

Exegetical Study – 2 Timothy 3

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Chapters 1 and 2

Paul writes with all heartfelt warmth to Timothy his beloved son in the faith. Paul, a prisoner about to die for the sake of the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, reminds Timothy to hold fast to what he has learned concerning Christ Jesus, to be strong in the Grace of the Lord, to willingly and gladly serve as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ, regardless the consequences. He urges Timothy to apply himself to Scriptures, to study so that he knows the Truth, to live a God-fearing life and to be gentle and patient with all those with whom he is dealing so that by God's strength and mercy they may be led to repentance.

Chapter 3

Timothy, however, is not to expect that the road will be easy and the way without crosses. There will be much opposition. False teachers and spiritual swindlers will oppose the Truth, all for personal gain and advantage.

- 1-5) “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. Men will be self-lovers, money-lovers, braggarts, pompous, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, thankless, profane, without love even for family, unappeasable, slanderers, without self-control, wild, despising what is good traitorous, rash, deluded (clouded in smoke), pleasure lovers rather than God-lovers, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power (having piety in form, but a piety without life). From these turn away.”

1) Timothy's work will not be easy. The times themselves will be most difficult and hard to bear. False prophets with every kind of vice imaginable will arise and oppose the Truth, making a mockery of God's Gospel and perverting the precious message of salvation in Christ. This was a warning which Paul had spoken once before to Timothy, “In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy – having their conscience seared with a hot iron (1 Tim 4:1-3)”, and a warning which Jesus Himself had uttered, “For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect (Mt 24:24).”

ἐνίστημι	stand in the way, to be at hand
χάλεπος	hard to bear, painful, difficult, troublesome

Throughout the entire New Testament era the times are difficult and getting worse. We see the qualities, which Paul enumerates prevalent not only in the world at large, but also and especially in spiritual leaders (mis-leaders) of the days:

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| 2) | φίλαντοι | lovers of self |
| | φιλάργυροι | lovers of money |
| | ἀλαδών | from ἄλη vagabond, false pretender; thus swaggering, boastful, braggart |
| | ὑπερήφανος | from ὑπερ + φαίνομαι, to appear over or above; thus overbearing, arrogant, haughty, pompous |
| | ἀπειθῶ | disobedient (rebellious of all authority) |

	ἀχάριστος ἀνόσιος	ungracious., unpleasant, ungrateful, thankless not ὅσιος, not holy, profane
3)	ἄστοργος	from στέργω to love, be fond of, such as parents for children, king for subjects; thus lacking natural love (as evidenced in abortion, child abuse, infanticide)
	ἄσπονδος	from σπεύδομαι, to pour out a drink offering – an act of appeasement; thus never being appeased, implacable irreconcilable (can never come to terms with)
	διάβολος	slandorous, always causing trouble by their words
	ἄκρατής	from κρατέω to have power over; thus without power over self, without self-control (alcohol, drugs, sex)
	ἀνήμερος	from ἡμερος tame; thus not tame, wild, savage (wild in every way, giving free play to old Adam)
	ἀφιλάγαθος	not loving any good, despising what is good

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things (Ph. 3:18-19).”

4)	προδότης	from προδίδωμι to give over, betray; thus a betrayer, a traitor, one with no loyalty or trust, a stab-you-in-the-back type
	προπετής	from προπίπτω to fall forward, to go headlong, to be rash, reckless, to do anything on any impulse
	τυφώω	to wrap in smoke; in perfect, to be beclouded, not able to see clearly. To be deluded (possibly with pride)
	φιλήδονος	from ἡδονή delight, enjoyment, pleasure – thus lovers of hedonism, interested solely in pleasure, not willing to endure any shortage of pleasure.

The above qualities we find in the world at large today, but also sad to say to some degree in many religious leaders of the day. We see men who are interested in themselves, in money, in pleasure, who will stop at nothing to gain their ends. Their last concern is God’s will; God’s Word, and God’s-flock.

5) These are people who have the form of godliness, who give the outward impression of being pious, and God-fearing; but who in reality are empty shells, void of Christian light in their hearts. They have never really come to grips with the fact that they are damned sinners graciously rescued by Christ Jesus who wants to live in their hearts and lives. “They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him” (Ti 1:16). “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me (Mt 15:8).”

μόρφη	form, shape, figure
ἄρνέομαι	deny (perfect part.)

From such Timothy was to turn away and to keep on turning away, lest he himself become infected with their devilry, or in any way condone their actions.

Paul now goes on to describe for Timothy these men a little more—their tactics, their brazenness, and their final outcome.

6-9) “For they are the kind who get-their-foot-in-the-door in houses and pressure simple women heaped with sins, driven by wide-ranging desires, who are always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth, into their custody. In the same way that Jannes and Jambres opposed, Moses, so also these oppose the Truth, men of wasted minds, frauds concerning the faith. But they shall not prosper very far; their lack of wisdom will be obvious to all, as also was that of the above.”

6) Paul here further describes these men as slick, smooth talking salesmen, who with craft and pressure work their way into houses laying upon weak naive women, and take them captive by their words and charms.

ἐνδύνω	press into, enter into, creep into
αἰχμαλωτίζω	from αἶχμη point of the spear, thus to take captive or prisoner by the spear
γυναικάριον	diminutive of γυνή an adequate translation escapes me

Those who are taken in by the peddlers are likewise described. They are people spiritually starved and susceptible to quackery. They feel the load of the sins of their consciences, find themselves driven by many different desires, and furthermore are interested in religion in that they look for the new, the sensational, the secret, but have little time and use for the simple Truth of the Gospel. They find it inadequate, and so are taken in by frauds.

σωρεύω	to heap one thing on another
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8) Such false leaders are as much opposed to the Truth, to God’s saving Word to the Savior, as were Jannes and Jambres who dared to oppose Moses, God’s chosen servant. (As far as we can tell, Jannes and Jambres were probably among the magicians of Pharaoh who at first succeeded in continuing to dupe Pharaoh and the Egyptians into thinking that they, Jannes and Jambres, had the inside track on the the Truth, the supernatural, and that Moses and Aaron were frauds. At first the magicians copied the miracles that Moses worked, but later were unable. Jewish tradition says that J. & J. were among these magicians. Paul, under inspiration, does not specifically say who they were. But who else could they have been? Such have no use for the Truth. Their minds are completely wasted, ruined, by Satan and sin and are set on their own desires. Their appearance of being of the Truth and for the faith is completely counterfeit.

ἀντίστημι	stand opposite, oppose
καταφθείρω	destroy, spoil utterly
ἄδοκιμος	not passing the test, not genuine, false

And so it is that men have gone out into the world, are present here today, and will be present in the future, who have gone out in the name of Christ, but whose only concern, although well masked, is self. It is a struggle to determine who they exactly are. As I look around at the various church bodies and church leaders that to one degree or another have distorted, perverted, or watered down the Gospel, I wonder. I want to give them the benefit of the doubt, to consider them as Christian brothers although weak and confused on some points. Yet the more I read portions of Scriptures like this, the more I read the repeated warning that practically all the Epistles contain concerning those who drift away from the Truth and the strong language used concerning them; the more I begin to wonder if the Church isn’t a lot smaller than we sometimes like to think; but then I am judging hearts. But, where do we draw the line? With the pagans, with the cults, with the Papacy, with the electronic church, with historical criticism? God only knows. But we do need more than ever to train our people in the truths of the Word so that they are firmly grounded and are not apt to be taken in by these, teachers running loose in the world peddling slick and easy religion.

9) Paul then comforts Timothy with the news that although these treacherous and deceptive people will come, they will not succeed in hoodwinking everyone. They will not progress very far. Their fraudulence and lack of true wisdom will be obvious to all,

προκόπτω	to cut away in front, advance, prosper, progress
ἄνοια	lack of understanding, folly
ἔκδηλος	conspicuous, plain, obvious

What a comfort that statement is to every shepherd of God's sheep; The Lord is in control and in the end will expose and crush everyone and everything that opposes His will; When depressed and discouraged at the inroads that false prophets are making into the church, remember what Paul says here and remember Elijah; "Elijah, I have set 7000 in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal (1 Kg 19:18)."

Having exposed the charlatans and false teachers for what they really are, Paul now proceeds to give Timothy the proper perspective on the ministry. He tells Timothy to take a look at how he, Paul, has lived and conducted his life. Timothy is to pattern his own accordingly.

10-13) "But you, you know well (Have closely traced) my teaching, my conduct, my purpose, my faith, my patience, my love, my endurance, my sufferings—what sort of things happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what sort of persecutions I bore up under, and from them all the Lord delivered me. And all who wish to lead godly lives in-Christ Jesus will be persecuted; For wicked men and charmers will progressively get worse, leading astray and being led astray."

10) Timothy knew well Paul's ministry. He knew the good sound διδασκαλία doctrine that he taught—sin and grace, law and gospel. Timothy knew not only his teaching, but also his teaching of his teaching; that is, his conduct, ἀγωγή, his method of operation. Both were above reproach. Timothy also knew Paul's purpose, his πρόθεσις, his stated aim, his goal. Paul's goal was to preach Christ crucified and that alone; not fame, not money, not power, but preaching Christ to lost souls. We can well remember to keep our doctrine, our conduct, and our goals above reproach. Our work is not to get money, not to keep a clean membership roster, not to make the budget, not a mechanical "job", but a preaching to lost souls! Be sure you people see that!

Timothy also knew Paul's personal faith, his πίστις, his wholehearted love and trust in Christ Jesus as his personal Savior. Timothy knew that Paul did not preach one thing and then personally believe another (a lesson for us too). Timothy knew his patience, μακροθυμία, and his love, ἀγάπη. "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Ro 9:3). Patience and love are qualities that must find themselves in every preacher's ministry. It is so easy to lack patience and then right along with that, love.

11) Timothy also knew Paul's endurance, ὑπομονή, his patient bearing up under any and every difficulty which was laid upon him. Timothy knew the sufferings and persecutions that Paul had endured, especially those right in Timothy's own home territory—Antioch, Iconium, Lystra (Paul stoned there Ac 14:19; and Timothy's hometown Ac 16:1). What a remarkable example of endurance! Leaning not on himself and his own powers, not grumbling at his sad lot in life, but learning to trust solely and, completely on the Lord in any and every necessity, Paul always knew that the Lord was there to deliver him and help him. "We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead; who delivered us from so great a death and doth deliver us, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us (2 Co 1:9-10)." "For when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Co 12:10)."

ῥυομαι	draw out of danger, rescue, save, deliver
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12) In fact every child of God can expect to be persecuted for his Christian teaching, life, and conduct. The world does not take kindly to the preaching of sin and grace. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you” (Jn 15:20). To the world the preaching of the cross is foolishness. Suffer that reproach gladly!

ζῆν from ζάω pres. inf.

13) And so Paul says, the times are not getting better, but they are getting worse... Wicked men, and swindlers, charmers, sorcerers, will progressively get worse-deceiving and being deceived—a genuine snowball effect. In fact we can be sure that evil never gets less evil, only worse.

γόης from γοάω to howl out enchantments; thus a sorcerer, swindle, a cheat
 χείρων irreg. comparative of κάκος, bad
 πλάνεω wander, to lead astray (planet)

The example that Paul had set for Timothy was superb. What a contradiction to the example set by the false peddlers of religion! Timothy was to remain strong in these things, the things he had learned from infancy on up, Timothy was to remain strong in his knowledge of and trust in God’s holy, inspired, inerrant Word!

14-17) “But you, you stand firm in the things which you have learned and have become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them—that from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. *All Scripture is inspired of God* (God-breathed), and is profitable for teaching, for refuting, for correcting, and for schooling in righteousness, so that the man of God may be in every way ready, properly prepared for every good work.”

Because it would be very tempting for Timothy or for any preacher to fall in with the methods, tactics, aims, and results of these false teachers, Paul reminds and urges Timothy to stand firm by the things that he has learned and become convinced of. “Don’t give up on that training which you have received and those truths which you have become convinced (which the Holy Ghost has convinced you) are correct and sure. Don’t give up on them. They are something very important, taught to you already by your mother and grandmother when you were just a babe in arms. Those truths are the truths of Holy Scriptures, the highest wisdom that can ever be learned on this earth, the wisdom of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus—eternal life,, peace with God, not through works deeds earthly philosophy, or high learning, but through Christ Jesus God’s own gracious sacrifice for the sins of the world, Don’t give up on what you have learned, it’s the pathway to heaven.” “Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

πιστόω to feel trust, to feel confidence, to be convinced

The καὶ ὅτι is difficult. At first glance it seems that Paul uses it to introduce the second reason that Timothy should stand firm by what he knows; that is “because it is from the Holy Scriptures.” However, that would make Paul’s first reason “because this is what your parents taught you” which in spiritual things can really be no reason at all. Paul has to be saying, “Stand by the things you are convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them—that from infancy you have know the Holy Scriptures...” all as one concept. The καὶ is expegetical.

16) Furthermore, Timothy should stand by what he has learned, should stand by the Holy Scriptures, because these Scriptures are not just any ordinary writing. They are God’s inspired, and therefore inerrant, Word. God breathed these very words into the hearts and pens of His writers. What higher Truth can there be?!

What better truth for each and every situation of life? This Holy Scripture, inspired and inerrant, not only provides the knowledge of salvation but it is also useful for this life—for teaching (for teaching the Truth to any and all who want to learn it), for refuting (for refuting any and all errors of any and all false religions), for correcting (for correcting and straightening those things that are out of line in the believers life), and for schooling in righteousness (for training in righteous conduct—conduct that is pleasing to God because it is done out of love toward him who has declared us righteous in Christ).

θεόπνευστος	God -breathed (not breathing-God) (purely on basis of plausible meaning)
ἐλέγχω	to cross examine, to question, to refute
ἀνορθόω	to set straight again, to correct
παιδεύω	to train, rear, educate

17) Thus the Holy Scriptures, by virtue of their inspiration, are all-sufficient to prepare the man of God, each and every Christian, for every situation in life. It is to this Word that Timothy is to cling. And in view of the false teachings prevalent, it to this Holy Word that Timothy has to cling.

ἄρτιος from ἄρτι just, exactly; thus exactly fitted, ready, prepared, proper

So also the shepherd today must always remember and never lose sight of the fact that his life, his ministry, flows out of the Word. He must cling to that Word, read it, study it and make it his own. There is a lot of false and perverted teaching alive in the world today. Learn the Truth! Impart it to others! Continue in his Word!