

"I am the vine, you are the branches"

A Fall from Righteousness



2 Timothy 3:1-9 says this: “But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.”

Paul paints a picture of the last days. Our question is this: are we in the last days? We are going to take a closer look at these verses, and then we will decide. In the last days, there will be difficulty. It seems as though all throughout history there has been difficulty of all sort, but Paul mentions these as proof of the end times.

1. Lovers of self. Now I suppose that there have been many people throughout history that have been lovers of themselves, like every ruler, Pharaoh, Caesar, Alexander the Great, Hitler just to name a few. But what about the everyday Joe? I would say in our modern-day world that most people have been thoughtful of others, but has that changed over the last century? The first commandment tells us that we are to only love God and our neighbor as ourselves. This is the greatest commandment (**Matthew 22:36**).

2. Lovers of money. We have seen over the last century many days of hardship like the Great Depression and the First and Second World Wars. But what

happened after this was a great revolution in manufacturing and technology, as well as a soaring boom in the stock market and corporate wages. These have impacted people to not only put themselves first, but at any cost to claw their way up the corporate ladder. Having to keep up with your neighbor even has a slogan, “Keeping up with the Jones’.” Yeshua (Jesus) tells us that we cannot serve two masters (**Matthew 6:24**).

3. Proud and arrogant. We have become so competitive that even parents are fighting at their childrens’ games, claiming that their child is better than another. We have become so braggadocious because of our pride and arrogance as a result of our love of self. James tells us that God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.

4. Abusive. Today we see such abuse of the elderly and animals and children and quite frankly everyone in so many ways and areas of life. It is terrible the things that people can bring themselves to do to another living being.

5. Disobedience to parents. Years ago, there was respect for not only our parents but for those who were your elders. The commandments tell us to honor our father and mother, but today we see children suing their parents and murdering them, disowning them, and mistreating them. As for our elderly parents, we drop them off in a nursing home and forget them.

6. Ungrateful. We are no longer grateful for what we have. Paul tells us to be content in all things and to rejoice in all situations, but today we complain about everything, and children, if they don’t get what they have asked for for Christmas, have a temper tantrum.

7. Unholy. The bible tells us that we are to be holy as He is holy. What happened to holiness? It is mocked and ridiculed in movies and on TV. A whole culture has turned their backs to those things that are holy and righteous and good.

8. Heartless. Yeshua tells us in **Matthew 24:12**, “Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.” What has happened today with people not caring about other people’s feelings? We are quick to judge and to slander. We don’t think about people as having feelings. There is no heart in the matter any more.

9. Unappeasable. Today we can never be satisfied. It is part of the fact that we are not content, because of our love for self and our love for money. Always having to have more, we have become so miserable that the only way to satisfy our feelings is to have more: a vicious cycle of worldliness.

10. Slanderous. Today if we don’t like someone, we character assassinate them. The commandments tell us not to bear false witness.

11. Without self control. We have seen the level of intensity grow with this list. Everything today is supersized, no matter if it is drinking, eating, or pleasure of one sort or another. People are out of control with their words and actions.

12. Brutal. As we watch the nightly news we see this level of cruelty which has become so brutal and unthinkable.

13. Not loving good. **Isaiah 5:20** tells us, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

14. Treacherous. We live in a dangerous world. We are a society of laws but we have become lawless.

15. Reckless. We do things today and we never think of the consequences, because for many there are no consequence. We turn a blind eye and say we must be forgiving and we twist God’s word. Actions have consequences no matter if we forgive or not. There is a penalty for sin.

16. Swollen with conceit. This is not just pride or arrogance, but being swollen like a river which goes beyond its banks and causes a flood, we have become conceited in our actions and words.

17. Lovers of pleasures instead of lovers of God. Church attendance has fallen because so many people would rather be doing something else than going to church. People today feel that they can sit home and watch a TV preacher who candy coats a gospel. It’s all about self-gratification and self-righteousness.

18. Having the appearance of godliness but denying the power. We see today that people’s self-righteousness is equated with being godly. Celebrities raise funds for different victims and we hail them as heros, and yet these same people ridicule and mock Christianity and God Himself in all His power. The true power He gives to His people when they follow His commandments.

In **Mark 7:20-23** Yeshua tells us, “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person.” So the question for us all is, “What’s in your heart?”

Paul tells us in **1 Timothy 4:1-2**, “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own

conscience as with a branding iron.”

Hosea 4:1-2 says, “Hear the word of the Lord, you Israelites, because the Lord has a charge against you who live in the land: there is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land. There is only cursing lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.”

We surely are in the last days and we need to heed the warning in **Matthew 24:42-44**, “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

Finally let’s take to heart the parable Yeshua speaks to us in **Matthew 24:46-51**, “Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that evil slave says in his heart, ‘My master is not coming for a long time,’ and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

In **Revelation 3:14-22**, Yeshua speaks about the church, and He says this about the church of Laodicea, which many scholars feel is the end time church: “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: ‘These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, “I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.” But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the church.”

How do we avoid this great apostasy, this fall from grace? We must get off the fence. We must take charge of our walk with God. We must follow in the footsteps of our Messiah. We must be committed to His cause, which is His kingdom. We must be devoted to Him by loving Him with all our heart and life and strength, staying in His Word and keeping His commandments, crucifying the sinful nature

and making a conscious effort in doing the opposite of what you just read above. God will not turn a deaf ear to those who cry out to Him and sincerely want His help. It is a spiritual battle and each person must fight the good fight, but the one we serve is a mighty warrior and He is mighty to save, so we can have the hope of Salvation.

Guard your eyes and your ears and your hearts and look only into the Master's face, and never turn to the right or to the left, and he will bring us to Him and we will one day enter into His kingdom forever.