



Paul's Attack on the Allegorical Myths of the 1st Century A.D., 2 Tim 4:2-4; the Strange Bedfellows of Progressive Secularists & Religious Legalists

2 Timothy 4:2 -Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season [**good times & bad**], reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience [**never deviate from truth**] and instruction [**teach doctrine**].

v. 3 - The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine [**no objectivity**]; but wanting to have their ears tickled [**an eagerness to hear what appeals to them**], they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires;

v. 4 - and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths [**μῦθος, *muthos***].

17. Paul's use of the word *muthos* in this passage has an application that corresponds to our overall study and warrants mention here. Gerhard Kittel's comments on *muthos* in the New Testament are instructive:

Kittel, Gerhard (ed.). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), 4:783:

μῦθος, *muthos*. Most deserving of notice are the interpretations which refer the myths to the Jewish haggada and which assume that the myths are proclaimed by a Jewish or Jewish-Christian Gnostic sect. It is highly probable that the Pastoral Epistles [1 & 2 Timothy & Titus] are concerned with the early form of a Gnosticism which flourished on the soil of Hellenistic Jewish Christianity. References to dualistic ideas such as those contained in 1 Timothy 4:1-5 clearly take us beyond the sphere of Judaism proper. In this, Gnosis haggadic stories and their religious allegorical interpretation were contemptuously described by opponents in terms of the pagan expression μῦθοι, *muthoi*, with a primary reference to the method of exposition, which was fundamentally the same as that of the Hellenic myths. In this type of interpretation, which opened the door to Gnostic caprice, the Church saw a danger which caused it to hoist a warning signal.

18. Even during the incipency of the Church Age the battle with allegorical interpretations of the Word had begun and Paul speaks of the impact upon those who were drawn to this method of biblical analysis when he writes, "they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to μῦθος, *muthos*: myths."
19. In a similar fashion, Reformed theology, characterized by its belief in "limited atonement" and the supralapsarian order of the elective decrees, has transformed the Christian walk from humble submission to the mandates and unquestioned faith in the promises of Scripture to a frantic search for confirmation through works.
20. This frantic search for confirmation is designed to accomplish within the minds of its followers an assurance that they are among the elected few who will see eternal life.
21. Such an attitude has gradually spilled over into the secular community. The zealous urgency to fix problems before they occur, to right all alleged wrongs, to change opinions deemed too traditional, and to alter circumstances that are politically incorrect are what is behind the domineering attitudes expressed today by government, courts, religion, academia, society, and the press.
22. Those who actively get involved in church affairs are not motivated by the prospect of a certain eternal future but by an energy-of-the-flesh attempt to convince themselves that they are among those decreed to be loved by God. The assumption is that if they are right with their fellow man then surely they are right with God.
23. Those who reject religion and especially Christianity nevertheless become very self-righteous in their attempts to whitewash the devil's world.



24. There are in fact quite a lot of similarities between special interest groups and legalistic churches. The proponents of political correctness and progressives in general are far more legalistic than the Christian churches they fear will impose their legalisms on The People.
25. No greater tyranny exists in this country than that imposed by the state and federal courts whose judges are the strong-arms who enforce progressive ideology in defiance of constitutional restraints.
26. Their self-righteous zeal seeks to preserve the planet by self-sacrifice, to rid the species of deadly diseases through scientific research rather than insisting that people restrain themselves from indecent and immoral behaviors, and to overcome economic downtrends by the distribution of wealth through confiscation of private property.
27. The eradication of biblical viewpoint from the culture has created a moral vacuum that has produced a multiplicity of problems. The progressives are trying to correct the very problems they created with human-viewpoint solutions that only serve to create even more intractable problems.
28. The paradox that has emerged is that the progressive secularists and the religious legalists complement each other with their fruitless systems of works.
29. The more the saving work of Christ is removed from the church the more its members get involved in human action designed to win God's favor through human action.
30. The more the principles of biblical truth are removed from the national dialogue the more Pharisaic legalism expands within the cultural Zeitgeist.
31. And so Americans are caught in a legalistic Gordian knot that at once tries to insure unlimited freedom of one's behavior but outlaw any criticism of his actions.
32. Thus, in an effort to insure unbridled freedom, we are forced into bondage. For without the sine qua non of truth, people degenerate. They begin to act normally and normality in the human species is not a pretty sight.
33. In order to control the lust patterns and trends of multiple sin natures, government must step in and take the place of religion in a society gone mad. Yet those who seek to solve the problems of society's reprobates imitate the legalistic church which has for too long stressed salvation through works for an elite few.
34. And so we find no separation of church and state when it comes to legalism. The struggle underway is to determine whose legalistic system will prevail.
35. The state has the constitutional upper hand and those in power are driven by human good and evil in a zealous effort to restore order out of chaos.
36. Yet, left out of the process is recognition of the fact that Jesus Christ controls history and reliance upon the grace of God Who is the source of every provision in life. Instead we are handicapped with human-viewpoint solutions which are completely opposed to biblical and establishment truth.