

FIVE CONJUNCTIONS

TEXT: II TIMOTHY 3:1-17

INTRODUCTION:

1. The Bible says the last days would be "perilous times" (3:1), that is, hard times, devilish and exceeding fierce (cf. Matthew 8:28), troublesome and dangerous.
2. Last week we saw the characteristics of these last days (3:2-8).
3. Tonight, I want to pick up at verse 9 -- "But..." This little conjunctive appears five times in our text tonight -- verses 9, 10, 11, 13, 14.
4. The apostle Paul told Timothy that the last days would be marked by apostasy, by worldliness, by selfishness, and by treachery.
5. The Bible says these will be perilous times, difficult times, devilish and exceeding fierce times.
6. Wicked and corrupt reprobates will make life very difficult, but then Paul puts on the brake at the end of verse 8, and says, "But they shall proceed no further..." (3:9).
7. That little word "but" changes the entire picture. Remember back in Genesis 6, the Bible vividly describes the wickedness of men -- "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5).
8. Genesis 6:6 says man's wickedness grieved God, and verse 7 says, "And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth..."
9. Then we come to Genesis 6:8 -- "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." That word "but" changes the picture.
10. Psalm 30:5 says, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."
11. With this in mind, let us consider the five conjunctions in our text this evening.

I. THE CONJUNCTION OF RESTRICTION (3:9).

1. From the early pages of the Old Testament right on through the New Testament, we are warned about apostates and reprobates (cf. 3:8).
2. These false teachers have corrupt minds and they resist the truth (3:8). The good news is their ability to deceive will soon come to an end. Their success in converting people to their false doctrine has a limit -- "But they shall proceed no further" (3:9).

3. Just as Pharaoh's magicians were exposed, and their folly was manifest unto all men, so it is with these modern day reprobates. They will be exposed, and their folly shall be manifest to all (3:8, 9).
4. Harold Camping was very successful in convincing his devoted followers that the church age was over and that the world was coming to an end. Through his "Family Radio" network, Camping was gaining many new converts. But God looked down from heaven and said, "But they shall proceed no further" (3:9).
5. Camping's "Family Radio" ministry has sold many of its stations, including its three largest radio stations, and has laid off many employees. Its net assets dropped from \$135 million in 2007 to \$29.2 million in 2011, according to tax records.
6. A news report says its cash on hand dropped from \$1.5 million to \$282,880 in 2011.
7. Since Camping's last false prophecy (the rapture would take place on May 21, 2011), donations have dropped 70 percent. Records indicate the network had to take out a loan to keep going.
8. The Lord said, "But they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifest unto all men" (3:9).
9. In addition to Mr. Camping, many other false prophets have been exposed as charlatans and crooks -- Rev. Ike, Rev. Moon, Pat Robertson, Jim Bakker, Jim Jones ("Jonestown" in Guyana), Oral Roberts, Benny Hinn, and many, many others.
10. There have been many news reports about the decline and inevitable collapse of the wealthy Scientology cult. Their most famous member, John Travolta, has been exposed as a fake and a sodomite.
11. "But they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was" (3:9).
12. It is very interesting to read old books. For example, H.A. Ironside, in his commentary on II Timothy, refers to the strange cults of his day (his book was published in 1947).
13. Ironside mentions Helena Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophical Society, and Annie Besant and Katherine Tingley, also promoters of Theosophy; the Fox sisters, who promoted Spiritism; Mrs. Mary Baker Glover Eddy, the founder of so-called "Christian Science"; the neurotic Ellen G. White and her visionary system of "Seventh-day Adventism"; Ella Wheeler Wilcox and her associates in the spreading of what they called the "New Thought," but which was really "the Old Lie."

14. Another old book is *Word Pictures in the New Testament* by A.T. Robertson. Dr. Robertson refers to "Schweinfurth, the false Messiah of forty odd years ago with his 'heavenly harem' in Illinois and the recent infamous 'House of David' in Michigan."
15. Most of these cult leaders and their cults have been long forgotten, though many of their strange teachings have been absorbed by the New Age Movement.
16. Nevertheless, the Bible is clear -- "But they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was" (3:9).
17. Despite their demonic assistance, cults are limited because they can never counterfeit the new birth, they are clearly exposed by the Word of God, and they are under the just judgment of God.
18. In His Olivet Discourse, our Lord warns of false Christs and false prophets, who shall shew great signs and wonders; "insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:24).
19. "If it were possible" means it will not be possible for false prophets to deceive the elect. Therefore, those taken in by false prophets were never genuinely saved.
20. First John 2:19 says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

II. THE CONJUNCTION OF TESTIMONY (3:10, 11a)

1. In contrast to the false teachers, who are condemned repeatedly throughout I & II Timothy, the apostle Paul uses himself as an example of a true Gospel preacher -- "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life..." (3:10).
2. None of Paul's companions was as closely associated with him as was Timothy, who Paul considered his "son in the faith" (I Tim. 1:2, 18; II Tim. 1:2; 2:1; cf. I Cor. 4:17).
3. Paul also referred to Titus and Onesimus as sons (Titus 1:4; Phil. 10).
4. Since Paul and Timothy were so close, Timothy was well aware of Paul's godly testimony, his "doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions" (3:10, 11).
5. Some preachers have little credibility because they have such a poor testimony, but Paul's practice lined up with his preaching.
6. A man was trying to sell the Duke of Wellington a bullet-proof waistcoat, and the man kept talking about how wonderful it was. The duke said, "All right, put it on yourself and let me take a look at it."

The man put it on and the duke examined it closely. Then the duke said, "Let's give it a test," and he called for a rifleman. The man quickly flew out the door.

7. Paul's doctrine and his testimony stood the test. Paul had a consistent godly testimony. False teachers do not have this kind of testimony.
8. False teachers do not exhibit the fruit of the Spirit because they are not saved. They do not have the Holy Spirit.
9. The little epistle of Jude has much to say about false teachers. Verse 19 says they are "sensual, having not the Spirit."

III. THE CONJUNCTION OF DELIVERANCE (3:11, 12)

1. Paul suffered greatly for the cause of Christ. In verses 11 and 12 Paul mentions the word "persecution" three times, as well as afflictions, which came to him at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra (3:11).
2. These persecutions and afflictions are recorded in the book of Acts.
3. Guy King said, "We soft-living Christians should, I think, read and ponder such a passage as II Corinthians 11:23-28, 'In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness'" (*An Expository Study of II Timothy*).
4. Paul says in II Timothy 3:11, "but out of them all the Lord delivered me." Not "from them," but "out of them."
5. In verse 12, Paul points out that persecutions were not unique. Albert Barnes said, "It was the common lot of all who endeavored to serve their Redeemer faithfully; and Timothy himself, therefore, must not hope to escape from it. The apostle had a particular reference, doubtless, to his own times; but he has put his remark into the most general form, as applicable to all periods. It is undoubtedly true at all times, and will ever be, that they who are devoted Christians -- who live as the Saviour did -- and who carry out his principles always, will experience some form of persecution."

IV. THE CONJUNCTION OF DISCERNMENT (3:13)

1. Paul had no illusions about the world getting better and better. He said, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."
2. We need spiritual discernment in order to keep from being deceived.
3. This discernment comes from studying the Word of God (cf. Hebrews 5:11-14).
4. "Strong meat" refers to serious Bible doctrine (compared to the "milk" of immature believers). "Full age" means mature, and "reason of use" means habitual, regular Bible study. This is how we have our "senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).
5. There is a terrible lack of discernment among professed Christians today. A man once called me on the phone and asked me if I thought the pope was saved. I asked him where did he get that idea from, and he told me they were teaching that in his charismatic church.
6. Notice that while deceivers deceive others, they themselves are being deceived (3:13). Satan deceives all lost sinners.
7. Revelation 12:9 says, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."
8. The devil deceives -- he has his false gospel, false churches, false preachers, etc. Paul said in II Corinthians 11:4, "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him" (cf. II Cor. 11:12-14).
9. Some might wonder how false teachers "shall wax worse and worse," while verse 9 says, "they shall proceed no further." I believe the answer is that they themselves will grow more and more wicked but their wicked influence on others will be limited.

V. THE CONJUNCTION OF PERSEVERANCE (3:14)

1. "But continue thou..." (3:14). William Carey was raised in a small village in England. He apprenticed in a local cobbler's shop. He had been raised an Anglican and after he was saved he became a Baptist.
2. Though he had little formal education, he borrowed a Greek grammar and proceeded to teach himself New Testament Greek.
3. When his master died, he took up shoemaking and soon was married and had a daughter. Life was hard. His daughter died at the age of two, and his pay was insufficient to live on.

4. But William Carey had faith. "I can plod. I can persevere to any definite pursuit."
5. William Carey "continued" (3:14). He continued his language studies, adding Hebrew and Latin to his Greek studies, and he became a Baptist preacher. He also continued pursuing his lifelong interest in international affairs, especially the religious life of other cultures.
6. He went to India, and he and his helpers translated the entire Bible into India's major languages: Bengali, Oriya, Marathi, Hindi, Assamese, and Sanskrit and parts of 209 other languages and dialects.
7. Carey also sought social reform in India, including the abolition of infanticide, widow burning (*sati*), and assisted suicide. He and his helpers founded Serampore College in 1818, a divinity school for Indians, which is still there today.
8. By the time Carey died, he had spent 41 years in India without a furlough. He laid an impressive foundation of Bible translations, education, and social reform.
9. His greatest legacy was in the worldwide missionary movement of the nineteenth century that he inspired, and he is often referred to as "the father of modern missions."
10. Missionaries like Adoniram Judson, Hudson Taylor, and David Livingstone, among thousands of others, were impressed not only by Carey's example, but by his words, "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God."
11. What an example! William Carey followed in the footsteps of the apostle Paul, who said, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (3:14).

CONCLUSION:

Spurgeon said, "By perseverance the snail reached the ark."