

Title:           **WHAT'S GOING ON?**

Text:           2 Timothy 3:1-5

Subject:       *The Judgment of God*

Date:           Tuesday Evening — March 23, 2010

Tape #         Z-82b

Readings:     *Rex Bartley and Romans 1:14-42*

Introduction:

We are living in perilous times! I cannot imagine a more difficult time in which to live for the glory of God, seeking to do the will of God. I cannot imagine a more difficult time in which to faithfully preach the Gospel of Christ.

**The moral decadence around us is astonishing!**

- Adultery!
- Fornication!
- Homosexuality!
- Materialism!
- Greed!

Even among those who profess to be the children of God, even among those who hold to the doctrines of the Gospel, the doctrines of grace. I see a general laxity, carelessness and open disregard for the love of God (Ephesians 4:17-20).

(Ephesians 4:17-20) “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth **walk not as other**

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**Gentiles walk**, in the vanity of their mind, <sup>18</sup> Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: <sup>19</sup> Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. <sup>20</sup> But **ye have not so learned Christ.**”

### **The self-centered lawlessness of this age is shocking!**

There is, in our generation as never before, a general contempt for authority, which is just an outward expression of man's contempt for God.

- Where is the child who respects the authority of his parents!
- Where is the student who respects the authority of his teachers!
- Where is the wife who respects the authority of her husband?
- Where is the man who respects the authority of civil government?
- Where is the politician, or elected official who respects the constitution he is sworn to uphold and serves the people he was elected to serve?

**Yet, this is the most religious generation that has ever lived!** The biggest business in America is big business religion. We have more religion and more ungodliness,

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more churches and more corruption, more preachers and more pornography, more “Christians” and more convicts than any nation on earth!

I look at these things and hurt. My soul is vexed with the godliness of our society. I am grieved for the glory of God and the truth of God. And I hurt for you who are trying to serve God, trying to walk with God, trying to honor God in this day. As I look at the world around me, I constantly ask myself, “What’s Going On?” Do you? Well, that is the title of my message. — **WHAT'S GOING ON?**

**Proposition:** I am afraid that I know the answer to that question. — **Ours is a generation under the judgment of God.** I cannot think of any place in the world that indicates an exception to that statement. — Our generation is a generation under the judgment of God.

My text is **2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:1-5.** Turn to that passage. I want you to read it with me. According to what I read in this Book, things are exactly what we should have expected. We should not be taken by surprise. God the Holy Spirit told us to expect exactly the things we see going on around us. (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

(**2 Timothy 3:1-5**) “This know also, that in the last days **perilous times** shall come. <sup>2</sup> For **men shall be**

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**lovers of their own selves**, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> **Without natural affection**, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, <sup>4</sup> Traitors, heady, highminded, **lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God**; <sup>5</sup> **Having a form of godliness**, but **denying the power thereof**: from such turn away.”

Let me show you **FIVE THINGS** that will help you to understand what is going on around you, and I hope will help you and me to live in this dark, dark day for the glory of our God.

## **SPIRITUAL APOSTASY**

**1<sup>st</sup>. We are living in an apostate religious world!** That is a fact that cannot be disputed by anyone with spiritual perception and understanding in Divine Truth. The New Testament plainly teaches us that before Christ comes, as this dispensation is drawn to a rapid conclusion, there will be a general, universal, wholesale departure from the faith of the Gospel, **a departure from the Gospel by those who profess to believe, defend and preach the Gospel.**

**Nothing is so evident to me in this age as the silence of God** (Amos 8:11-12). Thank God, he yet has his 7,000

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prophets who have not bowed to Baal! But they are scattered far and wide! **This is a day of spiritual famine.**

(Amos 8:11-12) “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that **I will send a famine in the land,** not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but **of hearing the words of the LORD:** <sup>12</sup> And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, **they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.**”

God has done as he said he would. Oh, what a famine he has sent! **The religion of this age is the religion of antichrist.** Never before in history has all the professedly “Christian Church” of the world so openly denied the Gospel of Christ. I am not talking about Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, or the hundreds of other religious systems outside what is commonly called Christianity. If you never had something, you can't lose it.

And I am not talking about the apostasy of Rome. Romanism has always been apostate! **Papacy was antichrist from the beginning!** But in our day the children of Rome are rapidly returning home to their harlot mother, not in name, but in belief and practice.

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The major tenets of all organized religions in the “Christian world” are purely Roman doctrines.

- Free-will Salvation!
- Works Justification!
- Separation (Asceticism – Evil is in things, not in us!)
- Rewards or Loss of Rewards based upon Our Works – Purgatory.

This is precisely what God told us would happen in these last days (1 Timothy 4:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8).

(1 Timothy 4:1-5) “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; <sup>2</sup> Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; <sup>3</sup> Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. <sup>4</sup> For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: <sup>5</sup> For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.”

(2 Thessalonians 2:1-8) “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, <sup>2</sup> That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by

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spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. <sup>3</sup> Let no man deceive you by any means: for **that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed**, the **son of perdition**; <sup>4</sup> Who **opposeth** and **exalteth** himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; **so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God**. <sup>5</sup> Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? <sup>6</sup> And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. <sup>7</sup> For **the mystery of iniquity doth already work**: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. <sup>8</sup> And **then** shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:”

Four hundred years ago, **John Owen** wrote, “The time will come, when a faithful minister of the Gospel will be more scarce and precious than a bar of gold!” And, to those who have sense enough to see what is going on in our day, a faithful Gospel preacher is as scarce and precious as a bar of gold. Truly, these are perilous times!

## JUDICIAL REPROBATION

**Rolfe Barnard** said, “This is a reprobate age, an age that cannot be explained apart from the judgment of God.” And

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Barnard was right. So, 2<sup>nd</sup>, I want you to see that **the apostate religion of this day is the result of Divine judgment, the result of God's judicial reprobation.** This is one of the most solemn things in all the Word of God. When God gives men the light of the Gospel and they refuse to walk in it, they are in danger of being reprobate, cut off and given over to satanic deception. — **And this is the work of God!**

**Illustration:** Ephraim (Hosea 4:17).  
Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37-38).

(Matthew 23:37-38) “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! <sup>38</sup> Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

Do you understand what reprobation is? — **Reprobation is the Work of God, fixing it so that those who would not receive his truth cannot receive his truth** (Proverbs 1:23-33; Romans 1:16-32).

- It is Christ himself who turns Satan loose upon the nations of the world (Revelation 20:1-8).
- It is God the Holy Spirit who ceases to restrain and lets loose the powers of darkness (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8).



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- It is God the Father who sends men a strong delusion that they should believe a lie (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12).

**Can you imagine anything more solemn?** The Scriptures tell us that God almighty sovereignly employs Satan and his hellish imps to secure the damnation of those who hear but refuse to receive the love of the truth! **Hear what I am telling you, and be warned!** God will not trifle with those who trifle with his Son and the Gospel of his grace.

**Are there any marks by which the messengers of Satan may be identified and distinguished from God's true servants?** — Most definitely there are! The man of sin will be revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:1), but not to the world. Only discerning souls, taught of God can identify him. But I warn you, their identification is disturbing. You may not like what I have to say, but say it I must. **The false prophets by whom Satan deceives the souls of men may be identified by three things.** Some of them have all three of these marks, some just one or two; but every false prophet can be identified by these three things:

1. **His Enchanting Miracles** (2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 16:13-14).

(2 Thessalonians 2:9) “*Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs

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and lying wonders,”

(Revelation 16:13-14) “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. <sup>14</sup> For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

2. **His Evil Motives** — “*And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not*” (2 Peter 2:3).
3. **His Enticing Message** — Fables — “*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables*” (2 Timothy 4:3-4). — Here are three religious fables...
  - “God loves everybody.”
  - “Christ died for everybody.”
  - “The Holy Spirit calls everybody.”

The false prophet may or may not pretend to have apostolic gifts. He may or may not be an obviously covetous man.

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But every false prophet in the world has the same message – Conditional Grace! They always mix something, somewhere with the work of Christ.

**And every true Gospel preacher has the same message. We all see eye to eye in the matter of salvation** (Isaiah 52:7-8).

(Isaiah 52:7-8) “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.”

- Grace Alone!
- Christ Alone!
- Faith Alone!

## **CAUSE FOR PRAISE**

**3<sup>rd</sup>. In these dark, dark days you and I who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, you and I who are the objects of God's distinguishing, saving grace, have great cause to lift our hearts to our great God with unceasing**

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**thanksgiving and praise** (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14). If you are one of God's elect, a trophy of his almighty grace, snatched out of this apostate religious world, you have something for which to be thankful! Can you imagine the shouts that went up in the hearts of those Thessalonian believers when, as they read the terrible things revealed in this chapter, they got to and read verses 13-14?

(2 Thessalonians 2:13-14) “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: <sup>14</sup> Whereunto he called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Rejoice, my heart, and give thanks to God for his unspeakable grace and abundant mercy! Look what God has done for us...

- He chose us!
- He redeemed us (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- He sent the Gospel to us!
- He called us (Psalm 65:4).
- He gave us faith in Christ and saved us from eternal ruin by his omnipotent grace (Ephesians 2:1-5, 8-10).
- He has kept us from the apostasy of this age (1 John 2:19-20).

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**GREAT RESPONSIBILITY**

**4<sup>TH</sup>. These days of darkness place us in a position of great responsibility.** You and I upon whom the triune Jehovah has shined the light of his grace, — into whose hearts he causes the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ to shine, — you who by his grace believe the Gospel, — this church, — you who preach, — this preacher! — We have a great weight of responsibility.

**Let us hold fast that form of sound words we have received.** — *“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus”* (2 Timothy 1:13)

- Total Depravity!
- Unconditional Election!
- Limited Atonement!
- Irresistible Grace!
- Perseverance of the Saints!

**Let us earnestly contend for the faith of the Gospel** (Jude 3).

**And let us preach the Gospel of God's free and sovereign grace in Christ to all men, as God gives us**

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**opportunity** (2 Timothy 4:1-5; 1 Timothy 3:13-16; 2 Corinthians 4:1-7).

- The Souls of Men and at Stake!
- The Glory of God is at Stake!
- The Time is Short!

(2 Timothy 4:1-5) “I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; <sup>2</sup> Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; <sup>4</sup> And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. <sup>5</sup> But **watch** thou in all things, **endure** afflictions, **do** the work of an evangelist, **make** full proof of thy ministry.”

(1 Timothy 3:14-16) “These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: <sup>15</sup> But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in **the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.** <sup>16</sup> And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles,

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believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

(2 Corinthians 4:1-7) “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; <sup>2</sup> But have **renounced** the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in **craftiness**, nor handling the word of God **deceitfully**; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience **in the sight of God**. <sup>3</sup> But **if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost**: <sup>4</sup> In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. <sup>5</sup> **For we preach not ourselves**, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. <sup>6</sup> For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> But we have this **treasure in earthen vessels**, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

**NO CAUSE FOR FEAR**

**5<sup>th</sup>. We have no cause for fear. — Our God is still on his throne!** (1 Corinthians 11:19; Romans 8:28-30).

- He is accomplishing his will!

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- He is saving his people!
- He is doing good!
- He is making himself an everlasting and a glorious name (Isaiah 63:12, 14).
- His kingdom is safe!

“O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy” (Habakkuk 3:2).

Amen.