falling away comes first.” In other words, “the falling away” will occur before the day of Christ comes. By the term, “the day of Christ” Paul is referring to what he just mentioned: “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him.” In context, Paul is saying “the falling away” happens before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him.

Continuing in 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul writes, “. . . and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped” (vv. 3, 4). Then in verse 8, we read, “And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.”

Thus, "the falling away" comes first, which results in the revelation of "the man of sin," who Paul also calls "the lawless one" ("the Antichrist" - 1 John 2:18), "whom the Lord will . . . destroy with the brightness of His coming." (v.8). "His coming" refers to "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" in verse 1 that is coupled with "our gathering together to Him" in the same verse, when the believers are gathered together to Him. Thus, when Jesus comes, He will both gather those who believe in Him and destroy the Antichrist.

For more insight concerning the end time, you are welcome to view a new book/eBook I have written entitled "THE COMING - The Testimony of the Bible Concerning the Return of Christ."



In this book, we take a look at what Jesus Himself said, what His apostles taught, and how all this ties in with what the prophets wrote in the Scriptures about the coming of the Lord.

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