

II Timothy - Part 1: Continue in the Gospel

John Stott

I. Introduction.

- A. The last days are the days in which we are living. (2 Timothy 3)
- B. Although it is natural to apply “last days” to Christ’s return, the biblical conviction was that they were in the last days.

II. Christ ushered in the last days.

- A. Peter applies Joel’s “last days” to today.
- B. The last days are the days spoken by God’s Son. (Hebrews 1:1)
- C. The last days are the days between the two comings of Jesus.

III. What the last days will include.

- A. They will include perilous times.
- B. This does not mean that the last days will be uniformly perilous.
- C. The times will be hard to bear.

IV. The reason the times will be hard is because of evil men spreading persecution and dead religion.

- A. Timothy was supposed to know this and be prepared for this.
- B. Paul describes the bad men’s conduct, religion and beliefs.

1. Conduct.

- a. They will be lovers of self. They will not be lovers of God. This in few words describes their conduct. What is fundamentally wrong with these men is that their love is misdirected.
- b. These are proud and arrogant resulting in abuse of other people.
- c. There is an absence of the quality of life in the family that even nature would expect. There is ungratefulness, lack of respect, heartlessness.
- d. Also the men will be slanderers, profligate, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, and swollen with conceit. The list ends and begins with pride.

e. All this is the consequence of a focus on self first. The root of the problem in treacherous times is that men are lovers of self.

f. The gospel makes us God-centered, and it makes our attitudes towards others right.

2. Religion.

a. Religion and morality have been more often divorced than married.

b. Amos and Isaiah God used to criticize the injustice of Israel in the midst of their religion. Jesus said similar to the Pharisees.

c. The enemies believed religion, but they denied its power.

d. True religion is a combination of power and form. One without the other is an abomination to God.

e. These men influenced others—they snuck into private homes to win people over to their heresy. They would win over the women who were morally and intellectually weak.

3. Beliefs.

a. The Asian false teachers are likened to the false teachers of Egypt and Paul likens himself to Moses speaking all truth.

b. The false teachers were rejecting God's truth, but Paul was confident that it would not get very far. God will vindicate His own truth, so one need not worry too much about false teaching.

c. In the visible church, Satan mingles with the good and sometimes has chief authority. This takes root in permissiveness.

d. Timothy was called to be different from the world in teaching and conduct.

e. Christians are called to be different. Too many are giving in without realizing what they are doing. We are told not to be moved though.

V. Paul's exhortation to Timothy.

A. Timothy has presently been loyal to Paul, but Paul beckons him to remain loyal in the future. He followed, now he is to continue.

B. By way of contrast the men portrayed were also followers, but of self—they were following their own inclinations. Timothy however had an objective standard he was following—that of the Apostle Paul.

C. Holy living and suffering are two proofs of the genuineness of teaching.

D. Timothy was to abide in what was and not advance to this new theology or morality.

E. Reasons for abiding.

1. We know from whom we have learned the teaching. This is a reference to Paul and his apostolic authority. It was Apostolic through Paul..

2. We know the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul was no innovator—he claimed that he was teaching nothing but what Moses and the Prophets said would come to pass. It was Prophetic through the Scriptures.

VI. Scripture.

A. Origin and nature.

1. It is God-breathed. God exhaled the Scriptures.

2. God's Word is reasonable within itself, for the mind of God is far beyond the mind and thoughts of God. (Isaiah 55)

3. God must reveal what is in His mind by speaking since His thoughts are so far beyond us. Speech clothes the thoughts of God's mind. This is communication.

B. Purpose.

1. It is profitable since it is inspired by God.

2. It can make one wise unto salvation. It is a book of salvation not of science.

3. The Bible is full of Christ and it bears witness to the salvation that comes from Him.

4. Evangelicals do not worship the Bible, but the Person of whom it speaks.

5. Its purpose is to make one mature in Christ.

Application questions

1. What are two tests for false teaching according to Paul?

2. How can you biblically explain the relationship between religion and morality?

3. What stood out to you the most in this message? How can you apply it to your own life for change and maturity in Christ?
