

2 Timothy 3:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

Analysis

Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. Paul reaches into Exodus tradition to illustrate false teachers' rebellion. "Jannes and Jambres" (Iannēs kai Iambrēs, Ἰαννῆς καὶ Ἰαμβρῆς) aren't named in Exodus but Jewish tradition identified Pharaoh's magicians (Exodus 7:11, 22; 8:7) by these names. They "withstood Moses" (antestēsan Mōysei, ἀντέστησαν Μωϋσεῖ)—anthistēmi (ἀνθίστημι) means oppose, resist, stand against. They used counterfeit miracles to oppose God's true prophet.

"So do these also resist the truth" (houtōs kai houtoi anthistantai tē alētheia, οὕτως καὶ οὗτοι ἀνθίστανται τῇ ἀληθείᾳ). Present tense indicates ongoing opposition. False teachers, like Egyptian magicians, don't merely err innocently but actively resist revealed truth. They produce counterfeits—teaching that resembles Christianity but subtly contradicts it, miracles that seem supernatural but lack divine source (Matthew 24:24). Paul identifies their character: "men of corrupt minds" (anthrōpoi katephtharmenoi ton noun, ἄνθρωποι κατεφθαρμένοι τὸν νοῦν). Perfect passive participle—minds have been corrupted and remain corrupted. Nous (νοῦς) means mind, understanding, intellect—their thinking is fundamentally warped.

"Reprobate concerning the faith" (adokimoi peri tēn pistin, ἀδόκιμοι περὶ τὴν πίστιν). Adokimos (ἀδόκιμος) means failing the test, rejected, worthless—like

metal failing purity testing. Concerning "the faith" (tēn pistin, τὴν πίστιν, definite article indicates objective body of Christian doctrine), they have been tested and found counterfeit. They claim Christianity but are spiritually bankrupt imposters.

Historical Context

Jewish tradition elaborated on Pharaoh's magicians, naming them and describing their ultimate fate. They symbolized opposition to God through counterfeit spirituality. Early Christians saw parallels: false teachers performed signs and wonders but opposed truth (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10). The warning remained urgent: Satan's servants masquerade as servants of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). Discernment requires testing teaching against Scripture, not merely evaluating apparent success, charisma, or supernatural manifestations. Many will claim Christianity while corrupting its truth (Matthew 7:21-23).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How can you develop discernment to recognize counterfeit Christianity that resembles the real thing but subtly opposes truth?
2. What false teachers today 'resist the truth' through corrupt minds and reprobate faith, and how should you respond to them?
3. Are you testing teaching and teachers against Scripture or accepting messages based on charisma, apparent success, or supernatural claims?

Interlinear Text

ὃν τρόπον δὲ Ἰάννης καὶ Ἰαμβρῆς ἀνθίστανται

G3739 **as** **Now** **Jannes** **also** **Jambres** **do**
G5158 G1161 G2389 G2532 G2387 G436

Μωϋσεῖ οὕτως καὶ οὗτοι ἀνθίστανται τῇ ἀληθείᾳ

Moses **so** **also** **these** **do** G3588 **the truth**
G3475 G3779 G2532 G3778 G436 G225

ἄνθρωποι κατεφθαρμένοι τὸν νοῦν ἀδόκιμοι περὶ τὴν

men **of corrupt** G3588 **minds** **reprobate** **concerning** G3588
G444 G2704 G3563 G96 G4012

πίστιν·

the faith
G4102

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 2:20 (Parallel theme): Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

1 Timothy 6:5 (Truth): Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

Exodus 7:11 (Parallel theme): Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

Titus 1:16 (Parallel theme): They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

2 Peter 2:14 (Parallel theme): Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

1 John 4:1 (Faith): Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Ephesians 4:14 (Parallel theme): That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

2 Timothy 4:15 (Parallel theme): Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.

Romans 16:18 (Parallel theme): For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

1 Timothy 1:19 (Faith): Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: