

How to Approach Biblical - Part 3

by Derek Prince

The last days will be characterized by fierce times, corruption, and the operation of occult power, but we can respond by proclaiming the word of God and trusting in the coming of Jesus.

Duration: 28:26

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:1

Topics: "End Times", "Gods Kingdom"

Description

This sermon discusses the reality of fierce times in the last days before the return of the Lord, emphasizing the increasing wickedness and the need to acknowledge and prepare for the challenges ahead. It highlights the futility of seeking solutions in human systems like politics and the importance of recognizing the ultimate solution in the coming of Jesus and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth.

Transcript

A lot of contemporary Christians have not really yet absorbed this truth. He says, in the last days, which is the period immediately preceding the return of the Lord, and probably half the books of the Bible have some reference to the last days, perilous times will come. Now that word that's translated perilous only occurs in one other place in the New Testament.

It's in Matthew chapter 8, verse 28, and it describes two demonized men who came to confront Jesus when he crossed the Sea of Galilee to the region called Gadaroth. And it says they were exceedingly fierce. I want to suggest to you that that's a better translation here.

In the last days, fierce times will come. I believe, myself, we're living in fierce times. But I think they're going to get fiercer.

Now to wish otherwise, to pray otherwise, to act as if it were not true, is a waste of time. It's an established fact. In the last days, things are going to get fiercer and fiercer and fiercer.

That doesn't frighten me. I've adjusted to it. I accept it as the expression of God's wisdom, God's righteousness.

But a lot of people still act as if it weren't going to happen. Some of those people are here this evening. You have not yet grasped the fact that we are confronting fierce times.

And they're not going to get less fierce, they're going to get more fierce. Now you might say, well you're just a pessimist. No I'm not, I'm an optimist.

I'm an optimist because I believe God has a solution. You know what the solution is? The coming of Jesus. And I don't believe there's any other valid solution.

No other solution than the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. With all respect to the politicians, I don't believe they have the solution. If they have, I'd like to know where it is.

I pray for politicians, if they're political leaders, I respect them. But I do not expect them to come up with a remedy for the problems of humanity. Which are enormous and increasing.

Poverty, sickness, hatred, war. All these terrible things that are blighting the lives of millions and millions of people. Politicians do not have a solution.

Ultimately, I believe the Bible reveals there will be one politician who will claim to have the solution. And he will be the Antichrist. But his solution will be worse than all the problems that have ever gone before.

Now I am not a pessimist. I'm not standing here looking unhappy. Because I believe that Jesus is coming.

But he cannot come until this condition is fulfilled in the world. Because that's what the Bible says. So if we want Jesus to come, do you want Jesus to come? Well you have to be prepared for fierce times.

Because that's what it's going to take. I believe myself God is going to allow human wickedness to come to its full expression. We will see, if we're still alive, the real innate evil in the heart of sinners manifested with an ugliness and a fearfulness that we can hardly imagine.

I believe God is going to let man who claims to be able to choose his own leaders make their own choice. See I have to tell you frankly, I prefer to live in a democracy than a tyranny. But democracy is not God's pattern for government.

Democracy is a Greek word, just like humanism. It comes from Greece. And it's corrupted our thinking, some of us.

Let me give you, I was a student of Greek philosophy before I became a preacher. Let me give you, I didn't intend this, but let me give you Plato's little picture of five forms of government. I think really you can't improve on this.

Starting with the best and ending with the worst. The best is the rule of one good man. The next best is the rule of a few good men.

The rule of one good man he called monarchy. The rule of a few good men he called aristocracy. After that is democracy, the rule of the people by themselves.

Who was it? It was Lincoln who said democracy, the government of the people, by the people, for the people, will never perish from the earth. I'm afraid he was wrong. It will.

All right, going still further, number four is the rule of a few bad men, which he called oligarchy. And finally, the rule of one evil man, which he called tyranny. Now, I cannot really see that that needs any correction.

What he said about democracy is it's the weakest of all forms of government. But in my opinion it's a preferable to oligarchy or tyranny. But it's not God's form of government.

God's form of government is a monarchy. The rule of one good man, and what is his name? Thank you. And the rule of a few good men with him who are his saints.

So I tolerate democracy and I'd rather live in a democracy than a tyranny. But I don't believe it's the ultimate solution. I don't believe it has power to solve the problems of the human race.

I don't believe that men and women basically are capable of choosing the right leader. If they have, why haven't they done it? I'm not criticizing the government. We're just dealing with human weaknesses.

So, what is the end? The end is monarchy. One man, Jesus, who will be king. Who will read a righteous rule.

Who will share his authority with those whom he has trained through suffering, through affliction, through discipline, to share his rule with him. What do we call those people? We call them the church. And bear in mind that the word church is a very poor translation of the Greek word ekklesia.

Which is essentially a governmental assembly. So if we're members of the church, we're members of a governmental assembly. Which will be headed up by one righteous man, Jesus.

That's God's solution. And I believe there is no other solution. I believe in a certain sense if we're trying to arrange for some other solution, we're wasting our time and our energy.

We've got lots to do within the context of God's revelation. Now, I want to point out two, I think, incontrovertible principles. You may not think them so.

But what we are dealing with is the corruption of human nature caused by sin. And notice that when Paul speaks about fierce times, the reason he gives will be, will is, men will be. And he lists 18 moral or ethical blemishes.

The root cause of the problems in the world is not nuclear fission. It's human character. After all, the atom bomb didn't invent itself.

Men invented it. Men used it. Men invented all sorts of horrible instruments of destruction.

It's men who are using them. So the root cause of the problems of humanity today is the moral and ethical corruption produced in humanity by sin. And if you'll accept the metaphor of corruption, which I believe is valuable, valid, there are two principles in the natural.

All corruption is progressive. It doesn't get better. It always gets worse.

And all corruption is irreversible. There is no way to turn back the working of corruption. I believe that applies to the world situation.

I believe it applies to the world. The corruption in the world is progressive. It's never going to get better.

It's always going to get worse. And it's irreversible. There is no way to reverse the process of corruption.

So all Christian prayers and schemes and plans that are, whether they know it or not, directed to reversing corruption, are a waste of time. And probably money too. See, this is why we need biblical prophecy.

Because it saves us a lot of wasted time, effort, and money. A lot of disappointment. Please understand, I believe as Christians, we have an obligation to pray for our government within the parameters of the revealed will of God.

I was speaking about this once, many years ago, about the need to pray for the government. And at the end a lady came up to me, a dear lady, and she said, but Mr. Prince, doesn't the Bible teach that everything is getting worse and worse? I said, no. It teaches some things are getting worse and some things are getting better.

And I'm one of the things that's getting better. And you can be one of the things that's getting better too. You understand? This is not negative.

It's realistic. You have to live within the parameters of the revealed, the revelation of God's Word. So, let's note also, and we'll return to this list, but let's note also that in the last time, this passage reveals there will be a great upsurge of the occult.

For instance, in the same chapter, that's 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 7, Paul says, Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith. Notice the word corrupt. But those two names, Jannes and Jambres, are the names of the two magicians in Egypt that resisted and opposed Moses and Aaron.

And so when it talks about them, it's talking about the occult. The satanic supernatural. And please bear in mind that Satan is perfectly capable of working miracles.

Any charismatic who believes that all miracles necessarily attest the truth, is mistaken. Because the Bible says at the end, Satan will do great miracles. But they will not be truth, they'll be lying wonders.

Now it's interesting really, because this conflict between Moses and Aaron and the magicians was not fought out on the natural plane. It wasn't a conflict of theology. And the battle for us in these last days is not going to be a conflict of theology.

It's going to be a conflict of spiritual power. That's the decisive issue. And let me remind you of what happened when Moses and Aaron appeared before Pharaoh and said, let God's people go.

And Pharaoh said, what sign can you show that this message is from God? And Moses said to Aaron, throw down your rod, our rod. And in the presence of Pharaoh, that rod became a snake. Now you might think that would convince Pharaoh, but it didn't.

He said, wait a minute. I'll see what my magicians can do. And he called for them.

And listen, the Bible says plainly, they threw down their rods and they became snakes. All right, supernatural, but satanic. That's not the end of the story, thank God.

You know what happened next? Moses' snake ate up the Egyptians' snakes. And I just picture this so vivid to me. The magicians walked away with empty hands.

They had no rod. And Moses' rod was thicker and stronger than it had ever been. But it was fought out on the supernatural plane.

And I want to tell you for sure, that's where we're going to have to fight. It's not going to be theology. It's not going to be merely doctrine.

It's going to be who has the power of God. This was predicted nearly 2,000 years ago. The prediction is right in force today.

The powers of the occult are increasing. Their boldness, their arrogance, their claims to superiority are increasing continually. But, their folly will be made manifest to all men.

As was the folly of Jannes and Jambres. Then you go a little further down here, in 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 13. But evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

You see, that's the progress of corruption. They will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. You know, no one is such a successful deceiver as the one who has deceived himself.

Who really believes his own deception. Because he speaks with real conviction. So, and again, where it says evil men and imposters.

Now I happen to have learned Greek since I was 10 years old. And I was qualified to teach it at university level. Now that doesn't mean I'm always right.

But it means I'm entitled to my opinion. And so I want to say about this 13th verse, it says evil men and imposters. The Greek word is enchanter.

Or wailers. And it speaks about people who cast spells by enchanting and wailing. Again we're dealing with the occult.

This is very real. Some years ago, I date things from before and after. The death of my first wife and my marriage to my second.

So this was before, in other words a long while ago. A man came to see me and he said he'd come to apologize to me because he had put a curse on me and my family. And then he told me, and I mean I didn't accept everything he said, but I just listened.

He said he was a practitioner of the occult and regarded as the most powerful wizard in America. And then he told me that he practiced various forms of occult power. But he said, I've come to the conclusion much the most successful form of power is enchanting.

Chanting. That really registered with me. I thought, so when we are singing in the Spirit, we're releasing God's power.

And then I thought about the Middle East, where I've lived many years. And I thought about the practice of the Muslims. Five times every day, from every mosque.

And there are thousands of them. The muezzin, the thing that comes out, the chant, you know. How many of you have heard it at least once? All right.

I think it's the ugliest sound on earth. We worship in a church in Jerusalem, inside the Old City, which is right next door to the mosque. And every now and then, at crucial points in the service, we have this awful wailing blaring out at us.

But it doesn't quench the Spirit, because the Spirit is more powerful. But anyhow, I thought to myself, and I think this is important. The place that had the area of the earth that has most persistently resisted the gospel is the Middle East.

And it's because of the presence of Islam, the Mohammedan religion. And what has given them that tremendous power is the regular proclamation of their satanic lie five times every day. And if that is so, then what is one of the most powerful weapons that we have? Tell me.

Proclamation, that's right. That's why Ruth and I always make a proclamation before I stand up to preach. Because it releases the power of God into the situation.

I've told people I don't believe either Ruth or I would be alive today if we had not learned the power of proclaiming Scripture. Because we both passed through a time of severe illness. And in that time we learned to use proclamation.

Let me give you one of the proclamations that we gave. Come on sweetheart, it doesn't take long. Psalm 118.

Somewhere in the middle of the psalm. Verses 15 and so on. Now, how did we start? Now this starts with a reference to the devil.

You've got to understand that. You pushed me violently that I might fall, but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and song and he has become my salvation.

The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tense of the righteous. The right hand of the Lord does valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted.

The right hand of the Lord does valiantly. Now listen. I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord.

The Lord has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death. That's our testimony. The Lord has... The Lord has chastened us severely.

We went through a time of chastening, both of us. But he did not give us over to death. And if God doesn't give you over to death, you won't die.

And I don't... There's no way we can count how many times we've said I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord. Now some of you probably need to say the same for various reasons. Listen.

You've been sitting a long while. Stand to your feet for a moment. Psalm 118, verse 17.

It's all there in the Bible. Now, I will say it once. If you get it right, then you're going to say it with us the second time.

I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord. Now all of us together. I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord.

What did we say? We said... I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord. Amen. Now you may sit down.

Amen. So now, we've seen from 2 Timothy chapter 3 that things are not going to get better. They're going to get worse.

It's not so much things, it's people. People are not going to get better. They're going to get worse.

And a major factor in their getting worse will be the operation of occult power. That's exactly where we are today. The occult has come out into the open and become aggressive and active to a degree which was unthinkable in either the United States or Britain even 20 years ago.

It's a fulfillment of prophecy. Now, you could be discouraged. That's one way to respond.

The other way to respond is thank God it proves the Bible is true. When I was teaching in East Africa some of my students who wanted an excuse not to become Christians would say to me, I don't want to become a Christian there are so many hypocrites in the church. I say that may be true, but after all the New Testament shows there will be hypocrites in the church.

So that doesn't prove the Bible is false, it proves it's true. That's one more reason for becoming a Christian. And I say the same about what I'm teaching.

You think, well it's very negative, it's very dark. But thank God it proves the Bible is true. And if we can believe the dark we can also believe the light.

But I think frankly, if you don't believe the dark you don't really believe the light either. Because you cannot be selective. The word of God is pure.

Every word of God is pure. No word of God is to be set aside. All right, now let's go back to the beginning of 2 Timothy chapter 3. And I want to give this a very personal application in the life of each one of us.

Not excluding brother Prince. It gives this list from verses 2 through 5. Maybe I should read it once more. As I read it, just ask yourself how many of these things are conspicuous in our contemporary culture.

Men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents. Parents, is that true? It's true for some. Disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.

Notice, to be unthankful is to be unholy. Unloving. But that's not really the right translation.

The old King James had it much better. Without natural affection. In other words, even the normal love that we expect has evaporated in many cases.

The love of a mother for her baby. The love of a parent for his children. The love of brothers and sisters for one another.

They are evaporating rapidly. Without natural affection. Unforgiving.

Or in the margin it says, irreconcilable. Slanderous. Without self-control.

Brutal. Despisers of good. Traitors.

Headstrong. Haughty. Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

Let's stop the list there for a moment. I want to point out to you that what you love determines what you will be. And that list begins and ends with what people love.

And there are three things. Love of self. Love of money.

And love of pleasure. And that really is the cause of all the other negative features that are listed there. Love of self.

Love of money. And love of pleasure. And why do people love money? Because they love pleasure.

Because money apparently will buy pleasure. But it won't buy peace. It won't buy joy.

But it will, for a little while, buy pleasure. And also money, the love of money is an expression of man's pride. Because when we have a lot of money, we can be arrogant, we can display our wealth.

We can act as if we're better than those who have less. It all hangs together. But, the root is the first one.

Love of self. That is what is breaking up our society today. A survey was carried out a few years ago as to the average number of people living in a household in the United States today.

And you know what the amazing answer was? 1.7 persons. In other words, less than two persons can live together today, on the average. What's the reason? Love of self.

Well, if you don't like the way I live, I'm going my way, you can go yours. That has broken up and is breaking up countless marriages. I tell people who get married, there's a recipe for disaster and a recipe for success.

The recipe for disaster is, what will I get out of this? If you get married on that basis, your marriage will be a disaster. The recipe for success is, what can I give to this? And if you go in with that attitude, your marriage will be a success. I've had two marriages.

The first lasted 30 years. Our present marriage has lasted 16 years. Each of them has been happy and successful.

Listen, I am not talking from theory. The surest cause of the breakdown of marriage and of the family and of society is the love of self. You can have what you like, but I'm going my way.

I'll do what pleases me. And that really dominates the thinking of the unconverted people of this nation today. And when marriage breaks up, the family breaks up.

And when the family breaks up, society breaks up. And the government can spend millions or billions of dollars to find some remedy, but there is only one, the family.

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