

REVIVAL NEWS
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THE ANSWER TO PERILOUS TIMES

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Perilous times

When apostle Paul was writing to Timothy he warned him that *“in the last days perilous times will come”* 2 Timothy 3:1. Paul then lists a multitude of characteristics of these *perilous times*, giving Timothy, and us, a picture of what to expect.

The word *perilous* is the Greek word ‘*chalepos*’ and it means: *harsh, savage, difficult, dangerous, painful, fierce, grievous, hard to deal with* [Word Wealth in New Spirit Filled Life Bible – 2 Tim.3:1]. Paul also told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:1 that *“the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons”*. There have been, and still are, difficult, painful, fierce, savage and dangerous days ahead that we need to walk through in Christ.

The Last days

Paul says that these *perilous times* will be in *the last days*. Many people focus majorly on the negative things about *the last days*. What else do the Scriptures say about the *the last days*?

- *“God...has in these last days spoken to us by His Son”* Hebrews 1:1-2. God speaks through the Son to us in these *last days*! We can now hear God through Jesus!
- *“And it shall come to pass in the last days’, says God, ‘That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh...”* Acts 2:17 [quoted from Joel 2:28 by apostle Peter]. In the *last days* God is pouring out His Spirit on all flesh, all who will receive Jesus, without partiality. How awesome!!

We are in the *last days*. In fact, we have been in the *last days* for close to two thousand years now! The *last days* is the time since Jesus accomplished the work of the Cross, resurrection and ascended to the right hand of God, until the time of His Coming. We are in the period of the *last days* and while there are many bad things about these *last days* it is also a time of great revival and revelation on the earth! We can expect men, women and children to hear the voice of God through the Son, Jesus, and be filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesying and bearing witness to the risen Lord Jesus!

A picture of the perilous times

From 2 Timothy 3:2-4, the picture of *perilous times* is that people will be:

- i) **“lovers of themselves”** – we are to **“look out... for the interests of others”** Phil.2:4
- ii) **“lovers of money”** – the **“love of money is a root of all evil”** 1Tim.6:10
- iii) **“boasters”** – giving glory to themselves – we are to boast **“in the Cross”** Gal.6:14
- iv) **“proud”** – lifting themselves above others – we are to be **“clothed with humility”** 1Pet.5:5
- v) **“blasphemers”** – speaking insultingly towards God – we are to **“Fear God”** 1Pet.2:17
- vi) **“disobedient to parents”** – we are to **“obey our parents in the Lord”** Eph.6:1
- vii) **“unthankful”** – we are to **“in everything give thanks”** 1Thess.5:18
- viii) **“unholy”** – we are to **“be holy in all our conduct”** 1Pet.1:15
- ix) **“unloving”** – love is how we are seen as Jesus’ disciples – **Jn.13:35**
- x) **“unforgiving”** – this means *irreconcilable* – we are to **“forgive one another”** Col.3:13
- xi) **“slanderers”** – literally means *devilish* – we are to **“let no corrupt word proceed out of our mouth”** Eph.4:29
- xii) **“without self-control”** – the final **“fruit of the Spirit is...self-control”** Gal.5:22-23
- xiii) **“brutal”** – this means *savage, fierce* – the **“fruit of the Spirit is...gentleness”** Gal.5:22-23
- xiv) **“despisers of good”** – means *hostile to virtue* – we are to **“approve the things that are excellent”** Phil.1:10
- xv) **“traitors”** – this means *surrendering friends to an enemy* – we are to be **“faithful unto death”** Rev.2:10
- xvi) **“headstrong”** – means to be *rash, going our own way* – we are called to **“submit to one another in the fear of God”** Eph.5:21

xvii) *“haughty”* – means *inflated, high-minded* – we are to *“associate with the humble”* Rom.12:16

xviii) *“lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God”* – we are to *“crucify the flesh with its passions and desires”* Gal.5:24

Who are these people?

When we first look at this list we can think this is all talking about people of the “world”. We look at society today and we can find these wicked attributes everywhere we look. However, Paul then says about these ones that they *“have a form of godliness but denying its power”* 2 Timothy 3:5. These people are **religious!** They may be following a false religion like Islam, Buddhism or Hinduism. Or, as it seems in the context, they may be carrying a Bible under their arm to the church meeting every Sunday!

They *have a form of godliness!* They appear godly. But they have not received the power of the gospel to have their lives transformed on the inside. These people can be churchgoers. Be warned. From this sort of person *“turn away”* (v.5). The apostle Paul seemed to have encountered a number of these sorts of “brethren” when he mentions to Timothy, *“all those in Asia have turned away from me”, “no one stood with me, all forsook me”, “Demas has forsaken me”, “Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm”* (2Tim.1:15, 4:9,14,16). These were all “brethren” who ended up betraying Paul, resisting him and his teaching, and loving the world more than God. Let’s commit even more to be led by and to walk in the Spirit and be devoted wholeheartedly to the gospel in these *last days!*

The Answer to the perilous times

1. Real Discipleship

After explaining to Timothy about the *perilous times* Paul begins to share the answer to the whole situation by reminding Timothy of his discipleship. Paul was a father and he knew how to disciple Timothy and others in a lifestyle of following Jesus. He gave Timothy a pattern of how to live in *perilous times*. Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:10-11, *“But you have carefully followed my...*

- *“doctrine”* - the *“apostles’ doctrine”* Acts 2:42. The doctrine is the *“things you have heard from me among many witnesses”* 2 Timothy 2:2.
- *“manner of life”* – Timothy knew Paul’s lifestyle and he was even sent to Corinth to *“remind you of my (Paul’s) ways in Christ”* 1Cor.4:17. Paul wanted others to *“imitate me as I also imitate Christ”* 1Cor.11:1. The lifestyle of a disciple is the answer to *perilous times*.
- *“purpose”* – Timothy knew the apostolic purpose that Paul embodied – *“that I might know Him...if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead”* Phil.3:10-11. This is the purpose we live for – knowing Jesus in all His fullness.

- **“faith”** – Timothy knew the reality of Paul’s faith and this was a heritage that Timothy could receive and walk in. **“whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct” Heb.13:7.**
- **“longsuffering”** – the development of **longsuffering** brings great rewards. **“Through faith and patience (longsuffering) we inherit the promises” Heb.6:12.**
- **“love”** – Timothy knew the pure motivation in Paul’s heart for the gospel. **“For the love of Christ compels us” 2Cor.5:14.** In **perilous times** the **“love of many will grow cold” Matt.24:12.**
- **“perseverance”** – we are to **persevere** in **perilous times** knowing that **“perseverance produces character, and character, hope” Rom.5:3-5.**
- **“persecutions”** – Paul even learned to **“take pleasure in...persecutions” 2Cor.12:10.** Through persecutions for Christ we learn that **“when I am weak, then I am strong” 2Cor.12:10.**
- **“afflictions”** – this is **hardships**. Timothy learnt from Paul the **“sufferings (afflictions) of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” Rom.8:18.**
- **“and out of them all the Lord delivered me”** – Timothy knew the deliverance that Paul had experienced so often from the Lord. This is to encourage us to endure in **perilous times**.

This is real lifestyle discipleship that Paul offered Timothy. O, how the church needs to return to this reality of discipleship to be able to endure **perilous times**. Disciples living like this is the answer to these times. Will you be part of the answer?

Continue

The apostle Paul then gives Timothy a promise. It is a promise not too many assure the saints of. He says, **“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” 2 Timothy 3:12.** This is a given. Be prepared. Jesus said, **“In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” John 16:33.** He also promised that **“evil men and impostors [literally ‘wizards, seducers, those muttering spells] will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” 2 Timothy 3:13.** Again, these are ones who infiltrate the church but operate in another power, not the Holy Spirit.

The answer to all of this is **“continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them” 2 Timothy 3:14.** Jesus told us that we would be His disciples if we **“abide [‘continue, remain’] in My word” John 8:31.** It is **continuing** in a lifestyle of devotion to Jesus, **continuing** in the apostolic pattern received through true apostolic fathers. Paul told the **Philippians** that **“the things that you learned and received and heard**

and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you” Philippians 4:9. Continue in the Way, the Life and the Truth. Be faithful with the gospel way of life you have received. We need to be a pattern people to help establish others in this lifestyle. This is the answer to being in *perilous times*.

2. The Scriptures

The second part of the answer to *perilous times* that the apostle Paul gives to Timothy is that he should give himself to the *“Holy Scriptures”*. He reminds Timothy about the infallibility of the Scriptures in uncertain times. The Scriptures alone are our source for faith and practice. We believe what is written. Paul reminds Timothy that *“from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”* 2 Timothy 3:15. There is no substitute for the Scriptures. We are to *know them*. We are to teach our children, natural and spiritual, the Scriptures, so that they can be *wise for salvation!* There is no other way. When others are abandoning the Scriptures to go after experiences, stay in the Word.

The benefit of the Scriptures

The apostle Paul then gives us one of the most awesome declarations of the status of the Scriptures compared to any other ‘holy’ book. *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [literally ‘God-breathed’], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction [or training] in righteousness”* 2 Timothy 3:16. The Scriptures originated from God. They are the *“living oracles”* that Moses and others received from heaven (Acts 7:38). Apostle Paul’s writings were and are considered Scripture (2Pet.3:15-16). We can trust and rely upon the Scriptures in *perilous times*.

They are profitable for four things:

- a. *“for doctrine”* - this means for *teaching*. Our source of *doctrine* should be the Scriptures alone
- b. *“for reproof”* – this means for *proving, convicting*. The Scriptures prove the truth to us and cause us to be convicted to change and align with the truth
- c. *“for correction”* – this means *rectifying, straightening us up*
- d. *“for instruction in righteousness”* – this means *training, educating and tutoring* us to live by faith

We need the Scriptures in *perilous times*. When we receive the Scriptures as from God in *perilous times* we will be made *“complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”* 2 Timothy 3:17.

May we walk as people who are the answer to *perilous times!*

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