

Perilous Times



Glimpses of the End (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

Now I want to tell you that my theme tonight is The Last Days or The End Time. Both phrases are widely used in the Scripture. I suppose that at least half of the books in the Bible have something to say about this special period, the Last Days or the End Time. And I personally believe we're living in the end time. I know a lot of other preachers believe the same. I wouldn't try to say how close we are to the end, but I think we're in the end time. And Paul has something to say about this in 2 Timothy chapter 3. I want to read the first five verses. 2 Timothy chapter 3 beginning at verse 1.

> "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come; For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!"

The Bible always goes to the root of things. Paul is very emphatic first of all. I don't think in any other place he uses such emphasis, "Know this... you can be absolutely certain of this one thing that in the last days perilous times will come." The word that's translated perilous only occurs one other place in the Greek New Testament, in Matthew 8:28 it's used to describe two demonized men who came against Jesus. And the translation there in this version is fierce. And I think fierce in a good word. "In the last days there will be fierce times..." And much of the power that makes them fierce will be demonic power. And Paul says you've just got to accept this fact. There's no doubting or disputing, that's what you're going to have in the last days. The word is not getting better.

And then the Bible reveals to us the root problem and this is so important because all sorts of political theories could be evolved, but they wouldn't touch the root. The root of the decline is the decline in human character. That is the root problem, that human character is declining. The decline in human character is a matter of corruption. Since man fell into sin he has been corrupt. His character has been corrupt. But corruption is something that progresses.

In the natural if you think of, say a piece of fruit, a pear, something like that, a peach. You have this beautiful fresh-looking lovely tasty piece of fruit. You don't have to do anything with it. Just leave it. Because beneath the surface corruption is already at work. And it will gradually work out until that piece of fruit is totally rotten. That's how it is with human behavior. The corruption is already at work. And it's going to go on until the whole thing is totally rotten. Corruption is irreversible. There is no way to turn back the process of corruption. Whether it be in character, or whether it be in fruit, or whether it be in some other thing.

So God does not try to reverse the process of corruption. God's answer is not to improve or clean up or reform. God has one simple answer—it's a new creation. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation." God is not going to patch up the old creation. He's not going to reform it. He's not going to send it to church or teach it the Golden Rule, because you cannot change corruption. You can delay corruption. You take that piece of fruit, whatever it is, and put it inside the refrigerator, corruption will be delayed, but it will still ultimately work out.

Sometimes I think some churches are like that. They're refrigerators. They're pretty cold. They're pretty nice, but they don't change the process of corruption. The only thing that can do that is the new creation. I wonder how many of you tonight can say, "I am a new creation in Jesus Christ." If you can't, you're still the slave of corruption at work in you.

Now associated with this revelation is an understanding of the main evil forces that are at work, and there are three of them, and each of them begins with the word love. Now I have to say the NIV which in some ways is a good translation, unfortunately does not translate the first word self-love. It translates it egotism which is all right. If you know Latin it means the same thing. But a lot of people don't know Latin. And in the Greek original text there are three phrases that are just exactly parallel, self-love, love of money, love of pleasure. There are three loves that are the corrupting force at work. Let me give you them again. Love of self, love of money and love of pleasure.

When Paul gives the list he starts with, "...men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money..." And he ends the list with "...lovers of pleasure." And altogether there are eighteen different forms of moral corruption listed, but the source of them is the first two, love of self and love of money. And the love of self and money ultimately expresses itself in the love of pleasure. I'll give myself a good time. I'll get as much as I can. I'll enjoy myself. I won't worry about other people. I'll just care for Number One. Those are the three corrupting forces that are at work.

In 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 10, Paul says,

> "The love of money is the root of all evils..."

So all the other evils that are listed here, these moral blemishes, proceed out of the love of money. And let me say this about love of money, it's very common in the Church and if you love money, you're a slave of money. You cannot love money without becoming its slave.

And so we have the exposure from the word of God of the three corrupting primary forces: love of self, love of money, love of pleasure. And you look at our culture today in this country and many other countries and what you see is love of self, love of money, love of pleasure. And that is the root problem. And nothing can resolve that but a new creation.

You could say this, Paul says it, "The love of money is a root of all evils..." But the soil in which that root grows is love of self. That's the real basic problem, is the love of self. And that is very little dealt with in the contemporary Church. In fact, much of the activities of the contemporary Church are designed to increase our love of self, to feed the love of self, to nourish the love of self.

Now the shocking thing and what I am saying is this. These terrible moral blemishes, beginning with the love of self, the love of money and ending with the love of pleasure, with all these horrible other things in the middle of it like unforgiving, unloving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers pleasure, etc... Now listen, these same people have a form of godliness but deny its power. So Paul is not talking about irreligious people. In fact, I don't think he's talking about non-Christian people, because as far as I understand Paul, he would never use the word godliness of anything that rejected Jesus Christ. So these are professing Christians. They have a form of godliness. But what do they do with it. They deny its power.

What is the power? Some of you will tell me it's speaking in tongues. I thank God for speaking in tongues. Some will say well it's miracles and healings. I thank God for all of them. I've seen them all myself. But listen, all of those can happily coexist with the love of self.

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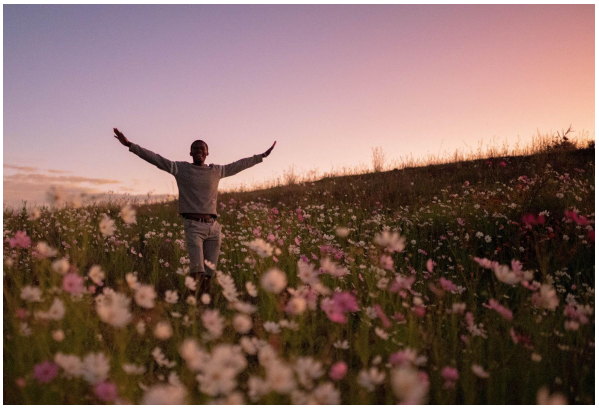

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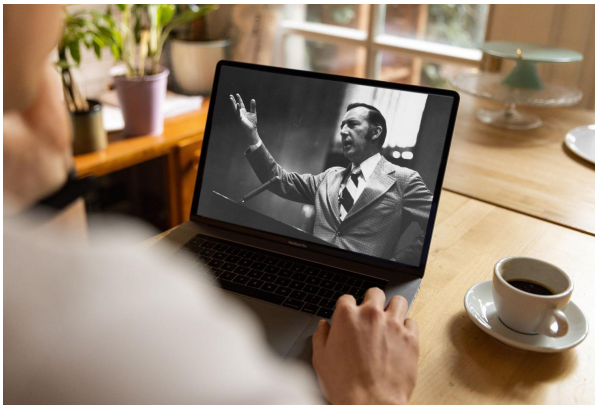

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