

# Timothy, II #2 Ch. 3-4

by Chuck Missler

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*Chuck Missler's sermon emphasizes the dangers of apostasy in the church and the necessity of grounding oneself in the Word of God during perilous times.*

**Duration:** 1:02:46

**Scripture:** 2 Timothy 3:2-4, 1 John 3:2

**Topics:** "Timothy"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of recognizing the signs of a society that is drifting away from godliness. He emphasizes the need to turn away from those who have a form of godliness but deny its power. The speaker then goes on to list 19 indicators of a society that is becoming increasingly self-centered and disobedient. He urges listeners to examine their own lives and strive for spiritual growth, reminding them of the importance of a personal relationship with God. The sermon concludes with a call to prayer for a grassroots revival in order to save the country and secure a better future for the next generation.

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## Transcript

As we continue our study in the pastoral epistles, I always like to start out by asking, how many in the audience here are in the full-time ministry? Can I see a show of hands? Praise God, you got the message, okay. I usually get about three or four hands, then I have to say, how many of you are saved? All the hands go up, which is the politically correct response in this community. And then you get the message, we are all, see we have a tendency, I know I did, that the pastoral epistles are for pastors.

1 Timothy and Titus are called the pastoral epistles, Paul wrote them to pastors. But they have messages for all of us. And we're going to finish 2 Timothy tonight, which is about apostasy.

Apostasy in the last days. And what is the antidote for apostasy? Apostasy is a disease, obviously, of the body of Christ. What is the antidote? The answer is the word of God.

And Paul is going to emphasize that. It's interesting, in the universe there are three things. There's God, there are people and things.

You should worship God, love the people, and use things. But if we start worshiping ourselves, we ignore God, we start loving things, we start using people. It's all muddled up.

But we're going to talk about how some of these things occur, and it may surprise you to see the source of some of this. One of the things that we need to do, of course, in trying to do a Bible study, there's always a trade-off. Because on the one hand, we want to really focus on the text and what Paul was saying and what it means.

The exegesis is what the text is really saying, and the exposition is what that means. But the real link is application, applying it to our own lives. And very often, because especially these passages that are so familiar to us, may lack reality because we form images in our mind that are remote or distant.

We don't realize it's here today. And I'm going to try to indulge a little bit in some examples that will dramatize the reality of what Paul is talking about, here in our day, in rather vivid terms. 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 1. Paul says, Does this know also that in the last days perilous times shall come? Perilous times shall come.

Perilous, dangerous, hard to deal with. The word actually means savage time. Perilous is sort of polite.

Savage, vicious times. The same word is used to describe the violent demoniac in Matthew chapter 8. Remember that wild man? That same word is used that was describing him, describing these times. So this indicates that the suggestion that lies behind the Greek text is that the violence will be, in the last times, will be actually energized by demons.

No surprise. By the way, just an aside, it doesn't look from the scripture like the conversion of the whole world. There are people who hold the view that the goal of the church is to convert the whole world, to make it a better place.

That's not a biblical view. The biblical view is that it gets worse and worse and worse to the end times. And there's not a very bright future portrayed here for the organized church.

And we use that term two ways. We use it sort of the organized church, and the real church, of course, is the mystical supernatural union of believers in Christ. But when we find the term last days in the Old Testament, it's really the last days for Israel, the end of the age, the time of the end, it usually is referring to the tribulation, for good reason.

But the last days regarding the church really points not to the second coming, not to the tribulation, but rather to the Harpatzo, the rapture, the gathering of believers. But the main point is Paul warned. You remember in Acts chapter 20, we've looked at this before in this study.

In Acts chapter 20, Paul stopped by at Miletus to meet with the Ephesian elders. He had them come down to meet us at Miletus because he didn't have time to get all the way to Ephesus, so they met by prearrangement. And he warned them, his last farewell address, and he warned them that there would be false teachers that would be attempting to disrupt the body.

Now we're going to see here in the following verses 19 descriptors of what will characterize the apostasy that's coming upon the church. Things are going to get worse, not better. You say, G. Chuck, that's not a very exciting message.

Well, it is and it isn't. First of all, it's the real message, it's from the word. But it's also exciting because as we see it, we know it's happening just like God said it would.

And that also allows us not to be caught by surprise. Now, we're going to see 19 indicators. The heart of every problem is a problem of the heart.

And every one of these will refer to that, starting in verse 2. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, or disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy. Lovers of their own selves, self-lovers. Boy, does that characterize our society.

I like to go by newsstand and look at the magazines, you know, Self, Me. Our society panders to our self-love. Covetous.

We've already talked about the lovers of money. Covetous, lovers of money. Remember 1 Timothy 6, we were into that.

It's not money is the root of all evil, money is amoral. It's not moral or immoral, it's just a medium of exchange. But loving money is covetousness and is the source of much evil.

Boasters is the next one. Swaggers are proud, people that boast. And then the next one is proud or haughty, more precisely.

And then blasphemers, or a better translation would be railers. And disobedient to parents. Boy, does that characterize our age.

I won't ask for a show of hands how many of you have or have had teenagers in the family. I won't go into that now for anyone on the spot, but it's a tough time. It's a tough time.

And what's interesting is that it's not just the usual rebellion of teenagers. They go through a stage. We're dealing with a society in which there's organized agendas attacking the family.

That's why we have Focus on the Family, this incredible ministry. James Dobson, Family Research Council, Gary Bauer, a number of organizations that have focused on this very, very effectively. Attacks on the family are a central part of Satan's strategy.

And when people attack the very institution of the family by a variety of different techniques, they're doing Satan's work. I'm not trying to say they're Satanists, don't misquote me. But I am saying they are doing, whether they know it or not, Satan's work.

Next item is unthankful. Have you noticed people being unthankful? And by the way, let me emphasize something here. What he's talking about here in this series is not the world.

He's talking about the body of Christ. He's talking about the body of Christ. He's not addressing this to the pagan unbelievers.

He's addressing this epistle to Timothy, a pastor of a church, about his church. So when you read this list, you forget that. Gee, this sounds like the world is awful.

The world is covetous. They love themselves. They're boasting, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents.

No, we're talking about Christians in chapter 3 of 2 Timothy. And I'm trying to show you what that means here. Unthankful.

It's amazing to us, having come from the secular world in our social and professional practices into the Christian community more professionally, how rare it is to get a thank you note. In the secular world, it's unthinkable. If someone gives you a gift or something, you get a thank you note.

It's just routine, not a big deal, but it's routine. I mean, there's a social manners. Just manners, courtesies.

And one of the things that took us a long time, Nan and I, to get used to the fact that it isn't that people are unthinking. They're just untrained. They just don't think.

They draw it off a little note. It's amazing. Anyway, and uncourteous.

I won't start on that. The next one is unholy or profane is what it really means. They are actually against God in their conversation and their manner of life.

We're talking Christians here. Or people, I should say, within the Christian church. Are they Christians is another issue.

We'll come to that. Then we get to verse 3. This is just the warm up. That's just verse 2. We've got a few to go yet.

Verse 3. Without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent fears, despisers of those that are good. Without natural affection. Boy.

Does that characterize our age? Where their rights are protected with special rights. You can argue from the secular world that you may not condone homosexuality. But they certainly shouldn't be treated any less.

No, no. They're treated better. They're protected.

Without natural affection. Strange. Homosexuality is accepted as normal.

And I think the way to deal with this is turn with me to Romans. Let's not be confused on this point. Because it's going to come up subsequently.

Let's turn to Romans. And just always remember Romans chapter 1. Boy. We really should start maybe at verse 18.

But in the interest of time, I'll start at verse 24. Paul says, Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections. For even their women did exchange the natural use for that which is against nature, and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, and burned in their lust one toward another, men with men, working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was fitting. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, and to do those things which are not seemly, being filled with all unrighteousness, and fornication, and wickedness, and covetousness, and maliciousness, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, insolent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant

breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful, who knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Wow. Heavy, heavy thing. It says it all.

Romans chapter 1. You see this throughout history, whether you're reading Gibbon, or the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, or other historians, humanity sinks to its lowest level, when it accepts homosexuality. See, the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was not homosexuality, it was the public condoning of it. There's always been maybe some around, because there is sin everywhere.

But when it officially condones it, is when judgment came. Anyway, moving on. He talks about truce breakers.

That's the way you keep lawyers employed. You know, it's interesting to me, because my real world for the last 30 years has been on Wall Street and the corporate boardrooms. And it fascinates me to see the deterioration even there.

Because the dictum of Wall Street, when it got started, was my word is my bond. These guys transacted things verbally at the curb. It was called the curb in the old days.

And even not many decades ago, the people that were the real movers and shakers on the street were people... they may not have been moral men for all I know, but they were ethical. Because their whole livelihood hung on the reputations for keeping their word. That's not true today.

Wall Street too has been subject to the sleaze of the low marketplace. And the corporate boardrooms were echoing much of that. Same kind of thing.

Ethical, sort of almost a sanctuary in the old days of corporate governance. And today it's a great big game in many places. But the deterioration of the style is fascinating to watch.

It's very measurable in that environment. Next was false accusers. Boy, if there's anything that characterized... By the way, let me emphasize again.

It's easy as you read these lists to presume Paul's talking about the world. No, the focus is the church. The Christian community is what he's talking about.

He's not talking about the world. It's not like Romans 1 where there he was talking about the secular world. Here in 2 Timothy 3 he's talking to a pastor about his church.

Slanderers. Boy, it disturbs me how many writers in the Christian community make their living by hurting people. That literally libel in print and slander on the radio.

Making no pretense for accuracy. I won't start. I won't name names.

It wouldn't be appropriate here anyway. But it's certainly characteristic of our times. And again, this is within the body.

Incontinent is the word in King James. It really means without self-control. And that also is characteristic of our Christian society.

Next one was fierce. It actually means savage or untamed or brutal. And of course our schools and streets are unsafe, even in daytime.

Despisers of those that are good. Better translated, haters of those that are good. You know, it fascinated me to watch the political rhetoric during the impeachment proceedings.

Not that there wasn't a difference of political view. That's understandable. But the unbridled hatred and animosity of the left, of the pagan left, to those neo-Puritans of the right is one of the phrases.

There were worse phrases. It fascinated me to see the masks removed. You really saw the situation.

Anyway, this is to verse 4. The list continues. Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Traitors are betrayers.

People who betray. And it's disturbing to discover that there are, within the body of Christ, people you don't trust. It took man and I a long time to really realize that.

Because you sort of take for granted, when you're within the Christian body, hey, you're within the family. You are in the family of God if you're among real Christians. But it's disturbing to discover, to experience the pain of discovery, of people who are, you know, fair-weather friends at best, and behind your back do strange things.

Betrayers. It's interested me that when we pick the name of koinonia, the word koinonia means communication or fellowship or communion. When you take communion, you're taking koinonia.

Koinonia. I was intrigued to discover that the same word koinonon is the word for fiduciary. And most Christians don't even know what that word means in the language.

Unless you're a lawyer on a board or something like that. But the breach of fiduciary duties are rampant. But let's move on.

Heady, meaning reckless is what the term really means. And then high-minded, blinded by pride, conceited. And then this one.

Boy, lovers of pleasures more than the lovers of God. We're talking about the Christian community, characteristic of our age. Take a look at our society.

Measure the budgets for entertainment and athletics in contrast to budgets for charity or even budgets for productive work. Very interesting. Staggering.

That's exactly what happened in Rome. Grain and circuses. Keep the people distracted and happy.

Keep them distracted, keep them happy, while we move on. And Rome fell. And there's five.

Having a form of godliness. Bear in mind, we're not talking about the pagan, secular left, really. The flow of Paul's message is to Christians.

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it. Now we're starting, the fog's beginning to lift. We may see where this is all headed.

When you see having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, what are you to do? What does the next few words say? From such, turn away. Wow. Form of godliness.

Rituals that are totally void of life and reality. But Paul is suggesting that, I think, if you are in a dead, cold, liberal church, and if you're a true believer, what are you doing there? I've had many of my friends say, well, that's my ministry. I know I'm still at Church X, but that's my ministry.

Well, good luck. The word of God says to avoid such things. I don't know that he puts new wine in old skins.

Now, what Paul is talking about here, is a people that are operating under the guise of religion. He's not talking about, by the way, I don't believe he's talking about false cults. I don't think he's talking about the New Agers.

I don't think he's talking about deviant, non-Christian groups. There's a place for that, and the Bible says lots about that. He's talking here about those that are operating under the guise of Christianity.

Now, bear with me. On September 2nd of 1998, Swiss Air 111 went down off the coast of Nova Scotia, killing 229 people. Millions of dollars and hundreds of people were dedicated to finding the cause.

The public wanted to know what the problem was, so it could be corrected, and they'd have some assurance it wouldn't happen again. Let me use a different example. Let's imagine, heaven forbid, that the President was hit with an assassin's bullet.

There would be relentless investigation of the secret servicemen who were charged with guarding him. The public would demand to know if the men responsible for protecting him had done their job properly. Had they been negligent in any way, obviously they would have brought charges against the men that were negligent.

Or let's suppose, for example, the President was incapacitated because of, say, food poisoning. There would be an intensive investigation of the White House staff to make sure they'd been careful in their selection, in their preservation and preparation of the President's food, and if evidence indicated they were negligent, charges would be brought against them. If the President fell from a heart attack, there'd be an investigation of his medical records and doctors, and if they discovered that his doctors knew he had heart disease and failed to treat him, they would have been held responsible, right? Suppose the doctors had detected blocked arteries or something like that, but only told him the good news, you know, that his cholesterol was this or that, or they found him good news, didn't tell him what the real problem was.

They just told him what he wanted to hear. He would love the doctors, wouldn't he? But he would die as a result. Well, we've had a President that crashed morally, that has denigrated the highest office in the land.

Now, I'm not here to attack him or defend him. That's not the issue. Plenty of other people have done and will continue to do that.

That's not the issue. I think it's worthwhile for you and I to understand why he crashed. What caused him to crash? Quite a part.

We want to understand what happened. The important issue, by the way, is not what the President did or who he did it with, or what his punishment should be. The crucial question before us here is why did he do

it? I'm going to suggest to you that the President's greatest error was not in getting involved with some woman other than his wife.

His greatest error was getting involved with ministers whose God was not his God. Jesus warned us in Matthew 24. He says, For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and deceive many.

Many false prophets shall arise and deceive many. There shall be false Christs and false prophets, and so much as it were possible, they should deceive the very elect. I hear people say, as long as he continues to do his job well, that's all that matters.

Wait a minute. A key part of the President's job is to set an example for the millions of children who see him as the most admired man in the world. See, you and I should not expect moral reformation.

We should not expect moral reformation in Washington, D.C. Moral reformation must begin in the churches and the pulpits, not in government. Spiritual decay has brought about a moral decay of our nation, and only a spiritual revival will bring about our healing. But let's examine his background a little better.

I'm going to suggest to you that the evidence indicates that President Clinton is the finished product of some of the most corrupt teaching ever given in the name of Jesus Christ. Let's talk about his background. This may surprise you.

He began attending church when he was nine years old, toting a leather-bound Bible in his left hand as he walked down the streets of High Springs, past the motel swimming pools and the various glitz of Middle American carefree vacation area. He was baptized into a Baptist church. Now, if you're going to be baptized, you go to a Baptist church, right? They ought to know about Baptism.

Well, he served as a member of the church choir. He carried his Bible, quoted the Scriptures. He counseled with ministers over his major moral decisions.

He spent much of his life listening to preachers. And by the way, far from being just a nominal church member, which is my presumption until I got exposed to the background here, he has a well-documented record of respect for ministers and their advice. At seven, he made a decision at a Billy Graham crusade.

At the age of 12, he started tithing his allowance to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. And you'll discover that every time he had a major decision, someone on death row or whatever, he counseled with his minister. Now later, when his moral weaknesses became more public, he selected three ministers to counsel him.

Despite all this religious influence and training, Clinton grew into what? A habitual adulterer, a man who deliberately lies all through his career, a man who cared more for himself than his family, his friends, co-workers, or his country. And it's easy to understand why these ministers wanted to keep religion out of it. Because you put this in religious terms, it's going to tarnish their ministries.

I want to remind you of King Jehoshaphat, of the Scripture. It was three years after the great battle at Ben-Hadad, the second king of Damascus. You find that in 1 Kings 20.

But Ahab, the king of Israel, the northern kingdom, proposed Jehoshaphat, who was king of Judah, the two kings of the north and south, proposed that they should come up together against Ramaph Gilead to

do battle again with Ben-Hadad. So they're going to go to battle. Jehoshaphat agreed, but he sought spiritual counseling about going into battle and suggested that the inquiry should first be made at the word of Jehovah.

So the southern king of Judah wanted to consult God before going into this. So what did Ahab do? He summoned 400 prophets, false prophets, who told the king what he wanted to hear, that all would go well. Now, Jehoshaphat was suspicious.

He must have known a lot about Ahab. But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides that we might inquire of him? He got 400 of these guys. Forget that.

Is there a prophet of the Lord that we can inquire? And the king of Israel, Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man... I love this. I have a friend on our board, John Peters, one of his favorite parts of the Bible. It's a really funny part of the Bible.

He loves it. Ahab says, There is one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him, for he never prophesies anything good unto me, but always evil. When A tells you something about B, you don't know much about B, but you learn a lot about A. I hate him, for he never prophesies good unto me, always evil.

His name is Micaiah. Well, Micaiah, the word means, by the way, who is like Jehovah. He is the son of Imlot, the faithful prophet of Samaria.

He was in prison at the time where he was confined, probably, because of something he said against Ahab. Anyway, they bring him out of prison. And at first, he tells them what he wants to hear, but it's sarcastic, because Jehoshaphat says, Don't tell me really what you think.

And he prophesies that it would end in disaster. And by the way, it did. At about the time of the Senate going down, Jehoshaphat died.

So it came true. It's in 1 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 18, for those who want to dig into that. We don't hear anything more about this prophet.

We suppose, not sure, that he may be the unnamed prophet referred to in 1 Kings 20, but we're not sure. See, the presidential prophets, you say, Gee, what are you getting at? Let's understand the kind of gospel and counsel that Bill Clinton was given from the pulpits that he attended. And his Arkansas pastor taught him that he does not have to repent of lying or adultery.

He made speeches to that effect. They're on record. Clinton's Washington pastor has said, The Bible is like the Washington Post in that it contains both truth and errors.

See what's going on here? Members of the Clinton clergy have taught him that as long as he believes there's a God somewhere out there, he is saved. His pastor said that straight sex is a sin, but oral sex is okay. Clinton was told that everyone who has a God-given obligation to forgive him, everyone has a God-given right to forgive him and demand no punishment, regardless of whether or not he confesses his misconduct or quits engaging in it.

They preached against the concept of repentance. That's old-fashioned. President's prophets have emphasized that we're all equally moral.

No one is perfect, so Clinton should not expect to live free of fornicating and lying. Ministers taught the president that anyone who offers corrections casting stones at him is therefore unchristian. Really? Clinton's preachers have stressed as long as he does his job well, sinning is secondary.

Wow. You begin to understand the problem isn't Bill Clinton, he's a symptom of the problem. I'm not here to disparage Bill Clinton, but we see him as an example.

We need to understand what's going on and why it happened. President's prophets have been careful not to mention hell, or the need to be born again, or Jesus' instruction that if part of your body causes you to sin, cut it off. That was an unintentional pun.

No one will ever believe me. Clinton's clergymen have not only perverted the truth of God, they've also led people in the worship of false gods. Clinton's Founders Methodist Church in Washington held a women's conference that the Greek earth goddess Gaia was asked for a blessing.

In 1993, the United Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and American Baptist churches featured a veneration of Sophia, creator God, and rites from other religions such as the American Indian tobacco ritual. Jeremiah, in Jeremiah 5, said, We think of a false prophet, most of us think of a false prophet as someone who's predicting something that doesn't happen. We think of prophecy as future telling.

No, prophecy means forth telling. Prophecy, to be a prophet meant you declared the truth of God. And this is the kind of, quote, truth, unquote, that Bill Clinton has been fed since he was a child, through his impressionable years.

This is the kind of counsel he received at his moments of decision when he called his trusted Christian ministers in for counsel. This is the conditioning they gave him. And it's staggering in its implications.

It's staggering in its implications for Bill Clinton. It's staggering in its implications for the moral fabric of this nation as our children look to him as an example. And the distraction of all of this and the hidden agendas have imperiled the peace of the entire world.

The word repentance is not only not in the vocabulary, it's preached against. Obviously, it's impossible to turn to God without turning away from sin. Repentance is a major theme, not only in the Old Testament, all through the New.

I don't have to go through that here. We could use our whole time on that whole subject. I'm often intrigued, you often heard me quote Jonah and Nineveh, where Nineveh was forty days from ground zero.

Forty days from ground zero. And Jonah, and it was a pagan capital. It wasn't a Christian capital.

It was the enemy of Israel. They attacked Israel previously. And Jonah was called to go minister to Nineveh.

And you all know the story. He wasn't too excited about the assignment until God explained it more clearly. And he goes to Nineveh.

And when he gets there, he doesn't preach. He didn't take polls to figure out how to package his speech. Forty days and you get yours.

That was his message. He was hoping they did. When they repented, he was upset.

Tell you what his mindset, his attitude was. He had a bad attitude. And of course, the greatest miracle of the Old Testament is that they repent.

You've heard me talk about that. But I want you to turn with me to Matthew chapter 12. Because there's a sequel to Nineveh that I should include in the Jesus comments on this whole situation.

Verse 40 says, Jonah spent three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish. So shall the Son of Man spend three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. And the men, by the way, that tells you where Hades is.

It's geocentric. You ever think about that? Where's the bottomless pit? The only place you're going to have a place where there's no bottom is the center of the earth. Because all directions are up, right? You understand what you're following me? Is that good? Okay.

Hades is geocentric. He descended to Hades and he's in the belly of the earth. Where's the outer darkness? The opposite.

Geometrically, it's the opposite. I'm not suggesting that it's confined to a three-dimensional space. But even in those idioms.

Hades is geocentric. Gehenna or whatever is outer darkness. The other way.

Hades gets thrown into Gehenna before it's all over. But anyway, that's not my point. Verse 41.

The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation. And shall condemn it. Because they repented at the preaching of Jonah.

And behold, a greater than Jonah is here. Whoa. Heavy stuff.

Heavy stuff. Well now, we have an example in front of us of apostasy today. And apostasy isn't some weird sect on the street corner.

It's in our most polished pulpits in America. Well, let's continue with 2 Timothy. I think we're down to about verse 6. For this sort are they that creep into houses and lead captives, silly women, laden with sins, led away with divers lusts.

Wow. Life's evidence of the real condition. Ever learning, never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

See, never matured, their lives have never been changed. They may have gone down the saddest trail at an evangelistic revival. But it didn't have impact on their lives.

Why? Because there's a missing word. It's called repentance. Turning away.

To turn to God, you have to turn away from sin. And we don't talk repentance. We had preachers on his behalf, on Clinton's behalf, saying we should forgive him.

He's never asked for forgiveness. He's never repented of what he's done. Never really specifically acknowledged what he'd done.

You can't acknowledge it in repentance and have your lawyers denying it. There's something disconnected. Anyway.

Paul continues to Timothy verse 8. Now as Janice and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these resist the truth. Men of corrupt minds reprobate concerning the faith. Remember Janice and Jambres.

But for Paul, we wouldn't know their names. You encountered them in Exodus chapter 7 and 8. Remember when Moses had Aaron. He threw the staff down.

The staff became a snake, right? And Pharaoh had his magicians come out. And they threw down their staffs and they turned into snakes. Now the scholars debate, was it a trick? I don't think so.

For some reason I'll come to. They had supernatural powers. From whom? Satan.

Not because of the snake. That could have been a parlor trick of some kind. We've all seen equivalent things on stage.

Of course, when Moses' snake ate the other two up, it made a point, right? But there were other plagues then. Turning to blood and the frogs. The other plagues that they were also able to duplicate.

And I don't think that's in the realm of parlor tricks. Until they got to the lice. There's a whole study on the different... All these were a hierarchy of gods that Egypt worshipped.

When they got to the lice, the priests panicked. In verse 18 of chapter 8, they go to Pharaoh and say, This is really of God. The plagues that Moses is bringing.

Because to officiate as a priest, they had to be lice-free. They went to elaborate procedures to be free of lice. And when the plague of lice came and they couldn't control it, that was a point that was made on their turf.

They understood what that meant. And they told Pharaoh, Moses' God is God. And it goes on, of course.

That doesn't change his mind. But the point is, we're dealing here... The reason I bring this out is you need to be prepared for deviant ministers to do miracles. Because that's promised in the Scripture of the false prophet, the Antichrist, and his minions.

We're not ready for that. When there's a miracle, we take for granted, praise God. Well, if you're praising Jesus, fantastic.

If you're praising anyone else, be careful. Be more than careful. Satan does miracles and he is the great imitator.

And I think most Christians underestimate the degree to which Satan intervenes in our lives in supernatural ways. And we touched upon that in our book, Alien Encounters, and other things. And there's some disturbing conjectures in that regard.

But anyway, reprobate concerning the faith. That means test it and found counterfeit. And don't be surprised to see these things that Paul is talking about in prominent pulpits.

See, I've read this so often. And so it's so easy to go through these chapters and sort of visualize this in terms of deviant groups of some kind. And never realize, hey, it's right in front of us in the church in America.

Obviously not all churches. Don't misquote me. I'm not here to badger the hardworking pastors who are sincerely committed to the full gospel, the whole counsel of God.

And that preach repentance and change lives. But there are pastors, the most prominent ones. In fact, they get prominent in part, some of them, by letting people be comfortable in their sins, preaching cheap grace.

See, repentance also is a gift, by the way. And we saw in 2 Timothy 2, we touched upon that. And we're going to touch on it again when we get to Titus a bit, so I won't get into it now.

And by the way, just to close off the Clinton thing, it's not too late for him to be a real hero. By doing what? Repenting. Not converting, whatever that means.

Repenting. But in the meantime, they're propping up what the psychologists would call a high-chair king. But let's move on.

Verse 9, But they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifest unto all men as theirs also was. But thou hast fully known my doctrine, Paul saying, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience. Paul's life was an open book.

I'm always nervous if there's a pastor that life isn't like Paul's. It's open. We read and know where he's been, where he's coming from.

It's all out there. Every Christian's life should be an open book. Be cautious if there's something less than openness.

It makes you wonder what they're hiding. But it would be interesting to compare Paul's resume before the church council. The church council's meeting, we got a guy here that would like to go on the mission field.

Really? Yes. He has a rather extensive prison record. He suffers from a physical affliction, probably his eyesight.

Every place he goes, he stirs up problems. He was very poor and he did not cater to the rich. I could go on.

If you look at Paul's resume, he's not likely to be the kind that you're going to vote for in a board meeting for some key post. I couldn't lay my hands on it. Many years ago, someone sent me a proposal.

It purported to be a proposal for someone to be in the church to read before the council. It went through all this detail. I just did this supervision.

By the time it got through, it's a riot. I cracked it. I couldn't find it for the night.

It wasn't perfect. When you read Paul's resume as a proposal for an office, you wouldn't think of hiring him. Anyway, verse 11.

Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. What persecutions I endured, but out of them all the Lord delivered me. And by the way, at Lystra, you may recall, Paul was stoned and left for dead.

There are some scholars that believe he really died. That God raised him. There's some subtleties in the text and the grammar that caused them to build a case on it.

I'm not here to sell it or deny it, but I just let you know that some people think... See, I do hold the view for some reasons from the Psalms that Jonah did die in the whale. He suffered death and came back. God had his reasons for doing that.

Whether that happened to Paul when he was stoned at Lystra, I don't know. There are some scholars that conjecture that it could have been so. So, who knows.

Verse 12. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Let's read that one again.

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution unless they live in the United States. Know what it says? One of the things that's not a pleasant message, but I think we need to understand the horizon. In Matthew 16, Jesus tried to the Pharisees being able to discern the weather.

Red sky in the morning, sailors take warning. Red sky at night, sailors delight. I mean, you can decide from the sunsets, sunrises, you can get a sense of how the weather is going to be.

You really can. If you're a seaman, you know that. We can look at our horizon and we realize, but we probably don't think about it, that the freedoms that you and I take for granted, freedom of expression, freedom of worship, has been granted to us for two centuries by virtue of the Constitution.

Nobody today takes it seriously. The Congress doesn't. The House and the Senate don't.

The courts don't. They call it a living document. We can bend it when we like.

No, the tragedy is the very foundation of our freedoms are being shredded. And the church, last of all, is aware of this. Well, our citizenship is in heaven and so forth.

You all heard the prattle about that. Well, we'll see. And I think it's going to cost each of us to be a Christian.

We're politically incorrect already and we're going to be more so. Melvin Laird, long before he became Secretary of Defense, made a statement at a San Francisco convention that I think is interesting. Quote, In this world it is becoming more and more unpopular to be a Christian.

Soon it may become dangerous. Close quote. Now, he said that a long time ago, but it's kind of interesting.

We'll keep moving here. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Evil men and seducers, seducers, impostors, leading many astray, including presidents and congressmen, shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

No one can be deceived more easily than the deceiver, by the way. There's no easier mark for a salesman than another salesman. Anyway, we'll start on that one.

Verse 14, But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. What's the antidote for apostasy?

That's what we're talking about. Antidote is the Word of God.

And Paul's moving right into this in space. And by the way, one of the strange approaches to try to... We're in an age when the sanctity of the Bible is attacked more than ever before. It wasn't many generations ago.

People who may not have believed the Bible still treated it with respect and awe. It's a standoffish. Today, it's openly attacked by people of all kinds of titles and degrees behind them.

And our book, Cosmic Codes, is a backdoor entry into that. We've got some very, very interesting endorsements. It's a whole different insight and perspective on hermeneutics.

Why can you take, in a modern day and age, the Bible seriously? Boy, there's lots of good reasons. But I better not stare in there. We'll use it for time.

It says, Make thee wise unto salvation. Unto salvation. Now, wait a minute.

That's a strange phrase, isn't it? Make thee wise unto salvation. I thought Timothy was saved. How many think Timothy was saved? Right? Oh, that's about a third of you.

How many think Timothy was saved? Okay, okay. I should see he was awake. But how can you be made wise to something? See, there's three tenses to salvation.

You see, there's a past tense, a present tense, and a future tense. The past tense, I have been saved from sin. Christ bore it all on the cross.

He said, to telestai. Translated in John 19 as, it is finished. The Greek term means paid in full.

He took care of it. It's a done deal. It's a done deal.

Romans 8, 1. There is therefore no damnation, no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. I'm in Christ. I am saved.

Past tense. I also, present tense, am being saved. Daily.

Moment by moment. From what? The power of sin. Imperfectly, because I'll stumble.

But, sin no longer has reign over me. If I'm in Christ. There's a day to day, moment by moment.

We usually call that normally sanctification. And then there's a future tense. I shall be saved.

And, remember 1 John 3.2. We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall then see him as he is. There's a future aspect to all of that. Anyway, then we get to verse 16.

Now, we always try to highlight the memory verses. Here's a dandy. Verse 16.

Paul says in Timothy, All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. I want you to notice that word, all. Well, the Bible contains the word of God.

Wrong. The Bible is the word of God. To say that it contains the word of God, implies that man is in the role of selecting which parts.

That makes you the editor of God's words. Not so. W.C. Fields, when he's reading his Bible, someone says, are you reading, are you studying your Bible? What are you studying your Bible? He says, I'm looking for loopholes.

Inspiration. The word actually means God-breathed. God-breathed.

And one of the controversial views, I won't try to sell it to you here tonight, but I'll just acknowledge it, so you at least know where I'm coming from. I believe he superintended every letter, every number, all through the scripture. Jesus said, of the Torah specifically, but he says, that not one jot or one tittle shall pass from the Torah until all be fulfilled.

Now a jot or a tittle are parts of a letter. A jot is like a little comma, sort of. A tittle is a little decorative hook on some of the letters.

Think not that I come to destroy the Torah and the prophets. I come not to destroy, but to fulfill. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that not one jot or one tittle shall pass from the law until all be fulfilled.

That's in Matthew 5, 17 and 18. And when I was in Israel, I came across this strange little thing that the rabbis say that we really won't understand the Torah until the Messiah comes. When the Messiah comes, he'll interpret the passages, in fact, he'll interpret the words, the very letters.

He'll even interpret the spaces between the letters. And when I first heard that, I smiled. I thought it was sort of one of these colorful Jewish exaggerations.

Until I reread Matthew 5. That's exactly what Jesus implied. And so, I really do believe it's in the original. In the original.

Obviously, our translations suffer from translational problems. If you're too literal, you miss the sense. If you're too non-literal, you're imputing your own sort of balance problem.

It's a tricky thing in translation. But in any case, in this modern world, you don't have to be limited to your English translation. You do not have to know Hebrew or Greek to understand the text.

The original text. Because there are helps today with numbers and things that you can find out what the words that were originally there really meant. So, for someone who's diligent, and with some of the computer software, it's automatic for you.

It's terrific. So, those excuses are no longer operative. For reproof.

That really means for conviction. I was at a conference, and I said, are these... There are some chairs there. I said, are these seats saved? The guy says, they're not even under conviction.

For correction. Setting things right in your life. Correcting errors and priorities.

And for instruction. The word instruction actually means discipline. It's not a book learning thing.

It's thinking and acting in accordance with God's will. Doctrine tells you what's right. Reproof what is not right.

And correction, how to get right. But anyway, verse 17. The man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The word perfect there really means complete, or more precise, fitted for use. Mature. The proof of the pudding is in the eating.

And I don't need to raise... I'm not in for raising hands. I'm just going to ask you, does your life demonstrate your faith? Can people tell by your behavior that you're a Christian? And the next part of that is, is that condition improved since last year? Are you on a growth path? Are you on an improving path? Is your spiritual condition today measurably better than it was a year ago? If not, you might think about that. We'll slip through chapter 4. It should be pretty... It's his deathbed testimony.

Paul was alone. He was incarcerated in the member time prison in Rome. Verse 1. I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing in his kingdom.

Paul knew his appointment with that... Jesus was coming closer. And we all have that appointment. Our final exam is going to... Our exam results are going to be in pretty soon for each of us.

And then there's another key verse. Verse 2. He says, Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

The word instant is strange in our vocabulary. It really means diligent or perhaps even better, urgent. It carries a concept of diligence and urgency.

And Paul doesn't say preach from the word. He says preach the word. Sometimes a text is a pretext taken out of context.

But don't take time to get in all that here. Reprove is what we're getting with conviction. Rebuke means... Actually, the word means threaten, strangely.

And exhort or comfort. Verse 3. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. But after their own loss shall they heap on themselves teachers having itching ears.

That's Laodicea today. In the idioms of the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3. Verse 4. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth and be turned unto fables. And boy, could we spend time going through modern fables.

Evolution. Modern scientists no longer regard evolution as a viable hypothesis to explain what we know about the universe. There are a number of exciting new books on the market.

Darwin Under Trial. The Death of Darwinism. Darwin's Black Mouth.

There's a number of these that are very readable and they are understandable to laymen. Knowledgeable scientists no longer embrace evolution as past its day. No longer viable for microbiology among other things.

And in the Christian community, more people are interested in the Antichrist than Christ. What's wrong with that picture? But watch thou all things and endure afflictions. Do the work of an evangelist and make full proof of thy ministry.

For I am now ready to be offered at the time of my departure as at hand. Now, when he says offered here, he really apparently has in mind the drink offering. We find that frequently mentioned in Exodus and Leviticus.

The wine was poured out on the brazen altar, which means it was hot. It went up in steam. And it would just evaporate and disappear.

That's sort of the phrase that Paul is implying. I'm just ready to be offered. I'm about ready to evaporate right here.

He used the word departure. That's not the word in 1 Thessalonians. This is a different word.

Analisis, which is the unloosing of things. A departure. It's a metaphor drawn from loosing the moorings preparatory to sailing out to sea.

That kind of was my departure. I'm about to be untied and turned loose, so to speak, from these constraints. Verse 7. I have fought a good fight.

I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Three idioms rolled up here.

A good combat soldier. That's Paul. Boy, he was a combatant for sure.

Also, not only is it a battle, it's a race. He uses the athletic thing. I have finished my course.

And here you can put in your notes, but I'll spare you for the time. 1 Corinthians 9.27, which he gives advice as an athlete. You walk the Christian walk.

Hebrews 12, verses 1 and 2. Or two verses where Paul uses the athletic idiom to speak of mastery and winning. And then the third one is stewardship. I have kept the faith.

And a steward has to be found faithful. He says, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day. Not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

There are actually five specific crowns in Scripture. In the interest of time, I won't go through those. I have in the past.

You'll find them in your notes if you've been with us. Otherwise, you can look it up very easily. Just take a concordance check out crowns.

You'll discover there's five specific crowns in the New Testament promised. But we'll move on. Then we get to Paul's very last words.

It gets easier. Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. He's getting lonesome.

And he's going to mention 17 people. It's very personal. This is the end of it.

This is a deathbed kind of thing. So he's going to mention a number of people. For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departing to Thessalonica.

Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Here's good old Dr. Luke.

Take Mark and bring him with thee. Paul's apparently repaired his relationship with Mark very well. The two of them are good friends.

For he's profited me for the ministry. Tachikos have I sent to Ephesus. He had to.

He couldn't stick around. He was the pastor in Ephesus. And the cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee.

And the books, especially the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil. The Lord reward him according to his works.

King James doesn't do this, but I think I put the word reward in quotes. I think his reward isn't really what Alexander the coppersmith was expecting. Of whom be thou aware also, for he hath greatly withstood our words.

Verse 16. After my first answer, no man stood with me. See, he was in trial.

After my first answer, no man stood with me. But all men forsook me, and I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. There, like Stephen, like Jesus, Paul at the end has an attitude of forgiveness.

Attitude of forgiveness. Verse 17. Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known.

And that all the Gentiles might hear that I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. Now some people take that literally. Some people think he's using it as a figure of speech.

We don't know. But let's move on. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom.

To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. And then he has a whole bunch of personal things here.

Salute Priscilla and Achilla and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus abode in Corinth, but Trophimus have I left at Militum sick. Do thy diligence to come before winter.

He wanted that, don't forget my cloak, back there in verse 13. Hubalus, greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren. The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.

Grace be with you. Amen. And this was the second epistle to Timothy, who was the leader, elder, bishop, whatever, of Ephesians.

He was written from Rome, of course, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time. So we have skimmed through rather quickly, I think, the two letters that Paul wrote to his protegee, Timothy, for the lessons that are there. And I hope you'll excuse my excursions in terms of our local scene at the moment.

But I indulge that for a couple of reasons. First of all, for us to understand that these problems that Paul talked about are very operative today. The problem in America is not Bill Clinton or the Senate or the Congress.

These are symptoms of the problem. Using examples of an air crash, trying to find out what caused the crash. Or a heart attack or some other kind of endangerment.

You investigate to find out the cause. We have been substantially endangered in this country. And it's not by Bill Clinton.

He's a victim of it. He's a product of it. You begin to understand what Paul is talking about from the Word of God.

That our situation in this country derives from the false gospel that's perpetrated, not on some tracks on a street corner, from the pulpits of America. Obviously not all of them, but a lot of them. They don't speak of repentance.

And Ray Comfort has a real message. Hell's best guarded secret. He's very critical of these evangelistic crusades, because the statistics show that you have thousands of people come down and make a decision for Christ and his crusades.

A year later, less than 1% are going to church. And one of the reasons, probably a number of reasons, but one of the reasons is they're not really demanding repentance. They make it easy.

It's an easy gospel, easy grace. And repentance is a major part. The thing that we have to do before the throne is to recognize we come empty-handed.

Worse. We're despicable. We're sinners.

And the good news is God has provided for that. But we need to acknowledge our sin and repent of it. If there are Christians that are having an affair somewhere, they've got to knock it off now.

There are Christians indulging in some sin that has control over them. They've got to, through the power of the Holy Spirit, they should recognize through the power of the Holy Spirit, they can be delivered of that. Need to be.

God is calling us to repentance. And our hope for our nation, just to close on 2 Chronicles 7.14, God appeared to Solomon. And yes, the context was Israel, but the principle God announces is quite broad.

For 2 Chronicles 7.14, if my people are called by my name, how many of you are God's people? Can I see a show of hands? Praise God. I won't ask how many are called by His name. Some of you are the best undercover Christians the world's ever seen.

The neighbors, the people who work, don't even suspect you sold out to Christ. God says, if my people are called by my name, we'll do four things, I'll do three. If they will humble themselves, step one.

That's certainly in contrast to the list Paul just gave us. If they'll humble themselves. We know how to do that.

May not do it enough. Humble themselves and pray. We know how to pray.

We have a 24-hour hotline to the throne room of the universe. And He's anxious to hear from us. That's why we're in trouble all the time.

It's the only time He hears from us. If my people are called by my name, we'll humble ourselves and pray and seek my face. Now that's a little more complicated.

That's a passion thing. That's a commitment thing. That's a hunger thing.

That's the kind of thing that you aspire to when you're in courtship. To see her face. Or see his face.

Whichever. If my people are called by my name, we'll humble ourselves and pray and seek my face. Ah, here's the rub.

And turn from their wicked ways. That was not addressed to the congressman, the senator, Bill Clinton, or the world. It was addressed to God's people.

If my people are called by my name, we'll humble ourselves and pray and seek my face. And turn from their wicked ways. Because then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sin.

And heal their land. I really believe that God would prefer for America to endure as a beachhead for the gospel to a hurting world. And what's standing in the way is not the pagan left.

What's standing in the way is us. Pogo said it so well. I've met the enemy and they are us.

We are what's standing in the way. And the only thing that will save America is a grassroots revival. And if you care about your children and your grandchildren, if your stomach turns at the predicament of this country as you begin to look at it and understand it, then it's time to spend some time on our knees.

For our children and our grandchildren. Because only by the sovereign grace of God can we have a revival sweep this land. But it's got to start with you and I. Right here.

Right here. That's the only hope for this country. And all the things that we see and all the things that we bemoan in the press and all the hidden agendas that surface through all these things and all the treason and the obstruction of justice and the witness tampering and the whole list are symptoms of the moral decay that has come about because of the silent pulpits or worse.

Pulpits that preach an easy grace, that don't mention repentance, that are not being faithful to the whole counsel of God. Let's stand for a closing word of prayer. Now one of the things about this, because I have to look in the mirror too, and I charge our staff to help me stay on track.

That we aren't guilty of these very same things. Preaching that which is convenient, preaching that which is popular. But to be faithful to what God has called us to do.

And our mission is to encourage and stimulate serious study of the Bible as the inerrant word of God. Cover to cover, every verse, every letter. May God empower and enable us to do this ever more effectively in Jesus Christ.

Let's bow our hearts for a word of prayer. Father, we do thank you for this time together. We thank you Father that you have illuminated your word.

We ask your forgiveness Father. We come before your throne asking forgiveness for the many times that we have failed to properly declare your truth. To skirt the reality of sin and its hold on our lives.

We thank you Father that Jesus has not only paid for our sins, but has given us the power over sin through the Holy Spirit. We pray Father that you would convict us of those sins which still so easily beset us. We pray Father that you would, through your Holy Spirit and through your word, empower us to bear a better witness of your truth.

And Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the illumination that you've given for the coming horizon. But we do pray Father, pleading the blood of Jesus Christ, we pray Father for a revival.

Let it start with us Father. Let it start with our own lives. Help us Father to be witnesses of your truth.

As we commit ourselves into your hands. Indeed, in the name of Yeshua, our Lord, our Savior, our Redeemer, our victor, Jesus Christ, Amen.

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