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2 Timothy 4:3-4: ***“The Time Has Come”***

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“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths (2 Timothy 4:3-4).”

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are in a time where people do not endure sound teaching. People are turning away from listening to the truth of God’s Word. And they are turning their itching ears to be scratched with myths, fictions, or fables that are simply not true, but foolish human inventions. For example, it can be a redefinition of Jesus. Instead of a Jesus who saves us from sin, death, and hell, there are those who create a Jesus that fits their bill - a good man, who had a lot of good ideas, and lived and taught a type of love that is tolerant of everything and makes life better down here. Some turn to other religions that might be more palatable, or to no religion at all. Peter writes:

For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly (2 Peter 3:5-7).

People do not want to acknowledge the fact that the earth experienced a great flood because that takes us to the reality of our rebellion against God. When we read the biblical account of the flood and ask ourselves what evidence we should expect, the answer is obvious—billions of dead plants and animals buried in rock layers laid down by water all over the world. And that’s exactly what we find. We even find fossilized shellfish in the Himalayas. The global, cataclysmic Genesis Flood and its aftermath was an actual event in history, just as God tells us in His record of the earth’s history: “And God said to Noah, ‘I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth (Genesis 6:13).’”

Who wants to acknowledge that such a flood really happened? To do so would force us to consider the other words of Scripture that speak about a final judgment by fire that will be for the destruction of the ungodly. That would certainly spoil the sin party. And so, we have been given the myth of evolution in order to get rid of God so that we can do whatever we want to do without the terrors of conscience and the possibility of facing a final judgment.

Or, if one can’t understand the complexities of life apart from an intelligent designer, then just sit back in your easy chair and watch “*Ancient Aliens*” on the History Channel. There you can learn through ancient texts, archaeology, and various legends about ancient astronauts from other planets who made us, mated with us, genetically altered us, or simply shaped our evolution by increasing our knowledge. Never mind the fact of Scripture that God created mankind to be in his image (Genesis 1:27). Never mind the fact that even the angels were made to be servants of God and to watch and learn as God deals with mankind. As it says, our salvation, the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories are “things into which angels

long to look (1 Peter 1:10-12).” Certainly, the fallen angels (the devil and his demons) are not too thrilled to look at Jesus and subsequent glories at all. Perhaps that’s why they like to deceive and destroy mankind through Ouija boards, astrological myths, the occult, apparitions, UFOs and orbs of light. It makes sense. That’s how they masquerade (2 Cor. 11:14-15).

Myths. Fictions. Fables. Whatever it takes to deceive. This comes from the enraged devil and his demons and all those who desire and love to sin while rejecting God’s Holy Word. Of course, they would all tell us that WE are the ones who follow myths, fictions, and fables. The devil and this unbelieving world would drum it into our ears that we are the ones who have been sorely deceived. Peter writes:

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:16-21).

We do not follow myths, fictions, and fables! The Holy Spirit bears witness about Christ and reveals him to us in both the Old and New Testaments, through the prophets and the apostles. The apostles identify and bear witness about Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ (John 15:26-27). The apostles have heard, they have seen with their eyes, they have touched with their hands, and they testify to it, and proclaim to you and me the eternal life (1 John 1:2) in the forgiveness of sins. We believe through their message (John 17:20).

Therefore we have not received a spirit of slavery to fall back into error and fear. Rather, we have received the Spirit of adoption as sons. We have been given the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). And we cry out to our heavenly Father to help us overcome all that would take us away from Him and the inheritance that is ours from the foundation of the world. As it says, “the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him (Romans 8:16-17).” We do suffer with him. As we die to myths and sin, we cry out as Jesus cried out in his death, and we are in the hands of our heavenly Father. And as Jesus was delivered and rose from the death, we also shall be delivered and rise from the death - glorified with Christ! Consequently, let us not turn away from the truth only to wander off into myths and sin.

After all, we have the very breath of God! Isn’t that what our epistle lesson boldly proclaims? Hear it again: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness . . . (2 Timothy 3:16).” Look at this precious gift! One cannot speak a word without breath. Breath carries with it the communication of what is on the inside of us. In the same way,

God gives to us that which is inside of Him. He communicates to us the image of himself in his one and only Son, and gives all that Christ has done in his life, sufferings and death. His Spirit and Word touches our very existence and changes everything. It turns us from myths and sin and gives to us the explanation that we so desperately seek. It teaches us about the relationship that God would have with us forever; how we are to be his eternal companion and receive all that is in Him. It tells us of how we have fallen away from this, and how it has been restored in us through the cross and the forgiveness of sins. The truth of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross has set us free.

The Time Has Come when we are more and more surrounded by Myths, Fictions, and Fables. But despite that fact, for the Christian, **The Time Has Come** to all the more tenaciously hold to God's truth and never stop proclaiming it. After all, it is his very heart to us. The pastors in the public assembly, and the priesthood of all believers in every day life, never stop testifying to the fact that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that Jesus lived a sinless life on our behalf and suffered and died for our uncleanness. Because we are overjoyed by the inheritance that has been given to us, we do not let go. May we never exchange the truth about God for a lie (Romans 1:25). Rather, let us worship and serve the Creator. In other words, may God grant us grace to always acknowledge that every good gift come from him who is by nature good, and may we submit to his great love by loving forever. Indeed, let us worship and serve the Creator, who is blessed forever!

Amen.

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