



EXPOSITORY
SERMONS
AND
MEDITATIONS
in the Scriptures

May 2026

Written and printed by
Georgina Everingham

MEDITATIONS IN 1 TIMOTHY

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MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 4: 9-10 (Part 1)

For Sunday, 3rd May 2026

This verse is one of those treasures of God's word. Paul has been instructing Timothy in the truth from God. In this precious verse he declares that all that he has taught concerning the truth of God can be assuredly received without any doubt. Let us now go through this verse to be clear about this wonderful certainty.

The verse opens with the sentence 'This is a trustworthy saying.' In other words Paul is assuring Timothy, and us also, that this verse is declaring a saying that is altogether true, and that it can be safely believed in its fullness. That is that there is not tricks or deviousness in it.

We live in a world of untrustworthiness. Many things are declared in all levels of society which are less than the truth, or with mental reservations. Satan is the source of all this deviousness, as Paul has been pointing out from the beginning of this chapter. Such are the lies and falseness that Satan has introduced into people's minds and into the doctrine of the church, that errors are taught in all good conscience, which are false. Further Satan has so cleverly cast doubts concerning the fact that God is speaking his revelation in the Bible.

The next phrase says 'that deserves full acceptance'. In national life and in personal life nothing really can be safely accepted. Experience has cast doubts on the sayings and promise of politicians and others because they have been found later to be false, or less than the truth.

When God speaks his words and sayings they will be found to be always absolutely true. Those who believe and accept that the whole Bible is God breathed, find that as they are taught its meaning by the Holy Spirit, they find it absolutely trustworthy even when science and philosophy may cast doubts on it.

The next phrase is in brackets, because it expresses Paul's constant action in teaching. The phrase is '(and for this we labour and strive)'. In this way Paul assures us that in all his teaching he strives always to speak what God has taught him by the Holy Spirit. Here is the wonder of the Scriptures where men who wrote were carried along by the Holy Spirit. They never wrote anything but what the Holy Spirit pressed upon them. God never lies. He also has absolute power to carry out all that he says and promises. This is why the Bible is known as the word of God. There is no other source of knowledge and truth which has this absolute assurance. How dreadful and wicked is Satan's deviousness to have deceived human wisdom and thinking to bring such doubt of the Bible over the last 150 years.

The next phrase is 'that we have put our hope in the living God'. God is the living God so what he has declared in the Bible is completely trustworthy. Because he is the living God who is everlasting and he is always living to substantiate his word. Those of us who hope in the living God, have this sure and certain hope that what God promises, he can and will uphold and fulfil.

We now come to the most trustworthy saying of God. It is a promise that is absolutely sure. This glorious saying of God through the apostle Paul is 'who is the Saviour of all men, especially those who believe'.

Whatever men and women think, we all need to be saved This testified to in the opening chapters of Genesis. These chapters tell of the origin of humanity. These chapters declare that God created man in his own image. Adam was the man God created, and became the prototype for all the human race. He was created with conditional immortality. Immediately modern wisdom scoffs at this origin of humanity, and instead of believing in an eternal and omnipotent God as the creator, believes in the incredible chance that matter suddenly evolved out of nothing and continued to evolve by chance, and then purely by chance

life evolved and developed. To make this at all possible, it is assumed that all the development of creation to have occurred over millions, billions, trillion years, etc. without end for this chance to be plausible. This fantasy rests on fossils found which under this theory are evidence of this amazing length of time needed for such theory to be at all credible.

Genesis is the only credible explanation of how this world, and humanity has developed, and why it is as it is in its domination of evil. It is because of this that this world needs a Saviour who is God himself.

There is not enough space in this meditation to tell about this salvation and of the divine Saviour, and this we will address in the following meditation.

MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 4: 9-10 (Part 2) For Sunday, 10th May 2026

WE now come to put flesh on this wonderful statement of the apostle Paul 'God, who is the Saviour of all men, and specially of those who believe'. To do this we need to be seeing the whole doctrine of Salvation as God has revealed it in the Bible.

We must commence this study in the first three chapters of Genesis which records the tragic occurrence in paradise which brought death and eternal loss on humanity. These opening chapters of the Bible tell of the creation of man and how God made him perfect in his own image and holy, and gave him a paradise in which to live. These chapters tell us that God placed Adam and Eve under a covenant of works. Adam and Eve were perfectly holy. They desired only to please God, and had the blessing that God walked with them, and they had fellowship with God in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8). But God had placed in the garden a unique tree which gave the knowledge of good and evil, and God gave this one command that they were never, never to eat the fruit of this tree

or they would die. This was the work of obedience which God placed them under, which in the wonderful holy state they were in by creation they had no desire to disobey. However Satan possessed the serpent and then suggested to Eve that God was depriving her and Adam of greater blessing, and they broke this covenant of works and disobeyed God by eating the fruit of the tree of good and evil.

All things changed because by this disobedience. They had given their obedience to Satan, and placed all their progeny under Satan's domination. From that moment Satan became the god of this world. This is taught by the apostle John in the words of 1 John 5: 19 in the words 'and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one'.

Adam and Eve failed to keep the covenant of works and placed all humanity under condemnation and death, and lost. But the covenant works still stands, leaving all humanity lost and hopeless to be plunged into Hell. Salvation can only be realised if that covenant of works is fulfilled in full.

God then introduced another covenant, A covenant of grace. Grace means unmerited favour. This is found in our Lord Jesus Christ, whom God sent into the world to be the second Adam. See Romans 5: 12ff and 1 Corinthians 15. Because the first Adam failed, a second Adam, a human being like the first, was sent by God, even Jesus Christ God's well beloved Son, so that he could fulfil all righteousness and so undo the failure of the first Adam to fulfil the covenant of works. We hear Jesus declaring this office in Matthew 3: 13ff where he gave John the Baptist the reason he must be baptised by him in the words of verse 15 'Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness'. This tells us that Jesus should fulfil all the demands of the covenant of works which Adam failed to keep, and so the complete the full righteousness of the covenant of works for all who believe on Him.

So Jesus Christ was incarnate. This was necessary for him to be the victorious second Adam. He took our nature upon him so that he was one person, two natures in one body, so that he could be the second Adam and provide a perfect righteousness which could be imputed, made available by grace, to all who believe on him. Romans 8: 3 tells us that God sent his only Son in the likeness

of sinful flesh, and this means Jesus was wholly human, bearing all the misery of the fall of Adam, yet without any sin. Only a human being like Adam could save sinful human beings. So he had to be one of us, but yet sinless. Jesus felt all the attacks of Satan, but never sinned as Adam did. This caused him to fulfil all the requirements of the covenant of works in its precepts, that is to never sin. This part of his fulfilling all righteousness is imputed to all who believe on him. He then fulfilled all the righteousness of the covenant of works by giving himself to suffer the full punishment required by the covenant of works when he died on the cross, and suffering everlasting death in hell there. This is made clear in his cry on the cross – my God, my God, why have you forsaken me. When he rose from the dead, God testified that his cry 'It is finished' was eternally true, and he fulfilled all righteousness for us who believe on him as their Saviour and sin-bearer.

The statement in our text that God is the Saviour of all men tells us that Christ's perfect righteousness in his life and death is sufficient for the salvation of all human beings, and the promise of John 3: 16 is total true when a person truly believes in Jesus as their sin-bearer and Saviour, and so eternal life is their eternal blessing.

However in John chapter 3 God goes on to tell us that men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. So the revelation of God is that faith in Jesus is a gift from God. What is also so true is that the offer of salvation in Christ is totally available for all who are enabled by God to repent of their sins, and believe in Jesus as their righteousness. However this enabling is only by the sovereign call of God in electing grace.

MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 4: 11-14 (Part 1)

For Sunday, 17th May 2026

In these verses Paul is instructing Timothy in the vocation of a minister if he or she is to carry out their ministry to the honour of Christ, and to fulfil their

calling by God to be a minister. In these verses we can notice three qualities of ministry which minister's need to cultivate in order to be a faithful minister of the gospel of Christ. These qualities are firstly authority, secondly example, and thirdly devotion.

AUTHORITY.

This is found in verses 11 and 12b. Paul explains two aspects of this authority. One is that the minister must teach, and the other is the minister must command.

Paul tells Timothy that he must teach the things which Paul has been teaching according to the terms of the faithful saying in the previous two verses. This is first that God is the living God. That is the one and only God, creator of heaven and earth; and the second is that God is the Saviour of all men. The core and heart of the minister's teaching is salvation that God has provided through his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. This teaching must be faithful to God's revelation in the whole Bible, where Christ is the theme that holds all things together.

Paul exhorts Timothy not to be intimidated when people despise him because he was a young man. Satan's continual work is to cause people to make people despise ministers who proclaim the message of salvation in Christ, because his aim is to hold sinners under his authority. This aim of Satan is most surely achieved when he promotes minister's who fail to preach the pure truth in the whole Bible.

Together with teaching Paul directs Timothy to command people people to receive and believe the message he taught concerning Christ. This is because the minister, preaching the truth of God, comes with the authority of God to proclaim the wondrous and costly salvation that God has provided through Christ in wondrous mercy, grace and love.

The true and faithful minister must command people to receive the word of salvation because the minister speaks with the authority of God. This authority only applies when the minister of Christ proclaims the word of God. We have no authority from God to proclaim our own opinions. There is no authority for those who reject or add anything to the revealed and inspired word in all of Scripture.

There is no authority if a minister, by the application of his own wisdom, judges the Scriptures, and makes it mean other than the plain meaning of the text. The opinion, so abounding in the visible church today, is that the Bible is only partly the word of God, and that like all natural human writings expresses what can be judged as expressing error of some kind. Such teaching has no authority from God, and will be rejected by God. Such opinions come from the devil who works continually to pervert the truth of God.

The minister's authority cannot and does not extend to lording it over the flock of God as superior. We have no authority in ourselves. The authority is only there when we command people according to the revealed word of God.

Where is this authority found? It is found through the work of the Holy Spirit, who is God's advocate with human beings, to make God's authoritative truth clear to God's called ministers.

From this it is clear that the minister, by prayer and dependence on the Holy Spirit, must firstly be a believer that the whole Bible is God breathed; and secondly must be diligent in study and meditation in the Bible, so that by the Spirit he or she may be apt to teach.

Together with this knowledge of the message of God in the Bible, the godly minister must always teach and preach having come from the presence of God with the message from God given for every occasion. When Paul speaks of the minister commanding, the command must only be the word of God given by the Spirit for every discourse.

When Paul instructs Timothy to command 'these things' the authority can only be the proclamation of the truth in the inspired whole of Scripture. Any other speaking or preaching, rather than having God's authority, will have God's curse.

How very important it is for every true minister to be constant in seeking to be true to Scripture, and by earnest prayer seek understanding from God by his Spirit, so that what he preaches is with the true authority of God.

MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 4: 11-14 (Part 2)

For Sunday, 24th May 2026

WE come now to the second essential quality which Paul identifies as crucial in a minister of Christ. This is the example in word and by life and living.

EXAMPLE.

Paul introduces this quality with the words 'set an example for the believers in ...'. He then expresses six qualities essential to a minister giving a good example. We will meditate on each one in turn.

a. In speech. This quality first of all requires a minister in all speaking to show forth the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. In present society in the UK there is an unattractive and offensive quality of impatient anger when people receive treatment which causes them to lose patience which brings forth abusiveness in their speech towards others. Believers and particularly minister's should be courteous in conversation whatever the circumstances.

However, although this quality is desperately important, what Paul is speaking concerning the speaking of the minister refers to declaring the truth, and only the truth, in all teaching and preaching. Interlarding teaching and sermons with personal opinions or unrelated humour simply to gain attention is of the world and not of the Spirit of God.

b. In life. The life of the minister is exceedingly important. It is essential that the life of the minister should adorn the doctrine of God and Jesus Christ. It has often been said of some minister that they are angels in the pulpit, but devils elsewhere. We who are called to be ministers of Christ must adorn the doctrine we preach always in the way we live, and relate to other people. This is essential with regard to the people to whom we minister, but also in all relationships with other people. Many in the world are turned away from Christ and the church because of the behaviour they see in us who represent Christ

on earth. This also applies to every believer who makes a profession before the world that they are Christians.

c. In love. Christ loved us with an everlasting love. His love and the love of God extended to his giving his life even unto the death on the cross to provide salvation for us. Paul in Philippians 2: 5ff says 'Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death – even the death on a cross.' Further Paul teaches us in 1 Corinthians 13 that love is the greatest virtue, even over faith and hope.

From this it is made clear that we are called as ministers to love as Christ has loved us, and so commend the Gospel. Love is costly. The example of Christ makes this so clear. It will be only living in fellowship with Christ constantly, that we will be able to express this divine love.

d. In faith. How important this quality is in our example to others. I must confess that in mind and in preaching I am able to express such faith, but in my personal living I find Satan rocks me so very badly. The minister must not doubt any of the glorious truths of salvation in Christ, but believe personally with assurance, that all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose. Reading such Scripture my faith is supreme, but in the assaults of Satan, and the various ups and downs of living, I find I am like the disciples, when they had Jesus with them in the storm which threatened their lives, felt afraid. Without faith no one can please God. Let us pray always for our Lord to strengthen our faith so we show a good example as ministers.

e. In purity. This must be sought not only in our outward living but also in our thoughts. Impurity in the life of a minister of Christ is so important. Impurity in our living tarnishes our example, and lets Satan in. Purity in thought is a sin just as impure actions are. It must be purged because we are what we think, and soon what we think is a means used by Satan to produce sinful and impure actions.

Purity must be also expressed in our preaching and teaching. We must be promoting pure doctrine and teaching. Anything else but the pure word of God expressed in the whole of the Bible will produce impurity not only in understanding but also in living, as people are encouraged by Satan to live by error and worldly wisdom, and so tarnish the image of God and Christ.

This example is something a minister must most diligently work at that Christ may be presented to people as the author of salvation.

We will finish next time with last essential quality in a minister which is devotion.

MEDITATIONS on the 1st Letter to TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 4: 11-14 (Part 3)

For Sunday, 31st May 2026

WE now come to the third essential quality which Paul names as needing to be found in the life and living of a minister of Christ.

DEVOTION.

Paul presents this quality with the words 'devote yourselves ...'. Devotion to our ministerial calling means it must be at the centre and core of our living and working. In devotion we give our mind, body and time to Christ in this ministry he has called us to. At the heart of such devotion must be our devotion to the word of God, where we are told and given example of the minister's calling.

Paul tells Timothy to devote himself to the reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. It is the minister's calling to devotion to presenting Scripture in these three ways. There are other duties which are part of the minister's calling such as administration and pastoral care, but the first and foremost is presentation and expounding of the Bible.

This priority is exemplified in Acts chapter six, where, because of the increasing numbers of believers, the apostles found themselves overburdened with administering duties and so appointed seven men to relieve the apostles of

these duties, and make them free to perform the primary work of the ministry of the word.

Paul names three aspects of this ministry of the word to which devotion primarily should be made. The first he names is the reading of Scripture publicly. The first nurture of believers is to know the Scriptures. In the days of the early church the New Testament Scriptures had not been completed, and most were in form of letters. It may have also been true that a number of believers could not read. Because of this public reading of the Scriptures, both Old and New, was very important.

The second aspect of devotion in ministry Paul names as preaching. Having read the Scriptures the Scripture read, needs to be explained and expounded, not only so that believers should know the truth, but also to believe it and have it applied to their lives and living.

The third devotion in this ministry of the Word Paul names as teaching. Paul never repeated himself so there is a difference between preaching and teaching. Teaching centres on explaining the meaning of the word of God so that it is understood, and the truth is made clear and remembered. Preaching is the minister coming out of the presence of God with a message from God for each special occasion. With preaching, although there is explanation of the meaning of the text, there is exhortation, application, and the command to hear, receive, believe and obey the message God has given for the people at the time of preaching.

Preaching is a prophetic utterance from God (from Scripture) for each occasion. It is like the office of the true prophet of God in the Old Testament. It is God speaking. The preacher can take no credit as the word of God is applied because it is by the Spirit that God makes the message fulfil his divine purpose.

Under this word devotion there comes from Paul in the 14th verse a personal message to the preacher. He says 'do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you'.

The ordination of a minister in the church of God, if it is rightly conducted and understood, is much more than simply appointing the minister for the ministry like an appointment to a job, it is an appointment by God, to be his spokesmen on earth.

A minister may have excellent personal ability, but there is something over and above this in the appointment of a minister of Christ. We have a special calling to the ministry from God, and God's equipping for such service to God.

This specialness of the Christian minister is expressed by Paul in the 14th verse as a gift. Just as the apostles were given the gift or anointing of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the truly called minister is given by God at the time of appointment, a special endowment of the Holy Spirit, over and above the filling of the Spirit which is given to all born again believers.

The exhortation which Paul gives, for the minister is to be truly devoted in the use and nurture of this gift given at ordination. It is not just the church who sets apart a person for the ministry, but first and foremost Christ. It is a sacred appointment which is never to be neglected.

GOD'S WORD FROM HOSEA

Number 31

HUMAN WISDOM PROVED A FAILURE

“(v.9)For they have gone up to Assyria like a wild donkey wandering alone. Ephraim has sold herself to lovers. (10)Although they have sold themselves among the nations, I will now gather them together. They will begin to waste away under the oppression of the mighty king.”

Hosea 8: 9-10

WE in our modern thinking tend to think in abstract ways. In the Old Testament, and in the days of Hosea, thinking was more expressed in concrete images. This a fact in this prophecy of Hosea, and is particularly illustrated in these two verses. This is made evident in the description of Israel as a 'wild donkey', and Israel behaving like a prostitute. Once we understand this we are able to appreciate the vividness, which holds a multiple of images and thoughts. In view of this we will take each phrase in these verse one by one.

The first two phrases are these - 'For they have gone up to Assyria like a wild donkey wandering alone'. Here we have a statement of action, followed by a concrete image of how this action was performed. This describes stupidity. A donkey has no brains to think with. A wild donkey seeks to please itself and its desires, and often gets into difficulties because of this. Ephraim was behaving like a donkey. They felt themselves in trouble, which was the case because they had turned away from God to idols. God had withdrawn himself from them because of their turning away from his word and commandments. Instead of repentance and returning to the Lord, and because they did not want to give up the ungodly lives they were leading, they address their problem with human wisdom. They turned to a heathen power to help them overcome the persecution from lesser nations around them.

The result that like a donkey they were wandering alone, dependant only on their own devices. The result was that they turned to Assyria who could not help them and did not want to help them. Assyria had their own agenda which was not altruistic, but selfish. The foolish action of going to Assyria had made things worse. This is expressed in the next phrase 'Ephraim has sold herself to lovers'.

Ephraim had followed the desires of their sinful nature. They had exalted their own desires and thoughts over the commandments of God. They had found in the idols of the heathen around them a

living that suited what their sinful nature was attracted to. The gods of the heathen allowed them the licence which the ways of Jehovah denounced. Ephraim had amalgamated these religious preferences into their worship, and these preferences had now elbowed out of the way the spirituality of the worship handed down to them by God through Moses. Ephraim was reluctant to give up this way of life. They had even convinced themselves that they were still faithful to Jehovah. Like a wild donkey they were following and relying on their own wisdom and devices. So when they found themselves afflicted and in trouble, using their own wisdom, they applied to the physically strong might of Assyria for help. They gave themselves to human solutions, and not to Jehovah the one and only true God who had chosen them, blessed them.

God, in a true assessment of their action and thinking, and through the prophet Hosea, makes clear what is the result of their action. The words of the prophet are 'Ephraim has sold herself to lovers'. Here is another vivid concrete image which opens up the result of Ephraim's action of applying to Assyria for help.

The picture is particularly vivid. When a man, being overcome by fleshly desires, is overcome by a passion for a particular woman, he soon finds himself in bondage to that lover, which gradually destroys him. He may find himself in poverty by the demands of his paramour. If he is married he finds he destroys his marriage, loses his wife and family. From being blessed with a happy life he finds himself destroyed and in poverty. His self respect is gone.

We have an example of this in the Bible in the case of Samson. His passion for Delilah was such that he did not see the deviousness of Delilah, and was seduced into telling her the secret of his amazing strength. Because of this he found himself in captivity, blinded and derided. We have a similar experience in the case of Lot. He was attracted to the plush living of Sodom, and this

resulted in him being lost and alone, and with nothing. He could have gone to Abraham for help, but he found himself still drawn to the life he had in Sodom, and also caused him to be ashamed to ask for help from Abraham. Both found out too late the folly of going after the wisdom and pleasures of the world.

In the next verse, verse eleven, God opens up the result of the folly of Ephraim in forsaking him for the lusts of their fallen and worldly nature. No doubt Ephraim used their own wisdom, not only to justify the way they were living, but also to argue that this was the right and best way to overcome their difficulties. This did not help, but landed them into more difficulty, and caused God, who was really their strength and Saviour, to withdraw from them.

Again God speaks through Hosea. The words of verse 11 are as follows - 'Although they have sold themselves among the nations, I will now gather them together. They will begin to waste away under the oppression of the mighty king'.

God declares the truth of the action of Ephraim acting on their own desire and according to their own wisdom. God makes clear the truth of their action. The action of their own wisdom had resulted in slavery. They had applied to Assyria for help, but they now found themselves under the power of Assyria who was using them, not for their good, but for their own agenda.

When God's people resort to the ways and wisdom of the world to escape their problems, the result is found to be more problems and difficulties, and not a resolving the problems they were seeking to overcome. The ways of human wisdom are always manipulated by the evil one, and end in more and more satanic domination.

The next phrase is rather enigmatic. The question is as to the meaning of God's gathering. The next phrase is the explanation. The gathering was not for blessing, but for displeasure and

judgement. My NIV reference Bible gives me two verses which support this meaning. These two verses are Ezekiel 16: 27 and Ezekiel 22: 20 which read as follows. Ezekiel 16: 27 'So I stretched out my hand against you and reduced your territory; I gave you over to the greed of your enemies,'. Ezekiel 22: 20 reads 'As men gather silver, copper, iron, lead and tin into a furnace to melt it with a fiery blast, so I will gather you in my anger and my wrath and put you inside the city and melt you'.

Both these verses speak of the gathering of God, not in blessing, but in a way that shows his displeasure at the folly of Ephraim in going for help to Assyria, rather in turning to him in repentance and trust.

The last phrase of verse 11 show what this meant for Ephraim. They went to Assyria for help. But it meant the opposite. It meant wasting away and not renewal of strength. It meant oppression by Assyria, and not salvation.

What is God revealing here? The way many react to this revelation of the result of Ephraim's action is revulsion. They see God with the eyes of their perverted human understanding and wisdom. They say that this is a false view of God. God's love would never allow God to bring this result on Ephraim. However the fact is that Ephraim was suffering in this way.

What this action of God reveals is not action of retribution, but the description of the result of Ephraim's action in trusting in Assyria for help and deliverance, rather than returning to God in sorrow for turning away from him to the lusts of the flesh. Lusts of the flesh does not simply mean physical lusts, but also includes setting oneself above the wisdom of God to the wisdom of the flesh and the mind. God had given to Ephraim the only true wise way to live, which when believed and followed had brought great blessing from God. Now because Ephraim had decided by their own ways of wisdom to solve their difficulties, God had withdrawn

from them and given them over to the result of their preferred way of living.

The result of departing from the revealed way of God always means wasting away. When God withdraws his blessing and leave men to their own devices, they find their own way and wisdom does not result in growth, but is wasting away. If God withdraws his blessing Satan takes over, and his agenda is always to destroy and not to bless.

When Ephraim gave themselves to their own wisdom, the result was not freedom from the oppression of the nations around them, but to the greater oppression of a stronger and more worldly power.

APPLICATION.

Has this historical experience of Ephraim any thing to tell us today? This is the big question! Surely it has. The world in its wisdom, says the apostle Paul, does not know God. We have only to observe history, and the condition of the world today to observe the result. Things go badly, so in a democracy the people vote for a change. Are things any better? In a broad sense there is little change. Some benefit, but the changes proposed by new government bring new difficulties, problems and still the underlying difficulties are nor resolved but still remain.

But the world was much the same, if not worse, in Old Testament times. Assyria had its own sinful agenda, and used Ephraim's cry for help for its own ends. This is always the underlying problem. All powers are out for their own agenda.

But Ephraim represented the church of the Old Testament. Ephraim, that is Israel, the ten separated tribes, were still part of God's chosen people, whom God had chosen to bless and guide into his blessing. In the times of Moses and Joshua God had made clear that in following the ways he had laid down was blessing, but departing from God's revealed way would bring disaster. Yet the

history of both Judah and Israel shows a continual departing from God's way, to the way of human desire and preference. Here in the time of Hosea we have an example of this, and its folly. Through Hosea God was showing Ephraim the result of following their own ways, rather than being faithful to the ways of God.

What of the overall scene in the church today. I speak with regard the church visible in the United Kingdom. Surely the scene is of wasting away. Congregations are generally dwindling. Churches are being closed. The influence of the church is weak and powerless. The church is effected by scandal which is no help. There are notable exceptions to this in individual congregations, but this is only a small part of the whole. The question that this syndrome presents is why is this so?

The answer is seen in the church following the ways of Ephraim in the days of Hosea, and this can flow over, and does flow over into the lives of individual church members.

What is the core of the problem illustrated in the life of Israel in the days of Hosea? The problem seen in Ephraim in the days of Hosea was that they tampered with the word of God. Their inspired word of God was that which had been handed down to them from Moses and the example of Joshua. The inspired word of God ever since the days of Jesus Christ is the whole of the New Testament which is a product of the inspired writing of the the apostles and others, according to the promise of Jesus that he would send the Holy Spirit to provide this inspired understanding. Together with the New Testament, the Old Testament writings have been joined as inspired because of the way Jesus Christ accepted it as God's word, and the apostles referred to it as God's inspired written word.

The church, and individuals following the example and teaching of the church, has fallen into the same trap as did Israel, as seen in

the time of Hosea which we are dealing with, and seeking to understand.

For various reasons the word of God, in Hosea's time, and in history, and today, has been added to or subtracted from, either by human contingency, or by human reasoning and preference. The rot commenced and became worse in the separation of Israel, (the ten tribes), from Judah, when Jereboam the first took Israel away from Judah and Benjamin, in the reign of Rehoboam. Jereboam, prompted by the necessity of keeping Israel separate from Judah and Benjamin, and preventing Israelites from going to Jerusalem to worship, substitute two golden calves to be the figures for worship. So this addition and separation from the pure word of God went on, and this was prompted simply by the attraction of the heathen world around Israel, together with the attraction of the life of the world presented by the idol worship of these heathen nations. Two things are illustrated here. Firstly, human reason and desire wanting God to be more like what their sinful nature preferred, and secondly, a desire to conform more and more to the mind and thinking of the world around them.

Surely this same syndrome is seen in the history of the church. The Bible as the inspired word of God has either been added to or subtracted from. Worldly reason, effected by the advance in scientific thinking, has caused the church and church members to subtract from the Bible, all that the mind of the world speaks of as unbelievable or untenable by modern thought. Then there has been additions to the Bible due to the preference of the human mind and reason. The Roman Catholic church is the most obvious example, but which has infected other Protestant denominations.

When Israel departed in this way from God's word, spiritual life died, and God withdrew from his people, and then when such apostasy continued God acted in judgement and punishment. Though modern thinking despises this Old Testament witness, the fact is that it is plain that God is dealing with the church today in

the same way. There is only one way forward, and that is repentance and returning to the Bible in its completeness in obedience and faith.

MAY 2026

GOD'S MESSAGE IN 2 PETER

Expository Sermons in the 2nd Epistle of Peter

THE DAY OF THE LORD

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare."

2 Peter 3: 10

THE Apostle Peter has been dealing with a problem of doubt which was permeating the church in the early days, which was because the promise made by Christ that he would return in power and glory had not occurred. The early church seemed to believe that the second coming in glory by our Lord Jesus Christ would occur in the life time of the apostles. Because of this expectancy doubters and scoffers had come seeking to destroy the faith of many. In our last sermon we observed how Peter dealt with this question, and now he speaks in verse 10 of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, in power and great glory. Peter speaks of this as 'the day of the Lord' because it is the day of the final victory and triumph of Christ, which will bring in the new and eternal order in the new heaven and the earth.

In this verse 10 Peter speaks of what he designates as the Day of the Lord. In the context, as we have seen, this day speaks of the day when Christ will return to this earth according to the promise made to the Apostles and disciples at the time of his ascension back into his heavenly glory, where, since then, he reigns at the right hand of the Father, to dispense all the blessings of eternal

salvation for all the ones given to him by the Father and who he gave his life on the cross to redeem and save.

It will be a day of his final triumph when Satan and all his servants and fallen angels will be judged and punished. This judgement is spoken of in Revelation as receiving double for all their sins, which refers to the complete justice of God that makes the eternal punishment exactly equal to the sins and evil that this host has committed. This victory of Christ at his return is described in the symbolism of Revelation 19: 11ff. Christ is seen as the rider on the white horse, leading the armies of heaven. To meet Christ comes the beast with all the kings of the earth and the powers of Satan to make war against the rider on the white horse. There is no conflict or opposition to Christ as we read in verse 20 that the hosts of evil are immediately subdued, and with all who received the mark of the beast, all the unbelieving multitudes, are cast in to the lake of fire. These verses from 11 to 21 give all the faithful an assured encouragement as we face the trials and temptations in our faithfulness to Christ and his word.

The Day of the Lord will be a day of glorious triumph of salvation which Christ achieved at his first coming. Satan's constant attack and opposition to Christ and his kingdom is so apparent in the Gospels, and continues against his redeemed church seen in the Acts of the Apostles, and made clear in the epistles which were written to strengthen and encourage believers in the face of Satan's viciousness. It is also a tonic and a strengthening to believers in every age, as they are made to face, in various degrees, the assaults of the devil and his hosts. The devil is bound in this time of the Gospel so that he cannot triumph over the believing church of Christ.

This day of the Lord is also a glorious triumph for all the faithful in every age to the truth that is in Christ. This described for us graphically by the apostles Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4: 13ff. The ones who believe that Jesus died and rose again, that is those who

have believed that Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried. That was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. And that he appeared ... making his triumph over sin and death most surely evident (1 Corinthians 15: 3-5) are told the glory for them when Jesus returns to judge the living and the dead.

This is the hope we are sure of. Death is simply falling asleep in Jesus, believing Jesus died and rose again for us, and so we believe that we will be raised when Christ returns. Paul tells us in these verses of 1 Thessalonians that God will bring with Jesus in this glorious return those who have fallen asleep. He goes on to declare this wonderful truth that all who are still alive at his coming will not precede those who have fallen asleep, and the dead is Christ will rise first, and that after that, we who are alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. This will be our joy before the final judgement is poured out on the world. Paul goes on to say that this will usher in the the eternal present of eternity where we shall be for ever with the Lord. This glorious new heaven and earth is given in symbolic terms in the last two chapters of the book of Revelation.

Peter goes on to speak of the Lord's return as coming like a thief. This is an illustration of the silence, speed and suddenness of the coming of the Lord. This urges us to be prepared.

As a thief, who comes to steal and to harm, giving no notice of his coming, so the return of Jesus will have no warning. His coming will be sudden and unannounced. Down the ages many people have sought to predict the coming of the Lord, and have created much interest and expectancy, but all these have been found to have been wrong. Jesus made clear in his teaching that he did not know the time of his return, and nobody else would know, not even Satan. Jesus made clear that the time is only known by the Father. As God has made clear in the Bible that he is sovereign

over all the world, so he is sovereign over the time of Christ's return in triumph.

God in his sovereignty created the heavens and the earth at his sovereign will. The fulfilling of his promise to send one who would crush Satan's head, according to his promise in Genesis 3; 15, was not known and came at God's good time, so the return of Christ at the end of time is also hidden from prying eyes, and will come suddenly as a thief.

Because of this sovereignty of God the actual time of Christ's return can not be predetermined or predicted. Men can search the Scriptures and think they can determine the time of Christ's return, but this is folly, and not right. God has hidden the time in his own sovereign counsel.

When Christ's returns no defence will be able to stop it. All the forces of Satan will be taken by surprise, and will be totally overcome and defeated. There will be no time for sudden repentance, and at his return it will be too late for repentance. The time of opportunity to hear the gospel, repent and believe, is now. When Christ returns there will be no opportunity to believe and be saved. There will only be an awful looking forward to judgement.

For those who failed to repent and believe there will be no escape from the judgement of God. There will be no place to hide. There will be no refuge from the inevitable eternal punishment for sin and unbelief. It will be a terrible and horrific day for all who have not responded to the Gospel of grace. It will be the end of time and the end of opportunity.

Peter goes on to leave us with no doubt as to the facts concerning this world of time when Christ returns to judge the living and the dead. Human wisdom and scientific thought believes that this universe will go on forever in some form or other. They speak of the theory of evolution as governing all things, and whatever

disasters occur according to human folly, this universe has no end. The words of Peter here, given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, declares a totally different fact of history. This universe may last another 2000 years or more, but will be brought to an end by God in his good time.

Peter goes on to speak of the reality of that time. He describes the end of the world. He tells us that the heavens will disappear with a roar. This describes none other than the end of the vastness of space with all its infinity. The numerous planets will be disappearing. He goes on to speak of the elements being destroyed by fire. This can mean nothing less than all matter and atoms which constitute earth and the planets being totally destroyed, leaving an emptiness of total annihilation. Peter speaks of this as the destruction of fire – the almighty and devastating fire of God, which reduces all to ashes and nothingness. Peter finishes his description of the end of the world with the words 'until the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. In some manuscripts this being laid bare is spoken of as everything being burnt up.

The world in its wisdom may well laugh at this sovereign revelation of God given to Peter. The devil may make the wisdom of the world to be the only truth, and deny completely the word of God through Peter, but like all lies it will be found to be such, with devastating consequences.

APPLICATION.

It is a hard thing to believe the declaration of God here in 2 Peter 3: 10 concerning the end of the world. Science gives warnings of how human selfishness and vanity is making inroads into the security of our universe, but the thought of all the universe we know being swept away by the omnipotence of God, and Christ returning in power and glory, is unimaginable.

This is true even in the visible church. From the earliest times of Christianity the creeds have spoken of the second coming of Christ in the words 'from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead', but this is hardly considered in the church today. This true fact may be recited Sunday by Sunday as the words of the creed in many expressions of worship express belief in this testimony of Scripture, but in the general preaching and living of church members these words in the creeds are recited without much thought.

Further, the increased attitude to the Bible which, by human wisdom and scientific pontificating, has cast doubts on the God given inspiration of the whole of the Scriptures, there remains little part of the Bible that can be claimed as God's truth. In fact the words of Pontius Pilate, at the trial of Jesus - What is truth? - seems to have so affected the faith of the church, that all that remains is the existential suppositions of human experience.

The fact is that in society as a whole, and in much of the thinking and living of church members, there is thought given to the distant future of the world. The state of the world before the judgement of God by the universal flood which killed all life in the days of Noah, is so evident today. As the population of the inhabited world in the days of Noah laughed at the warnings given by Noah, and lived for the present, is true today. However, just as the world in the days of Noah was taken by surprise when the floods came, and were swept away by the terrible judgement of God, so the Bible warns that the same will be the case when at Christ's return.

The great message of Scripture to us all is that we should be prepared for this promised return of Christ. What does God say in Scripture as to how we can be prepared?

In the first place the words of Jesus in the Gospels to pray that God will send forth witnesses, is so needed to day. Jesus added the

words 'for the harvest is truly plentiful' may be felt to be doubtful today, but his words 'but the labourers are few' is most evident today. There are many clergy and ministers in the different denominations, but there seems to be few who are faithful to the Bible as a whole, and few who have this urgency to call people to be ready for Christ's return. Neither is there many ministers or clergy who preach as John the Baptist, and Jesus, and the apostles, preached, to call people to be ready for the judgement day. They preached 'repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'. This was the preaching of John the Baptist, and Jesus followed with the same message. The apostles in the Acts also had the same message. What does this urgent preaching reveal to us which is so lacking in preaching today. It reveals the condition of fallen humanity as sinners in the sight of God, and the desperate destiny people are journeying life to. It speaks of the hopeless unreadiness of people for Christ's return to judge the living and the dead.

The next things is that preachers, witnesses, should be faithful, as Noah was in his day, to warn people of the wrath of God to come, and to tell people the safety of the 'Ark', the ark of Christ, who so lived and died to fulfil all righteousness, so that all who enter the ark by faith in him as their sin-bearer and Saviour, will be given eternal life. Preach that those who believe in Jesus and have died in the faith of Jesus, will be safe at his return, and be gathered together to be with Christ in his heavenly glory for all eternity.

It is not popular today to warn of the terrible consequences of not being prepared for Christ's return. It is deplored by clergy and ministers to preach the Bible witness to the awful everlasting death in the fires of hell of all who have not heeded the danger of not being prepared for the last judgement. It is shouted in anger from pulpits that such preaching is totally opposed to the idea that God is love. But such preachers are the ones who have never appreciated the true and real love of God, which is made clear in the Christmas and Easter

message. What incredible love is the real love of God, that he gave himself in the person of his well-beloved Son, to enter this world to satisfy all the pure righteousness of God for sinners, by living a totally sinless life in our place, and then in our stead suffering the fires of hell as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sin of the world, so that God can justly forgive and raise to new life all those who come to Him in sorrow for their sins and sinfulness, and put their trust in Jesus as their Saviour.

Dear reader, in heavenly love, I ask you where you stand in the light of the teaching of the apostle Peter in this 10th verse of this third chapter of his second epistle. Do you truly believe what Peter is saying, or do you reject it as false gloominess as so many do today in the visible church. In everlasting love God in Christ inspired this faithful apostle to write his truth and witness. Will you not see that to doubt or reject this testimony you are being overcome by the malice of Satan, whose whole purpose is to so promote unbelief that he may carry souls with him into perdition. Will you not allow the light of Christ and the Gospel to shine into your mind and heart so that you hear these words of our text as God, as Jesus, speaking to you, and calling you to come into his everlasting love, and know everlasting bliss eventually in his kingdom of love and purity.

Together with such preaching, all who hear and are receiving the message of Peter in this verse, we are urged to pray, with all the saints, that will open the heavens and pour out his blessing, that God may answer with witnesses to his loving warning, and own such preaching, that multitudes in these last days may believe and be saved.

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