

Preach the Word

I. REVIEW: THE END-TIME FALLING AWAY (1 TIM. 4:1-3)

- A. Paul prophesied that there would be a falling away in the end times (4:1-3).

1Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth... 6If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ... (1 Tim. 4:1-3, 6)

- B. ***The Spirit expressly says***: Paul sets forth the urgency and importance of this prophecy.

- C. ***In latter times***: Paul again prophesied perilous times in the “last days” (2 Tim. 3:1).

- D. ***Depart from the faith***: The most tragic reality in Church history is the end-time falling away from the faith (2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3-5; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; cf. Rom. 11:22; 1 Tim. 5:15; Heb. 3:12; 6:4-6; 10:26-31, 39; Jas. 5:19-20; 2 Pet. 2:20-22; 3:17).

3Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin [the Antichrist] is revealed... (2 Thes. 2:3)

- E. ***Giving heed to deceiving spirits***: They will embrace deceiving spirits and their doctrines of demons. Deceiving spirits are demons who seduce and then work through individuals. Jesus and Paul gave more warnings about deception in the end times than tribulation and persecution (Mt. 24:4-5, 11, 24; Mk. 13:5-6, 22; Lk. 21:8; 2 Thes. 2:3-10; 1 Tim. 4:1).

- F. ***Speaking lies in hypocrisy***: They will lie about God’s Word, and their happiness and freedom.

- G. ***Seared conscience***: A conscience seared with a hot iron no longer responds to God.

II. PERILOUS TIMES WILL COME (2 TIM 3:1-5)

- A. Paul described the perils in society in the end times (3:1-5), highlighting false teachers (3:13; 4:3).

1Know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away...13Evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. (2 Tim. 3:1-5, 13)

- B. ***Know this:*** Paul wanted Timothy to “know” that perilous times will come in the end times and that great resistance to the truth would get worse and worse as Jesus’ return approaches (3:13).
- C. ***In the last days:*** The New Testament writers used the phrase, “in the last days,” five times and in two different ways. In 2 Timothy 3:1 and 2 Peter 3:3, it refers to the generation that Jesus returns. In Acts 2:17 and Hebrews 1:2, “the last days” include the period extending from Jesus’ death and resurrection until His return. James 5:3 could be used in either way.
- D. ***Perilous times will come:*** Earlier, Paul wrote of the falling away in the latter days (1 Tim. 4:1-3). Paul used the future tense, writing that perilous times “will come” (3:1), men “will be” lovers of themselves (3:2), and that evil men “will grow” worse (3:13) instead of saying that the perilous time “had come” and evil “had grown” worse. Paul used verbs in the future tenses (3:1-2, 13), giving a prophetic tone to his message here while also applying it to Timothy’s generation.

III. THE CORRUPT WAY OF FALSE TEACHERS (2 TIM 3:6-9)

- A. Paul included the false teachers in Ephesus in these verses, though it applies to all false teachers in the end times who will be part of causing society to be perilous and dangerous (3:1).

6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith... (2 Tim. 3:6-8)

- B. ***Creep into households:*** Deceptive men will “worm their way” into homes under false pretenses. They will gain entrance into households in which gullible women (married and single)—who are dominated by sinful desires—are vulnerable to being deceived by false teachers and teachings.
- C. ***Gullible women:*** They will target and seek to make captives of gullible, weak, vulnerable women by enticing them with false ideas that are novel and exciting spiritual ideas and experiences. Paul is not describing women in general but specifically warning us that vulnerable people will be targeted.
- D. ***Loaded down with sins:*** False teachers will gain psychological dominance over their victims who are overwhelmed under the weight of guilt and difficult consequences related to their past sins.
- E. ***Jannes and Jambres:*** Paul compared these deceptive spiritual leaders with corrupted minds to the Egyptian magicians in Pharaoh’s court who resisted the Lord and Moses (Ex. 7:11; 9:11).

IV. HOW GOD'S LEADERS ARE TO RESPOND (2 TIM. 3:10-17)

- A. The conduct of godly leaders like Timothy is in direct contrast to false teachers. He was deeply encouraged by Paul's example of steadfast faithfulness (3:10-15) and by the Scriptures (3:16-17).

10You have carefully followed my [teaching]...manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, 11persecutions...which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra... 12Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 13But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. (2 Tim. 3:10-13)

- B. All who live godly will be persecuted: All Christians who are determined to live a godly life will suffer persecution because they live and speak in a way that is opposite to the world system.

- C. Grow worse and worse: Paul was emphatic that evil would continue to intensify in the end times.

- D. In the face of pressure, Timothy must continue in the Word and not turn aside to evil men.

14But you must continue in the things which you have learned...15that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation... (2 Tim. 3:14-15)

- E. Meditating on scripture empowered Timothy to withstand evil men (3:16-17).

16All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine [teaching], for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

V. PROCLAIM THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD (2 TIM 4:1-2)

- A. Paul commanded Timothy to proclaim the truth (4:2) with a solemn charge (4:1): that the Father was watching him and that Jesus would eventually evaluate him at the judgment seat of Christ. Paul knew that his death was near (4:6), so he gave Timothy one final exhortation with five imperatives.

1I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. (2 Tim. 4:1-2)

- B. I Charge You: "I solemnly command you" or "I earnestly and authoritatively urge you." This is much stronger than a casual request. Paul is placing Timothy under a serious, sacred obligation before God.

- C. ***Before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge...***: Paul is reminding Timothy that His work will be evaluated by the Lord Jesus Christ.
- D. ***Preach the word:*** The primary responsibility of every believer is to speak the Word faithfully.
- E. ***Be ready in season and out of season:*** Be prepared to speak at any occasion, whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether he felt inspired or not, and not to speak the Word only on special occasions. Thus, he was to take advantage of every opportunity to make the Word known.

VI. DO NOT BE INTIMIDATED BY THOSE WITH ITCHING EARS (2 TIM. 4:3-5)

- A. Timothy was so charged in 4:1-2 because “they,” or many who hear the Word in the future, would not tolerate the truth but would only listen to speakers who told them what they wanted to hear.

3For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine [teaching], but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables. 5But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (2 Tim. 4:3-5)

- B. ***The time will come:*** Paul spoke of the future, particularly in the end times (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1).
- C. ***They will not endure sound teaching:*** To endure sound teaching is to receive and apply it. Sound doctrine teaches self-discipline, humility, and purity; thus it will not satisfy itching ears.
- D. ***Itching ears:*** Itching ears speaks of an irritation in the ears that demands relief and cannot be easily satisfied. This metaphor implies that the false teachers will “scratch” or satisfy itchy ears.
- E. We see Paul’s confidence in facing death and his encouragement that Timothy be faithful (4:6-8). Paul described his life using three metaphors—being poured out, fighting the good fight, and finishing his race— and thus, keeping the faith while loving Jesus’ appearing at His coming.

6For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. 8Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Tim. 4:6-8)