

Expect Terrible Times

2 Timothy 3:1-5

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Pastor Gary Hollinger

Paul is inspired to warn that despite the faithful efforts of God's people, overall things are only going to get worse.

I. The "last days" technically began with Jesus first coming but will grow increasingly worse as His return draws near. (v. 1)

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. (1 John 2:18)

For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day." (John 6:38-40)

Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. (1 Peter 3:3-7)

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. (Matthew 7:13-16a)

II. God warns us through Paul of 19 ugly characteristics that people living in the last days will display. (v. 2-4)

1. Lovers of self: self-centered and egotistical

2. Lovers of money: greedy and avaricious

...the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. (1 Timothy 6:10a)

"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." (Luke 16:13)

3. Boastful: braggarts, full of great claims about themselves
4. Proud: or arrogant, haughty and overbearing.

“God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” (James 4:6b)

5. Abusive: revilers or literally blasphemers
6. Disobedient to their parents

For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’ and ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’ (Matthew 15:4)

7. Ungrateful
8. Unholy
9. Without love
10. Unforgiving
11. Slanderous
12. Without self-control
13. Brutal (only here)
14. Not lovers of the good

Woe to those who call evil good
and good evil,
who put darkness for light
and light for darkness,
who put bitter for sweet
and sweet for bitter. (Isaiah 5:20)

15. Treacherous
16. Rash
17. Conceited
18. Lovers of pleasure
19. Rather than lovers of God

III. This will be (is) the sorry state of the religious in those (these) last days. (v. 5a)

“Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

““These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.

You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.” (Mark 7:6-8)

They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good. (Titus 1:16)

Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

“I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be mastered by anything. You say, “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both.” The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit. Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. (1 Corinthians 6:9-20)

“If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. (John 14:15-17)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23a)

IV. Real Christians are to shun (turn and run from) such evil false professors. (v. 5b)

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked person from among you.” (1 Corinthians 5:9-13)

Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” (1 Corinthians 15:33)

Take special note of anyone who does not obey our instruction in this letter. Do not associate with them, in order that they may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard them as an enemy, but warn them as you would a fellow believer. (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15)

“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17)