

## **DARK TIMES AHEAD** **(1 Timothy 4:1-6)**

### **I. A prophecy (vs. 1-3a).**

- A. Paul said that the Spirit had expressly or distinctly spoken on this subject of apostasy.
- B. The Holy Spirit said this would take place in "latter times."
  - 1. This simply means time soon after Paul wrote this.
  - 2. From the time of Paul's writing until the time of the Lord's return there would be false teachers.
- C. Paul had written to the Thessalonians, which was the first of Paul's writings, that the "mystery of iniquity was already at work."
- D. These things were in their infancy and would see a great growth in the not distant future.
- E. What would happen would be a great falling away or apostasy.
  - 1. The word "depart" literally means "to stand away from."
  - 2. There was to be a large group of Christians who would stand away from the teaching of the gospel, which is here mentioned as the faith.
- F. They would do so because they would pay attention to seducing spirits and doctrines concerning demons.
  - 1. False teachers would seduce them into believing their doctrines instead of the doctrine of Christ.
  - 2. They would teach things concerning demons and the departed that were not true.
- G. These things happened soon after Paul wrote this to Timothy on a small scale.
  - 1. False teachers taught a theology called Gnosticism.
  - 2. It had a series of emanations between God and man to whom you were supposed to pray in order to get your message to God.
  - 3. They taught a great disconnect between spirit and flesh.
- H. This happened also through the Roman Empire when the emperor claimed to be deity and upon his death people began to pray to him.
- I. This took place on a great scale when the apostate Roman Catholic Church was organized.
  - 1. The Roman Church teaches praying to various beings other than God through Jesus.
  - 2. Notice what has been and may still be said in the prayer before the Mass, ""In union with the holy church and its minister, and invoking the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and all the angels and saints; we now offer the adorable sacrifice of the mass."
  - 3. Here is what has been said at confession: "I confess to Almighty God, to the blessed Mary, ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly."
  - 4. The Catholics also believe in and practice exorcism.

- J. What would happen is that through the hypocrisy of those who spoke these lies, the hearers would have their consciences seared.
    - 1. These hypocritical people who claimed to live for God, but only strove for followers would speak lies and cause people to harden their hearts against God.
    - 2. False doctrine continually ingested and followed will cause one's heart to become so hardened the gospel can do nothing with it.
  - K. Paul continued the line of thought which the false teachers would follow.
    - 1. They forbade marriage attempting to bolster the false idea that abstinence was a better state.
    - 2. Certain forms of Gnosticism taught asceticism, the discipline of self, to great extremes.
    - 3. This carried over into the church in the refusal of marriage to priests and nuns.
    - 4. John Wesley wrote this about these verses: "Forbidding priests, monks and nuns to marry, and commanding all men to abstain from such and such meats on such and such days."
  - L. Notice this brief progression one commentator gave us: "This notion may already have influenced opinion in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 7); it developed in less than a century into Gnostic contempt for marriage; it entered patristic theology in the form of an exaggerated veneration for virginity; it developed in the Latin and Greek churches into the celibacy of the clergy and of religious orders; it was a tendency wholly opposed to Scripture teaching which allows "marriage is honorable in all" (Hebrews 13:2); it forbade marriage to church rulers and ministers, despite the fact of Old Testament priests and New Testament elders having been required to be "husbands of one wife." Apostles were permitted to take their wives with them on mission tours (1 Corinthians 9:5)."
  - M. The eating of meat would be condemned at certain times.
    - 1. We know this has definitely been a part of Catholicism.
    - 2. Certain days have been set aside where meat is not to be eaten at all.
  - N. The Catholic Church is not the only body of false teachers that has promoted these doctrines but it is the largest and most well known.
- II. The practice (vs 3b-5).**
- A. While Paul does not address the false teaching about marriage, he does address that regarding meat.
    - 1. The truth is that all meat is good at any time because God created it.
    - 2. Jewish dietary laws had restricted the eating of flesh but those were nailed to the cross.
  - B. We may choose to not eat meat or certain kinds of meat for health reasons, but not for religious reasons.
  - C. We are to be thankful for what we receive from God not reject on religious reasons that which we receive from God.
  - D. When prayers of thanks are offered for the meat received, that meat is not

to be viewed as unclean and thrown out.

1. God's word says it is good.
2. Jesus told Peter to rise, kill and eat.

**III. The preaching (vs. 6).**

- A. What Paul was writing about was not new to the Ephesians.
- B. He told Timothy to remind them of these things.
- C. If Timothy would do that, he would be considered a good minister.
  1. It is a preacher's job to remind just as it is any teacher.
  2. Repetition, repetition, repetition is the key.
- D. If Timothy would do this, he would show others that he was educated, which is the idea of nourished up, in the sound gospel Paul had taught him.
  1. Truthfulness to what has been taught that is true is a sign to others of maturity and faithfulness.
  2. It shows that you think well of those who taught you.
- E. The last phrase of the verse means he is showing that what Timothy had been taught was fully understood by him and that he agreed with it and showed it by teaching others.
- F. We need to be people that preach the truth that we have been taught and not turn our backs on it.
- G. We need reminding and we need to remind others so they won't fall away.