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W. O. Vaught

Ouachita Baptist University

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WHY DO CHRISTIANS FACE SEVERE OPPOSITION IN THE
CHRISTIAN LIFE?

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS
NUMBER 122
2 TIMOTHY 3:8-12

Dr. W. O. Vaught, Jr.
Immanuel Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

2 TIMOTHY 3:8-12 "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was. But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

In this study we will digress from the text given in Acts and study this passage in 2 Timothy. Why did Paul face such severe opposition? Why do all Christians, sooner or later, face severe opposition as they attempt to live for Christ? Those who attempt to orient to the grace of God are always put under pressure.

Look for a moment at the soul. The soul has lungs for the inhale and exhale of doctrine. Many passages of Scripture bring out this truth. Psalm 42:1 speaks about the soul "panting." With your lungs you inhale for the first time when you are born physically. With the lungs of the soul you inhale for the first time when you are born spiritually.

Each person is born with body, soul and an old sin nature. The old sin nature had blotted out the human spirit. In conversion the Holy Spirit must double for the human spirit and thereby push gospel information into the mentality. This is the inhale, and the first exhale of the soul is belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. For a Christian to grow Bible doctrine must be taken into the soul, but if one builds up scar tissue on the bank or lung of the soul then doctrine will not pass into the soul. Instead of Bible doctrine being deposited into the soul, a vacuum is created and into this vacuum is sucked religion. This vacuum is so designed that only false doctrine can be taken in and this produces pseudo-spirituality. This makes it impossible for one to respond to the love of God. Even though God loves with a perfect love, when one's soul is clogged with scar tissue he is incapable of any response to God's love.

Knowing Bible Doctrine Of Primary Importance

The primary reason why knowledge of Bible doctrine is so important is that such knowledge makes it possible for us to respond to God's love. This produces right relationships with God and with people and thereby we produce divine good. No one can produce divine good unless he constantly takes in Bible doctrine. When one fails to take in Bible doctrine, he invariably accepts some phony system of taboos or ecstasies or some anti-biblical program that produces human good. This causes darkness and religion in the soul and destroys any capacity to love God. Invariably false and superficial substitutes from tongues to ecstasies and all kinds of emotional decisions crowd into the soul and thereby replace the truth of the Word of God. Therefore with darkness in the soul you suck in religion and legalism and this even leads you to persecute grace oriented believers. Now this is what happens to the believer when he refuses to take doctrine into his soul.

Now let's look for a moment at what happens to the unbeliever. When the unbeliever rejects Christ, he builds up scar tissue on the soul and he becomes antagonistic, an opposer, and a persecutor. Pharaoh in Egypt is a perfect illustration of this truth. When he refused to accept Christ he became a persecutor of the Jews. As Paul says in Galatians, "The son of the bond woman always persecutes the son of the free woman."

In our passage under study, we have two of the greatest grace believers of all times--namely, Moses and Paul. Moses was the greatest teacher of doctrine in the Old Testament and Paul was the greatest teacher of doctrine in the New Testament. Based on the content of their messages, these two men were the greatest of all, all except the Lord Jesus Christ. Moses and Paul were grace oriented. Both of these men were constantly subjected to persecution. Religion persecuted them all along, for religion hates the truth. (Keep in mind here our definition of religion--Religion is man seeking God through his human efforts.)

2 TIMOTHY 3:8 "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." In this verse we read that Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses. They were religious magicians in the court of Pharaoh. Their plan was to follow and persecute, follow and intimidate, follow and ridicule. Back in 2 Timothy 1:15 the two who opposed Paul were mentioned, Phygellus and Hermogenes, and both of them were believers. So here are two religious unbelievers who opposed Moses, and two religious believers who opposed Paul.

2 TIMOTHY 3:7 "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Back here in verse 7 we have a perfect picture of religion. Ever receiving instruction but never able to learn. Religious types are always filled up with scar tissue on the banks of the soul and therefore doctrine cannot flow in. Negative attitude toward doctrine creates a vacuum and into that vacuum is drawn religion and legalism and mental attitude sins. Religion has always been a device which Satan has used to oppose Bible doctrine. So Paul and Moses are the two believers here used to illustrate this truth.

The word "Now" at the beginning of verse 8 is a transitional particle and means that this verse is connected with what has gone before.

Back in verse 6 we read, "And lead captive silly women laden with sin." Now "silly women" is neuter gender and it is not referring to feminine gender. It is referring to any preacher or any teacher who rejects Bible doctrine and they slip into the church and substitute their teaching and their opinion for Bible truth. Jannes and Jambres are used here as an illustration of this type of person. They were two Egyptian magicians. They are described in Exodus 7 and 8, though their names are not given. Look for a moment at how false teaching and false doctrine is classified in the Bible.

1. A false gospel--2 Cor. 11:3-4
2. The doctrine of religion, or doctrine of demons. 1 Timothy 1:4
3. False ministers. 2 Cor. 11:13-14
4. The Devil's communion table. 1 Cor. 10:20-21
(You can't drink the Lord's cup and the Devil's cup at the same time.)
5. Righteousness connected with religion. Matthew 19
6. A system of pseudo-spirituality. Galatians 3:2-3
7. False power in religion. 2 Thess. 2:8-10
8. The super type God in religion. 2 Cor. 2:3-4

So Jannes and Jambres were "anthistemi," they were opposed to Moses. They stood against Moses. Religion always opposed grace. This is where religion and legalism always get started. When one become apathetic and loses interest in Bible doctrine, they become "metaiotes," a vacuum is produced in the soul. In your Bible it is translated "Vanity." When you shut down the breathing of the soul and the intake of doctrine, then there is no exhale toward God. Immediately you begin to suck into your soul all the things that oppose grace and Christ and God and Bible doctrine. You have to breathe physically to live physically, and you have to breathe in doctrine in order to live spiritually.

NEITHER YOUR BUSINESS OR YOUR SOCIAL LIFE OR YOUR RECREATIONAL LIFE IS HALF AS IMPORTANT AS THE INTAKE OF DOCTRINE INTO THE SOUL.

Now believe it or not, I have a way of taking the blood pressure and the pulse of the members of this church, and I can tell when people turn down Bible doctrine. You let in religion and legalism and you turn down the grace of God. The manifestation of this is scar tissue on the soul which results in mental attitude sins. When you turn away from the grace of God you turn away from those who are grace oriented. Mental attitude sins mean that your soul is in darkness and scar tissue is building up. The only thing that can change your direction is a crash program of Bible doctrine. Ephesians 4:17-21 is the great passage on scar tissue in the soul and this is the greatest problem facing you as an individual and the greatest problem facing Immanuel Church. It is so easy to become lethargic and sluggish toward Bible truth. You have to inhale it in order to be able to exhale it. You can't give it out unless you take it in. You can't live by it unless you have it in your mind. The pastor-teacher must take the doctrine out of the Word and plant it in your mind. You get this by coming to Bible class and by taking notes and by listening. You can talk about loving Jesus and helping people all you want to, but you can't do it unless you take in Bible truth into the soul. This comes from learning Bible doctrine and there is no substitute.

We may be right now at a critical point in the life of this church. I call it a prosperity problem. We think we are getting along just fine, but far too many of us are not taking in any Bible doctrinal truth and as a result we have scar tissue on the soul. (So many are critical at this point and they say, "You are always taking in doctrine and never giving it out. You are a stagnant lake." Don't listen to that malarkey for one minute. That is nonsense.) You cannot give out love response to the Lord unless you take in doctrine. You can't respond to him unless you know his mind and the Bible is the mind of Christ. You hurt yourself when you are too busy to come and listen and learn. You are ruining your life by this neglect. Rebound gets you back in fellowship but it does not remove scar tissue. The only way you dissolve scar tissue on your soul is to learn Bible doctrine and for many it is a real hard road. The Jews could not go into the land at Kadesh Barnea after they spied out the land and they fell apart and cried all night. The next day they emotionally charged up the hill in their own strength and the enemy completely humiliated them and they came back down that hill and wandered around in the desert for 39 years and died there. They were kept out of that land for one reason--they had so much scar tissue on the soul they were incapable of doing anything great for the Lord. God had to wait a whole generation and get another group ready to go in and take that land.

So Jannes and Jambres resisted the teaching of Moses--and Phygelles and Hermogenes resisted the teaching of Paul. They were the two greatest communicators of all time, and yet they were opposed.

This verse says they were men of "A corrupt mind." This is "Kataphteiro." It means by the norm or standard of a corrupt mind they destroyed Bible doctrine in their souls. So these were men who had been destroyed in the mind. And it says reprobate "odokemos" and means worthless.

Now this phrase "Men having been corrupted and made worthless in their minds" can apply to believers or unbelievers. Judas is an illustration of such an unbeliever. He became incapable of taking in Bible truth and he ended up a suicide.

Let us get a correct translation of this verse--

"But in the same manner as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so also these themselves keep on resisting the truth, men having been corrupted in their minds, and have become worthless concerning the body of doctrine."

2 TIMOTHY 3:9 "But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was." "But they shall advance not one step farther." The word madness here is "anoia" and means psychosis. From this we get such words as paranoid or paranoia. He is simply saying that when you get scar tissue on the soul you become psycho.

2 TIMOTHY 3:10 "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience," Instead of the words "Thou hast fully known" the Greek says "But thou hast followed closely as a rule" then he mentioned seven things--

1. My doctrine. It is from "didaskalaia" and it means the public teaching of the Bible. You can take it or reject it.
2. Mode of instruction from "agoge" and means you have to be instructed in order to understand it.
3. The predetermined plan. This was God's purpose from eternity.
4. "The faith" and this is the proper name for God's doctrine.
5. Restraining yourself from wrong this produces a relaxed mental attitude.
6. A love which is relaxed.
7. The endurance.

So this verse really should read, "But you have followed my plan of public teaching, the mode of instruction I have used, the predetermined plan, the faith, the patient endurance of evil, mental attitude love, and the endurance."

2 TIMOTHY 3:11 "Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me." So Paul says here, "I bore up under them all." The only way to bare up under such difficulty is to inhale Bible doctrine in study and give it out in witnessing and teaching. Notice that Paul said, "The Lord snatched me out of a difficult situation."

2 TIMOTHY 3:12 "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." This simply means that all who have positive volition toward doctrine will have life in the soul and will be able to stand up under difficulties and persecution. Where do you stand in this regard?