

2Timothy 24-11-24b

We are initiating the second portion of our study this morning in 2 Timothy chapter 3, and we can do no better whether looking at eschatology. We've recently in our home reviewed a study in the book of Revelation, and the importance of not only looking at it in terms of its predictive value, the truth that it contains about God's culmination of this age and the age of Israel, the inception of the kingdom of Christ, and later the kingdom of the Father. It is wonderful to see what is going to happen in the same way that we look at the Old Testament and see what has happened in the past in God's dealing with His people, and His judgment on evil, His orchestration of the fate of nations, His pursuit of righteousness and justice and peace, whether it is in the hearts of His people or in the land and nation proper.

But most importantly, after we have surveyed and after we have seen these truths, to turn the corner into personal application, to light our hair on fire and cut a hole in a sheet and jump up and down waiting for the rapture because we read the late great planet Earth isn't God's will for us. To watch the Left Behind movie if you can endure it, or to read the Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins books, or even to watch The Chosen or any other form of Christian entertainment or encouragement. There are books that are devotional in nature.

There are books that are relational in nature and are attempting to improve Christian marriages, Christian child training, whatever it may be. Ultimately and finally, for you and for me, you can see in these pastoral epistles that knowing the Word of God individually and personally and applying it daily, hourly, situation by situation, conversation by conversation, thought by thought, the thoughts and intents of our hearts to constantly be aware that the Lord is at hand. Let your moderation, let your self-control, let your reasonable possession of the center, don't stray to the left, don't stray to the right, one foot in front of the other on the narrow road, on that journey through the straight gate to life, is personal and individual.

We can't busy ourselves trying to change others, trying to change society, trying to get too invested in politics or international happenings, national happenings, social happenings. Our walk before the Lord is individual and daily. It is an expression of our love for God that we consider Him and put Him first in everything.

We're constantly aware in the way we have experienced when we were infatuated with someone of the opposite sex and you consider them in your plans, you consider them when you get up in the morning and how you dress and how you're going to invest your time and order your day. And if you're going to be on a date that evening, you plan ahead, you don't want to get too tired, you want to give consideration to everything in the day. When you are planning a Thanksgiving meal and you are going to have guests or you are going to be a guest, you spend time around a Thanksgiving table with loved ones, typically, and you plan ahead.

And through the days leading up to any kind of holiday or family get-together or reunion with loved ones, it constantly returns to your mind. Well, what effect is this going to have on the

plan? How shall I order my priorities in anticipation of that? This should be our daily expression of love for God is that He returns to our mind and we evaluate ourselves in the light of His observation and His presence, His provision, His blessing, His watch care, His forgiveness of our sins, His long-suffering and compassion expressed for us. The Lord Jesus Christ interceding on our behalf, speaking our names to His Father and asking for leniency and grace and strength to help in time of need on our behalf.

The Lord Jesus intercedes for us individually and personally. How should we then live? That is what it means to be a lover of God and not a lover of ourselves. Everything you see in the first half of chapter 3 can be summarized under that heading.

Do I love God? And because I love God, I love the one another's and the other categories of love? Or do I love myself? And am I interested in my own gratification? My own happiness? My own satisfaction? My own purposes? My own goals? My own plans? My own acquisitions? We begin to fall off the narrow road into diverse and obscure paths that lead to this description we've seen in these first seven verses. Not only can we be perpetrators of bad things, as described in the first five verses, but we can be victims and be led astray by others who are in that category in verses 6 and 7. We are either those who lead astray or we are those who are led astray. We become gullible.

We become naive. We become fools. Foolishness is when foolery has taken place.

Someone is making a fool of someone else. And we do not want to be always learning and subsisting on the twinkies of new information that comes over social media, that comes about world events, politics, science. Even religion, archaeology, whatever it may be.

Always learning but never able to come to a knowledge and epinosis of God's truth. This is a daily gut check. It can be an hour by hour gut check for us.

Why am I here? Why did God give us life and breath, plant us where he did in time, in relationships, in circumstances, in experience? Why am I here? I have a job. I have things to be done. I have responsibilities.

I have opportunities. But they are meaningless. Unbelievers have those things.

And they are incapable of converting those potentials into something of eternal value. That is the gift that Jesus Christ has given us is the ability to redeem the time, to redeem the situation, to redeem the conversation, to redeem a relationship where possible. Do you notice we have the command, redeem the time because the days are evil.

It's actually a participle. Redeeming the time. This is something that happens on an ongoing basis because otherwise the day will natively and inherently be evil.

What do you know about redemption? Let's just talk about redeeming the time for a minute. What do you know about redemption? Who is redeemed? Out of the human race, who is

redeemed? Is everyone redeemed? No, they are not. We are redeemed when we accept the Lord Jesus Christ in this age as our savior by faith.

It is God's grace through faith that saves us. And when we are saved, one of many things that takes place is we are redeemed. We are purchased out of the slave market of sin.

We are transferred out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the son of God's love. God's John 3 16 love. We are transferred.

We are redeemed out of darkness into light. So if we are redeeming the time, what are we doing? The same thing. We are taking time that would otherwise be vain, fruitless, spent on something that has no eternal value.

And we are transferring it into the light, into the future. We are investing it in treasure in heaven where moth and rust don't corrupt and thieves do not break in and steal. It is an active, conscious effort to ensure that we are in the faith, that we are in the light, that we are on the road heading for the gate that leads to life.

In verse eight of 2 Timothy 3, Paul says Janus and Jamberus resisted Moses. These are the names. They're not given in Old Testament scripture, but they were preserved in Jewish tradition.

And I think they are correct. Otherwise Paul wouldn't quote them. And Paul brings some information out of tradition and into inspired scripture that isn't recorded in Exodus and the story of the deliverance from Egypt.

But the magicians who turned their rods into snakes in the presence of Pharaoh were named Janus and Jamberus. They resisted Moses. And the word you have here is, it says, now as.

I am fascinated by what is in scripture that doesn't have to be there. You could easily skip from verse seven to verse 10. You could skip eight and nine and not be consciously aware of any loss.

If someone was doing a Reader's Digest version of 2 Timothy, they could homo eteluton out those two verses. They could delete them and close up the gap. No one would be the wiser.

So my question is, why are they here? Why bring up a couple of old, dusty, tired Egyptian magicians when you've made a wonderful point about these guys insinuating themselves in the household and leading women astray and cultivating and playing to their personal desires, distracting them and getting them off track of their Christian faith. But you, and here's the answer, here's how to avoid that. Why bring up these mummies from Old Testament history? And by the way, these guys probably weren't mummified unless Egypt was in such disarray after the plagues that they had to suspend that.

But they normally took these high officials and did the Egyptian thing to them and turned them into these little ossified, calcified, desiccated remnants. Now, as Janus and Jambors resisted

Moses, these resist the truth. My question to you is, A, why is this here? Why does Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, mention these guys? Going all the way back.

Well, think about Timothy. This is a Bible story that Timothy learned as a child from his mother and his grandmother. He was raised in the faith.

And Paul is going to refer this to this again. He's referred to it in the past. We know the names of Lois and Eunice, his mother and grandmother.

They taught him from childhood up. They taught him the Bible stories. And he knows this story.

And because they had the names from tradition, Timothy knew these names. Paul knows Timothy knows them. And Paul is reminding Timothy, your faith is built on the foundation of Bible knowledge.

You start by learning the history, learning the stories, learning the scriptures. The scriptures are able to make you wise unto salvation. And godly parents who aren't busy letting guys in the door to subvert them and lead them astray are focusing their attention on raising their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Now, remember our pattern. When you have an example, it doesn't just restrict itself to those people. When you talk about characteristics of an elder, it doesn't let everyone else off the hook.

When you talk about godly widows in the church in 1 Timothy, that doesn't let everybody else off the hook. They are an example. They are an illustration of truths that pertain to everyone in some fashion.

So, when Paul says basically to Timothy, remember that story you learned from your mother and your grandmother about the early phase of God's deliverance from Egypt? What is the situation when Moses is confronting Pharaoh and these court magicians, these high-level members of Pharaoh's cabinet? They're influential. They use their power and their influence to sway the Pharaoh himself. Cabinet members are important.

That's who Janus and Jambres are. They resisted Moses. Part of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is attributable to these gentlemen.

But it doesn't say they resisted outright. It says as they resisted Moses. So, what is the way they resisted Moses? They subverted the authority of God.

God is the king of kings. God is the lord of lords. And when God issues a command to a king, let my people go.

You know, let my people go, the M in my is capital. Because Moses is conveying a message from the Lord God in heaven. God says, let my people go.

It's not Moses' possessive. It's a divine possessive. And there is a truth that it is time for Israel, who has been put under the purview of Egypt for these hundreds of years, now it is time for them to go.

God delivers the message as the king of this king, as the Lord over this Pharaoh, let my people go. Janus and Jambres, his high advisors and influential magicians, say this isn't a message from God. I.e., how did they resist? It says, as these two guys resisted Moses.

What did they do by way of resistance? They didn't just whisper in Pharaoh's ear, no, don't let them go, it'll wreck the economy. How did they do it? They didn't do it by talking about economic results. They didn't do it by talking about international consequences.

What will the other nations think of you if you're shown to be weak and you let these people go without resistance? What was the way they resisted? As Janus and Jambres resisted, what was the nature of that resistance? They discredited God, endeavored to do so in the eyes of Pharaoh and the other high court officials and the people of Egypt. The person saying, let my people go, is not real. He's a fake.

His signs are bogus. They're counterfeit. We can do what he does.

He is not the King of Kings. He is not the Lord of Lords. He doesn't need to be obeyed because the signs that authenticate his authority are not valid.

Remember when Jesus confronted the Pharisees who were attributing the miracles done by the Holy Spirit to the devil? He casts out demons by the Prince of Demons. That is resisting the truth the way Janus and Jambres did. It's not some other form of attack.

It is denying the source, discrediting the source. That's what these individuals do. What is happening today? How are Christians being subverted, deceived, led astray, neutralized, off in the weeds? How is it being done when they have a form of godliness? The authority of God has been discredited.

And this is the attack on the Bible. This is the lack of attention to the role of the Holy Spirit. When you do find people who want to quote the Sermon on the Mount or want to take isolated passages that support their deconstruct, reconstruct, progressive, postmodern idea of Christianity, they are not balanced in their approach to Scripture.

They dismiss as irrelevant and uninspired the Old Testament. The God of the Old Testament is not the God of the Lord Jesus. That was a misunderstanding.

This is rife. It is being taught in seminaries, what used to be conservative seminaries, bastions of biblical truth. They have been subverted, co-opted, perverted by this notion that you can't trust the Bible.

The miracles in the Bible are symbolic. The future occurrences on the earth when the Lord Jesus

breaks the seals and hell concomitantly breaks loose on earth, those aren't real. Those were just designed to warn people against the abuses of empire and go forth from Babylon and don't be a Christian nationalist.

It's not real. It's in the realm of apocalyptic, and it's a genre, and it's like a fable. You're not supposed to take Aesop's fables or Brer Rabbit and Uncle Remus and the rest of it.

Those are just illustrative stories. There's not really an old woman that lived in a shoe, and there's not really a Joshua who conquered the land of Canaan and slaughtered all the women and children at God's command. That's just not real.

That didn't happen, or if it did happen, God didn't want it. Jesus has told us, and Jesus never judged anyone, never killed anyone, never led an army, and that's the only God you need. Do you see the attack on the authority of God expressed in Scripture? It resides with God the Father.

It comes through the Lord Jesus Christ, who is not only the suffering servant. The revelation of God through Christ is not only His coming in the form of a servant, but having divested Himself of equality with God. People want to say Jesus is God when Scripture says the Jesus that came as the suffering servant did not grasp the form of God.

He came in the likeness of men and was found in appearance as a man. God is not the suffering servant. And the Lord Jesus is coming a second time apart from sin for deliverance, and He is the God-man riding the right horse with a sword issuing forth, and there is going to be blood as high as the horse's bridles, and there is going to be judgment, and there are going to be people cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, who have eternal life, and there are going to be so many others who will be cast into the lake of fire where the devil and his angels go, where death and hell are cast, and there is eternal destruction at the behest of the Lord Jesus.

The same Lord Jesus who was involved in creation, and without Him nothing was made that was made, is also a part of the God of destruction, who is going to judge and eliminate evil, sin, and human notions of good. They will be destroyed, and the Lord Jesus is the instrument by which they will be judged. He is the one who comes in flaming fire, taking vengeance on the Lord's enemies and the enemies of the people of God.

Well, that has been undermined, it has been set aside, it has been pooh-poohed and dismissed as a misunderstanding, and oh, these poor saps, traditional Christians, who think that God is a God of judgment, they don't get it. It's the gentle Jesus of the Beatitudes. That's the true God.

That is how Janus and Jambres resisted Moses, who was the speaker of truth, by attacking the source of the authority of the message. That is as Janus and Jambres resisted. It isn't just simply that they resisted.

What did they do? This Moses has no authority. Aaron's rod turns into a snake and back into a

rod again. We can do that.

See, we have equal authority. The Catholic Church has done this for centuries. We have equal authority with God.

It's the Church and the Scriptures, co-equal. We can declare Mary to be co-redemptrix with the Lord Jesus, on the Church's authority, on the Pope's authority. He is speaking ex cathedra, and what he says is just as authoritative as Scripture.

But let's turn back to Exodus. Make sure I don't misremember any details about Janus and Jambres. So, you go back to Exodus, when God is delivering a message as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords to Pharaoh.

You go to the first encounter with Pharaoh in Exodus 5. Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, Thus says the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness. Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go. So they said, The God of the Hebrews has met with us.

Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword. Then the king of Egypt said to them, Moses and Aaron, Why do you take the people from their work? Get back to your labor. Pharaoh said, Look, the people of the land are many now, and you make them rest from their labor.

So the same day, Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying, You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. Lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before.

You shall not reduce it. They are idle. Therefore they cry out, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God.

Let more work be laid upon them, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words. Keep them busy, and they will not have time to pay attention to the word of God. This has insinuated itself into churches.

Stay busy. You don't need all of this theology. You don't need to understand the deeper truths of the word of God.

Keep busy. Make bricks. If you're not busy enough, and you're starting to think about the words of God, well, let's make you busier.

You can get straw to make your bricks. So the taskmasters communicate this to the people in verses 10 and 11. And the people were scattered abroad throughout the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw.

Notice this strategy not only distracts them from God's truth, but scatters them so that they are

not united in fellowship and in conversation and in speaking the truth to each other. Taskmasters, force them to hurry. Fulfill your work, your daily quota, as when there was straw.

And this is belabored in verse after verse after verse about the straw and the bricks. So this goes all the way down through verse 21. And presenting the truth seems to have made things worse.

So Moses in verse 22 returns to the Lord and says, Why have you brought trouble on this people? Why is it you've sent me? Since I came into Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all. Then the Lord said in chapter 6, Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. With a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.

God spoke to Moses and said to him, I am the Lord. Remember what Pharaoh said? Who is this Lord? I don't know him. I've never heard of him.

God affirms to Moses, I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty. By my name, Lord, I was not known to them.

I have established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. Notice how in this situation, God is taking Moses back to the foundation. Paul is taking Timothy back to the foundation of his knowledge.

The inception of the people of Israel, God's salvation, writ large in the deliverance of the people of God from Egypt, is the story of individual deliverance from oppression, from hard labor, from distraction and distribution, being scattered instead of being united. God delivered the people from that. And when Moses begins to question God's deliverance, you've not delivered them at all.

You sent me to deliver. It's not happening. God takes him back to his basics.

Do you know who I am? I'm the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty. But by my name, Yahweh, I was not known.

I established a covenant with them to give them the land, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. And I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered my covenant. Therefore, say to the children of Israel, I am the Lord.

I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will rescue you from their bondage. And I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.

I will take you as my people and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, your God, who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land, which I promised to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

I will give it to you as a heritage. I am the Lord. Always going back to his identity.

He is Almighty God. What he says goes. When he promises, it is going to happen.

Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel, but they did not heed Moses. Because of what? Look at chapter 6, verse 9. Why were they unable to comprehend and place their faith in this fresh revelation from God, reiteration of the covenant, restatement of His power and His glory? They could not heed Moses because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage. Their circumstances were more real to them than the word of God.

Their hard labor was more immediate in experience than the promise of God that He would deliver them from it and take them to the land of promise. So the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Go tell Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to let the children of Israel go out of his land. Moses spoke before the Lord, saying, The children of Israel have not heeded me.

How then shall Pharaoh heed me? I am of uncircumcised lips. The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them a command for the children of Israel and for Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. God reiterates now for the third time His identity and His truth, His promise, His covenant.

Now you have an interval where the families are given. Interestingly, there is an interruption. Why place this here in chapter 6? It is the strangest thing.

And when we did Exodus, we talked about this. Then in chapter 7, the Lord said to Moses, I have made you as God to Pharaoh. This is similar to the role of the angel of the Lord.

The angel of the Lord is as God to people when He appears to them in the Old Testament. He speaks in the first person for God. And when Moses stands before Pharaoh and says, Let my people go, He is as God to Pharaoh.

Aaron, your brother, shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you. Aaron, your brother, shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land.

I will harden Pharaoh's heart and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay my hand on Egypt and bring my armies and my people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.

Notice, the purpose of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is not so that he may destroy him as a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction. The judgments are to impress upon the Egyptians that God is the Lord. He is the King of kings.

He is the ultimate creator authority so that the Egyptians may know. And with that knowledge comes the opportunity for repentance. Remember the mixed multitude that's eventually going to leave Egypt? There are thousands of Egyptians that through the hardening of Pharaoh's

heart come to faith in the God of Israel and accompany them into the wilderness headed for the promised land.

The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord when I stretch out my hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them. So Moses and Aaron did so just as the Lord commanded them so they did. Moses was 80 years old, Aaron 83, when they spoke to Pharaoh.

Here's the miraculous rod of Aaron. The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron when Pharaoh speaks to you saying show a miracle for yourselves you shall say to Aaron take your rod cast it before Pharaoh and let it become a serpent. Do you notice in chapter 5 and in chapter 6 the authority of God, the command of God, the covenant of God, the very identity of God as the Lord is the issue.

A demonstration of that is going to be the miracle. This has ever been the demonstration of authority for a messenger of God whether it is a prophet in the Old Testament, the Lord Jesus, or apostles in the New Testament. Miracles are used to authenticate the source of the message, the authoritative nature of that word.

So, Moses and Aaron, show a miracle, take your rod, cast it before Pharaoh and let it become a serpent. Verse 10, chapter 7. Moses and Aaron went into Pharaoh and they did so just as the Lord commanded. Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants and it became a serpent.

Notice, God said to them, let it become a serpent. Cast it down. You don't have to do anything.

You be obedient. Stand in front of Pharaoh. When he says, prove it, just throw the rod.

Let it become a serpent. You do what you can do, which is to let go of the stick. God will do the transformation from a rod into a serpent.

So, Moses and Aaron went into Pharaoh and they did so just as the Lord commanded. Notice the emphasis. As the Lord commanded.

Trust and obey. Have faith. Have confidence.

How embarrassing would it be to throw the stick down and it just lays there. Moses and Aaron went into Pharaoh and they did so just as the Lord commanded. Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants.

This includes Janus and Jambres and it became a serpent. But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers, the magicians of Egypt. They also did in like manner with their sleight of hand, their enchantments.

Enchantments is the Hebrew way of saying they faked it. I've always thought if I was going to try to turn an ostensible staff into a serpent, I would take a snake and I would wrap it in brown wax paper so that it couldn't move. I might put a little straightener in there like a little thin stick

and wax paper the snake to the stick so that it looks like a staff.

And then when I throw it down, the wax paper breaks and the snake goes wriggling off. Oh look, I turned my stick into a snake. That's enchantments.

It's sleight of hand. It's, you know, how you tell somebody to pick a card, any card, and you suddenly show them what it is. Every man threw down his rod and they became serpents, but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

You can't fake that. Pharaoh's heart grew hard and he did not heed them just as the Lord had said. This is how Janice and Jambres attacked the authority of the message, denying the divine source, denying the divine command, denying the word of the Lord.

That's what is happening today. Just as Janice and Jambres resisted, so also these. Don't let anyone undermine the authority of the word of God in our thinking, in our practice, in our faith, hope, and love.

It is founded on the solid rock. Jesus described himself as God's own truth. He is the word in John chapter one.

In the beginning was the word of God. The word was with God and the word was God, but the word became flesh and dwelt among us. But he is still the eternal word and the almighty God.

Well, that should give us confidence to persist and pursue. When we come back next Sunday, we are going to see the word of God and the man of God that follows this bad example of Janice and Jambres. Paul is going to say, Timothy, you are different.

You have carefully followed my manner of life. You are invested in, you are trusting in the word of God. And that's why you are going to succeed despite false teaching, despite opposition, despite physical problems, despite your youth, despite whatever resistance exists.

You will prevail as a good soldier of Jesus Christ and we can do the same. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the solid foundation on which our lives rest, the bright hope we have for the return of the Lord Jesus, entrance into the future unfolding of your plans and purposes in the kingdom of the son, followed by your own kingdom.

We pray that we can be qualified to serve and to function in those ages, that we will grow in grace and knowledge, we will be transformed, be thoroughly equipped for every good work. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.