

# A PRESCRIPTION for PERILOUS TIMES

By Bill Irby

**A PRESCRIPTION FOR PERILOUS TIMES:** As Paul wrote the second letter to his protégé Timothy he provided a warning: This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come (2 Timothy 3:1). Paul meant to help Timothy even though the news he told him was not good. When the apostle spoke of the last days he spoke of the days in which he and Timothy were living. We, too, live in the last days. The “last days” are the days of the Christian dispensation (which was preceded by the Patriarchal and Mosaic periods or dispensations). When it ends, this old place will be finished (see 2 Peter 3:9ff.). Many of the problems Timothy faced in his part of the last days are still present here in our part of the last days.

What does the word “perilous” mean? The English word means “fraught with peril, dangerous; hazardous, full of risk.” The Greek word behind the English means “hard to deal, difficult, dangerous.” That word is frequently coupled with the word for time which well may be rendered as a couplet, “hard times.” Paul is making a point to Timothy. He told him that hard times were coming. The idea is that Timothy had better be ready. Paul would help his son in the faith to be ready through the instruction in this chapter.

Paul told Timothy that people would make his times perilous or hard. What kind of people? Look at the list (2 Timothy 3:2-9): They were self-lovers, covetous, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, uncontrollable, fierce, despisers of good people, traitors, headstrong, pleasure lovers and God-haters. Furthermore they were sneaky, tricky and hypocritical. They practiced folly and thus they were foolish. We still have this kind of folks with us today. They make the lives of good people hard in both the spiritual and material realms. These folks can, should and must be rebuked with the truth of God’s Word (2 Timothy 3:16-4:5). When sin gets hold of a man he becomes a peril to all that are around him.

Paul also told Timothy that he might as well expect persecution in these hard times. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). Paul did not paint a rosy picture for the young preacher. Times will be tough at times. But Paul told him that he could make it...and so can we.

How can we make it through these hard and perilous times? Well, God has a prescription for us that will surely help us. I used to work in drugstores and hospitals and got to know a little about the practice of Pharmacy. A pharmacist is an important link in the chain of healthcare in our system. The doctors have at their disposal very powerful drugs. The pharmacist makes sure they are dispensed properly and that folks know the possible problems associated with modern powerful chemical agents. The thing about a good pharmacist is that he or she will only dispense precisely what the doctor orders on the prescription. Nothing more and nothing less will do. So it is with God’s prescription for these hard times. We must follow it precisely and continually.

What is the prescription? Paul told him to continue in the truth he had learned (2 Timothy 3:14). He was to follow the Scriptures (3:15-17). He was to preach the word (4:1-4). He had to be on guard (4:5). Timothy would need to endure (that is, patiently put up with) afflictions (4:5). And he was told to do his work (4:5). We can all see how that each of these charges or admonitions to Timothy can apply to us today. Yes, spiritual as well as material hard times do indeed come into our lives. But we can stay ready by taking to heart God’s prescription. It is good medicine for bad times.