

THE PARABLE OF THE TARES AND THE WHEAT (Part 4 of 6)

If we are truly living in the very last days of the Church Age, with the tares of Matthew 13 in full bloom; resulting in the proliferation of false doctrine throughout the Christian faith in every corner of our world, then there is only one final piece to this end-times puzzle to be put in its proper place. And the apostle Paul does it for us in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4, where we read the following –

“Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless THE APOSTASY (emphasis added) comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.”

For a detailed explanation of the prophetic significance of this passage, please see my study entitled: “Middle East Peace – The Fulfillment of Bible Prophecy.” But for our purposes in this segment, Paul writes to the Thessalonian believers here in order to alleviate their anxiety caused by a message which declared that the Day of the Lord had already arrived. They had been previously taught by Paul that the Day of the Lord would be a period of time which would bring God’s judgment upon the earth; but that they would not experience this time of tribulation, by being raptured into the Lord’s presence at the very outset (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:1-9).

It is vv3-4 of this passage which become significant as it relates to our current topic at hand. Paul informs them of a development which will occur prior to the rapture of the Church and the onset of the tribulation on earth; referring to it as the apostasy. In the secular sense it is a word that can refer to a rebellion of some sort, often used in regard to a revolt against governing authority. But here, in the spiritual sense, Paul uses it to refer to a falling away from the faith; a “religious defection” of some sort. This establishes an important prophetic timeline for our current day and age. Why? The tares will be allowed to grow together with the wheat until the time of the harvest (Matthew 13:30). Are we living at the very end of the Church Age or not? Are the tares among the wheat in full bloom or not? How you answer those two questions will determine whether or not you are open to the possibility that the Christian faith throughout our world is experiencing a time of profound apostasy, rather than a great revival. More about the nature of this apostasy, next.