

Perilous Times will Come

I. 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)

1. Some will fall away by choosing to indulge in sin (immorality, drunkenness, drugs, the occult, etc.), others by fear of persecution, and still others will drift away by unbelief under the cover of “intellectual honesty,” concluding that God’s judgments, His one way of salvation, and His holy standards (sanctity of life, marriage, sex, etc.) are a contradiction to love.

2. Once they have confidence to dismiss the parts of the Word that speak about His judgments, then they will find it easier to challenge the authority of the Scripture. Later, they will accept the heresy of universalism and reject that Jesus’ death provides the only way of salvation.

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, etc.

- G. **Seared conscience:** Having their conscience seared with a hot iron so it no longer responds to God.
- H. **Forbidding to marry:** The Supreme Court decision to legalize gay marriage on June 26, 2015 goes far beyond what people do in the privacy of their bedroom. It is normalizing immorality in our culture and institutionalizing it in our legal system, demanding the systematic promotion of homosexual lifestyle in every public elementary school. This law opened a door for the systematic presentation of an immoral agenda. This unholy momentum is accelerating as many seek to remove moral boundaries from society, including the sanctity of life, marriage, and sexuality.
- I. **Commanding to abstain from foods:** They will command people to refuse foods which God created for them to receive (4:3). This is a much bigger issue than legalism and asceticism.
- J. Paul called attention to two issues—forbidding marriage and various foods.

II. EVERY CREATURE OF GOD IS GOOD (1 TIM 4:4-5)

- A. God's creation is good (Gen. 1:31; Rom. 14:14); thus, we can eat with gratitude what He created.

4Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 5for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. 6If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ... (1 Tim. 4:4-6)

- 1. God's gifts can be abused by immorality, gluttony, addiction to drugs and alcohol, etc.
 - 2. Paul was not saying that everything is good for us (poisons, drugs, etc.), but he promoted the idea that what God created is fundamentally good if it is used in the way that God intended.
- B. **Nothing is to be refused:** Paul taught that a believer can eat anything as long as it does not cause another believer to stumble (1 Cor. 8:8-9). He did not promote a theologically-based asceticism.
 - C. **Sanctified by the Word and prayer:** We learn from the Word that God set apart food for our good and enjoyment. We acknowledge this via prayer. We sanctify or set apart food for God's purpose when we pray for it and gratefully partake of it in a way that agrees with the Scriptures.

III. 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).

1I know 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,

4*traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, *5*having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away...13*Evil men and impostors [of genuine Christianity] 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.
- E. Paul prophesied concerning sinful attitudes and activities—He gave 20 descriptions highlighting facets of loving pleasure and self-centeredness. We are to act in the opposite spirit and teach others to do so and to be alerted instead of surprised and offended when mistreated by such people. The call to resist these sinful actions parallels the call to the “Sermon on the Mount” lifestyle.
- F. **Lovers of themselves (1)**: Sociologists agree that this is the most narcissistic generation in history due in part to being empowered by social media and other contemporary realities. It is the first time in history that people make a media page to promote themselves aggressively—this seems normal to many. Loving who we are in the grace of God results in godly self-esteem (Mt. 22:39).
- G. **Lovers of money (2)**: Self-centeredness leads to greed, materialism, and accumulation of more things to gratify ourselves. Many seek to lure people into their churches by promising them more money if they will serve God.
- H. **Boasters (3)**: Selfishness is expressed in boasting that is rooted in an inflated sense of importance.
- I. **Proud (4)**: This includes a defensive attitude that automatically resists being corrected by others.
- J. **Blasphemers (5)**: This expression of pride boldly profanes God and people with fierce criticism.
- K. **Disobedient to parents (6)**: Failure to honor parents is an expression of rebellion against God. Once one lacks gratitude for benefits given to them by their parents, they soon consider nothing sacred.

- L. **Unthankful** (7): They are unappreciative and ungrateful for good that God and others have done.
- M. **Unholy** (8): To be unholy or impure includes disregarding foundational, sacred values and norms.
- N. **Unloving** (9): The Greek word *astorgoi* can be translated as heartless, callous, or hateful. Such wicked people will become almost beastlike in their loss of love for their families and friends.
- O. **Unforgiving** (10): They will be unwilling to forgive or to seek to reconcile relationships. This will lead to great pain and destruction of many lives, families, and the social order itself.
- P. **Slanderers** (11): They will find it easy to gossip and malign others to damage their reputation.
- Q. **Without self-control** (12): Without self-control, people quickly yield to anger and temptation, and will seek pleasure and comfort at any cost. Self-control is a foundational element of true spirituality.
- R. **Brutal** (13): Such people will be like wild animals in their lack of mercy and empathy for others.
- S. **Despisers of good** (14): They will openly criticize and oppose those seeking to walk virtuously.
- T. **Traitors** (15): They will be treacherous to betray even the closest relationships—including fellow Christians to the authorities in times of persecution—for personal gain and protection.
- U. **Headstrong** (16): They will act boldly in rash and reckless ways towards other people.
- V. **Haughty** (17): They will over-value themselves and under-value others in conceited self-delusion.
- W. **Lovers of pleasure** (18): They will love pleasure and comfort because they love themselves.
- X. **Rather than lovers of God** (19): They will have no regard for loving Jesus in the hour of history when the Spirit establishes the first commandment in first place in the body of Christ worldwide.
- Y. **Having a form of godliness but denying its power** (20): They will make a pretense of godliness and have the appearance of having a devout relationship with God, but they will lack its power. It is possible that the apostasy will not be Christians becoming secular atheists so much as Christians embracing other spiritual expressions (while probably using non-religious language).
- Z. **From such people turn away** (3:5): Paul told Timothy, and thus the body of Christ today, to have nothing to do with people of such hardness of heart. This seems to contradict Paul’s command in 2:24-25 to correct people in gentleness, humility and patience. “Such people” is not a general reference to sinners but specifically to those who apostatize from the faith and attack Christians.