

## THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS

### III. II Timothy: Church Ministry Amid Hardship

#### H. Responding To Satanically Influenced People In The Ministry

(2 Timothy 2:24-3:9)

#### I. Introduction

- A. The messenger of God's Word plays a key role in a local church, so he is a target for Satanic opposition.
- B. That opposition can come in various ways, but a particularly difficult way for God's messenger is Satan's use of people whom he controls to oppose God's messenger in his ministry, 2 Timothy 2:26.
- C. 2 Timothy 2:24-3:9 directs God's messenger on responding to such people, what we view for our insight:

#### II. Responding To Satanically Influenced People In The Ministry, 2 Timothy 2:24-3:9.

- A. As explained in 2 Timothy 2:26, Paul's instructions to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:24-26 deals with Timothy's need to handle opposition he faced in his ministry from people who were taken captive by Satan to do his will.
- B. Thus, people who are taken captive by Satan to do his will can be identified as sometimes trying to argue with God's messenger, to oppose his teaching or his ministry functions in some way, 2 Timothy 2:24a, 25a:
  1. Paul's call that God's servant not "strive" (v. 24a KJV) translates the Greek word *machomai*, meaning "fight, quarrel, dispute," Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 497.
  2. The KJV expression "those that oppose themselves" (v. 25a) translates the Greek verb *antidiatithemi*, which is here in the middle voice (*antidiatithemenous*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 735; The Analyt. Grk. Lex., 1972, p. 32) and in the middle voice it means to "be opposed," *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 73.
  3. Thus, Satanically influenced people in one's ministry, people who could actually be true believers as in Peter's case in Matthew 16:21-23, may oppose God's messenger by disputing or arguing with him.
- C. God's servant is thus lured to react to this opposition by hotly arguing in return, what makes him dishonor himself before onlookers and hurt his ministry, so a different response is needed, 2 Timothy 2:24-26:
  1. God's servant must not argue (*machomai* above) with one who opposes him, but rather (*alla*, a strong adversative, *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T.) be "kind, gentle" (*epios*, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 349) toward all, "skillful in teaching" (*didaktikos*, *Ibid.*, p. 190), "bearing evil without resentment" (*anexikakos*, *Ibid.*, p. 64), in "gentleness, humility, meekness" (*prautes*, *Ibid.*, p. 705-706) "correcting, instructing" (*paideuo*, *Ibid.*, p. 608-609) those who counter him, 2 Timothy 2:24-25a.
  2. Such a careful, measured, self-controlled, considerate way of responding to an opponent is necessary not only because the opponent to God's servant is controlled by Satan who is trying to discredit God's messenger by luring him to lose his temper, but since the opponent himself is in jeopardy of God's punishment for what he is doing to God's messenger. This opponent needs the opportunity to come to his senses and acknowledge the truth, to escape Satan's control and avoid God's discipline, 2 Tim. 2:25b-26.
- D. However, in the last days [between Paul and Christ's return, Ryrie St. Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 2 Tim. 3:1], Paul wrote that "hard" (*chalepos*, *Ibid.*, p. 882) times would come, and *chalepos* appears elsewhere in the New Testament **only** at Matthew 8:28 to describe a hard-to-handle demoniac, 2 Tim. 3:1. (*Ibid.*; Moulton & Geden, Conc. to the Grk. Test., 1974, p. 1001) In **this** 2 Timothy 2:24-3:9 **context** then, 2 Tim. 3:2-5a ESV gives **more** descriptions of Satanically influenced people God's servants would face, namely, "lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" and "having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power."
- E. Regarding such folk, God's servant is to "avoid" (ESV) them, the Greek verb being *apotrepou*, the middle voice of *apotrepo*, "turn away from, avoid," *Ibid.*, p. 101; 2 Tim. 3:5b. The middle voice means one must **pull back as far as is necessary to GUARD ONESELF from sinning or being spiritually harmed by such people.**
- F. These folk typically control weak people burdened by sins and led about by various lusts who always learn but never grasp the truth, folk disqualified by God as to teaching the faith, 2 Tim. 3:6-8; B. K. C., N. T., p. 756.
- G. Nevertheless, the sin of these folk in time would be evident to all, discrediting them before others, 2 Tim. 3:9.

**Lesson:** Satanically influenced people who oppose God's servants are controlled by a powerful, brilliant Satan who uses them to oppose God's servants so as to get them to sin and sabotage their ministries, hurting the local church. God's servants must be gentle but Biblical and careful in facing such people, giving room for God to work in it all.

**Application:** In facing Satanically influenced people in the ministry, may we use Biblical discernment and care.