



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

OPPONENTS OF GOD - 2 TIMOTHY 3:8-9

WYOMING

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It is sad that even within the visible church itself, there are those in positions of leadership as ministers who are zealous in promoting a counterfeit faith. The visible church will always be a mixed company of true and false confessors. There will always be those guilty of hypocrisy and external religiosity who twist and distort the Word of God for their own end.¹ Churches with little Biblical content and weak teaching can so easily fall into this error and people who attend these churches are easy targets for false teachers because they don't know what they believe. How can we keep from falling and being deceived? 2 Peter 3:17-18 offers these words after warnings about false teachers, "You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

I. OPPONENTS OF GOD- 2 TIMOTHY 3:8-9

(1) "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. (2) Men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unboly, (3) unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, (4) treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God: (5) holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these. (6) For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, (7) always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (8) And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these also opposed the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected as regards the faith. (9) But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, as also that of those came to be." 2 Timothy 3:1-9

In Matthew 24:24 Jesus Himself says this about the end times: "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible even the elect." Not all signs and wonders are from God and people are being deceived as a result. It must be clear that false Christ's and false prophets will arise in the last days showing great signs and wonders that would mislead even the elect if that were possible. We cannot be deceived. Here in 2 Timothy 3:8-9 Paul draws a comparison between two false leaders in Moses' day who could even do miracles that appeared to be the same as Moses, yet were revealed as counterfeit in time. These leaders and imposters in the church must be clearly understood for the opponents of God and imposters that they are.

A. "JUST AS JANNES AND JAMBRES OPPOSED MOSES..." - 2 TIMOTHY 3:8A

Who are Jannes and Jambres? They were not mentioned by name in the Old Testament, but have been found in other Jewish writings

and literature. These were the names given to the court magicians of Pharaoh who opposed Moses and Aaron when Moses was leading the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. You might remember that at first they could match the miracles of Moses and Aaron, but in the end they were defeated and discredited.² You can read about it in Exodus 7:11-8:19. Eventually Aaron threw down his rod and it became a snake but when these two Egyptians sorcerers cast their rods down they also became snakes and were consumed by Aaron's. Just as these two opposed Moses, false teachers were opposing Paul and Timothy and by extension, also oppose those who proclaim God's Word today. This example given by Paul to Timothy reminds us that false teachers, by means of their counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders oppose God and the truth of His gospel.³ So too they will oppose all true believers who possess a genuine faith and confession, with the only true Biblical message.

B. "SO THESE MEN OPPOSED THE TRUTH"- 2 TIMOTHY 3:8B

Not only do these false teachers oppose Moses, but they oppose the truth of God. Paul keeps coming back to truth in this letter. This is a battle for the truth...it's a truth war. People have always been prone to every wind of doctrine, away from the truth. That's why Paul began this letter in 2 Timothy 1:13-14 with this imperative, "Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you." We are to guard the treasure, the gospel which is the truth and then pass this truth on (2 Timothy 2:2) to others. We need an army of good soldiers who will by God's grace, preach and teach the Word with faithfulness because eternity is at stake for the souls of many!⁴

Christians will never lack opponents, even in the church. There will always be those who have a twisted idea about the faith and those who want to win others to their erroneous ideas.⁵ Make no mistake, these false teachers aren't just misguided in their teaching, they are actively opposing and distorting God's truth. They are dangerous.

C. "MEN OF DEPRAVED MIND"- 2 TIMOTHY 3:8C

The very organ we were given to perceive truth and understand spiritual realities, Paul says has become thoroughly and permanently corrupted.

"depraved" Greek *"katepharmenoi"* perfect tense indicating an established, unalterable condition; perverted, debase, corrupted.

BIBLE STUDIES

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OPPONENTS OF GOD - 2 TIMOTHY 3:8-9

“And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these also opposed the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected as regards the faith. But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, as also that of those came to be.”

The picture is of utter moral depravity that leads to corrupt lives and depraved actions of all kinds. It is a state of corruption consistent with the description in Romans 1:28-32, having refused the true gospel and being given over to their depravity.

D. “REJECTED AS REGARDS TO THE FAITH”- 2 TIMOTHY 3:8D

Their opposition to the truth reveals their rejection of the faith they claim to possess and thus they are rejected by God. They have a counterfeit faith with teaching that’s false and worthless.

“*rejected*” Greek “*adokimos*” refers to reprobate silver or gold, tried and found wanting, condemned as worthless, unfit, disqualified, utterly rejected, couldn’t pass the test of purity.

This is a refining term used of a silversmith who would carefully heat metals such as silver or gold, causing the impurities to be released. The process would be repeated until the ore would pass the test of purity. When the silversmith looked into his melting pot and saw his reflection clearly in the ore, then he knew it was refined silver and accepted as pure. But sometimes the metal would not release the dross or impurities after much heating and so the silversmith would have to set that aside as impure, disapproved, condemned as worthless, and disqualified. Paul uses this word to describe these false teachers. It is also used in other places such as in 2 Corinthians 13:5-7 where he instructs those in the church to test themselves to see if they are of the household of faith...to see if they “*fail the test*.” To “*fail the test*” is the same word used here as “*adokimos*”. So these false teachers have been tried by God and found wanting, lacking as to their faith. They have refused the light of truth found in the gospel to which they deny and yet claim to know. They have been tested like metals and shown to be worthless, useless. In regards to the faith, they are disqualified.

E. “BUT THEY WILL NOT MAKE FURTHER PROGRESS”- 2 TIMOTHY 3:9A

Paul offers this encouragement to Timothy, that the days of false teachers were numbered. They may flourish for a time but not forever. Even though their work appears to be overwhelming, God is sovereign and in control. This is an assurance to Paul and Timothy that in spite of the turmoil and damage cause by these false teachers, just as Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, the gates of hell will not over power His church. The threat they pose will never be fatal to the gospel. They are not more powerful than God. Jesus warned in Mark 13:22 that false Christ’s and false prophets would come until He returns. But God has a boundary on the work of Satan, not only in

the church, but in the world. Satan is on a divine tether that he can neither break nor lengthen.⁶

F. “FOR THEIR FOLLY WILL BE OBVIOUS TO ALL”- 2 TIMOTHY 3:9B

Eventually the truth will expose these false teachers and imposters of Christianity for the lies and deception they propagate. One of the best tests for such misrepresentation is Matthew 7:16-20. Essentially, we will know them by their fruit. And maybe the defeat of error depends not just on the skill in controversy, but the demonstration in a life of the more excellent way.⁷ And just as the counterfeit charms of the false teachers, Jannes and Jambres were eventually exposed before Pharaoh in Moses day, so the success of the present teachers will be limited and exposed as their “*folly*” become obvious to all. “*Folly*” refers to senselessness, foolishness and may be the best way to describe their ungodly conduct of self-love. Their folly is a result of their wickedness. And even if their falsehood becomes fashionable with their sly and slippery methods and error may spread and be popular for a time, in the end it is bound to be exposed as evident throughout church history. God preserves His truth.

And so Paul calls on all believers to avoid these self-centered deceivers and their practices with their misdirected loves and a religion devoid of Christ’s power and truth. We live in dangerous times. We must understand that the church is in spiritual warfare that will intensify till Christ returns. We must be doctrinally discerning, testing each message against God’s Word as the Bereans did in Acts 17:11. We must be pure and holy vessels set apart for the Lord’s use. (2 Timothy 2:21) We must be patient in difficult times, persevere and earnestly contend for the faith for the sake of the lost.⁸ (Jude 3) We must remain faithful, courageously teach God’s truth in spite of opposition and have as our ambition to please God for He alone must be the true north of our lives! (2 Corinthians 5:9)

¹Williams, Peter, *Opening Up 2 Timothy*. One Day Publications: Ryelands Road, Leominster, New Zealand, 2007. Pg. 70-71.

²Barclay, William, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky, 1956, revised 1975 and 2003. Pg.218.

³Platt, David; Akin, Daniel L.; Merida, Tony, *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary: Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*. B&H Publishing Group: Nashville, Tennessee, 2013. Pg. 189.

⁴Platt, David; Akin, Daniel L.; Merida, Tony, *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary: Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*. B&H Publishing Group: Nashville, Tennessee, 2013. Pg. 189.

⁵Barclay, William, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky, 1956, revised 1975 and 2003. Pg.219.

⁶MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.122.

⁷Barclay, William, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky, 1956, revised 1975 and 2003. Pg.219.

⁸MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.122.