

November 12, 2017

## “Terrible Times in the Last Days”

### Focal Passage: 2 Timothy 3:1-9 (NASB)

Cross References: 1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 11:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:13-15

**Lesson Idea:** We need to turn away from the wickedness and worldliness of false religion, and let the power of God keep us in the Truth in these last days.

#### BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

Nov 5 John 3-4	Nov 6 John 5-6
Nov 7 John 7-8	Nov 8 John 9-10
Nov 9 John 11-12	Nov 10 John 13-15
Nov 11 John 16-18	Nov 12 John 19-21

#### Background:

Today’s lesson speaks about the difficult times during the “last days.” Verse 1 says: *But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.* David Guzik explains the term:

**In the last days:** This is a broad term in the New Testament, broad enough to where one could say that the last days began with the birth of the Church on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17). The days of the Messiah mark the last days; yet the term is especially appropriate to the season immediately before the return of Jesus and the consummation of all things.

The sign of the “last days” according to this passage deals with the character of people. As we study these verses, we should ask ourselves: “Are we living in the last days?” Can we see these descriptions matching our society? Are we ready for the Day of the Lord?

#### 2 Timothy 3:1-9

*1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. 6 For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, 7 always learning*

*and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. 9 But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes’s and Jambres’s folly was also.*

#### DISCUSSION:

- v 1. What does Paul say will be true of the “last days?”
- v 2-4. What do these terms mean, and how are they evident in our days?
- *lovers of self*

**NOTE:** from Guzik:

***Men will be lovers of themselves:*** This is certainly characteristic of our present age, when men and women are encouraged to love themselves. People are told to love themselves unconditionally and that such self love is the foundation for a healthy human personality. . . This love of self is the foundation for all the depravity that follows in Paul’s description. . .

“It is no accident that the first of these qualities will be a life that is centred in self. The adjective used is *philautos*, which means self-loving. *Love of self* is the basic sin, from which all others flow. The moment a man makes his own will the centre of life, divine and human relationships are destroyed, obedience to God and charity to men both become impossible. The essence of Christianity is not the enthronement but the obliteration of self.” (Barclay)

- *lovers of money*
- *boastful*
- *arrogant*
- *revilers*
- *disobedient to parents*
- *ungrateful*
- *unholy*
- *unloving*

- *irreconcilable*
- *malicious gossips*
- *without self-control*
- *brutal*
- *haters of good*
- *treacherous*
- *reckless*
- *conceited*
- *lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*
- v 5. What does it mean to “have a form of godliness, but to deny its power?” How could that describe much of Christianity today? Why should true believers avoid such men?

**NOTE:** from Guzik:

When we talk about the power of godliness, we often mean it in the sense of “power to give me what I want.” But this is exactly opposite of what Paul meant here. The power of godliness that men will despise in the last days is the power it should have to guide their lives; power in the sense of rightful authority – and many, many, today deny that God has the power to tell them what to do through His Word.

- V 6. What is another sign of false teachers?
- V 7. How could someone constantly be learning, but still not arrive at the truth? Why would they not be *able to come to the knowledge of the truth?*

**NOTE:** from Guzik concerning Jannes and Jambres:

**Jannes and Jambres:** Though they were not named for us in the Exodus account, these two men are the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses before Pharaoh (Exodus 7:8-13, 7:19-23, 8:5-7, and 8:16-19) . . . These were able to work real miracles – not mere parlor tricks – but by the power of darkness and not the power of God. When Moses cast down his rod and it turned into a serpent, Jannes and Jambres could do the same. When

he turned water into blood, they could do the same. When Moses brought forth a plague of frogs, Jannes and Jambres could do the same. Yet eventually they could not match God miracle-for-miracle, and their occult powers were shown to be inferior to God’s power.

The ability to do miracles by the power of darkness and the willingness to receive them as authentic will characterize the end times (Revelation 13:13-15 and 2 Thessalonians 2:9). Some ... are amazed by any spiritual power that is real, without carefully thinking that real power may have a demonic source instead of a Godly source. And even if a psychic or new age power seems to feel right, we must not be seduced by it because demonic powers can come masquerading as angels of light (2 Corinthians 11:15).

Resisted Moses: The resistance of truth by Jannes and Jambres was shown by their ability to cooperate with demonic powers to do miracles. In the last days, men will also resist the truth. Even as Jannes and Jambres were eventually put to shame (though for a while they matched Moses “miracle for miracle”) and were eventually compelled to give reluctant glory to God, so also will the evil men of the last days. Even as Jannes and Jambres’ power had limits, so does Satan’s power, even in the last days – God is still in control.

This is the message of great hope in the midst of this great darkness – the spirit of the last days has an answer to it in Jesus Christ. The spirit of the last days is not stronger than the power of Jesus. The glorious truth is that we don’t have to be bound by the spirit of our times; we don’t have to be slaves to self and have our universe revolve around something as puny as our selves. There is hope, triumphant hope, in Jesus.

- V 8. How do false teachers oppose the truth? What does it mean to have a depraved mind? Why are they “rejected in regard to the faith?”
- V 9. Why did Paul believe that the false teachers would not make “further progress?”

**APPLICATION:**

- ✓ Do any of the descriptions of “last days” behaviors describe your life? How will you repent of those this week?
- ✓ Do you have a “form of godliness” that lacks power? How will you seek the Lord’s power this week?
- ✓ How are you guarding yourself from false teachers?

Lesson by Bro Stan