

Dangerous Times are Coming (1)

Text: 2 Timothy 3:1-4

Introduction:

1. This section (2:14-4:8): Paul's focus turns to the need for doctrinal soundness in view of the heresies appearing in the church (Hiebert)
2. This chapter: Paul warns Timothy of the coming apostasy of the last days (Vs.1-9), cites his own example as a contrast to the apostates (Vs. 10-13) and then exhorts him to live a life distinct from the apostates in conformity to the Scriptures (Vs. 14-17).
3. Outline of Vs. 1-9
 - I. The Certainty of Perilous Times (Vs. 1)
 - II. The Depravity of Perilous Times (Vs. 2-4)
 - III. The Religiosity of Perilous Times (Vs. 5)
 - IV. The Immorality of Perilous Times (Vs. 6)
 - V. The Illiteracy of Perilous Times (Vs. 7)
 - VI. The Obstinacy of Perilous Times (Vs. 8-9)
4. This lesson: We will cover the first two of the above 6 points

I. The Certainty of Perilous Times (Vs. 1)

A. The Perceiving of Perilous Times (Vs. 1a)

1. "this know" = Paul wants Timothy to be alert and aware of this truth. It is vital that we understand the times in which we live (1 Chr. 12:32). Many believers today are asleep and are ignorant of what is happening around them. This is the opposite to the mindset required in this verse.
2. 'perilous' = hard, difficult, violent, fierce, wild, hazardous, dangerous. Examples of how we might use the word today – "the perilous journey" or "a perilous situation"

B. The Period of Perilous Times (Vs. 1b)

1. "last days" = time just preceding the rapture of the church
2. 'times' – seasons. These seasons have come down through the ages but intensify as we get closer to the return of Christ (Vs. 13)
3. "shall come" = future tense. A sure and certain fact.

II. The Depravity of Perilous Times (Vs. 2-4)

There are 18 characteristics of end time apostates listed in these verses:

A. Self-lovers = fond of self

1. Word made up of 'phileo' "to be affectionately fond of", and 'autos' meaning "self". (Wuest)
2. Illustration: 'Narcissism' is a term we use today to describe someone who is excessively self-admiring. The term originated

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from Greek mythology, where the young Narcissus fell in love with his own image reflected in a pool of water and eventually turned into a flower that bears his name, the narcissus (modern day daffodil or jonquil).

3. Illustration: The “selfie” generation
 - a. Internet Celebrity Face (Friday Church News Notes, December 15, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

China has taken the selfie craze to a new level of vanity by means of apps that enhance one’s appearance. The most popular are produced by the multi-billion-dollar company Meitu. Its first photo-editing app, which appeared in 2008, bears the company’s name *Meitu* (“beautiful picture”). Other apps have followed, including *BeautyPlus* and *MakeupPlus*. They do things such as lighten the skin, smooth the complexion, remove freckles, whiten the teeth, enlarge the eyes, apply makeup and hair color, even slim and contour the face. Meitu’s apps are installed on more than a billion phones in China and across Asia and **generate six billion photos a month** (“China’s Selfie Obsession,” *The New Yorker*, Dec. 18 & 25, 2017). Meitu also sells smartphones that are designed specifically for selfies, with more powerful front-facing cameras and built-in beautifying apps “that start working their magic the moment a picture has been taken.” The name for the “new kind of face” produced by Meitu apps is *wang hong lian* (“Internet-celebrity face”). *Meitu* has actually become a verb in the Chinese lexicon, but it is an exercise in fantasy. It is purest vanity. Of those *billions* of selfies, how many are even looked at by anyone other than the photographer? Who cares? Where will those selfies be even in one week, not to speak of five years? It is narcissism and escapism, and it is a major sign of the times. We would warn God’s people not to be conformed to the vanity and foolishness of the world. Spend the precious hours of your fleeting life on things of eternal value.

- b. According to the U.K. Daily mail, estimates done in 2014 revealed that approximately 17 million selfies are uploaded to social media each week totally a staggering 884 million per year. Google reports that in 2015, 24 billion selfies were uploaded to its Photos app.
 4. Fairbairn: “But in proportion as the spirit of selfishness should at any time prevail, the others might be expected in a corresponding ration to follow. That spirit fitly stands at the head of this black catalogue of moral evils, being in a manner the root-quality out of which the rest will, as circumstances admit, inevitably spring.”
 5. Note: Self-love is the complete opposite to Christian discipleship – “...*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*” (Luke 9:23)
- B. Covetous** = lit. a lover of silver (money). There’s nothing wrong with having money, so long as money doesn’t have you!
 - C. Boasters** = braggers, making exaggerated claims about oneself
 - D. Proud** = means “to show above”. Refers to one who shows himself to be above other people, haughty (Wuest).
 - E. Blasphemers** = railing, abusive, slanderous speech. This can be directed towards God or man.
 - F. Disobedient** = disrespect and rebellion against parental position and authority. From this disrespect of parental authority flows a disregard to all other authority.

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- G. Unthankful** = unappreciative of benefits and blessings received (Hiebert). How true this is of modern Christendom in our society! We live in one of the wealthiest times of human history yet we are shockingly ungrateful.
- H. Unholy** = wicked and sinful
- I. Unnatural** = without family love
1. E.g. the love that normally is exhibited between parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters.
 2. Illustration: The modern abortion industry. Worldwide, 55 million unborn children are killed every year. This makes for approx. 105 per minute.
 3. Illustration: The modern child care phenomenon
- J. Trucebreakers** = implacable. One who will not be appeased, mollified or pacified.
1. One who refuses to enter into a truce to terminate a state of hostilities. 'truce' = a suspension of arms by agreement, cessation of hostilities.
 2. Same word is used to describe the unsaved world in Romans 1:31. Translated 'implacable'
 3. "They resist all efforts to reconciliation." (Hiebert Pg. 84)
- K. False accusers** = slanderers.
1. Webster: Slander is "A false tale or report maliciously uttered. and tending to injure the reputation of another by lessening him in the esteem of his fellow citizens."
 2. Greek word is *diabolos* (δίαβολος) which literally means devil (translated devil 35 times in N.T.). A false accuser aligns himself with the work of the evil one. Rev. 12:10 describes Satan as "the accuser of the brethren"
- L. Incontinent** = no self-control. They have never learned to exercise a restraint upon their lusts and passions. They are "devoid of inner self-government."
- M. Fierce** = savage, un-tame (e.g. a wild animal)
- N. Despisers** = lit. "not lovers of good men." They are haters of good men. This is the attitude of apostate Christendom with its sneering attitude towards holy, separated living.
- O. Traitors** = betraying confidence and trust, disloyal. Illustration: The 'committed' generation (Grandma)
- P. Heady** = rash and reckless. Plunging into things without adequate forethought
- Q. High-minded** = to raise a smoke, to wrap in a mist, puff up. Speaks of pride.
- R. Pleasure-lovers** = fond of pleasures. They put devotion to self-satisfaction above devotion to God. Pleasure is their god as whatever I love and value more than God is the object of my worship.