

2 Timothy 3:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

Analysis

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. Paul transitions to eschatological warning. "This know also" (touto de ginōske, τοῦτο δὲ γίνωσκε) commands certain knowledge—this isn't speculation but revealed truth Timothy must understand. "In the last days" (en eschatais hēmerais, ἐν ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις) refers to the entire period between Christ's first and second comings. From Pentecost forward, believers live in "last days" (Acts 2:17, Hebrews 1:2, 1 Peter 1:20). This isn't future prediction but present reality already unfolding.

"Perilous times shall come" (enstēsontai kairoi chalepo, ἐνστήσονται καιροὶ χαλεποί). Enistēmi (ἐνίστημι) means arrive, be present, come upon. Kairos (καιρός) means season, opportune time—not mere chronological time (chronos) but significant seasons. Chalepos (χαλεπός) means difficult, dangerous, hard to bear—used in Matthew 8:28 for demon-possessed men who were "exceedingly fierce." The last days will be characterized by dangerous, difficult seasons marked by false teaching and moral decline.

This warning isn't pessimistic but realistic. The church shouldn't expect increasing earthly triumph but should anticipate opposition, apostasy, and moral decay alongside gospel advance. Understanding this prevents disillusionment and prepares believers for spiritual warfare. The catalog of vices (vv. 2-5) specifies what makes these times "perilous."

Historical Context

Early Christians expected Christ's imminent return. When He didn't return immediately, some questioned eschatological teachings (2 Peter 3:3-4). Paul corrects false expectations: the entire church age constitutes "last days," not merely the final moments before Christ's return. History vindicated Paul's warning —every era since has faced dangerous times of moral decline and false teaching. Yet Christ's kingdom advances despite opposition. The "last days" perspective provides realism: expect difficulty, but persevere in hope that Christ will return and establish His kingdom fully.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. Do you recognize that you live in the 'last days,' and does this shape your expectations about cultural trends and church challenges?
2. How does understanding that 'perilous times' characterize the entire church age help you avoid both naive optimism and cynical pessimism?
3. What specific 'perilous' challenges face the contemporary church that require biblical wisdom and spiritual discernment?

Interlinear Text

Τοῦτο δὲ γίνωσκε ὅτι ἐν ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις

This also know that in the last days

G5124

G1161

G1097

G3754

G1722

G2078

G2250

ἐνστήσονται καιροὶ χαλεποί·

shall come

G1764

times

G2540

perilous

G5467

Additional Cross-References

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

2 Timothy 4:3 (Parallel theme): For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

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.

Micah 4:1 (Parallel theme): But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

Jude 1:17 (Parallel theme): But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Isaiah 2:2 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

Daniel 12:11 (Parallel theme): And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Jeremiah 49:39 (Parallel theme): But it shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the LORD.

Ezekiel 38:16 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

Daniel 12:7 (Parallel theme): And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

