



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

2nd Timothy 3

“The Crisis in the Church”

TRANSCRIPT

[AUDIO BEGINS]...verse 1 through verse 17. And I would like to introduce what I'm going to read by reminding you that our Lord once rebuked the disciples for their failure to discern the signs of the times. He said, “And in the morning it will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” And you will notice that as Paul begins this third chapter of 2nd Timothy he has much the same attitude, for in the opening words of the chapter he says,

“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, high-minded, 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, (that is somewhat ambiguous in English, for ‘Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth,’ might refer to the men who creep

into the houses and lead captive the women. Or it might refer to the women.

Fortunately in the Greek text there is no ambiguity at this point and it does refer to the women, Paul is describing them as, ‘Ever learning, never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.’) Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was. But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture, (I think this is more accurately rendered, though it is a matter of debate, ‘Every Scripture.’) Every Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Let’s bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] We thank Thee, Lord, that through the Scriptures Thou hast given us guidance and Thou hast given us an insight, a window on the word that is to be. We thank Thee for these warnings of holy Scripture, admonitions that point out to us the trends of the times in which we are living and which we approach. And we thank Thee for this great chapter written to young Timothy to admonish him and instruct him with regard to the future and also with regard to the present. We thank Thee that we know

that in the word of God we have assurance that we can expect that things shall become more and more perilous as the days go by, for we shall not be surprised by what we see and experience. And we thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast given us instruction in how we should respond to them. "From such, turn away," Paul said. Continue Thou in the things that Thou hast learned and in which Thou hast been instructed and we pray Lord that the word of God may have its effect in our lives.

We are grateful for this group of people who have gathered here to hear Thy word and to hear servants of Thine expound the Scriptures to the glory of Christ. And Lord, we pray that in this hour Thy name may be magnified and glorified. That the doctrines of the word of God may be upheld, that the church may truly be the pillar and ground of the faith. And we pray Lord that as we consider the doctrines of the word of God we may be hindered from falling into error and heresy. We know that it is not popular to speak about heresy in the 20th Century, but nevertheless, there are warnings in the word of God that we must heed. And so Lord, we pray that as we listen to the Scriptures today we may be responsive and Lord, wilt Thou guide and instruct him who teaches the word so that we may have the sense that it is Thy voice to us.

We pray for each one present. Wilt Thou administer to us in our many, many needs; personal, in our families, among our friends. Among those who are sick we would particularly remember some that we know are still confined to home because of serious illness. We commit them to Thee and pray Thy blessing upon them, pray that Thou wilt restore to health and strength soon. We commit this hour to Thee for Thy blessing upon us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Today I want to speak to you in a manner a little different from that in which I ordinarily do. If you have attended Believers Chapel very long you will know that as a general rule the ministry of the word of God from this pulpit, from me, and from others who stand here, is expository. That is, as a general rule we turn to a passage from

the word of God and expound that particular passage. I personally feel that that should be the staple diet of our congregations and that in the long run if we make a general habit of expounding the Scriptures the congregation may be expected to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord. Occasionally it is good to vary the diet and consequently we have from time to time a number of us, not just I in my preaching, but others have also taken topical types of messages or doctrinal messages in which we considered subjects.

The one that I want to speak on today is the type of topic that I think is especially fitting as we draw near to the conclusion of 1971 and look forward to 1972. So my topic for this morning is a topic and I will not try to treat 2nd Timothy chapter 3, although some of the things that I will say will be based upon it, but my topic is “The Crisis in the Church.” Where are we and where are we heading? What better time to ask questions like these than at such a time as this.

Occasionally, nominal Christians question the validity of prophetic study, but our Lord's words in which he admonished and rebuked the apostles for failure to discern the times, and Paul's words here when he tells Timothy that one of the things that he must know is that perilous times are coming, should forever silence such critics. And if our Lord reprove men for failure to discern the times and if Paul warned Timothy that it was important that he should recognize what the future held for him, well surely we ought to pay a great deal of attention to the future. One of the striking things that is true of 1970 is the interest of the world in future things. We have two new terms which are quite commonly seen in our newspapers: futurology, futuriasis. Many of our leading corporations have entire departments now devoted to an analysis of the future and futuriasis has become a common term. Futuriasis has to do with the study of the future and so from Henry Kissinger to Charles Rike and from Arthur Burns to Alvin Toffler and from Herman Cone to Norman Mailer, the 1970's may be remembered for the epidemic of futuriasis that swept the country.

We perhaps, if we are in business, may be acquainted with the spread of a predictive instrument for which the RAND Company is responsible. It is the Delphi method, a series of controlled conferences developed at the RAND Corporation in the early 60's. And since its inception an extensive number of these exercises have been performed and intensive studies have been made of the future in connection with many different types of research. The Delphi method is essentially this, that a series of questions is proposed to experts unknown to each other. That is, their replies are unknown to each other and they respond and the mediator or the monitor of the exercise looks at the answers, rephrases the answers, sends them back. The experts answer again then the answers of other experts may be given to the experts and they ask to respond in the light of others answers until finally some information may be derived by this research as to what experts think about the future in a particular field.

So even the world is interested in the future and it's not surprising then when we turn to the Bible that a great part of the Bible is concerned with the future. So I want to survey in this message the signs of the times as they pertain to the church. And I am using the term church in the sense of the professing church and consequently I would like to look at it in this way, I would like to look at the crisis in Roman Catholicism. And then secondly, the crisis in Protestantism. And finally, the crisis in evangelicalism, a little branch of Protestantism with which most of us in this audience are identified by our personal faith in Jesus Christ.

So first of all, the crisis in Roman Catholicism. If you have followed the things that have happened in the Roman Catholic Church in the 1960's you probably have sensed from the simple reading of your newspapers that the Roman Catholic Church is in ferment as a result of the Vatican council and the meetings in connection with it. In 1964 at that council there surfaced a great deal of the oppositions to the official policies that others had known existed for some time. One thing remained sure, while there is ferment in the Roman Catholic Church the opinions of the hierarchy have not changed. And by that I

mean the opinions of the Pope with his cardinals and bishops. There are glimmers elsewhere of changes in the Roman Catholic Church. There are little evangelical groups that are meeting all over the world.

A few years ago I was in Cuernavaca, Mexico and was invited by a man, who's lived in Mexico almost all of his life and is well acquainted with what is happening in that area, to visit the cathedral in that city. And he told me ahead of time that the local Catholic authorities there were not on very good terms with Rome because they had come through the study of the Scriptures to a much more evangelical position. They had come to see the fact that idolatry or the icons and other images of the Roman Catholic Church were not really scriptural and they were eliminating them from the cathedral. And it was a strange experience to enter a Roman Catholic Church and find so few evidences of what has been characteristic of them in years past.

Since that time a friend of mine from Oklahoma City who travels there quite frequently has said that so far as he can tell there is not a single image left in that cathedral in that city. And furthermore, a number of the clergy are studying the Scriptures. Nuns are studying the Scriptures. There are the equivalence of our home Bible classes going on and he has attended them and he is a man of spiritual perception and he says so far as he can tell that there is evidence of a number of them being genuinely converted. And so there is evidence of a movement of the spirit of God in the Roman Catholic Church.

There is also a growing neo-Pentecostalism in the Roman Catholic Church and groups of Catholics over the country are gathering in order to have fellowship with one another and to speak in tongues. Now I know that some of these groups are not scriptural. Some of them say as a result of speaking in tongues they are able to worship Mary and that is not a scriptural sentiment and so consequently the results of that particular experience are not too genuine in my opinion. But in this group there may well be some who have come to know Jesus Christ as their savior.

I also know that there a number of Roman Catholic clergymen that are leaving the Roman Catholic Church year. I don't have the figures for the last two or three years but in 1968 four hundred and sixty-three Roman Catholic clerics left the Roman Catholic Church in this country. The real issue in the Roman Catholic Church today is the issue of freedom versus authority. In other words, is the hierarchy to have ultimate authority or not? Is the Pope really infallible or not? And this issue of freedom versus authority extends to such practical matters as birth control. Someone has said, “Birth control is the Pope's Vietnam.” [Laughter] And it may well be so in a kind of parallel or analogy. But the real issues is, is the Pope really infallible.

Now if you are not acquainted with Roman Catholic doctrine, you may not know that the doctrine of papal infallibility is essentially this, this doctrine holds that the Pope cannot be in error when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is from the throne, on matters of faith or morals. That is both the cornerstone of the Roman Catholic Church and an obstacle to union with other Christian groups. And it is evident that this particular doctrine is a doctrine which the Pope intends to support to the end. But there is a revolt going on in the Roman Catholic Church, I think it has reached its climax in the controversy that has come to a head between Professor Kung and Professor Karl Rahner. And the former Professor, a Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Tubingen in Germany has written a book in which he has challenged the infallibility of the Pope and he is a man of tremendously widespread interest in Europe. His teacher was Professor Karl Rahner who is Professor of Theology at the University of Munster in Germany and the two are now engaged in a rather bitter controversy over the question of the infallibility of the Pope. And you can be sure that the controversy has been felt and is a day by day point of discussion in the Vatican itself.

A few years ago the Pope, I think it was in 1970, the Pope went to Australia. And when he went there it was the custom in the Australian churches for them to have a lot of fellowship with one another and so a number of the Protestant churches decided that they

would cooperate with the Pope when he came and that they would have a public meeting. They would gather together and pray together and have a little fellowship together. But their outward unity was shattered by the statements of the Anglican archbishop of Sydney, Marcus Loane. Marcus Loane in the newspaper issued an official statement in which he said that he did not find it possible to sit down with the Pope in a common meeting and have fellowship meeting and he went on to say why. He said that for him, doctrine was a great deal more important than decorum and as far as he could tell there was no question but that the Pope had not changed his views concerning certain Christian doctrines. And until those views were changed he did not think it was possible for any Protestant, honestly, who believed the Bible to sit down in fellowship with him in a token of unity. And he named the doctrines. He said as long as the Pope believes in his own infallibility he cannot sit down in fellowship with him, as if they were united in Christian things. He said he didn't have anything against the Pope but he just could not in conscience overlook these important differences in their theology. He went on to say that the Roman Catholic Church believes in tradition and Scripture as authoritative for faith and practice.

Karl Barth has said, “The only difference between Catholics and Protestants is one word, ‘and’.” And by that he referred to this very distinction: that Protestants have believed that the Bible is authoritative for faith and practice, but Roman Catholics have believed that the Bible and tradition is authoritative for faith and practice. And Marcus Loane said as long as he believes that tradition and Scripture is authoritative he cannot be at one with him. As long as he believes in transubstantiation he cannot agree with him. As long as he believes that the mass is a sacrifice for human sin, he cannot sit down in unity with him, for he believed that salvation was through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ alone, made at the cross of Calvary at an historical point in history.

He said as long as the Pope believes that Mary is the mediatrix of all divine blessings, he cannot sit down in unity with the Pope. And he said as long as he believed

in justification by works rather than by faith alone, he could not sit down in unity with him. And we could add further doctrines. For example, as long as the Pope believes that the priesthood is of only some believers and not all, we cannot have fellowship with him. So to conclude, the condition in the Roman Catholic Church is a condition of ferment with an inner tension over the question of authority versus freedom, which touches even the practical affairs of daily life. But so far as I can tell, there is no question but that the hierarchy still holds to the same doctrines which in my humble opinion are anti-Christian, which they have held for many, many centuries.

Now let's turn secondly to the crisis in Protestantism, for everything is not wonderful in Protestantism either. There is every evidence of a continuation of recent trends in Protestantism. There is a moral apostasy that is present in Protestantism. There is also a doctrinal apostasy. In fact, it is obvious that the moral apostasy is the product of the doctrinal apostasy. As the Apostle Paul says in Romans chapter 1, and verse 18, “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.” For, you see, it is the ungodliness that produces the unrighteousness. It is the wrong theology that leads to moral evil. And Paul in 2nd Timothy is telling us that same thing. He is saying that in the last times, perilous days shall come and those days shall be characterized in this two-fold way: there shall be a moral apostasy and secondly there shall be a doctrinal apostasy. And the second is really the reason for the first.

As you look at Paul's words, which open 2nd Timothy chapter 3 I think we could sum them up for purposes of the message this morning by saying that Paul is simply saying that there is going to be a general repudiation of law and by that, divine law. Divine law, a general repudiation of justice and a general repudiation of natural affection in Christian professing circles. And when he gives us this detailed explanation of the types of people that shall arise in the last days, we are not surprised as we look out upon our civilization, with which we are concerned, to see evidences of this very thing right about us. But you might say to me, “But Dr. Johnson, is not Paul warning us about things

that shall take place in the professing church, for surely he's not talking simply about the world.” Yes, that's true. As a matter of fact, Paul is talking about those that Christians will have contact with and from the remainder of 2nd Timothy it seems evident that he is speaking about those who mingle with Christians, for he says that, “They have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.” He is really talking about professing Christians, and they shall be characterized by this general repudiation of the law of God. This general repudiation of divine principals of justice, and this general repudiation of natural affection such as children should have for parents and parents for children.

Now I'm not going to talk about that, I'm sure that each of you could give a private lecture on that point. But I do want to stress this, that what we are seeing happening today in the Christian church itself, in Protestantism, is so far as I can tell a precise fulfillment of the trends the apostle has prophesied. I have in my hands here a clipping which I took out of *Time* magazine this week. It is the December 13th issue. The title of this article in the religion section of *Time* magazine is The New Commandment, Thou Shalt Not, Maybe. And I'm going to read a few sentences from it if you don't mind. If you do mind, listen anyway [Laughter]. “On Mount Sinai God was unequivocal, Thou shalt not commit adultery. Traditionally most devout Christians have interpreted the Hebraic commandment to extend to all sexual relations outside marriage. Jesus even condemned lustful thoughts, saying that the man who indulged them had already committed adultery in his heart. But in recent years, pressed both by changing sexual behavior and by liberal theologians, the churches have reluctantly come to grips with a new morality that questions whether any sin, including adultery or other non-marital sex, is wrong in all circumstances. The movement began in the 1960's with a group of writers who champion contextual or situation ethics. As defined in a widely read book by Episcopalian Joseph Fletcher, situation ethics holds that there are always circumstances in which absolute principles of behavior break down. The only valid ethical test, the argument goes, is what God's love demands in each particular situation.”

The striking thing about this is that, and we don't have time to engage in a discussion of this philosophy, it is one of the weakest that I have seen come to the attention of large sections of Christians for a long time and, I think, fortunately is today not regarded quite as strongly as it was a few years ago. But the striking thing about this that as the *Time* article points out, at least four major Protestant groups this year and last year have produced documents that are at odds with the traditional biblical teaching on sex. And, of course, as you might expect these documents have come from the hierarchies of the churches and represent largely their viewpoints. They have not received approbation from great numbers of the people who sit in the pews, fortunately. But nevertheless it is a reflection of the fact that there are today those same trends that the apostle was talking about and among those who professed to be Christians there will be those who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof.

The same Joseph Fletcher a year ago about in May of 1970 addressed the Southern Baptist Christian Life conferences in Atlanta. And in the midst of his speech to them he made this statement, “I am prepared to argue that Christian obligation calls for lies, and adultery, and fornication, and theft, and promise breaking, and killing sometimes, depending on the situation.” Now the interesting thing about this, as any philosopher would know, is that he says he's prepared to argue that Christian obligation calls for lies. Well if that is true, how do we know that Fletcher was not misrepresenting his own position in that situation in which he was preaching. As you can see, such a philosophy ultimately becomes totally meaningless. But surprisingly this type of thing has become predominant in sections of professing Christendom and so we have a moral apostasy.

But Paul goes on to point out that this moral apostasy is to be accompanied by a doctrinal apostasy and he warns against the creed of the Ephesian errorists of whom he's speaking here in 2nd Timothy chapter 3 who made a parade of Christianity yet trickily traded on the weaker sex who, being more intuitive and receptive in nature, are peculiarly susceptible to proselytism, when living in lust and sin. I think that Paul's

analysis of the situation is true and I do not, in any way ladies, mean to suggest that you are not lovely and beautiful and we could not live without you. I love my female members of my family dearly, but they are females and I am a male and we each have our susceptibilities and we each have our strong points. And one of the susceptibilities of women is to be, as I've just said, more intuitive and reception in nature. And consequently, women are easily, more easily, misled than men. It is a striking fact that many of our outstanding heresies are the product of women. As you know, Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy and Christian Science and Ellen G. White and others. Now, do not think for one moment that men have not been responsible for heresies too, perhaps even more so because they have been more active.

But women are peculiarly susceptible because of their very nature and that is why the apostle exhorts the men in the New Testament times to not allow the women to teach in the meetings of the church. They were to be silent because as in the Garden of Eden when women were misled, they are more easily misled. That is why, in my opinion, and I'm going to say a few words in a moment about the tongues situation, but that is why in my opinion the tongues movement is so heavily in the hands of the women. Well Paul warns against this doctrinal apostasy. Now we have it about us, I'm not going to go into it. Over and over again through the years I have talked about the types of apostasy: apostasy toward the deity of Jesus Christ, apostasy toward the Scriptures, apostasy toward the atonement, apostasy toward the doctrine of the resurrection, apostasy toward other great doctrines of the Christian faith. There is no need, I do not think, to enter into details here. I will comment only in this way, by saying that about a year ago when the National Council of Churches met in the city of Miami for one of their meetings there was a poll taken at that time at which they were asked the delegates their views concerning the deity of Jesus Christ concerning the reality of God and also concerning another doctrine; it was life after death. And the startling conclusion of the poll taken among the delegates at the National Council of Churches assembly was that one third of the delegates could not

affirm unqualified belief in the reality of God, the divinity of Christ or life after death. I think you can see there is widespread apostasy in the National Council of Churches.

Well let's move on to the crisis in evangelicalism, for this particularly concerns us. If I were to characterize evangelicalism today I think I would honestly characterize it as strong and growing due to the youth movements that have taken place. Now I am not in any way saying that I believe that everything that transpires in the movements of the Jesus people or of other Jesus movements is genuine. As far as I can tell, a great percentage of it is simply faddism. As far as I can tell, a great deal of it is not real at all. But also, as far as I can tell, a great deal of it is genuine. And what we are seeing is a genuine turning to the Lord. But now, that does not mean that there is not a great deal of need for Bible teaching, there is a tremendous need for Bible teaching. But I do believe that we have seen some unusual things. It wasn't but just a few years ago when I was preaching right here in Believers Chapel I made reference in one of the messages on Psalm 40 some time ago to a statement that John Lennon of the Beatles had made. He had in the course of one of their trips over the United States made the statement that the Beatles were now more popular than Jesus Christ. That produced quite an outcry against the Beatles in Britain and he tried to respond to that as conveniently and carefully as possible. But the facts are that today, just a few years later, the Beatles are shattered and George Harrison is singing My Sweet Lord. So things have taken place.

Now I made that statement not long ago in Richmond, Virginia and a young lady came up to me and she said, “That's right, Dr. Johnson, but if you will listen carefully to that,” and I had listened but I hadn't listened this carefully, she said, “You will discover that really his doctrine is Christendom and that may well be true but that, too, would illustrate exactly what I'm saying. That there is a great deal of reality but there is also a great deal of unreality in the midst of this strong, growing, youth movement. But I am grateful, I must confess as a Christian, to the many young people who have come to faith

in Jesus Christ. And after all, they are only young people and consequently they need to be instructed in the great doctrines of the Christian faith.

But there are some other disturbing things in evangelicalism that I want to say a few words about. Now in the course of ten minutes obviously I'm not going to try to solve any problems. I want to call your attention to them and if you are interested in them I think there is wonderful opportunity for you to study them. But the first disturbing element that has come to my attention over recent years is the doctrinal softening that is taking place in our evangelical circles. Today if a man stands in the pulpit and preaches a sermon in which there is a strong emphasis on theology you will discover that in most of our congregations they will not respond. They are not used to that kind of food. They will usually reply, “Well that went way over my head,” which is probably true. I preached not long ago in a church which has had evangelical ministry for 30 years and I gave what I thought was a relatively simple message on the two natures of Jesus Christ. In fact, it was a message that I gave here not too many months ago. And when I gave it, several people came out and said, “Dr. Johnson, that was way over my head.”

Now perhaps it was, perhaps it was my thought, perhaps I was way over their head and if that is true then, of course, I take some of the blame for not analyzing the spiritual condition of that congregation. But on the other hand, I do not think that it should ever be true that a message on the two natures of Jesus Christ should be such that it passes over the heads of intelligent Christians who are students of the word of God. It has concerned me tremendously that around the country in our Bible conferences where men gather who are our experts in the exposition of the Scriptures, as a general rule what you hear is something that is so light and superficial that it is very difficult to even remember what they said a week later.

Unfortunately, we have become so used to hearing light, frivolous, superficial kinds of ministry in which the devotional element is the total element that when we turn to the great truths of the word of God that really make up the bones, the raw bones of

biblical structure, we cannot take it. We are used to one diet that when the other comes, when it's really good, we don't recognize it. Now I've seen this officially in one of our leading evangelical theological seminaries which just a few years ago believed in the verbal plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, believed in the Premillennial system of interpretation, which I think is true to Scripture, believed in eternal punishment, has now modified their doctrinal statement in which they deny each one of the - do not deny them but say that their faculty members do not now have to believe in these three things. They do not have to believe in verbal plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, they have watered that down. They do not have to believe in the Premillennial interpretation of the word of God, they have watered that down. Now let me hasten to say, I do not think that if you hold the Amillennial system of interpretation you are a heretic. As a matter of fact, you may be even a better Christian than some Premillennialist I know, but I nevertheless think that that is a wrong interpretation of the word of God in its eschatological sections, particularly.

But the thing, also, that disturbed me greatly was that they had removed the doctrine of eternal punishment from their doctrinal statement. And when we come to the place that we do not believe that men that are lost shall suffer eternally for their rejection of Jesus Christ then most or a great deal of the incentive for the preaching of the word of God is gone. There is a tremendous and disturbing doctrinal softening.

Now the second thing that disturbs me in evangelicalism is the tongues movement. Now we are happy that men are seeking the Lord, but let us do it biblically. I am well aware of what happened at 312 Azusa St. in Los Angeles in 1906, the time and place at which the modern tongues probably began. And let me hasten to say, if you want to study this I spoke for three hours on this topic back in May and the tapes are available to you. In three minutes I'm only going to say a few things about it. I feel that this is unscriptural. I feel that it has risen in some cases because some Christians are anxious for

an experience which they have not had in the Christian faith but they are seeking it unbiblically.

Vance Havner once said, “In some churches I am frozen. In others I am fried. And because we are frozen in some churches because there is no life in them we should not, therefore, go out and seek to find fire.” Because, you see, it may not be in accordance with Scripture and the evidence from the Book of Acts is against the tongues movement. The evidence from 1st Corinthians chapter 12 through 14 is against the tongues movement. The evidence of history is against the tongues movement. Do you realize there is no certain evidence of any speaking in tongues, and mind you, biblical speaking in tongues was speaking in known languages that were unknown to the person who uttered them; had to be interpreted by someone else. Biblical speaking in tongues was not ecstatic speech or gibberish as takes place in most of the meetings in which tongues is spoken.

Do you realize that from the times of the apostles to the times of the 19th Century, there is no certain evidence of any experience of speaking in tongues? Now when we see that Jesus Christ died on the cross at Calvary and the veil of the temple was rent and twain from top to bottom, what do we see of that? Why, we see that God has signified by that that he has done away with the Levitical system and that is true. By his actions he demonstrated what he thought about the Levitical system and so the veil of the temple was rent and twain from top to bottom. And by the fact that the gift of tongues has not been given down through the centuries, that is evidence from divine providence that he did not intend that that gift should be given and what we have today is a counterfeit.

I was speaking in Oklahoma City back in the spring on tongues, gave an hour’s message there, and when I opened it up for question a man stood up and said - or raised his hand and said, after I’d answered one question, “Dr. Johnson, I would like to make a statement.” Well I thought, uh oh, one of my tongues friends is in the audience and wants to give the other side and so I said, “All right, go ahead and make your statement.”

And he stood up and I was happy to hear his words which were, “Dr. Johnson, I would like to confirm everything that you’ve said.” And then he went on to tell his story. He said, “I grew up in a Pentecostal church. My father was and is a Pentecostal preacher. I spoke in tongues from the time that I was a young person on into my adulthood but I was not a Christian. Five years ago,” he’s a man about thirty-two or thirty-three years of age now, “Five years ago,” he said, “I can to the knowledge of Jesus Christ as my personal savior.” And he went on to say, “Dr. Johnson, anybody can speak in tongues, the kind of tongues that they are speaking in today, the ecstatic speech and gibberish who has ever been around very much those who do.” Afterwards I asked him his explanation, he said, “Well in my opinion it is psychological.”

A month or so after that we had a young man visit Believers Chapel who talked with Mr. Wheeler about tapes. He had become a Christian and he lives in Van Alstyne, Texas. He asked for information on the tapes because he wished to grow in grace, he said. In the course of the conversation he told Mr. Wheeler that he had spoken in tongues and Golden said to him, “Well what did you say?” And he said, “I don’t know.” And unfortunately that is the experience of many who are in this movement which I think is a sad movement because it leads Christians off into emotionalism and psychological instability and does not provide within itself the solid biblical instruction in Scripture that God intended for us to have.

I’ve had people who were in this audience who have gone off into the tongues movement, come to my home and say to me in my living room, “Dr. Johnson, I wish you would have this experience.” And then after I sought to reason with them from the word they would say, “Well Dr. Johnson, I am unable to talk to you about the word of God because I don’t know the word of God that well. And furthermore, Dr. Johnson, I would like to say that one of the things we miss is the ministry of the word of God in this movement.” Which I think is a very interesting thing because if that movement were what

it contended that it was, we should find there the richest, fullest, and deepest expositions of the word of God that we could find anywhere. We do not.

The third disturbing element, which I'm only going to mention, is evangelicals' infatuation with the social gospel. I wish I had time to talk about collectivism, which in my opinion misunderstands man and man's nature. Denies his spiritual nature, makes promises of behaviors in this life that are utterly unattainable. I believe that Jesus Christ believed in the possession of wealth, privately, and I think if you will study the statements of our Lord in the gospels you will come to the conviction that he did believe in man's possession of private wealth. He had a radical opinion about wealth, he said it does not belong to you and it does not belong to the state, it belongs to God and it should be administered in responsibility and under God. Not under the state, not actually under your authority finally, but under God in that you are a steward of what God has given you. But he has given that to you and it belongs to you and it doesn't belong to the state. Now this is the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Well my time is up and the game is about ready to begin [Laughter]. Let me conclude with these observations. In the first place the Bible affirms two principle things will be present in the latter days: one of them is moral apostasy, the other is doctrinal apostasy. And they are with us now. Perhaps you are saying, “Dr. Johnson, there you are again becoming narrow and complaining about what is happening in the world.” Well I remember a statement that Mr. Spurgeon made which I believe is true, he said, “The truth is God's property, not ours and he who is charitable with another's property is a thief.” And so I complain when men steal God's truth and misrepresent it.

Now then, it seems evident then that these things are with us and it is proper and biblical to complain about the apostasy of our day. Well now, what are we to do about it? Well Paul tells us one thing we are to do in verse 5, is to turn away. He says, “From such errorists, turn away.” I think that means, “Do not receive them into the fellowship of the saints, into the membership of the church or Jesus Christ.” Turn away from false

teachers who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. And the second thing he says is in the latter part of the chapter, and he says this every time he speaks about apostasy, he says the answer to apostasy is to give ourselves to the teaching of the word of God. He says, verse 14, “Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

There is one remarkable thing which is true of us in the physical sphere, we are learning that the problem in the world is really not poverty as such. People do have food. The problem is malnutrition. And surprisingly our doctors, many of them, are claiming that the effects of malnutrition so effect a mother that her child can never recover from the loss of the vitamins. That’s an amazing thing. There is some dispute in medical circles about this but we are learning that malnutrition is more significant than poverty. Now I think that is the exact condition that exists in evangelicalism today. We have food, we have plenty of food in evangelicalism. We have many, many preachers throughout this country who are teaching us the Scriptures. That is, they are opening them and they are giving us messages from the word. But it is so vitamin free that it is malnutrition for Christians and we are raising up a generation in evangelicalism that no longer has any taste for the great ole fundamental, deep doctrines of the word of God which will require us to engage in a little thought to take in and enjoy.

And so, my dear Christian friends, I exhort you as Paul exhorted Timothy, continue in the things which you have learned. Give yourselves to the Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, for every Scripture is inspired of God and profitable for doctrine as well as the other practical effects. May we stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]