

## 1 John 5:4 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup>For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

In **2 Timothy 3:1** The apostle Paul says, *“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come.”*

He then describes in **2 Timothy 3:2-5** what those perilous times will look like

- I believe this is the world in which we are now living

In this series, we will look at what the Bible says about being an overcomer during perilous times!

## 2 Timothy 3:1 (NKJV)

*But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:*

- Know – to know something, emphatically and with absolute certainty
- Something so urgent that it **MUST** be known **MUST** be recognized and **MUST** be acknowledged

The Holy Spirit is saying in this verse is that the following information should not be considered optional

- He wants us to fully grasp what He is saying
- He wants us to be prepared and not be taken off guard
- He is not saying this to scare us but to prepare us
- He wants us equipped for the last day's storm ahead

After Paul writes to the end times church to be emphatically aware of the times in which they are living, he lists the characteristics of a lost society that has run amuck

## 2 Timothy 3:2–9; 12-13 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup>For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>3</sup>unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, <sup>4</sup>traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup>having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! <sup>6</sup>For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, <sup>7</sup>always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>8</sup>Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; <sup>9</sup>but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

<sup>12</sup>Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. <sup>13</sup>But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

- We touched on these signs of the times in the first segment of this series
- Now I would like to look at these characteristics in-depth

If we are unaware of what's going on, we will be sucked into the same lifestyle that the rest of the world is

We've talked about Lovers of Themselves, and Lovers of Money, Boastful, Proud, Blasphemous, and Disobedient to Parents, Unthankful, Unholy, Unloving (*without natural affection*), Unforgiving (*trucebreakers*), and Slanderers (*false accusers*), Incontinent (without self-control), Brutal (*fierce*) despisers of (*those that are*) good, traitors, headstrong, haughty (*high-minded*), lovers of pleasure rather (*more*) than lovers of God

Today: Having a *form* of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away

- *Form – an outward shape or form*

There will be people in the Church that will have all the right words and forms in their religious practices, yet lack the power of God because they will “*deny*” its operation

- They look good and even sound good but will be devoid of spiritual power or effectiveness
- A spiritual mannequin if you will
- A person who has all the religious “*styles*”, “*actions*”, or “*phrases*”
- Someone who is *perceived* to be *religious* or *spiritual*

Its not about the outward appearance but the condition of the heart

### Matthew 23:27 (NKJV)

<sup>27</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men*'s bones and all uncleanness.

There are spiritual mannequins all around us

They speak in religious terms and even look the part, but have stepped away from the Scriptures and the authentic power of God

- *Deny – to disown, reject, refuse, renounce, or rebuff*

Paul is stating that there will be a category of spiritual leaders, confronted with truth but no longer embracing it, would reject and rebuff its operation

Many churches once born in revival and the power of the Holy Spirit now do not practice the faith they once were dedicated to

- Some denominations modify the Gospel to “fit in”
- They marginalize sin and recognize no need to repent

They propagate a false gospel that states the real problem with human beings is psychological or medical

- We just need to accept and include everyone and their lifestyle

We are seeing this departure from the faith that Paul prophesied in his letter to Timothy

Even though many churches still preach the true Gospel there is a clear alternate that emphasizes social justice and social action instead of offering the life-transforming power of God

- One that includes genuine repentance from sin and dead works
- One that can change society from the inside out
- Everyone is loved by God but not all lifestyles are acceptable

## Ephesians 5:5, 12 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

<sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.

- It is true that we are to love and respect everyone regardless of their lifestyle – **John 3:16**
- Everyone is a precious soul whom Jesus died for who can be changed by the power of God
- Celebrating “*same sex*” wedding ceremonies at our altars are a slap in the face of Scripture

Liberal, progressive thinkers are negatively affecting the way many churches practice their faith

We are each personally responsible to not only recognize spiritual mannequins but to “*turn away*” from them and their deceptive teachings – **2 Timothy 3:5**

## 1 Timothy 4:1 (NKJV)

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons

- It’s a little here, a little there
- A small modification here, a minor alteration there

*“Until finally a church that was a blaze with the fire of God becomes a hallow shell of its former glory”*

- An outward form with no power

### Jude 3 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

- It is not our faith it is Jesus'
- We do not have the right to adapt it – only to keep it!
- We must protect and guard that faith and hold tight to it
- If necessary, give our lives for it

*“From such turn away” – in the original language it depicts a mental, spiritual, or physical turning*

- *To remove ourselves immediately*

How about you? Have you become a spiritual mannequin?

- Are you just going through the religious motions – talking the talk or looking the part?
- Or are you truly loving and serving with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength? – **Mark 12:30**

Even the most sincere and devoted believer can gradually become a spiritual mannequin over time

### Jude 20–25 (NKJV)

<sup>20</sup> But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, <sup>21</sup> keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. <sup>22</sup> And on some have compassion, making a distinction; <sup>23</sup> but others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

## 2 Timothy 3:6

<sup>6</sup>For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible (*silly*) women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts

“*Of this sort*” – “form of godliness” or spiritual mannequins

- They will creep into houses at the end of the age
- “*Creep into*” – to dress or wrap in a garment as a disguise
- One who wears a disguise to make their message more appealing
- “*Houses*” – households, homes, or residences

Only today, with modern technology could this be possible

## Daniel 12:4 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup>“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

- Knowledge is doubled every 12 hours
- Even though much of this is good it has also opened up a floodgate for all kinds of nonsense to creep into our houses

## 1 Thessalonians 5:12 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup>And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you

- It is extremely important to know who is speaking the word of God to you via the internet
- Are you sure who they are?
- Do you know what they really believe on topics that are non-negotiable to you?

“lead captive gullible ‘silly’ women loaded with sins”

Lead captive – *to thrust the point of a spear into the back of a captive to push them in any direction he wished to go*

- It came to denote the idea of *manipulation by mental or spiritual suggestion*

Silly women – *describes needy women or weak women*

- A woman who feels an acute sense of need in their lives

Loaded with sins – *one who is burdened or overwhelmed with missing the mark of what was hoped for*

- *It depicts sin as missing the mark in personal failures, problems, or disappointments in life*
- *The high hopes they’d nurtured for life, marriage, family, career didn’t happened as they had dreamed*

**“Led away by various lusts”**

He is prophesying that some women will feel particularly vulnerable and overwhelmed by life

- This will cause them to be targets for manipulation because of the deficiency or brokenness over their deepest longings
- Many women will be desperate for help or counsel for troubled marriages, broken relationships, better health, more finances, etc.
- Often unsafe voices will tug on their hearts and manipulate their emotions to lead them in the wrong direction
- All in the privacy of their own homes



Yes it is true that men can harbor brokenness or unresolved issues that give access to “*creeping in*”. However, it is no accident that the Holy spirit warned that women would be a target of deception at the end of the age

The devil knows that if he can find an inroad to influence the minds of women it will open the door to begin to influence entire families

It is just like the enemy to exploit a person’s weakness and vulnerability

- Just look at daytime talk shows or written publications targeting the female audience
- A deluge of propaganda bombarding women to modify what they believe
- To become more of a “*progressive*” thinker
- Much of this progressive thinking is contrary to scripture

The truth is that women are much more diligent in their quest for answers to problems in life

## 2 Timothy 3:7

<sup>7</sup> always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

- Looking in the wrong places
- Hearing the wrong voices through the filter of their pain and disappointment
- The Church must fill the vacuum!
- How can I speak more effectively to the needs of those around me?

## 2 Timothy 3:8

<sup>8</sup> Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith

- Those with a form a godliness will be similar to Jannes and Jambres
- They were Jewish intellectuals who lived in Alexandria Egypt
- They were sorcerers who opposed Moses  
– Exodus 7:11, 22; 8:6-7

*Resist* – stand against or in opposition

- Someone who will do everything in their power to resist or defy something

*Corrupt minds* – their minds have progressively moved downward into a state of collapse, deterioration, or ruin

*Disapproved (reprobate)* – unfit, unreliable, untrustworthy

Paul is describing a society that has become compromised, impaired, ruined, and no longer trustworthy

## Romans 1:28 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup> And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased “*reprobate*” mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

A glorious mind designed by God to gloriously function has now become unfit because of exposure to a toxic environment of wrong thinking

- One that calls evil good and good evil

## Isaiah 5:20 (NKJV)

<sup>20</sup> Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

- Isaiah is forecasting a society at the close of the age
- It has lost its ability to discern right from wrong
- One that justifies bad as good and good as bad
- This is the day we are living in

## 2 Timothy 3:9 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

*Progress (proceed)* – describing the spreading of a disease

- God describes the spread of reprobate thinking like a disease
- Like a spiritual infection
- If infections go untreated they will spread
- A little leaven – **Galatians 5:9** (*speaking of errant doctrine*)

*Folly* – mindless, madness, or irrational thinking

*Manifest* – to become mistakenly clear

In other words, these errant leaders will become so out of control that it will be seen clearly, so that their sheer madness will be exposed to all!

- Just as Moses had a showdown with Jannes and Jambres there will be a showdown at the end of the age
- The book of revelation is clear on that – We Win!

## 2 Timothy 3:13 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

- *Deceiving* – a wandering from an established moral path or one who has veered from a solid path
- Paul is saying that they will not only spread deception but buy into it themselves
- They will become the biproduct of their own illusion

## 2 Timothy 3:12–16 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. <sup>13</sup> But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. <sup>14</sup> But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, <sup>15</sup> and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness

- In these last days we must hold fast to the authority of God's word
- It is the only way to avoid being taken captive and believing a lie
- We must renew our minds daily
- Stay connected to a vibrant church
- And stay filled with the Holy Spirit!

## Ask Yourself

### **Whom do I think of when I read, “*having a form of godliness but deny the power thereof?*”**

- Have I allowed the power of God and the gifts of the Spirit to operate in my life in the past more than in the present?
- Have I become a spiritual mannequin in some way?
- Have I modified the faith so I can “*fit into*” a social environment that is changing its moral code?
- Am I willing to allow the Holy Spirit to examine my heart and have ears to hear what He says about my spiritual condition?

### **Is there a particular person or group that I need to “*turn away from*” in view of this discussion?**

- Since this is what the Bible says, what does this mean to me personally?
- If I keep myself and my family in the current spiritual environment we are in, what kind of harvest will it produce in the future?
- Am I committed to a church that loves the Bible and is committed to building my faith according to the Word of God and the Power of the Spirit?
- What is the Holy Spirit prompting me to do personally in response to Paul’s message in 2 Timothy 3:5?

## **Whom am I allowing to infiltrate my private space?**

- Whose voices am I allowing to enter my private space and speak into my life via media and digital devices?
- Am I satisfied that safe voices are speaking to me?
- Do I know the background and foundational beliefs of those I allow in my private space?

## **Whom do I think of when I consider people who have refused to budge from the non-negotiable doctrines of the Christian faith?**

- Who do I think of as a bright shining light of true spiritual stability that I can count on to be scripturally dependable and stable?
- Do I allow these individuals to speak into and see into my spiritual life?
- Are they qualified to help me discern if what I am listening to and watching is healthy or unhealthy for my spiritual life?
- Is my church a safe haven for me?
- Do I trust the spiritual leadership of my pastor or spiritual leader?

## **Philippians 2:15–16 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, <sup>16</sup> holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.