

Fierce, Perilous Days Ahead



Fierce Times Are Coming (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

So tonight we're going to deal with the theme Fierce Times Are Coming. This is taken from 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

> "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!"

So Paul says there, in this translation, "In the last days perilous times will come." Now the Greek word that's translated "perilous" only occurs in one other place in the New Testament which is in Matthew 8:28, which describes an encounter of Jesus with two demonized men. I will just read that one verse. Matthew 8:28.

> "When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demonized men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way."

That's the other place where that word is used. It's translated "fierce." I feel that fierce much better represents what God is saying than "perilous." The NIV translates it "terrible." So we are headed for times which will be fierce and terrible. We had better face up to the fact because it's a remarkable fact that in that passage Paul starts by saying to Timothy, "Know this..." I don't recall any other passage in the writings of Paul where he laid so much emphasis on the fact that what he was saying was absolutely certain. "You can be absolutely sure of this, Timothy, in the last days fierce times will come."

Why did he put that emphasis there? I suppose it may have been He knew something of human nature. People really don't want to listen to that kind of message. They'd rather not hear that fierce times are coming. They'd rather be able to think up some theology or interpretation of prophecy which

doesn't make room for that. But the truth of the matter is, fierce times are coming. In fact, I think they are already here in a certain measure.

About 1991 Ruth and I took a "sabbatical," which didn't work out the way we thought it would. But the Lord did not only speak to us, He dealt with us. He saved my life from a very serious heart condition. As we entered that sabbatical the Lord told us that judgment was coming, and it would come in three phases. Preliminary judgments, intermediate judgments, and final judgments. I believe we've entered the preliminary judgments. But that's only the beginning. I wonder if you believe that God is going to judge men and women. I hear very little in the contemporary church about God's judgment. It's interesting when Paul preached to a completely Gentile audience in the city of Athens, he declared about Jesus that God has appointed Him to be the judge of all men. He didn't mention Savior. All he said was judge. And if you don't believe in judgment, you don't need to be saved, because being saved is being saved from judgment.

I want to analyze briefly what Paul says here about these fierce times. I want to point out three aspects of this truth. I hope as I do that, you will have to say to yourself, "That's absolutely true. That's the correct analysis." What I hear on television or the radio, what I read in the newspapers—it's all mixed up. But what I am hearing through Paul is the plain, unvarnished truth, and it's a correct analysis. Paul analyzes why the fierce times are coming.

He says three things which I will bring out in order. First of all, the basic cause of the fierce times is the degeneration of human character. Let me say that again. The basic cause, the root problem is the degeneration of human character. Don't blame it on the government. Don't blame it on a certain nationality or a certain religious group or the wicked people that go doing all sorts of bad things. That's not the root cause. The root cause is the degeneration of human character.

Paul lists 18 horrible, moral and ethical blemishes which will conspicuously mark people as we come to the close of this age. I'm not going to read through the list again, but I suggest you could take time by yourself to read through that list and check off every one that applies to people all around us and maybe to some of us right now, today. I believe you will find it a amazingly accurate list.

The second thing I want to point out is a principle. Corruption is irreversible. Let me say that again. Corruption is irreversible. When corruption moves into something, takes hold something, works in something, it's irreversible. It cannot be turned back. Take some simple example like a peach or a pear. You have this beautiful peach with its nice fuzzy soft—you know it's almost like velvet, you just want to stroke—beautiful shades of pink and gold. There it is. It's wonderful. Just leave it that way for a week, come back, and it's yellow and shriveled and unattractive. Why? Because there was corruption in it. And once corruption comes into a thing, it's irreversible. There's no way to turn it back. You can postpone it. You can slow it down. You take that beautiful peach, put it in a refrigerator, and at the end of a week you can take it out looking more or less as good as it looked at first. But you haven't changed the corruption that's in it. Sooner or later that corruption is going to run its course.

Now I think some kinds of moral religions are like the refrigerator. You can put a person in a refrigerator, which has probably got more than one point of comparison, and they will come out a week later, a year later, ten years later looking pretty good. But they haven't changed inwardly. They're still corrupt. You can postpone it, but you cannot prevent it. Sooner or later that corruption is going to take over and finish off the peach, the pear or the person. So please see this because it's so important. Corruption, moral corruption, ethical corruption is irreversible. Once it's in the situation or a person or a community, it cannot be reversed. And God has no program to reverse the corruption of sin. He's not going to do something to improve it, or make it last longer, or turn it back. God's program is a new creation. He will not settle for anything else.

Lot's of human programs are trying to, what would I say, put the peach in the refrigerator, or put it somewhere where it won't look so bad, or find some chemical process which will slow up the corruption. But none of them are acceptable to God. God is not interested in Christianizing our civilization. He's not interested in Christianizing our culture. I believe we can bring forth an alternative culture which is Christian. But we cannot change and improve to the degree that God requires, the corruption that's in our present culture, society, and total condition. So God says, "I'm not going to mess around with it. It can't be saved. All I'm going to do is produce something totally new." There are three Scriptures about this. 2 Corinthians 5:17 which says,

> "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation…"

That's God's solution. Not improving, not patching up, but producing a totally new creation.

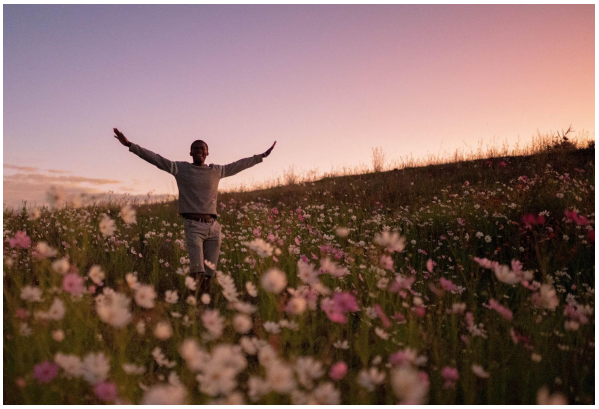


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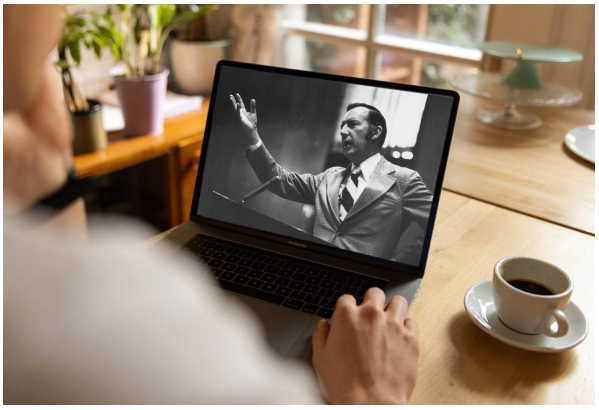
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