

Do You Know What Time It Is?

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We want to look into two books of the Bible, II Peter and Jude, that deal with the same period of time but are told by two different people. Looking into these books carefully should broaden our understanding of the time we live 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? Do you believe you are living near the time of the second coming of Jesus?

If you believe what you see these days, things that were foretold in the Word, you will agree that these are the end times.

Peter's Warnings

Apostasy

First, let's look into the book of II Peter where we find a picture of what it will be like at the end of the age, in a time of apostasy.

Realize this, if you go apostate, there's 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's left?

Damnably Heresies

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 damnably heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Here, Peter looks both backwards and forwards.

Notice it goes from prophets to teachers. These false teachers shall privily (secretly) bring in damnably heresies: untruths, doctrines that are not true. Oh, they may have a little tinge of truth mixed in, but they're false: they're not sound, not right.

There are a lot of heresies around, where people are believing things that aren't true. This Scripture, though, is speaking of heresies at a higher degree: it speaks of *damnably* heresies.

A damnably heresy is a heresy which would damn your soul, undermine your Christian faith, bring you down into the realm of rejecting Jesus and His blood.

Now, you might have believed something for years. Yet if you searched the Word concerning that thing, you might find there no is sound basis for it. You might find just a little truth but not enough to back it up.

Some take a little truth and then start to stretch it this way and that way. They see where the fiber's weakening so they want to add something 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 in itself, but mixing it with things that are untrue turned it into a heresy.

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

So, the destruction that comes from a damnable heresy can be swift: even the day it is swallowed — the day it is brought it into the heart as something to believe! It can bring destruction to people's souls while they're still alive, still walking around in their body.

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 soon be following after antichrist and not after Jesus.

Truths to Cling To

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 of God's Word:

- the truth that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.
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- the truth of the virgin birth of Jesus, believing that He came in the flesh, as the Scriptures teach.
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- the truth of the cross: We believe that Jesus died on the cross. His blood was shed as an atonement for our sins. We believe we are redeemed through His blood.
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- the truth that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, the Christ (Messiah).

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

Among other truths, they deny the following: the virgin birth, the cross, and the blood as a means of atonement.

Many may have, at one time, had some truth, but listened to a false teacher and were gullible, giving up the very truths they believed, to turn and believe a lie.

Beware of False Teachers

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 amongst God's people yet never took the truth to heart, never accepted it.

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

We are told that 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 — to cause you to mistake them for a sheep, thinking what a good preacher or teacher they are. You may even get some ideas from them.

But remember this: They bring damnable heresies that cause people to deny the Lord that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And they have many followers who follow their pernicious, hurtful ways. You can't afford to follow them nor to 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 what they once possessed.

Many will following their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

Peter also speaks of the false teacher: *by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.* That word *whom* refers to somebody. We can relate this to the false teachers. Some of these influential teachers may have a lot of charisma about them, where people will want to gather around them.

We ought to know when someone is speaking against what we believe. We should know when someone is ranking Jesus down and know there is something wrong with them. 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 them as we possibly can. We shouldn't want to hear anything more 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 stop to consider that it's really dynamite to them — something which, getting into their soul, could destroy them.

Signs of False Teachers

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, using feigned words: words that try to convince you that what they're doing is really 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.

If someone wants to promote themselves in this realm, you find they use gimmick upon gimmick, trying to convince you that those gimmicks will somehow bring a blessing.

Now, feigned words will often say, "I'm not really charging you. I'm just giving you a gift in return for your offering." But the Bible says that through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you.

What did the Lord think about the merchandise that was being sold at the temple when He was upon this earth? All around the temple were those who set up tables with things for sale, like a flea market. And there were money changers, like where you exchange foreign currency.

In Jesus' day, they were doing these types 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!

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 to receive a blessing shouldn't be your motive for giving.

We should 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! And I suppose it didn't take them long before they moved back in 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.

Jude's Warnings

Jude writes concerning this same time period:

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 why the Gospel was delivered to us so that we don't get away from that purpose.

Contend for the Faith

Over in II Peter we read about damnable heresies. And here in Jude we read of contending for the common faith. Bear in mind how important it is that we contend for that faith, contending for all that the Scripture has given. We shouldn't let one thing slip. In the early church there was a tendency among some to want to turn away from those very things, bringing a reason for Jude to be alarmed. This was why he wrote of the need to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Turning Grace into Lasciviousness And Denying the Lord

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 they get into the church? To get in there and be effective they've got to have some means to do what they want to do as a false prophet or teacher.

Jude speaks of such who crept in unawares. They came in under pretense, but it may not be long before they have an opportunity — have the audience they want — and the real things they wanted to promote begin to flow from their mouth.

These are not to be respected in any wise. The real damage is turning the grace of God into lasciviousness: turning it into hot, lewd lust. There's no place in the church for lasciviousness. There's not a function in the church that's for this purpose.

They turn the grace of God — change the grace of God. Instead of being teachers of grace, they soon 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 against 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 and encourages immorality to flourish, is bringing lasciviousness into the church.

What about marriage and divorce and remarriage! This is so prevalent in the churches today. A pastor that blesses the likes of this is in trouble!

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, then God saved your soul, forgiving and cleansing you. That's the grace of God.

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

Now, lasciviousness over there in Jude 4 would account for all these things which we are to deny here in Titus 2.

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 that will be left is corruption.

Jude 4b

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

Summary

Both II Peter and Jude speak of men creeping in unawares, deniers: denying the blood, denying the Lord, rejecting Him. 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.

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

John 14:6

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.