

2 Timothy 3:1-9

Instructions to Timothy
Guiding, Growing, Guarding!



The Disrupters!

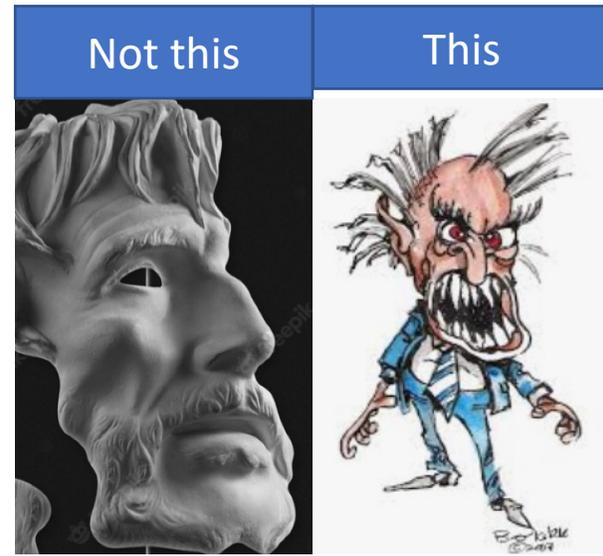


Paul refers to Jannes and Jambres in today's text. Who were these bad boys?! There is no other reference in scripture that names these guys. Yet, Paul refers to them as if his readers, or at least some of them, know who he is referring to, and what they did! Well, it turns out Paul, being the consummate Jew that he was, had been taught the various Midrashim, or ancient commentaries on the Torah, the first five books of the Bible. The first 5, are the books that Moses was supposed to have written exclusively. This was compiled from the teachings of famous rabbis throughout Old Testament times. At the time of Jesus, these teachings were memorized by Jewish boys, just as their fathers and grandfathers before them had memorized them! So it was reverently passed on from generation to generation in this way. So, it was some of the ancient Midrashim (these oral commentaries) that named the magician/ priests in the court of Pharaoh, that Ex. 7 mentions - these men, **Jannes and Jambres**. It claims that these two men duplicated for the first of the signs and wonders that the 10 plagues of Egypt began with – 1) the staffs that turned into snakes, 2) the water that turned to blood, 3) and, somehow, even the frogs (certainly by slight of hand). So they had the skillful power of a magician's slight of hand, or to somehow harness the power of Satan! These two names also appear in Talmud – another set of rabbinical commentaries - where it claims that these men left Egypt with Israel, and a little later down the road, were responsible for the formation of the golden calf and Israel's rebellion while Moses was up on Mount Sinai meeting with God (**Ex. 32**). If this is true, somehow they survived God's judgment upon Israel for that incident. Jannes and Jambres show up again in another Mishnah as the two servants mentioned in **Numbers 22:22**, servants of the troublesome false prophet, Balam. They supposedly continued to stir unrest and rebellion in Israel until the time of Phinehas in **Numbers 25** when the camp was a purged of rebels. Again, it is unlikely that this was all true, because God's judgments seemed to have pinpointed the leaders of the various rebellions in Israel's early history for summary judgment! These identifications were also made 100s of years after the fact, and if true, these two instigators would surely have been targeted by God's inescapable wrath! But whether this oral tradition was accurate or not, Paul and his Jewish compatriots in the early church, would have know these stories! Paul is using this folklore, equating what these men did to Israel, to that mischief and damage done by these nameless false teachers to the early church. These are men were without character. They were pleased to be used to further Satan's destructive agenda in the church – anything to slow the progress of God's Kingdom!



Paul says it is about sex for many of the false teachers and trouble-makers. They impressed women somehow. Why is it that some women are attracted to bad boys? *I was told once time by a guy that traveled with a Christian celebrity in the 60s, 70s, and 80s – a man with a huge singing voice, but whose face had been horribly disfigured by a burn accident. And yet this man could pick a woman out of the crowd to go home with virtually every engagement! He carried on like this, His ongoing sin undiscovered, for 30 years! How is it that some men have such unerring predatory instincts like this, and some women are so weak-willed as to be easily victimized by these types?! It's a head scratcher, but human nature no longer surprises me.

Paul says that these women are eager to learn, but are easily impressed with the pseudo-wisdom of the false teachers. But when you are open to bad theology, you have created within yourself a faulty truth filter. Where a strand of truth should catching on, clinging, remaining in place, there are strands of bad theology already there making sure the good theology never gets a foothold! If bad theology simply gets there first, there is no room for good theology! That's just the way this works! The truth will hit a wall of resistance, **splat**, and slide down and away, unable to gain access because truth and falsehood necessarily will always cancel each other out! So these women were interested in learning, but did not possess the discernment or wisdom to figure out what was truth and what was not! That left them open to error. So these guys would impress the ladies with their sharp minds and glib tongues, and then woo them with flattery, or promises, or with clever witticisms, and the women would fall into the arms of these men – and those men would prove themselves once again to be men without conscience or fear of God, and the women would be ruined and made useless to God – which was Satan's underlying agenda in the first place! So Paul is calling these guys out as false teachers and false prophets, picturing them in the first verse of this chapter as *anti-Christ*, and challenging Timothy and the church leadership in Ephesus to follow up on seeing these guys for what they were, stopping them, and chasing them off before they can do more damage!



Paul says, in vs. 8, that people such as these false prophets, false teachers, false Christians, are “**rejected**” by God! I mean, there are those that are “**accepted in the the Beloved**”, “**chosen in Christ**” for accomplishing a God-given task, and “**elect in Christ**” to be a part of a people who by faith, as a group, are set aside for God, **saved** for God and **accepted, chosen, elected, and preserved/secured** through Jesus Christ! But these false Christians, wolves in sheep’s clothing, weeds among the wheat, goats among the sheep - they are unsaved, rejected, **un-chosen, un-elect, and un-secured!** Understand that this is not God’s doing! They have done this to themselves! **They chose** this path by their disrespect for God! *”Well”, you say, “**what about “Esau have I hated**” that everyone seems to know from Rom. 9, or Pharaoh who chosen by God for judgment! First of all God’s rejection of them was not arbitrary or random. Esau disrespected God and disrespected his own chosen-ness as the eldest son and rightful possessor of Abraham’s birthright and Abraham’s covenant with God. I mean, **He had sold his birthright for a bowl of soup!** So God rejected him and by hook or by crook (mostly crook), Esau’s birthright was gained by his younger twin, who actually wanted it! The rejection of Esau was based upon his cavalier attitude and arrogant behavior! His rejection of Pharaoh was based upon the fact that Pharaoh was a mass murderer of God’s people - forcing Jewish mothers to kill their own male babies! Can you even imagine such cruelty and inhumanity?! So, yes, Pharaoh was rejected – earmarked for God’s wrath and judgment, and rightly so! But it was not an arbitrary decision by God, but a wise judgment based upon Pharaoh’s dark and excessively cruel heart, and heartless treatment of God’s people!



Likewise, the rejection of these false teachers was based upon their cavalier, no-fear-of-God, behavior in the church. They opposed the apostles at every opportunity, and were a thorn in the flesh of the churches making progress in accomplishing the will and purposes of God. They were instead being submerged in controversy and scandal, created by these trouble-makers. So, says Paul, they are rejected!

“Here’s the thing,” says Paul in **vs. 9**, these guys “**will not get very far**”. What do you think he means by that? Well, he means that although they were having some success at presenting themselves as an alternative to apostolic teaching, eventually people would figure them out, and they would go from on top of the heap to the bottom! When people finally saw behind their act, they would be disgraced, and their fall from favor would be precipitous! It’s like they live for right now and cannot see their impending downfall. We’ve more recently had a number of famous Christian writers and pastors of mega-churches failing dismally when how they have been conducting themselves behind the scenes finally is revealed! How is it revealed? How else? It is when their victims begin to come forward and tell their stories of abuse and misuse at the hands of these monstrous, two-faced men or women! And, true to form, they will somehow blame everyone else except themselves! This only adds to the realization by the people in the church as to what they really are! Even with being well-versed in human nature, I am shocked, though, how gullible people can be! Gullibility allows this kind of thing to continue for many long years when it should have been uncovered and stopped at the beginning!



Being offer this



Seeing it for what it is!

Here’s the thing. People are hesitant to do or say anything because they have seen others confront their leaders and be wrong. They perceive that people attacked their leader(s) because they were filled with bitterness and anger. All they had on the guy, basically, was that they had had a disagreement and they didn’t get their way, or they imagined they had been disrespected, and so on. It was personal! And accusations are tossed about, and a gossip campaign gets started and factions are formed as people take one side or the other, and churches are destroyed, and Satan wins! *It is something like a dirty, rotten, lying, slanderous, political campaigns on TV these days – and who wants to get involved with something like that! You feel like you have just been slimed! So, in a church, good people fail to take initiative, and nothing is confronted or corrected - and the destruction persists! Again, it is the victims that finally get the ball rolling, and out they march, one by one, forming a line of them – and a clear pattern emerges. I guess that is how it has to be unless the victim-izers are caught in the act! In **vs. 10**, Paul says, “*look at my resume! You know me, and you know my history, and you know that I am not one of them*”. How else can you know a person than by their consistent track record over years? Even then it is not a sure thing, but it is the best we can do, since we are not God and do not have His insight!