

Dangers in the Church

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[0:00] In the pastoral epistles, the Apostle Paul seems to have two different but recurring themes.

! One has to do with the last days. And he talks quite a bit about the last days, but he weds that to the danger of false teachers in the church.

And I have to tell you, I've been studying Paul, I guess, all year because I did Acts. We're doing, we did 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy now. I've done, you know, I've done Hebrews by Barnabas.

All those things are talking about false teachers. Both of these things are related because the scriptures tell us, including the words in red, that there will be a rise in the number of false prophets, false teachers in the last days infecting and impacting churches.

Now, here's what Paul is going to say to us tonight in the form of a warning to deliver to Timothy. As he, Timothy had to address these issues with the Ephesian church.

[1:40] And this is 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 1 to 9. 1 Timothy chapter 3, verses 1 through 2.

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I couldn't help but think that when there were two people on earth, both were disobedient to God's direct instruction, to them. When there were four people on earth, one was a murderer and one was a murder victim.

Following that moral decay of the human race, we spiraled downward to a point where God chose to eradicate the human race from planet earth. The scriptures tell us that God looked down upon a man named Noah and that Noah found favor in God's eyes, favor or grace. Noah was far from sinless. You can prove that by reading the post-flood actions. Noah and his children were far from sinless, but he found God's unmerited favor. Noah and his family survived the global destruction of the earth by water. However, men were still repugnant to God. Human conduct was self-centered, self-serving, and worldly as to opposed heavenly. Well, today, we're a long way from that. We live in the church age, but even in the professing church of our day, there is even greater confusion, apostasy, and moral decay. We live in a time where even in the church, there is tolerance for things that are opposed to God, opposed to God's word, and opposed to God's true people. Anybody read the editorial in Friday's paper? Associate pastor, assistant pastor of the Universalist Church, got to wed his first husband-husband couple. And so he referred to it as, husband-husband. Millions have been misled by the preaching of irrelevant messages on social issues, positive thinking, and neo-orthodoxy. As we will see in a few weeks,

Paul had this to say about such times as these. Hello. He said, the time will come when many in the church will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires. That's 2 Timothy 4.3.

[5:43] One of the questions we're going to try and answer tonight is this. Are we in such times as Paul describes here? And for one thing, we know it will be times of difficulty, because he starts out talking about difficult times. Verse 1 again, but realize this, that in the last days, difficult times will come. Now, let me say this is not fortune telling. Paul didn't look into some crystal ball and come out with that statement. This is ultimate truth delivered to us from the mind of God, by the Spirit of God. The statement comes to us from the God who is incapable of lying. From this, we understand that either difficult days are approaching or that they are already here. And we'll further define that. The truth is that Paul's warning to us is now about 2,000 years old. In the intervening years, times have gotten progressively more difficult. It has been a time when heresies have become the characteristics of the characteristics of nominal churches, which is really no church at all. The problem over the centuries, there have been imposters in positions of authority within the professing church. One of the identifying marks of difficult times has been those periods where the ideas of men have been substituted for the truth of God. And when a church or a denomination goes down the road of substituting men's ideas for God's truth, it is substituting God himself and

replacing God with fallen, sinful men. Now, we should not underestimate just how widespread this problem is. We live on the buckle of the Bible belt. So we've been a little shielded from all of this. But having churches and entire denominations that are man-centered instead of God-centered is really quite prevalent in the West, and especially in the United States. There is in our day a widespread rejection of God's Word as the final authority. And trust me, that goes on in Bartlesville. Many even reject the idea that it is inspired. They treat the Bible as a sort of upper story fable. It's like you're reading Mother Goose or Aesop's fables. The danger is that such blasphemous rejection of truth originates within the church. You know, we're not talking about this massive assault from outside. People that are driving up and down 75 on Sunday morning. They're not assaulting the church with their ideas. This starts inside the church. It is not some outside force that is assaulting the doors of the church. So remember, false teachers originate within the church and not outside of it. Now, Paul saw this coming. He's walking with the Spirit of God. He saw this coming, and my class on Sunday morning studied this in Acts chapter 20 verses 29 and 30. The last time

Paul met with the Ephesian elders at Miletus, this is what he said. I know, that's pretty strong, isn't it? I know, that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. And from among your own selves, men will arise speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them. There's some really disturbing comments by Paul in that passage. He says that for perverse men, who will seek to destroy, and that's the concept here, they will seek to destroy followers of Christ, are going to arise even among the elder body. Boy, that's scary. Now, remember, Jesus already gave a promise that he's going to build his church, underline his and capitalize it, and that hell itself would not overpower the church. But the implication there is that hell will assault the church, though it won't be successful. It's not going to overpower the church. Nowhere does the Lord promise that his people, the true church, will be immune from spiritual danger. He does promise us that he'll be with us as we walk through the danger. But dangerous times and difficult times come. In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord has said this about the church through the generations. Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. And I'll tell you, if you've ever been around sheep, they're kind of pleasant to be. My wife wants me to buy her a black-faced sheep, because they have those in Scotland a lot.

And, of course, I help out. I say, well, how would we butcher it when it's time to... She flips out. We get the preacher up there to do a funeral when it dies, and we bury it. False prophets and false teachers are almost indistinguishable from the genuine article. They blend right in in most congregations, which is exactly what makes them so dangerous. They blend in. In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus clearly predicted that false prophets and false teachers would abound as we enter into the end times. And, my brothers, we can be sure of this. You can be absolutely certain we are in the end times.

Why do I say that so boldly? Well, listen to John in his inspired writings. 1 John 2, 18. Children, it is the last hour. And just as you heard that Antichrist is coming, even now, many Antichrists have appeared. From this, we know that it is the last hour. And, guys, I've got to tell you, he wrote that 2,000 years ago. And if we're in the last hour 2,000 years ago, we're in the last seconds in 2014, in my opinion. The last days fall between the first and second advents of Christ. That's the last days. We are in that period of time. It is in those days that Paul says difficult times will come. In the original language, the idea of difficult carries with it the idea that this is going to be perilous. It's going to be grievous. It can also be translated violent, even. That would certainly fit our culture in America. Another interesting word used here is the word times. That is not a reference to chronology, but to periods like periods of time, seasons, eras. Paul makes clear there are perilous times on earth. He also makes very clear that such times will become even more perilous as we approach the return of Christ. As the day approaches, those difficult times are going to increase. Now, there are some things that will mark out these difficult times. And one of them is the fact that men will be lovers of self. He starts out with that in verses 2 to 4. Men will be lovers of self. Doesn't stop there.

They're going to be lovers of money. Boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

[14:23] I've always wished Paul would be more explicit and bold, you know, in his autograph there. John MacArthur points out something here that I think is quite startling.

Men referred to here are not mankind in general or men that are part of the world of the unsaved, although I don't think these are saved men, but it is a reference to men in the church.

Paul's talking about the church. These are men claiming to belong to him, even serving in the capacity of pastors and elders. Again, this is all part of God's warning to us about false prophets and false teachers inside the church. These are the apostate leaders who lead apostate churches. They are spread across America. They have crosses and steeples, and they look like a church, and we have them here in our community. By the way, there are also women who serve in this capacity of a false teacher as well. I want to be an equal opportunity guy, politically correct.

There are plenty of women that do that. I won't name them like Joyce Meyer and those people. Paul lists 18 characteristics of ungodly apostate men and women who have corrupted or are corrupting the church until Christ returns, and we'll take them in order and give a very brief description of each one of them.

First of all, lovers of self, and the word there of lover is used as phileo. It means to have affection for someone. It's not nearly as strong as agape, but it's a Bible word. It's not a bad word or a wrong word.

[16:09] It's not wrong here, but it does indicate a love that is misdirected, not directed toward God or even God's people directed toward self. When love for self is elevated, love for God decreases. It's just natural.

You raise one, the other lowers. So when love for self elevates, love for God decreases.

Misdirected love is sinful when it robs God of the glory and honor due him.

Self-love is really the hallmark of much in the church today. This arose aggressively under the ministry of Robert Shuler, who redefined the gospel as being self-esteem. He was the big self-esteem guy.

But this theology was rooted before Shuler, and he learned from it, in the humanist movement, which had as its base evolutionary teaching. We came from slime. We're going to return to slime. What does it matter? Self-love is always associated with sin and pride. The new theologians proclaim that the problem in the church is that some men still believe it is God-centered when it should be centered on self-esteem and self-love. This type of self-love was captured in a very popular phrase.

[17:38] I had to memorize it one time. A man is the captain of his own ship and master of his own fate. Well, that's about anti-God and anti-Christian as you can become. Secondly, men will be lovers of money. Now, I've never loved money because it hadn't been around me long enough for me to get affectionate with it. It's just not there.

And right now, my money is going for little girl dresses and, you know, swings.

Christmas Day, she's going to be born. Lovers of money. This represents materialism, which is a craving for earthly possessions. I had many times in Vietnam, China, other areas of the persecuted church have them tell me, we're praying for the church in America. We don't know how you guys put up with the persecution.

You have to go in. And I said, well, what do you mean by that? He said, well, you know, you compete with materialism. How do you do that? How do you compete with materialism? You know, the guy that's got the lake cabin or the pontoon boat or the hunting lodge, how do you compete with that? There is a right use for money.

We're to provide shelter, clothing, food for our families, support for the church. Many false teachers and false preachers in our day are focused exclusively on money, especially that found in their pockets or bank account.

[19:11] That permeates the health and wealth false gospel. And Paul wrote about this in 1 Timothy 6.5. They suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

You know, that's what you're told if you ever watch some guys, and I'm not recommending it, but, you know, send me your money and you're going to have all these blessings and all these things are going to come your way. And they're always temporary, transitory. They're going to go away. In Titus, Paul says that these types in the church must be silenced. The false gospels of self-love and prosperity are related.

They go hand in hand. They promote each other and they feed on each other. Well, boastful. Men will be boastful. Being boastful is the outward manifestation of self-love and lovers of money. When you love yourself and you've got a lot of money, you can boast. The word boastful there in the Greek language is actually better translated a braggart. A braggart is a man who claims

greatness but doesn't possess it.

[20 : 21] That's really what a braggart is. Such a person is always the hero of his own stories. John MacArthur came in here to Tulsa, the hotbed of charismatic theology, and he preached on charismatic theology right after he'd written his books on charismatic theology.

He didn't call any names, but down there you didn't have to. He said, you show me a man who's into Rolexes and gold chains and watches and has corporate jets and is a hero of all his own stories and names universities after himself.

That was a clue. And he said, I'll show you a guy that leaks all over. I mean, that was John. A boastful person leads one. By the way, I bought his charismatic book that night and he autographed it for me.

And now it's in Branson in Rob's library. A boastful person leads to another one of the characteristics that Paul mentions because a boastful person is also an arrogant person. Find a person that is boastful and you will find a person that is also arrogant.

They fit hand in glove. A person who is arrogant has a very high view of himself. And it's a view, by the way, much higher than the evidence will support.

[21 : 39] There's no evidence that they should have that view of themselves. Arrogant is from a Greek word meaning to place above and that imagery certainly fits.

Christ turned his attention to who? Think of the Sermon on the Mount. The meek. The lowly. And he condemned the mighty and the arrogant.

You know, he came to exalt the humble and humble the exalted. And he did a good job of it. Paul also tells us that in these difficult times there's going to be men who are revilers.

That is actually the Greek word for blasphemous. It has the basic idea of one that is abusive and slanderous. If a person is contemptuous of others, he will revile them.

Any man who elevates himself naturally demotes those around him. If he's the hero of all his own stories, then no one else can be.

[22 : 44] Disobedient to parents. Now, that's basically self-explanatory. It takes us all the way back to the Ten Commandments about honoring your father and mother. But disobedient to parents.

Disobedience directed at parents is epidemic in our age. My officers deal with this every day. If you've got a scanner, you'll hear the word ungovernable.

We have a situation where they are ungovernable. You will be shocked at how many times in a school year we'll get a call from usually a weeping mother who's the only parent in the house.

My 12-year-old refuses to go to school. Paul, he's sitting in the middle of the yard. He won't get on the bus. I don't know how my dad would have handled that. Paul, is there any question in anybody's mind?

Now you would. Back then you would. I love the story of Jefferson Davis, the first and only president of the Confederacy. Oh, yeah.

[23 : 50] He grew up on a plantation in Mississippi. He was a little boy and it was time for school and he announced to his dad he wasn't going to school. His dad said, okay, if you don't want to go to school, you don't have to go to school, but you're going to have to work.

He said, okay. He had, Jefferson Davis' father had a trusted slave named James Pemberton. In fact, he was basically the plantation manager and had a salary.

He was well respected. And he said, he called Mr. Pemberton and he signed his little six-year-old son to Mr. Pemberton. He worked him until nine o'clock that night.

And Jefferson Davis did say a word, but the next morning he got up and went to school. That was the way to handle it. I am totally lost here.

Disobedient parents, we deal with parentless homes. You know, there's one parent. We deal with spiritual failures of fathers and we deal with the government takeover of the educational system.

[24 : 52] And we see all that in my statistics. A child that will rebel against a parent will rebel against a nation, against a nation's laws, against the culture, against the church, and ultimately against God.

It starts at home. It starts at home. Difficult times. Men will be ungrateful. Again, this is self-explanatory.

Self-elevated people feel no need to express gratitude. Ungrateful people despise even grace.

Such ungratefulness is a hallmark of our age. I'll never forget the story of Jim Croce, the singer. I like this music. Put on a concert.

Can't remember where. And standing outside the exit after the concert was a young man that was a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University.

[26:00] And he came walking out and he said, Mr. Croce, could I talk to you for just a moment? I know you're probably in a hurry. He said, what do you want? And he said, I'd just like one minute to tell you about Jesus Christ.

And he said, what do I need bleep that bleep for? He got his jet, flew home to Louisiana, and flew into a mountain.

And stood before the person that he used. He described as human excrement. Stood before him. Never made it home. Flew into a mountain.

Men will be unholy. This is a word used for gross indecency. It was used to describe a person. Believe it or not, this is the Greek.

Who refused to bury a dead person. And that's pretty bad. Or who committed incest. And that's really bad. Unholy people are driven to fulfill their own lusts.

[27:06] In the end times, difficult days, will be unholy people in the church. Unloving people. A self-loving person is unable to extend love to others.

He just doesn't have it in him. The spirit of unlove has led to massive crimes of abuse. You'd be surprised in this town how much abuse we get.

Husband beats wife. Husband beats children. Wife beats husband. Wife beats children. Children beat parents. We get it all.

We get it all. The spirit of unlove has led to an epidemic of abuse in America's homes. This abuse is between husband, wife, children, and parents.

This is the stuff of headlines. And our town hadn't been immune, guys. We've had the crime of double murder in the last 60 days in this town.

[28:08] Based upon the lack of love in a home. I mean, it's a real world out there. They will be irreconcilable.

That is a trait of those who refuse to change. It doesn't matter how desperate the situation comes. Men who are lovers of self simply will not change.

These are people determined to have their own way, even if it destroys the life of friends, families, or ultimately themselves. But they're not going to change.

They're also going to rise up in the church malicious gossips. This is from the Greek word diabolos, meaning accuser. It is used many times in the New Testament to refer to Satan.

We get the English word diabolical from it. Engulfed in self-love, malicious gossips do the work of Satan. They do the work of Satan.

[29:10] And, boy, the Bible really soundly deals with gossip, doesn't it? And yet we have that all the time. There will be men without self-control.

This describes a person who has no inhibitions and no shame. Do we not live in a time of no inhibitions and no shame? I saw today in the paper where the computer where a Christian couple in New York State were fined \$13,000 because they wouldn't perform a lesbian wedding on their farm. They have a chapel and they have a little honeymoon suite and all that out in the woods. And they refused to conduct a lesbian marriage.

And the paper ran the picture to the ladies. I said, they made a mistake. They should have refused on the grounds of being overweight. These women weighing in at about 350, 400 pounds just say, hey, they're just too heavy. We can't do this.

But they refused on that. They're closing down. They're closing down. My daughter-in-law, who's a marriage planner and a good one, she has contingency plans to shut down.

[30:19] And she's been told by her Christian lawyer that the day will come when you will be tested. The ACU is paying people to test the waters. Brutal.

Brutal refers to savagery. It is living like a wild beast whose nature is to attack and destroy the defenseless.

There was your wife out there looking in. Brutality is an outgrowth of all the above traits. It reminds me of the bully on the playground.

Remember those days? I don't know why this is true. I always stood up for the underdog. And when a kid was being bullied, they'd come to me.

And I don't know why because I was scared to death. I didn't want to fight, but I had my bluff in. I guess I bullied the bullies. But kids always came to me.

[31:19] But let me tell you, there were bullies on the playground. And I'm going to tell you, when I went into the corporate world, where's Lee? There he is. I found out there's bullies in the boardroom.

There's bullies in the executive tower. There's bullies. Haters of good. These are the people who hate what they should love and love what they should hate.

And that is a hallmark. Now, Kylie, you're being paged out there. And that is a hallmark of the day. They call good evil and evil good. Haters of that which is good are under divine judgment.

Treacherous. Now, if you get a copy of this, ignore lovers of elf. You can love an elf. Lovers of self. There's a lot more in here, too.

Lovers of self have no room in their hearts to love others. Eventually, they will turn against family and friends. Treachery is the natural outgrowth for lovers of self.

[32:25] Money, boastful, arrogant, and all the other characteristics we have looked at. That's my buddy there. Reckless. This is a person that is careless and negligent.

This may not be as serious as the other traits and can sometimes be entered into unconsciously. You just don't realize, you know, that certain things that come into your life, you become reckless. You need to just repent of that, confess it, and get back on track.

But self-centered people become reckless people because they focus on themselves. When you focus on yourself, you lose track. You get off track. Conceited.

This is the person that has a very much too high view of self. It is the image of a person in the Greek language enveloped in smoke or in a fog.

He can't even see that he is conceited because of his conceit. Conceit has built a fog around him. Conceited. Conceited. Paul gave stern warnings about leaders in the church being conceited.

[33:32] Conceited. Well, it's a dangerous, dangerous sin. And I'll tell you, you watch, I don't recommend it, but you see these false teachers on TV? Well, they are conceited.

And then Paul says there's going to be difficult days in the church because there will be lovers of pleasure. This is the final sinful characteristic in Paul's list.

Those who love pleasure have no room for God. The church is filled with leaders who are seekers of pleasure.

And while the term here is beyond that which is only sexual, we have seen some very high profile ministers fall to such temptation.

And let me tell you, with the speed of media today and the Internet, those falls are heard throughout the world.

[34:29] I mean, it's practically instant. And they love to report the fall of a Jimmy Swaggart, a Jim Baker. There are a lot of others.

There are a lot of others. Well, these are the 18 dangers that Paul saw in the church in his day. And he and the Lord and Jude and Peter and John and others saw these things increasing just prior to the Lord's return.

And I'll tell you, you can reflect on those really slowly and quietly in your quiet time and realize this is the hallmark of our day. This is the hallmark of our day.

These leaders who foster false systems of belief while living corrupt lives themselves are not only lovers of self, but they are charlatans when it comes to true religion.

They're charlatans. And TV's full of them. There's charlatans everywhere. They hold to a form of godliness. The word form, again, displays the intrigue of knowledge of the Holy Spirit and his ability to communicate through men to each generation.

[36:12] You know, the Holy Spirit communicates to us. And yet these guys are charlatans. They abuse what the Holy Spirit has taught the church. Form there is the Greek word morphos, which is akin to a silhouette.

It's talking about a shadow or a silhouette, something that is very shadowy. Can't get your hands on it. It just kind of moves in the darkness. In Jesus' day, the scribes and Pharisees were concerned with their brand of morphos, their brand of being silhouettes.

They wore beautiful, ornate robes. They hung bells from their garments so people would hear them approaching, knew they were in the vicinity.

They would stand back and look at them in awe. It was all an outward form, but inwardly they were full of all manner of corruption. Jesus said, you're full of dead men's bones.

They were of their father, the devil. False teachers in Paul's day and ours hold a form of godliness. It is an outline of Christianity, but without substance.

[37 : 30] Brothers, that makes them very dangerous. Dangerous if your kids go off to school and get hooked on one of these guys. Immature believers follow them, believing they are teaching truth.

They believe they are teaching truth, and they are not. Why can't people discern that? Because people don't know what the truth is. Why can't they? They don't get in the word of God. They don't get in the word of God.

False teachers in Paul's day and ours hold a form of godliness. It is this outline, but with no substance.

How do we know them? They do not hold or teach the power of the true gospel. They are concerned with healings and wealth and things that are going to pass away.

You know, I have often said this. Jesus did not do Lazarus any favors. You know, Jesus did that for everybody else who was standing there.

[38 : 33] But I am sure Lazarus was quite happy because he was in glory. And the Lord said, you have to go back. You know, there is a reason for this. All of the things these guys are concerned with are temporary.

They do not love God. They do not love his word. In fact, they twist it and abuse it. And nor do they love his people. They love themselves. They are lovers of self.

Well, what are we supposed to do with men and women like this? Paul says, and he gives some really good advice, avoid them.

Plain and simple. Avoid them. And even in my studies, wanting to know what some of these guys are teaching, I can only watch like a minute or two.

And then I start, you know, throwing stuff on the TV and, you know, yelling and Diane gets upset. I don't make a diet of those guys, whatever you do. Some people used to watch them just for the show.

[39 : 36] When I grew up here, little boy, we watched Oral Roberts. We weren't a fan of Oral Roberts. It was just cheap entertainment in a small town. And we were getting ready for church and, you know, TV was on and we turned off and go to a true church.

We used to like to watch Oral because it was a show. Paul says, avoid them. And then he talks about the captors of the weak.

For among this is verse 6 and 7. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate or take captive weak women weighted down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Another mark of false teachers is their ability to capture weak people. And, boy, they do. In the Southern Baptist Convention, 265 people a day join a cult.

265 people a day. Paul singles out women here. Now, it applies to men. But Paul singles out women here. And I want to say this with kindness. If it were not for women, the extreme charismatic movement would collapse in a month.

[41 : 02] That's where they get most of their money. That's where the tongues movement caught on. And you can trace this all historically. It would collapse on itself.

Now, let me make a very politically incorrect statement. Okay? But God's truth is eternal. Women are the weaker vessel.

And when they are weighted down with life, they will turn and embrace error. And, you know, the saddest thing, and we've seen them in this church, the saddest thing is to see a woman who has to be the spiritual head of her household.

Now, it's not her fault. God bless her, pray for her, help her. But she's been forced into it because of an unbelieving husband or a husband that has abandoned her.

And the woman becomes the spirit. I've... There was a time when I had my youngest granddaughter was the spiritual leader of that home. And she was about seven years old then, if you can believe that.

[42 : 08] Boy, it was sad. Diane and I just pulled what little hair I have out. Women, if left alone, will embrace error.

Now, that's really politically incorrect. And I'm going to give you a very clear example of this, okay? Her name was Eve.

Her name was Eve. Eve heard from the... I started to say greatest.

I don't want to use that word. The most powerful false teacher there ever was. The serpent. Indwelt by Satan himself.

And he convinced her that she could be like God. Now, the question is not... The question for us is not, why did Eve do that?

[43:10] The question for us is, where was Adam? Where was Adam? And I used to kind of pretend at home with Diane. I said, well, you know, Adam was in the other county and he was putting in a garden and, you know...

You know what the scriptures say? Eve did... Eve ate the forbidden fruit. And Adam, who was with her, also ate.

He went in the next county. He saw the whole thing. He heard it all. He didn't just walk up on that and say, what have you done? The worst theology that I ever saw was Adam took the role of Christ and atoned for Eve's sin.

That's pitiful. Adam, who was with her, also ate. And you know what they call that? Adam's sin.

You will never read the scripture where it says Eve's sin. It's Adam's sin. Adam's sin. Such women and men learn much from false teachers, but they're not able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

[44:20] They embrace error. And when you do that long enough, error appears to be truth. They like a system that says if you send your money to the latest charlatan, you will be made right with God.

You'll get health, wealth. Can I make another politically incorrect statement? Do you ever notice a lot of these are black women?

I mean, I'm being very frank with you. They are. A lot of them are black women. But they're in a single parent home. Thank God they're in church, but they're getting inundated with this error. Finally, I've done political incorrectness enough for one night. They oppose truth. Just as Janice and Jamboree's.

Do you know who those guys were? Remember Moses went in and he put the rod down and it turned into a snake? These two guys come along and they put their rods down and they turned into snakes.

[45:24] They were magicians. And Moses' snake ate them, ate their snake. Do you know? I didn't know this until two days ago. Janice and Jamboree's is not in the Bible.

I thought they were back in Exodus. They're not there. It's tradition gives us their names. There was a bunch of magicians. Now, if you can prove me wrong, please do so, but you're going to be proving MacArthur wrong because he says they're not back there.

But these were two of the Egyptian magicians, probably the chief magicians, that opposed Moses. They were able to mislead the crowd, including Pharaoh, into believing they could do the same miracles as Moses.

False tree teachers try to mimic the miracles of the Lord or of the miracles that occurred in the apostolic age with the apostles, which passed away.

But like Janice and Jamboree's, these are men and women of depraved minds. Theirs is a false faith, and they are to be rejected.

[46:36] They can wreak havoc in the church, but there is a limit. Paul says there comes a point where they can't make further progress.

They can harm a church and prevent people from hearing about true salvation, but they are incapable of robbing the truly redeemed people from their salvation.

They cannot take away the redeemed's salvation that is secure in the Lord. Well, let's close with application to what we studied.

One, realize that the church is in spiritual warfare, and warfare will intensify as the return of Christ approaches.

Two, be doctrinally discerning and test every message that claims to be Christian against God's word to see whether or not it is true.

[47:37] Another way to put that, be Bereans. Paul preached to the region of Berea. They went home. They opened up their Bibles, which were scrolls, to see if what he said was true. Paul was pleased.

They were Bereans. They didn't challenge what he said. They questioned, and they wanted to make sure it was accurate, and it was. Three, strive to be vessels of honor for the Lord to use.

Four, be patient because the ultimate victory belongs to Christ. We may go into heaven battered and bruised, but guys, Jesus wins.

I've read the end of the book. Jesus wins. The church today faces difficult times. There are outward attacks whereby Satan uses governments that are hostile to the cause of Christ to thwart the church.

There are also inward attacks coming from false teachers and false leaders. But ever faithful to the truth, be ever faithful to the truth taught in the word of God.

[48:48] And love the appearing of our Lord. Again, he wins. Satan loses. Now, remember, just prior to the return of the Lord, the Bible says there will be a great apostasy.

Apostasy is not the pygmy in Africa who never hurt. The pygmy in Africa is lost, but he's not an apostate. Apostasy is those who've heard the truth, understood the truth, in an outward fashion maybe embraced some of the truth, and then fell away.

But just before Christ appears, there will be a great apostasy. At the end of the great apostasy, then the Antichrist will appear. And let me say something.

I've been saying something for an hour and a half. The church will be here for part of the apostasy. And you may say, well, wait a minute.

I thought that Christ could return to any more. Guys, we're in apostasy. It's already happened.

We're going to be here for that. It's not unusual for us to be here for that. But we will not be here for the Antichrist.

[49:57] Don't go buy books that says who the Antichrist is. It's none of our business. We don't care. And I've heard so many guys now, I can't keep them all in order. You know, John Kennedy, Anwar Sadat, Henry Kissinger, King Juan Carlos of Spain.

I've heard all these guys. I believe the apostasy has begun. And it's spreading like wildfire because of instant media and Internet.

So my message tonight is really this. Look up your redemption drawing tonight.