

**THE RAPTURE PRECEDES “THE APOSTASY,” THE REVELATION OF THE “MAN OF LAWLESSNESS,”
THE “DAY OF THE LORD,” THE “GREAT TRIBULATION,” AND THE SECOND COMING**

“Let no man deceive you by any means.” (2 Thess. 2:3.)

Extended Summary

Part I, the essay’s introduction, discusses the following. At 1 Th. 3:13, the apostle Paul, using the phrase “coming of our Lord Jesus *with all His saints*” (italics added), refers to the Second Coming when Jesus will physically return to earth from heaven and bring all Christians with Him. In 1 Th. 4:13-18, Paul teaches on the “coming of the Lord” (1 Th. 4:15) and on the rapture of Christians that occurs when they are “caught up” (1 Th. 4:17) to meet the Lord in the air. Paul alludes to the Second Coming again at 1 Th. 4:14, which says, “God will bring *with Him* [Jesus] those who have fallen asleep.” (Italics added.) In 1 Th. 5, Paul examines whether Christians will be present on earth when the fearful “day of the Lord” comes. It includes the “great tribulation” and later Second Coming. In 2 Th. 2, Paul instructs on the rapture, “the apostasy,” the revelation of the “man of lawlessness” (the Antichrist), and the “day of the Lord.” Paul again addresses whether Christians will be present on earth when the “day of the Lord” comes.

Moreover, 1 Th. 5 and 2 Th. 2 show that *before* Paul wrote First Thessalonians, he had *orally* taught the Thessalonian Christians about the rapture generally, and about “the apostasy,” the revelation of the “man of lawlessness,” the “day of the Lord,” and whether the rapture would precede the rest of those events. In 1 Th. 4, Paul addressed a specific issue about which he had not previously informed the Thessalonian Christians: whether Christians who had died before the rapture would go up in the rapture and be present with Christ during the Second Coming; he taught that they would.

The essay maintains that a careful review of the Scriptures will demonstrate that the rapture occurs prior to “the apostasy,” the revelation of the “man of lawlessness,” and the “day of the Lord” (including the “great tribulation” and Second Coming).

In part II, the essay observes that there are two different “comings” of the Lord. One is the “coming of the Lord” at 1 Th. 4:15 (connected with the rapture); the other is the “coming of our Lord Jesus *with all His saints*” (1 Th. 3:13), i.e., the Second Coming.

Part III demonstrates that the rapture precedes the “day of the Lord” because Christians belong to the “day,” not to the “night,” and the “day of the Lord” comes in the “night.” To this end, the essay reveals that the “day of the Lord” is a fearful period of God’s wrath and destruction. Rev. 6:17, referring to God the Father and Jesus Christ, states, “the great day of Their wrath has come.” Shortly thereafter, Rev. 7:2 references the “rising of the sun,” symbolic of the beginning of a day. These two verses mark the commencement of the “day of the Lord” in the Book of Revelations. The “day of the Lord” ends with the destruction of the present heavens and earth.

In 1 Th. 5, Paul mentions three different *periods*: a “day” (associated with spiritual light), a “night” (associated with spiritual darkness), and the “day of the Lord.” Christians are “sons of day,”

meaning they belong to the *period* of the “day.” Christians do not belong to the “night.” And as long as Christians are here, it is “day.” The “day” therefore ends with the rapture; then the “night” begins. Christians will not be present during the “day of the Lord” because the “day of the Lord” comes in the “night.” This is the first reason the rapture precedes the “day of the Lord.”

Part IV proves based on 2 Th. 2 that the rapture precedes the “day of the Lord” because as long as Christians are here, Satan restrains, through “the mystery of lawlessness,” the revelation of the “man of lawlessness,” and that revelation precedes the “day of the Lord.” This part explores these concepts and the meaning of “the apostasy” in 2 Th. 2. There are three elements of “the apostasy”: those who commit it (1) “did not accept the love of the truth so as to be saved,” (2) “did not believe the truth,” but (3) “took pleasure in wickedness.” “The apostasy” is committed only by unbelievers; they have never been Christians. The “man of lawlessness” is the Antichrist. Something and someone “restrains,” i.e., hinders, the revelation of the “man of lawlessness.” The something is “the mystery of lawlessness . . . at work” (2 Th. 2:6); the someone is Satan (2 Th. 2:9). Satan restrains through “the mystery of lawlessness . . . at work.” It was working in Paul’s day and is working today. However, Satan will be “removed” and the “man of lawlessness” will then be revealed.

Nonetheless, as long as Christians are here, Satan, through “the mystery of lawlessness . . . at work,” hinders the revelation of the “man of lawlessness.” Therefore, the rapture must occur before the revelation of the “man of lawlessness.” Since the rapture precedes the revelation of the “man of lawlessness,” and that revelation precedes the “day of the Lord,” then the rapture precedes the “day of the Lord.” This is the second reason the rapture precedes the “day of the Lord.”

Part V shows that the rapture precedes the “day of the Lord” because as long as Christians are here, “the apostasy comes,” i.e., it has not yet occurred, and “the apostasy” precedes the “day of the Lord.” First, when Paul had been personally with the Thessalonian Christians, he had orally told them about various end-times matters, including the fact that “the apostasy comes.” He asked them at 2 Th. 2:5, “*Do you not remember* that while I was still with you, I *was* telling you these things?” (Italics added.) His question implied that what he had *orally* told them *controlled*. Second, therefore, he commanded them at 2 Th. 2:15 to “stand firm and hold on to the traditions which you *were* taught” (italics added), including the tradition that the “the apostasy comes,” i.e., it was a future event. If it were possible for the Thessalonian Christians to be *present* on earth when “the apostasy” occurred, then they could not “stand firm and hold on to” the tradition that “the apostasy” was a *future* event, and Paul would have been commanding them to do the impossible. Third, the Greek word translated “traditions” means “the content of traditional *instruction*.” In sum, when Paul orally told the Thessalonian Christians that “the apostasy comes,” he was presenting *doctrine*. Thus, the rapture must precede “the apostasy.” Furthermore, “the apostasy comes first,” then the revelation of the “man of lawlessness,” then the “day of the Lord.” Therefore, the fact that the rapture precedes “the apostasy” means the rapture precedes the “day of the Lord.” This is the third reason the rapture precedes the “day of the Lord.” Moreover, the above three reasons that the rapture precedes the “day of the Lord” also provide reasons that the rapture precedes the “great tribulation” and later Second Coming, since the last two occur during the “day of the Lord.”

Part VI presents Scriptural corroboration that the rapture precedes the “day of the Lord.”

Part VII presents “the apostasy” as one event in a continuum of events involving unbelievers who live through the rapture. Thus, during the church age, the Christian gospel will be presented to unbelievers. Moreover, the church age will continue for a brief time to permit these unbelievers to accept the gospel. However, they will not and they will be the final, worldwide group of people to not accept the Christian gospel. The rapture will subsequently occur. These unbelievers will later commit “the apostasy.” Because these apostates “did not accept the love of the truth so as to be saved,” they “perish” and God will send on them a supernatural “deluding influence” so that they will believe the Antichrist’s deceptions. These apostates will be present when the Antichrist comes with his efforts to deceive. And because of those deceptions, and the “deluding influence,” the apostates will believe the lies of the Antichrist.

Part VIII contains a summary of the essay and a brief chronology of end-time events.