

5. The true church is a subset of the whole. Proportionally, during the time of the church of Laodicea, the true, faithful followers of Jesus will become fewer in number. This is the time of the great apostasy.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 and **1 Timothy 4:1-3** describe a time when there is a falling away within the larger setting of those who call themselves the church.

Paul says the apostasy (a falling away) comes first, before the end. Paul is not talking about individual Christians ceasing to be Christian here. He is talking about the community changing from one that is mostly Christian to one that is less and less Christian.

Explain *the great apostasy* in your own words. Why do you suppose the Lord allows this to come upon the church in the last days? How is knowing about the great apostasy important to our understanding of prophecy?

6. Read **2 Timothy 3:1-5**. In what ways does this describe our context and culture today?
