

THE CHALLENGE OF A GOOD MINISTER

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have prayed and read the Bible for this lesson to learn what the Holy Spirit wants you to teach your students. Then let Him guide you in using these notes. When you follow this procedure you will be a better teacher of your students.

Lesson aim: Learn how to expose false doctrine with the Scriptures and a godly life.

Suggestion: The teacher lesson will call attention to some important truths to teach. After the lesson, give your class next week's Student Lesson so they can share their answers in class next week.

Introduction: In chapter three Paul warned Timothy about the certainty of apostasy coming into the churches (3:1). He told him its characteristics (3:2-5), its captives (3:6-7) and its conclusion (3:8-9). Then he challenged Timothy to combat it by following his example (3:10-11), by living a godly life (3:12) and by practicing the precepts in God's Word, because "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (3:16-17).

When are perilous times coming? 3:1

Perilous times are not limited to the days near the end of this age, but they have been with us since the days of the apostles. Christ will destroy these wicked persons, described in verses 3-5, who cause the perilous times. Christ will destroy these wicked people when He returns to earth to rule all nations. We must not stop witnessing by the threat of perilous times, but be strong in the Lord (Eph 6:10).

How are the apostates described that oppose the Lord and His people? 3:2-5

They love themselves, love money (3:2) and love pleasures (3:4). These are their gods. They do not love people, good things (3:3) or God (3:4). They are arrogant: boasters outwardly and proud inwardly; they blaspheme God and anyone who upsets them; they disobey parents (3:2), are heady and high-minded (3:3). They are unthankful, unholy (3:2), unforgiving and unable to control their lusts (3:3). They are like fierce beasts and treacherous traitors (3:3). They look godly, but deny God's power (3:5). Like Paul told Timothy, we should stay away from such trouble-makers (3:5).

How was Timothy fully acquainted with Paul's doctrine, persecutions and afflictions? 3:10-11

Paul preached and was persecuted in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra on his first missionary trip (Acts 13-14). Lystra was the city where Timothy heard the Gospel preached by Paul and was saved. On that visit to Lystra Paul was stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:19-20). Timothy traveled with Paul on his second missionary trip and went with him to Iconium and Antioch on that trip. He also assisted Paul in Ephesus to build that church, so he fully knew Paul's doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience, persecutions and afflictions. We can know about Paul only by the history of the early church in Acts written by Luke, a close companion of Paul, and by his epistles.

What hard times and what hope did Paul give to Timothy? 3:11-12

Paul told Timothy, "All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." But in the previous verse he told Timothy, "Out of them all the Lord delivered me." We are not delivered from hard times, but the Lord will deliver us out of them.

When is it best to teach children the Scriptures? 3:15

Timothy was taught the Scriptures early, not as a child (*teknon*), but as a babe (*brephous*). As a result he was prepared to receive the word for salvation. Teach children the Scriptures when they are babies.

How important are the Scriptures in bringing a believer to maturity? 3:16-17

All Scripture is inspired (God-breathed). God's breath gave life to Adam (Gen 2:7). God gives life to those that hear and learn His words (Jn 6:45). Scripture is profitable for doctrine (teaching), for reproof (rebuking), for correction and instruction (training) in righteousness that the believer might be perfect (complete or mature). Scripture will thoroughly prepare the believer for every good work. When you master the Word of God, the Word of God will master you and prepare you to do the work of God. No other book can make that claim.