

# What time is it?



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We are going to look into two books of the Bible dealing with the same period of time and the same events.

Looking into both of these passages carefully should broaden our understanding of the time we are living in today.

**Do you know what time it really is?**

Do you believe that you're in the end times, the latter days - the last days of the last days? near to the coming of Jesus?

If you really believe that these are the end times, it is because you believe what you're seeing.

There are events to look for which are foretold by the Lord and by the apostles - and some of those same events are foretold by the prophets in the Old Testament.

In II Peter, we find a picture of what it will be like at the end of the age, in an apostate time.

**Apostate** - We want to consider that word **apostate** carefully, because we don't want to become apostate!

Know that if you go apostate, there is no remedy. In other words, if you get in it, you can't get out of it. If you go apostate, that means you have denied the Lord, denied the Blood - and if you've done that, what is left?

II Peter 2:1

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Peter is looking both backwards and forwards here.

He's talking about false prophets of days gone by, how they came and the things they did. But then he goes on to relate that there shall be false teachers among us (future).

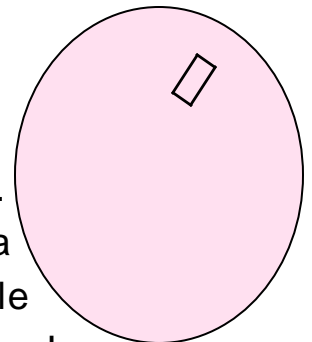
Notice that it goes from prophets to teachers. These false teachers shall privily bring in damnable heresies - untruths, doctrines that are not true. Oh, they may have a little tinge of truth mixed in, but they are false. They are not sound, not right.

There are many heresies around, in which people are believing things that aren't true. This Scripture, though, is speaking of heresies at a higher degree: **damnable heresies**.

A damnable heresy is a heresy which will damn your soul, undermining your Christian faith, bringing you down to rejecting Jesus, and rejecting His Blood.

There might be something that you've believed for years - but if you searched the Word you would find no sound basis for it. You might find just a little truth, but not enough to back it up.

It's like a stick of bubble gum. You chewed it and then blew a big bubble - but then the bubble burst and went all over your face!



Well, you might take a little truth, and then start to stretch it this way and that way. The fiber weakens, so you keep adding more and more to it.

The next thing you know, what started out as a little truth turns into a heresy.

That little truth wasn't heresy to begin with, but mixing it with things that are untrue has turned it into a heresy.

We want to consider, then, that false teachers bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

So the destruction that comes from a damnable heresy can be swift - even the day that a person swallows it! the day he takes it up! the day that he brings it into his heart, and starts to believe it!

It can bring destruction to a person's soul, while he might still be walking around in his body.

Each one of us ought to stop and be careful that we're not gullible:

to be gullible is to grab something you see or hear, and take it as being factual - no matter what it is.

Some people will believe anything they hear. But we can't be that way as Christians.

The work of antichrist in the last day is to try to bring people into damnable heresies, where they would follow after him and not after Jesus.

Now, we find there are several areas we have to hold firm to - -

## OUR BASIC REDEMPTION -

Our redemption is available through the Blood of Jesus Christ. We can't cast His Blood aside. We've got to go by the Gospel, and hold to the truth . . .

- **the truth** that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

The sufferings of Jesus on the Cross were for us. And as we look at the Cross, we see that shed Blood, we see the death and resurrection of Jesus, and we see the way is made for our redemption.

- **the truth** of the virgin birth of Jesus, that He came in the flesh, as the Scriptures teach us.

• **the truth** of the Cross. Jesus died on the Cross. His Blood was shed as an atonement for our sins.

We are redeemed through that Blood, bought back out of sin unto God.

- **the truth** that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, the Christ.

The damnable heresies of these last days deny that Jesus is the Christ.

There are those apostates who aren't just apostate, but are of the spirit of antichrist, denying the very things which we're taught to hold to and believe.

Among other things, they deny the following truths: the virgin birth, the Cross, and the Blood as a means of atonement.

Many of these may have, at one time, had some truth - but they listened to some false teacher and were gullible, giving up the very truths they believed.

## Only to turn and believe a lie!

Peter says that these false teachers shall be among you, possibly even someone brought right up in the midst of the flock.

These last day false teachers are dangerous. They're damning souls. They're of the enemy, not of the Spirit of God.

Always remember that false prophets and false teachers know all the jargon.

The false prophets of the Old Testament knew what it was all about. They grew up among God's people - yet never took the truth to heart, never accepted it.

They will have a following -

II Peter 2:2

And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

Bear in mind that they may have on sheep's clothing, so that you mistake them for sheep, thinking *What good preachers or teachers they are!* You may even get some good ideas from them.

But remember that they bring damnable heresies which cause people to deny the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

And they have many followers who follow their pernicious (hurtful) ways. You can't afford to be one of those followers, nor have any part of them.

II Timothy 4:3,4

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

This is the work of the last day false teachers: turning people away from the truth, away from the Lord, causing them to lose that which they once possessed.

*Many will follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.*

**Followers:** following their pernicious, or hurtful, ways. **False teacher:** by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. That word *whom* refers to these false teachers.

Some of these influential teachers may have a lot of charisma about them, so that people want to gather around them because of their flashy ways.

We ought to know when someone is speaking against what we believe.

We should know when someone is ranking Jesus down - and we should know there is something wrong with him.

We should know when someone is running down the Cross and the Blood of Jesus, or the virgin birth, or the resurrection - and we should get as far away from him as we possibly can.

When we hear these contrary things, they should alert us, turning a red light on. We shouldn't want to hear anything more that they have to say.

These false teachers can be slick, smooth-mouthed, great orators, really laying it out. It sounds good to people who don't know or stop to consider that it's really dynamite to them - something which, getting into their souls, could destroy them.

### How can we identify them?

We have to look for signs given to us in the Scriptures to show us how we can know who these false teachers are:

II Peter 2:3

And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

These are teachers who are damning souls with damnable heresies, people who seem to have a lot of what it takes to get others to leave the truth and follow their lies.

### Covetous:

These false teachers come along making merchandise of souls through covetousness with feigned words (words that try to convince that what they're doing is of God).

Many of these have their hand out, looking for big offerings. They're in it for the money. And they know how to be convincing.

There's a danger sign right here that we have to watch out for: making merchandise of the Gospel.

Know that the Gospel is not something you buy, nor is it something you sell.

If someone is wanting to promote himself in this manner, you'll find he has gimmicks upon gimmicks, trying to convince that those gimmicks will somehow bring a blessing to any who buy them.

Now, feigned words will often say, *I'm not really charging you. I'm just giving you a gift in return for your offering.*

Maybe it's a just a tape. But once you put a price on it, it's not just a tape - it becomes merchandise.

So many offer something for you to buy - disguised as something else: *You send me \$100 and I'll GIVE you back \$50 in merchandise!*

That way they get their \$50 and you get your \$50 worth of merchandise. There's a lot of that going on these days.

*And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you.*

What did the Lord think about the merchandise that was sold at the temple?

All around the temple were those who set up tables with things for sale (like a flea market). And then there were the moneychangers (like a bank, where you can exchange foreign currency for American currency).

Well, in Jesus' day they were doing all of these type of things - right in the temple!

They were selling animals and birds for sacrifice - in the temple. The things which they were selling all sounded legitimate; but they were selling them in the temple!

We have to beware when people are wanting to make merchandise of us.

In our ministry, we set our foot down years ago to anyone who was going to preach for us, letting all know they couldn't sell merchandise in the house of God.

People may be using such things to finance the Gospel - but what happened to the old fashioned idea of just giving to God? Isn't that the Scriptural way?

Do you have to get something back when you give to God? Oh, God will bless your life when you give your tithe in faith and love - when you don't do it as a matter of buying and selling (a matter of covetousness). But you shouldn't give your tithe just because God has promised to bless those who do.

Take the Lord's own example. He threw the tables upside-down, scattering money everywhere. And he drove out all those who were involved.

He did this twice!

but, I suppose, it didn't take them long before they moved back in yet again!

Those who make merchandise of souls through covetousness are of a wrong spirit, a spirit that isn't just out for your money - but also out for your soul.

Bear this in mind: we don't own the Gospel. Did you know that the Bible isn't copyrighted? You cannot copyright the Bible.

The Scriptures belong to God, and are given to everyone. Nobody has a right to copyright them and claim them as his.

It costs to print Bibles, but if you're going to buy one, go to the bookstore. Don't buy or sell Bibles in church.

There has to be a line drawn, keeping the sanctuary solely as a place of worship, a place where we can get our souls fed - not as a place to buy and sell, not a place to make money.

II Peter 2:3

And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

This covetousness that makes merchandise of people is an awful thing. The whole purpose of the false prophets is to make money for themselves.

They're out there being covetous, robbing others. They lie and convince many with their feigned words.

There are those preachers who receive money under false pretense, taking money for a cause which they have no intention of helping. It's just a gimmick to get people to give to them.

Through their covetousness they're making merchandise of others, by feigned words. They lie, saying that the money is to be used for something other than their own gain.

This same time -

Jude 3

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Jude warns us concerning the Gospel and what the Gospel was delivered to us for, that we don't get away from that.

We should stay in tune with the Gospel, earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

This would tend to make us fundamental, going back to the Bible - going back to the New Testament, back to the book of Acts, and earnestly contending for those things.

We preach revival. We preach the book of Acts. We preach the power of Pentecost. We preach the gifts of God. We preach healing and deliverance.

These are things that were given to us, and we hold on to these things.

Therefore we don't mind preaching them and practicing them. These are things which are part of this faith referred to in Jude 3.

[The faith which was once delivered unto the saints.](#)

Though Pentecost brought it to us, it's up to us to maintain and keep it.

Here we find those in the early church warning us about the last day church.

In the early church there was a tendency among some to want to turn away from those very things.

This was reason for Jude to be alarmed and to write the need to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Over in II Peter we read of the damnable heresies, and here we read of contending for just the common faith.

We're not to let these good things slip.

We're not to get into the realm of those in the last days who will bring damnable heresies that destroy souls.

Bear in your mind how important it is that we do contend for that faith, for all that the Scriptures have given.

## The whole Gospel -

Why should we let one thing slip?

Jude 4

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Certain men crept in.

How do these things get in the church? To get in there and be affective they've got to have some means to accomplish what they want as false prophets or teachers. Jude speaks of such who crept in unawares.

They came in under pretense, but it may not have lasted too long. When they got the opportunity to have the audience they want, then the real things they have in them begin to flow from their mouths.

These are not to be respected in any wise.

Now, they were before of old ordained to this condemnation. It was foretold by the prophets and the apostles that they would come.

Here's the real damage they do: turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, a hot, lewd lust.

There's no place in the Church of Jesus Christ for lasciviousness. There's not a function in the Church that's for this purpose. It only turns the grace of God, changes the grace of God.

Soon, instead of being teachers of grace, they become corrupters.

Can they teach people how to live? Can they teach true godliness? They can't, can they!

The only way they could preach about that sin in any extent would be to back away and try to deceive people to think they're not living in sin themselves.

Anything that brings immorality into the church, that allows immorality to flourish, that encourages immorality to flourish, is bringing lasciviousness into the church.

What about marriage and divorce and remarriage! This is prevalent in many churches today. It's like a new way of life, running from one mate to another. They live a few years with someone, and then it's time to drop that one to find someone else.

And they want to do it in the church with the pastor's blessing!

A pastor that blesses the likes of that is in trouble with God! We've got to be careful. The grace of God is something precious:

Ephesians 2:8,9

**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.**

Your salvation is given you by faith. You believed and embraced it, but it is a gift of God. You didn't earn it. All you did was to believe. It was God who saved your soul, who forgave and cleansed you. That was the grace of God at work in your life.

What if you were under the law, and you had to earn salvation by living that law?

Just about the time you thought you were getting up on your feet, you found that you broke another commandment - and were, thus, guilty of all. And you found yourself back to square one.

How do you get out of that? Only by the grace of God.

God is not imputing our sins to us under grace. There's a book in heaven that is being used of God to impute righteousness, not to charge sins. God deals with sin here and now.

If you sin, God will deal with you now. That's what the chastening rod is for. It's one of God's tools to get sin out when things aren't right.

Realize, then, that the grace of God is important. We can't let it slip from us.

We can't let it be turned into something else, though some do just that.

Titus 2:11,12

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

Verse 11 expresses that the grace of God brings salvation.

It also teaches us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

Now, lasciviousness in Jude 4 would account for all these things which we are to deny - the grace of God turned into lasciviousness rather than following the course presented here in Titus 2.

We want to be in the realm with God where we bear in our minds that we can't afford to live that way.

Individuals can fall into this, and so can entire churches - depending on what's being preached and taught.

If we don't preach the truths of God's Word, all we'll have is corruption.

Jude 4b

. . . and denying the only Lord God,  
and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Over in II Peter we read about these people creeping in.

And here in Jude again we read of certain men crept in unawares: deniers, denying the Blood, denying the Lord - antichrist, deniers of Jesus.

If we're in the last days, then it's no strange thing if we see these things around.

These are the things that warn us about the end times: false teachers who have damnable heresies, false teachers who are more prone to bring lasciviousness into the church, deniers of the Blood and the sacrifice of Christ - deniers of Him.

Anybody denying Jesus is rejecting Him.

But look at all of this and note how these have crept into the churches to bring in apostasy.

[When people deny the Lord, what is left?](#)

You can't afford to go down that route. Keep your love for Jesus pure, keep your heart on Jesus, keep your mind on Him.

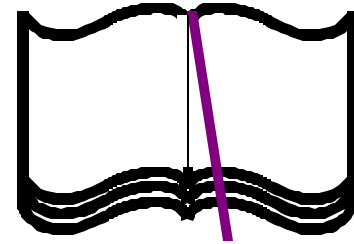
Bear in mind that you're living in an end time, when you can expect to see a lot of things going on that aren't right. And you don't want to be a part of such things.

To reject Jesus is to reject life, because you can only find life in Jesus Christ.

Let's be thankful, then, in our hearts, that we've been taught sound doctrine which is able to save our souls.

The Word of God would teach us to love God, to walk with Him, and to keep ourselves.

It teaches the way of holiness and righteousness, teaches to have a faith in God which is real - that we would make heaven.



Jude 1:20-21

But ye, beloved,  
building up yourselves  
on your most holy faith,  
praying in the Holy Ghost,  
keep yourselves in the love of God,  
looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus  
Christ unto eternal life.