

# **Words of Grace Seasoned With Salt**

*Bible Studies, Personal Opinions About Current And Future Events*

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June 2015

## **The Falling Away**

*The coming worldwide apostasy*

In 2 Thessalonians 2:1-10 Paul wrote these words:

**1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,**

**2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.**

**3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;**

**4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.**

**5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?**

**6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.**

**7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.**

**8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:**

**9 *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,**

**10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.**

According to these verses someone had the Thessalonians “all shook up” (verse 2) concerning the second coming of Christ for the church. Someone led them to believe he was about to come back. (Sound familiar?) Paul wrote these words to show them that Christ’s coming was not at hand, as they were led to believe. He said Christ’s coming is preceded by a number of events he lists in these verses. He said until these events take place, no one can say with certainty his coming is at hand.

One of the events Paul said would precede the coming of Christ for the church was a *falling away*. He wrote: **Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first.**

The falling away must FIRST come, before Christ comes again. The falling away precedes the coming of Christ. Christ will not come until there is **first** a falling away along with a number of other events listed in these verses.

The Greek word for falling away is apostasia. It does not take a Greek Scholar or a rocket scientist to see what this word means. It's apostasy. Some people say a revival will precede Christ's coming, but Paul says just the opposite. He said Christ's coming for the church in verse 1 is preceded by a major falling away or apostasy according to verse 3. This is why Paul said his coming is not at hand. He will not come until after this apostasy is fully developed.

He calls this apostasy, *the mystery of iniquity* in verse 7 and he said it will continue to work and work till Christ comes again. This apostasy will prepare the way for the coming of the antichrist. And here is a thought: If it prepares the way for the coming of the antichrist, then it must have something in common with him. You will learn what it is as you read this article.

The question is; what does this apostasy look like? How does the Bible describe it? How can we identify it? What is the nature of the falling away? We need to know these things now, so when it comes we can expose it and warn people about it. There is more than one description of the falling away and apostasy in the New Testament, but we will confine our study to Paul's description of it in 2 Timothy chapter three.

### **2 Timothy 3:1-9**

**1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.**

**2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,**

**3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,**

**4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;**

**5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.**

**6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,**

**7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

**8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.**

**9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all *men*, as theirs also was.**

In these verses, Paul described the last days that precede the coming of Christ for the church. It is like 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. Their context is the same. In these verses, there is a group of men God has singled out for us to pay special

attention to. Once we see who and what they are like, it will help us to identify the fallen away and apostasy of 2 Thessalonians 2 that precedes Christ's coming.

In verse 5, he warns us about men who have a **form of godliness**. The Greek word for the word "form" is morphosin. We get our word metamorphous from it. It is something that changes from one form and appearance into another; such as a caterpillar is changed and transformed into a butterfly. Prior to becoming a butterfly, he is a caterpillar. The change is so amazing that it's hard to believe they are the same creature. Looking at a beautiful butterfly some people do not believe he was once an ugly caterpillar.

These men have an outward form of godliness. They appear to be godly men, which mean they are religious men. This is a warning about men who appear to be religious and godly, but they are not. Why? Because they **deny the power of godliness**. What is the power of godliness? The gospel is the power of God unto salvation and the power of godliness, for men are made godly and righteous by believing the gospel. Therefore, these men deny the true gospel. They have an outward form and appearance of godliness, while at the same time they deny the power of godliness. They morph themselves. They change their outward appearance. Outwardly, they look and sound like real men of God, but it's a masquerade designed to fool us, because inwardly these men are satanic.

They are just like the men God warned us about in 2 Corinthians 11:3-4: Paul wrote: ***But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.***

In these verses, Paul warned the Corinthians and us about men who preached a jesus, a gospel and a spirit that he did not preach. In verses 13-15 he identifies these men:

***For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.***

The men who preached the other jesus, gospel and spirit were ministers of Satan, but they transformed themselves as the ministers of righteousness. They appeared as the ministers of righteousness, because they preached a jesus, a gospel and a spirit just like the true apostles of Christ, but theirs were counterfeits. They are just like the men Paul warned us about in 2 Timothy 3:5 who have a form or appearance of godliness while at the same time they denied the power of godliness.

This concerned Paul, because he knew most people judge men and especially religious men, by their outward appearance. If you judge the men of 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 and 2 Timothy 3:5 by their outward appearance you would be fooled, because they all have a form and appearance of godliness. The devil and his ministers never appear to be who they really are. In view of their deception Paul gave us a full description of these men in this chapter so we identify and expose them.

When reading 2 Timothy 3 always keep in mind that verses 1-4 is a description of the men of verse 5 who have a false form of godliness. And verses 6-8 are also a description of these same men.

### **Verses 2-3**

#### **Lovers of themselves**

These men preach and promote self love, self esteem, self promotion, self improvement, self enrichment, self awareness, and self advancement.

#### **Covetous**

These men covet money and lust after money. Most of their time is spent preaching and teaching about money, begging for money and promising money to covetous people like them. 2 Peter 2:3,15, Jude 1:11

#### **Boasters, proud**

Some of these men are so proud that they claim to be little gods. They call themselves gods and little messiahs. (See note at end)

#### **Blasphemers**

What can be more blasphemous than to preach a counterfeit Jesus, gospel and spirit?

#### **Without natural affection**

Even though they are religious, some of these men are sodomites. This should not surprise us, for sodomites can be religious.

2 Kings 23:7, Jude 1:7-8.

#### **Incontinent**

This is someone who is given over to sexual sins and sexual perversions of all types. They are religious, but many of them are sexual perverts such as sodomites and whores.

2 Peter 2:14

#### **Fierce**

If you oppose them they will persecute and even kill you. The false apostles of 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 persecuted Paul, Christ and all the apostles. The men who have this false form of godliness are a part of the satanic religious system of this

world that has persecuted God's people throughout history. John describes how dangerous this religious system is in Revelation 17. When John saw it he said she is: ***Drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.*** (Rev.17:6)

#### **Verse 4**

##### **They are traitors**

They are traitors of the Lord for they deny him (2 Peter 2:1, Jude 1:4) and true believers also. Luke 21:16

##### **Highminded**

They place themselves on the same level of importance as Jesus, the apostles and prophets. They demand the respect of men.

##### **They love pleasure more than God**

The thing that gives these men the most pleasure is sex, money, wealth and power.

#### **Verses 6-7**

##### **They creep into houses**

Even though this applies to ordinary houses and homes of people, it also applies to local churches for every local church in the Bible met in some one's home. (See Romans 16:5) The word creep means: to move secretly, to move so as to escape detection, or prevent suspicion. In other words, these men creep into churches undetected. No one knows who they really are. Why? They have a form of godliness. They use the appearance of godliness to creep into churches without being detected. They are wolves, but they appear as sheep.

Jude said this about them in 1:4: ***For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.***

Titus said about them: ***For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.*** Titus 1:10

##### **They lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts**

The favorite target of these men and all false teachers is women. Keep in mind that the first person the devil deceived in the Bible was a woman. It was Eve who was deceived by Satan and not Adam according to 1 Timothy 1:14. That is why God calls the woman the weaker vessel in 1 Peter 3:7. She is weaker, because

she is easier to deceive. Why? Because most women judge men by the outward appearance and by their physical senses.

The women they target the most are silly women who are laden down with sin and led away with diver's lusts. This shows us their main target is either lost women or carnal women, who are easily led away from the truth by lust.

In 2 Timothy 4:3-4 Paul wrote: ***For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*** When silly women are led away of their own lusts it says, they turn from teachers who teach sound doctrine, to teachers who will tickle their ears with fables and lies

***They are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth***

This is true of both the women and the men who teach them. Outwardly, they appear to be searching for truth, but they never find the truth. Why? Because you can't learn truth from men who are reprobates, blasphemers and corrupt. (Verse 8) No one comes into the knowledge of the truth listening to reprobates. All you learn from them are lies and fables and false doctrine. You don't find gold in garbage cans and you don't find truth in reprobate teachers.

**Verse 8**

***Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.***

This is a major clue as to the identity of these men and their church and the religious system they are a part of. These men who have a form or appearance of godliness are AS the two men who withstood Moses and Aaron. Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, but how did they do it? When you see how they did it, then you will get a clearer picture of the men of 2 Timothy 3:5 and the nature of the falling away of 2 Thessalonians 2.

**How Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses**

In Exodus 7-8 God sent Moses to command Pharaoh to let Israel leave Egypt and warned him that if he didn't he would smite Egypt with miraculous plagues, but notice what happened.

In Exodus 7:10-12 it says: ***And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.***

In Exodus 7:20-22 it says: ***And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said.***

In Exodus 8:6-7 it says: ***And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.***

Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, by working satanic signs, wonders and miracles! And Paul said, ***so do these also resist the truth.*** The men we are warned about throughout this chapter oppose the truth like Jannes and Jambres by working satanic signs, wonders and miracles. This is major clue as to the identity of the men in verse 5 and their church and religious movement they are a part of.

#### *Putting the pieces of the puzzle together*

In 2 Timothy 3 God has described the last days that precede the coming of Christ. These verses give us a picture of the future before it happens, for only God knows the future. He said the last days will be perilous times, meaning days of danger, deception, tribulation and trials. In these verses, he has put the spot light upon a particular group of men in verse 5 to beware of and this is the description he gives of them:

\*They have a form or appearance of godliness. They appear as righteous and godly men when in fact they are like Jannes and Jambres in verse 8 who opposed Moses and the truth.

\*They are highminded, proud and boasters who claim the same authority as Jesus and the apostles and prophets of the Lord.

\*They are traitors who deny the Lord like Judas and God's people to save their own neck.

\*They are lovers of themselves. They promote themselves and exalt themselves above everyone else. They place themselves on a higher level of spirituality than everyone else and expect and demand men to esteem and praise them.

\*They covet and lust after money. Their ministries are motivated by the love of money. Money is their goal and their god and many of them are very wealthy. They preach the gospel of health, wealth and prosperity.

\*They are blasphemers, because the Jesus and gospel and spirit they preach are false. They are the ultimate blasphemers.

\*They are without natural affection, meaning many of them are sodomites.

\*They love the pleasures of this world which are; sex, money, wealth, riches and power.

\*They are incontinent, meaning they are given over to all types of sexual sins and perversions.

\*They appear as if they are harmless, when in reality they are fierce. If you expose or oppose them, they will persecute you and kill you if they had a chance. One said, he wished God would give him a machine gun to kill all those who opposed him. Another prayed that God would kill all those who exposed him. (See note at end)

\*They creep into houses and churches unawares, for they appear as godly men or sheep and not as the wolves and devils they really are.

\*Their favorite target is woman and most of their followers are women, especially lost women and carnal women who are laden with sins and led away by carnal lusts. Some of them are women preachers. (See note at end)

\*They and those who follow them are ever learning, but they never come into the knowledge of the truth, because they are reprobate concerning the truth and are blasphemers.

\*They are like Jannes and Jambres who withstood Moses. They have a form of godliness, preach a false Jesus, a false gospel and a false spirit and work satanic signs, wonders and miracles to deceive the hearts of the simple.

After putting all the parts to the puzzle together do you see who these men are? Can you identify the church and religious system these men are a part of? It should be obvious that what Paul describes in these verses is the modern day charismatic movement. He made this prediction nearly 2000 years before it showed up. This is a perfect picture of the charismatic movement of today and of its preachers who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.

**The modern day charismatic movement is the falling away of 2  
Thessalonians 2:3.**

Paul is not the only New Testament writer who warned us about these men who work satanic signs and wonders that deceive people. Jesus warned us about them years before Paul. For example he said in Matthew 24:22-24:

***And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.***

The context here is the same as 2 Timothy 3 and 2 Thessalonians 2. It's the last days that precede the second coming of Christ. The men God warned us about in 2 Timothy 3 are the same men found in verse 24 which says: ***For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders.***

Again, we find a prophecy of a group of men who will work signs and wonders to deceive people before Christ comes. The religious system that promotes signs and wonders and miracles today more than any other, is the charismatic religious movement. And that movement deceives people just like these men. How? By the counterfeit Jesus, gospel and spirit they preach and by their counterfeit signs, wonders and miracles. (Notice they also deceive people about the time and place of the second coming of Christ in verse 26 just as Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 2:3.)

John also warned us about these men in Revelation 13:11-15.

***And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.***

Again, the context here is the same as 2 Timothy 3, 2 Thessalonians 2 and Matthew 24. It's the last days that precede the coming of Christ. In those days a man will show up working signs, wonders and miracles and they will be so convincing that the whole world will worship the antichrist except those whose names are in the book of life.

John also wrote in Revelation 16:13-14.

**And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.**

Notice that these men will work miracles that are so strong and convincing that it will cause all the kings and nations and armies of the earth to come and fight for the antichrist against Jesus Christ at the battle of Armageddon.

Today and especially in the last days, we will witness multitudes of false teachers, apostles and prophets who will work satanic signs, wonders and miracles that will deceive millions. They all have a form of godliness and knowing or unknowingly, will prepare the world for the coming of the ultimate miracle worker and charismatic himself, who is the antichrist.

According to 2 Thessalonians 2 the falling away, which is the mystery of iniquity, will work and work and work and then the antichrist will come. The apostasy will become so strong and intense that by the time the antichrist comes, the world will be conditioned to believe he is the true Christ. And when he comes it says his: **Coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.**

When the antichrist comes he will work signs, lying wonders and counterfeit miracles. This is why the falling away is now preparing the way for his coming. The falling away and apostasy Paul and Christ predicted is advanced by men who work signs and lying wonders just like the antichrist when he comes.

No one can deny the fact that the religious movement that emphasizes, promotes and preaches signs, wonders and miracles the most today is the charismatic movement. It is a worldwide religious movement that appeals to all men of all nations by its counterfeit signs and wonders. This should convince us that the falling away and apostasy God warned us about is the modern day charismatic movement. It is the religious movement that is doing more than any other to prepare the way for the ultimate charismatic, the antichrist!

There is something else about the charismatic movement that makes it even more dangerous and that is how it attracts all denominations. It is very ecumenical. It is like a magnet for it attracts every type of denomination: Catholic, Protestant, Independent, and even the cults, because many of its practices are from the occult. Many denominations today are heavily influenced by the signs and lying wonders of the charismatics. If this religious system was Catholic, the Protestants would not be attracted to it. If it was Protestant or Baptist, the

Catholics would not be attracted to it. But they are all attracted to the charismatic movement. It is the one movement that is appealing to most denominations. Baptists are not becoming Catholics and Catholics are not becoming Baptists. But many Baptists and Catholics and other denominations are becoming charismatic. The falling away of the last days will be charismatic in nature and will help usher in the antichrist who is the ultimate charismatic. When he shows up the people who are now easily influenced to believe anything that has signs and wonders attached to it, will welcome the antichrist with open arms. They will believe he is the true Christ. This is why this religious movement is so dangerous.

### **How We Can Be Saved From The Falling Away**

1Timothy 4:1 says: ***Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.***

This is the prediction of the falling away and apostasy in the latter times. Some will depart from the faith and go apostate. How and why? By giving heed to seducing spirits in men who have a form of godliness who teach doctrines of devils. In this chapter, we are told how we can be saved from the falling away and apostasy of the last days.

Verse 13 says: ***Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.***

To give attendance to something means to pay special attention to it and spend time doing it. We are told to give our attendance and our attention to: reading, exhortation and doctrine. Reading what? The word of God. (2 Tim. 3:15-16) Exhortation, which is preaching. Spend time preaching the word of God and hearing the word of God preached. Doctrine is teaching what is true and doctrine is what we study. In these last days, we should read the word of God, preach and hear the word of God and study the sound doctrines of the word of God more than ever.

Verse 15 says: ***Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.***

What things should we mediate on and give ourselves wholly unto? Reading the word of God, hearing the word of God and studying the word of God.

Verse 16 says: ***Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.***

The salvation in this verse is salvation from the coming apostasy in verse 1. We can be saved and save others from the falling away and coming apostasy if we give attention and attendance now to reading the word of God, preaching and

hearing the word of God and studying and being grounded in the sound doctrine of the word of God.

The gospel is the only thing that can save sinners from their sins. God's word and sound doctrine is the only thing that can save Christians from the falling away and apostasy of the last days. Our salvation from the falling away is the word of God. Reading it, hearing it, preaching it and studying it now more than ever.

The deception of the last days will be so strong that if you do not continue in the sound doctrines of the word of God, you will depart from the faith and end up a casualty in the falling away. .

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\*There are many film clips on You Tube of Benny Hinn saying he is a little god.

\* Concerning his critics, Benny Hinn said: "You know, I've looked for one verse in the Bible -- I just can't seem to find it -- one verse that says, 'If you don't like'em, kill'em.'" I really wish I could find it! Sometimes I wish God would give me a Holy Ghost machine gun. I'd blow your heads off.

\*Paul Crouch said: I think they [i.e., those he labels 'heretic hunters'] are damned and on their way to hell and I don't think there is any redemption for them. I say, 'To hell with you.' I say, 'Get out of God's way, quit blocking God's bridges or God is going to shoot you if I don't'" (Paul Crouch on TBN's "Praise-A-Thon," April 2, 1991).

\*Concerning women; a prominent Pentecostal preacher once said that the majority of Pentecostals and Charismatics are women and if they ever left the movement it would cease to exist.

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