

## IN THE LAST DAYS PERILOUS TIMES SHALL COME

### **TEXT: II TIMOTHY 3:1-9**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. In our text this evening, the apostle Paul warns us "that in the last days perilous times shall come" (II Tim.3:1). This describes a great apostasy "in the last days" of the church age.
2. Over 100 years ago, C.H. Spurgeon said this about our text tonight: "This is the photograph of the present age, and I do not doubt that Paul spoke of it when thus the spirit of prophecy was upon him. This is the very motto of the present age, 'Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.' It glories in knowing nothing; and its great boast is in its continual progress, 'never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.'"
3. Vance Havner says that our day is one of "anarchy in the world, of apostasy in the church and of apathy in the individual believer."
4. The word "perilous" is an interesting word. *Webster's Dictionary* defines "perilous" as "dangerous." And we can all agree that these are dangerous days that we live in.
5. The original Greek word translated *perilous* in II Timothy 3:1 is much stronger than our English word "dangerous." The same exact word is used in Matthew 8:28 to describe demonic possession. There the same word is translated "exceeding fierce." Thayer's Lexicon says this word means, "to oppress, to annoy, and when referring to times it means difficult, hard to bear, troublesome, hard, perilous and when referring to people the word means fierce, violent, dangerous, savage."
6. So Paul is saying here that in the last days "devilish" and "exceeding fierce, troublesome, and hard" times shall come. Beloved, those perilous times are here.

#### **I. MEN SHALL BE SELFISH (3:1, 2).**

1. Paul says that "men shall be lovers of their own selves" (II Tim. 3:2). This means "selfish," but it sounds much uglier. People are in love with themselves.
2. They are always taking pictures of themselves; they spend much time in front of the mirror, and shopping for themselves, etc.
3. A few years ago, Alex Rodriguez ("A-Rod"), the Yankee's third baseman posed for photographs kissing his image in a mirror, and lying on a mattress gazing at himself lovingly in the mirror, etc.
4. This extreme narcissism is nauseating, but very prevalent today.

5. Rodriguez was caught using steroids, so now he is suing Major League Baseball and commissioner Bud Selig, alleging they are seeking to "destroy the reputation and career of Alex Rodriguez."
6. Yet Rodriguez has not denied using steroids. And no one can destroy his reputation because he himself has already done that.
7. Self-esteem is another term for self-love. All of this emphasis today on self-esteem is unscriptural. The problem today is not a lack of self-esteem. The problem today is too much self-esteem.
8. Even secularists are warning that the American emphasis on self-esteem is harming our students. The Brookings Institution, a (secular) Washington think tank, reported that countries such as the United States that promote self-esteem are lagging far behind countries like Korea and Japan in mathematics and science.
9. According to their annual Brown Center report on education, 6 percent of Korean eighth-graders surveyed expressed confidence in their math skills, compared with 39 percent of U.S. eighth-graders. But a respected international math assessment showed Koreans scoring far ahead of their peers in the United States, "raising questions about the importance of self-esteem."
10. Because "men shall be lovers of their own selves" (II Tim. 3:2), there are no restraints today – people do as they please. The recent Spitzer and Weiner scandals are examples of this.
11. We have a generation today who were never disciplined when they were younger and now they think they can walk all over everybody else.
12. People demand their "rights," whatever that means. Some think they have a "right" to a government job, or a "right" to free food or free housing, even a right to be a pervert, and on and on it goes.
13. This selfishness naturally leads to covetousness (3:2). The tenth commandment is: "Thou shalt not covet" (Ex. 20:17), but many people are covetous and money-hungry (cf. I Tim. 6:6-10).
14. Many preachers cater to these greedy money-lovers with their unscriptural "prosperity gospel" (aka "the Word of Faith movement" or "positive confession" or "name it and claim it," etc.).
15. There is even a stupid reality TV show called, "Preachers of L.A.," which features six "prosperity gospel" pastors. This is disgraceful.
16. With all of this foolishness all over the television, it is no wonder most Americans are confused! This is from the devil because God is not the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:43).

17. Paul goes on to say that men shall be "boasters" (3:2). We have many boasters today – bragging of their accomplishments, bragging of their money and possessions, even bragging about how religious they are.
18. Like the Pharisee who stood and prayed thus with himself, "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke 18:11, 12).
19. Men have a strong desire to promote themselves – we must suppress this. Proverbs 27:2 says, "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips."
20. Men today are "proud" (3:2). This is one of the biggest obstacles we face when we give out the Gospel. People are so self-sufficient that they feel they do not need anyone, even God. They think they can accept God on their terms. But God does not work that way. For a man to get saved, he must repent of his sin and come to Christ on His terms.
21. Paul says these perilous times are marked by men that are "blasphemers" (3:2). This word means, "foul-mouthed, railing, and abusive." This needs little explanation. Hollywood has been polluting our nation (and the entire world) with wicked blasphemous movies and TV shows.
22. Sadly, many people today are "blasphemers" (3:2) -- foul-mouthed, railing, and abusive.
23. Another sign of the times is children that are "disobedient to parents" (3:2). It breaks my heart to see children that are rude to their parents and then the parents do nothing about it. Parents need to apply the board of education to the seat of learning.
24. People today are "unthankful" (3:2), ungrateful, taking everything for granted. People are not thankful to God, to their parents, or to anyone.
25. The next time you are in a restaurant, look around and see if anyone bows his head to give thanks to God for the food.
26. A little boy was having dinner with his neighbors and he noticed that none of them prayed before they ate. He said, "You folks are just like my dog – he just digs in!"
27. Albert Barnes said, "Ingratitude has always been regarded as one of the worst of crimes. It is said here that it would characterize that wicked age of which the apostle speaks, and its prevalence would, as it always does, indicate a decline of religion. Religion makes us grateful to every benefactor - to God, and to man."
28. Barnes used the term "religion" to mean "Christianity."

29. People today are "unholy" (3:2). Biblical holiness and separation from the world are under constant attack these days. And God help the pastor who preaches holiness – he is called a legalist and a Pharisee and too old-fashioned and worse.
30. Paul is describing people without character and this is one of the marks of the last days (cf. 3:3).
31. Wilbur Smith said the antichrist will be the incarnation of the sins referred to here in II Timothy 3.

## II. MEN SHALL BE SAVAGE

1. "Fierce" (3:3) literally means "savage."
2. Verse 3 says they are "without natural affection" (cf. Romans 1:31). Unloving, unkind, cold, etc.
3. "Trucebreakers" (3:3) refers to those who are unwilling to enter into any agreement. Barnes says it refers to "those who are unwilling to be reconciled to others when there is a variance; implacable." Sounds like our politicians in Washington DC!
4. The Greek word translated "false accusers" (3:3) is *diabolos*, from where we get our English word "diabolical." It is usually translated "devil" (cf. II Tim. 2:26).
5. *Strong's Concordance* says that when this word is applied to a man it means he is "opposing the cause of God," and he "may be said to act the part of the devil" or is taking the side of the devil.
6. This same word is translated "slanderers" in I Timothy 3:11.
7. "Incontinent" (3:3) means lacking self-control, intemperate. Barnes said this refers to those without strength to resist the solicitations of passion, or who readily yield to it.
8. The Greek word translated "fierce" (3:3) is only used once in the New Testament, here in verse 3. It means ungentle, harsh, severe, savage.
9. Those that are good are despised (3:3b). For example, when was the last time you read something positive about Christianity in the newspaper?
10. Those that are wicked are promoted and highly esteemed, e.g., the immoral Hollywood stars, and professional athletes, and rock and hip-hop singers -- these are the heroes of modern society!
11. First Timothy 3 says that in the last days men shall be "traitors" (3:4), truce-breakers (3:3), back-stabbers, treacherous double-crossers, and cut-throats. A man's word means nothing today.

12. These men without character are "heady" (3:4), i.e., headstrong, rash and reckless; "heady" literally means "falling forwards because of your big, fat head."
13. Men today are "high-minded" (3:4), i.e., they are puffed-up, proud, determined to have their own way.
14. These heady, high-minded, people without character and people without Bible convictions are "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (3:4).
15. That's why churches are bringing in the rock music and all of this worldly entertainment, because church-goers today are "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (3:4).
16. What people really need is Bible preaching that will bring them under conviction. But they do not want that! What they want is worldly entertainment because they are "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (3:4).
17. H.A. Ironside said, "When they profess to love God, it is themselves they love."
18. People today have "a form (semblance, appearance) of godliness" but it's not real. They are lost and on their way to hell. We are told to "turn away" from them (3:5).

### **III. MEN SHALL BE SNEAKY**

1. Note the word "creep" (3:6). False teachers "creep into houses," i.e., they are sneaky and deceptive.
2. Jude 4 says, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."
3. Second Peter 2:1 says, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."
4. They "lead captive silly women laden with sins (heaped up with sins)." Note the word "captive" (cf. 2:26); they are captured by the devil.
5. It is not difficult to figure out why so many silly women are mixed up in cults and in charismatic churches. The Bible says that they are "laden with sins" and "led away with divers lusts" (3:6).
6. False religion soothes their troubled conscience but does not make any demands. They need not repent, they need not get right with God

- they merely follow the false religionist down the primrose path to hell.
7. Another sure mark of these perilous days is that men are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (3:7). The truth is found here in God's Word. All you need to know about salvation, judgment, heaven and hell is here.
  8. Paul compares these false teachers to Jannes and Jambres, Pharaoh's magicians who withstood Moses (3:8; cf. Ex. 7:10-13).
  9. They "resist the truth," i.e., they resist the Gospel, they deny the Bible, etc.
  10. They are "men of corrupt minds" – this certainly describes our situation today – from the White House to the poor house, we are surrounded by men of corrupt minds!
  11. They are "reprobate concerning the faith" – this refers to the horrible apostasy that is so prevalent in these last days. Men who claim to be ministers of the Gospel reject the blood atonement and the deity of Christ and the new birth.
  12. "But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men..." (3:9). God is allowing things to unfold but He will put a stop to it at some point. There is a limit – God will soon say, "Enough" and He will move in judgment.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Paul uses the word "reprobate" (3:8) to describe people that are living in these last days. The word means "unfit."
2. Romans 1:28 says, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate ("unfit") mind, to do those things which are not convenient."
3. Paul said in I Corinthians 9:27, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (same Greek word -- "unfit")."
4. "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate ("unfit")" (Titus 1:16).
5. "But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected ("unfit"), and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned" (Hebrews 6:8).
6. Let us make sure we are not reprobate, rejected, unfit castaways! Cf. II Cor. 13:5-7.