



2 Timothy 3

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

2 Timothy 3.

Topics.

- At the end of the age, people will be lovers of self.
- Never arriving at the knowledge of the truth.
- Why the Gospel lacks the power to change certain people.
- Weak women burdened with sins and led astray by various passions.
- All who live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter Paul spoke of quarrelling about words which only ruin the hearers; suffering as a good soldier for Christ; of the crowing of an athlete; of a hard-working farmer and said though he is bound in chains, the word of God is not bound. He told Timothy Jesus is the offspring of David; if we have died with Christ, we will also live with him, but if we deny him, he also will deny us; about rightly handling the word of truth and that in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, but the Lord knows those who are his.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

2 TIMOTHY 3:1-5

1

At the End of the Age, People will be Lovers of Self.

- **2 Timothy 3:1-5:** But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ²For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

This is amazing, Paul lists all these horrific attitudes (i.e., lovers of self, proud, arrogant, abusive, brutal and treacherous) and then says something stunning, "They have the appearance of godliness" (v5) how can this possibly be? If we cast our eyes over the Middle East for a moment (were Christianity started) and where God's Holy City stands and consider the multitudes of religious factions that in the name of God not only go to war and brutally kill, but even wear bombs for the sole purpose of killing innocent civilians it is easy to see what Paul had in mind. Added to this certain western countries declare war in the name of God and with weapons of mass destruction that the history of mankind has never seen before and not only destroy entire nations, but kill, cripple and injure hundreds of thousand innocent people in the process (referred to as collateral damage) and this is all done in the name of God. Obviously, the verses are also inclusive of the general populations of the world and not simply limited to so-called religious people. Sadly, today we live in a society whose collective mind is "me-first" and are raising children who have a sense of entitlement and very little thought for others. Added to this discipline is almost non-existent in many homes. I remember when I was a child, we never locked the house and often left the keys in the car the thought someone would steal it never entered our minds and builders in the generation before me could leave their tools on site go home every day have lunch and all their tools would still be on site when they

returned. There is no doubt as the world moves further away from a belief and consciousness of God and his love, justice and mercy that human nature will continue to decline. Speeding up this decline is the theory of evolution which denies the existence of God the creator and which the world has embraced on a global scale as being absolute truth, is it any wonder the destructive attitudes Paul speaks of in the above verses will increase as we approach the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Denying its power: the words, "Denying its power" (v5) does not mean denying miraculous power (i.e., the power to heal) as some religious ministers teach. The power in focus is in reference to godliness and the appearance of godliness, thus the context is denying the power of the Gospel to change a person's life, to affect the heart and the inner man. It is denying the power to change a person's lifestyle from one of being led by ego, self, pride, greed and lust etc., to a lifestyle that is in harmony with God and the life of Christ.

Never arriving at the knowledge of the truth: the knowledge in the context of these verses refers to the knowledge of the Scriptures especially the knowledge of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The following words of Paul:

- Always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth (v7).

Are stunning and at the same time horrifically frightening. Stunning because these men obviously spend much time in learning yet they still do not understand what they read. Horrific because it can be enormously dangerous and destructive when religious men who have tremendous authority are influence by a wrong understanding of the Bible. It is dangerous because these men believe the evil, they are doing is the will of God and therefore no-one can reason with them. This same principal is not limited to men in authority, but applies to any religious person who legalistically and dogmatically studies the Bible and though they have great knowledge and daily read the Scriptures they cannot perceive that the Spirit of God and the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ is love, mercy and grace and therefore not only cause contentions, strife and divisions but hurt many who come under their influence.

A good example of this would be the chief priest, Pharisees and scribes of Jesus era, these men had the religious authority over an entire nation (Israel) they certainly did not lack in knowledge and Jesus never rebuked them for any lack of knowledge, but he did strongly rebuke them for their use and application of the knowledge they had. Jesus said of these men:

- Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others (Matt. 23:23) (Luke 11:42).

Clearly showing that Bible knowledge that is not taught and applied from a heart filled with justice (a sense of what is fair) and mercy and the love of God is going to do more harm than good since it not only brings those who are under the influence of such religious teachers into bondage, but also brings a bad testimony to God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.

Why the Gospel lacks the power to change certain people: the reason people can always be reading the Gospel and learning and still never arrive at the knowledge of the truth is because they are reading and learning with a wrong heart attitude that is why the power of the Gospel is not able to change their lives for the better. If the Gospel of Christ is read with a prideful heart, for selfish ambition, intellectual head knowledge or a person's own gain it will not yield its spiritual treasures or its life changing power, but if it is read with a humble heart that is seeking after God the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ will release its spiritual beauty and the life changing power that it holds to those who read it with a humble heart and a honest desire to know God.

2 TIMOTHY 3:6-7

Weak Women Burdened with Sins and Led Astray by Various Passions.

- **2 Timothy 3:6-7:** For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, ⁷always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

These verses could refer to:

- Religious men and false teachers having hidden affairs and keeping it secret from those they teach and proclaim the Scriptures to.
- Foolish women, who are not only vulnerable and lonely, but esteem those in authority and are therefore susceptible to a religious leader's flirtatious advances.
- Women whose hearts are open to anything that has the appearance of advancing God's Kingdom, but are under the influence of sinful desires and tendencies and are therefore easily flattered and charmed by the graceful manners of religious instructors who lack integrity.
- Foolish women who do not endure sound teaching, but have itching ears and are therefore attracted to teachers who suit their own passion for excitement in discovering new philosophies and new ideas (especially those that promise wealth, riches, prosperity and such like things etc.,) and are thereby led astray into false doctrines by false teachers with corrupted minds.

2 TIMOTHY 3:8-9

3

Jannes and Jambres Opposed the Truth.

- **2 Timothy 3:8-9:** Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. ⁹But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

Jannes and Jambres were Egyptian magicians they are not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible. It is thought by some that Jannes and Jambres were two of Pharaoh's magicians who withstood Moses by casting down their staffs and they became serpents, but Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs (Exodus 7:11).

2 TIMOTHY 3:10-11

Paul's Great Testimony.

- **2 Timothy 3:10-11:** You however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, ¹¹my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.

Here is a fantastic testimony, Paul commends Timothy because he in contrast to religious men with corrupted minds and followed (as a son does his father):

- Paul's teaching, conduct and aim in life (his motivations, goals and purpose).
- Paul's faith, patience, love and steadfastness.
- Paul's persecutions and suffering.

Is it any wonder Paul had such affection for Timothy and treated him as a protective father treats their own children? There is nothing that thrills the heart of a true shepherd of the Lord than seeing disciples influenced by their teaching standing steadfast in their faith in Christ especially in troubled and suffering circumstances. Perhaps as well as giving those who desire to enter into the ministry a doctrinal exam, it might be a good idea to give them this list of Paul's testimony and see how many would be willing as Timothy was to tick them all with a yes!

Antioch: from Antioch Christianity spread after the persecution of Stephen and in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians (Acts 11:19-30). It was in the predominantly pagan soil of cosmopolitan Antioch that the Gospel first took root, and was a place where barriers between Jew and Gentile were very slight and had numerous converts to Judaism; because of this there was less to be feared from mob-violence than in other districts. Antioch had a reputation for immorality and contained Hellenic cults of Zeus and Apollo and was a place with mystery religions which taught messages of death, resurrection, initiation and salvation making it one of the places where early false teachings took place because of the importation of non-Christian ideas. Antioch is a Greco-Roman city in Turkey 15 miles inland from Mediterranean Sea it had a great metropolitan center of over 500,000 people, business connections all over the world and was the meeting point of the Orient and Greek civilization.

Iconium: Paul after preaching here was also persecuted by the people it is a city of Asia Minor in Turkey that Paul and Barnabas visited.

Lystra: a city in Turkey, Paul and Barnabas fled to the church in Lystra to escape from persecutions in Iconium while in Lystra they healed a crippled man, but the people of the city turned on Paul and Barnabas and stoned Paul and left him for dead.

2 TIMOTHY 3:12-15

All who Live a Godly life in Christ Jesus will be Persecuted.

- **2 Timothy 3:12-15:** Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴But as for you continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul tells Timothy that the populations of the nation's worldwide are going to get worse not better (see notes following v1-5). This does not mean that every human on planet earth outside the Kingdom of God is a wicked person. There are many people separated from God who have kind and compassionate hearts. One only has to look at all the good works of charity done around the world and the sympathetic response when there is a global crisis from people worldwide and see the enormous financial aid that is raised from the generosity of compassionate hearts to help the masses of people that have been affected by such horrific tragedy to know that this statement is true. But sadly, in spite of these pockets of goodness the world on a whole is in rapid decline and will continue to be so until the Lord Jesus Christ returns as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will

not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

All Scripture is Breathed out by God.

- **2 Timothy 3:16-17:** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

The Jews throughout the Old Testament had selected scribes who were painstaking fussy and meticulously careful to record on scrolls (also called parchments) in exact detail all that the prophets spoke and because these scrolls contained the word of God they treated and protected them as the greatest treasures on earth. Added to this the LORD had told them to teach from generation to generation the words of the prophets and God's dealings with Israel throughout the Old Testament and commanded the fathers to teach their children thus the reasons they were enormously fastidious and careful about protecting these scrolls. By the time of Paul there were many scrolls (parchments) that Jewish scribes had recorded and kept since the time of John the Baptist. These scrolls contained the messages of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John etc., and were available to read and study for men like Paul, Timothy and others who proclaimed the Gospel (2 Tim. 4:13). When Paul said:

- All Scripture is breathed out by God" (2 Tim. 3:16)

He did not mean every individual word as some religious ministers teach. If this was a true teaching then those who live in China and Mexico or speak any other language than what the Bible was originally written in could never read the, "Scripture breathed out by God" since their Bibles would certainly not be written in the same words as the original manuscripts. Paul's statement, "All Scripture is breathed out by God,"

refers to the messages that the individual words put together teach and not the individual words themselves. It applies to the messages spoken by the prophets and apostles (i.e., the sum total of what the individual words put together are teaching). Sometime a prophet was given a message by the inspiration of God and they were to speak the exact words God had given them to the people. At other times God spoke to the prophets and they spoke the messages to the people in their own words (especially if it was a vision or revelation). Though the words they used might have been different the messages remain the same. God's word was not corrupted simply because the prophets used their own words to explain to the people what God had said. If this was the case no preacher on earth (no matter how good) would be speaking the inspired word of God unless they are using the exact words the original manuscripts were written in.

A simple example: a preacher may go to a foreign country of which he cannot speak the language so he proclaims the Gospel in his language and an interpreter translates it into the common language of the people. They intern understand it and if they respond with a right heart attitude to the message, they hear they will be saved, clearly showing that it is not individual words that are the inspired word of God, but the messages the words present.

This is why it does not matter what language the Bible is written in if the messages remain the same its power to save to eternal life those who seek God with a humble heart is in no-way diminished.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.