

## **“The Time Will Come ...”**

*“... when they will not endure the sound doctrine;, but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth and turn aside unto fables ...” (2 Tim. 4:3f).*

Timothy had been charged to preach the word at all seasons and in all times. Truth is absolute; unchanging and because it is, there are times when the truth will be received in different ways. Despite the attitude which might prevail among the hearer; the word must unswervingly be proclaimed. Of the attitudes of men Paul said that the time would come when men ...

Would not endure the sound doctrine. How blessed is he who humbly receives the word. James urged, *“Receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls”* (James 1:21). Jesus addressed this ill when He said of His generation, *“... this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them”* (Mt. 13:15). Jeremiah lamented that the people of his day had the same disposition: *“Stand in the ways and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls; but they said, We will not walk therein”* (Jer. 6:16).

Would have itching ears. It is “natural” that men desire justification for the things they do. Many are they who search the scriptures, not to learn truth, but to find something which will “condone” their deeds. A person in an adulterous marriage seeks the passage which “sanctifies” his unholy marriage. The homosexual seeks scripture to justify his “lifestyle;” the lover of beer seeks for the passage which allows him to drink “socially.” The people of Isaiah’s day said, *“To the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits, get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path ...”* (Isa. 30:10f). And, when such folks do not get the “answers” they want, they come to hate those who have sufficient courage to tell the truth, contrary to what the inquirer wishes to hear. Ahab said of the prophet Micaiah, *“I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil”* (1 Kings 22:8). Those who listened to Stephen were enraged when he charged them that they were *“stiff-necked in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye”* (Acts 7:51). So enraged were they that they *“cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him”* (Acts 7:57).

Would heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts. There are always "priests for hire." Men who are for sale to the highest bidder; men who stifle the truth because they know it is not what their audience wishes to hear. Ahab wanted to hear his prophets tell him God would be with him in his battle with Syria. And, his prophets predicted a great victory would be his. When Micaiah was summoned to speak (because the king of Judah did not 'trust' the prophets of Samaria); Ahab's prophets counseled him: "*Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak thou good*" (1 Kings 22:13). Micaiah could not be bought off, however. He said, "*What Jehovah saith unto me, that will I speak*" (1 Kings 22:14).

Would turn aside from truth unto fables. Man's lusts to satisfy his own itching ears leads him to accept many foolish doctrines or fables. But it has ever been so.

Despite what the world wants to hear, God's faithful preachers must be "*sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill thy ministry*" (2 Tim. 4:5).

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