

1 Timothy 4:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Analysis

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly (Τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ὁρτῶς λέγει, To de pneuma rhētōs legei)—'the Spirit explicitly says.' Rhētōs means expressly, in stated terms, explicitly—not vague or ambiguous. The Holy Spirit has clearly warned. **That in the latter times some shall depart from the faith** (ὅτι ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς ἀποστήσονται τινες τῆς πίστεως, hoti en hysterois kairois apostēsontai tines tēs pisteōs)—'in later times some will abandon the faith.' Apostēsontai is future tense of aphistēmi (to stand away from, depart, apostatize).

Giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (προσέχοντες πνεύμασιν πλάνοις καὶ διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων, prosechontes pneumasin planois kai didaskaliais daimoniōn)—'paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons.' Planos means deceiving, leading astray. Daimonion means demon, evil spirit. False teaching has demonic origin—Satan working through deception to lead believers away from truth.

Paul warns of apostasy—professing believers who abandon faith for demonic lies. This isn't theoretical but practical: the Ephesian false teachers exemplify this defection. Their ascetic teaching (4:3) originated not from God but from seducing spirits. The church must recognize spiritual warfare behind false doctrine.

Historical Context

The early church faced constant pressure from Gnostic dualism teaching that matter is evil (leading to asceticism or libertinism) and from Jewish legalism adding works to grace. Paul identifies these as demonic deceptions, not mere human error. Behind intellectual arguments stand spiritual powers seeking to destroy faith. The 'latter times' began with Christ's first coming and extend until His return—the entire church age sees this spiritual conflict.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How can we discern when false teaching has demonic origin versus merely human error?
2. What does it mean to 'give heed to seducing spirits'—how do demons work through ideas?
3. Why does Paul emphasize that apostasy will happen in 'the latter times'—what's the warning?

Interlinear Text

Tò δè πνεύμασιν ῥητῶς λέγει ὅτι ἐν ὑστέροις
G3588 Now spirits expressly speaketh that in the latter
G1161 G4151 G4490 G3004 G3754 G1722 G5306

καιροῖς ἀποστήσονται τινες τῆς πίστεως προσέχοντες
times shall depart from some G3588 the faith giving heed
G2540 G868 G5100 G4102 G4337

πνεύμασιν πλάνοις καὶ διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων
spirits to seducing and doctrines of devils
G4151 G4108 G2532 G1319 G1140

Additional Cross-References

2 Peter 2:1 (Parallel theme): But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Jude 1:18 (Parallel theme): How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

2 Peter 3:3 (Parallel theme): Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

Jude 1:4 (Parallel theme): For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:3 (Parallel theme): But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

2 Timothy 3:13 (Evil): But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

1 John 4:6 (Spirit): We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

John 16:13 (Spirit): Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

1 John 2:18 (Parallel theme): Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

Daniel 10:14 (Parallel theme): Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.

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