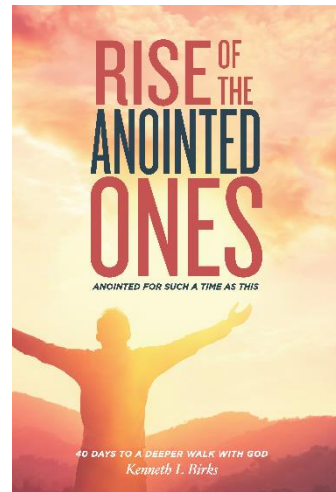


## Thriving in Troublous Times

God's desire for us as Bible believing Christians is to reign in life, no matter what our circumstances may be, even in the most adversity of times. As the end of this age draws to a close, the spiritual climate will become more and more hostile to those of us who are true followers of Jesus Christ. It will be extremely important for us to recognize and embrace this season so that we are not taken by surprise. We must take heed to the exhortation Paul gave to Timothy.

**2 Timothy 3:1-5** *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come; <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.*



The Bible is very clear that the end-time environment will be wrought with perilous times. Jesus said very clearly, we as Christians will be hated by all nations before He returns. Many believers will fall prey to Satan's devices and will actually betray their brothers and sisters during this time. Because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.<sup>1</sup> In light of all this, we are strongly encouraged to reign during troubled times and a hostile environment.

The question is, will we be one of those who fall victim to this hostile environment and betray our brothers and sisters or will we be of those who reign with Christ and lead others to Christ? The choice is ours to make. We must begin now to prepare our hearts for all that is to come. It's becoming increasingly obvious that we are entering into the beginning of the birth pangs that Jesus spoke of.<sup>2</sup>

As the apostle Paul exhorted Timothy when he said, *"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,"*<sup>3</sup> so it is with us. We must fortify

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 24:6-13

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 24:8

<sup>3</sup> 2 Timothy 2:3

ourselves in the Spirit if we are to reign in a hostile environment. If we can't handle opposition now while it is still relatively easy, how will we do when the hostility become unbearable. In other words, if the footmen have outrun you, how will you contend with the horses? Look around; hostility towards righteousness is everywhere. We can't avoid it.

**Jeremiah 12:5** *If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, in which you trusted, they wearied you, then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan?*

We have been given an abundance of grace to reign in life over every situation that comes our way, which includes an environment that is full of hostility.

**Romans 5:17** *For if by one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.*

So, the question is, how do we reign? The answer is in the above Scripture. We must continually draw from the abundance of grace that has already been freely given to us. In order to continually draw from the abundance of grace given requires total reliance on the sufficiency we have in Christ. We must learn to trust in Him in every aspect of our lives without leaning on our own understanding, and not being wise in our own eyes.<sup>4</sup>

**2 Corinthians 3:5** *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.*

**2 Corinthians 9:8** *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.*

As we are faithful to trust in God for all things and situations without leaning on our own understanding, He will give us the grace to reign and act wisely towards



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<sup>4</sup> Proverbs 3 5-7

all amid all the hostility that comes our way. He is faithful. As a result, we will be among those who reign and rule amid all that is hostile. His grace is sufficient.

Amid all that's going on in our world today, we must respond as Jesus did in the face of an angry hostile crowd that sentenced Him to death. He said, "Father forgive them for they don't know what they're doing." Many in the world today are caught up in the collective mindset of the world with Satan leading them on with his lies and deception. They're deceived and don't know, just like some of us were before our eyes were opened. We must follow the advice Paul gave to Timothy when confronting hostility. This is how we reign in a hostile environment.

**2 Timothy 2:24-26** *"And a **servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will."***