



EXPOSITORY
SERMONS
AND
MEDITATIONS
in the Scriptures

April 2026

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MEDITATIONS IN 1 TIMOTHY

April 2026

MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 3: 16

For Sunday, 5th April 2026

THIS 3rd chapter of 1 Timothy closes with what proves to be a early creed, the sum of the teaching Paul gave to the churches, and was now reminding Timothy of. He calls it the mystery of godliness, which is beyond question. It focuses on the person and ministry and victorious salvation which our Lord Jesus Christ won and worked when he was on earth. It is an itemising of faith and belief which, perhaps, does not immediately prove straight forward, so let us consider each item together, praying that the Holy Spirit will make the doctrine clear.

This creed centres on the truth of Jesus Christ. This is made clear in verse in verse 13. The first clause is 'He (Jesus Christ) appeared in a body'. This plainly refers to the incarnation, where Jesus took on human flesh, and became a human being. In Romans 8: 3 we read that God worked salvation by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh in order to be a sin offering. This declares that Jesus Christ was the eternal divine Son of God, and that he became truly human as well in the likeness of sinful man. This means that Jesus was truly human, but with out the sinful nature which we all inherit from Adam. Thus Jesus was the Lamb without blemish, the second Adam, to make atonement for our sin in our place. So this clause makes clear that Jesus was one person with two natures – both divine and human.

The second clause is 'was vindicated by by the Spirit'. This surely indicates that the Holy Spirit, throughout the earthly life of Jesus, clearly testified to the truth concerning Jesus both as to his person, and to his atoning death. At his baptism we read in Matthew 3: 16 -17 the heavens opened, and John the Baptist saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. Then God spoke audibly, described as a voice from heaven declaring 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased'. Here God himself by the Holy Spirit testified to the truth about the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, making clear that although he was plainly a man, he was also the eternal divine Son of God. Here, right at the beginning of his ministry, Jesus was vindicated by the Holy Spirit concerning both the truth of his person, but also the truth concerning the purpose of his incarnation to be the propitiation for our sins.

Though this creedal statement is in six short sentences, they were the basis of the fuller teaching of the apostle concerning our Lord Jesus Christ which we have in all his other epistles.

The next clause states that our Lord Jesus was seen by angels. It is a fact made clear in the Gospels that angels continually ministered to him. We have this when the angels came to strengthen Jesus after his supreme trial of temptation by Satan. We see Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane, being strengthened by angels in his anguish when he prayed to the Father as he faced the terrible ordeal of the cross, where he would be forsaken by his Father and where he suffered the whole wrath of God in receiving the whole and just punishment of God for the sin of the world. This anguish, which the angels strengthened Jesus to perform, was not only the physical suffering, but being forsaken by God, which constituted the whole suffering of eternal punishment in hell, revealed by the cry of dereliction on the cross where Jesus cried 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me.' This being seen by angels was clear throughout his earthly life as they wonderingly viewed the glory of his massive task of working the salvation for the elect.

The fourth clause is more easy to understand. He 'was preached amongst the nations'. This was evident in the teaching ministry of Jesus

during his ministry before his crucifixion, and plainly evident in the preaching of the apostles, after Jesus had victoriously won salvation for sinners, and returned to the heavenly glory, to make intercession for God's elect by presenting his perfect work before the Father for their acceptance and the gift of eternal life.

The penultimate clause tells us 'He was believed on in the world'. How blessed is this truth. Christ's saving work was sufficient to save every person in the world throughout time, and is and was preached as the possession of all who believe in our Lord Jesus as their Saviour. However Jesus explained the truth about fallen humanity in John 3: 19 'This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil'. But God steps in to alter this terrible human condition. Ephesians 1: 4 tells us that God chose, elected, a host of fallen humanity before the foundation of the world. And in John's Gospel chapter 17 we read that these were given to Jesus to save, and the testimony of Jesus in the prayers is that he testified that he had lost none of these who had been given to him, and so by His Spirit in time we who have been chosen to such eternal blessing have been brought to genuine conviction of sin, true and heartfelt repentance, and to a saving faith in Jesus as our sin-bearer and Saviour, and raised to new life in him.

What a glorious truth the last clause is. Those who have been given grace to believe 'was taken to glory'. Glory, praise and thanksgiving to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit for this glorious inheritance of the saints.



MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 4: 1-5 (part 1)

For Sunday, 12th April 2026

In this letter Paul is giving instruction to Timothy concerning what he should be concerned about as a good minister and teacher in the church of God. He has taught about the conditions for ministry in the church. He has given the substance of the doctrine which a minister should preach and teach in the church. But there is more to being a faithful Minister and Pastor and that is to protect the people of God from the errors with which Satan continually seeks to infect the church. In these opening verses of chapter 4 Paul speaks of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in this essential work of a Pastor in the protection of the church from error. This essential part of the ministry Paul declares in verse 6. The true Pastor exposes error creeping into the life and belief of the church fellowship.

In opening this great subject Paul speaks of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the warning given by the Holy Spirit. This ministry of the Holy Spirit is from God as taught by Jesus Christ in John 16. In verse 13 we read 'But when he, the spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.'

During the earthly life of Jesus he taught the truths of God and the truths concerning salvation which he came to provide, but the disciples in their own strength and wisdom were not able to understand, let alone teach, what all Jesus had done in his life, death, resurrection, and what he ascended into heaven to perform. So Jesus tells his disciples in John 14 to 16, that he was going to send the Holy Spirit to address this lack.

We read briefly in these first 5 verses of 1 Timothy 4 that this illumination and understanding would be given by the Holy Spirit. This

promise of Jesus was fulfilled at Pentecost, and which has continued ever since then in the church. Paul tells Timothy that church members would abandon the the faith. So the ministry of the Holy Spirit is twofold. Firstly, as we read in John's Gospel, giving knowledge of the truth in order that the apostles would be able to preach, but also that they may be able to write the truth down in the New Testament Scriptures. Also to have understanding of the truth of all that Jesus wrought in his life, death, resurrection and full and correctly to teach and proclaim the truth, and so keep his church from error. This is what Paul is speaking about in these opening verses of chapter 4 of this first letter to Timothy.

Paul describes this problem as being caused by deceiving spirits. What Paul is telling Timothy, and the church since then, that the devil by his army of evil spirits, brings deception into the minds of members of the church by causing them to follow deceiving spirits and the things taught by demons.

It is one the terrible success of Satan and his demons that he has succeeded in these later times to deceive people who claim to be believers in the church. This work of Satan began even in the time of the apostles, and has gone on ever since. Paul and others wrote their letters because of this work of Satan. Timothy is being warned and taught that he, and all pastors in the church, must be aware of this menace, and be able to counteract this work of Satan.

Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit spoke clearly to him and the other Apostles. The words he uses here in 1 Timothy are 'The Spirit clearly says'. In other words the Apostles were left in no doubt about the teaching given them by the Holy Spirit. We have here clearly that when the Apostles wrote the Epistles they were clearly declaring the divine truth of God.

This warns us that present day criticism of the Bible is the work of deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Paul makes clear that this criticism is from the devil. The Bible criticism which has been going on now for over century is from critics deceived by Satan and demons,

and think that in the pride of their intellect they are being very clever and wise as they criticise the Bible, but the real fact is that their thoughts come not from cleverness but from Satan.

Paul goes on to say that the reality is that such Bible criticism is abandoning the faith and following deceiving spirits. The cleverness of Satan is seen how powerfully he has made his deception to be the real thing. By this he has kept people from the truth that saves their souls, and gives them new life, and reconciliation with God.

This powerful work of Satan is so very evident in the visible church today. People in our churches are being led away from the truth to believe that they are dwelling in the love of God, and that when they die, they will be accepted into God's heavenly kingdom. When they are taught the Gospel that all people are sinners and have fallen short of the glory of God, and need a Saviour, they revolt against the truth that saves with anger. In this culture congregations are dwindling, and God is evidently withdrawing his presence and blessing.

MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY **1 Timothy 4: 1-5 (Part 2)** For Sunday, 19th April 2026

WE have dealt with these words in a general way in the previous meditation, but now let us examine this testimony of Paul to Timothy in more depth. For this let us look more carefully at verse 2.

This verse says 'Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.' These are words by which Paul describes those who have parted from the Scriptures and the teaching of the apostles. This is description of those who criticise or diminish the plain teaching of the Bible in one way or another.

What is an example of such attitude to the Bible. One such example is found in the word 'myth' which is used to describe any part of the Bible that is felt unacceptable to modern thought and unbelief. One example of this is found in Mark 4: 35-41. This the historical account of an incident where the disciples and Jesus were crossing the sea of Galilee and a fierce storm began, and the boat was being in danger of being sunk. Jesus is sleeping in the boat because of tiredness, and the disciples in their terror woke him up and said to him 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown'. Jesus wakes up, chides the disciples for their lack of faith in him. Then he rebuked the wind and said to the waves "Quiet! Be still!", and the storm immediately ceased, and instead of huge waves threatening to sink the ship, the sea became calm immediately like a mill pond.

The text is plainly a record of an historical fact. It is given as an historical truth, but modern pride of thinking can't believe that the storm was stilled in this remarkable way by Jesus. Because of this they regard this account as a 'myth', by which is meant that the happening could not possibly be true, but was given as a story to explain some spiritual truth held in the story. By this fantasy of modern pride the divine nature of Jesus is rubbished, and the wonder of the incarnation destroyed. And the omnipotence of God over all he has created denied.

Paul calls this sophistication a hypocritical lie, and those who declare it as hypocritical liars. How offensive this is to modern pride. They find such direct speaking utterly offensive. But Paul goes on to explain how such hypocrisy is found possible. He describes such people as having their conscience seared with a hot iron. In other words he describes a conscience utterly burned to death and destroyed, so all the devil's lies are accepted as wise and intellectually the only way such records can be described. What this attitude and thought is in fact making God, the Holy Spirit, a liar, and what God has said by the Holy Spirit in the Bible as intellectually foolish. Such attitude is nothing short of blaspheme.

As we go on in these verse we find Paul describing the teaching of these hypocritical liars in the time of the apostles. They taught that

marriage was forbidden, and certain foods should not be eaten and were forbidden to Christians, even though God had clearly declared them good.

This transgressing the true teaching of the apostles was a departing from the word of God which we may well find ridiculous today, but in certain areas in the visible church today similar rules are pronounced as living a more holy life which gains merit with God, and commended.

The work of Satan and demons in the church today is found in different ways. Satan is a master of subterfuge, and knows exactly the way to destroy faith and produce error in the church in any age. He knows also, better than we do, how to play on unbelief and human pride of intellect, and use modern thinking concerning the universe, to promote his lies and errors in the church.

When we consider the way of error introduced in the time of the apostles, we can see that it is in essence the preaching of works for a life acceptable to God. This was the way of the visible church in New Testament times, and expressed perhaps most clearly in the teaching and example of the Pharisees. This error infected the church in those early times as seen in the teaching Paul describes in these verses before us.

The devil knows how successful such teaching can be, because it was the covenant introduced in Eden. The teaching boils down to 'do this, and live' fail in doing and you fall short of what makes a person commendable to God. When Adam failed to keep the one prohibition given by God in Eden, he brought condemnation of all humanity. This way of works for salvation is impossible since, even though natural human thinking is bound by it. Christ brought in a new covenant – the covenant of grace – where he fulfilled all the demands of the covenant of works in himself, both in its precepts and in its punishment, and this covenant of grace promises forgiveness and eternal life for all who with deep sorrow for falling short of God's holiness, put their trust in Jesus as their sin-bearer and Saviour. Blessed covenant – grace abounding

even to the chief of sinners. This is the grace of God taught by the apostles, which Paul taught, and commends to all true ministers of the Gospel.

MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 4: 6-8

For Sunday, 26th April 2026

THE teaching of Paul to Timothy in these next three verses follows on directly from the teaching of verses 1 to 5. Having warned Timothy as a minister in the church to be careful of the devil's devices, he now goes on to positive teaching as to how Timothy can be a true and faithful minister. This instruction is for all of us who have been called into the ministry of the church of God.

In verses 1-5 Paul has implied that the faithful minister of the Gospel needs to know that truth and teach it, but also must expose error which Satan brings into the church. He opens these next verse with the words 'if you point out these things (false teaching and error), you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus. He then follows this by telling us what enables a minister to be such a good minister.

So a true and faithful minister of Christ is one who has been brought up in the truths of the faith. This indicates how important it is that a minister should be well taught in the doctrines of the Bible, because only if he is he, will he be able to discern the lies of Satan which he is constantly seeking to infiltrate into the family of God. If a minister does not know and believe, from the heart, the doctrines taught in the Bible, and has firmly believed them, he or she will be easily misled by Satan, and will not be able to see Satan's lies when they appear. The minister must

have courage to stand firm to the truth when so much of the visible church laughs at such faithfulness to the Gospel.

In verse 7 Paul instructs Timothy as to how he should act to be faithful to the truth. In the first place he must avoid all that is contrary to the truth. He must have nothing to do with myths used to pervert the truth, which calls them old wives tales, even though the ones who promote the myths declare they are following true wisdom and understanding of what God has said in the Bible. This means that a good minister of Christ will deny and oppose all these godless deceptions of Satan vigilantly.

Paul next instructs Timothy as to how he can achieve this godliness. He says to Timothy 'rather train yourself to be godly'. How is this to be done? True godliness is not only knowing the truth, but also believing it from the heart, and living by it. Godliness is forming our life on the truth which we have diligently sought to understand and apply to our lives.

There can be no end to the need for the ministers of Christ to continually study the Word of God, and by earnest prayer to God, seek to understand and live by God's word. On top of this the true and faithful minister must seek the ministry of the Holy Spirit for the gift of God to be able to clearly and cogently preach and teach the truth. It is perhaps useless for the minister to be well taught in the truth of the Gospel, but unable to clearly and usefully to make the truth known to those he teaches. Further, if the truth is to be received by the people, the minister must truly be seen to be living the life of the truth, and adorning in his or her life the doctrines taught.

Paul ends this instruction in verse 8 with wise counsel concerning living in health both of body and soul.

Paul speaks of the excellence of exercise for the body to keep the body healthy. Healthy living and physical exercise is essential to be strong for living the ministers life. However Paul tells Timothy that although bodily health is essential, still more essential is health of the soul.

The devil is quite content for the minister and indeed every believer to know the truth. The devil's concentration is on the health of the soul. If Satan can bring sickness and weakness into the soul he knows he has won the battle, and destroyed the ministers effectiveness.

The truth for all believers is that the body is for this life, but the soul is for the life to come. So for believers, and even more for the ministers, if the soul is not born again and raised to new life in Christ, however he or she succeeds in this life, eternity will be lost in everlasting death.

A minister of Christ is of no use if his or her soul is not alive to God, and already living in the heavenlies with Christ. Paul speaks of this in his words, 'godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come'. Jesus spoke of this so forcefully when he says what profit it is to win the whole world and lose your soul. We may be very successful in this life and be praised of others, but if we lose our souls it will mean everlasting death in hell.

How much worse will it be for a minister to gain the praise of men for his ministry, and attain heights in the visible church, when his ministry has departed from the truth and led people astray.



GOD'S WORD FROM HOSEA

Number 30

GOD'S VIEW AND ACTION TOWARDS IDOLATRY

“(v.5) Throw out your calf-idol, O Samaria! My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of purity? (v.6) They are from Israel! This calf - a craftsman has made it; It is not God. It will be broken in pieces, that calf of Samaria. (v.7) They sow the wind and reap a whirlwind. The stalk has no head; it will produce no flour. Were it to yield grain, foreigners would swallow it up. (v.8) Israel is swallowed it up; now she is among the nations like a worthless thing.”

Hosea 8: 5-8

THESE four verses deal with God's view of idolatry and his response to it. The first two of the ten commandments given by God to Israel through Moses begins with the sin of idolatry. Because these two commandments come first in the Decalogue, it shows their importance in the view of God, and the seriousness of breaking them. Yet the breaking of them, and the disobedience concerning them, is treated very lightly in the visible church. In these verses God responds and reacts to the serious idolatry which he found in Israel in the days of Hosea.

There seems to be an opinion in the visible church that this great sin is not committed today because we do not bow down to objects of gold or wood or stone. When images of one kind

or another are introduced into the church, this is not considered as idolatry but aids to worship, even though veneration and worship is given before them. In the second commandment God specifically mentions the evil of making images of him and bowing down to them. In this way the command of God is ignored and emptied of its truth.

Even when there is no making of physical images for worship, and claiming that idolatry is absent, yet it is forgotten that images and idols can be formed in the mind, which reduce the reality of God into an idol. This is just as much abominated by God, and condemned by the first two commandments, as making physical images. The question arises as to how this is perpetrated. It is perpetrated when the revelation given by God in the Bible is rejected by human wisdom for the opinion that there is a more perfect view of God, and the Bible revelation is rejected on the grounds that it is ignorance and superstition of humanity in the Old Testament time. This evaluation is carried through to the New Testament. The apostles are denigrated as men of their time who were devoid of the wisdom man has achieved in modern times.

The words of God given through Hosea speak of the terrible sin of idolatry in Israel at that time. This is how the Bible revelation given by God consistently views the rejection of its revelation concerning idolatry. This condemnation of idolatry in Israel is as relevant today and in every period of time. The Bible records God's wisdom. Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 1: 19-21 the truth about the supposed excellence of human wisdom. By human wisdom God can not be known; he can only be known when he reveals himself in sovereign grace and love, and this he has done in the Bible. This fact we must hold firmly in our minds as we approach the word of God declared in these verses before us.

Verse 5 of Hosea 8 records a direct and imperative command of God to Israel. The command is 'Throw out your calf-idol, O Samaria'. When Jeroboam 1 separated the ten tribes from Judah and Benjamin, and because he did not want these tribes to go to Jerusalem to worship, he made two calves of gold for the ten tribes to continue worship. This is what Hosea is referring to here.

The command is direct and imperative. By this command God was expressing his horror and displeasure at this practice. They may have commenced worship before the calves in a spirit of worshipping God, and Jeroboam might have justified it in this way, but it had degenerated, as it always does, in treating and believing the calves were gods. But whatever the case it was a direct disobedience of the command of God, which was an offence to God.

God expresses his response to this idolatry. God's response is given in the next phrase 'My anger burns against them'. How modern wisdom revolts at this and declares in human pride and arrogance that it is unacceptable for God, who is love, to be angry. This shows the foolishness of the wisdom of the world. They think of anger in terms of human anger of losing control. God's anger is not executed in this way. God's anger is his firm response to disobedience. God's anger and wrath against idolatry is a passionless expression of his holiness. God acts according to his character as it is revealed to us in the whole of the Bible. God is unable to overlook any transgression from his purity and holiness. His anger is nothing like our sinful human passion. When people criticise the truth that God expresses anger against anything that falls short of his holiness, they are showing the sinfulness of their being, and expressing their dominion to Satan as the god of this world. When we read here that God's anger burns, it is expressing the horror of God against human pride and arrogance that reduces

his purity and holiness to the level of human imagination and preference.

Next next phrase in this 5th verse is very telling and revealing of the true nature of idolatry and its expression of thinking of God in human sinful terms. The words of Hosea express this 'How long will they be incapable of purity'.

Idolatry in all its forms, whether physical or mental, is a product of impurity, which all humanity are born with through Adam's sin and choosing to believe Satan rather than God. All of us are born with this impurity, which can only be overcome by new birth through the grace of God giving the repentant soul the gift of faith in Jesus Christ as their sin-bearer and Saviour. Where idolatry is found it is a sign of a person still abiding in death and under the dominion of Satan. In Christ we are a new creation, and translated from the kingdom of this world and Satan, into the kingdom of God and heaven. This new life, as Paul teaches in Ephesians 4: 24, is created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. This new principle of holy life in God bows down and worships God in the truth and completeness of the love and holiness of his being as revealed in the whole of the Bible. Anything less than this is impure and an expression of sin. Sin at its reality is setting ourselves above God in thought and action. This is why idolatry expresses the very heart of sin and impurity and rebellion against God. The sinful nature which still remains part of us while we live in this life and is in conflict with our new person in Christ, which our now real self can't approve, and so we are unable to remain in any thinking of action which is in conflict our new life of purity in Christ.

The first sentence from verse 6 expresses the truth of all who embrace any form of idolatry. The sentence is 'They are from Israel'. The action and thinking in the worship of the golden calves came from Israel, that is from the people in rebellion

against God, and expressed the sinfulness and impurity of their inner being.

The horrific nature of this action of the people of Israel is declared in the next words of this 6th verse. The calf was plainly not God. Why because it had been made by human craftsman. How plainly this expresses the folly and arrogance of idolatry. It is not God. It is sinful fallen human beings setting themselves above God, and seeking to reduce God into the image of their preference.

This is the heart of idolatry. It is an expression of the sinful heart of fallen humanity which desires to make God in an image of their preference which fit the way they would like to be and live; which in turn is an expression of the desire to have a god which does not interfere with the way they prefer to live. The reason why idolatry is so universal is because fallen human nature prefers a god who does not interfere their thinking or way of living. When God reveals himself as he is in his holiness, the sinfulness of humanity turns against it violently. This reaction is seen particularly in the anger expressed by people when they are told they are sinners in the sight of God. They do not want God to express displeasure against the way of life they are leading. They feel insulted.

God's reaction to this arrogance is expressed in the last phrase of verse 6. 'It will be broken in pieces, that calf of Samaria. This expresses the action of judgement executed by God against this calf idol. He says he will destroy it.

What this means is that an idol, whether physical or mental, brings God's destruction of it. This, in its final form, is being cast into hell. Satan is always arguing that nothing seems to happen people who follow his thoughts and lies, so any idea that idolatry will be punished finally is a myth to frighten people. Satan made Adam and Eve to believe this lie, and the

result we know in the fact that God executed his punishment, and death has reigned since Adam, and will remain if the love, mercy and love of God seen in the gift of His Son as Saviour is rejected.

Satan's lie is so dangerous. In this world of time there is always time to repent, but when time ends in eternity there will be no escape. Hell is forever. How Satan delights to bring men and women into the eternal misery he is destined for; and how he works continually to deceive and hide this hatred and malice from those he has duped.

The next two verse 7 & 8 are verses that describe the certainty and devastating nature of God's judgement against all who despise this warning against idolatry, and go their own way. They speak of the impotence of sinful humanity to stand against God.

The first phrase spoken by God concerning his omnipotence over sinful people says 'They sow the wind, and reap a whirlwind'. The words 'They sow a wind' are a trifle enigmatic. However with a little thought the meaning is clear as we see it in the context. So the words 'They sow a wind' must express the way people who refuse to heed the warnings God gives in the Bible of their rebellion against God and his commandments, setting themselves above God. The wind is the way the words of God are blown away in their thinking - they sow the wind of rebellion in the arrogance of their corrupted reason and preference in living.

The response of God is contained in the words 'and reap a whirlwind'. However much people set themselves above and against God; and however much they despise the way of God expressed in his revelation of his holiness and commands in the Bible; and however powerful that opposition to God is expressed; and however successful it is to gain the following of

others; and however much the Bible revelation is treated with contempt; yet the response of God's anger and judgement, in the end will sweep the opposition away. Those who have raised the opposition, and those who have followed them in this opposition, God's force will be far more powerful than the opposition against him. The wind, however powerful, will reap an even more dreadful opposition from God before the wind of rebellion will have no strength to oppose.

In history of the world effected by Satan's powerful wind of opposition may appear to be invincible. In the present Satan's power seems to be all consuming, but this is a mirage of deception promoted by Satan. The reaction in judgement of God may seem to be long held back, and seem to show God to be powerless, but his promised wrath will eventually arrive, and no power of man or Satan will be able to stand against God. The word of God speaking of final judgement will most surely come. The Bible is clear that whatever happens in time, a time will come when Christ will return to judge the living and the dead, and a great separation will take place. This is described by Jesus when he speaks in the images of wheat and chaff, and sheep and goats, describing the final separation of the righteous from the unrighteous. In these parables Jesus speaks of the chaff being consumed by unquenchable fire, and the wheat being gathered into God's barn, which is emblem of heaven and eternal life.

The rest of verse 7 continues this declaration, and looks at it in the stages of time. The image here is of sowing wheat that does not develop and produce the seed from which flour is made. Then goes on to say that if there is a harvest of grain, it will not help, because an enemy will come and destroy it or carry it away.

Verse 8 speaks figuratively of how this is expressed in the life of Israel, where in time Israel was bereft of God's blessing and

became a worthless impotent thing in the face of the enemies all around.

Has all this complaint of God and its promise of Judgement have anything to say to the church today? There is no doubt that it has a very serious message for the church today!

The visible church today is showing as much departure from the word of God as Israel did in the days of Hosea. There is a denial of this, just as Israel despised the word of God's warning in the days of Hosea. God was very patient with Israel in the days of Hosea. Through Hosea God spoke directly to Israel about his displeasure at the way they were living in turning away from his holy word, and the message of Hosea. God's promise of judgement then, and his power to execute it, is seen in the history which followed in Israel, which ended in their final destruction in the days of the last king of Israel, Hoshea.

This same syndrome is plain in the visible church today. The Bible, God's Holy word, still declares the warning of God. The same arrogance and failure is seen in the church today as it occurred in the time of Hosea, and later. Yet the Bible is treated with contempt. In arrogance the visible church declares that the Bible may contain the word of God, which by human wisdom can be discerned, but much of the Bible is irrelevant and nonsense in the light of the advance of human knowledge in this present time.

In spite of the fact that the visible church, except for the exception of where the Bible is held as the infallible word of God in its entirety, has declined in influence and respect. The image of the wheat having no growth to produce flour, and where there is some growth this is carried away and swallowed up, is seen in the diminishing congregations, and the diminishing of resources, and the church being exposed in

lacking to uphold the righteousness of God and being humbled drastically.

Like Israel, the visible church today refuses to appreciate this decline. It still believes it can overcome its problems by human reason and worldly activity. It proudly rejects any idea of God's displeasure at its progress, and looks down on today's prophets, just as Israel despised the word and warning of its prophets sent by God.

There is no way forward other than genuine repentance and turning back in faithfulness to the whole of God's word, and in the light of this, crying to God for his mercy to be poured out again. Then there is the hope that God will send his grace in revival, and not bring an end to the visible church expressed in its failing denominations.

APRIL 2026



GOD'S MESSAGE IN 2 PETER

Expository Sermons in the 2nd Epistle of Peter

ETERNAL GOD

"(v.8)But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand year are like a day. (v.9)The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

2 Peter 3: 8-9

AS a good and caring apostle and pastor Peter now deals with doubts and fears in the minds and hearts of believers which have risen because the promise of Christ's return had still not yet been realised in the church at that time. It is Satan's constant purpose to cause doubts in God's people, and bring questions and distrust in the minds of God's people. We find him executing this purpose in the days of the apostles, as he does in the lives of believers in the present. This viciousness of Satan brings misery to believers, so this teaching of the apostle in these two verses surely become a strong tower.

The way the apostle deals with this activity of Satan is to remind the believers of his time, and us today, of the truth and reality of God. God is eternal. He has no beginning and no end. He lives in an eternal present. All the history and future of the world is known to him all the time. He is the author of all things. He is eternally sovereign over all his creation, whether in the spiritual realm of angels, good and bad; and in the realm of time in our universe of time. He is creator of all including time in which we live, and move, and have our existence. The end

of time and the beginning and all in between is known and ordered by him. Satan and his satellites in the spiritual realms are all under his control. We have this revealed in the two opening chapters of the book of Job, where we see that Satan has no power unless it comes from the purpose of God. For us this is so hard to understand and accept, but this is part of the eternity and omnipotence of God. God exists outside of time. All time is known and ordered by him.

This truth of the eternity of God is the one thing Peter exhorts us not to forget. He makes this clear in an amazingly simple way. He reminds his readers that to God a thousand years is but a day, and day as a thousand years.

This fact is so plainly evident in the history of the Bible. God promised the Saviour at the moment of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, and there putting all humanity under the dominion of Satan. The promise is found in Genesis 3: 15 which reads 'And I will put enmity between you and the woman. And between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel'.

Here God is speaking to the serpent who is plainly Satan. Satan is triumphing because he has achieved dominion over all humanity. God promises him that he will send another human being, which Paul identifies for us as the second Adam and representative of a new human race, and makes plain to Satan that his victory and triumph over all humanity will be terminated when this second Adam is given and born, and that this second Adam would crush Satan's head, though Satan would strike his heel in the process. Here is the prophecy and promise by God of providing Jesus as the almighty Saviour who would save his people from Satan's power, and who would at a second coming cause the final overthrow of Satan at the end of time. When Christ came as the second Adam, Satan struck his heel in all the suffering Jesus had to endure, but the 'seed',

even our Lord Jesus Christ, God promised would crush Satan's head, which indicates the overthrow of all Satan's plans and power, and the delivery of the redeemed humanity which God had chosen before the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13: 8).

Now God made this promise, but it was not fulfilled in its first part until over 4000 years had past, when Christ was born and brought about eternal salvation for all who believe on him. We are still waiting after more than 2000 years for Christ's final 'crushing' of Satan's head, when he returns to judge the living and the dead. We can hold fast to the fact that what God promises he will always perform. Just as he kept his promise concerning the coming of Jesus Christ, the second Adam, who would be victorious unlike the failure of the first Adam, so all believers can be assured that the promise of Christ's return to overthrow Satan forever would also be performed. As the promise of Christ's first coming was realised at God's eternal purpose in time, so his return to finally overthrow Satan will be kept even if in time we have to wait another 4000 or more years.

We are God's people of faith when we believe on and in Jesus as our Saviour from sin and death, and this faith is our fortress as we wait for Christ's return and the creation of the new heaven and earth in which evil and Satan will have no part. This was the way God's elect people have always lived by faith with total assurance and confidence in spite of all the misery of the assaults of Satan. We have this made so clear in the history of Abraham, who was assaulted by Satan and defeated many times, but eternally safe in the arms of Jesus. The Bible makes this plain in so many ways. We have this made clear in the record of this victory of faith in Hebrews 11, and the triumph of the faithful recorded in the book of Revelation. (Revelation 13: 8).

Peter continues his pastoral and apostolic assurance in verse 9. He has already made clear in verse 8 the timeless eternal purpose of God and its certainty. He continues this assurance in this next verse, verse 9.

We may feel God is slow in fulfilling his promises, and through Satan's lying activity many have been overcome to believe that God has failed in keeping his promises. Peter answers this feeling which Satan so cunningly forces into the minds of Christ's believing people.

Peter affirms that God is not slow in keeping his promises as we understand slowness. To us, in the prison of time, may well be tempted to feel that God is so very slow in fulfilling his promises. This is how the understanding of the matter of time envelopes us. Over 4000 years to us is a very long time indeed. But for God dwelling in eternity it had happened already, and its certainty never in doubt. The moment the promise of Genesis 3: 15 was announced, in the eternity of God it had already been accomplished. There was never any doubt of its certainty because God is eternal.

God does understand the limitations we are under being controlled by time, and Peter helps us to embrace this loving understanding of this truth about God in the next phrases.

Peter's first statement is that God is patient with us. He hears our questions; he is patient with our doubts; he totally understands our difficulties; and in a real sense takes them into account, and so never gives up on us whom he has called into faith in Jesus and the promises that are found in Jesus. There can be no doubt that Abraham faced this difficulty of trust. God had promised Abraham and his wife Sarah that he would give them a son in order that his promise would be kept and preserved. Abraham and Sarah waited until, humanly speaking, it was impossible through old age for Sarah to

become pregnant. In his faltering faith Abraham resorted to human wisdom, and this was to resort to have a son by Sarah's maid, and Ishmael was born. Abraham loved Ishmael and felt the promise of God would be fulfilled through him. God was patient with his difficulty to believe the promise, and still gave Abraham and Sarah a Son, Isaac, which was God keeping faithful to his promise. Even though Abraham's faith failed, God was patient with him and never cast him off.

This patience of God never failed throughout all the doubts, failings and sins of the people of Israel, and in God's time, which for God was but a moment, Christ was born, and according to the eternal purpose of God fulfilled the promise of God in Genesis 3: 15.

Peter then makes clear that the promise in Christ for salvation is secure in the words 'not wanting anyone to perish'. This is a reference to those chosen for salvation before the foundation of the world. This is expressed so clearly in Romans 8: 28-30.

This certainty is seen even in the multiplicity of the failures and sins of the chosen. David is only one example. He failed in faith. He failed in sinfulness which some in the pride of self-righteousness condemn outright because of the terrible nature of his sinful action. In spite of this David was preserved as a chosen child of God, and this preservation has been preserved for the multitudes which no one can number who are in this promise of God.

It is God's purpose that his promise in Christ for those people he gave to Christ, and whom Christ declared that he had lost none, should never fail and these chosen and saved loved ones of God come to genuine repentance.

This repentance is never erased throughout earthly life. Satan has achieved in many of the chosen of God great defeat and

sinful action. What Satan is totally unable to do is to keep them in his dominion, or sever them from the powerful and eternal protective purpose of God. This absolute certainty is so clearly asserted in the words of Romans 8: 28-30 'And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

There is no doubt that God's chosen vary in vast degree in their living, from much domination of the world to great sanctity of life. There is no doubt that Lot was desperately captivated by the attractions of the world, but he is still described in the New Testament as a righteous soul. Others are clearly victorious over the world, the flesh and the devil. All have been given the grace of repentance, and even in the worst failures, this repentance always returns and remains and is victoriously granted unto life eternal.

All this testimony of Scripture is no excuse for worldliness and sin. This testimony is simply the assurance that because of the sovereign grace of God, God will never cease to work genuine and sincere repentance to fill the heart of those he has chosen. Apart from this sovereign choice of God no one would be saved. This is why the perseverance of the saints remains true.

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