

These individuals are not center stage in the New Testament story, but their appearances are enough to leave a warning. Whether through doctrinal error, selfish ambition, or outright opposition to the truth, their brief mentions remind us that not every servant is faithful, and not every name listed in Scripture is worth emulating.

THE HALL OF INFAMY

DEMAS: THE LOVER OF THE PRESENT WORLD

Key References: Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:10

- Listed as one of Paul’s “fellow laborers” early in ministry.
- Later described by Paul as having “forsaken me, having loved this present world.”
- Not charged with heresy or betrayal, but with desertion.
- His departure stemmed from preference for comfort, not open rebellion.
- A warning that quiet compromise can still ruin faithfulness.

ALEXANDER THE COPPERSMITH: THE ACTIVE OPPONENT

Key Reference: 2 Timothy 4:14–15

- Paul warns, “Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil.”
- Possibly the same as in Acts 19:33 or 1 Timothy 1:20, though uncertain.
- Actively harmed Paul’s ministry, not just through departure but resistance.
- Paul adds, “Of whom be thou ware also,” recognizing the threat to others.
- A reminder that opponents often follow faithful leaders and attack their followers.

DEMETRIUS THE SILVERSMITH: THE PROFIT-DRIVEN INSTIGATOR

Key Reference: Acts 19:24–27

- A craftsman who profited from making shrines to Diana.
- Stirred up a riot against Paul, motivated by financial loss, not theological zeal.
- Said, “By this craft we have our wealth” (Acts 19:25).
- Illustrates how economic interests often oppose gospel truth.
- His actions cloaked greed in religious concern—worldly interests dressed as piety.

HYMENAEOUS AND PHILETUS: PARTNERS IN DOCTRINAL ERROR

Key References: 1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 2:17–18

- Hymenaeus delivered unto Satan by Paul to learn not to blaspheme (1 Timothy 1:20).
- Later, both Hymenaeus and Philetus accused of teaching the resurrection “is past already.”
- Their teaching overthrew the faith of some, creating spiritual damage.
- Paul links them to “shipwrecked faith” and labels their doctrine a spreading “canker.”
- Demonstrates that:
 - False teaching destabilizes the church.
 - Agreement with error is enough to cause lasting harm.
- Their doctrine likely spiritualized the kingdom and resurrection—a view echoed in much of church history.

- Modern forms of this error appear in present-day teachings of a spiritualized or present kingdom.

DIOTREPHESES: THE POWER-HUNGRY DIVIDER

Key Reference: 3 John 9–10

- Described as one “who loveth to have the preeminence.”
- Rejected apostolic instruction and authority.
- Slandered faithful believers and excommunicated them from the assembly.
- Pride led him to elevate himself above Scripture and godly leadership.
- Shows how ambition for control can blind a man to the truth.
- Warns against the misuse of church authority as a platform for ego.

SIMON MAGUS: THE SPIRITUAL CONSUMER

Key Reference: Acts 8:9–24

- Believed and was baptized under Philip’s preaching.
- Later tried to purchase the power to give the Holy Ghost.
- Peter’s rebuke: “Thy money perish with thee” (Acts 8:20).
- His belief, whether genuine or not, was overshadowed by desire for control.
- This took place before the dispensation of grace—so belief cannot be judged by today’s standards.
- Nevertheless, Simon’s lust for miraculous authority shows how quickly spiritual interest can be hijacked by carnal ambition.

ELYMAS THE SORCERER (BAR-JESUS): THE DECEIVER

Key Reference: Acts 13:6–11

- Jewish false prophet who resisted Paul’s gospel before a Roman proconsul.
- Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, called him a “child of the devil” and “enemy of all righteousness” (Acts 13:10).
- Elymas was struck blind as a sign of divine judgment.
- Actively tried to turn others away from faith, not merely disbelieving himself.
- His story underscores the seriousness of opposing truth and misleading others.

COMMON THREADS

- **All rejected truth, but not all in the same way:**
 - Demas quietly walked away.
 - Hymenaeus and Philetus distorted doctrine.
 - Simon and Diotrephes sought power and control.
- **Pride is a recurring theme:**
 - Diotrephes loved preeminence.
 - Simon sought supernatural status.
 - Demetrius feared the loss of influence and income.
- **Their choices caused harm:**
 - They disrupted churches, discouraged saints, and in some cases, led others into false belief.
 - These are not harmless or irrelevant footnotes.
- **Unfaithfulness often looks respectable:**

- Not all were loud rebels—some were subtle, calculated, or socially acceptable.
- Yet each chose ambition, error, or comfort over faithfulness.

ALL IN ASIA

Key Reference: 2 Timothy 1:15

- Paul mourns: “All they which are in Asia be turned away from me...”
- Not just individuals, but entire assemblies departed from Paul.
- This was a departure from the **distinctive Pauline truth** given for the Body of Christ.
- Paul’s gospel was:
 - Not a continuation of Peter’s message.
 - A separate revelation based on the mystery hidden since the world began (Ephesians 3:8–9).
- Abandoning Paul meant:
 - Blurring lines between law and grace.
 - Collapsing the distinction between Israel and the Body.
 - Merging prophecy with mystery.

Consequences:

- Church history veered back into law-based systems and covenant confusion.
- Churches adopted Jewish ordinances and kingdom promises not intended for the Body.
- The result: A hybrid theology neither fully Jewish nor fully Pauline.

The Turning Point:

- Asia’s abandonment of Paul was not a footnote—it was the beginning of a long drift.
- Nearly all of church history has followed this path, building upon systems foreign to Paul’s gospel.
- From early councils to modern traditions, a Pauline-free Christianity has dominated the scene.
- **To return to New Testament Christianity:**
 - One must return not to Pentecost, Rome, or the Reformers.
 - But to **Paul**, the one apostle sent from heaven with the gospel of grace.