

# A Warning to Bible Believers

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Preacher: Eric Peterson

[0:00] Thank you.

I called Abraham Lord, and that's definitely not what Doreen called me today after that. Before we begin, Brother Rich, would you please open us in prayer?

Okay. Thank you. Father, it's good to be alive tonight. What does that mean to sing? I'm not going to sing those songs of Zion.

I'm not going to come to the earth. I'm not going to sing those songs of Zion. I'm not going to sing those songs of Zion. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. With Christmas now behind us and the new year upon us, for many, this is kind of a week of reflection.

It's a time of self-evaluation for a lot of people, updating bucket lists, contemplation of New Year's resolutions.

[1:34] In a lot of ways, it's kind of a happy, sad time. And for those of us who are here tonight, it ought to be a time of great thankfulness over the very fact that we are all still here.

And I don't mean that we're here physically on this earth. Because I think we can all agree that it would be much better to be absent from the body and present with the Lord.

But what I mean is that we're still here at a Bible-believing church on a Wednesday night. And there is a great danger in taking this simple fact for granted.

And with that in mind, I want to offer a bit of a warning to all of us tonight. And by us, it's those who are here on a Wednesday night.

There's those who are here on Sundays, and there's those who are here on Wednesday night who tend to be a little bit more committed. And with that commitment, there's a greater stake at hand.

Growing up, an illustration I heard many times was of the frog in the boiling water.

[2:51] Urban myth has it that if you put a frog in a pot of boiling water, it will instantly leap out. But if you put it in a pot filled with pleasantly tepid or lukewarm water and gradually heat it, the frog will remain in the water until it boils to death.

And allegedly, the frog is not able to detect the gradual increase in temperature until it's too late. And I heard this allegory frequently used in church with reference to the subtle destruction of America.

The idea being that America wouldn't corrupt overnight. Instead, little by little, it would corrupt because of our so-called Christian heritage.

Because enough good people would sit idly by doing nothing until before we knew it, the nation would be cooked. And I think that there was always somehow this secondary insinuation that that was also how the church would apostatize.

Or that that was how believers would fall away. It would be a slow process by degrees, almost unnoticeable.

[4:15] And there was this other sense, this personal sense that all never fall away completely because there will always be time to catch myself.

You know, I know how far into the surf I can wade and still make it safely back to shore. And so there's almost this game of Russian roulette that's played with our spiritual lives.

You know, seeing how far we can depart from the Lord without fully departing from the Lord, without fully apostatizing. And I think even with Bible believers, we've become susceptible to this way of thinking.

There's a sense that we've got the right Bible and the right doctrine, the right divisions of Scripture, the right heritage, that we're of this faithful remnant.

And because we are, we are somehow immune to the greater concerns of the church at large. And yet over the last couple of years, there have been folks who have sat right here in our midst, who were here Sunday morning, both services, who were here Wednesday nights, who were here for revival services, who were here for church picnics, who memorized verses on Wednesday nights, who preached from this very pulpit, who were here one day, and then they were gone.

[6:16] And now, it wasn't a departure by degrees. They didn't go from three services a week down to just one service a week.

They didn't go from wearing a suit and tie to showing up to church in jeans and a t-shirt. They didn't go from the front row to the back row. It was sudden.

They were here for a revival. And then they weren't. A year or so ago, Pastor Wilski's father preached on Lot and the progressive steps of compromise in a believer's life.

How Lot, through a series of life choices, drew nearer and nearer to the city of Sodom and its culture, until he was nearly indistinguishable from it. But that's not what we're talking about tonight. We're not talking about this gradual falling away. Tonight, we're talking about people who are in one day and out the next.

[7:20] Tonight is a warning to all people who think that their faith is indestructible to take heed. And this is not about salvation. This is not a sermon that says that you can lose your salvation.

We all know that our our standing is secure. This is about falling out of the way. This is about sudden destruction coming upon those who think that they're indestructible because they're Bible believers because we're part of this remnant.

And when we consider sudden destruction coming upon the indestructible, we're often reminded of the Titanic. That seems to be the illustration that most of us are familiar with that's used over and over.

But in 2 Kings 18 and 19 in its companion passage, Isaiah 36 and 37, we read the story of Sennacherib who had the whole world in his hands, or so he thought, who sent his high officials to Judah, to King Hezekiah, to try to weaken his faith in the Lord God and to frighten him into surrendering to the king of Assyria.

And in doing so, he reproached and blasphemed the Holy One of Israel. And it came to pass that in one night the angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand.

[8:55] And when they arose early in the morning, behold, they are all dead corpses. In 1815, Lord Byron published the poem *The Destruction of Sennacherib* and it goes like this.

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold and his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold. And the sheen of their spears was like the stars on the sea when the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green, that host where their banners at sunset were seen. Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown, that host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast and breathed in the face of the foe as he passed. And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill in their heart but once heaved and forever grew still.

And there lay the steed with his nostrils all wide, but through it there rolled not the breath of his pride. And the foam of his gasping lay white on the surf and the cold as the spray of the rock beating surf.

[10:35] And there lay the rider distorted and pale with dew on his brow and the rust on his mail. And the tents were all silent, the banners alone, the lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Asher are loud in their wail and the idols are broken in the temple of Baal. And the might of the Gentile unsmote by the sword hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord. In reading commentary on the poem, you'll discover that most literary critics are like Bible scholars and they find that the destruction of Sennacherib is but an alleged event in the history of Israel. And as Dr. Ruckman so often said, the only thing that men learn from history is that men never learn from history. And you and I are no more indestructible than that host of 185,000 Assyrians

that surrounded Jerusalem that night many, many years ago.

And but for the grace of God, so might we perish quickly from off the good land the Lord giveth us. If you'll turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 10, we'll now read what the apostle Paul wrote around AD 57.

[12:29] 1 Corinthians chapter 10 starting at verse 1 says, Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud and all passed through the sea and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea and did all eat the same spiritual meat and did all drink the same spiritual drink for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them and that rock was Christ.

That's us. We are those who have enjoyed those same spiritual blessings and drank of that spiritual rock. He goes on to say, but with many of them God was not well pleased for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

Now these things were our examples to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. Neither be idolaters as were some of them as it is written the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

Neither let us commit fornication as some of them committed and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted and were destroyed of serpents.

Neither murmur ye as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer. now all these things happened unto them for in samples and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.

[14:09] Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. As Bible believers we are beneficiaries of great spiritual benefits.

We have been blessed with countless rich spiritual blessings and as such we are to take heed because we are not indestructible and we are not above sudden destruction.

Exodus 32 7-8 says and the Lord said unto Moses go get thee down for thy people which thou brought us out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.

They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They turned aside quickly not by degrees not little by little they were here one day and then they were gone.

Deuteronomy 9-16 reiterates this and says and I looked and behold he had sinned against the Lord your God and had made you a molten calf he had turned aside quickly out of the way which the Lord had commanded you.

[15:40] Again this was not a gradual falling away. Aaron and the elders of the people did not have lengthy conversations and long deliberations the thought was introduced and they departed quickly out of the way.

To apostatize by definition is to fall from a standing position. Nobody falls by degrees. Nobody falls gradually and gracefully which is why many falls result in injury.

Apostle Paul says in 2 Timothy 3 1 this know also that in the last days perilous times shall come.

These are dangerous days that we live in. There is much that is at risk. Our faith, our testimony are daily at risk.

Again it's not your salvation that is in peril. Your standing, our standing is secure. It's our faith that is at constant risk.

[16:57] In 2 Thessalonians 2 starting in verse 1 Paul writes Now we we beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto him 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 let no man deceive you by any means for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first we are in the last days there should be no one here who is unclear about that fact and in these days of great danger and great risk there will be a falling away first and if we're completely honest this falling away has already been going on for over a hundred years but we are not to be amongst those who are soon shaken especially as

Bible believers we are not to be amongst those who depart quickly and suddenly out of the way in first Timothy chapter one starting in verse one Paul writes Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ which is our hope unto Timothy my own son in the faith grace mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord God to God God so do now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart and of a good conscience and of a faith unfeigned from which some, having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling.

They swerved. They deviated from the commandment, from the faith once delivered unto the saints and turned aside quickly.

And suddenly to that which is vain, to that which is false, to that which is apostate. No one swerves by degrees.

They swerve quickly. They swerve suddenly. They swerve abruptly. Now we've all experienced swerving while in a car, either as a driver or as a passenger.

[19:59] And we know from experience that it's not smooth. It's not graceful. It's not pleasant. And oftentimes we swerve because of what would be considered a very real threat, whether it be an animal, maybe a person, a child running into the road, or some obstacle in the road.

But interestingly enough, there are many times that we swerve because of that which is a perceived threat, and that it's not a real threat in actuality.

There's many times that we swerve because of a shadow in the road. We swerve because of a paper bag that comes flying across the road.

We swerve because of a child that we see on the sidewalk, and we anticipate that that child may run in front of us. We swerve because of a vain jangling, a false premise.

We are not to be soon shaken in mind. We are not to swerve aside suddenly to that which is false.

[21:29] Thirdly, we are to stand firm. The writer to the Hebrews in chapter 2, verse 1 said, Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

No one slips by degrees. No one slips gradually. Few slip gracefully.

Furthermore, no one slips forward. We slide forward. We slip backward. Hebrews 10.23 says, Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.

Revelation 3.11 says, Behold, I come quickly. Hold that fast which thou hast that no man take thy crown.

Ephesians 6.13 says, Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand.

[22:53] So then, let me leave you with a few things to consider. First, you better know what you believe and why.

Your faith is your faith. Don't think because you have Dr. Ruckman and Brother Donovan and Pastor Dave and Pastor Wolski as your spiritual mentors and teachers and pastors that you are not susceptible to falling away.

Hezekiah was as spiritual a king as Judah had and no sooner had he passed away than Judah departed quickly out of the way and fell into the grossest of sin and gravest of apostasy.

You cannot live on the accomplishments of others. Your walk is your walk. You cannot live on the faith of your husband or your wife.

You cannot live on the faith of your father or your mother. You cannot live on the faith of your pastor. Your faith is your faith.

[24:22] You better know what you believe about salvation. Paul wrote in Galatians 1 starting in verse 6 I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel which is not another but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you let him be accursed. As we said before so say I now again if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received let him be accursed.

You had better be rooted and grounded in the simplicity of salvation. Salvation by grace through faith plus nothing. That you be not soon shaken by some new thing which you heard from some angel or some spirit or some vision or some internet preacher this this is the revelation given us by God upon whom the end of the age has come.

This is our confidence. this is our final authority. You had better know what you believe about the King James Bible.

You had better know that these are the pure and perfectly preserved words of God kept for us even unto this day. Every sentence every word every punctuation mark every chapter every verse every jot and tittle are perfect and perfectly preserved.

[26:28] You had better have it settled in your mind that these are God's words written to us in the English language of these last days and this is not simply the best translation available at the moment until a better and more accurate one comes along.

once again these words are pure words. This is our confidence. These words are our final authority and you had better know what you believe about the rapture and second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are not kingdom builders and this world is not getting better. We are not looking for government or social reforms to save us.

Our Savior's return is imminent. We are looking for that blessed hope, even the Lord Jesus Christ who is coming in the clouds to catch us away someday.

And as such, we do not sorrow as others which have no hope, but rather we press on holding forth the word of life that we may rejoice one day soon having not run in vain, neither labor it in vain.

[27:48] So you better know what you believe and why. Secondly, you had better know what you're supposed to be doing and you had better be busy doing it.

Paul in Acts 9-6 asked, Lord, what will that have me to do? and it's a good question and one we ought to ask ourselves often, regularly.

David was the captain of the Lord's host. The Lord took him from the sheep coat to be ruler over all Israel. He was a wartime king, if you will.

One of the main reasons that David was not commissioned to build the temple of God, though it most certainly was in his heart, is because he was called instead to fight.

It was David who was to subdue the heathen and give Israel rest from all her enemies round about. And in 2 Samuel 11-1 we read, and it came to pass after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the children of Ammon and besieged Rabbah.

[29:21] But David tarried still at Jerusalem. And we all know the rest of the story. David, who was supposed to be out fighting, stayed behind.

And because he stayed behind, he departed quickly out of the way. David possessed the sure mercies of David, and had it not been for those, there was no remedy for the sins that he committed.

And the story of David, were it not for those remedies, would have ended right there. Solomon, on the other hand, was a peacetime king, if you will.

He was not called to fight, he was called to build. And as long as he was busy in building, his heart was right with the Lord.

But at the end of 20 years, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Milo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer, and Beth Horan, and Baaaleth, and Tadmor, in the wilderness, and all the cities of store, and the cities for his chariots, and the cities for his horsemen, and a house for his wife, Pharaoh's daughter, we then read in 1 Kings chapter 11, But King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites, of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go into them, neither shall they come in unto you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.

[31:33] Solomon clave unto these in love, and he had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines, and his wives turned away his heart, for it came to pass when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods.

when David stopped fighting, his heart turned quickly away. He wasn't supposed to build, he was supposed to fight.

When Solomon stopped building, his heart turned quickly away. He wasn't supposed to fight, he was supposed to build.

And when he was finished building, he ought to have asked the Lord what he would have him to do next. Ephesians 5, 15-17 says, See then that ye walked circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

will. Wherefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. You had better know what you're supposed to be doing and get busy and stay busy in doing it.

[33:09] And lastly, this Bible here was a gift to my dad in 1964.

It's a Schofield reference Bible, a King James Bible.

For those of you who are Bible believers and have been Bible believers for any number of time, you're well familiar with this Bible and its history. I never knew about this Bible until just a few years ago.

this Bible was gifted to my dad by a well-known Bible teacher and pastor here in the valley.

And that pastor went away to Bible school and seminary and was soon shaken and he swerved away from the pure words of the King James Bible and he slipped.

[34:59] And when he left there, he left with the New American Standard Bible under his arms. and his influence was such that my dad put this Bible down and picked up a new American standard Bible.

And when my dad put this Bible down, my mom put her Bible down too. and we were never introduced to this Bible as a family.

And when we depart from the pure words of this Bible, we depart as well from the truth that is contained within it.

And we'll never know what our lives might have been like. I'll never know what may have happened to our family. I'll never know how my life might have been different or my brothers or my sisters or my mothers had this Bible never departed from our lives.

You see, when we depart quickly from the faith, there are consequences.

[36:39] We affect the lives of others. We could affect the next generation. There are people sitting in here today who a year from now will be married and will have a child.

Lord willing, that child will grow up with this Bible and that that Bible won't get lost on the shelf like it did before the days of Josiah.

There are people sitting here today, and I hope it's not the case, that may not be here a year from now. They may put down their Bible and walk away.

There are people here today who, and Lord willing, that again it's not the case, may not have the right influence on others.

My prayer, my hope, is that that won't be the case with any of us, that we will not put this Bible down, that we will not depart quickly out of the way, that we will not be soon shaken, that we will not swerve from the truth, that we know to be the truth, that we will continue to have influence and vitality in our spiritual lives, that we will know what we believe and why we believe, and that we will cling tightly to these words.

[38:55] Pastor, Thank you.