

Falling Away Part 3

2 Thessalonians 2:1-5 (CEV) 1 When our Lord Jesus returns, we will be gathered up to meet him. So I ask you, my friends, 2 not to be easily upset or disturbed by people who claim that the Lord has already come. They may say that they heard this directly from the Holy Spirit, or from someone else, or even that they read it in one of our letters. 3 But don't be fooled! People will rebel against God. Then before the Lord returns, the wicked one who is doomed to be destroyed will appear. 4 He will brag and oppose everything that is holy or sacred. He will even sit in God's temple and claim to be God. 5 Don't you remember that I told you this while I was still with you?

Purpose of the Epistle

The purpose of the epistle was to calm believers and assure them that the day of Christ (the Lord, as in the texts) had not yet come; that apostasy and the Antichrist must first come; that the rapture must take place even before these two events (2Th. 2:3-8); that he did not write any such letter as used by the false teachers who were disturbing them; and that he had not changed his doctrine since seeing them and writing the first epistle to them.

Acts 21:21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

Two Events Precede the Day of the Lord:

1. The falling away
2. The man of sin is revealed

At the rapture of all dead and living in Christ in a moment (1Cor. 15:23,51-58 1 Th. 4:13-18), not one soul will be left on earth who is a "true" Christian.

- Revelation 19:7-9
Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.
- Matthew 25:1-13 (KJV) 1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But

the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

- In other words, hold fast to your first love...
 - Revelation 2:4-7 (CEV) 4 But I do have something against you! And it is this: You don't have as much love as you used to. 5 Think about where you have fallen from, and then turn back and do as you did at first. If you don't turn back, I will come and take away your lampstand. 6 But there is one thing you are doing right. You hate what the Nicolaitans are doing, and so do I. 7 If you have ears, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. I will let everyone who wins the victory eat from the life-giving tree in God's wonderful garden.

1. Timothy 1:18-19 (CEV) 18 Timothy, my son, the instructions I am giving you are based on what some prophets once said about you. If you follow these instructions, you will fight like a good soldier. 19 You will be faithful and have a clear conscience. Some people have made a mess of their faith because they didn't listen to their consciences.
2. 1 Timothy 4:1-5 (CEV) 1 God's Spirit clearly says that in the last days many people will turn from their faith. They will be fooled by evil spirits and by teachings that come from demons. 2 They will also be fooled by the false claims of liars whose consciences have lost all feeling. These liars 3 will forbid people to marry or to eat certain foods. But God created these foods to be eaten with thankful hearts by his followers who know the truth. 4 Everything God created is good. And if you give thanks, you may eat anything. 5 What God has said and your prayer will make it fit to eat.
3. 1 Timothy 5:3-8 (CEV) 3 Take care of any widow who is really in need. 4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren, they should learn to serve God by taking care of her, as she once took care of them. This is what God wants them to do. 5 A widow who is really in need is one who doesn't have any relatives. She has faith in God, and she keeps praying to him night and day, asking for his help. 6 A widow who thinks only about having a good time is already dead, even though she is still alive. 7 Tell all of this to everyone, so they will do the right thing. 8 People who don't take care of their relatives, and especially their own families, have given up their faith. They are worse than someone who doesn't have faith in the Lord.
4. Revelation 3:1-3 (NLT) 1 "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Sardis. This is the message from the one who has the sevenfold Spirit of God and the seven stars: "I know all the things you do, and that you have a reputation for being alive—but you are dead. 2 Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost

dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of my God. 3 Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly. Repent and turn to me again. If you don't wake up, I will come to you suddenly, as unexpected as a thief.

5. 2 Timothy 2:1-13 (CEV) 1 Timothy, my child, Christ Jesus is kind, and you must let him make you strong. 2 You have often heard me teach. Now I want you to tell these same things to followers who can be trusted to tell others. 3 As a good soldier of Christ Jesus you must endure your share of suffering. 4 Soldiers on duty don't work at outside jobs. They try only to please their commanding officer. 5 No one wins an athletic contest without obeying the rules. 6 And farmers who work hard are the first to eat what grows in their field. 7 If you keep in mind what I have told you, the Lord will help you understand completely. 8 Keep your mind on Jesus Christ! He was from the family of David and was raised from death, just as my good news says. 9 And because of this message, I am locked up in jail and treated like a criminal. But God's good news isn't locked in jail, 10 and so I am willing to put up with anything. Then God's special people will be saved. They will be given eternal glory because they belong to Christ Jesus. 11 Here is a true message: "If we died with Christ, we will live with him. 12 If we don't give up, we will rule with him. If we deny that we know him, he will deny that he knows us. 13 If we are not faithful, he will still be faithful. Christ cannot deny who he is."
6. 2 Timothy 3:17 - 4:5 (CEV) 1 When Christ Jesus comes as king, he will be the judge of everyone, whether they are living or dead. So with God and Christ as witnesses, I command you 2 to preach God's message. Do it willingly, even if it isn't the popular thing to do. You must correct people and point out their sins. But also cheer them up, and when you instruct them, always be patient. 3 The time is coming when people won't listen to good teaching. Instead, they will look for teachers who will please them by telling them only what they are itching to hear. 4 They will turn from the truth and eagerly listen to senseless stories. 5 But you must stay calm and be willing to suffer. You must work hard to tell the good news and to do your job well.
7. Hebrews 2:1-4 (CEV) 1 We must give our full attention to what we were told, so that we won't drift away. 2 The message spoken by angels proved to be true, and all who disobeyed or rejected it were punished as they deserved. 3 So if we refuse this great way of being saved, how can we hope to escape? The Lord himself was the first to tell about it, and people who heard the message proved to us that it was true. 4 God himself showed that his message was true by working all kinds of powerful miracles and wonders. He also gave his Holy Spirit to anyone he chose to.
8. Hebrews 3:7-15 (CEV) 7 It is just as the Holy Spirit says, "If you hear God's voice today, 8 don't be stubborn! Don't rebel like those people who were tested in the desert. 9 For forty years your ancestors tested God and saw the things he did. 10 "Then God got tired of them and said, 'You people never show good sense, and you don't understand what I want you to do. 11 God became angry and told the people, 'You will never enter my place of rest!'" 12 My friends, watch out! Don't let evil thoughts or doubts make any of

you turn from the living God. 13 You must encourage one another each day. And you must keep on while there is still a time that can be called "today." If you don't, then sin may fool some of you and make you stubborn. 14 We were sure about Christ when we first became his people. So let's hold tightly to our faith until the end. 15 The Scriptures say, "If you hear his voice today, don't be stubborn like those who rebelled."

The Falling away. Greek: apostasia (G646), defection, revolt, apostasy. Used only here and in Acts 21:21, but the same as **apostasion**, defined as divorce, in

- Mark 10:4-9
And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. 5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.
- Mark 10:4-9 (CEV)
4 They answered, "Moses allows a man to write out divorce papers and send his wife away."
5 Jesus replied, "Moses gave you this law because you are so heartless. 6 But in the beginning God made a man and a woman. 7 That's why a man leaves his father and mother and gets married. 8 He becomes like one person with his wife. Then they are no longer two people, but one. 9 And no one should separate a couple that God has joined together."
- 1 Corinthians 6:17-20 (CEV)
17 But anyone who is joined to the Lord is one in spirit with him.
18 Don't be immoral in matters of sex. That is a sin against your own body in a way that no other sin is. 19 You surely know that your body is a temple where the Holy Spirit lives. The Spirit is in you and is a gift from God. You are no longer your own. 20 God paid a great price for you. So use your body to honor God.

Matthew 10:37-39 (NLT)

37 "If you love your father or mother more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter more than me, you are not worthy of being mine. 38 If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine. 39 If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it.

John 8:42 (NLT)

42 Jesus told them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, because I have come to you from God. I am not here on my own, but he sent me.

John 6:48-51 (CEV)

48 I am the bread that gives life! 49 Your ancestors ate manna in the desert, and later they died. 50 But the bread from heaven has come down, so that no one who eats it will ever die. 51 I am that bread from heaven! Everyone who eats it will live forever. My flesh is the life-giving bread that I give to the people of this world.

John 14:15 (NLT) 15 "If you love me, obey my commandments.

John 21:15-19 (CEV)

15 When Jesus and his disciples had finished eating, he asked, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than the others do?"

Simon Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, you know I do!"

"Then feed my lambs," Jesus said.

16 Jesus asked a second time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you!"

"Then take care of my sheep," Jesus told him.

17 Jesus asked a third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus had asked him three times if he loved him. So he told Jesus, "Lord, you know everything. You know I love you."

Jesus replied, "Feed my sheep. 18 I tell you for certain that when you were a young man, you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will hold out your hands. Then others will wrap your belt around you and lead you where you don't want to go." 19 Jesus said this to tell how Peter would die and bring honor to God. Then he said to Peter, "Follow me!"