

2 Timothy 3:6-9 “Phony faiths”

I. Introduction

II. Vs. 6-7 Gullible, guilty and gathers

III. Vs. 8-9 Infiltration and imitation

I. Introduction

Having looked at the 18 characteristics of religious people that will cycle through the last days, we now move on to see:

- Vs. 6-7 Converts: *Three traits that cause people to gravitate towards religion*
- Vs. 8-9 Captains: *Two tactics employed by the religious to captivate converts*

Paul outlines for Timothy two tactics that satan employs when he attempts to get the church and people to become religious. Paul says that, “*Those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts.*” What Paul is speaking of is the tactic that goes after people who have grown frustrated by the morally corrupt and hypocritical church and have abandoned corporate fellowship with believers. Instead they were staying away remaining at home. We need only look at the present day theological cults of Jehovah Witnesses and Mormon’s as 25% of the converts to them come from those who used to attend another church.

II. Vs. 6-7 Gullible, guilty and gathers

Vs. 6-7 Paul lists three traits that can cause a person to gravitate towards religion and away from a relationship with Christ:

1. Vs.6a Gullible: The word “*gullible*” in the Greek is “*little women*” but in the Greek is in the neuter gender tense which suggests more the vulnerability of

people then it describes their gender. Paul is telling Timothy that those that succumb to these religious people are gullible like young girls. It is the gullibility that makes people accept religion instead of investigating to see if what a person is saying is truth. I believe that one of the great assets of people is to investigate and use critical thinking. Just because someone in authority says that what they are telling you is true doesn't mean it is. We need to separate:

- **True skepticism**: Where a person is looking for the truth in order to believe
- **False skepticism**: Where a person is looking for reasons not to believe

I love to investigate and read views that differ from my own especially where I can see where they have come to their conclusions. It has never weakened my faith it has strengthened and refined it.

2. **Vs. 6b Guilty**: Paul also says that a person is more vulnerable to religion when they are aware of their own failures as they are looking for a way to escape their own conscience. No person can escape a wounded conscience, they will either need to:

- **Numb it** through self-indulgence
- **Appease it** through works
- **Sear it** through continual abuse
- **Crucify it** through faith in Christ's work

And as you can imagine only one of those options truly sets a person free from guilt and shame. The religious prey upon people who are looking to escape from the bondage of their freedoms and are especially open to so called "*truths*" that offer alternatives to trusting in God and His word. They "*creep into households*"

by offering something that they can't provide in exchange for loyalty, money and service making them far worse than they were prior. They still have the same problems and gained a far worse one "religion" where they are duped into believing that all is well. No wonder Paul warns Timothy in verse 5 "*From such people turn away*".

3. **Vs7 Gathers**: The religious look for those who like to collect information, pseudo-intellectuals who are on a continual quest for more information so they can appear to be learned but never seem to apply what they say they know. There is nothing wrong with education but if all it produces is a continual search for more information that never transforms the person it is an empty search. The religious prey upon people like this as they can continue in small increments pass on little tidbits of "*higher knowledge*" that makes their student far superior to the common truth seeker. Of course this truth search makes them also twice as arrogant and prideful, as well it keeps them hooked on the information instead of the Word of God by the Spirit of God.

III. Vs. 8-9 Infiltration and imitation

Vs. 8-9 From the **18 characteristics of the religious** to the **three traits that make a person gravitate towards religion** to finally looking at **two tactics employed by the religious to captivate converts**. In looking at these two tactics we will need to go back to verse 6 to see the first one.

- a. **Vs. 6 Infiltration**: "*Those who creep into households*". Paul says of them, "*For of this sort*" which is a direct reference of the 18 characteristics mentioned and specifically of what he said in verse 5 that "*they have a form of godliness but*

deny its power”. Religious people seek to prey upon people who are disfranchised from religion that masquerades as Jesus’ Church and are looking for another way to elevate the guilt of sin, preferably by self-effort and works so that they can claim superiority above the religious they have left. Even when religious people have been disenfranchised with the church they will still seek meaning and purpose to handle the despair and emptiness of life. These people become extremely vulnerable when they are not consistently in fellowship and the word of God become sheep without a shepherd. The prophet Jeremiah described the condition of Israel during the captivity to Babylon in chapter 50 verse 6 as a “lost sheep, as their shepherds have led them astray..” Jesus also had compassion on the Jewish people as they were like “sheep having no shepherd.” Religious leaders target the vulnerable, and supply lies to as instruction.

b. Vs. 8 Imitation: “As Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth..” : Exodus chapters 7-9 reveal the contest between Moses and the Egyptian magicians mentioned here by Paul as *Jannes and Jambres*. Though Exodus doesn’t reveal their names apparently their names were well known in Jewish tradition as Paul tells Timothy the story including their names. These two men opposed Moses and the truth by imitating what he and Aaron did to convince Pharaoh that the God they represented had the authority and power to command Pharaoh to let His people go free. But in the end all they could produce is more snakes, more blood and more frogs. In other words all they could do is MAKE THINGS WORSE, they had no ability to make things better. Saints, there is power in religion but only in making things worse never in making things better.

Satan can imitate but he can't create, as he is only a counterfeit. Paul says that religious leaders do the same as they have a "***phony faiths***" to appeal corrupt minds that already are looking for an alternative to faith in Jesus alone. They claim to offer what only Jesus can give peace, identity and security but the cost is commitment to the group instead of a relationship with Christ. They have learned to use the same words and phrases as true faith in Christ but the meanings and practice is different. Many folks fall into these ***phony faiths*** and will even tell you that they are Christian's as well but they haven't surrendered to the same Jesus who died upon the cross, they have surrendered their lives to an organization. In the end *Jannes and Jambres* were exposed and made fools by the truth and judgment of God. Paul says they can only "*progress*" to a point then "*their folly will be manifest to all*".

Vs. 9 Having seen the kind of folks that will be susceptible to the two types of deception of "***infiltration***" and "***imitation***" Paul shares that the "***phony faiths***" will not get the better of the true faith in Christ, God's work will always "swallow up" the counterfeit. Evil always has a limit and inevitably satan over plays his hand and those who have followed an organization instead of a person realize that the imitation is no substitute to the real Person of Jesus. The truth is that the greatest opportunities to speak of Jesus' greatness happen during seasons of the greatest stress and trials; that being the case then our opportunities are becoming greater every day. Until Jesus comes back we will continue to have the religious, who just make things worse and can never make things better. Paul says these are indicators that we are in the last days as we have been for over 2000 years but this doesn't discourage me. Here is why:

1. **Dark times are made for people who are in the light**: When things increase in darkness it makes the light all the more attractive to those who tire of stumbling around. You all know how diamonds are formed.Heat and pressure! The darker the times the more Christ in us sparkles and the more precious He becomes.
2. **People who are in the light are made for dark times**: Take a casual look around your Bibles and you will see folks like Daniel and his three buddies Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, four guys who God placed to stand up against Nebuchadnezzar. Then you have the young queen Ester a gal who the Lord used to stand up against Haman and his edict to destroy the Jews. God always has a remnant and we are called for such a time as this!

So the darker our world gets, the certainty we know that God has called us stand up and shine. In the diamond business color is graded or judged against a white background but the diamond is best enjoyed and appreciated next to dark colors as there it truly stands out. Our grading comes when we stand next to Him who is Perfect, Jesus but our enjoyment to the world is best seen when everything around us is getting darker and darker.