

“The Time is Now”
A Battle for the Church
2 Timothy 3:1–9

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, 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, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. 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.

—2 Timothy 3:1–9

1. Realize

“But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.”

—2 Timothy 3:1

Realizing, understanding, knowing intimately can only come through the knowledge of **God’s Word** and **spending time** with Him.

Paul is helping us here in getting rid of the ignorance of what is currently happening and will continue to happen both in the **world** and in the **church**.

“...the idea of handling the Word of truth correctly has to do with knowing God’s truth and putting it into practice in our own lives, such that, we are living examples, approved by God, illustrations to the world around us of just how relevant His truth is.”

—Pastor Rick

When are the last days? The short answer is **right now**.

‘AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,’ God says, ‘THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS...’

—Acts 2:16–17

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

—Hebrews 1:1–2

Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.
—1 John 2:18

It means the time from the **first coming** of Christ to the **establishing** of His eternal glory.

2. **Recognize and Reject**

Can you identify spiritual fraud? Where does the fraud begin? The first thing Paul names is the parent of all the others... **lovers of self**.

“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
—John 13:35

We are to be thankful for what we are in Christ, because it’s not about me, it’s about **Christ IN me**.

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...
—2 Timothy 3:2–4

- If you’re a lover of self, you’ll want to be **gratified**
- If my love for myself is more important than love for anyone else, I’m going to be **proud**
- If I’m more important than you, I’m going to look down on you and **criticize** you
- If I’m more important than you (and I’m a child), why do I need to **obey my parents**?
- If I’m more important than you, it’s **YOLO**

“He that over values himself will under value others. And he that under values others will oppose them.”

—Samuel Johnson (18th century preacher)

But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.
—2 Corinthians 11:12–15

When we see how much comes out of self-absorbed self-love, we will be ready to recognize the **fraudulent spirituality** when it tries to enter the church.

Three tools to help us:

- **Character**
- **Teaching**
- **Followers**

This is a battle for the church, but the enemies of the church will also attack on **another front**.

Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith.

—2 Timothy 3:8

There will be those who not only **oppose the truth**, but they will sometimes use **supernatural** means to do so.

3. **Rejoice**

But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all...

—2 Timothy 3:9

Those who are attacking will attempt to weaken the church, but they **will fail**. They will **NEVER** be able to stop the work of God.

for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

—Mark 13:22

The true church will see their **folly**. The true church can't be ultimately **deceived**.

Application

Be **aware**. Realize this is indeed a real battle, a **spiritual** battle.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

—Ephesians 6:12

Pray. Pray for **yourself** and pray for those at the **front lines** of this spiritual battle.

Be **discerning**. Take the time to get into God's Word, know His Word, study His Word. When you know Him better, you will be able to easily discern truth from deception.

Examine yourself. How's your personal holiness? What is it you do in your home while no one is looking? What are you reading and watching and listening to?

Be **patient**. God's timing is perfect. Yes, we may want this battle to end now, but God's not through yet. His plan has always been Plan A, and that's not going to change. When the time is right, the battles will end.

Now is our time. Now is our time to be what God has called us to be—men and women of spiritual courage. Now is the time to invest your life in others. If we are in Christ, ours is the victory. Our God is faithful, He will deliver, and it will be forever.