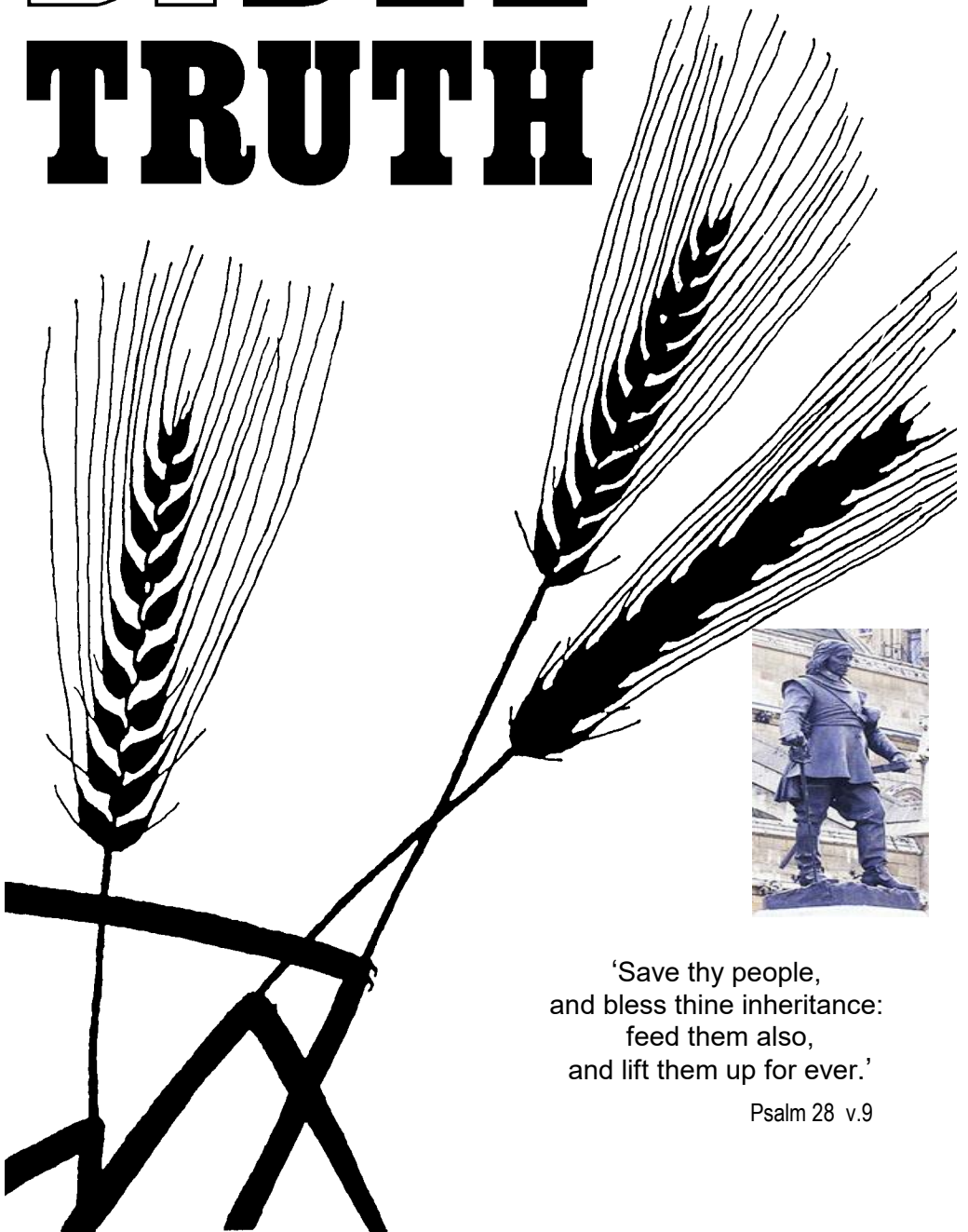


# BIBLE TRUTH

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‘Save thy people,  
and bless thine inheritance:  
feed them also,  
and lift them up for ever.’

Psalm 28 v.9

# **Warning Signs !!!**

by Lynne Gray

The letters in the New Testament known as 1st and 2nd Timothy were written by the Apostle Paul to Timothy about AD 61 from his prison cell in Rome shortly before his martyrdom. His death is not reported in the New Testament but it is believed that he died between July AD 64 and before the last year of the Emperor Nero's reign in AD 68. Historically it has been traditionally recorded that Paul was beheaded by orders of Nero.

Timothy was from Lystra which means he was a Galatian, his father was Greek and his mother and grandmother were Jewish. Timothy met Paul when he was a teenager and the friendship developed to the extent that Timothy established churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea (see Acts chs 16-20). Timothy remained in Ephesus until AD 97 and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* records that at a pagan celebration Timothy reproved the partygoers for idolatry which antagonised the revellers who clubbed Timothy 'in so dreadful a manner that he expired of the bruises two days later'.

In the letters to Timothy we are given a passage which reads as a warning to Christians of what to be aware of in the time closest to the return of Jesus Christ. Humanity will experience all sorts of moral and ethical decline in lifestyles, but Christians must guard against falling into the same ungodly lifestyle. This is the topic of the passage from Paul to Timothy and is more relevant today than it was when it was originally written.

'This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.'

2 Timothy ch.3 vv 1-5

The purpose of this article is to examine what the words in this text really mean and then to examine ourselves honestly and ask God to help us to purge ourselves of any of the traits listed below.

**The last days** - agreed universally that this is referring to the time between the ascension of Jesus and the second coming of Jesus Christ.

‘But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.’

Mark ch.13 v.32

Only the Father knows when this will be which knowledge was not shared with Jesus Christ.

**Lovers of their own selves**, or one word in the original Greek, ‘philautos’, ‘autos’ means ‘self’ and comes into the English language in words such as autobiography, autocratic, autograph. Add to ‘autos’ the prefix ‘philos’ which is the common Greek word for emotional love, love from the heart, thereby giving the definition ‘love of self’. The first sinners (Adam and Eve) were guilty of this when they chose themselves over God. Love of self eliminates empathy and has a very destructive influence on relationships - how can a person have meaningful relationships if they have no concern for the welfare of other people? Top of the list of sins which God hates is ‘pride’.

‘The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.’

Proverbs ch.8 v.13

Self-promotion, focusing on self and devoted to meeting our own needs.

**Covetous** - ‘philarguroi’, occurs in Luke ch.16 v.14 in relation to the Pharisees who were covetous. The word means ‘lovers of money’ and is translated as ‘covetous’ in the King James Version. It is a determination to accumulate material wealth and a reluctance to part with it. It is a form of idolatry.

**Boasters** or in Greek ‘huperephanos’, meaning proud or arrogant. These people treat others with contempt and show they feel they are superior to others by boasting of their achievements.

‘Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.’

1 Peter ch.5 vv 5-7

**Pride** - Why does God hate this? It was the reason that Lucifer was cast from heaven, pride cost Adam and Eve their place in Eden. Pride is actually the essence of all sin and the mother of all evil. Pride was one of the reasons Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed.

‘Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.’

Ezekiel ch.16 vv 49-50

**Blasphemers** - ‘blasphemia’, meaning to slander, literally means ‘slow to call something good and slow to identify what is truly bad’.

‘Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.’

Romans ch. 1 v.25

**Disobedient to parents** - In Deuteronomy this problem was dealt with severely,

‘If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

Deuteronomy ch.21 vv 18-21

It was dealt with harshly to quell rebellion amongst Israel. This is not the first time disobedient children have been discussed.

‘And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.’

Exodus ch.21 v.17

‘For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.’

Matthew ch.15 v.4

‘For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him.’

Leviticus ch. 20 v.9

The fifth of the Ten Commandments states,

‘Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee’.

Exodus ch.20 v.12

‘Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.’

Ephesians ch.6 vv 1-3

Disobedience is the spark that lights the flame that will leave the family and the home in ashes.

In the Bible we are only told to fear two things:

• God -

‘The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.’

Proverbs ch.1 v.7

• Parents -

‘Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.’

Leviticus ch.19 v.3

**Unthankful** - ‘acharistos’ meaning ungrateful, thankless, ungracious, unpleasing. We should always be gracious, grateful, thanking people for what they do for us, polite, and generally desire to have an attitude that is pleasant to those around us.

**Unholy** - ‘anosios’ regarding nothing as holy, disrespect of the things of God and an utter disregard for what is sacred.

**Without natural affection** - ‘astorgos’ meaning ‘no love’ or ‘unloving’. These people lack devotion, concern or tenderness — basically no empathy.

**Trucebreakers** - ‘aspondos’ without libation, without truce, implacable. This is those people who cannot be persuaded to enter into a covenant. These people will not cease hostilities nor accept reconciliation. The word ‘aspondos’ comes from ancient practices to do with treaties, truces and agreements. At the conclusion of negotiations, the custom was to pour out a ceremonial libation or drink offering to seal what had been agreed. Those who would not make a treaty or agree to a truce in war would not get to this point where they would drink a libation to seal the treaty or truce, such people were ‘aspondoi’ (literally ‘without libation or drink offering’). In New Testament times

'aspondos' describes a person who is unwilling to negotiate a solution to a problem involving another person — it points to someone who will not let go, that is 'not willing to be reconciled'.

**False accusers** - 'diabolos' meaning a traducer, false accuser, devil, slanderer, Satan. This describes a person prone to slander others and accuse others falsely, a backbiter. Diabolos is translated 'devil' in the New Testament. A slanderer is someone who makes a false spoken statement that is damaging to a person's reputation.

**Incontinent** - 'akrates' meaning powerless, without self-control, inclined to excess, in a moral sense these are people who are unrestrained. Basically it is somebody who is weak-willed. This is the only use of this word in the New Testament.

**Fierce** - 'anemeroi' meaning uncouth, brutal, uncivilised. This is when humans, out of choice, choose to act like animals. The Christian virtues are love, kindness, gentleness and 'anemeroi' is the opposite of what God wants us to be. This is a word used for those who forget God and are savage and fierce. Many of us have known people who were fierce, cruel or harsh.

**Despisers of those that are good** - 'aphilagathoi', lacking in faithfulness or submission towards goodness — failure to stand for goodness. These people are unloving, malicious gossips, with no self-control.

**Traitors** - 'prodotai' — 'pro' meaning before and 'dotal' meaning to deliver up, referring to those who deliver up to an enemy the person who has put his life in their hands. Traitors are betrayers of trust and tell lies about people.

'And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.'

Matthew ch.10 vv 21-22

Jesus knew what would happen to those that believe in Him as the time for the return of Jesus Christ draws nearer.

**Heady** - 'propetes' meaning falling forward, headlong, rash, impulsive. These are people who rush imprudently in pursuit of what they want. Today it is seen in the rush to get married then the rush to divorce, in violent mobs that cause mayhem in public places, riots that turn aggressive and revolts.

**Highminded** - 'hupselophroneo' meaning to be lofty in mind, arrogant, haughty.

Romans ch.11 v.20 tells us to, '... Be not high minded, but fear:'.

What is arrogance? Arrogance is 'the act or habit of making undue claims in an overbearing manner; that species of pride which consists in exorbitant claims of rank, dignity, estimation, or power, or which exalts the worth or importance of the person to an undue degree; proud contempt of others'.

<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/arrogance>

The New Testament was written in Greek and Greek literature uses the word 'hubris' which is a form of arrogance in which a person thinks himself to be higher in status than other people, that is, a god. No wonder the Bible denounces such traits.

**Lovers of pleasures** - 'philedonoi' more than lovers of God - love of pleasure is a million dollar industry.

The sentiments in the following passages have an echo in the past in the Old Testament.

'This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.'

2 Timothy ch.3 vv 1-7

*A Psalm of David.* 'Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us? For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from

this generation for ever. The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.'

Psalm 12

All of these practices show a total departure from God's instructions and God's ways.

### **Categories of Sins**

- Conduct                      Character
- Lust                            Loving pleasure, hedonism
- Coveting                      Loving to possess
- Pride                            Loving self the most
- Contention                    Not loving others
- Lying                            Not loving truth
- Evil                              Not loving goodness

2 Timothy ch.3's problem is that one assumes Paul is speaking of non-Christians. Unfortunately, He is talking about people in the Christian church professing to be Christian but don't act like one should, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof (2 Timothy ch.3 v.5) and from such we are told to turn away. This type of person talks the talk but does not walk the walk. Paul's letter to Timothy points out the dangers of empty religion where congregation members are lovers of self, not lovers of God, doing what they want rather than what God wants. So what do we do?

The best guidance is, as always, in the Bible and we find in Jude the following passage.

'But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.'

Jude vv 17-21

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