

23-0730a Transcript

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

Bible Readers: Scott Reynolds and Roger Raines

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T1-The Rise of the Scoffer and the Depraved Mind

Transcript (0:03 - 36:19)

Scripture Readings

1st Reader: Scott Reynolds

Proverbs 1:20-33,

(0:03) The scripture reading this morning is from Proverbs chapter 1, specifically verse 22, (0:11) but for context I'm going to pick it up at 20 through the end of the chapter.

(0:17) Wisdom cries aloud in the street. In the market she raises her voice. (0:23) At the head of the noisy street she cries out. At the entrance of the city she speaks. (0:30) How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? (0:37) How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing, and fools hate knowledge? (0:44) If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you. (0:51) I will make my words known to you, because I have called, and you refuse to listen. (1:00) Have stretched out my hand, and no one has heeded. (1:04) Because you have ignored my counsel, and would have none of my reproof, (1:10) I also will laugh at your calamity. I will mock when terror strikes you. (1:19) When terror strikes you like a storm, and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, (1:24) when distress and anguish come upon you, then they will call out upon me, (1:30) but I will not answer. They will seek me diligently, but will not find me. (1:37) Because they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord, (1:42) would have none of my counsel, and despised all my reproof. (1:47) Therefore, they shall eat the fruit of their way, and have their fill by their own devices. (1:55) For the simple are killed by their turning away, and the complacency of fools destroys them. (2:04) But whoever listens to me will dwell secure, and be at ease without dread of disaster. (2:13) That's the end of the scripture. (2:14) Amen. (2:15)

2nd Reader: Roger Raines

Proverbs 21:23-25,

(2:20) Good morning. (2:22) Good morning, Walter. (2:25) Second scripture is, we're going to stay in Proverbs chapter 21, verses 23 through 25. (2:36) Proverbs 21, 23 through 25.

(2:42) He who guards his mouth and his tongue guards his souls from troubles. (2:47) Proud, haughty, scoffers are his name. (2:51) Who acts with insolent pride, the desire of the sluggard puts him to death, (2:58) for his hands refuse to work. (3:01) This concludes this reading. (3:03)

Transcript

Preacher: Scott Reynolds

(3:08) Good morning, Walter. (3:14) I had the opportunity, Jean and I, when we were visiting my brother, (3:18) in-law, and sister, to come across some material by a man called Del Tackett, Dr. Del Tackett, (3:30) called The Truth Project, which is a study on how to build personally, each of us, a biblically-based (3:43) worldview on the scriptures, and see the world as God sees it. (3:51) When you do that, and there are a number of us, the men who are (3:56) speaking to the congregation, have gotten together and we're studying that, (4:03) because we want to bring it to the congregation. (4:05) It's very important for us, in today's times especially, for us to know (4:14) what a Christian worldview looks like.

(4:19) Then, having become familiar with Del Tackett through the study, (4:25) I went to his website and found he has a lot more material. (4:29) He's written many articles, and he's doing another project, (4:33) The Truth Project, by the way, was done in 2005, (4:37) and it is uncannily accurate with what's going on in the world today. (4:45) He's doing another study called The Engagement Project, and in an interview he had said, (4:54) you know, when I did The Truth Project, you get a worldview from God's perspective, (5:01) and then what do you do with it? What do you do with this knowledge? (5:05) And The Engagement Project is, now, how do we engage with the world that is (5:15) adamantly opposed to God's worldview? (5:21) And that's what The Engagement Project is about.

(5:23) I also found on his website a series called The Seven Threats of Our Time, (5:31) and it's kind of a bridge between The Truth Project and The Engagement Project, (5:36) and you get a glimpse of how to engage with today's world. (5:44) We are going to be starting The Seven Threats, one each sermon. (5:50) We started last Sunday night with an introduction to the series, (5:54) and I'm going to continue now with the first one.

(5:59) Del picks up by saying, there are seven threats that are converging on all of Western culture, (6:06) but in particular, we're going to look at how they're coming together here in America. (6:14) There are other threats, but I think these are the most critical for us, (6:19) the remnant, to understand so that we can know what to do. (6:24) So why are we learning this? So we know what to do.

There's some action that we can take. (6:33) The seven threats are rise of the scoffer and the depraved mind, which we will do today. (6:40) Number two, rise of homo deus, which is man is looking at himself as little gods, (6:48) and neo-Christianity.

Increasingly, we see Christianity as being all about ourselves. (6:56) Three, the loss of the noble male, which he says may be the most controversial as we go through (7:04) these, and rise of malevolent compassion. That is the no ethic compassion that has become (7:13) the primary ethic in our culture today.

Number four, consolidation of massive earthly power. (7:21) We are in a day and time when there are powers that are not just state powers. (7:28) There are technological powers that can shut you off.

They can ruin you financially, and so forth. (7:37) Five is rise of a demonic worldview, and he says I don't shy in using that adjective. (7:43) I believe it is demonic, and that worldview has created a huge split in our nation that he calls (7:51) the national rift.

Six concerns the health of the people, and we are, America, addicted and soft, (8:01) dependent and

lost. And number seven could be maybe the most drastic of all of these, (8:08) the attack on the biblical family. These are the seven threats, and today we're going to walk (8:15) through the rise of the scoffer, and the depraved mind, and talk about what that is.

(8:23) But most importantly, I want us as we look through these threats, that we don't lose sight of who we (8:30) are. The last thing we want to do is to be that the sky is falling, and lose sight of who God is, (8:43) and who we are, and who the evil doers are. So let's read through Psalm 92, as we open this up (8:53) with an understanding of the remnant, and who we are.

It's incredibly important to discuss these (9:00) things in the context of the larger story. There's more going on than our little life. (9:11) So Psalm 92, it is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High, (9:21) to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, (9:28) to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.

For you, O Lord, (9:36) have made me glad by your work, at the works of your hand I sing for joy. (9:42) How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep. The stupid man cannot know, (9:50) and the fool cannot understand this, that though the wicked sprout like grass, (9:59) and all evil doers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever.

(10:17) But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox, you have poured over me fresh oil. (10:27) My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies, (10:31) my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants. The righteous flourish like the palm tree, (10:39) and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

They are planted in the house of the Lord, (10:43) they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age, and they are ever (10:51) full of fat and green. To declare that the Lord is upright, He is my rock, and there is (10:59) no unrighteousness in Him.

And while we're understanding the larger story, (11:06) I'd like to begin with a little quote from Alistair Begg from his book, *Brave by Faith*. (11:14) What are we to make of all this? We are not to be surprised when we find Christianity maligned (11:21) and marginalized, when we hear of Christians being prosecuted and persecuted, or when we (11:28) find ourselves being told we are extremists, haters, and bigots. For a few hundred years in (11:36) the West, we have been able to kid ourselves that the normal experience of God's people (11:43) is to be considered respectable and honorable, to be able to voice our views in the public square (11:50) and be welcomed, and to be able to speak to those in power and be listened to.

It was not ever thus, (12:00) and it is no longer thus. We are back to the normal experience of the Church, (12:08) facing opposition and being called to stand firm and undergo suffering for our faith. (12:17) And I think it's important to understand that historical context.

Yes, we pray that we may (12:25) be able to see things restored, and God may do that, but we never lose the understanding (12:33) that our Lord told us it would not be an easy road for those to follow Christ. So, (12:43) with that beginning of our context, let's look now at what I call the rise of the scoffer (12:51) and the depraved mind. We draw these two, the scoffer and depraved mind, (12:58) both from Proverbs and Romans, because Proverbs carries within it a sense of progression, (13:05) and we will call it a regression, because progression implies something onward and (13:11) upward.

A regression implies something downward, and that's what we see in Proverbs. (13:17) We will look at this first, and then we will look at the regression that we see in Romans chapter 1, (13:23) and

many of us are familiar with that, and we will try to understand these and why it is going on (13:30) around us. Proverbs introduces us to three, yea, four kinds of people, the simple, the fool, (13:41) and the scoffer, and they are continually contrasted with the four, the wise.

We will (13:51) meet all three of these right in the beginning of Proverbs, in Proverbs chapter 1, verse 22. (14:00) How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their (14:08) scoffing, and fools hate knowledge? If you look at these three, the simple, the fool, and the (14:16) scoffer, the simple reminds me of the 60s, when the mantra was, I'm okay, you're okay. This was (14:24) the throwing off of moral values, doing what felt good, and the live and let live, carefree days of (14:31) amen, cool, and flower powder.

The Proverbs seem to imply that the simple minded will eventually (14:41) become the fool. Now the word fool is used often to talk about all three of these, (14:50) but with the fool here, we see an open rejection of God for fools hate knowledge, (14:58) verse 22 told us. In Psalm 14 1 and 53 1, they both say the same thing, (15:07) the fool says in his heart, there is no God, they are corrupt, their deeds are vile.

(15:16) The fool hates truth, and the knowledge of God, rejecting it in favor of whatever he gathers from (15:24) the world and the pleasure he can derive from it. The fool is not everybody's fine of the simple (15:30) minded. It's, I'm okay, but you're not.

It's okay for you to throw off boundaries and so forth. (15:39) But if you think there are boundaries, well, that's a problem. So the fool takes a stand, (15:47) there is no God, evil is good, and good is evil.

But in the fallen world, (15:55) the fool can descend even further into a final stage, the scoffer. This is the militant fool. (16:06) The scoffer is no longer satisfied with saying there is no God.

Now he wants to make you believe (16:15) there is no God. Or he wants to punish you if you do believe there is a God. So the scoffer (16:24) is the fool militant, and the focus of our discussion today.

He is arrogant and haughty. (16:32) Proverbs 21 24. scoffer is the name of the arrogant haughty man who acts with arrogant pride.

(16:42) So you see, this is beyond the simple, beyond the fool. He's arrogant, he's haughty, (16:49) and he acts with pride. Do those terms sound familiar today? Proverbs 22 10.

Drive out a (16:59) scoffer and strife will go out and quarreling and abuse will cease. So the scoffer brings strife. (17:07) The scoffer pits people against each other.

The scoffer quarrels and stirs up quarreling, (17:15) and he brings abuse. Proverbs 24 9. The scoffer is an abomination to mankind. (17:25) The scoffer is not content with just his own philosophical position.

The scoffer is the (17:32) militant who wants to destroy, and that is why he is called an abomination to mankind. And look (17:40) at this one. Proverbs 29 8. Scoffers set a city aflame, and certainly we've seen that.

(17:51) But the wise turn away wrath. And this is the context of the wise to all of these (17:58) that we find throughout Proverbs. And in Jude and 2 Peter, a couple of other passages here (18:04) for us

to consider.

And before I read these, Del says, I want to tell you I'm not conveying to you (18:12) anything about eschatology or the end times at this point. I'm not conveying anything about the (18:18) end times. We are just reading what the scripture says about the scoffer.

Jude verse 18. They said (18:28) in the last time there will be scoffers following their own ungodly passions. (18:35) 2 Peter 3 verse 3. Knowing this first, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, (18:44) following their own sinful desires.

The scoffer is interested only in his own ungodly passions (18:52) and his own desires. Proverbs, I think, is describing them here in Proverbs 4 verse 16. (19:01) They cannot rest until they do evil.

They are robbed of sleep until they make someone stumble. (19:09) The scoffer is the militant fool. Okay.

So now let's look at the regression found in Paul's (19:16) letter to the Romans chapter 1. It too is not upward but downward. Here we are told that God's (19:25) wrath is being revealed from heaven because people have first suppressed the truth, though it is (19:33) plain, it says there, because God has made it plain. And two, they do not glorify God nor thank (19:41) him.

And lastly, they have become futile, their hearts darkened, and they have become fools. (19:48) And God's wrath is now being revealed as a result of this state of the people. (19:54) And then we are introduced three times to where it says, therefore, God gave them over to something (20:04) because they exchanged the truth of God for a lie.

And it appears that these are successive (20:13) giving them over to statements. And my comment here, Scott speaking, is understand that these (20:20) successive pronouncements are God's actions that he's taking against man. First, therefore, (20:30) God gave people over to sexual impurity.

This is a sexual immorality that is within the normal (20:38) male-female relationship. It isn't hard to think about what happened in America toward the end of (20:46) the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s when Darwin, beginning in 1859, on the rise of acceptance (20:55) of the Dewey Decimal System, stripping God and ethics from schools, and Freud focusing everyone (21:02) on sex. Our culture took a major turn.

World War I could have been a warning to us, but we ignored (21:10) it and ran right into the roaring 20s. The Great Depression and World War II might have also been (21:18) warnings, but we ignored them as well. Sexual impurity was on the loose in America and in her (21:25) arts and media all the way through the 60s.

And because they do not repent of that, they do not (21:31) turn away from the sexual impurity, it seems we move from the simple-minded to the fool. And, (21:39) number two, therefore, God gives them over to shameful lusts. No longer was sexual impurity (21:48) confined to the natural male-female sexuality.

We moved rapidly into unnatural sexual impurity, (21:56) and the culture embraced it all the way to the Supreme Court. And then finally now, number three, (22:03) it appears that, therefore, God has given us over to a depraved mind. (22:12) What does that mean? The Greek word for depraved means unqualified.

But what is an unqualified (22:20) mind? What does it look like? If you sat next to someone with a depraved mind, how would you (22:26) recognize it? Would they be frothing at the mouth, throwing things, or twitching? The key may (22:33) be in first understanding what a qualified mind would be. God created us with a mind that was (22:41) rational. It could recognize reality, comprehend logic, and reason with the Lord when he said, (22:48) come, let us reason together.

It was a mind that had what we call common sense. (22:57) An unqualified mind, then, would be a mind that was no longer rational or entertained logical (23:04) arguments or reason. It would appear to think and say things that were irrational or lacking (23:10) common sense.

In Mark chapter 5, when Jesus encountered the Gerasene man who was possessed, (23:18) naked, and acting crazy, Jesus healed him, and he was found clothed and in his right mind. (23:27) We see the same with Nebuchadnezzar, out of the pasture, eating grass like a cow, (23:33) after God had judged him until he came to his senses. (23:41) We now find ourselves in a culture where it is increasingly difficult to have rational discussions (23:52) with people unless it is over benign things like the weather, sports, or your flower beds.

(23:59) Not long ago, as I was traveling, I was trying, rather, to have a rational discussion regarding (24:07) voter ID. We were on a plane, and the lady next to me mentioned that she had forgotten her ID (24:14) and missed her flight because she had to go home and get it. I casually mentioned that it was (24:20) strange that someone is required to show an ID to fly from Houston to Colorado Springs, (24:26) but there is a battle over whether or not someone should have to show an ID to vote.

(24:33) That started an irrational discussion that ended with her giving me dirty looks. (24:39) Have you tried to have a rational discussion regarding abortion or math being viewed as racist (24:48) or allowing young children to select their own gender? What about training our military to (24:53) the country that they are supposed to fight for? What about forcing government contractors (25:00) into re-education programs and forcing them to sign letters of guilt and confessions because (25:06) their skin was light? Many people I know shake their heads at such things and breathe something (25:11) like, the world has gone crazy. We become frustrated because of the lack of common sense, (25:17) and no one seems to listen.

Maybe we have been given over to a depraved mind. (25:27) What is the response of these things? How do we live as wise in the times in which we live? (25:35) There is a preeminent need for wisdom. The sons of Issachar understood the times in which they (25:42) lived and knew what Israel should do.

We are told in 1 Chronicles 12, verse 32. (25:49) The word understood in the Hebrew word is the Hebrew word banah, and it means more than just (25:56) knowing the facts. It is a deep wisdom and discernment and understanding of cause and (26:03) effect, perceiving the true reality of what is going on around you.

But the sons of Issachar (26:09) not only understood the times in which they lived, but they knew what Israel should do. (26:17) We need to have that same kind of understanding, that deep wisdom to look at the culture around (26:24) us for the purpose of not just being more knowledgeable or to hide under the bed or (26:30) become hopeless, but to know what the people of God should do. And that is what Colossians tells (26:38) us.

Colossians 4, verses 5 and 6. Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, (26:48) making the

most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace as though seasoned (26:54) with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person, and that includes (27:04) the irrational scoffer. It is critically important for the remnant to keep in mind (27:11) that the scriptures clearly tell us that we are dealing with a spiritual battle.

It is very easy (27:20) for us to get caught up in the physical when people are speaking ill words to us. When we see (27:27) things happening that are so unjust, and we get riled up inside to forget that this is a spiritual (27:37) battle that we are engaged in, and understanding that will help us in our response. There is also (27:44) a preeminent need for a vision.

I also want us to have a clear understanding of the vision of (27:52) who we are. And 2 Corinthians chapter 5 is excellent in that. In verses 16 through 21.

(28:01) Therefore, from now on we will recognize no one according to the flesh or the physical. (28:08) Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him in this way no longer. (28:15) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature.

The old things passed away. (28:22) Behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through (28:30) Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

Namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the (28:39) world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them. And he committed to us, he committed (28:47) to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were (28:54) making an appeal through us.

We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made him who (29:02) knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. (29:11) So, being wise in the day of the irrational scoffer.

Adel says this here, (29:19) let's mix up a little bit, but I say it as gently as I can and as lovingly as I can. (29:27) In the day of the irrational scoffer, we need to recognize that all of our apologetics are based (29:36) upon the here having a rational mind. All of our apologetics are based upon rationality and logic, (29:45) as it should be.

Based on the truth of God, we build our apologetic piece by piece, (29:52) and so on. But that apologetic, which may have been appropriate hundreds of years ago, (30:00) when there was a general acceptance of a biblical worldview, that kind of apologetic listened to by (30:08) people with a rational mind had an effect. That assumption may no longer be valid.

(30:16) How do you bring up logic to someone who has an irrational mind? We can become frustrated (30:22) because of the lack of common sense, or no one listens, or people are crazy. We can't continue (30:29) to try to fit rational arguments into irrational minds. Well, how do we deal with the outside today? (30:37) Begins with wisdom.

In their book, I Once Was Lost, Don Evers and Doug Schaub have interviewed (30:48) 2,000 students in the campus ministry who have come to Christ. They tried to capture what each (30:55) of these 2,000 students' journey was. While their stories are diverse and varied, certain (31:01) themes emerged.

They identified discernible phases that they went through. Each one crossed (31:08) through five

thresholds. We will look briefly at the first two.

The first was that someone who was (31:17) skeptical, maybe even a scoffer, who was skeptical of Christianity, skeptical of Christians. (31:25) The first threshold that they had to cross was that they had to enter into a trusted relationship (31:34) with a Christian. If they entered into a trusted relationship with a Christian, (31:39) the next step was they began to ask sincere questions and they began to engage.

Now, all of (31:49) this is in the context of prayer. It is important for us to understand that if we are going to (31:56) conduct ourselves with wisdom toward outsiders and understand the times in which we live, (32:02) then we need to also understand how do we engage with a culture in which increasingly people have (32:10) given over to a depraved mind and they become the irrational scoffer. We will also engage with (32:18) wisdom.

The only way I know is through building a trusted relationship in the context of diligent (32:26) prayer. That God is going to open their mind or their heart in that trusted relationship and then (32:34) they will begin to ask sincere questions in which they are willing to listen. Only God can change (32:42) scoffers heart.

Only God can heal the depraved mind. Only then will the rational truth have (32:53) fertile soil in which to flourish. The second thing I think it is important for us to understand (32:59) here is that we will not be as those without hope.

That does not characterize the people of God. (33:10) We are a people of hope. We're going to meditate on the nature of God and his works.

We're going (33:18) to meditate on his work. We're going to remind ourselves continually that the wicked will not (33:24) prevail as we read in Psalm 92. We are going to stand firm for the truth and righteousness (33:31) though the cost may be great.

There are many people who are paying that cost even now (33:38) and Daniel did as well. In the midst of that cost, we are going to build deep relationships (33:45) with people in the context of diligent prayer for them and we will pray that God will then (33:53) allow us to yield fruit in our old age. We're going to close with Psalm 92 again.

(34:04) It reminds us of who God is of the larger story of who we are and that the wicked shall not prevail. (34:14) Psalm 92. It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High, (34:26) to declare your steadfast love in the morning and your faithfulness by night, to the music of the (34:34) lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.

For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work. (34:41) At the works of your hand, I sing for joy. How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts (34:49) are very deep.

The stupid man cannot know and the fool cannot understand this, (34:56) that though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction (35:07) forever. But you, O Lord, are on high forever. For behold, your enemies shall perish and all (35:19) evildoers shall be scattered.

But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox. (35:26) You have poured over me fresh oil. My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies.

(35:33) My ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants. The righteous flourish like the palm tree and (35:41) grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord.

(35:48) They flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age, and they are ever (35:55) full of sap and green to declare that the Lord is upright. He is my rock, and there is no (36:08) righteousness in him.

We're extending the invitation now to anyone who is subject to it. (36:15) If you need to, come while we stand and sing.