

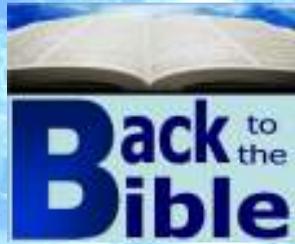
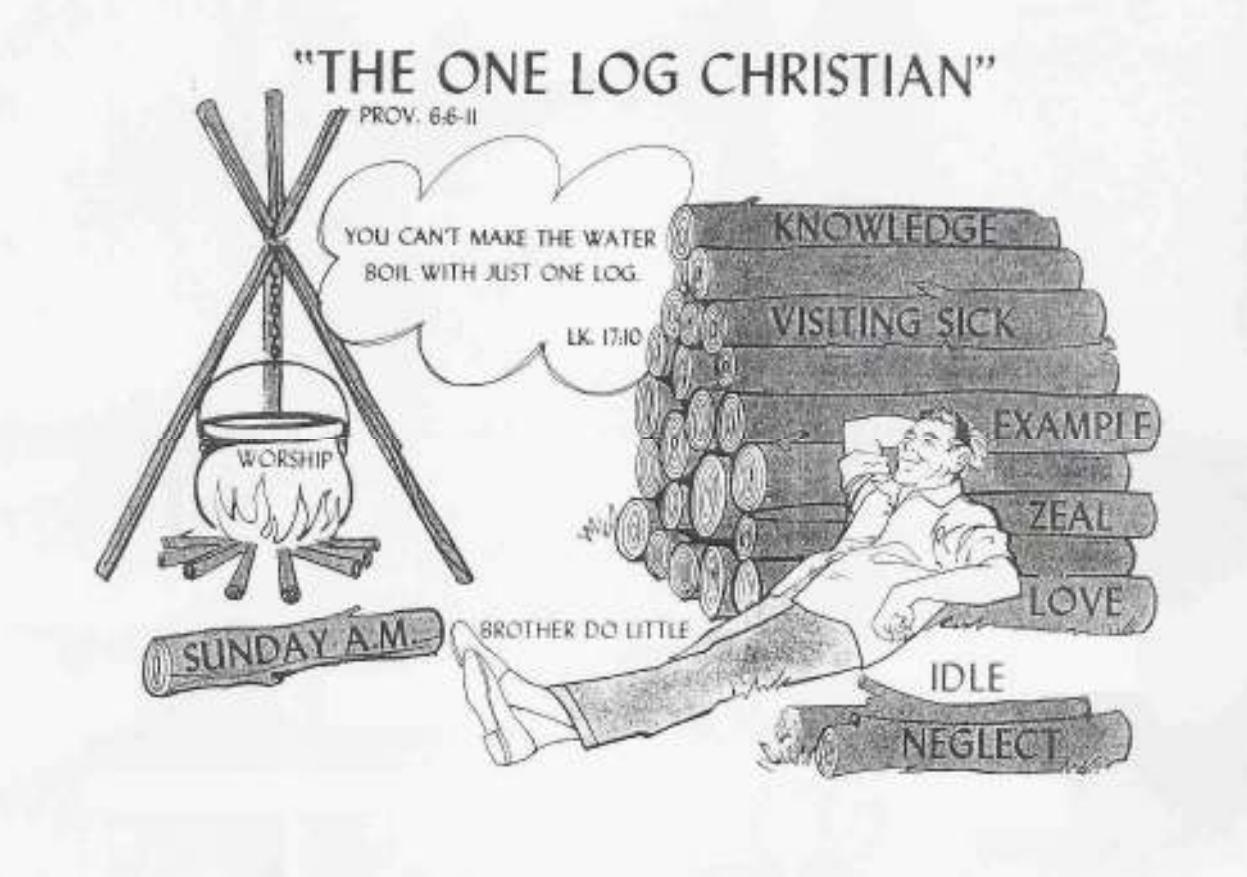
Today's Sermons

Morning: The Lord IS Coming! Are You Ready?

Evening: TBA

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FOR THE RECORD	
Sunday Bible Study	31
Sunday AM Worship	40
Sunday PM Worship	n/a
Wed. Bible Study	29
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Times of Services:

Sunday

Bible Study:... 10:00am
AM Worship:...11:00am
PM Worship:...6:00pm

Wednesday

Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program

Sunday:.....7:30am
"Back to the Bible"
AM 580 WSKS
93.5 FM

**We Extend A
Warm &
Cordial
Welcome
To All Our
Visitors!**

PREDICTED DEPARTURE FROM THE FAITH
Roger Campbell

The Bible record of 1 Timothy 4:1-3 states, "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 [demons, NKJV]; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

(1) Who revealed that this departure would take place? A: "The Spirit," meaning the Holy Spirit. What Paul writes in this passage is not his personal hunch. It is not his own forecast that is based on the conditions of his day. Rather, he spoke this message by God's Spirit. God was the source of this prediction. The fact that the Spirit has the capacity to speak makes it plain that He is not simply a force, but rather a Person with power and expression.

(2) When would the departure come about? A: "In the latter times." This refers to some point in the future after the time that Paul penned 1 Timothy (probably mid-60's of the 1st century). Such a departure would not take place overnight, but would come about over the course of time. Paul had earlier written to the church in Thessalonica that there would come "a falling away" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Prior to the time that Paul wrote 1 Timothy, he had told some shepherds from Ephesus, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise,

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speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29,30). By the Spirit, Peter also wrote that there would arise false teachers among the saints, and many would follow their damnable heresies (2 Peter 2:1,2). The departure from the faith that eventually came about should have caught no one by surprise for numerous inspired statements about it were given to the church.

(3) What does the expression "depart from the faith" mean? A: "Depart" is from the Greek word (aphistemi), which means to go away, depart, to desert, withdraw from one, to fall away, become faithless, to shun, flee from" [*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 89, word no. 868]. The same Greek word is used in Luke 8:13, where we read Jesus' explanation of the stony soil in His Parable of the Sower: ". . . *these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*" While Paul requested that his thorn in the flesh might "depart" from him (2 Corinthians 12:8), the apostasy about which he writes in our text (1 Timothy 4:1), points to action by which people would *remove themselves* from the faith.

What is "the faith" from which some would depart? It is the system of faith that is called the "*one faith*" (Ephesians 4:5). It refers to the teaching of the Christ, or His gospel. To depart from the faith is the same as departing from the truth. To depart from the faith is the same as departing from the way of the Lord. When a person leaves the Almighty, such a one is committing spiritual suicide.

(4) What could possibly entice people to depart from the faith? A: The Bible says that such apostates would give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils or demons. The following description fits them well: "*And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables*" (2 Timothy 4:4). Why would fables attract them? The previous verse states, "*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*" (2 Timothy 4:3). Rather than give their heart to following the word of God, they would be pulled aside by false teaching. Why? It would be more pleasant to them.

(5) What does the Bible say about the honesty of those that would have part in the departure? A: ". . . *speaking lies in hypocrisy*" (4:2). Some people may spread lies, not knowing that they are untrue statements. In this case, though, the lies would be told by hypocrites. Hypocrites are mask-wearers or actors. They put on a front. Jesus openly condemned the hypocrisy that prevailed in His time (Matt. 6:1-18; 23:2-33). Can you think of anything more disgusting than the thought of hypocritical liars using a religious message to pull others away from the faith?!

(6) What would be true of the conscience of those involved in the departure? A: It would be as if it were seared by a hot iron (4:2). Just as a brand on the flesh of a steer causes the steer to lose its feeling in the branded area, so a person's conscience can become totally without feeling. The term "hard-hearted" fits them well.

(7) What were some of the specific false teachings that would characterize the departure from the faith? A: "*Forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats [foods, NKJV]*" (4:3). It is a matter of historical record that in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox denominations, traditionally only single men may serve as "priests" and only single women are allowed to serve as "sisters/nuns." There might be exceptions to that policy, but that has been the standard practice of those denominations. What about the matter of forbidding people not to eat meat? Many of us remember a time when Friday meals in the cafeteria at school never included pork, beef, or chicken. Why? Because of the Catholic influence in our society and the traditional teaching of the Catholics that it is wrong to eat meat on Friday. Does that not sound a lot like what 1 Timothy 4:3 says about commanding to abstain from foods? Many have sincerely wondered why the meat of fish does not count as meat on Friday! Other groups, such as Seventh Day Adventists, also teach that it is wrong to eat certain types of meat. Yes, the Bible does contain the message that the eating of pork is forbidden. That instruction, however, was given to the children of Israel (Leviticus 11:1,2,7). The old law, including its dietary restrictions, was abolished when Jesus died on the cross (Ephesians 2:14-16).

Paul's inspired prediction was not that "all" would depart from the faith, but rather that "some" would. It is still possible for individual saints to fall from grace (Galatians 5:4), just as it is possible today for congregations to depart from the truth (Ephesians 2:4,5). How can God's people be on guard against such apostasy? By doing exactly what our text speaks of doing: "*believe and know the truth*" (1 Timothy 4:3). God has a truth. It can be known, it can be believed, and it can be obeyed. That is the only safe course of action for any of us to follow.

The predicted departure from the faith about which we read in 1 Timothy 4:1-3 should serve as a warning to all of us. May we take its message seriously, learn its valuable lessons, and determine to stick with the Book and its Giver, so that we will not be drawn away by the fables of men.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- April 12 – Preach & Eat
- April 26 – Worship @ Eula's @ 2:00 pm
- April 26 – Song Service @ 6:00 pm
- May 17-21 – Gospel Meeting w/ David B. Smith. Fellowship meal immediately following morning worship.
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell