

## 2 Timothy

### I. Introduction

- A. **2 Timothy 3:5b-9** . . . Avoid such men as these (**vs 2-5**). [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] Just as Jannes (*JAN eez*) and Jambres (*JAM breez*) opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. [9] But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes's and Jambres's folly was also.
- B. This is an intriguing portion of scripture, first of all because the average Bible reader is likely to treat it as information that is not very useful.
1. A second reason this is an intriguing portion of scripture, is the part about women is easily misconstrued or misused.
    - a. It is easily **misconstrued** in a culture where any talk like this about women is seen as disparaging, offensive, and unacceptable.
    - b. But it can also be **misconstrued** when read from a one-sided, all-or-nothing perspective that ignores the immediate context and other parts of God's word that help us keep the intended perspective of what is being said here.
    - c. It is easily **misused** by men who see themselves as superior to women – and especially in relation to a woman's emotional stability and mental abilities.
  2. A third reason this is an intriguing portion of scripture is that there are no other Bible references to Jannes and Jambres – which makes it difficult for the average Bible reader to know who they are, how they opposed Moses, and how we are to recognize their folly.
- C. However, if we will look past what we cannot easily understand, we will find two reasonably clear messages in these four verses.
1. **First**, there will be self-seeking men in the church who – whether self-appointed or church-appointed – will use their charisma, communication skills, and position to take advantage of whomever they can in order to build a following, feed their ego, and gain power, influence, and financial profit. Avoid these kinds of people.
  2. **Second**, there are women whose immaturity and naivety, **and** whose sense of need for affirmation, recognition, and for being treated as being just as capable as men is so strong that it will blind

them to their susceptibility to being manipulated by leaders and teachers whose intent is to take advantage of women like this for their own selfish interests.

#### D. Prayer

## II. Self-appointed leaders seeking prestige, power and profit; Emotionally needy women seeking recognition and empowerment

A. [6] For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins . . . [8b] **these men**...oppose the truth, [have a] depraved mind, [and are] rejected in regard to the faith. [9] But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all.

1. **2 Timothy 3** begins with a warning about the last days, followed by a list of ungodly character traits that will be found within the church during those days.
  - a. Among those within the church who fit the list in **vs 2-4**, there will be **some**, not all, but some who will use their charismatic personality, communication skills, and manipulative abilities to gain a following.
  - b. And like every good salesman, their greatest success will be among those who are self-centered and emotionally needy – because people like that are very susceptible to manipulation.
2. However, though **vs 1** indicates **vs 2-9** are about the last days, these kinds of charismatic manipulators are already at work within the church – and have been since Paul’s day.
  - a. We know they have been active since Paul’s day because of **Titus 1:10-12**, “For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, [11] who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain.”
  - b. Jude affirmed this in his letter: “For certain persons **have** (*already*) crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (**Jude 4**).
  - c. And Peter warned his readers that this kind of problem in the church was imminent: **2 Peter 2:1-3**, “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as **there will also be** false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing

swift destruction upon themselves. [2] Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; [3] and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.”

- d. What will be a worse problem in the last days, and what was a problem in Paul’s day, is a serious problem in the church today. Sadly, these self-serving leaders and teachers are able to use their charismatic personalities, clever and persuasive forms of communication, and appeals to people’s self-interest to gain a following because there are so many spiritually immature, naive, and emotionally needy Christians.
3. Yet in spite of their apparent success, the Bible paints these kinds of leaders and teachers as scoundrels who take advantage of the emotionally needy and spiritually weak, who openly oppose the truth, and whose thinking is depraved.
  - a. As **Titus 1:15b-16** says, “Both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.”
  - b. And to quote other portions of God’s word, these kinds of leaders and teachers (1) speak false visions, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds; (2) they fill you with false hopes (**Jer. 14:14; 23:16**); (3) they are like savage wolves (**Acts 20:29**) who come in sheep’s clothing (**Matt 7:15**); (4) they are empty talkers, deceivers (**Tit 1:10**), false apostles, and deceitful workers who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ (**2 Cor 11:13**).
  - c. The reality is, for all the good they seem to do, these kinds of religious charlatans are not seeking the good of those to whom they are ministering, they are seeking their own good. They are not serving those they attract to their ministry and teaching, they are serving themselves.
4. The point is, regardless of how popular these kinds of pastors, Bible Study leaders, elders, and other church leaders are, and regardless of how spiritual they sound, they are serving themselves, not God, and their intentions are evil, not good.
5. Therefore, to protect our own spiritual health and the health of the believers we gather with, we must stay away from them.
  - a. In order to stay away from them, we must discern the difference between godly leaders and ungodly, self-serving leaders.

- b. To discern the difference between godly leaders and ungodly, self-serving leaders, we must be godly enough ourselves to know the difference, **or** we must depend on someone who can discern the difference to make clear to us who is worthy to be listened to and followed, and who we should turn away from.
      - 6. **Vs 9** goes on to say, “Their folly will be obvious to all.”
        - a. Their folly is in ignoring the fact that judgement is coming. And though they may be able to rise above the consequences of their sinful behavior in this life, they won’t escape the consequences in the next.
        - b. May we not be so foolish to think we can go against God, and get away with it.
- B. [8] Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses.
- 1. Who are Jannes and Jambres? If the Protestant Bible is our only resource, then we can only guess at who they are. Even the Apocryphal books in the Catholic Bible don’t tell us.
  - 2. However, according to non-biblical writings, it appears Paul is drawing on the oral and literary traditions of historical Judaism.
    - a. The names Jannes and Jambres came to represent the Egyptian magicians who used magic tricks to oppose Moses and his displays of divine power in bringing about the ten plagues – though the Egyptian magicians could only duplicate the first two plagues.
    - b. The use of these names to represent the Egyptian magicians first appears in what is called the *Damascus Document A* (vs 18): “For formerly Moses and Aaron arose by the hand of the Prince of Lights (*God*); but Belial (*devil*) raised up Jannes and his brother, in his cunning, when Israel was saved for the first time.”
    - c. Subsequent to that reference, there are numerous references to Jannes and Jambres found in Jewish, early Christian, and secular Latin and Greek literature.
  - 3. It appears from the context in **2 Timothy 3**, that the reference to these two names is intended to make the point that the charismatic manipulators operating in Christian circles are just as committed to opposing God’s will, and just as empowered by the devil, as the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses.
- C. [9] But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes's and Jambres's folly was also.

1. Self-serving pastors, elders, leaders, and teachers may make inroads into individual churches, or even the larger Christian community, but they will eventually be exposed (1) by the inability of their message to transform sinners into godly Christians, and (2) by the ungodliness of their own lives.
    - a. This is supported by the words of Jesus found in **Matthew 7:20**, “You will know them by their fruits,” that is, the fruit of their lives and the lives of their followers.
    - b. Yet this is also supported by church history, including church history over the past ten years.
  2. The reality is, character determines behavior. Who we are – that is, what we believe, what we value, what we fear, and who we live to please – who we are is revealed in what we do. We may be able to act contrary to our true character at times, but never consistently. Who we are will eventually come out, and those who are discerning will see through our facade, and see us for who we are.
  3. Besides, selfishness naturally leads to self-destructive, relationship-destructive, and spiritually-destructive choices and behaviors.
  4. Therefore, self-serving church leaders may be able to hide their selfish intentions for a time, but they cannot hide them forever. In time, the truth will come out and the self-serving teachers and their false teaching will be exposed for what it is.
  5. However, until that day, let us pray and seek to be wise enough and spiritually minded enough to see the true character of those who, in some form or another, want to have influence in our lives.
- D. [6b] 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.
1. This statement, whether standing on its own or grouped with other biblical statements about women – such as wives submitting to their husbands, covering their heads, and remaining silent in church – is seen by some as an example of a male-dominated religion that holds women down, treats them as second-class citizens, and denies them the opportunity to show they are strong, capable, intelligent, and spiritually sound individuals who can bring to and do for the church whatever men can do.
  2. However, neither the context nor the wording supports the idea that this portion of scripture is presenting a negative view of women that can be generally applied to all women.

3. This portion of scripture is pointing to the kind of woman who, due to her own emotional, relational, moral, and spiritual weaknesses, is susceptible to being conned, manipulated, or used by self-serving men seeking to gratify their own desires.
4. The sad reality is, recent history and current studies show that there are women who fit into this category – just like there are men who are evil enough to take advantage of them.
  - a. According to sociological and psychological studies, women are more susceptible than men to falling under the control of charismatic leaders seeking to exploit them. According to research, upwards to 70 per cent of cult members are women.
  - b. For example, there are significantly more women than men in cults like Scientology, David Koresh's Branch Davidians, and Warren Jeff's Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints.
  - c. Women, along with their children, made up well over half the population in Reverend Jim Jones' Peoples Temple – which was made infamous for leading its members to mass suicide via poisoned Cool Aid.
5. The point is, Paul is not promoting a derogatory view of women. He is warning the church that there are women who are susceptible to manipulation, and there are men who, in their greed, hunger for power, and desire for fame, will take advantage of them.
  - a. In my opinion, the women in this category are to be pitied, dealt with compassionately, and helped, if possible.
  - b. And according to God's word, the men who take advantage of women like this are to be confronted and exhorted to change their ways. And if they don't change, they are to be avoided.

### III. Conclusion

- A. The last days with their difficult times, are coming. And part of the reason these difficult times are coming is because of wayward, self-serving, spiritually immature Christians.
- B. Therefore, may we heed the warnings of what is to come. May we flee from the ways and influences of the world, the devil, and our old nature. And may we, in a planned and purposeful way, pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace – here and now– so that when the difficult times come, we are prepared to stand with and for God, rather than join those who have turned against Him and the truth of His word.