

Seven Threats of Our Time

23-0730a - T1-The Rise of the Scoffer, Scott Reynolds

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These Sermon Notes by Scott Reynolds

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T1-The Rise of the Scoffer and the Depraved Mind

[Del Tackett 7 Threats Series with Video link](#)

[Del Tackett Threat #1 transcript](#)

Dell Tackett Preface

There are seven threats that are converging on all of Western Culture, but in particular we are going to look at how they're coming together here in America. There are other threats, but I think these are the most critical for us, the remnant, to understand, so that we can know what to do.

The seven **threats** are:

1. Rise of the Scoffer and the Depraved Mind (which we will do today)
2. Rise of Homo Deus (we are little gods) and Meo Christianity (Increasingly we see Christianity as being all about ourselves)
3. Loss of the Noble Male (which may be the most controversial as we go through these) & Rise of Malevolent Compassion (It is the "no ethic" compassion that has become the **primary** ethic in our culture)
4. The Consolidation of Massive Earthly Power (We are in a day and time when there are powers that are not just State powers. There are technological powers that can shut you off, they can ruin you financially, and so forth)
5. Rise of a Demonic Worldview (and I don't shy in using that adjective, I believe it is demonic and that worldview has created a huge split in our nation), the National Rift
6. (Concerns the Health of the people and we are...) America: Addicted & Soft, Dependent & Lost
7. (Could be, maybe, the most drastic than all of these...) The Attack on the Biblical Family

These are the seven threats and today we are going to walk through the Rise of the Scoffer and the Depraved Mind and talk about what that is.

But most importantly I want us, as we look through these threats, that we don't lose sight of who we are. The last thing that we want this to be is that the "sky is falling," and lose sight of who God is and who we are and who the evil doers are.

So let's read through Psalm 92 as we open this up with an understanding of the remnant and who we are. It's incredibly important to discuss these things in the context of "the larger story."

Psalm 92:1-15

It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; ² to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, ³ to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. ⁴ For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy.

⁵ How great are your works, O LORD! Your thoughts are very deep! ⁶ The stupid man cannot know; the fool cannot understand this: ⁷ that though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever; ⁸ but you, O LORD, are on high forever. ⁹ For behold, your enemies, O LORD, for behold, your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered.

¹⁰ But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; you have poured over me fresh oil. ¹¹ My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants.

¹² The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. ¹³ They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God. ¹⁴ They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, ¹⁵ to declare that the LORD is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

And when we're understanding the larger story, I'd like to begin with a little quote from Alistair Begg, from his book:

"Brave by Faith" (p. 109)

"What are we to make of all this? We are not to be surprised when we find Christianity maligned and marginalized, when we hear of Christians being prosecuted and persecuted, or when we find ourselves being told we are extremists, haters, and bigots. For a few hundred years in the West we have been able to kid ourselves that the normal experience of God's people is to be considered respectable and honorable, to be able to voice our views in the public square and be welcomed, and to be able to speak to those in power and be listened to. It was not ever thus, and it is no longer thus. We are back to the normal experience of the church: facing opposition and being called to stand firm and undergo suffering for our faith."

And I think that it's important to understand **that** historical context. Yes we pray that we may be able to see things restored and God may do that, but we never lose the understanding that our Lord told us it would not be an easy road for those to follow Christ.

So, with that beginning of our context let's look now at what I call:

(#1) The Rise of the Scoffer and the Depraved Mind

July 21, 2021 - Del Tackett (modified with livestream added)

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We draw these two from both Proverbs & Romans because

Proverbs carries within it a sense of progression, we will call it a "regression", because "progression" implies something onward and upward. A regression implies something downward and that is what we see in Proverbs. We will look at this first.

And then we will look at the regression that we see in Romans 1. And we will try to understand these and why it is going on around us.

Proverbs introduces to us three (yea four) kinds of people: the simple, the fool, and the scoffer. And they are continually contrasted with [the 4th] the wise. We meet all three together (right in the beginning of Proverbs) in...

Proverbs 1:22

How long, O **simple** ones, will you love being simple?
How long will **scoffers** delight in their scoffing
and **fools** hate knowledge?

If you look at these three (the simple, the fool, & the scoffer), **the "simple"** reminds me of the 60's, when the mantra was "I'm ok; you're ok". This was the throwing off of moral values, doing what felt good and the live-and-let-live, carefree days of "Hey, man, cool!"

The [Proverbs seems to imply that the] simpleminded will eventually become the "fool". Now the word "fool" is used often to talk about all three of these. But with **the fool here** we see an open rejection of God (fools hate knowledge, 1:22, that is knowledge of God and His ways);

Psalm 14:1; 53:1

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile...

The fool hates truth and the knowledge of God, rejecting it in favor of whatever he gathers from the world and the pleasure he can derive from it. The fool is not: "everybody's fine" (of the simpleminded), it's, "I'm ok, but you're not." It's ok for you to throw off boundaries and so forth, but if you think there **are** boundaries then there's a problem.

So the fool takes a stand now: there is no God, evil is good and good is evil.

But, in a fallen world, the fool can descend [further] into a final stage: **the scoffer**. This is the militant fool. The scoffer is no longer satisfied with saying: "There is no God." Now he wants to **make you** believe the same or he wants to punish you if you do believe there is a God. So the Scoffer is the fool militant and the focus of our discussion today. He is arrogant and haughty:

Proverbs 21:24

Scoffer is the name of the arrogant, haughty man who acts with arrogant pride.

So you see this is beyond the simple, beyond the fool. He's arrogant, he's haughty, he acts with pride. (do those terms sound familiar today?)

Proverbs 22:10

Drive out a scoffer, and strife will go out, and quarreling and abuse will cease.

So the scoffer brings strife. The scoffer pits people against each other. The scoffer quarrels and stirs up quarreling and he brings abuse.

Proverbs 24:9

... the scoffer is an abomination to mankind.

The scoffer is not content with just his own philosophical position. The scoffer is the militant, who wants to destroy. And that is why he is called an abomination to mankind.

Look at this one.

Proverbs 29:8

Scoffers set a city aflame [certainly we've seen that!], but the wise turn away wrath.

This is the context of the wise to all of these that we find throughout Proverbs.

And in Jude and 2nd Peter, a couple of other passages here for us to consider.

And before I read these [Dell says:] I want to tell you I'm not conveying to you anything about eschatology at this point. I'm not conveying anything about the end times. We are just reading what the scripture says about the scoffer.

Jude 1:18

They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions."

2 Peter 3:3

knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

Proverbs, I think, is describing them here...

Proverbs 4:16

...they cannot rest until they do evil; they are robbed of sleep till they make someone stumble.

The scoffer is the militant fool.

Ok, so now let's look at the regression found in Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter one. It, too, is not upward, but downward. Here we are told that God's wrath is being revealed from heaven... because people have:

- suppressed the truth (though it is plain, because God MADE it plain)
- they do not glorify God nor thank Him.
- they have become futile, their hearts darkened, and they have become fools

And God's wrath is now being revealed as a result of this state of people.

And then we are introduced three times to where it says:

"Therefore, God gave them over to" something, because they exchanged the truth of God for a lie

And it appears that these are successive "giving them over to..." statements. (My comment here, "SR," is: "Understand that these successive pronouncements are God's actions that He's taking against man"),

- **First: Therefore, God gives people over to "sexual impurity"**

This is a sexual immorality that is within the normal male/female relationship. It isn't hard to think about what happened in America toward the end of the 1800's and the beginning of the 1900's. With Darwin on the rise of acceptance, Dewey stripping God and ethics from schools and Freud focusing everyone on sex, our culture took a major turn. World War I could have been a warning to us, but we ignored it and ran right into the Roaring 20's. The great depression and World War II might have also been warnings, but we ignored them as well. Sexual impurity was on the loose in America and in her arts and media all the way through the 60's.

And because they do not repent of that, they do not turn away from the sexual impurity, it seems we moved from the simple-minded to the fool and...

- **Therefore, God gives them over to "shameful lusts"**

No longer was sexual impurity confined to the natural male/female sexuality. We moved rapidly into unnatural sexual impurity and the culture embraced it all the way to the Supreme Court.

then finally,

- **Now, it appears that: Therefore, God has given us over to a "depraved mind"**

What does this mean?

The Greek word for "depraved" means "unqualified". But what is an "unqualified" mind? What does it look like? If you sat next to someone with a depraved mind, how would you recognize it? Would they be frothing at the mouth? Throwing things? Twitching?

The key may be in first understanding what a "qualified" mind would be. God created us with a mind that was rational. It could recognize reality, comprehend logic and reason with the Lord when He said "come let us reason together". It was a mind that had what we call "common sense".

An “unqualified” mind, then, would be a mind that was no longer rational or entertained logical arguments or reason. It would appear to think and say things that were irrational or lacking common sense. [In Mark 5,] when Jesus encountered the Gerasene man who was possessed, naked and acting crazy, Jesus healed him and he was found clothed and “**in his right mind**”. We see the same with Nebuchadnezzar, out in a pasture eating grass like a cow after God had judged him, until “**he came to his senses**”.

We now find ourselves in a culture where it is increasingly difficult to have rational discussions with people unless it is over benign things like the weather, sports or your flower beds.

Not long ago, I was trying to have a rational discussion regarding voter ID. We were on a plane and the lady next to me mentioned that she had forgotten her ID and missed her flight because she had to go home and get it. I casually mentioned that it was strange that someone is required to show an ID to fly from Houston to Colorado Springs, but there is a battle over whether or not someone should have to show an ID to vote. That started an irrational discussion that ended with her giving me a dirty look.

Have you tried to have a rational discussion regarding abortion? Or math being viewed as racist? Or allowing young children to select their own gender? What about training our military to despise the country they are supposed to fight for? What about forcing government contractors into re-education programs and forcing them to sign letters of "guilt" and "confessions" because their skin was light?

Many people that I know shake their heads at such things and breathe something like “the world has gone crazy!” We become frustrated because of the lack of “common sense” and “no one seems to listen”.

Maybe we have been given over to a depraved mind.

What is the response to these things? How do we live as wise in the times in which we live?

There is a Preeminent Need for Wisdom

Sons of Issachar

"The sons of Issachar understood the times in which they lived and knew what Israel should do." We are told in 1 Chronicles 12:32.

The word “understood” is the Hebrew word “binah” and it means more than just knowing the facts. It is a deep wisdom and discernment, an understanding of cause and effect, perceiving the true reality of what is going on around you.

But the sons of Issachar not only understood the times in which they lived, but they “knew” what Israel should “do”. We need to have that same kind of understanding, that deep wisdom and discernment as we look at the culture around us. For the purpose of not just us being more knowledgeable or to hide under the bed or become hopeless, but to know what the people of God should do.

And that is what Colossians tells us...

Colossians 4:5-6

Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. ⁶ Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

→ And that includes the irrational scoffer

It is critically important for the remnant to keep in mind

that the scripture clearly tells us that we are dealing with a spiritual battle. It's very easy for us to get caught up in the physical when people are speaking ill words to us. When we see things happening that are so unjust, and we get riled up inside, to not forget that this is a spiritual battle that we are engaged in. And understanding that will help us in our response.

There is also a Preeminent Need for Vision

I also want us to have a clear understanding of the vision of who we are and 2 Corinthians 5 is excellent in that:

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. ¹⁸ Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

So... Being Wise in the Day of the Irrational Scoffer

This may cut a little bit, but I say it as gently as I can and as lovingly as I can.

In the day of the irrational scoffer we need to recognize that

- All of our apologetics are based upon the hearer having a rational mind

All of our apologetics are based upon rationality and logic, as it should be. Based on the truth of God, we build our apologetic piece by piece, logical premise and so on..., but that apologetic, which may have been appropriate a hundred some years ago, when there was a general acceptance of a biblical worldview, that kind of apologetic listened to by people with a rational mind, had an effect.

That assumption may no longer be valid.

- How do you bring up logic to someone who has an irrational mind?
- We can become frustrated because of the lack of "common sense" or "no one listens" or "people are crazy"

We can't continue to try to fit rational arguments into irrational minds.

How do we deal with the outsider today?

- Begin with Wisdom

In their book: "I Once Was Lost", Don Everts and Doug Schaupp have interviewed two thousand students (in a campus ministry) who have come to Christ. And they tried to capture what each of these 2,000 students journey was. While their stories are diverse and varied, certain common themes emerged. They identified discernible phases that they went through. Each one crossed through five thresholds. We will look briefly at the first two.

- The 1st was that someone who was skeptical, maybe even a scoffer, who was skeptical of Christianity, skeptical of Christians, the first threshold that they had to cross was that they had to enter into **a trusted relationship with a Christian**. If they entered into a trusted relationship with a Christian, the next step was
- They began to ask sincere questions. And they began to engage.

Now all of this is in the context of prayer.

It is important for us to understand that if we are going to conduct ourselves with wisdom toward outsiders and understand the time in which we live, then **we need to also understand how do we engage** with a culture in which increasingly people are given over to a depraved mind and they become the irrational scoffer.

- **We will engage with wisdom...**

The only way I know is through building a trusted relationship in the context of diligent prayer. That God is going to open their mind or their heart in that trusted relationship and then they will begin to ask sincere questions in which they're willing to listen.

Only God can change the scoffer's heart.

Only God can heal the depraved mind.

Only then will the rational truth have fertile soil in which to flourish.

- **The second thing**

- I think it is important for us to understand here is that we will not be as those without hope. That does not characterize the people of God. We are a people of hope.
- We are going to meditate on the nature of God and His works. We're going to meditate on His word.
- We are going to remind ourselves continually that the wicked will not prevail as we read in Psalm 92.

- **We are going to stand firm for truth and righteousness**

- though the cost may be great. There are many people who are paying that cost even now. As Daniel did as well.

- **We will still yield fruit in old age**

In the midst of that cost we are going to build deep relationships with people in the context of diligent prayer for them. And we will pray that God will then allow us to yield fruit in our old age.

We are going to close with Psalm 92. It reminds us of who God is, of the larger story, of who we are and that the wicked shall not prevail.

Psalm 92:1-15

It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; ² to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, ³ to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. ⁴ For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy.

⁵ How great are your works, O LORD! Your thoughts are very deep! ⁶ The stupid man cannot know; the fool cannot understand this: ⁷ that though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever; ⁸ but you, O LORD, are on high forever. ⁹ For behold, your enemies, O LORD, for behold, your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered.

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<https://www.deltackett.com/resources/32803/7-threats-in-our-times-1-the-rise-of-the-scoffer-and-the-depraved-mind>

Invitation

We are extending the invitation, now, to anyone who is subject to it. If you need to, Come,... while we stand and sing.