

2 Timothy 3:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their's also was.

Analysis

But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their's also was. Despite false teachers' apparent success, Paul assures: "they shall proceed no further" (all' ou prokoopsousin epi pleion, ἀλλ' οὐ προκόψουσιν ἐπὶ πλεῖον). The verb prokoptō (προκόπτω) means advance, make progress. Their deception has limits; God won't allow indefinite advancement. This provides hope amid ecclesiastical corruption: error doesn't ultimately triumph; God sets boundaries on falsehood's spread.

The reason: "for their folly shall be manifest unto all men" (hē gar anoia autōn ekdēlos estai pasin, ἡ γὰρ ἄνοια αὐτῶν ἔκδηλος ἔσται πᾶσιν). Anoia (ἄνοια) means folly, senselessness, madness—opposite of nous (sound mind). Ekdēlos (ἐκδηλος) means clearly visible, manifest, obvious—from ek (out) and dēlos (clear), something brought into clear view. Future tense promises this will happen. Their error, currently perhaps persuasive to some, will eventually become obvious to all.

The comparison: "as their's also was" (hōs kai hē ekeinōn egeneto, ὡς καὶ ἡ ἐκείνων ἐγένετο)—referring to Jannes and Jambres. Egyptian magicians initially matched Moses's miracles (Exodus 7:11-12, 22; 8:7) but eventually couldn't (Exodus 8:18-19). Their power had limits; God's didn't. Similarly, false teachers may initially deceive, but truth ultimately prevails. God vindicates His Word and exposes error. This encourages perseverance: faithfulness to truth will be vindicated even if delayed.

Historical Context

The Exodus narrative showed Egyptian magicians' limitations. They duplicated early plagues but couldn't match later ones, finally confessing "This is the finger of God" (Exodus 8:19). Their power, whether demonic or mere trickery, proved inferior to God's. Church history validates Paul's promise: heresies that seemed threatening eventually collapsed—Gnosticism, Arianism, Pelagianism—while orthodox truth endured. Contemporary heresies seem powerful, but they too will ultimately be exposed. This doesn't guarantee immediate victory but assures ultimate triumph. Truth endures; error eventually self-destructs.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does confidence that false teaching will ultimately be exposed provide patience and perseverance when error seems triumphant?
2. What contemporary false teachings appear successful but show signs of eventual self-destruction and exposure?
3. How can you remain faithful to truth even when it seems unpopular or defeated, trusting God's ultimate vindication?

Interlinear Text

ἀλλ' οὐ προκόψουσιν ἐπὶ πλεῖον· ἡ γὰρ ἄνοια
But no they shall proceed further G4119 G3588 **for folly**
G235 G3756 G4298 G1909 G1063 G454

αὐτῶν ἔκδηλος ἔσται πᾶσιν ὡς καὶ ἡ ἐκείνων
their manifest shall be unto all men as also G3588 **theirs**
G846 G1552 G2071 G3956 G5613 G2532 G1565

ἐγένετο
was
G1096

Additional Cross-References

2 Timothy 3:8 (Parallel theme): Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

Exodus 7:12 (Parallel theme): For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

Exodus 9:11 (Parallel theme): And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.