

GREAT “FALLING AWAY”

This month’s paper will go over verse by verse why the great “falling away” is not the church and straighten some common misconceptions that are starting to creep into our churches. “**A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.**”

Introduction

Before we start on this topic, I would like to show how we are to study God's word.

#1) Isaiah 28: 10-13= (repetition) “**For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:** (11) For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. (12) To whom he said, this is the rest where with ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. (13) **But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; Line upon line, line upon line; Here a little, and there a little;** That they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.”

#2) 1 Cor 2:13= (comparison) “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; **comparing spiritual things with spiritual.**”

#3) 2 Tim 2:15= (division) “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**”

#4) Hos 12:10= (similitudes) “I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used **similitudes,** by the ministry of the prophets.”

#5) 2 Peter 1:20= (literal interpretation) “Knowing this first, **that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.**”

So, starting off just with studying the Bible we see that there are some things that we have to do to be able to understand God's Word. Number one is repetition, understanding that God means what He says, and we can see that through the scripture when he repeats it. Number two is comparison We are to compare scripture with scripture, and if anything doesn't line up with God's word then whatever it is that doesn't line up is wrong. God's word is always true! Number three is one of the most important in my opinion, studying to **show thyself approved unto God.** We can study, and we can take verses out of context, and we wouldn't **be approved unto God** at that point. We've got to **study to show ourselves approved unto God a Workman that needeth not be ashamed.** We've got to work at studying, and when it comes down to reading God's Word and studying God's Word, we must understand that we are to rightly divide, and that God deals with people differently in different times. The fourth thing that we can see in Hosea, is that we are to see **similitudes** in God's Word. That goes with **rightly dividing.** We will see God deal with a certain group of people, like the nation of Israel, a certain way and then deal with the body of Christ, which is the New Testament church, a certain way, and we must see the **similitudes** in the way that He deals with people. And the fifth point, in II Peter 1:20, we see that **no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.** I've personally heard people say, “Well I

believe that the Bible here is saying (*fill in the blank*),” and that's just not so. The Bible says what it means, and it means what it says, and if God wanted it to say or to mean what you think that it means or says, then He would have written that down. We must understand that this Bible is our final authority in all matters and manners of life, and that God doesn't make mistakes, and that we don't interpret the Bible to what we think is right. We read the Bible for what it says.

Laws of Biblical interpretation:

#1) The law of *first mention* (when you see the 1st place God uses a word)

#2) The law of *literal interpretation*.

#3) The law of *application* (fix the doctrinal meaning before any other meaning).

#4) The law of *complete mention* (the Bible, without any reference to *tradition* or “*the church*” is God's complete revelation on anything important to your spiritual life.)

#5) The law of *the gap* (the Bible skips periods of time without comment).

Topic at Hand

I would like to discuss the phrase in II Thessalonians 2:3 that says “**Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;**” Before we get into the meat of the paper, I would like to make clear that the Bible says in II Timothy 3:16, “**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and it's profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction and righteousness:**” Since I got saved at the ripe old age of 10 years old (33 now), I have heard countless messages and sermons on this passage claiming that the falling away is the church, and, might I add, that they were some of the best messages that I've ever heard preached. However, I would like to make clear that the “**falling away**” is not the church, and it can be very dangerous if you claim that it is. Unfortunately, I am in no way going to exhaust the material that covers this topic. That is where it's important for you personally to study this out for yourself.

Context of Passage

II Thessalonians 1:7-10 “**7: And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,**

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired and all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”

This context, no doubt, is in reference to the second coming of Christ, which we know is at the end of the seven-year tribulation (time of Jacob's trouble). So, who is Christ being “**revealed**” to here? It says in verse 8, “**them that know not God**”. Well, who is that? It's not the church, it's the **world! Revelation**

19:15 “And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the **nations**: and he shall rule **them** with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and the wrath of Almighty god.”

Chapter 2 1-2 “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

2 That you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.”

So, in verse one, we see that Paul is giving urgency to the brethren on the topics of the second coming and the rapture. He mentions the second coming first in the verse, which is not an uncommon thing that the Holy Spirit does throughout the Bible. For instance, in Psalm 89:19-37, the second advent is listed first and then in verses 37-45 the first advent is mentioned. So, Paul is letting it be clear to the Thessalonians that the rapture has not yet happened. We know that the “**day of Christ**” is a reference in the Pauline epistles to the *rapture of the church* and the *judgment seat of Christ* (1 Cor 1:8, 5:5, 2Cor 1:14; Phil 1:6,10, 2:16). Now this is where it's important to rightly divide the Word of Truth, and have spiritual discernment, not wresting the scripture to try, and make a passage match what you believe instead taking it in the context and believing what it says.

References and Context of Falling Away.

II Thess 2: 3-6 “let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

5 Remember ye not, that, when I was with you, I told you these things?

6 And now you know what with holdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

Let's take this verse by verse, the first words that we see is “**Let no man deceive you by any means**”. I can look at that in 2023 and say that men are still trying to deceive us by any means and if that means wresting the scripture that's what they'll do. **II Peter 3:16 “As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable **wrest**, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction**”. So, we have people that get to this passage, and they do not understand it. They try to change the meaning and take our hope away, our victory away, and our comfort away by privately interpreting it themselves, instead of doing what God commanded us to do in studying the word of God! The next thing that we see is that “**day shall not come except there come a falling away first**”. So, this is simple to do. Let's look at our King James 1611 Authorized Bible at “**falling away**” and see who it's in reference to.

2 Kings 25:11 “Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that **fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carry away. So, the question is who is this talking about? The answer is**

the southern tribes. They are being carried away, captive into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. The first reference in your Bible of **falling away** or **fell away** is the Jew.

Jeremiah 39:9 “Then Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in the city and those that **fell away**, that **fell to him** with the rest of the people that remained.” The second reference is of the same event, and it is the nation of Israel **falling away to** Nebuzar-adan and Nebuchadnezzar. Which, we know Nebuchadnezzar is one of the greatest types of the Antichrist in the Bible.

Jeremiah 52:15 “Then Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carried away captive certain of the poor of the people, and the residue of the people that remained in the city and those that **fell away**, that **fell to the king of Babylon**, and the rest of the multitude.” The third reference is once again to the Jews, **falling away to the king of Babylon**. You can rest the Scriptures here till you are blue in the face. You are not changing what the Bible says. You say, “Well I just have a hard time believing that.” My response to that is, I'm sorry, but **where is your faith?**

Luke 8:13 “They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, received the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation **fall away**.” Here, in the fourth reference, you see the parable of the Sower and the seed, and once again God dealing with the Jew.

Hebrews 6:1-11 “THEREFORE leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

2 of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

3 And this will **we** do, if God permit.

4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made for takers of the Holy Ghost,

5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

6 If they shall **fall away**, to renew them again unto repentance; Seeing they crucify to themselves the son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.


7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bring it forth herbs meat for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

8 But that which heareth thorns and briers is rejected, and does not any under cursing; whose end is to be burned.

9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, and that ye have ministered to the Saints, and do minister.

11 And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:” Here, the fifth reference to **falling away** in your Bible is a passage that has caused many to stumble. I could go over the multiple viewpoints and private interpretations of what some men say this passage is, but as you know, and as I have made clear before, it is people having a hard time understanding, and instead of rightly dividing and taking the passage for exactly what it says, they come up with some off the wall theory that's unbiblical. “Which they that are unlearned and unstable **wrest**”. This is so easy to understand if you just **rightly divide** and believe what you read!! The “**we**” in this passage is a bunch of Hebrews (that's the name of the book) and that “**the end** (vs 11) of the tribulation. The writer is telling them that they must leave “**the principles**” of verses 1-3 and move on to the “**better things... that accompany salvation**” (vs 9), because salvation in the tribulation is a *faith-and-works* system of salvation. Revelation 14:12 is a reference to somebody in the tribulation who has **fallen away to the Antichrist** and taken the mark of the beast. Revelation 14:9-11 is once again, another reference to falling away that is dealing with the Jew. If you've noticed, not one time has **fallen away** dealt with anybody that is in the body of Christ during the church age. Of all the verses in your Bible that deal with falling away, all of them deal with the Jew. Now, if you're honest with yourself, you would understand and admit that this it is clear this phrase, “falling away,” does not have anything to do with the body of Christ or with anybody that is saved in the day and age that we live, which is the church age.

So back to the passage in II Thessalonians, who is the falling away referring to? It says in verse 3, “...that day shall not come except they're coming falling away first and that man of sin be **revealed** the son of perdition; 

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; So that he as God sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God.”

Well let's ask this question, how is the son of perdition going to be revealed? And who is he going to be revealed to? Notice the big red arrow pointing to the semi-colon. The passage tells you how he is going to be revealed! He is going to sit in the temple of God and claim that he is God, and later in this passage, in Thessalonians, you see that he is going to deceive people with, “**signs and lying and all deceivableness of unrighteousness and send the people strong delusions that they should believe a lie**”.

To answer two questions with another question, when does all of that happen? It happens 3 ½ years into the tribulation (Rev 13). We will be long gone! **That day** could very well be in reference to the judgment seat of Christ, that will be encompassing the events going on in the earth at the time of **the falling away of the Jew to the Antichrist** on this earth, while we are in the 3rd heaven with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The key to understanding this is the **day of Christ** can encompass a number of events, just like the **day of the Lord**. While something is

going on in heaven, at the same time, something is going on down here on this earth! In verse six, you see that he is going to be **revealed in his time**. That's the Antichrist. That's in the tribulation. That's when we, those who are saved, born again by the precious blood of the Lamb, are in heaven, and not on this earth. The Jews here on this earth that are going through the tribulation will see that **man of sin be revealed** and then **the wicked one revealed** (vs 8), and the Jews will **fall away** to the Antichrist, just like they did to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. This is simply taking what you read and believing it, **rightly dividing the Word of Truth**, and not wresting the scriptures to make it fit what you think or what you want to believe.

The Importance

Titus 2:12-13 "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;" The first part of the answer is this, our blessed hope is Jesus Christ rapturing us off this earth before the tribulation. By this verse, we are to be looking for that blessed hope, which is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!! There is nothing in this verse about looking for the antichrist to be revealed or a great falling away!

1 Thess 4:13-18 "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore **comfort one another with these words."**

This is simple, if you just believe The Book for what it says. Notice in this passage, that we are not to comfort somebody with the Antichrist being revealed. We are not to comfort somebody by telling them that there is going to be a great falling away. We are not to comfort somebody any other way other than Jesus Christ is coming back to get his bride. With that, we have **blessed hope and comfort** in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ coming back to get us. We are to be **looking for him and comforting one another with these words**, in the day and age that we live.

1 Cor 15 51-57 "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump's: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible shall I put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.

55 Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, **which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

We have three passages here, one telling us to be **looking for** our Lord Jesus Christ, which is our **blessed hope**. The next, telling us that Jesus Christ coming to get us are the words that we should used to **comfort** one another, and the third passage, letting us know that we have **victory** through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in Him coming back and getting us. So, what are you looking at, what are you looking for, and what are you listening for? The Antichrist to be revealed, or the falling away of the church? From this article, I hope you understand that the Bible wants your eyes on Jesus Christ and nothing else. Focus on Him and His Word and stop worrying about the headlines of this world and the conspiracy theories of this world. Focus on our Lord and Savior and what we are supposed to be doing here on this earth.

Final Facts

II Thess 2:5-17 "5 **Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?**

6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in **them** that perish; because **they** received not the love of the truth, that **they** might be saved.

11 And for this cause God shall send **them** strong delusion, that **they** should believe a lie:

12 That **they** all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.



Rightly dividing

13 But **we** are bound to give thanks all way to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth:

14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and **good hope through grace,**

17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

So now you see the whole passage. We have gone through the Bible and the references of the falling away and worked our way all the way back to the original text. The Thessalonians, in verse two, were troubled and shaken by word and letters that the rapture has already happened. They were concerned that they had missed it. Here, what Paul does is exactly what we are supposed to do, assure them that the rapture has not happened because the events that he lists in this passage are going to happen after the rapture, three and a half years after it, to be exact. He even asked the brethren in verse 5, **“Remember you not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?”** That is why he says, **“they” and “them”, “they” and “them”, “they” and “them”** in verses 10-12, and then says **“but we”** in verse 13. When you get down to verses 16 & 17, there is that hope, through grace and comfort, that we went over, and our blessed hope, our comfort, our victory, and the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to get us off this earth before the tribulation starts. You can take these passages and wrest them out of their context and make them fit your belief of what you think, or you can have faith in God, that He does not make mistakes. He means what He says, and He says what He means. The choice is yours! This is so important, as people will use this as an excuse. **“There's a great falling away coming so why should we get out and witness or street Preach or pass out tracts? Or, that the numbers in the churches are down, so, “It's supposed to be like this because there is a great falling away coming”. I can't tell you how many people have asked me if I've seen the latest political fiasco, the latest prophecy that has nothing to do with the Bible, or if I've heard about the mark of the beast being in the COVID vaccines, etc. What I don't hear about is people looking for Jesus Christ, listening for that trump, praying over lost souls, reading their Bible, witnessing daily, preaching on the streets, or leading somebody to Christ. Have you ever thought, that maybe exactly what Jesus Christ said in **Revelation 3:15-16** is right and that it has nothing to do with a **“falling away”**? But instead, we as Christians are not **“hot or cold, but****

lukewarm” (which is a neutral temperature), or **II Tim 3:5 “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away,”** (another neutral position). Notice here it does not say, falling away. The problem is not falling away, the problem is neutrality in this world. We have let the atmosphere of this world change the spiritual temperature of us to match it. Instead of letting the Bible transform our minds we have let the world transform our minds. If we could just have some Christian men and women and kids stand up, get out of the pews, stop making excuses, and let the light of Jesus Christ shine through them. Who knows what God could do with that? We are more worried about the Antichrist being revealed, the mark of the beast, how to bring in God's Kingdom now, without Him, and how we can fix this world without Jesus Christ. Well, I'm here to tell you, the only way this world is going to be fixed is when our Lord and Saviour comes back to rule and to reign with a rod of iron, and not a moment sooner! You and I cannot fix the White House, we cannot fix the war in Ukraine, we cannot fix any other worldly event that you are thinking of. But what we can do, is tell somebody about what Jesus Christ did for them at Calvary almost 2000 years ago, and help them fix their house, and fix their eternity with salvation in Jesus Christ!

Pastor, Wesley Givens