

The Four Horsemen of the Gloomy Decades

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer describes the despondent intellectual mood of the 1920s and 1930s, characterized by materialism, pessimism, cynicism, and skepticism.

Scripture: Psalm 42:11, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 6:34, John 16:33, Romans 15:13, Philippians 4:6-7, 2 Timothy 1:7, Hebrews 11:1, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Hope in Despair", "Faith Amidst Pessimism"

Description

A.W. Tozer addresses the pervasive pessimism that followed World War I, describing how materialism, pessimism, cynicism, and skepticism became the dominant attitudes of the 1920s and 1930s. He notes that intellectuals across various fields succumbed to these gloomy perspectives, leading to a general sense of despair about the future, particularly regarding prophecy and civilization's fate. Tozer critiques the liberal religious response of the time, which, while optimistic, was based on a misguided interpretation of scripture. He emphasizes the need for genuine faith and hope amidst the prevailing darkness, urging believers to seek true understanding and trust in God's promises.

Transcript

Immediately following the first World War, a wave of pessimism swept over the literate world.

What the cause was I shall not go into here but, whatever it was, the intellectual mood of the '20s and '30s was thoroughly despondent. Materialism, pessimism, cynicism and skepticism were the four horsemen of those gloomy decades and they rode forth conquering and to conquer.

The scientists were materialistic, the philosophers skeptical, the novelists and biographers cynical and almost everyone pessimistic. Even the interpreters of prophecy were apprehensive, for they saw in the capture of Jerusalem by the British and the rise of the Roman Empire under Mussolini evidence of the nearness of the tribulation days, the coming of Antichrist and the collapse of civilization. About the only religionists on the Protestant side who managed to retain a little optimism were the liberals (?modernists? they were called in those days), and they were cheerful for a wrong reason. Out of the poetic passages of a Bible, in which they no longer believed, they wove delicate daisy chains, which have long since withered, and crocheted pretty religious doilies of which they are not now exactly proud and which they would willingly forget but cannot because their handiwork is still to be found among us--on the seventeen cent bargain table of the second-hand bookstores.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/the-four-horsemen-of-the-gloomy-decades/>

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