

2 Timothy 3A

- As we move into Chapter 3 of 2 Timothy, Paul's letter remains on the topic of bad teaching or false teachers
 - But he's also beginning to transition from Timothy's circumstances to the circumstances of the church generally
 - Timothy, as we know, was a young pastor contending for the faith in a pagan city
 - And he did so during a time of increasing hostility toward Christians and the message of the truth
 - Not only was he contending with false teaching in various forms, but now he was fighting his own flesh in its desire to avoid persecution
 - Because of these challenges, Paul wrote to shore up Timothy's courage to continue preaching the truth
 - In Chapter 1 Paul told Timothy not to neglect the gift he received knowing God granted it for an eternal purpose
 - Paul pointed to his own example of suffering for Christ, as inspiration for Timothy to continue the fight
 - And he mentioned a few contemporaries who failed in that regard as a warning to Timothy
 - Then in Chapter 2, Paul choose to use a series of comparisons to explain the importance of holding to the mission
 - Over the chapter, Paul compared Timothy's Christian service in ministry to seven roles
 - A son, a soldier, an athlete, a farmer, a laborer, a vessel and a bond-servant
 - Paul's point in this chapter was that life as a servant of the Living God involves no less commitment, sacrifice, patience, dedication and reward than do these other walks of life
 - In fact, serving God will require all the more in these areas

- And so if we're willing to do what's necessary to fulfill these other roles, why would we be less willing for the sake of serving Christ?
- Finally, as Paul ended Chapter 2, he gave Timothy the exhortation to strive to be a pastor who handles the Word of God properly
 - Make your goal in ministry to handle the Word of God accurately
 - As I said in the last lesson, this should be the highest (and maybe only goal) of every man in pastoral ministry
 - Paul said that being an approved workman includes the responsibility to avoid being dragged into worldly and empty talk
 - Pursuing holiness in your own life is a prerequisite for teaching others about the holiness of God from the word
 - Moreover, Timothy must avoid getting dragged into unhelpful, useless and foolish speculations about words
 - Finally, he must work to correct those caught up in such things
 - On that final point, Paul said the goal was to avoid being quarrelsome, showing love and patience as he worked to bring repentance among those in opposition
 - Those who are consumed by false teaching are not the enemy necessarily
 - Often they are victims and so they may be the focus of our ministry, should the Lord grant them repentance
 - So although Timothy was to stay out of the mud himself, he should also seek to pull others out as well
- But we can't save everyone, so there are times when it's best to leave the fight
 - That leads us into Chapter 3 where Paul moves to proving his point regarding false teachers, by drawing a comparison to the nature of the last days
 - In fact, let's begin Chapter 3 by re-reading the final two verses of Chapter 2
 - This will give us the full context for Paul's teaching in this chapter

2Tim. 2:25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

[2Tim. 2:26](#) and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

[2Tim. 3:1](#) But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.

[2Tim. 3:2](#) For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,

[2Tim. 3:3](#) unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good,

[2Tim. 3:4](#) treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

[2Tim. 3:5](#) holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

- Reading the end of Chapter 2 with the beginning of Chapter 3 makes clear that Paul wasn't unrealistic about the degree of success Timothy might achieve
 - In fact, Paul's tone is decidedly pessimistic
 - He says things like "if perhaps God may grant repentance"
 - They are caught in a snare of the devil
 - They are held captive, doing his will
 - And then in Chapter 3, Paul opens with "realize this Timothy, in the last days difficult times will come..."
 - Paul is about to set Timothy straight about the nature of the days in which he ministers
 - When Paul says last days, he refers to the days of the church prior to the Lord's return
 - "Last" days doesn't necessarily refer to a short time, though the longer this age lasts, the less of the "last days" remains (obviously)
 - You should hear last days as referring to the final period of history before the Lord sets up the Kingdom
- And in the last days, Paul says difficult times will come
 - Why did Paul want Timothy to know about the future?
 - Because Timothy needed to understand that his situation in Ephesus wasn't unexpected nor was it unprecedented

- The Lord had revealed to Paul that other pastors in other cities would face similar and even worse circumstances during the time the church exists on earth
- Young and often untrained men like Timothy would be required to stand firm contending for the faith against false and ungodly adversaries
- As bad as life may be for Timothy, and as hard as the work may be at times, Timothy wasn't alone and God wasn't surprised
- Therefore, there could be no self-pity or making excuses, or avoiding of persecution or confrontation
 - Instead, Paul expected Timothy to set an example for the church to follow
 - To teach and preach the truth of scripture, unadulterated by foolish speculations and unafraid of opposition
- And critical to Timothy's success was having realistic expectations while knowing his enemy
 - A man of God must steer clear of the traps and pitfalls set by the enemy
 - In these last days, the world is going to be marked by extreme ungodliness
 - And so we must be ready to note and avoid the negative influence of men under Satan's control
 - Before we look at Paul's description of these times, let's understand that the very notion of a bad-to-worse progression would have been news in itself
 - Paul is saying that the age of the church on the earth will not progress to greater godliness or enlightenment, prior to Christ's return
 - Certainly, those who come to faith in Jesus during this time will be sanctified by their faith
 - But the world at large will not get better during these days
 - Rather, Paul says the condition of men on earth goes in the opposite direction

- For those of us living 2,000 years after Paul with the benefit of hindsight, this truth doesn't shock us
 - We see it fulfilled before our eyes
 - We see clearly the growth in evil over the past centuries...even just in the past few decades
- But for the early church, Paul's words were probably surprising
 - They were enjoying Pax Romana, a worldwide Roman peace
 - And though life was difficult in many ways, it seemed to be getting better
 - So to learn that the Messiah's appearing was not to result in Pax Christos, a worldwide peace of Christ, was news probably
 - Therefore, if Timothy held such an expectation, then it's no mystery why he might have been disturbed by the arrival of persecution
- Even today, there is a certain view of eschatology that believes the world is marching toward greater holiness in preparation for the Lord's return
 - Those who hold to this view are likely to find their faith in God's word shaken when these expectations aren't met
 - As the world descends deeper into ungodliness, they struggle to make sense of it
 - Because they had the wrong expectation, despite Paul's counsel
 - Therein lies one of the key problems with bad eschatology; a wrong view of the Bible's teaching of the end times
 - An over-realized view of end times can undermine a believer's confidence and interest in prophecy
 - They've been told one thing, but the world points in a different direction
 - And so they question whether prophecy can even be understood at all
 - Which is why Paul tells Timothy "realize this"

- The church needs to understand that the days of the church – the last days – are a period of difficult times
- The Greek word for difficult can be translated fierce or harsh
- We must be prepared to undergo harsh and difficult circumstances at the hands of ungodly people
 - Persecution and difficulty isn't proof that you're doing something wrong
 - It may be proof you're serving God well
- Paul moves now to listing 19 vices that mark the nature of these days
 - Paul gives us this list for at least a couple of reasons
 - First, here's our proof that the world is not going to become more holy during the church age
 - Each time you watch a news story about some episode of depraved indifference to human life...
 - Or hear about a YouTube video of reckless or boastful behavior going viral...
 - Or culture normalizing behaviors that used to be scandalous and worthy of condemnation...
 - You can remember Paul's words and understand this is what we were told to expect
 - Don't get discouraged
 - Don't doubt the Lord or His promises, as if the world's descent into ungodliness is cause to question your faith or your Bible
 - Recognize that the Lord warned you to expect such things during these days
 - Secondly, I think Paul wants Timothy and the church to understand these things, because to be forewarned is to be forearmed
 - Paul told Timothy to flee these things and to stand apart from the world

- To protect the word and to be willing to suffer when enemies try to silence him
- So knowing that the pressure against godly believers will only get worse, is key to preparing to stand up to that pressure
- Let's look briefly at each item of the list
 - The list begins with lovers of self
 - The phrase means narcissism
 - I think it's appropriate that the list begins with this vice, since it has become the defining characteristic of our time
 - Technologies like social media and the cell phone camera have only served to give society's narcissism an easier outlet
 - But the instinct to love one's self has always been in humanity's heart. We just see it on display all the more today
 - In a way, this vice explains most of the rest of the list
 - In our self-deception, we have been taught and have come to accept love of self is a virtue
 - We have changed the term slightly to make it sound more appropriate
 - We call it self-esteem today, but it's the same idea
 - And so we say that raising kids with "healthy self-esteem" should be a goal
 - The Bible says that mankind has all the self-love (or self-esteem) we need
 - The Bible calls it pride, and it says we have way too much of it
 - Ironically, when the world won't affirm our love for ourselves, we pout or rage or get depressed or work all the harder for attention
 - We call these bad behaviors a lack of self-esteem
 - When in reality, they are actually the consequence of someone realizing they weren't as lovable as they thought

- The word of God says love of self is a mark of the sinful hearts in the last days
 - The last thing anyone truly needs is more self-esteem
 - Instead, we need less self-esteem and more Christ-esteem
 - Fearing our sinfulness brought into the presence of a holy God is the beginning of wisdom
- Paul uses the term “loving” numerous times in this list, including with the second item
 - In the last days, mankind will be lovers of money
 - This means being avaricious
 - Having an insatiable appetite for money and what money may possess
 - Beyond being greedy, this sin also involves a dissipation of time as people spend countless hours earning the money they desire
 - So it’s a sin of consumption made possible by an investing of time and energy in selfish pursuits
 - Next Paul says men in these days are boastful and arrogant
 - Both these words are ways in which we display pride
 - Being boastful means speaking pridefully
 - Arrogant means acting pridefully
 - Both are the outward displays of self-love
 - The fifth and sixth items are revilers and disobedient to parents
 - These too are related sins
 - Reviling is acting against proper authority
 - While disobedient to parents is acting against parental authority
- The Greek word for disobedient could also be translated unresponsive
 - So imagine a child sitting by as a parent gives an order, yet the child doesn’t even acknowledge the parent’s instructions much less obeys

- In the culture of Paul's day, this was the height of insubordination
- In fact, it was almost unimaginable that a child would respond to a parent's authority in that way
- Yet today many families know the experience of children ignoring a parent's authority, which is the highest form of rebellion
 - Disobedience among children is so prevalent in our culture today that restaurants bar children
 - Families decline to fellowship with other families, knowing they can't expect their children to behave
- When a child has so little respect for a parent's authority that they ignore instructions, the child is in full rebellion
 - Even if the child hasn't yet begun to act out in the worst ways, it's only a matter of time
 - Paul says this is a mark of ungodliness in the last days
 - So certainly Christian parents must do their best to guard against raising children who have this attitude
 - We can't guarantee our children become believers, but we must set an expectation of respect and obedience in the home
- The seventh item is ungrateful, which means to carry an unthankful, unappreciative heart
 - We can see this sinful attitude growing in our culture and world
 - Increasingly, our culture is unfazed by the conveniences and blessings of our modern life
 - What satisfied yesterday is suddenly not good enough today
 - Imagine how grateful our ancestors would have reacted if they could see into the future to understand the things we possess today
 - For example, in 1950 the size of the average American home was under 1,000 sq. ft. (93 sq. m)
 - Today it's about 2,700 sq. ft (252 sq. m)
 - But are we happier today than Americans of 1950?

- Our houses may be bigger, but we're working harder to pay for them
- The added expense leaves us more stressed
- And we have to fill all that space with things which we must pay for, and dust and protect and replace
- Having an ungrateful heart inevitably leads to avarice and greed, which explains why this sin exists alongside the others on this list
 - We judge what we have against what our greedy heart desires
 - Which leads to discontent and ungratefulness
 - Every year's iPhone leaves me ungrateful for the one I have
 - Another person's success leaves us discontent with our situation in life
 - The pursuit of more drives a sinful lifestyle, which leads us to the next item on the list
- Eighth: people will be unholy
 - To be unholy means, simply, to be unlike God
 - This one term summarizes the entire list, but in light of the other items around it, I think Paul means it more specifically
 - It means impure as in a sexual sense
 - People will be unholy in their bodies, which should require no further explanation
- Impurity in our bodies leads to the next two items on the list in v.3: unloving and irreconcilable
 - The Greek word for unloving means to be heartless, callous
 - It means to be without love in the true sense of the word
 - So in this age, people will use their bodies in increasingly impure ways with one another
 - And yet at the same time, show less true love for one another
 - Seeing these two side by side in Paul's list makes perfect sense

- Our culture is oversexed and unloving because sex is not love
- In fact, it's the opposite of love when practiced in ungodly ways
- Yet in these days Paul says immorality becomes the norm, and so people will be unloving
- And as we would expect, such relationships don't last
 - Marriages based in selfish love fail
 - Friendships involving fornication end without marriage
 - And other illegitimate relationships give rise to all manner of abuse
- So Paul adds that people won't be reconcilable
 - The word in Greek includes the notion of unforgiving
 - Looking beyond immoral relationships, we can see this quality in every area of life
 - People are quick to take offense and no one has reason to forgive
- Next comes malicious gossips
 - A malicious gossip is someone who spreads false rumors for the purpose of hurting someone
 - In Paul's day, this usually involved men spreading rumors in the workplace or women gossiping house to house
 - Those in the early church who spoke against Paul were malicious gossips
 - Paul says this behavior will be the way of ungodly people in the last days
 - The Greek word for malicious gossip is *diabolos*
 - From which we get the word devil – who is the father of lies
 - In our day, we see how this is being fulfilled in ever-more powerful ways
 - The internet and the anonymity of modern communication has made malicious rumors a fact of life

- We now have a new name for it: fake news
- This is probably one of the clearest examples of fulfillment on the list
 - Never before in history has it been so easy to do what Paul says here would become typical for the age
 - You can certainly expect this to get worse, not better
- Items 12-18 on the list are very closely aligned, so we will look at them as a group
 - You can see a cause-and-effect relationship building in this part of Paul's list beginning with lacking self-control, then brutal and then haters of good
 - To lack self-control means to lack the ability to restrain the evil nature of our flesh
 - No one needs self control when acting in the Spirit, for the Spirit naturally brings control
 - Self-control is always a matter of controlling our sin nature
 - But in these days, people stop trying to control (or never gain control) over their flesh
 - They are like animals living according to instinct
 - And so they are brutal
 - Brutal literally means uncivilized
 - So the world lives increasingly without regard for societal norms, or the dignity of others or even their own bodies
 - Even a casual look around the world confirms this progression
 - Brutality leads to people becoming haters of good
 - In this context, a hater of good is someone who is antagonistic toward anything that seeks to counter their brutality
 - Anything in life that convicts them or prevents them from acting out as they please is attacked
 - Much like a wild animal kept in a cage, they rage at the zookeeper and bite at the bars

- This pattern is easy to see today, as anyone or anything that dares to call out sin will be attacked
- In v.4 the chain of behavior continues to items 15 and 16, treacherous and reckless
 - The first word means seeking to betray or depose those in control
 - Naturally, as the world becomes brutal and haters of good, they will seek to overturn the establishment
 - Paul says ruling authorities are in place for our good, but since the world hates good, it will hate the establishment
 - Once again, it's easy to see the world's desire to rebel against authority and disrupt order
 - This leads to reckless living
 - The word in Greek is better translated "falling headlong"
 - The word carries both the sense of jumping before you look and of being stubborn
 - As in the case of someone who has been warned not to jump off a cliff, so they decide to jump anyway
 - We can see the progression continuing from treachery to recklessness
 - As the world seeks to throw off the shackles of social norms and authority, they begin to act in increasingly headstrong, reckless ways
 - They are not under counsel or authority
 - So they are living without restraint
 - Browsing through the most popular videos on YouTube reveals a world of increasing recklessness
 - In extreme cases, the world is reckless with life itself, seeking increasingly dangerous daredevil stunts
 - This comes from hating good also, since it shows contempt for life itself and the opportunity to understand the meaning of life
 - They have made life an empty pursuit of cheating death

- For an unbeliever to play with death is the absolutely epitome of recklessness since they are risking an eternity in the Lake of Fire
- This cause-and-effect chain concludes in v.4 with items 17, 18 and 19: conceited, lovers of pleasure, not lovers of God
 - To be conceited means to be proud, but in the sense of wrapping one's self in a veil of self-delusion
 - Such a person has supposed themselves to be someone other than they truly are
 - To imagine they live a life of importance or substance
 - Conceit is a necessity in a narcissistic, reckless culture
 - We must compete with everyone else's narcissistic achievements while maintaining our sense of self-worth
 - As social norms dissolve and forgiveness and reconciliation disappear, we must defend our ego
 - Else we risk being run over and rendered irrelevant in a culture that loves only self
 - Conceit leads to a society in which everyone is seeking personal pleasure at everyone else's expense
 - From where we live, what we drive, what we eat, what we wear, what toys we possess and hobbies fill our time, our culture is obsessed with self-gratification
 - This is simply the natural outworking of all the other sins, which lead to uncontrolled selfishness
- Ultimately, the narcissism, ungrateful hearts, lack of self control, brutality and conceit add up to a failure to love God
 - The world has no regard for God
 - But more than that, the world hates God
 - And as Paul says, love for the world and love for God are diametrically opposed
 - We can only do one at a time
 - Of course the unbelieving world has always been opposed to God

- But what changes in the last days is the focused hatred of the world against Christ, the true manifestation of God
- Prior to Christ, the world's opposition to God was diffused, lacking focus (beyond hating God's people)
- But today, the Messiah has been revealed so the world knows Who to hate now
- Have you noticed that movies like to use the name of Jesus Christ in vain, but you never hear Muhammed or Buddha used in vain?
 - And Christians are mocked on television, movies or elsewhere but rarely other faiths?
 - This is no coincidence
 - Satan focuses the world's hatred at his true enemy, God
 - This too is a sign of the last days
- True to form, our conceited world likes to think of itself as close to God, even as they hate Him
 - Item 19 in v.5: Paul says the world will hold to a form of godliness though they deny its power
 - They make a show of being religious, because it feeds their conceited view of self as worthy of God's love
 - The word in Greek for form literally means an outward form, as in making a show or pretense
 - There is no substance to their piety
 - Today we see this superficial form of godliness evident in those who describe themselves as "spiritual"
 - If you ask them if they are Christian (or any other religion), they will say no to distance themselves from any authority
 - Remember, our culture is treacherous, they reject authority
 - So instead, they claim a higher status of being "spiritual"
 - Much like they enjoy having sexual relationships without the constraints of commitment or self-sacrifice

- This is not godliness at all, of course, which fits with the whole pattern of an arrogant, boastful, depraved society
 - They have denied the true power of God, Paul says
 - The true power of God is found through faith in Jesus Christ alone
 - That power being the power of His blood to save us from sin and the power of the Holy Spirit to teach us true godliness
- For all their forms of godliness, the one form they categorically reject is that of faith in Jesus Christ
 - And so they possess neither the form nor the substance of true godliness
 - They have no truth nor sincerity in anything
- Paul's list is so powerful because it is such a vivid portrayal of the effects of sin when left unchecked in the human heart
 - As the natural constraints God has placed in the world erode, sin abounds all the more
 - God gave mankind marriage, government, societal norms and even our own conscience to contain the sin of man's heart
 - Even barriers like communication, distance and language are being eliminated
 - It's a repeating of the Tower of Babel
 - Mankind, united by their sin nature, achieves even greater heights of depravity, even as they declare they are seeking to reach God
- At the end of v.5 Paul says to Timothy, avoid such men as these
 - Paul's command serves as an interesting counter to his earlier call to correct and counsel men who teach in error
 - Sometimes Timothy was to engage with those causing trouble in the church
 - And in other cases he should avoid such men, Paul says
 - The difference is a matter of the heart

- In the first case, those engaged in foolish and useless talk were believers who were caught in the trap of the enemy
- But perhaps they might be rescued, Paul said
- So Timothy was to engage with believers to correct and perhaps rehabilitate
- But he wasn't to participate with them in their idle talk
- But in the case of those here in Chapter 3, we're talking about unbelievers who stand in the way of the church
 - These men will be the source of persecution – the difficult times that will come upon the church
 - In general, Timothy is to avoid such men as these
 - Perhaps they too may be reached with the Gospel
 - But that decision lies with the Lord, and in the meantime Timothy should use discretion and wisdom
- Paul is coaching Timothy on the balance between reaching the culture and remaining apart from the culture
 - Like a shepherd who leads his flock into pastures but away from wolves
 - We must understand the threats that we face even as we try to convert them
 - Jesus expressed it as being wise as serpents and innocent as doves
 - Never giving cause for accusation yet being smart in how we handle ourselves, knowing we are operating behind enemy lines
- Paul is trying to give Timothy wisdom on how to defeat his enemies even as he is ordering Timothy forward into battle
 - Including naming more examples from Timothy's past experience

2Tim. 3:6 For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses,
2Tim. 3:7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

[2Tim. 3:8](#) Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith.

[2Tim. 3:9](#) But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes's and Jambres's folly was also.

- Paul says that among those in the world who fit this pattern of sin, there are those who “enter into households” to captivate weak women
 - This is such an intriguing statement, which some see as somewhat misogynistic
 - Paul is describing a pattern in Ephesus, we assume, though I doubt anything that happened in that city was altogether unique
 - In fact, I think we can still see this pattern today
 - In general Paul is describing what can happen in the church when unbelievers posing as religious experts get too close to the church
 - To be clear, we’re talking about unbelievers
 - Notice Paul begins with “for among them”
 - Clearly, we’re talking about people from the list above, which means they hold to a form of godliness but deny its power
 - These are false teachers, unsafe men who portray themselves as ministers of God in some form
 - Paul told Timothy to avoid such men because they hold a risk for the weak in the church
 - Paul calls out weak women at home weighed down by sin
 - Paul is speaking about a situation in his culture that is different today at least to some degree yet follows the same principle
- First, you have a captive audience
 - In Paul’s day, women were mostly found in the home
 - False teachers came into the home during the day, while the men were away in the fields
 - They sought to captivate the women with false teaching

- Secondly, they found spiritually immature Christians living un-sanctified lives
 - The women were beset with sin because they were not growing in the word
 - So they were suffering under the weight of the consequences of all that sin
 - So naturally, such a Christian seeks for relief as the Spirit convicts them
- The problem was they found “answers” in the wrong place
 - Their immaturity left them vulnerable to receiving false teaching
 - You may remember in our 1 Timothy study we learned that the false teaching in Ephesus was being promoted by deceived women in the church
 - Now we see how those women were deceived
 - They were won over by crafty false teachers while they were without the protection of their husbands
- Interestingly, the same pattern repeats itself today, though it’s not necessarily limited to women
 - The internet and television brings a myriad of false teaching into homes
 - There, these teachers find a ready audience of weak Christians desperately seeking solutions to life’s problems
 - While the real solutions are found in God’s word under proper teaching, they seek quick solutions from men selling snake oil
- Paul says immature Christians are led on by various impulses (or lusts)
 - We don’t know the lusts that dominated Paul’s day
 - But I doubt they were all that different from our day
 - And today we see people seeking to be healed, to be rich, to experience a miraculous encounter with God
 - So they succumb to any false teaching that offers what they lust after

- Paul says they are always learning but never able to come to true knowledge
 - This is a pattern you see commonly today
 - A Christian who is always enamored with the latest fad...a book, a movie, a particular teaching or new practice
 - They float from fad to fad, always learning something new but never actually growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ
- That's the danger for the church who's pastor does not help their flock keep distance from these threats
 - They are like wolves robbing the shepherd of stray sheep that wander too far from the flock
 - If Timothy was going to hold the line in Ephesus, he had to contend with the false teachers who were undermining his mission
 - He couldn't shrink back for this was the time to be alert and on guard
- In vs. 8-9 Paul cites an example from Moses' experience in Pharaoh's court
 - We know from Exodus 7 that Moses was opposed by two of Pharaoh's magicians who performed a stunt similar to the miracle Moses performed
 - God turned Moses' staff into a serpent
 - These two magicians, probably through slight of hand, mimicked the miracle
 - That's a perfect representation of what false teachers do in general
 - First they gain an audience because a true work of God is taking place around them
 - False teachers rarely start their own religious movements
 - They almost always hijack the true church
 - Mormonism begins with a man they call Jesus, though he's not the Jesus of the Bible

- Jehovah's Witnesses do the same
- Just as the two magicians Paul names tried to hijack Moses' appearance
- Secondly, they seek to diminish the work of God into a work of man, while claiming to have that power themselves
 - Moses claimed God did the power but the magicians attempted to prove that such power lies within the grasp of men
 - False teachers speak of God but really put the spotlight on themselves and their audience
 - All power is within the grasp of the individual if only they follow the recipe of the false teacher
 - Finally, the end effect of these magicians is to oppose the truth
 - The magicians sought to discredit Moses and his testimony
 - Likewise, the false teachers in the church seek to move our minds off the Gospel and the true message of the church
 - And onto other meaningless things like prosperity
 - Paul says these men opposed the truth, because they have depraved minds and have been rejected by God in regard to faith
 - Paul's strong declaration lines up with Jude's statement about the same false teachers

Jude 4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand **marked out** for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

- Jude says God marked such men out for condemnation beforehand
- And Paul says they were rejected in regard to faith
- Clearly they are not candidates for rehabilitation, and so Timothy and the church should avoid them altogether
- To end our teaching tonight, notice Paul says the good guys win in the end

- In v.9 Paul says just as the magicians saw their snake eaten alive by God's snake, so will the false teachers' attempts to undermine the church fail
 - This is Paul's encouragement to Timothy to stand strong against such men
 - Moses was probably afraid of what he faced in the court of the most powerful man on earth
 - Nevertheless, he stood firm and truth was vindicated by God's power
- Similarly, Timothy had good reason to stand firm against opposition
 - Because he was not alone
 - And God knew difficult times would come, so this wasn't a shock or a surprise
 - The men are as evil as the days, but that's why the church exists to proclaim the truth
 - And in the end, the Lord will win by His word