

## Daily Bible Study

### *“A Picture of the Contemporary Scene”*

#### *2 Timothy 3:1-9*

*July 13– July 19, 2014*

**MONDAY** – We now continue our study of **2 Timothy** and enter **Chapter 3** as we look at what were calling “*A Picture of the Contemporary Scene*”. As **Chapter 2** ended we were reminded that there was opposition to the Gospel from individuals who have been *taken captive* to do the *will of the devil*. We also saw that in all the *Metaphors of the Christian Life* there was an obvious call for diligent, faithful, effort. Now, as Paul continues he is still concerned with the Gospel ministry in the present time as well as the future and he wants Timothy to understand that wickedness and evil is not something that will go away; rather, it will remain even get worse as time progresses. Timothy is weak, the opposition is strong and yet we remember the power to fight and win is Jesus’ and is found in Him. So after he paints in our current text *A Picture of the Contemporary Scene* which is not pretty or promising, he will go on to remind Timothy to remain faithful to the Word of God and the Gospel of God therein revealed. He will elevate the Word of God to its rightful, exalted place as he declares its power and provision for the *man of God (3:10-17)* Timothy and all of us who are children of God. Read our text: **2 Timothy 3:1-9**: “*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! <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.*”

Suggestion for Prayer: God, teach me from Sacred Scripture this week and help me not be discouraged by all the evil I see around me but rather be encouraged that You are God alone and as the only wise God and father You have everything in control and have given me Your Word to guide and protect me in this life.

**TUESDAY** – **2 Timothy 3:1**: “*But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:*” Paul begins this section with an emphatic statement to Timothy when he says, *But know this.*

He wants Timothy to *ginosko* (to know and understand) the seriousness of what he is about to say concerning the current time and what lies ahead for this man. Timothy already knew that opposition was active. Paul is in prison; he has been deserted and left alone. He has told Timothy about fighting as a good soldier etc... Timothy is well aware of the situation of opposition and hostility to the truth so why does Paul tell him to understand what he already knows? He wants to remind him that this is not fleeting problem but rather a characteristic of the age in which he was living. It won’t go away; not for him, not for us. It is a *perilous chalepos* (violent, hard) time in view here and this word is used in **Matthew 8:28** to describe the two demon possessed men that came out of the tombs to meet Jesus. The age he was living in was called by the Apostle, *the last days*. This phrase has conjured up all kinds of definitions and interpretations. What is Paul referring to? Many people hear this phrase and rush forward in their thinking to the very end of time before Jesus’ return. The Bible does not use the phrase that way but rather the context of the biblical passage helps define what is being meant. William Barclay helps us with his comments, “The Jews divided all time into *this present age* and *the age to come*. In between, there was...a day when God would personally intervene and shatter the world in order to remake it. That day of the Lord was to be preceded by a time of terror, when evil would gather itself for its final assault, and the world would be shaken to its moral and physical foundations. It is in terms of these *last days* that Paul is thinking in this passage.” The New Testament writers saw that the new age promised in the Old Testament arrived with Jesus, and with His arrival the old age began to fade away and the last days had started. Thus Peter on the Day of Pentecost quoted Joel’s prophecy that ‘in the last days’ God would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh, and declared that this prophecy had now been fulfilled. Peter said that the prophecy of **Joel 2** referring to what God would do in *the last days* had come as he spoke in **Acts 2:14–17**. **Hebrews 1:1-2** opens with the disclaimer, “*In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.*” So what Paul is about to explain to Timothy is not about a yet future time but actually the present time. Another hint that this is the way the phrase is being used here would be that Timothy is told to *turn away* from certain types of people here described in the present. Timothy is living in *the last days* that Paul is speaking about. There may be an increase in the evil (“*worse and worse*” **Verse 13**) but right now times are *perilous*.

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me to remain faithful to You and Your Word in these last days. Thank You for speaking to me through both the written and living Word, Your Son Jesus.

**WEDNESDAY** – **2 Timothy 3:2-4** “*<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,*” This list of evil and

sinfulness truly explains the godlessness of Timothy's day and age as well as our own. This beloved is what a godless world looks like. This is a description of the characteristics of the people who will be responsible for these *perilous* times. This is a vibrant description of the moral deterioration that occurs in society that attempts to live without God. This is Romans 1 all over again. Push away and suppress God's truth and wickedness will result. "*The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness*" (**Romans 1:18** - NIV). Notice this list in our text begins with, *For men will be lovers of themselves* and ends with *lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*. Between this love of self and no love of God we find the wicked vices spelled out. We would be a long time outlining each and every one of these at length and we will discuss each this Lord's Day if He wills, but for now, I must touch on them but briefly. We mentioned the incredible self-love of the opening line already, and that which follows is that they will be *lovers of money*. They are like the money lovers of **Luke 16:14**. ...*boasters, proud, and blasphemers* come next. They are boasting about themselves and are haughty and arrogant which not surprisingly leads them to hurt or injure with their words as they insult God and others to lift and build themselves up. Some reputable scholars see these next five characteristics dealing with the family life; *disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>3</sup>unloving, unforgiving...* Regardless of whether that was the Apostles intent we understand that relationships between parents and children should be marked by obedience, thanks and gratitude, piety and respect, affection and reasonableness. ...*slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, <sup>4</sup>traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God* finish out the list and we see that progression from inner attitudes and dispositions to outward hateful words and deeds. Let us be aware that even as genuine Christians we sometimes exhibit these sinful qualities and need to repent and seek forgiveness. We are thankful for Scriptures promise; *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One* (**1 John 2:1**). Only Jesus Christ within a person through the Holy Spirit's power can change a man from the inside out.

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You for forgiveness of sin through Jesus and help me to be an example of a life changed by Your power as I live in this evil sinful world.

**THURSDAY – 2 Timothy 3:5-7:** <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.*" What is absolutely the most shocking and horrifying part of this nasty picture is the fact that Paul is describing godless people who are actually to be found *within the visible church*—as the text says *having a form of godliness but denying its power*. Worldliness and a godless spirit have been found in the church throughout the ages. Jesus cleansed the Temple in His day for its sin issues including

the leaders love of money (**John 2:16**), not to mention all the godlessness He found. He found hypocrisy (**Luke 11:39**) and a pridefulness that put on a show with empty prayers and lavish dressing (**Mark 12:38, 40**). Paul is saying that it is possible to engage in outward rituals of worship, singing, praying, sacraments and so forth yet know nothing of the inward power of the Holy Spirit. Without the power of The Holy Spirit of God and His presence and blessing religion is an empty formality with empty souls and sadly this is a very prevalent problem not only in Jesus day, but Timothy's and ours as well. Paul says, *And from such people turn away*. When you find empty, Holy Spiritless religion and those who engage in it, get away and have nothing to do with them. It gets worse as Paul now explains the behavior of these godless religionists by saying they *creep into households* and target *gullible women*. As Eve was vulnerable to the temptation and deception of Satan in the Garden of Eden so also women in timothy's day were being deceived and led astray by false teachers (**1 Timothy 2:14, 5:13-15**). So many in the church then and today are busy *always learning and (are) never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*.

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, please help and protect me from false teaching and teachers by going faithfully to Sacred Scripture and communing with You and walking in the Holy Spirit.

**FRIDAY – 2 Timothy 3:8-9:** <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.*" There are people in the church today, both leaders and others who are promoting and believing a counterfeit faith. Men such as the two named here, *Jannes and Jambres* who *resisted* and opposed *Moses*, so also these current men of our text *also resist the truth*. They are men of *corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith*. The Greek word translated *currupt* is ***katafithiro*** taken from two words which mean "to spoil entirely, to wither, shrivel, to destroy, and utterly perish". We must guard our hearts and minds as well to avoid such a spoiling which results in a horrible end (**Proverbs 4:23**). *Jannes and Jambres* are not mentioned in Scripture, but according to Jewish tradition they were the magicians who opposed Moses with their counterfeit and magic. So Paul uses them to warn Timothy about those who resist and therefore oppose God's Word and Gospel. Remember last week where we saw Jesus spoke about the field in **Matthew 13:24-43**. The field had wheat but Satan has also sown tares and the church on earth will always have hypocrites without God who resist, twist and distort the teaching of Scripture for their own gain. But we close with assurance that the true Church of Jesus will stand firm. God's truth wins in the end *but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all*. Remember the foundation *standeth sure* and Jesus will build His church and hell itself won't beat it. So beloved, let us beware, examine our hearts and lives and heed the warning to *depart from iniquity* while we rest in the fact that *the Lord knows them that are His* (**2:19-20**).

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You that I am safe in You as I walk with You and obey.