

2Timothy 3:1 ¶ This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

“This know also” – connects this section with the context from the previous chapter

Note that the reference is to the “last days.” The Greek is specific in defining this phrase to be referencing the final days. I believe this is referencing final in reference to the days before Jesus returns as King of kings to planet earth in context from the previous chapter. In that chapter he was focusing on our resurrection from the dead to immortality to reign with Jesus and the importance of striving to serve Him as vessels of honor until that time.

“Perilous” times reference difficult, dangerous times. It was interesting to me that the Greek root is possibly connected to the idea of reducing strength. This would connect in my mind as related to the waning influence of the church due to the increasing influence of the forces of Satan as that time nears.

“shall come” – The fact that he is telling Timothy this information indicates that he was preparing Timothy for what might confront him in his lifetime, but we now know in retrospect that the term “last days” was in reference to thousands of years later.

2Timothy 3:2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

The word “men” is a reference to humanity, both male and female. With this verse Paul begins a description of what will characterize the people of those perilous times mentioned in verse one. Yes, these terms have been applicable throughout history, but it seems that the applicability to our times has increased at an exponential rate over recent years.

“Lovers of their own selves” speaks of selfishness. Who can deny that today the focus is on the right to please self without regard as to how it may impact others. Marketing is based on presenting products based on fulfilling the desires and needs of the flesh in support of this love of self. The primary motivating factor for most people today—What’s in it for me?

The Greek for “covetous” is connected to avarice, the love of money and greed for wealth. Again, can we deny that the desire for more money as evidence of one’s success and to provide the ability to fulfill selfish desires is an apt description of the overall culture of today?

A “boaster” is a braggart, someone who shows excessive pride in his/her accomplishments, possessions, or abilities. I think there is a difference in having a healthy pride and an unhealthy pride. A healthy pride regarding one’s accomplishments, possessions and abilities is based upon personal investment of time and energy according to one’s God-given talents and acknowledging that you have because you have been given. An unhealthy pride is evidenced by basking in recognition of one’s accomplishments, possessions and abilities

without regard to God and thinking that this places you in an elite status compared to others. In Christendom it would be evidenced by an attitude analogous to the Pharisees of Jesus' time. Again, this fits right in with being a lover of self. I am beginning to see why Paul listed that trait first.

Being "proud" is a reference to haughtiness, considering oneself as superior to others and looking down with contempt on those you consider unworthy of your attention.

"Blasphemers" are those who speak out with slander and disrespect against God. This is especially obvious among the new atheists of today. It is also prevalent in so-called art and entertainment today in America and other parts of the world. Sadly, however, it is also true of many who profess themselves to be Christian, but call God's word a lie and/or twist or manipulate its truth to support their own objectives.

I liked this comment by David Guzik on boasting, pride and blasphemy: "When I boast, when I am proud towards others, and when I express my pride towards God in blasphemy, I am the center of my universe. You don't matter and God does not matter. All that matters is me."

"Disobedience to parents" means what it says. The Greek included the idea of being unpersuadable. This seems to reference having a stubborn heart that is not teachable or open to reasoning. I am afraid the evidence of the truth of that statement is ever more evident in the youth of today. They are more likely to respond to their peers and/or be led by the example and/or expressed beliefs of popular cultural figures than to parents.

"Unthankful" is the equivalent of ingratitude and, I believe, again ties directly to selfishness. Kids today are growing up with an attitude that indicates they feel they are deserving without regard to their treatment of others or the effort they put forth. To my observation in America at least, this attitude has had a great negative impact on the work ethic of today in comparison to when I was growing up.

To be "unholy" is to be wicked (from the Greek). Webster states that to be wicked is to act contrary to the moral or divine law. One only has to look at the Ten Commandments to conclude that unholiness is an apt description of the culture in most of the world today. God is certainly not acknowledged as Lord. Taking God's name in vain has become part of everyday speech in America at least. Killing the unborn is excused as the woman's right to choose. Sexual immorality is an accepted lifestyle. There is a growing attitude of "the ends justifies the means" when it comes getting what we want.

2Timothy 3:3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

The Greek defines being without natural affection as being hard-hearted towards your relatives; it is showing a lack of sympathy, cruelty and lack of pity (from the

Greek). Again, this falls right in line with being “lovers of self.” I believe that the many nursing homes that are found to have employees that are abusive to those that live there are indicative of this characteristic. Parents and relatives are often placed in these institutions and then forgotten or pitifully neglected by their “loved ones.” I also believe this attitude is manifest by most women that choose abortion; relatively speaking, very few women choose abortion for life-threatening medical considerations. These women do not have the “natural affection” you would expect to go with expectant motherhood.

The Greek for “trucebreakers” stated “literally, without libation....” When I looked up the root word, this was a reference to devoting one’s life as a sacrifice. My definition: Making a deal or promise without true commitment to fulfill it at point of sacrifice to self. Scripture is clear in stating that we should honor our word.

Zechariah 8:16 “These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor....”

Proverbs 3:27 “Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.”

1 Peter 1:15–16 “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [behavior]; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

“False accusers” are those that tell lies about someone to destroy their reputation. I think that the media in general in America today is full of people who are willing false accusers in pursuit of promoting their own agendas, and the public as a whole seems to be willing to believe their lies. In politics it has become the norm for candidates to lie about their opponents in order to gain a political advantage. These are but a couple of examples that evidence a growing lack of integrity that permeates our culture today.

“Incontinence” is a reference to lack of self-control. Again, this is an outworking of selfishness. One who lacks self-control is obviously not concerned about how his/her actions may affect others. The growing lack of self-control goes hand-in-hand with the use of drugs and alcohol and is the foundation for the success of the porn industry. Sadly, this lack is also the motivating factor behind the horrendous crimes of rape, sexual abuse of children and human trafficking, among others.

One who is “fierce” is aggressive and characterized by uncontrolled violence. Frankly, I believe the great increase in aggressive and violent behavior evidenced in society today is spawned by the entertainment industry. Movies and video games have caused people to become desensitized to aggression and violence and made them much more likely to emulate such actions without feeling guilt. This type of behavior is also directly connected to lack of self-control.

The phrase “despisers of those that are good” is basically self-explanatory. This too is becoming more dominant in the news today. The persecution of Christians

is growing throughout the world. Christians in America are being categorized by public officials with radical terrorists and characterized as intolerant (implied, and therefore dangerous). Those who live in disobedience to God's word are always going to despise those that are obedient to God's word. Jesus predicted this hatred.

Matthew 10:22 "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake...."

John 15:18–19 "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

2Timothy 3:4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

A "traitor" is one who betrays or violates the confidence or trust of another. In today's society this often goes hand-in-hand with the love of money. The tabloids and increasingly the mainstream media produce headlines and make profit by seeking out people who are willing to betray friends, lovers, bosses, etc. A traitor is almost always motivated by selfish purposes of some type.

One who is "heady" is rash; he/she is prone to acting before thinking. Sometimes I think that must be an unwritten qualification for running for office in Washington D.C. I was totally appalled to learn that our congressional leaders think it is normal and reasonable to pass legislation that they have not read. How can we possibly expect the people to be careful, deliberate and reasonable in making decisions when those who lead us operate with such rashness. Webster adds that "heady" actions affect the head and are intoxicating. I believe that is what affects those in leadership in our government today. They become intoxicated with power and lose all sense of reason.

One who is "highminded" is inflated with self-conceit and lifted up in pride (from the Greek). Webster made reference to Romans 11:20.

Romans 11:20 "....Be not highminded, but fear...."

I thought it was interesting that this statement attributes highmindedness to lack of fear—of God is implied in context. Of course, I believe this is true of those whose lives are characterized by any of the traits in this list.

As Paul gets to the end of his list, he gets to the main problem in the lives of the types of people being referenced in this list—they love pleasure more than God. Scripture acknowledges that sin results in pleasure—but only for a season.

Hebrews 11:24–25 "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season...."

Psalms 73:3 & 17 "For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked....Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end."

Scripture is also clear in declaring that those who love God will suffer in this world, but it also declares that our obedience will be well rewarded in eternity.

John 16:33 "...In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Acts 14:22 "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

1 Corinthians 2:9 "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Matthew 5:10–12 "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven:"

Colossians 3:23–24 "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."

2Timothy 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

This verse is a continuation concerning those that love pleasure more than God. In this verse Paul is narrowing that group to those that "have a form of godliness." In other words, they appear to be Christians; they are professors of faith but not possessors of faith; they are hypocrites. These people deny the power of God to save souls and change lives. This is the most discouraging aspect of the "church" today. It is the most telling trait on this list in my opinion regarding the "last days." The "church" today is in the process of "emerging" and morphing into the ecumenical church of end times. The word of God is being misused. The focus of the church is more on social work than on spreading the gospel. The practices of mysticism are being incorporated into worship. Tolerance and unity among faiths are being promoted in disregard of the exclusive truth of scripture.

John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Matthew 7:13–14 "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

The power of God is being disregarded for the power of men and evil spirits. Many popular “Christian” books promote the wisdom of the author—not the wisdom of God as revealed in scripture. Others present God and/or spiritual teaching according to their own imagination and desires rather than as instructed or described in scripture. Many “new age” beliefs are being promoted and marketed in writings openly identified as revelations from spirit guides. Visions of the Virgin Mary and mysterious phenomena are identified as “from God” when it is obvious that they are contrary to scripture and, therefore, are occurring according to the powers of the “god of this world”—Satan. I am reminded that scripture warns us that our fight is with evil spirits and that Satan has the ability to work lying wonders within the parameters that God allows him (as evidenced by Job).

Ephesians 6:11–12 “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

2 Thessalonians 2:9 “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders....” [speaking in context of the Antichrist]

Deuteronomy 13:1–3 “If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Matthew 7:22–23 “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” [“wonderful works” = miracles in the Greek]

Paul’s direct instruction to Timothy—Stay away from these kinds of people.

2Timothy 3:6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,
2Timothy 3:7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

“this sort” – I think this is more in reference to those who love pleasure more than God and present themselves as Christians. Sad to say that history reveals that some “church” leaders abuse their positions and “lead captive silly women” to fulfill their fleshly lusts. I think the NLT gives a clearer translation: *“They are the kind who work their way into people’s homes and win the confidence of vulnerable women who are burdened with the guilt of sin and controlled by many desires. Such women are forever following new teachings, but they never understand the truth.”*

Recent history shows that this abuse has also been directed toward the most vulnerable—children in the church.

With today's technology this abuse often comes through the pleas of "Christian" ministers that enter the home through the television and take advantage of the tender hearts of people who are not spiritually discerning and plead for money to support their ministries which they use to support their luxurious lifestyles.

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

2Timothy 3:9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.

Paul uses as an example the actions of Jannes and Jambres, Pharaoh's magicians that stood against Moses. These men were obviously empowered by evil spirits to a limited degree and refused to believe the power demonstrated by Moses was any different than their own. These corrupt "Christians" oppose the plain truth of God's word towards their own purposes in the same way as these court magicians. It seems to imply to me that they are being influenced and/or empowered by evil spirits as well. They are depraved in thought and deed and have abandoned the morals established by God in scripture.

Note: The names of Jannes and Jambres are not mentioned elsewhere in scripture, but commentators make note that they were well known through Jewish tradition. It is obvious to me who Paul is referencing, and his use of their names is affirmed through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—the source of all scripture as declared in verse 16 below.

Verse 9 indicates that eventually these wicked men will be found out. There came a point (the plague of lice) in which the magicians had to admit that they were really pretenders to true power. The false teachers being referenced in this passage will also one day be shown for who they really are—in God's timing.

Paul addresses this truth more clearly in his letter to the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 11:13–15 "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

I am reminded that the Lord allows some of these wicked people to prosper in order to prove the faith of His people.

Deuteronomy 13:1–3 "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

2Timothy 3:10 ¶ But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,
2Timothy 3:11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of *them* all the Lord delivered me.

Paul now turns his attention to affirming Timothy's faith based on his own testimony before him. Timothy was personal witness to Paul's ministry, his character, and his faith as evidenced by his commitment to the spread of the gospel, his patience and love toward others as God's ambassador, and his endurance in spite of persecution. He was witness to God's power through the Holy Spirit at work in Paul's life.

2Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Paul declares that all who choose to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

This black and white statement really bothered me for a long time, because I did not really feel that I had "suffered" accordingly. I remember looking up the word "suffer" in Webster during one of my studies and found the following: "To feel, or endure, with pain, annoyance, etc....to undergo; as, to *suffer* pain of body, or grief of mind." It made me realize that sometimes the pain of persecution is pain of the heart or mind. It is a personal connection with the heart of God as you respond to the sin that surrounds you. Most of us who have faith in Christ as our Savior will not die a martyr's death or face physical torture in light of that faith, but many will probably face rejection and/or mocking from family and/or friends. All of us, however, should grieve with the heart of God over sin and the eternal future of those who reject Him. We should especially grieve at corruption in the "church" and how it serves to dishonor God and mislead so many. We should grieve over how God's word is being discredited and used by false teachers towards their own purposes.

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

The sad truth is that evil men and impostors or hypocrites are going to become even more depraved and more prevalent. They will continue to deceive others as they themselves are being deceived. In other words, these false teachers may be really sincere in their beliefs, but they are sincerely wrong.

Satan will not let up once he has established a strong hold in some area of your life. Once you fall into his trap he only strengthens his influence over you through the deceptive powers available to him. The only way to break this influence is by the power of God. Paul addresses this truth in his letter to the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 10:3–5 “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ....”

2Timothy 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*;
2Timothy 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

“continue” – Paul is affirming to Timothy that he has been taught well and that his testimony is one of solid faith, discernment and obedience.

Paul is encouraging Timothy to remember that God had specifically appointed Paul to share the gospel message and the truth of God’s word with the Gentiles. Timothy can be sure of the truth of his teaching. Everything Paul was teaching was in accordance with those Old Testament scriptures. Paul is declaring that those scriptures clearly point to Christ Jesus as the Savior. Also, Timothy had been taught the truth of scripture since he was a child by his mom and grandma (cf 1:5) and was able to understand Paul’s teaching concerning this truth in light of those scriptures.

2Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
2Timothy 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

These verses declare a powerful truth. “All” scripture is God-breathed; in other words, it was divinely implanted into the heart and mind of the author as he wrote it. This is a declaration of the complete truth and authority of everything it declares. God’s word is truth that will stand forever.

Psalms 119:160 “Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.”

Isaiah 40:8 “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”

Again, I like David Guzik’s quote regarding the inspiration of scripture: “It was written over 1600 years, over 60 generations, by more than 40 authors, on three different continents, in different circumstances and places, in different times, different moods, in three languages, concerning scores of controversial subjects, but it speaks with one united voice.”

Because it is truth, the scripture is helpful, useful for several things.

- For understanding doctrine—a reference to instruction in the Greek. Obviously, the reference would be to God’s instruction, His teaching.
- For giving reproof—providing evidence for the truth it declares.
- For providing correction—determining how to “straighten up” (from the Greek) one’s life, to change bad behavior to good
- For instruction in righteousness—providing instruction as to how to live in obedience to God having integrity and faithfulness

When the believer, “the man of God,” is taught according to the truth and precepts of scripture, he/she is prepared and equipped to serve God by serving others. Jesus was clear in declaring that we could do nothing to produce spiritual fruit without Him.

John 15:4–5 “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”

Many churches today are focusing on doing “good” deeds without regard to “abiding in Christ” and allowing Him to work in and through the believer. Obviously social work, humanitarian work is “good” in the eyes of society today. God’s standard as to what is “good,” however, is measured by whether or not God is being served and honored in the process with the potential for producing spiritual fruit because the person doing the deeds is ministering through the leading, direction and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. This type of service will always draw attention to God rather than to the person or organization performing those works.