

Jannes And Jambres

"And even as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also withstand the truth; men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be evident unto all men, as theirs also came to be" (2 Tim. 3:8f). Paul has spoken of grievous times to come upon God's people; of men who would have a form of godliness but who denied the power thereof; of those who would follow the examples and teaching of such men; disciples who would ever be learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. He compared those future teachers who those of the distant past -- to men who met Moses in contest before Pharaoh.

The time when "*Jannes and Jambres*" withstood Moses seems clear enough. These were the magicians who vied for the heart of Pharaoh by seemingly to duplicate the mighty works Moses wrought. There is no record in Moses' Exodus account of the names of these two men, nor, for that matter, how many there were of them. Their names were preserved and handed down by oral tradition, then written tradition among Jews through the centuries. And, that previous tradition was accurate, for were it not so, we would have Paul purportedly speaking by God's spirit, yet revealing an untruth. Such will not do; otherwise what else did Paul write which was fable, not truth?

Jannes and Jambres, as magicians in Pharaoh's court, were there because of their pretended claims, already they had "*wrought signs*" -- albeit false ones, which had convinced Pharaoh they possessed supernatural powers. When Moses came with command from a God, Pharaoh "*did not know*" and which command he was not disposed to yield to, Moses sought to convince Pharaoh the command was from a higher power. Pharaoh's magicians, by their pretended signs sought to negate the true power of Moses' signs.

Moses thrust his rod upon the ground and it became a serpent. Pharaoh's magicians did the same, but Moses' rod swallowed theirs up (Exo. 7:10-12). Moses stretched his rod over the river of Egypt and the waters became blood. Pharaoh's magicians did the same, with the same result (Exo. 7:17-22). Moses called forth a scourge of frogs up the land. The magicians did in like manner (Exo. 8:2-7). How and in what manner Pharaoh's magicians wrought their signs, we cannot say. They were lying wonders, not true, but not so easily perceived to be so by the mass of folk.

Satan's cunning craftiness has closed the minds of many folk. Simon the sorcerer gave out to Samaritans that he was "*that power of God which is called great*" and they stood in awe of him (Acts 8:9-11). Simon knew

better; he was himself astonished by the miracles Philip wrought but on the surface the unsuspecting would have been greatly confused by the works of Simon and Philip. Elymas, a sorcerer who withstood Paul on Cyprus, held much power even over Sergius Paulus, the island's proconsul (Acts 13:6-12). And, in Paul's day, there were those men who were corrupted in mind, who led foolish people astray. Those modern-day deceivers were reprobate concerning the truth. And, to seekers of truth, the difference between true and false, real and pretended would become apparent *"for their folly shall be evident unto all men, even as theirs also came to be."* The day of revelation came -- the time came when Jannes and Jambres simply could not, by magical art, duplicate the signs Moses performed. Moses with his rod smote the dust and it became lice upon all. The magicians tried, failed and told Pharaoh, *"This is the finger of God"* (Exo. 8:16-19). As the plagues came one by one, distinguishing between Israel and Egypt, magnifying in intensity, Pharaoh reluctantly yielded, if momentarily. *"Rise up, get you out from among my people, take ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve Jehovah, as ye have said. Take both your flocks and your herds, as ye said, and be gone and bless me also"* (Exo. 12:31f). The folly of Pharaoh's magicians and of Pharaoh himself was apparent. Jehovah was God.

So shall it be to honest, sincere seekers of truth. *"And ye shall seek for me, and ye shall find me, when ye shall search for me with all your hearts"* (Jeremiah 29:13). But, what a contest lies between the mind of the flesh and the mind of the spirit; a contest Christians can win, but not so easily!

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