

A Father's Farewell

2nd Timothy

Deception and Truth In the Last Days

Key idea:

The last days are full of deception, but Christians must strive to be faithful to the truth in their belief and conduct regardless of the consequences.

Key text:

2 Timothy 3:6–13

They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, ⁷always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth. ⁸ Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth — men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. ⁹ But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone. ¹⁰ You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, ¹¹persecutions, sufferings — what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. ¹² In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³ while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Key points:

1. The last days will be full of false teachers who deceive others and who themselves have been deceived by the devil.
2. The false teachers and their followers are progressing - but only further and further into deception and evil.
3. Paul again reminds Timothy of his own life and conduct, and how he was faithful even in the face of suffering and persecution.
4. Those who desire to be faithful to the truth and godliness in this age of deception and moral decay must be prepared to suffer for their faithfulness.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's text and teaching stood out most to me? Why?
2. Why does Paul link wrong belief and wrong conduct so tightly?
3. Does deception lead to wrong conduct, or does wrong conduct open me to deception, or is the relationship more of a never-ending circle?
4. Paul compares the false teachers with Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of Pharaoh who opposed Moses. As I meditate on this comparison, what does it tell me about false teachers and about the deceptions they peddle?
5. Why does Paul seem to have such harsh words about the immature/weak-willed women who were listening to the false teachers? Is this evidence of misogyny in Paul, or is there something else that was happening? Why does it matter?
6. Jesus referred to Satan as "the father of lies" (John 8:44). What does this tell me about the relationship between the false teachers, their heresies, and Satan and his kingdom?
7. When I consider some famous examples of mass deception - such as Germany during the time of the Nazis - why do I think we are susceptible to being deceived? How can I protect myself from being deceived? How can I do this when the deception seems to be universal?
8. Paul indicates that everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (v12). What does he mean by 'persecution'? Is it just private belief that brings persecution, or does "live a godly life" indicate something more?
9. What do I think is stronger - the truth or deception? Why?
10. Who will I call to encourage this week? What specific members of BRCC will I commit before God to pray for and call?

Preview of Next Week: 2 Timothy 3:14-17