

- (9) The nation can only recover its advantages of prosperity from God through the formation of a new pivot.
21. When a client nation is in the throes of an historical downtrend, biblical theology begins to become confused.
  22. Pastors sell out to programs designed to bring more and more people into the fold. In order to attract the masses, it is assumed the message must be watered-down.
  23. Consequently, the men ordained to teach the Word place more interest in making the congregation “get involved” with programs rather than teaching the Word of God.
  24. Over time, the power of the Word of God is diminished by the failure to teach its precepts. In the process, central doctrines necessary for spiritual growth is sacrificed.
  25. The importance of foundational doctrines is not stressed causing application to be watered- down.
  24. From this immerges ideas that play to the emotions of the members. Historical downtrends are interpreted as harbingers for the Rapture.
  25. Since there is no prophecy in the Church Age, then historical downtrends foreshadow national decline rather than the exit resurrection.
  26. The church at Thessalonica was also confused about the Rapture. Some assumed those who died had been raptured and were afraid they had been left behind.
  27. To correct this misunderstanding, Paul takes up the case and in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. This passage makes clear that the Rapture is immanent while at the same time is a mystery.

## The Day of the Lord and the Man of Lawlessness:

**2 Thessalonians 2:1** - Now we urgently request you, fellow believers, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ [ the Rapture ] and our gathering together around Him [ resurrection of “the dead in Christ” and “those who are alive and remain” (1 Thessalonians 4:16c–17a ),

**v. 2** - that you be not easily shaken in mind or disturbed, neither by a spirit [ demon influence ], nor by a message [ false doctrine ] nor by a letter [ false corrigendum ] as if from us, alleging that the day of the Lord [ 2d Advent is near ].

**v. 3** - Do not let anyone deceive you in any way since the Tribulation<sup>†</sup> cannot come unless the apostasy [ ἀποστασία (*apostasía*): the Rapture ] has come first, and the man who is lawless, the one doomed to destruction, shall be revealed. (EXT)

1. Through the attack of demon influence, those who are unable to discern what time it is teach their congregations that the Tribulation is underway with the result that believers have missed the Rapture or that there is no Rapture.
2. This is erroneous and the English translation doesn't help things either.
3. Things are moving along nicely through the first two verses, but in verse three we find a translation that completely distorts the impact of Paul's effort to correct the problem.
4. In the English translations, the Greek word *apostasía* is translated “rebellion” in the NIV and NET, “apostasy” in the NASB, and “a falling away” in the KJV Bibles.
5. In order to maintain the context presented by Paul, the word *apostasía* cannot mean rebellion, apostasy, or a falling away.

<sup>†</sup> This is Daniel's Seventieth Week, the seven-year period that begins shortly after the Rapture of Church-Age believers described by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18. Paul is teaching the Thessalonians that false teachers are deceiving them by claiming that the Tribulation has commenced and that they have missed the Rapture.

6. Consequently, we must discover what *apostasía* means in this context. To do this we must consult resources that provide the insight necessary to clear this up. First, let's go to the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*:

**ἀποστασία.** In 2 Thessalonians 2:3 *apostasía* is used in the absolute sense as an event of the last days alongside or prior to the appearance of the ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας (*ánthrōpos tés anomías*): the man of lawlessness. Here a Jewish tradition is adopted which speaks of complete apostasy from God and His Torah shortly before the appearance of the Messiah. This is applied to the apostasy of Christians from their faith to error and unrighteousness (v 11f.) in the last days (Matthew 24:11f.).<sup>2</sup>

7. *Apostasía* is found in Classical and Koine Greek lexicons and dictionaries respectively and its definition there supports translating the word as a reference to the Rapture:

**Departure, disappearance, separation.**<sup>3</sup>

**To depart; departure.**<sup>4</sup>

8. In his study of the Book of Second Thessalonians, R. B. Thieme, Jr., expressed the following analysis of the verb ἀποστασία:

**ἀποστασία** refers to the Rapture of the church. It is generally transliterated as apostasy; it is erroneously translated here [2 Thessalonians 2:3 (KJV)] "falling away." ἀποστασία means the departure, so this is not the passage where we can have any great apostasy before the Rapture occurs. "There must first come the departure" [the Rapture of the Church]." The Rapture is an absolute, but it is going to take all believers of the Church Age and move them out. They are going to depart; the whole body of Christ is removed from the earth. It isn't an apostasy, it is a departure.<sup>5</sup>

9. The *Scofield Study Bible: NASB* has a footnote at 2 Thessalonians 2:3 reading, "The apostasy. Greek *hē apostasia* meaning *the rebellion* or *the departure*."

<sup>2</sup> Heinrich Schlier, "ἀποστασία," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 1:513.

<sup>3</sup> Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, "ἀποστασία," *A Greek-English Lexicon*, rev. Henry Stuart Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 218.

<sup>4</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, ed., "ἀποστασία," in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed. (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993), 236.

<sup>5</sup> R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Second Thessalonians: 1973*, R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 463.

10. The translation “falling away” for the word ἀποστασία fails to stay loyal to the context. It is preceded by the definite article ἡ (hē): “the.”
11. To translate it “the falling away” doesn’t fit in the context. The definite article stresses and defines the noun ἀποστασία or “apostasy.” This implies there is a “sign” or “prophecy” regarding the Rapture.
12. There is no biblical prophecy regarding the timing of the Rapture. The context demands that an alternate definition of ἀποστασία be considered here.
13. The translation “departure” describes the event of the Rapture with is clearly presented in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.
14. The verb, on which the noun ἀποστασία is based, is ἀφίστημι (*aphístēmi*) which occurs only fifteen times and almost every time it is translated “to depart.”<sup>6</sup>
15. Most who buy into the false doctrine of a post-Tribulational Rapture will become fearful the Tribulation is present and the Second Advent is only a few short years away.
16. Many are anxious to believe such a deception because it is a convenient explanation for the phenomenon of historical downtrends in a reversionistic client nation.
17. Irresponsible decisions are made as a result of these misunderstandings. Some sell all their earthly possessions and go up to a high mountain awaiting the Rapture is hopes of going up first.
18. Others are dumbstruck by fear of divine wrath during the course of the Tribulation.
19. Principle: Historical disaster, personal or collective, is not a sign the Tribulation is about to occur or has already occurred.

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<sup>6</sup> Very consistent in KJV; other English translations employ a variety of synonyms dependent on context.

20. Some recently emphasized the confluence of four “blood moons” that occurred during this year as warnings that Israel would become the target of hostel attacks.
21. Principle: Under this rational, a full moon could be a harbinger of Israel being in harm’s way since she has been the relentless target of the Dark Side since Sarah gave birth to Isaac.
22. Paul continues in verse three by addressing a second thing which cannot occur until after the Rapture of the church:

**2 Thessalonians 2:3** - Do not let anyone deceive you in any way since the Tribulation cannot come unless the apostasy [ ἀποστασία (*apostasía*): **the Rapture** ] has come first, and the man who is lawless, the one doomed to destruction, shall be revealed. (EXT)

1. In the second half of the verse is where the phrase, *ánthrōpos tés anomías*: “the man who is lawless,” occurs.
2. The King James Version of the Bible translates *anomía* as “sin” as do other translations. There is a reason for this since the word *anomía* (lawlessness) and *hamartía* (sin) are each used in this verse within the corpus of Greek manuscripts.
3. The majority of the manuscripts use **ἁμαρτία** (*hamartía*): “sin,” but several important manuscripts employ **ἀνομία** (*anomía*): “lawlessness.” Here is why the latter use is preferable:

Although external support for *ἁμαρτίας* is broader, the generally earlier and better witnesses are on the side of *ἀνομίας*. Internally, since *ἁμαρτία* (*hamartía*, “sin”) occurs nearly ten times as often as *ἀνομία* (*anomía*, “lawlessness”) in the *corpus Paulinum* [i.e., the Greek manuscripts of Paul’s Epistles], scribes would be expected to change the text to the more familiar term. At the same time, the mention of *ἀνομία* in verse 7 and *ὁ ἄνομος* (*ho ánomos*, “the lawless one”) in verse 8, both of which look back to verse 3, may have prompted scribes to change the text toward *ἀνομίας*.

The internal evidence is thus fairly evenly balanced. Although a decision is difficult, ἀνομίας has slightly greater probability of authenticity than ἀμαρτίας.<sup>7</sup>

4. The “greater probability” of the correct text is “the man who is lawless” which identifies the Beast-Dictator, or Antichrist, who is in complete opposition to the Law of God.
5. The word lawless – ἀνομία – is compound of the word for law – νόμος – with the alpha privative ἄ- which makes it a negative: “no law,” or “lawless.”
6. In the mind of the Lucifer-possessed Antichrist, the impact of this word is intensified. He not only breaks the laws of God, he does so knowingly in continual defiance of the Word, will, and purpose of God.
7. Consequently, this man is opposed to the authority structure of the laws of divine establishment which he subverts to his dictatorial rationales. He aspires to impose cultural, economic, and political change upon the world’s population.
8. His opportunity to pursue this global intrigue is said to be “revealed,” the aorist passive subjunctive of the verb ἀποκαλύπτω (*apokalúptō*). It is a compound of ἀπό (*apó*): “from” and καλύπτω (*kalúptō*): “to conceal” to mean “revealed.”
9. The verb *apokalúptō* is literally the removal of a veil or covering exposing to open view what was before hidden; to reveal a thing previously secret or unknown.<sup>8</sup>
10. When the divine schedule approaches the day of the Rapture, the Beast-Dictator will be alive and well on planet earth, but his identity and his future pseudonym will be unknown.

<sup>7</sup> *The NET Bible* (Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 1996–2005), 2315fn1.

<sup>8</sup> Zodhiates, ed., “ἀποκαλύπτω,” in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, 224.

11. He is identified in verse 3 as “the man of lawlessness.” After the “departure” of Church Age believers, this man’s personality will ascend dramatically as an international power player. This is described by the structure of the verb “revealed.”
12. The aorist tense is ingressive which signifies a state or condition while denoting one’s entrance into that state or condition.
13. Therefore the public perception of this individual will “begin to be revealed.” Unknown to anyone before the Rapture, he will begin to be revealed following the Church’s “departure.”
14. The passive voice indicates that this personality will receive the action of being revealed. The subjunctive mood indicates that his identity is totally a matter of speculation.
15. We know that the Beast-Dictator is a historical figure, he is prophesied in numerous biblical passages and his strategy and tactics are discussed by John in the Revelation.