

'...always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth.' 2 Timothy 3.7-8.

We have seen that St Paul wrote 2 *Tim* to encourage 'timid Timothy' to stand up to the false teachers in his congregation at Ephesus. Now here in ch3 we hear Paul's explain *why* Timothy is being opposed. It's because, Timothy, we are living in the last days, and they are *hard*, 'difficult' (ESV), 'terrible' (NIV). 3.1... But what are these 'last days' that we are living in now? The 'last days' before *what*? They are the last days before Christ will return to earth finally and decisively to root out evil and sin, and fully to reign. Very, very rarely do we hear sermons about Christ's 2nd Coming, but it's in the Bible as the one unfinished item on God's agenda. History is not just going to go on and on and on. God is moving events forward to an end-point, a climax, and you had better make sure you are on the right side.

Because somewhere in the future, - tomorrow, or in 10,000 years time - Christ will return to earth and crush evil, evil clearly has every reason to resist. So what you are seeing all around you at this precise moment is the Devil throwing everything he's got against goodness, love and truth. Just read vv2-5 ... Isn't that what you see all around you today?

And if the Devil is throwing everything he's got at us before Christ returns one day in the future to crush him, what is his strategy? It is to attack the idea of Truth, and, as I shall try to shew, he's doing a pretty good job of it. The good news, however, is that he will ultimately fail, because truth is the daughter of time. Truth will out, v9..

You see, when God came to us in Jesus Christ, he did not come as therapy or optional life-style choice. In his own words, Jesus came as the Truth. He rightly saw the devil for precisely for what he is, the Liar-in-chief. Turn to p1074, *John* 8.44-45... The Devil works by deluding people.

If I had to explain the events of the 20thC, I would say they can all be traced back to one thing: 'The Flight from the Truth'. In the Western world in the 20thC we abandoned God and *that* led to abandoning *absolutes*. So everything now is *relative*. Who now is to say what is true? It's what seems true to you. We glamorise this by grandly calling it *post-modernism*. It's nonsense, of course. Imagine two postmodernist brothers squabbling over a will. They soon forget their relativist thinking and appeal to an absolutist idea of truth. 'Look', one will say, 'it says here in black and white that I get the million pounds, not you'. Relativism is a complete delusion, but it's now accepted as 'gospel', isn't it? How often do you hear people say, 'Well, it's all relative, isn't it?' And here is the contradiction. Nothing is absolute. Everything is relative. But surely, such a statement that everything is relative is itself absolute! That was the flaw in the Logical Positivists, the philosophers who dominated the 20th. 'Nothing can be true unless it can be "proved"'. So that conveniently gets rid of God. But, just hold on. 'Nothing can be true unless it can be proved'? But how can you prove *that*?

It took decades to see through *that* lie. But the greatest lie of the 20thC was Marxism. It by far had the greatest impact on the history of the 20thC. We had to go through the terrors

of Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, Mugabe to find out it was a lie. Never forget that Sinn Fein/IRA is a Marxist organisation. Few realise that Hitler's Nazi party was *socialist*: the National *Socialist* party. The distinguished scholar Leszek Kolakowski called Marxism 'the greatest fantasy of our century ... culminating in the monstrous tyranny of Stalinism'. It finally collapsed under the weight of its own contradictions when the Berlin Wall fell. Yet it still lives on in our colleges!

The big threat today, of course, is Islam. It has taken Marxism's place. Again we delude ourselves that it is all about peace, and we all worship the same God. How can Christians say we worship the same God when the Koran explicitly says that God did *not* come to earth in Jesus Christ, and this Jesus did *not* die on the Cross? We are deluding ourselves. The Devil is deluding us. That's precisely how he works. We have allowed Christianity to be undermined by allowing all religions to be taught equally as RE in schools.

And our silly church leaders have gone along with this, all in the precious name of tolerance. Tolerance is a good thing, but the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons do not tolerate wrong medicine, quackery, voodoo and dangerous drugs, do they? Christians leaders have allowed themselves to be deluded that Jesus isn't really the Son of God. He didn't really die for our sins or physically rise from the dead. Jesus wasn't really speaking the truth when he said that he was the Truth, and the only way to the Father. But look, it's all here in this 3rd chap of 2 *Tim*. Look at v5...

The great issue for the Church and for our society is

this matter of the Truth. Once we abandoned God we forsook the truth, so we now cannot tell the difference between right and wrong. We are so corrupted now that we do not even use the word 'wrong'; we talk of something being 'inappropriate'. It's value-free. A fork is 'inappropriate' for taking soup! We can't believe our politicians because of the corrosive culture of 'spin'. The victim's concerns seem now to be outweighed by those of the criminal. In this delusional culture we are told that debt is good. Family breakdown does not harm children. 24-hour drinking, gambling casinos are good. All we need to curb our drug culture and our school-girl pregnancy rate is yet more education.

It's utterly delusional. I return you to p1074, *Jn8.44-5*... Jesus made truth-claims, not life-style option. The devil opposes him. People will oppose *me* for saying all this. Paul told Timothy to *expect* resistance if he preached gospel truths. Back to p1196. They resisted Jesus and even murdered him, because he is the Truth. The great Moses was opposed by Jannes and Jambres. (Tradition says these were the names of the magicians at Pharaoh's court who opposed Moses), v8...

The world is about the struggle between good and evil, between truth and falsehood. Anyone who takes Jesus seriously sees him as the Truth. But the truth hurts, and people have vested interests in not wanting to hear it. *That* is the deadly struggle. Christians like Timothy who see Jesus as the truth can expect opposition. Our deluded society is not happy. The devil wants it that way, but only the truth can set them free.