

A Biblical Worldview

In the Age of Apostasy

Part 2 Handout
Pastor Grant Williams

Rightly Dividing God's Unchanging Word (Truth) for a Biblical Worldview in the midst of the godless worldview causing the great apostasy (falling away from the truth) in the church. Jesus said "many" pastors, preachers and teachers would deceive "many" because they no longer believe God's Word is true. Matt 24:5

In part 1 of this series we looked at the definition of a “worldview”. Everyone has some type of worldview, but Christians are to hold a Biblical worldview, which means that every decision and action should be shaped by the Truth that was from the beginning—Jesus Christ or the Word. A Biblical worldview (or a Christian worldview) is based on God’s unchanging Word. Since God is the Creator of everything in heaven and earth, He is the standard for truth. God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and unchanging.

A secular or non biblical worldview is one based on and shaped by the ever changing godless culture. It is seen through and effected by the emotions and feelings from our old sin nature. This worldview is what is causing the great apostasy (falling away from the truth) in the church. Jesus said “many” pastors, preachers and teachers would deceive “many” because they no longer believe God’s Word is true. (Matt 24:5)

Matthew 24:5 AMPC

5 For many will come in (on the strength of) My name [appropriating the name which belongs to Me], saying, I am the Christ (the Messiah), and they will lead many astray.

When asked by His disciples what would be the sign(s) of His return at the Time of the End, Jesus replied that one of them would be: **many** pastors, preachers and teachers would deceive many by adding, deleting and twisting the Truth (God's unchanging Word) about sin, judgment, righteousness and the "**things**" to come that have already been written.

This is why Jesus told HIS followers we would need the Holy Spirit...

John 16:1-13 AMPC

1 **I have told you all these things,** so that you should not be offended **(taken unawares and falter, or be caused to stumble and fall away).** [I told you to keep you from being scandalized and repelled.]

2 They will put you out of (expel you from) the synagogues; but an hour is coming when whoever kills you will think and claim that he has offered service to God.

3 And **they will do this because** they have not known the Father or Me.

4 But **I have told you these things now, so that when they occur you will remember that I told you of them.** I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.

5 But now I am going to Him Who sent Me, yet none of you asks Me, Where are You going?

6 But **because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts [taken complete possession of them].**

7 However, I am telling you nothing but the truth when I say **it is profitable (good, expedient, advantageous) for you that I go away.** Because if I do not go away, the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengtheners, Standby) will not come to you [into close fellowship with you]; but if I go away, I will send Him to you [to be in close fellowship with you].

8 And when He comes, He will convict and convince the world and bring demonstration to it about **sin** and about **righteousness** (uprightness of heart and right standing with God) and about **judgment:**

9 About sin, because they do not believe in Me [trust in, rely on, and adhere to Me];

10 About righteousness (uprightness of heart and right standing with God), because I go to My Father, and you will see Me no longer;

11 About judgment, because the ruler (evil genius, prince) of this world [Satan] is judged and condemned and sentence already is passed upon him.

12 I have still many things to say to you, but you are not able to bear them or to take them upon you or to grasp them now.

13 But when He, the Spirit of Truth (the Truth-giving Spirit) comes, He will guide you into all the Truth (the whole, full Truth). For He will not speak His own message [on His own authority]; but He will tell whatever He hears [from the Father; He will give the message that has been given to Him], and **He will announce and declare to you the things that are to come [that will happen in the future].**

The Holy Spirit will help guide you and I into all Truth. He will remind us, declare to us, announce the things or God's Word that are to come. You can only be reminded of and act on what is being announced or declared if you have already heard and understand the Truth.

The Holy Spirit will help you and I when we have been studying the Word, surrounding ourselves with people who know the Word not to be led into error. The reason Paul said we need to be meeting together, studying God's Word, encouraging one another is...

Genesis 3:1-10 AMPC

1 Now the **serpent was more subtle and crafty** than any living creature of the field which the Lord God had made. And he [Satan] said to the woman, Can it really be that God has said, You shall not eat from every tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat the fruit from the trees of the garden,

3 Except the fruit from the tree which is in the middle of the garden. God has said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.

4 **But the serpent said to the woman, You shall not surely die,**

5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing the difference between good and evil and blessing and calamity.

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good (suitable, pleasant) for food and that it was delightful to look at, and a tree to be desired in order to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she gave some also to her husband, and he ate.

7 Then the eyes of them both were opened, and **they knew that they were naked;** and **they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves apronlike girdles.**

8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

9 But the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, Where are you?

10 He said, I heard the sound of You [walking] in the garden, and **I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.**

The “Never Wrong” Prophet Isaiah told us the “things” that took place in the beginning: sin (disobedience to God’s unchanging Word), judgment (reward and punishment), righteousness (what is right or rightly dividing the word) would take place at the Time of the End.

Isaiah 46:9-10

9 [Earnestly] **remember the former things,** [which I did] of old; for I am God, and there is no one else; I am God, and there is none like Me,

10 **Declaring the end and the result from the beginning,** and **from ancient times the things that are not yet done,** saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure and purpose,

This was foretold, that many will deceive many which is the great Apostasy and as a result. The great Apostasy or abandoning truth is taking place which was prophesied in God’s Word. Satan is subtle and crafty and is deceiving the very one’s who are supposed to be sounding the alarm that Judgment is coming by preaching heresy.

This is what the “Never Wrong” Prophet Ezekiel said...

Ezekiel 33 AMPC

1 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying,

2 Son of man, speak to your people [the Israelite captives in Babylon] and say to them, When I bring the sword upon a land and the people of the land take a man from among them and make him their watchman,

3 If when he sees the sword coming upon the land, he blows the trumpet and warns the people,

4 Then **whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.**

5 He heard the sound of the trumpet and did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. **But he who takes warning shall save his life.**

6 **But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them, he is taken away in and for his perversity and iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.**

7 So you, son of man, **I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at My mouth and give them warning from Me.**

8 **When I say to the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his perversity and iniquity, but his blood will I require at your hand.**

9 **But if you warn the wicked to turn from his evil way and he does not turn from his evil way, he shall die in his iniquity, but you will have saved your life.**

Jesus told you and I that when the Word, Jesus Himself, takes place and/or is revealed that religion will try and stop it. Religious leaders will gather other like minded religious leaders together and “circle the wagons” to protect religion by no longer wanting THE TRUTH to be told about: sin judgment, righteousness and the **things** or signs concerning the time of the end. These are the very things that the “Never Wrong” Prophet Ezekiel was commanded to sound the alarm about.

The next several weeks we are going to follow connecting layers/paths that parallel each other regarding preparing for the Time of The End.

- Paul's instructions to the pastors, preacher and teachers...
- Stoning of Stephen by the religious leaders...
- Peter's writings to the End Times church...
 1. Essence of True Knowledge for the believer (ch. 1)
 2. False pastors, preachers and teachers and their doom (ch. 2)
 3. Warning, judgments and exhortations (ch.3)
- The warnings and instruction in Jude...
- Paul's instruction to the church in preparation for the rapture...
- Warnings from the Never Wrong Prophets for today...
- What Jesus said would happen regarding the great Apostasy...

Apostasy Defined:

(Greek: a defection, to depart)...

1. An abandonment of what one has professed; a total desertion, or departure from one's faith or religion.
2. The desertion from a party to which one has adhered.
3. An abscess.

Abscess defined: a swollen area within body tissue, containing an accumulation of pus.

Pride defined: Inordinate self-esteem; an unreasonable conceit of one's own superiority in talents, beauty, wealth, accomplishments, rank or elevation in office, which manifests itself in lofty airs, distance, reserve, and often in contempt of others.

Note: another word for swollen with pride: puffed-up, arrogant, egotistic, puffy...

Matthew 24:5 AMPC

5 For many will come in (on the strength of) My name [appropriating the name which belongs to Me], saying, I am the Christ (the Messiah), and they will lead many astray.

Matthew 24:5 KJV

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

John 1:1 AMPC

1 In the beginning [before all time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself.

Appropriating Defined:

participle present tense Assigning to a particular person or use; claiming or using exclusively; severing to the perpetual use of an ecclesiastical corporation.

- Webster's Dictionary 1828

Jesus instructed His followers or His disciples, to go wait for the promised Holy Spirit and the reasons why in John chapters 14-16. Then, starting the book of Acts Jesus provides us with the summary of the book of Acts with these words in Acts 1:8: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

In Acts 2:1–13, the Christ-followers receive the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:14 -7:60 describes the rapid growth of the church in Jerusalem. Chapters 8-12 find Jewish persecution inadvertently spreading the gospel throughout Judea and Samaria. And in chapters 13-28, Paul and his companions spread the good news throughout the Roman Empire which is the 6th Empire of Bible Prophecy in the book of Revelation and the 4th Empire that Daniel foretold following the Assyria & Egypt Empires.

I want to focus in on Chapter 7 and what it reveals regarding the Great Apostasy...what is taking place right now as what was prophesied would take place. We need to know what has happened so the Holy Spirit can remind us and guide us into Truth so we won't be deceived.

Setting the stage for Acts chapter 7 we need to get some context from chapter 6. Acts 6:5 introduces a faithful man of God named Stephen: “a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.” It is noteworthy that there have always been those faithful believers whose love for and commitment to the Word seem to shine through so greatly that others around them notice, and Stephen was such a man. Nothing is known about the personal life of Stephen, his parents, his siblings, or whether he had a wife or children; however, what is known about him is what is truly important. He was faithful, even when faced with certain death.

Stephen was one of the seven men chosen to be responsible over the distribution of food to widows in the early church after a dispute arose and the apostles recognized they needed help. He was also "full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:8). Opposition arose, but the men who argued with Stephen were no match for the wisdom given him by the Holy Spirit. So, the men decided to falsely accuse Stephen, labeling him a blasphemer and having him arrested (Acts 6:11-14).

In Acts 6:12–14, the Jews accused a true Jesus-follower (Stephen) of speaking against the temple, Moses, and the Law. Acts 7 is Stephen's defense. It can be difficult for modern readers to follow because he intermingles truth about the Mosaic law, the prophets of Israel, and the role of the temple in and around Old Testament Jewish history. Ultimately, he explains that God never asked for the temple (religion), and the Israelites didn't need one (religion) to follow Him; Moses wasn't always perfect; the Israelites never properly followed Moses or the Law; and in fact, they killed the very prophets who told them how to recognize the Messiah.

Acts 7 is the record of Stephen's testimony and a pivot point in the book of Acts, which is perhaps the most detailed and concise history of Israel and their relationship to God of any in Scripture. Stephen was not concerned about his earthly existence, determining instead to stand firmly on the side of Jesus Christ, no matter the consequences.

God inspired him to speak boldly, rightly accusing Israel of their failure to recognize Jesus, their Messiah, rejecting and murdering Him, as they had murdered Zechariah and other prophets and faithful men throughout their generations. Stephen's speech was an indictment against Israel and their failure as the chosen people of God who had been given the law, the holy things, and the promise of the Messiah. Naturally, these accusations, though true, were not well received by the Jews.

Until recently, the early church has seen favor from the people and indifference from the Sanhedrin. Now, the Sanhedrin has beaten the apostles and ordered them not to preach about Jesus (Acts 5:40), and the people are starting to realize how different Christianity is. In Jerusalem, this Jesus-follower named Stephen has been in a debate with other Jewish religious leaders who finally accuse him of wishing to destroy the temple, like Jesus (Acts 6:8–15). This is Stephen's defense, which leads to his death and the introduction of Paul.

Sanhedrin Defined:

What was the Sanhedrin during Jesus time? The Sanhedrin was an assembly of either twenty-three or seventy-one elders (known as "rabbis"), appointed to sit as a tribunal in every city in the ancient Land. What is the difference between the Pharisees and the Sanhedrin? The Pharisees and Sadducees made up the Sanhedrin, a council of seventy men who made all the decisions for the Jews. The tie-breaker was the high priest, who was called the nasi/nasee. In modern Hebrew, nasi/nasee means president.

Pharisee: [capitalized] a member of a Jewish sect of the intertestamental period noted for strict observance of rites and ceremonies of the written law and **for insistence on the validity of their own oral traditions concerning the law.** [not capitalized] **a self-righteous person; a hypocrite.**

Acts 7 AMPC

1 And the high priest asked [Stephen], Are these charges true?

2 And he answered, Brethren and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our forefather Abraham when he was still in Mesopotamia, before he [went to] live in Haran,

3 And He said to him, Leave your own country and your relatives and come into the land (region) that I will point out to you.

4 So then he went forth from the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. And from there, after his father died, [God] transferred him to this country in which you are now dwelling.

5 Yet He gave him no inheritable property in it, [no] not even enough ground to set his foot on; but He promised that He would give it to Him for a [a]permanent possession and to his descendants after him, even though [as yet] he had no child.

6 And this is [in effect] what God told him: That his descendants would be aliens (strangers) in a land belonging to other people, who would bring them into bondage and ill-treat them 400 years.

7 But I will judge the nation to whom they will be slaves, said God, and after that they will escape and come forth and worship Me in this [very] place.

8 And [God] made with Abraham a covenant (an agreement to be religiously observed) [b]of which circumcision was the seal. And under these circumstances [Abraham] became the father of Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac [did so] when he became the father of Jacob, and Jacob [when each of his sons was born], the twelve patriarchs.

9 And the patriarchs [Jacob's sons], boiling with envy and hatred and anger, sold Joseph into slavery in Egypt; but God was with him,

10 And delivered him from all his distressing afflictions and won him goodwill and favor and wisdom and understanding in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

11 Then there came a famine over all of Egypt and Canaan, with great distress, and our forefathers could find no fodder [for the cattle] or vegetable sustenance [for their households].

12 But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent forth our forefathers [to go there on their] first trip.

13 And on their second visit Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, and the family of Joseph became known to Pharaoh and his origin and race.

14 And Joseph sent an invitation calling to himself Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all.

15 And Jacob went down into Egypt, where he himself died, as did [also] our forefathers;

16 And their [c]bodies [Jacob's and Joseph's] were taken back to Shechem and laid in the tomb which Abraham had purchased for a sum of [silver] money from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

17 But as the time for the fulfillment of the promise drew near which God had made to Abraham, the [Hebrew] people increased and multiplied in Egypt,

18 Until [the time when] there arose over Egypt another and a different king who did not know Joseph [neither knowing his history and services nor recognizing his merits].

19 He dealt treacherously with and defrauded our race; he abused and oppressed our forefathers, forcing them to expose their babies so that they might not be kept alive.

20 At this juncture Moses was born, and was exceedingly beautiful in God's sight. For three months he was nurtured in his father's house;

21 Then when he was exposed [to perish], the daughter of Pharaoh rescued him and took him and reared him as her own son.

22 So Moses was educated in all the wisdom and culture of the Egyptians, and he was mighty (powerful) in his speech and deeds.

23 And when he was in his fortieth year, it came into his heart to visit his kinsmen the children of Israel [[d]to help them and to care for them].

24 And on seeing one of them being unjustly treated, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian and slaying [him].

25 He expected his brethren to understand that God was granting them deliverance by his hand [taking it for granted that they would accept him]; but they did not understand.

26 Then on the next day he [e]suddenly appeared to some who were quarreling and fighting among themselves, and he urged them to make peace and become reconciled, saying, Men, you are brethren; why do you abuse and wrong one another?

27 Whereupon the man who was abusing his neighbor pushed [Moses] aside, saying, Who appointed you a ruler (umpire) and a judge over us?

28 Do you intend to slay me as you slew the Egyptian yesterday?

29 At that reply Moses sought safety by flight and he was an exile and an alien in the country of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.

30 And when forty years had gone by, there appeared to him in the wilderness (desert) of Mount Sinai an angel, in the flame of a burning bramblebush.

31 When Moses saw it, he was astonished and marveled at the sight; but when he went close to investigate, there came to him the voice of the Lord, saying,

32 I am the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob. And Moses trembled and was so terrified that he did not venture to look.

33 Then the Lord said to him, Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground and worthy of veneration.

34 Because I have most assuredly seen the abuse and oppression of My people in Egypt and have heard their sighing and groaning, I have come down to rescue them. So, now come! I will send you back to Egypt [as My messenger].

35 It was this very Moses whom they had denied (disowned and rejected), saying, Who made you our ruler (referee) and judge? whom God sent to be a ruler and deliverer and redeemer, by and with the [protecting and helping] hand of the Angel that appeared to him in the bramblebush.

36 He it was who led them forth, having worked wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea and during the forty years in the wilderness (desert).

37 It was this [very] Moses who said to the children of Israel, God will raise up for you a Prophet from among your brethren as He raised me up.

38 This is he who in the assembly in the wilderness (desert) was the go-between for the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai and our forefathers, and he received living oracles (words that still live) to be handed down to us.

39 [And yet] our forefathers determined not to be subject to him [refusing to listen to or obey him]; but thrusting him aside they rejected him, and in their hearts yearned for and turned back to Egypt.

40 And they said to Aaron, Make us gods who shall [be our leaders and] go before us; as for this Moses who led us forth from the land of Egypt—we have no knowledge of what has happened to him.

41 And they [even] made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice to the idol and made merry and exulted in the work of their [own] hands.

42 But God turned [away from them] and delivered them up to worship and serve the host (stars) of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets: Did you [really] offer to Me slain beasts and sacrifices for forty years in the wilderness (desert), O house of Israel?

43 [No!] You took up the tent (the portable temple) of Moloch and carried it [with you], and the star of the god Rephan, the images which you [yourselves] made that you might worship them; and I will remove you [carrying you away into exile] beyond Babylon.

44 Our forefathers had the tent (tabernacle) of witness in the wilderness, even as He Who directed Moses to make it had ordered, according to the pattern and model he had seen.

45 Our forefathers in turn brought it [this tent of witness] in [with them into the land] with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations which God drove out before the face of our forefathers. [So it remained here] until the time of David,

46 Who found grace (favor and spiritual blessing) in the sight of God and prayed that he might be allowed to find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.

47 But it was Solomon who built a house for Him.

48 However, the Most High does not dwell in houses and temples made with hands; as the prophet says,

49 Heaven [is] My throne, and earth the footstool for My feet. What [kind of] house can you build for Me, says the Lord, or what is the place in which I can rest?

50 Was it not My hand that made all these things? 51 **You stubborn and stiff-necked people, still heathen** and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are always [f]actively resisting the Holy Spirit. As your forefathers [were], so you [are and so you do]!

52 Which of the prophets did your forefathers not persecute? And they slew those who proclaimed beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, Whom you now have betrayed and murdered—

53 You who received the Law as it was ordained and set in order and delivered by angels, and [yet] you did not obey it!

54 Now upon hearing these things, they [the Jews] were cut to the heart and infuriated, and they ground their teeth against [Stephen].

55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit and controlled by Him, gazed into heaven and saw the glory (the splendor and majesty) of God, and Jesus standing at God's right hand;

56 And he said, Look! I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at God's right hand!

57 But they raised a great shout and put their hands over their ears and rushed together upon him.

58 Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him, and the witnesses placed their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59 And while they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, Lord Jesus, receive and accept and welcome my spirit!

60 And falling on his knees, he cried out loudly, Lord, fix not this sin upon them [lay it not to their charge]! And when he had said this, he fell asleep [g][in death].

Stephen's defense was the Old Testament: Stephen reminded them of their faithful patriarch, Abraham, and how God had led him from a pagan land into the land of Israel, where He made a covenant with him. He spoke of the journey of his people, through Joseph's sojourn in Egypt to their deliverance by Moses 400 years later. He brought to mind how Moses had met God in the wilderness of Midian in a burning bush, and he explained how God had empowered Moses to lead His people from idolatry and slavery to freedom and times of refreshing in the Promised Land.

Throughout his defense, he repeatedly reminded them of their continual rebellion and idolatry, in spite of the mighty works of God to which they were eyewitnesses, accusing them with their own history (Old Test), which only irritated them until they did not want to hear any more.

Note: (The law of Moses states that the sin of blasphemy deserves a death sentence, usually by stoning (Numbers 15:30-36)). Sensing that the crowd is turning violent and that he's running out of time, Stephen rapidly pulls everything together and relates the main point to his audience. His opponents rejected Jesus, Moses' promised prophet. They killed Jesus, just like their forefathers killed the prophets God sent throughout history. Stephen doesn't want to see the temple destroyed, but anyone who values the temple over the Messiah is an idolater (Acts 7:51-53).

Acts 7:51-53 AMPC

51 You stubborn and stiff-necked people, still heathen and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are always [a]actively resisting the Holy Spirit. As your forefathers [were], so you [are and so you do]!

52 Which of the prophets did your forefathers not persecute? And they slew those who proclaimed beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, Whom you now have betrayed and murdered—

53 You who received the Law as it was ordained and set in order and delivered by angels, and [yet] you did not obey it!

Just before these arrogant, unredeemed Jewish (religious leaders) followed the prescribed penalty and began stoning Stephen, Acts 7:55-56 records his final moments of earthly life, just before he stepped through the veil between heaven and earth:

Acts 7:55-56 AMPC

55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit and controlled by Him, gazed into heaven and saw the glory (the splendor and majesty) of God, and Jesus standing at God's right hand;

56 And he said, Look! I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at God's right hand!

The words of Colossians 3:2-3 could have been written about the life of Stephen, even though they are applicable to all believers today as well:

Colossians 3:2-3 AMPC

2 And set your minds and keep them set on what is above (the higher things), not on the things that are on the earth.

3 For [as far as this world is concerned] you have died, and your [new, real] life is hidden with Christ in God.

Stephen's life and even more so his death should be an example of how every believer should strive to live: committed to the Lord even in the face of death; faithful to preach the gospel boldly; knowledgeable of God's truth; and willing to be used by God for His plan and purpose. Stephen's testimony still stands as a light to a lost and dying world, as well as an accurate history of the children of Abraham.

In 2 Timothy 4 Paul is writing Timothy for pastors, preacher and teachers today. This is one of the layers/paths that parallel each other regarding preparing for the Time of The End.

2 Timothy 4 AMPC

1 I charge [you] in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, Who is to judge the living and the dead, and by (in the light of) His coming and His kingdom:

2 Herald and preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency [stand by, be at hand and ready], whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable. [Whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether it is welcome or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong.] And convince them, rebuking and correcting, warning and urging and encouraging them, being unflagging and inexhaustible in patience and teaching.

3 For the time is coming when [people] will not tolerate (endure) sound and wholesome instruction, but, having ears itching [for something pleasing and gratifying], they will gather to themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number, chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold,

4 *And will turn aside from hearing the truth and wander off into myths and man-made fictions.*

5 *As for you, be calm and cool and steady, accept and suffer unflinchingly every hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fully perform all the duties of your ministry.*

6 *For I am already about to be sacrificed [my life is about to be poured out as a drink offering]; the time of my [spirit's] release [from the body] is at hand and I will soon go free.*

7 *I have fought the good (worthy, honorable, and noble) fight, I have finished the race, I have kept (firmly held) the faith.*

8 *[As to what remains] henceforth there is laid up for me the [victor's] crown of righteousness [for being right with God and doing right], which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me and recompense me on that [great] day—and not to me only, but also to all those who have loved and yearned for and welcomed His appearing (His return).*

9 *Make every effort to come to me soon.*

10 *For Demas has deserted me for love of this present world and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens [has gone] to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.*

11 *Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very helpful to me for the ministry.*

12 *Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.*

13 *[When] you come, bring the cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, also the books, especially the parchments.*

14 *Alexander the coppersmith did me great wrongs. The Lord will pay him back for his actions.*

15 *Beware of him yourself, for he opposed and resisted our message very strongly and exceedingly.*

16 *At my first trial no one acted in my defense [as my advocate] or took my part or [even] stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them!*

17 *But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the [Gospel] message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was delivered out of the jaws of the lion.*

18 [And indeed] the Lord will certainly deliver and [a]draw me to Himself from every assault of evil. He will preserve and bring me safe unto His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen (so be it).

19 Give my greetings to Prisca and Aquila and to the household of Onesiphorus.

20 Erastus stayed on at Corinth, but Trophimus I left ill at Miletus.

21 Do hasten and try your best to come to me before winter. Eubulus wishes to be remembered to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren.

22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace (God's favor and blessing) be with you. Amen (so be it).