

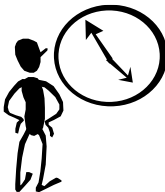
THE BATTLE CREEK BULLETIN

Inside this issue:

<i>Difficult Times and Difficult People</i>	1
<i>The Harvest is Past</i>	3
<i>P.M. Sermon Outline:</i> The Prophetic Riddle of the Seven Kings	4
<i>Recent Evidence Shows</i>	6
Duty Rosters	7
Announcements & For the Record	8



Time of Assembly



Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m.
(Or every other week)

Bible Study 4:00 p.m.

Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

Difficult Times and Difficult People

By Doy Moyer

Predators prey on gullible people when they think they spot an opportunity. This is one of the points of II Timothy 3:1-9. The difficult times in this context, though spoken of as future, included the time in which Paul was writing (note the present tense in II Timothy 3:6). These difficult times are brought on by difficult people whose attitudes and actions are such that lead to the conclusion, “*Avoid such men as these*” (II Timothy 3:5). This is slightly different from those who opposed the truth in II Timothy 2:24-26, where there was still some hope that through patient and gentle instruction they might be led to repentance.

There is hope for many who might not realize that they are taken captive by the devil, and we should always begin with the assumption that people are willing to listen until they prove otherwise. Start with the benefit of any doubt and perhaps some will be saved.

Then Paul provides an important contrast: “*But know this ...*” (II Timothy 3:1). There will be difficult times because difficult people are so far gone that they are to be avoided altogether. That takes judgment, of course, but the principle is the same as in Matthew 7:6, “*Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.*” Some people will show themselves to be so brutal and uncaring that they need to be marked for what they are so that we can move on and not waste time with foolish disputes.

Paul told Timothy that these men are so bad that they will seek out gullible women who are weighed down by sin (note: this is not talking about every woman, but certain women known to them). These particular women are driven by every wave of doctrine (cf. Ephesians 4:14), unable to come to a knowledge of the truth because of the deception

and lies of these false teachers who themselves do not care about the truth. Again, false teachers prey on the gullible who might even be looking for answers.

In principle, this could be any of us if we are not careful. Some will not land on any truth and they are the prey for those who can persuade them of some new idea, some new doctrine that seems right on the surface. We must be balanced, for, on the one hand, we do need to be open to listening, weighing evidence, and considering what others say. We might have missed something. We might have misread something. We might need to change. At the same time, there are limits. Not every idea is a good one. Not every doctrine is to be equated with the truth. Instead of refusing to listen on the one hand and only wanting new things on the other, like the Bereans, we must search the Scriptures to see what is actually true (Acts 17).

In this context of II Timothy 3, Jannes and Jambres, who opposed Moses in Exodus 7 and whose names were known from earlier writings, were fitting examples of the type of people Paul was talking about. They had a form of godliness, the ability to pretend as if they had God or the gods on their side. They could, to a point, imitate the truth, but ultimately their folly was exposed. They were unable to match the truth once enough of it was made known, and their failure became obvious.

False teachers will operate this way. They might have a measure of the truth. They will initially sound right. They will give the appearance of godliness. They will appear to be working for your good. Yet deep down they are looking for a way to manipulate things to their own advantage. They “*worm their way*” in (CSB) and take advantage. If they think someone is given to various doctrines, they will jump on that and attempt to persuade others for their own gain. As we say, if they are given an inch, they will take a mile. Avoid such men.

What is the way to combat this? When we read Paul’s letters to Timothy all the way through, we see the stress on the need for sound teaching, the need for preaching the word in purity, the need for avoiding foolish disputes, and suspicious wrangling. We must become deeply entrenched in Scripture itself, to know the truth so well that we can spot the error when its ugly head rises.

By the end of the chapter, Paul says it clearly, and this shows the significance of Scripture:

“But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (II Timothy 3:13-17).

The Harvest is Past

By Jarrod Jacobs

“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved” (Jeremiah 8:20 KJV). In context, these words were spoken by people desperate for someone to deliver them from the consequences of their decisions. Some Bible versions even use phrases like “we have not been delivered,” “rescued,” and “we have not been helped” in place of the word “saved” used in the KJV. It seems people had recognized God’s power to help them (Jeremiah 8:14) but understood it was too late now (Jeremiah 8:15). Now, these people, God’s people, realize they had run out of chances. “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” What a tragedy!

I suppose there are no sadder words in the English language than “no hope.” They are used by Paul in Ephesians 2:12 when he describes the spiritual state of people who are outside of Christ. This is the way these people in Jeremiah’s day were! Though they were God’s children, they continued to reject God through idolatry (Jeremiah 8:2). They “*hold fast deceit, they refuse to return*” was another charge against the people (Jeremiah 8:5). In addition to these, we read of their stubbornness when they rejected “the old paths” in Jeremiah 6:16!

I understand that God extends a time of patience to allow people to see the error of their ways and repent (II Peter 3:9; Romans 2:4). God extended such patience to the Canaanites (Genesis 15:16). He did this with the Egyptians, allowing them not only 430 years to correct their error and adding ten more plagues as a means of giving the Pharaoh every last chance to free the Israelites. We have seen God’s longsuffering in other areas of life, and it was evident when He dealt with the Israelites during these years of the divided kingdom!

Yet, God’s long-suffering is not eternal. For example, there was a day when God shut the door to the ark, and none were allowed in (Genesis 7:16). Even in the parable of the ten virgins, the door was shut after a period of time, and five virgins remained outside of the wedding feast (Matthew 25:10). In Jeremiah 8, we see the people lament because summer is over and the harvest is past. In other words, it is too late now!

When we look in the New Testament, the urgency to become a Christian is apparent. After urging people to “*save yourselves from this untoward generation*” (Acts 2:40), Acts 2:41 says about 3000 were baptized when they gladly received the word. The language here leaves us with the understanding that they were baptized right then. They did not put it off. Again, when the Philippian jailor wanted to be saved, he was taken “*straightway ... the same hour of the night*” to do it (Acts 16:25, 33-34). The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians and told them, “*now is the accepted time, behold*

(Continued from page 3)

now is the day of salvation” (II Corinthians 6:2). The Hebrew writer also emphasized taking immediate action when he wrote, “today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (Hebrews 3:7-8, 15).

Procrastination has no place in the Lord’s plan of salvation. We have no lease on life and know not what might happen in our future (Proverbs 27:1). Thus we need to take advantage of the “here and now” before it is gone. The Israelites learned the hard way what it means when the “harvest is past.” Don’t you make that mistake! Be saved today while you still can (Acts 22:16). If you need to repent and return to your Lord, your first love, then do it while the breath is in your body. You don’t know when your life’s “summer” will be ended!

Recent Evidence Shows?

By Warren E. Berkley

Several years ago scientists (especially in the behavior field) formed a research team. The simple question to be studied was: What can be done for people who are depressed? Not severe depression that has some physiological cause. Just people who visit a therapist and they present symptoms of depression; functional but depressed.

So, this team set about the task of finding a non-pharmaceutical treatment (apparently not funded by the pharmaceutical companies). They did their research, accounted for all the data, poured over case studies, and conducted interviews. Finally, the findings were published.

HEADLINES: NEW RESEARCH!

Published by the University of California at Berkeley (no relation to author), here is a quotation from their findings: “Recent evidence suggests that a promising approach is to complement psychological counseling with additional activities that are not too taxing for clients, but yield high results. In our own research, we have zeroed in on one such activity: **the practice of gratitude.**”

It is remarkable – and it happens all the time – that some who are held in high esteem in the academic world find something God has said from the beginning and God’s people have always practiced; and when they sign their collective names to it, it becomes “new research.”

The document went on to say, “...many studies over the past decade have found that people who consciously count their blessings tend to be happier and less depressed.”

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (I Thessalonians 5:18). Let’s keep doing what we know moves us further into the light of Christ and away from the darkness of this world. Count your many blessings. Name them one by one.

Source: Joshua Brown, "How Gratitude Changes You and Your Brain," *Greater Good Magazine*, 6 June 2017.