

# Coping In Terrible Times

## 2 Timothy 3:1-9

But mark this.. There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God-- having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth--men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.

But mark this.. There will be terrible times in the last days.

## What are 'the last days'?

They cover the Messianic age

The first Coming of Jesus the Messiah

Acts 2:16-17 .. **this is what was spoken** by the prophet Joel: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people."

Hebrews 1:1-2 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but **in these last days** he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.

## How long do 'the last days' last?

They end with the return of Jesus the Messiah

2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendour of his coming.

Matthew 24:30 Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.

# When are 'the LAST days'?

But mark this.. There **will be** terrible times in the last days.

Paul here refers to this time as in the future.

They were expecting the return of Jesus in the end times

The idea of the Messianic kingdom has the elements of  
'now' and 'not yet'

Jesus reigns, but we pray for God's kingdom to come.

1 Corinthians 15:25 For he must reign  
until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

## Expect trouble

But mark this.. There will be **terrible times** in the last days.

Warning! – It will be like the days of Noah

Genesis 6:5 The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.

Matthew 24:37-39 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

# Everything is affected

Although 2 Timothy 3 focuses on human behaviour  
Matthew 24 and Revelation say that both the population  
and the physical earth will be affected.

Matthew 24:7-8 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.

Revelation 16:1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go, pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth."

## **Similar things have happened before.**

In Israel, the prophets (eg. Jeremiah) and godly men and women suffered

Matthew 5:11-12 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Hebrews 11:35-38 .. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated-- the world was not worthy of them.



## **Similar things have happened before.**

These things can be seen throughout world history

In early church times up to 400 AD. Roman atrocities against Christians occurred –they were tortured, burned, put with lions in the arena.

In the middle ages, the official Church persecuted those who questioned their authority and teachings. Cf. Tyndale, Huss

In England at the time of the reformation (1500s) many were martyred

In our modern era, totalitarian religion and political groups world wide are persecuting believers. More Christians have died for their faith during this last century than ever before. The unreported scandal.

**Paul describes things that have been around for a long time  
but seem to intensify toward the end.**

People will be lovers of themselves,

It's people's hearts that are the cause of the problems

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.  
Who can understand it?

It's the wrong kind of self love (selfish, self centred)

Contrast this with Psalm 139:14

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

lovers of money,

A root of all kinds of evil

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Today's world as well?

boastful, proud, abusive,

Celebrities get away with this behaviour  
Looking down on others

There is no excuse.

disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,

Family breakdown – encouraged by media and  
pressure groups and state powers

Everything is a “right” – the world owes me

Religion mocked – only my rules apply

without love, unforgiving, slanderous,

Coarse and unfeeling – self first

Long memories of hurts – real or imagined

False accusations/ social media trolls etc.

without self-control, brutal,

Me first- I want what I want and I want it now.

Tread on those on my way – others don't matter.

Philadelphia in the USA, the city of brotherly love is the murder capital of the nation, and CNN dispatched a reporter to interview the grieving mother of a young black boy killed while riding his bicycle in the street. Apparently, a couple of cars had got backed up behind him, and an impatient passenger in one of them pulled out a gun and shot the kid.

not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited,

No appreciation of finer things,  
Mock the 'do-gooders'

It's OK to fiddle the books, get-one-over somebody.  
'My word is my bond' doesn't apply

Instant, unconsidered actions – consequences don't apply

Full of their own great ideas and disdain of yours

Proverbs 26:12 Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes?  
There is more hope for a fool than for him.



lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God-

Their philosophy is ...“Life is an orange – squeeze it for all it’s worth.”

These are the dominant aims : food/ sex/ shopping/ entertainment

These things are loved rather than being in their proper place

God is left out! - and we see the inevitable results

Romans 1 : if that’s their choice, God gives them up to it and worse follows.

- having a form of godliness but denying its power.

Church / religious appearance (wolves in sheep's clothing)  
All that glitters .... Is NOT gold.

They do not live by the power of God which produces a transformed heart and life.

Their 'fruit' ultimately gives them away in spite of the show.

# Hopeless

Have nothing to do with them.

They are so far gone that there is nothing you can do to help them. Avoid them. Their influence is toxic.

They are the kind who worm their way into homes

Sneaky tactics are employed to take  
advantage of people  
– homes are meant to be safe places.

and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires,

They go for the easy targets of women at home feeling guilty. They can be 'sold' a get-better-package which is a mix of sinful suggestions and responses.

always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.

They are always ahead in the information game  
BUT never thinking things through to come to a real understanding

Acts 17:21 Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

1 Corinthians 2:14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses,

Their names are not recorded for us in Exodus

Exodus 7:10-11 So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the LORD commanded. Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers, and they, the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts.

BUT people didn't forget who they were.

so also these men oppose the truth-

The false teachers resist the truth in the  
same way

And do their best to oppose and  
undermine it (with fake truth!)



-men of depraved minds,  
who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected.

They are seriously beyond the pale.

Jeremiah 7:16 “As for you, do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me, for I will not hear you.

1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that.

## Keep watching

But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men,  
their folly will be clear to everyone.

Moses 'out performed ' the magicians

Just so ..

Their days are numbered,  
but they can do a lot of damage in the mean time.

But mark this.. There will be terrible times in the last days.

So .... Be on your guard

Know the word

Depend on the Holy Spirit

Keep in close fellowship with the Lord

(The shepherd will protect his sheep)

## **The gospel still goes out**

Matthew 24:13-14 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.