

23-0723p Transcript

23-0723p - 7 Threats in Our Time, Intro, Scott Reynolds

Bible Reader: Roger Raines

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7 Threats in Our Time, Intro

Transcript (0:03 - 32:03)

Scripture Reading

Bible Reader: Roger Raines

1 Corinthians 3:10,

(0:03) The scripture reading is from the first book of Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 10. (0:10) First Corinthians 3, verse 10, and it reads,

(0:16) According to the grace of God, which was given to me, like a wise master builder, I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. (0:25) But each man must be careful on how he built it. (0:30) This concludes this reading. (0:32)

Transcript

Preacher: Scott Reynolds

(0:37) All right. (0:40) There's a lot going on in our culture today, and the culture the whole world over.

(0:46) While the world is losing its collective mind over workness, traditional values are under relentless attack. (0:58) There are some positive things going on, and I'm going to mention The Chosen here as a positive in this sense. (1:06) The Chosen is totally independent of Hollywood.

(1:11) The Chosen, if you don't know, is a television program that was produced by Christian-minded people outside of Hollywood, (1:23) and it's been tremendously successful. (1:28) With that in mind, The Chosen is totally independent of Hollywood, (1:33) and they went that way because they didn't want some producer somewhere telling them what had to be in their story. (1:41) They wanted total control over what they presented to the audience.

(1:47) It is the largest crowdfunded production in history. (1:54) They get all of their proceeds from donations. (1:59) No other movie, TV production has ever been crowdfunded to this extent before.

(2:10) They've brought in millions of dollars to do their shows, (2:16) even though what they put into a show is much less than what Hollywood puts into a show, financially speaking. (2:24) It's an example of what Christian-minded people can accomplish, (2:28) and if you don't know, the first two episodes of their third season, (2:37) they took it to movie theaters as a theatrical release, (2:43) and during the period of time, it came in at least second. (2:49) I don't remember if it did first of any period throughout that time, (2:54) but they surprised Hollywood.

(3:02) They were so successful that they only did that with their first two episodes. (3:09) There were eight episodes in their season, and before their season concluded, (3:13) the movie theater association came back to them and asked them if they could present their last two at least something else, (3:22) and they put in, at the end of their season, their last two episodes, (3:31) and it went to a theatrical release, and it also was very successful. (3:39) So it's an example of what Christian-minded people can accomplish, (3:45) and I want us to think of that because as the churches of Christ, (3:50) we're awfully confrontational to our religious friends because they just don't know how to become Christian, (4:03) and we are antagonistic a lot of times to them.

(4:09) However, what we are facing in the world now, we cannot be like the crabs that claw at each other, (4:20) and none of them are able to escape the tank because as one starts to get going, (4:27) the other claw them and pull them back down, and they're all caught. (4:31) And we need to address the war that's going on, cultural war that's going on together. (4:46) Christian-minded people have influence, but we don't exercise it.

(4:50) There's a statistic, and I'm going to use evangelical Christians because that's what this statistic is about, (4:56) but there's a statistic that says that less than 50% of evangelical Christians voted in the last election. (5:09) Now, the last election was close, and more than half. (5:15) Now, how do you think evangelicals would vote? (5:21) Would they vote for what's going on now, or would they have been more traditional-minded when they voted? (5:30) And more than half did not vote.

(5:35) This means that we can influence elections by concentrating on getting like-minded people to get out and vote. (5:44) We don't have to convert those enemies of the cross to change the outcome of an election, (5:49) although to save their souls we need to address them, (5:56) but hopefully it would be easier to motivate like-minded people to action. (6:02) As you may know, a group of us here, mainly those who have been preaching, have preaching responsibilities, (6:09) have been looking at the Truth Project.

(6:10) It's a study by Del Tackett, and the Truth Project is a systematic and comprehensive look (6:17) at building a biblically-based Christian worldview, totally based on the Bible. (6:26) It's an eye-opening study. (6:29) It helps us to make sense of the lunacy that's going on in our world today.

(6:34) We will be presenting this material to the congregation, probably and hopefully in small groups. (6:41) We also will probably have some sermons here and there based on it. (6:48) But it is intended to transform people, and the best way to do that is in small groups.

(6:55) We are comparing it to the Scriptures to make sure that what it says is the truth, and it actually is biblically based. (7:02) I believe that for each of us, individually and collectively, that the next step in our Christian walk, (7:09) once we have become a Christian, we have become established in the elementary truths of the Scripture (7:15) and have begun to move on to the solid food to become mature Christians, (7:20) because that's what we've been doing here. (7:23) And it is to develop, the next step is to develop a comprehensive biblically-based Christian worldview (7:32)

that will help us to see the world through Bible eyes, if you want to put it that way.

(7:39) We know the foundational part of the Gospel. (7:43) We have it down pat. (7:44) We know how to become a Christian.

(7:47) Our effort in the Churches of Christ have been to learn the plan of salvation and teach it to others (7:53) and teach them to teach it to others. (7:56) I think of it as every member of evangelism, evangelists and non-evangelists, (8:03) all out evangelizing how to become a Christian. (8:07) It's important to know how to become a Christian.

(8:12) It's important to make new Christians. (8:17) But that's not the whole of the Gospel. (8:24) We know, because we have a five-step plan, and Tom did a fantastic job elaborating on that this morning.

(8:36) And you know the plan, hear, believe, confess, repent and be baptized. (8:40) And he even mentioned the sixth step of our five-step plan, (8:45) which is, because we don't normally mention the sixth step, (8:50) is to teach them to observe all that I commanded you. (8:54) And typically, or practically if you want, when we teach them to observe all that I commanded, (9:02) it boils down to teaching them to do personal evangelism.

(9:06) And I'm thinking, go ye means go me and fishers of men. (9:10) And then we stress, you know, you just gotta make sure you show up at every service, (9:18) because if the doors are open, you need to be there. (9:22) And I'm not minimizing that we need to be together.

(9:28) But being a Christian is more than that. (9:35) In Ephesians chapter 5, verse 23 and following, Paul tells us that Jesus' relationship with the church (9:43) is like a husband's relationship with his wife. (9:47) The husband, Paul tells us, represents Christ.

(9:51) And the wife represents the church. (9:53) And Paul goes on to even include the children, who represent church members, (9:58) that is, Christians, little Christ, that's what that means, little Christ, in this metaphor. (10:07) In practice, much of our time is spent teaching us to use the metaphor to make babies, (10:15) that is, new Christians, and then to teach those new Christians to make babies.

(10:21) And in a real family, however, most of the time spent within the family is not making babies, (10:30) but training the children you have and nurturing them to become mature, to maturity. (10:40) Truly speaking, I do not see that kind of training going on in the church. (10:47) We're haphazard in what we do.

(10:51) I believe we're missing the point. (10:54) We weren't saved just to make new Christians and teach them to make new Christians. (10:59) We were saved to be transformed, to be changed by the renewing of our minds (11:06) and help others change or to morph, to use the Greek version of that term.

(11:13) It's stated this way, Romans 12, verse 2. (11:17) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, (11:24) that by testing you may discern what the will of God is and what is good and acceptable and perfect. (11:32) So we need to be able to discern God's will. (11:36) And Peter said it this way.

(11:38) Therefore, preparing your minds for action and being sober-minded, (11:42) it set your hope

fully on the grace that would be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (11:49) As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance. (11:56) So before we're a Christian, and we were like those out in the world, (12:02) we're in a state of ignorance.

(12:10) Our job is to take, just like Jesus said to Nicodemus, (12:16) I have come to testify to the truth. (12:20) We need to proclaim the truth. (12:24) It's sin that's going to take us captive, and it's truth that's going to set us free.

(12:32) So, as obedient children, do not be conformed. (12:36) Did I tell you where that was? 1 Peter 1, verses 13-16. (12:41) As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.

(12:47) But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, (12:55) you shall be holy, for I am holy. (12:58) And what are we supposed to be transformed to? (13:03) Romans 8, verses 28-30. (13:07) Paul says, and we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

(13:15) For those, excuse me, for those who are called according to his purpose. (13:22) For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. (13:30) We're to be transformed from the world's thinking, and be conformed to the image of Jesus.

(13:40) That's the transformation that needs to take place. (13:45) And those whom he, in order that he might be, rather, the firstborn among many brothers, (13:51) and those whom he predestined to be called, and those whom he, I'm sorry, (13:58) and those whom he predestined, he called, and those whom he called, he also justified, (14:05) and those whom he justified, he also glorified. (14:09) So, we know the foundation, as Romans 8 tells us what the foundational teachings about Christ are.

(14:19) In Hebrews 6, 1 and 2. (14:22) So, how are we to transform? (14:25) And another way of saying that is, once we become a Christian, what now? (14:30) And I don't think our purpose is for all of us to become solely personal evangelists. (14:38) It's important. (14:40) It's not a sole job.

(14:41) We do have evangelists, by the way, also. (14:45) I'd like to take a fresh look by looking at the metaphor of building a house given to us by the Scripture. (14:54) Number one.

(14:55) Jesus said, upon this rock, I will build my church. (15:00) And the rock being the confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. (15:04) It's Jesus' church, his house, he's the builder.

(15:08) See Ephesians 2, 19 through 22, and Hebrews 3, verses 3 and 6. (15:14) Paul tells us that Jesus is the chief cornerstone to which the foundation is laid. (15:21) The foundation laid down by the apostles and the prophets. (15:27) That is, Christ and the apostles and prophets' teaching.

(15:31) That's the basic structure. (15:33) It's the foundation. (15:35) It's not a completed house.

(15:41) That's the foundation upon which to build a house. (15:47) What now? (15:48) You know what we end up going around doing? (15:51) I don't want to be this antagonistic or this negative. (15:56) But it's just what we do.

(15:59) We're going around laying the foundation everywhere. (16:04) We never build on it. (16:08) There's a lot of lots that are out there that have good foundations, but that's where it stops.

(16:20) Isn't it interesting, once you have the foundation, that sounds a lot like, now that I'm a Christian, what now? (16:29) Where's the floor? The walls? The windows? Ceiling? Roof? (16:33) Who builds that? (16:35) Could this be the transformation part of being a Christian? (16:38) Are we supposed to build something on the foundation? (16:42) What do we build? (16:44) A house? Where are the blueprints? The plans? (16:47) Is this the transformation by the renewing of our mind to discern the will of God being conformed into the image of His Son? (16:57) Let me suggest that we are to build a Christian worldview conformed to the image of His Son, to see the world the way Jesus sees the world. (17:10) Paul said, 1 Corinthians 10, verses 10-17, (17:14) According to the grace of God, which was given to me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. (17:25) But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

(17:32) So each of us needs to take heed how we build on the foundation. (17:38) That means we are to build something on it. (17:41) Verse 11, For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid.

(17:47) By the way, we were not told that we need to lay a foundation. (17:54) The foundation has been given to us. (17:57) The foundation has been laid by the apostles with Jesus as the chief cornerstone.

(18:05) We're not redoing that. (18:08) That's not our job. (18:10) The foundation has been laid.

(18:13) Now, if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, (18:21) each one's works will become clear, for the day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire. (18:29) And the fire will test each one's work of what sort it is. (18:35) And if anyone's work which he has built endures, he will receive a reward.

(18:40) He did a good job. He conformed to the blueprint. (18:44) If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss.

(18:47) He's going to lose what he built on it, but he himself will be saved. (18:52) Yet, as through fire, he's lost the work that he put into it. (18:56) We're building on the foundation, not replacing it.

(19:00) And our work will be tested. (19:02) It's to see if it stands. (19:06) Did we conform to the image of Christ with what we built? (19:13) Is this Jesus? You know, Jesus is the builder, Matt.

(19:18) Hebrews chapter 3, verse 3. (19:21) He built the house. We need to follow his example and build a house on the foundation he gave us. (19:30) Verse 16 of 1 Corinthians chapter 3. (19:34) Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (19:40) If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him.

(19:44) For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. (19:49) So we are building a temple on the foundation of Jesus, the chief cornerstone, (19:54) and the foundation laid by the apostles' teaching. (19:58) And I believe that is a comprehensive biblical worldview.

(20:08) In addition to the Truth Project, Del Tackett has written numerous articles. (20:15) One series I would like us to look at is entitled, (20:19) The Seven Threats to America in Our Times. (20:22) I'm going to give you a short introduction tonight, (20:30) and we'll start on the first one the next time I speak, which is next Sunday.

(20:34) Sunday morning. (20:36) We'll start the first of the seven threats. (20:41) He starts out with

the perfect storm in his introduction.

(20:46) On October 30, 1991, there was a strange confluence of weather forces (20:52) that brought about what came to be known as the perfect storm. (20:56) A name that was coined by author Sebastian Junger. (21:00) The word perfect in this case does not mean something good and wonderful, (21:05) but it reflected the crazy fluke that numerous meteorological events (21:12) were all happening at the same time and place.

(21:15) Storms joined up, pressure systems merged, (21:18) and they all converged to create a horrendous storm with 30-foot waves. (21:25) The Andrea Gale, a fishing boat, with its crew of six were lost in that storm, (21:33) some speculating that it went down near the Titanic. (21:37) We are seeing a similar convergence today, a perfect storm, if you will, (21:43) not of weather systems, but of social hazards, cultural risks, and worldview threats.

(21:49) They are aligning in our times, and they bring much greater crises upon us (21:55) than 30-foot waves. (21:58) When God anointed David as king, the majority of Israel had not yet accepted him as king. (22:08) And you know, when you read the Bible, and you read about these famous people, (22:12) King David, you think, wow, he's king, he had it made.

(22:16) It takes him a long time, he struggled to develop what he got. (22:29) So when he was anointed king, the majority had not yet accepted him. (22:35) The mighty men, which was a group of soldiers in his armed forces, (22:41) wanted to change that.

(22:43) And one tribe of those mighty men, who were the sons of Issachar, (22:49) and they were commended with these words, in 1 Chronicles 12, verse 32. (22:56) The sons of Issachar understood the times in which they lived, (23:01) and knew what Israel should do. (23:05) The word understood means more than just knowing the facts.

(23:09) It is a deep wisdom and discernment, an understanding of cause and effect, (23:15) perceiving the true reality of what is going on around you. (23:20) But the sons of Issachar not only understood the times in which they lived, (23:25) but they knew what Israel should do. (23:30) Their understanding wasn't just for themselves, (23:34) it translated into knowing what must be done.

(23:39) And I pray for this kind of understanding in the body of Christ today. (23:44) We can no longer look at what is happening and lament that things are crazy, (23:51) or merely gripe and complain or ignore what is going on around us. (23:56) We must proceed with wisdom and grace and truth.

(24:02) I would like to offer, Del says, seven threats that have aligned themselves (24:07) in our times and in our culture. (24:11) There are certainly more than that, more than this, (24:15) and it is entirely possible that you might think I have selected the wrong seven. (24:20) But I believe these seven are not only critical, (24:24) but they must be understood if we are to see any kind of restoration (24:29) and reformation and revival in our land.

(24:33) And I'm only going to comment on one or two of the seven. (24:38) I'm going to list all seven. (24:41) The first being the rise of the scoffer and depraved mind.

(24:47) And he calls it a regression of depravity. (24:51) He said I would use the word progression, but progression implies an upward trend. (24:56) It's a downward trend, it's a regression up to depravity.

(25:02) The downward trend toward depravity beginning with the fool (25:07) who says in his heart there is no God. (25:11) Then to the scoffer who is militant. (25:14) He's not just a fool, he's militant in his beliefs.

(25:19) And ending with the depraved mind. (25:22) And to the one who slides down the slope of depravity. (25:26) And this is what scares me.

(25:28) It is God who gave them over to a depraved mind. (25:34) Romans 1, chapter 1, verse 28. (25:39) Number two is the rise of homo deus and neo-Christianity, he says.

(25:46) Homo deus is man-God. (25:48) It's where we are increasingly beginning to act like we are little gods. (25:52) And neo-Christianity, where we see Christianity is all about us.

(25:59) It's all about me. (26:01) And what it means to me. (26:03) Number three, loss of the noble male and the rise of malevolent compassion.

(26:09) And this, by the way, is the article that got me interested in the series. (26:12) I didn't even know that there was a series. (26:14) I happened across the third threat and started reading it.

(26:18) I thought it was very valuable, would be very valuable for us to hear what he has to say on that. (26:25) And found out it was part of a seven-part series. (26:32) So, loss of the noble male and rise of malevolent compassion.

(26:40) Number four, the consolidation of massive earthly power. (26:44) These powers are not just state powers, but technological powers who can shut off and ruin you financially. (26:53) Number five, the rise of demonic worldview and the national rift that has even caused the national rift.

(27:02) Number six, America addicted and soft, dependent and lost. (27:08) Number seven, he says, which is probably the most critical of the seven threats, the attack upon the biblical family. (27:20) As we go through these threats, I want to make sure, he says, that we don't lose sight of who we are.

(27:27) The last thing we want to do is for this to be seen as the sky is falling. (27:31) And lose sight of who God is and who we are and who the evil doers are. (27:39) So, he says, I thought I would read Psalm 92 for you because it is important to discuss these things in context of the larger story.

(27:50) Psalm 92. (27:52) It is good to give thanks to the Lord and to sing praises to your name, O Most High, and your faithfulness by night. (28:03) With the ten-stringed lute and with the harp, with resounding music upon the lyre.

(28:08) For you, O Lord, have made me glad by what you have done. I will sing for joy at the works of your hands. (28:16) And notice, he says, that as we go through the Psalm, that it is about God and who he is, about man and who we are, about the larger story.

(28:28) Verse five. (28:30) How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep. (28:36) A senseless man has no knowledge, nor does a stupid man understand this.

(28:41) That when the wicked sprouted up like grass and all who did iniquity flourished, it was only that they might be destroyed forever. (28:52) But you, O Lord, are on high forever. (28:57) For behold, your enemies, O Lord, for behold, your enemies will perish.

(29:03) All who do iniquity will be scattered. (29:06) But you have exalted my horn like that of the

wild ox. (29:11) I have been anointed with fresh oil, and my eye has looked exultantly upon my foes.

(29:20) My ears hear of evildoers who rise up against me. (29:25) The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree. (29:28) He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon, planted in the house of the Lord.

(29:33) They will flourish in the courts of our God. (29:36) They will still yield fruit in old age. (29:40) They shall be full of sap and very green to declare that the Lord is upright.

(29:46) He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him. (29:51) Psalm 92. (29:52) And he finishes with this quote from Alistair Begg.

(29:56) I had to look him up. (29:58) He preaches, not for the Church of Christ, but he preaches in the Cleveland area, by the way. (30:04) I was surprised.

(30:06) What are we to make of this, Alistair says? (30:09) We're not to be surprised when we find Christianity maligned and marginalized, (30:15) when we hear of Christians being prosecuted and persecuted, (30:20) or when we find ourselves being told we are extremists, haters, and bigots. (30:25) For a few hundred years in the West, we have been able to kid ourselves (30:31) that the normal experience of God's people is to be considered respectable and honorable, (30:38) to be able to voice our views in the public square, and be welcomed, (30:43) and be able to speak to those in power, and be listened to. (30:47) It was not ever thus, and it is no longer thus.

(30:52) We are back to the normal experience of the Church, (30:57) facing opposition and being called to stand firm and undergo suffering for our faith. (31:06) And remember, Jesus told us, and this is not Alistair, this is back to Adele, (31:12) remember that Jesus told us that it would not always be an easy road to follow him. (31:19) As we go through the seventh, just like the Truth Project, (31:26) it opens our eyes, that we can see, understand the times in which we're living.

(31:33) We can see what's going on, and it makes sense. (31:37) We can understand why they're acting in such an insane manner, (31:46) and because they have rejected the source of truth. (31:51) They have no true compass.

(31:55) So, we're extending the invitation to anyone who needs it. (32:02) Shall we stand?