

In The Last Days

"But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof, from these also turn away" (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

We are in the "last days." Peter quoted from Joel on Pentecost saying, "It shall come to pass in the last days," but Peter prefaced this words with his own saying, "This is that which hath been spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 23:16-17). In other places in Paul's writings allusion is made to the last days or last times. In his letter to the Thessalonians he wrote of a falling away which would come in which one would exalt himself above God or all that is called God (2 Thess. 2:3-11). In his first letter to Timothy he warned, "The Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall fall away from the faith ..." In Paul's warning to the Thessalonians and in 1 Timothy, the emphasis is on the corruption of God's church. In this last letter to Timothy, the warning is centered on men's character and lives. It is sad to realize that the apostle described the conduct of these who would be bereft of truth. He said these folks would "hold a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." It is startling to compare the list here in 2 Timothy with an earlier list given of the Gentiles whom God had given up (Rom. 1:28-32). The lists are not exactly the same, but similar enough to realize that both groups were of the same spirit and demeanor. These are 18 citations of moral deficiency (KJV) that provoke us to know that just as the Gentiles were "given up by God" in Romans, so would be these reprobate Christians. "Grievous times." It is always grievous times when those who are "God's people" sink to such a state as these described by Paul. From the list of sins contained herein; very obviously these folks had long since abandoned the mind of the Spirit and had not the mind of Christ. They were "lovers of self" (an attitude foreign to God's child). His children must deny and crucify themselves (Matt. 16:24; Gal. 2:20). Hedonism reigns supreme when men are lovers of selves, for lovers of selves are destined to be "lovers of pleasure." Hand-in-hand with lovers of self is "lovers of money."

The list continued. These "Christians" would be "boastful" and "haughty." These two keep the same company. When one is boastful, he is likely to be haughty. One lifted up with pride is also one disposed to regard with disdain others. These words center around the "Big I" and has no esteem for "little you." Those who are boastful and haughty often rail (are railers) upon

others. To "rail" is to cruelly castigate those whom they feel their inferiors. Moreover, these folks would be "*disobedient to parents.*" The good intent of the parent is set aside. These sometimes disobey the parent as did the first son in Jesus' parable of the two sons. Hearing the father command, "Go, work today in my vineyard," the son said, "I will not." Some are as the second son who having the same command said, "I go sir, and went not." These are "unthankful" -- unthankful to God, unthankful to parents. They are "unholy," nothing is deemed holy in their sight, and they are also without natural affection. They are devoid of natural affection for their parents, without natural affection for their offspring (abortion).

These are "*implacable*" -- "*truce breakers.*" They have a high hand in dealing with others. "*Slanderers;*" "*false accusers;*" "*without self control;*" "*fierce*" -- ungentle, harsh, severe, "*no lover of good*" -- haters of good, lovers of darkness; "*traitors*" betraying anyone or anything if that severs their passion and purposes; "*headstrong,*" ready to do anything; "*puffed up;*" "*proud;*" "*lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God.*"

These have a "*form of godliness: outward claim to religion, but denying the power thereof.*" The gospel can transform men into godly persons, but the word must be permitted to work. Where the word is stifled, just a hollow, empty shell of pretense remains. From such we must turn away.

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