

BIBLE COMPANION COMMENTARY:

1 TIMOTHY

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PREFACE

This commentary is based around the New European Version of the Bible, which is generally printed with brief commentary on each chapter. This commentary is the hard copy of the more detailed commentary found on the *Bible Companion* app.

Are there errors of thought and intellectual process in these volumes? Surely there are. Let me know about them. But don't fail to see the wood for the trees. Never let the wonder of the simple, basic Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom become obscured by all the angst over correctly interpreting this or that Bible verse. Believe it, respond to it, be baptized into Him, and let the word become flesh in you as it was so supremely in Him.

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1 TIMOTHY CHAPTER 1

1:1 *Paul, an apostle*- Paul begins by saying he has been called to be a sent out one, and then a few verses later backs it up by repeating that he was appointed to be an apostle (2:7). The same pattern is to be seen in 2 Timothy; the opening verse speaks likewise of how he is an apostle (2 Tim. 1:1), and then 2 Tim. 1:11 says he was indeed appointed as an apostle. Perhaps Timothy was beginning to doubt Paul's credentials, and this was a factor in Timothy's lack of full devotion to his ministry? Or perhaps Paul is urging Timothy to follow his own example of commitment to the calling he had received. For the letters to Timothy suggest that Timothy needed to be stirred up to continue responding to the calling received.

Of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Saviour, and Christ Jesus our hope- The most essential error, practically or doctrinally, is to "lose connection to the head [Jesus], from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together... grows" (Col. 2:19). The Lord Himself taught what Paul called 'growing up into Him who is the head'; He commented that the end goal for His disciples was that "every one [i.e. disciple, in the context] when he is perfected shall be as his master", i.e. Himself (Lk. 6:40). This was why Paul can speak of "Jesus who is our hope" (1 Tim. 1:1), all we hope to ever become. The

hope of glory is to have Christ in us fully (Col. 1:27), which explains why the presence of the spirit of Christ in us now is a foretaste and guarantee of our eternal salvation.

The Greco-Roman idea of a 'Saviour' was that anyone who had dramatically personally saved / delivered someone could be given the title "Saviour" by the person whom they had saved. A physician might be honoured with the title "Saviour" by someone whom he had cured. But always the title was granted with reference to some highly specific and defined act performed to an individual who then designates the person as their Saviour. The idea of calling God and Jesus "our Saviour" means that we have felt deep gratitude for a specific act of saving, performed specifically for us individually at a specific time. The specific historical act was surely the Lord's death on the cross. This is what we rightly celebrate regularly, and personally name Him as "Saviour". This all serves to underline how the Lord's death is consistently, persistently portrayed in the New Testament as the climactic act of God's love for me personally; and how salvation is something we now enjoy, and have cause to celebrate. We shall indeed die in this life, but we have a great salvation to celebrate all the same, in that we have already been saved from death. 'Saviour' implies a salvation *from* something; but if we proudly refuse to accept conviction of the reality of sin and death, then we will not crown him as our saviour. Potentially, God is the saviour of all men (1 Tim. 4:10). But they will not let themselves perceive this- lest they break down in a gratitude that will totally consume their lives. It is not as if a crisis situation arose, and the Lord Jesus then stepped in to save us. He saved us from death, whilst we were still sinners, and we never even knew it. But now we do. And so our appreciation of Him as our Saviour is of a far deeper nature- than if He had obtruded into our lives to grab us out of a situation which arose during our lifetimes.

1:2 *To Timothy, my true child in faith*- Timothy had not been converted to Christ by Paul's preaching directly. But his spiritual formation was largely thanks to Paul's influence. We can have children in the faith as a result of pastoral work with them, even if we ourselves were not responsible for their conversion or baptism. "True child" might suggest that our real children are our spiritual children. For our efforts with them will last eternally. We might even infer from this that Paul had other, unbelieving children of his own. This is great comfort to the childless or those whose children haven't turned out spiritually as they would have wished. You can, in fact, have other such children. As the son of a Jewess who had married 'out of the faith' to a Gentile (Acts 16:1), Timothy would have been considered spiritually illegitimate; so perhaps Paul is saying that no matter how we are born under a bad sign in the eyes of the world, and lack legitimacy with our society- we are 'true / legitimate children' in Christ.

Grace, mercy and peace to you- They are nearly always mentioned in this order. God's grace is the basis for His mercy and this leads to peace with God. The standard wishing of peace to a person [*Shalom / salaam*] was thereby invested with so much more meaning when used between Christian believers. It was a real wish that 'May the things we believe really be true for you'.

From God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord- The clear separation between Father and Son here and in :1 [and so often in Paul's letters] ought to be proof enough that Trinitarian understandings are wrong.

1:3 *Stay at Ephesus*- From what we figure of Timothy later in the correspondence, the implication would be that Timothy wanted to give up in his work with the believers there because he was tired of the inter-personal tensions involved in confronting people and leading people to a better way.

Just as I urged you to do- The Greek can stand the translation 'begged'. Timothy clearly needed to be persuaded and was weak from the start.

When I was going into Macedonia- It seems this refers to the time of Acts 20:1: "Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them he said farewell [to Ephesus] and departed for Macedonia". But soon afterwards we read that Timothy rejoined Paul (Acts 20:4); we could conclude that Timothy couldn't stick it for long. And now Paul is urging him again.

So that you might instruct certain men not to teach a different doctrine- "Instruct" is to charge. This word is repeated three more times to Timothy; he was to charge others as to how to behave (1 Tim. 4:11; 5:7; 6:17). For a young, insecure man to charge others regarding their behaviour was of course very difficult. All teaching is difficult because the message we have is not acceptable to our audience, for the most part. This is why true teaching of God's word is not an easy work- if we do it properly. It is not entertainment; reasoning with folks about how to use their money (1 Tim. 6:17) is bound to be difficult and not something we naturally would prefer to do. The difficulty was worse because the Ephesian church had originally been formed out of the synagogue, and the false teaching in view in this verse was probably by Jews. And Timothy was born uncircumcised and probably not fluent in Hebrew. Yet he was to charge the Judaists with authority that they must not teach their false teaching further.

We must compare Paul's charges here to Timothy with the Holy Spirit's statement that "From your own number will men arise and distort the truth to draw away disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:30). "Certain men..." implies specific individuals whom Timothy was perfectly aware of, and surely the allusion is to the words of Paul about these very "men". Clearly God states what 'will' happen but there are conditions and various forks in the path which depend upon human freewill. And as Jeremiah makes clear, judgment spoken need not come about if there is repentance. The prophesied false teaching was to come from false teachers within the church at Ephesus. And that is why Paul spends so much time telling Timothy to resist false teaching, and to appoint elders according to the strict qualifications of 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 5:17-25; seeing that teaching was to be done only by the elders (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17). This was likely why Paul didn't write to them directly as a church, warning them to tackle their false teachers. Probably the eldership wouldn't have even read his letter to the church. I take the 'Epistle to the Ephesians' to be more of a circular letter rather than addressed specifically to the church in Ephesus. Instead Paul focused upon strengthening Timothy, so that this young, weak believer could wrestle with church politics and strong minded elders who were deeply astray. That Timothy succeeded, according to the Lord's own letter to Ephesus, is an amazing evidence of the power of the Spirit. The uninspired Epistle of Ignatius to the Church at Ephesus [dated around AD 110] likewise implies they were a doctrinally orthodox church. Paul chose the weakest and most unlikely person to do the job. And this is just how God works too.

1:4 Nor give heed- The same word used about not giving heed to the teaching of the Pharisees (Mt. 16:6,12) and the scribes (Lk. 20:34). The specific nature of the false teaching was Jewish, because the Ephesus ecclesia had begun in the synagogue. And further, the Judaizers had a conscious program of seeking to infiltrate Christian groups with their teachings. The same words are found in Tit. 1:14, warning Titus not to give heed to *Jewish* fables. Later in 1 Timothy the word is used about not giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons (4:1). These terms might appear to be more relevant to pagan ideas; but a great theme of Paul is that Judaism was in fact another form of paganism. This needs to be given its full weight by those Christians who seem attracted to Jewish legalism to this day.

To fables- The Jewish myths which were considered by them to be inspired on an equal level to the Old Testament scriptures.

And endless genealogies- Literally, unfinished genealogies. The idea may be that the only genealogies worth studying are those which finished in Christ, as recorded in Matthew and

Luke. The temple records were destroyed by the Babylonians, and so Judaism was in crisis- as the priests could not conclusively prove their descent from Levi and Aaron. All they had was incomplete genealogies which they used to justify their positions.

Which cause disputes- The problem with much academic Bible study is that it can only minister questions and not building up. This is not helpful in any pastoral context. By saying this, I am not appealing for a simplistic approach. But rather a way of interpreting the Bible which builds up, using building blocks of interpretation and connection which are not speculative and are therefore not open to any question.

Rather than Godly edification which is in faith- The Hebrew and Greek idea is of trust. Edifying, building up, involves trust. And nothing more can be said. We do not arrive at such trust / faith by considering endless questions which have no definitive answer. So much that passes for apologetics is in my view misplaced. It is childlike trust which enables God's word to build us up, not endless debate or "disputes". They do not forge a path towards upbuilding.

1:5 The intended result of this instruction is love out of a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith- The purpose of keeping our understanding of the basic principles clear is that this will lead to true love and faith (1 Tim. 1:3-5). Timothy was to "charge" some that they didn't teach false doctrine, and the "end" of this charge [s.w. :5] was "charity out of a pure heart... a good conscience... love unfeigned". This is what the true Gospel enables, and *this* is why it should be defended. This is where it all leads. All commandments are "briefly comprehended" in that of love (Rom. 13:9). This is the end result of everything, it is the singular fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), the bond of maturity (Col. 3:14).

1:6 From which things some having strayed have turned aside to idle talking- If the development of love and faith is not the end point in our motivation, all discussion of Biblical interpretation ends up straying and going wrong, degenerating into academic difference of opinion for its own sake. All the profound disputes end up therefore as "idle talking", literally, 'babble'. For all their apparent erudition, they are just that- babble. Our motivation is so very important before getting involved in any doctrinal teaching or dispute.

1:7 Desiring to be teachers of the law- Clearly the nature of the problem in Ephesus was rooted in Jewish thinking. These people aspired to be small time rabbis. And Paul the rabbi had quit all that; he was in the best position of all to warn against this tendency. The term 'teacher of the law' was applied to Gamaliel, Paul's tutor (Acts 5:34). These men pretended to Gamaliel; and Paul had once done the same.

Though they neither understand what they say, nor what they confidently affirm- The word is only used again in urging Titus to confidently affirm the need for true spirituality in the face of Judaist false teaching (Tit. 3:8). Spare a thought for timid Timothy, up against men with every air of self-assurance, who confidently affirmed the teachings which he was asked to stand up against. We wonder why someone of Timothy's nature and timidity would be used by the Lord for such a ministry. Our callings in ministry are very often right against the grain of what we would consider ourselves naturally suited to. This is the nature of carrying the Lord's cross. Thus Paul was sent to the Gentiles and Peter to the Jews, when naturally they were both best suited for the opposite role.

1:8 But we know that the law is good- Paul is always at pains to point out that the Law is holy, just and good. The problem was with how it was used (Rom. 7:14).

If a man use it lawfully- Galatians 3 explains that the law was given in order to convict

sinner of the hopelessness before God, and to prepare sincere sinners to throw themselves upon salvation by grace in Christ. The intended usage of the Law was therefore for sinners; but the Jews considered it was intended for the righteous.

1:9 *Since we know that the law is not made for a righteous man-* See on 1:8 *If a man use it lawfully*. This was the very opposite of the Jewish understanding of the Law as intended for the righteous.

But for the lawless and unruly, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers- Why this particular list of crimes in :9 and :10? The first four commandments of the ten commandments are all broken by the "Lawless and unruly... ungodly and sinners... unholy and profane". Murderers of parents break the fifth commandment; manslayers break the sixth commandment.

1:10 *For fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers-* As noted on :9, the list of sins chosen here is not random, but each of them refer to various commandments within the Decalogue [the ten commandments]. Significantly, Paul doesn't allude to the command about Sabbath keeping; that is the one command in the Decalogue he considers as not morally binding.

And if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine- Whilst Paul is arguing against legalistic obedience to the Law, he is not saying that the Law is somehow 'not good' (:8). Indeed, he sees sound Christian teaching ["doctrine"] as being in line with the spirit of the ten commandments, excluding the Sabbath law. Hence 1:11 continues: "In accordance with the Gospel...". Breaking the spirit of the Decalogue was breaking the spirit of the Christian Gospel.

1:11 *In accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God-* The language recalls in Jewish terms the glory of God revealed at the giving of the ten commandments. The previous three verses have laboured the point that the Gospel precludes the same things as were forbidden by the ten commandments. The giving of the Gospel is as glorious, in fact far more so, than the giving of the Law. The would-be Rabbis whom Timothy had to struggle against (:7) were claiming that God's revelation had come to them, and therefore they had authority. Paul's point is that the Gospel in all its glory has been revealed to each one who has faith in it ["committed to my trust" is literally 'en-faithed'], making each believer no less authoritative than the Rabbis.

Which was committed to my trust- Paul uses a strong and emphatic Greek construction here. The Greek means 'to me, myself, I, personally'. Those raised 'knowing the truth' should pause and reflect whether the wonder of the fact they have been given the Gospel is registering with them as it might. God believes in us; this is why He has graciously called us to know His Truth. Thus when Paul writes in :14 about his own conversion: "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus", he perhaps means that it was the love and faith of Christ in him, Paul, that was the basis of his being converted by the Lord Jesus.

Every time Paul speaks of having been entrusted with the Gospel, he uses the common Greek word for 'to have faith in'; and within the next verses, we find him using the same Greek word again, in the context of our belief in Christ (1 Tim. 1:11,12,16; Gal. 2:7,16). We had faith in the Lord, and He had faith in us, He en-faithed us, with the preaching of the Gospel we have believed in. Here we see the awesome mutuality between a man and his Lord. We have been entrusted with the preaching of the Gospel; the Lord believes in us to do His work.

1:12 *I thank him that enabled me, Christ Jesus our Lord-* Literally, en-strengthened me, put His *dunamis* in me. I take this as a reference to the internal strengthening within a believer made possible by the gift of the Lord's Spirit. Such a gift is received after baptism.

And Paul is the parade example; after his baptism, he "increased the more in strength" and preached boldly (Acts 9:22 s.w. "enabled"). He refers to this strengthening later: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). Those "all things" in that context refer to the internal, mental, psychological ability to cope with various life circumstances. He wishes Timothy to make use of the same strengthening: "Be strong in the grace [Gk. 'the gift'] that is in [that comes from being in] Christ" (2 Tim. 2:1). And at the end of his days, Paul could reflect that the Lord Jesus stood with him at his final trial and strengthened him (2 Tim. 4:17). The same word is used of how weak believers like us were strengthened out of their weakness to be strong in faith- again a reference to psychological strengthening (Heb. 11:34), just as Abraham's weak faith was strengthened (Rom. 4:20 s.w.). The same power strengthens believers [s.w.] unto internal characteristics such as endurance, patience and joy (Col. 1:11), the "power" in view being the spirit of Christ. This same power / *dunamis* is referred to in Rom. 15:13 as the source of these same internal, mental attributes: God fills us with "all joy and peace... that you may abound in hope, through the power / *dunamis* of the Holy Spirit". To deny the operation of this power is not simply a matter of missing out on so much; it is a denial of the essence of the transforming Gospel. A related word is found in Eph. 3:16- we are "strengthened with might [*dunamis*] by His spirit in the inner man". This is where the gift of the Spirit operates; the reference is to "the inner man" and not the public display of the Spirit in special miracles etc. Paul's whole ministry, like ours, is a result of "the operation of His power / *dunamis*" (Eph. 1:19,21; 3:7). On this basis, Paul urges timid Timothy to allow the spirit / *dunamis* of love and a sound mind to work in him [again, internal attributes, not referring to any ability to perform miracles]; and this would drive out his "spirit of fear" (2 Tim. 1:7). It was this *dunamis* which would enable Timothy to endure "the afflictions of the Gospel" which were clearly making Timothy balk (2 Tim. 1:8). Paul notes that the opposition to Timothy within the church had a "form of Godliness [possibly referring to their upholding some kind of statement of faith] but [were] denying the power [*dunamis*]" of that form of Godliness, i.e. the doctrines of the Gospel (2 Tim. 3:5). Paul has spoken of the "form of sound words" as referring to some kind of corpus of Gospel teaching in 2 Tim. 1:13. This has unpleasant similarities with those of our day who loudly profess their Biblicism, their holding of some "form of Godliness" in the Gospel; but who deny the operation of the power / *dunamis* which is associated with it, in that those who accept the Gospel shall be given the Spirit. And this element within the church of today deny this, insisting that the Spirit is not given in response to belief of the Gospel, and that the days of Spirit operation ceased in the first century. It is this *dunamis*, this power from the Lord, which provides us with all things required for spiritual life and Godliness, and keeps us unto salvation (1 Pet. 1:5; 2 Pet. 1:3). See on :14 *And the grace...*

For that he counted me faithful, appointing me to his service- Very much the language of Romans, about how we who are sinners are judged and yet found innocent because of our status in Christ. We are counted as faithful; it would be rather arrogant surely to assume we are given a ministry because of our righteousness. But that is surely not what Paul intends to say, especially as he now goes right on to speak of his terrible past. He who was such a sinner, was judged / counted faithful. That is Paul's point. The ministries we are given are therefore given as an outworking of God's undeserved, unmerited grace to us; and not as a function of any human adequacy for the tasks. And yet Paul is appealing to Timothy to be faithful. He is presenting himself to his 'son in the faith' as a role model, and yet only by grace. Just as we do to our natural and spiritual children.

1:13 *Though I was before a blasphemer, a persecutor and abusive-* Orthodox Judaism was and is highly sensitive to the possibility of blasphemy. Paul so often casts Judaism in the language of paganism; and he saw himself as such. He had compelled others to blaspheme

(see on Acts 26:11); and he sees himself as the blasphemer. He took responsibility for what he had forced others to do.

Paul saw himself, his own life and experiences, in the light of the words of the Gospels. He saw himself as having been like those Roman soldiers who nailed Christ to the tree trunk (Lk. 23:34 = 1 Tim. 1:13). He saw himself as "chief of sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15), and therefore one of those referred to by Christ in Mt. 9:13.

However, I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief- Ignorance is not an excuse for crime. The Lord had prayed on the cross for forgiveness of those who persecuted and crucified Him, because of their "ignorance" (Lk. 23:34). The Jews however were not totally ignorant, just relatively so. And Paul likewise was not totally ignorant; he had been pushing against the goads of conscience. And as one brought up in Jerusalem, he presumably would have heard the preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus Himself. Paul knew full well from Mosaic precedent that ignorance did not remove guilt; for there were guilt offerings prescribed for sins of ignorance. Remember that Paul is about to hold himself up as an example and pattern of ultimate grace. He is saying that he "obtained mercy" on the basis of the Lord's prayer of Lk. 23:34 as it were covering him too; his torture and murder of those in Christ had been done to Christ personally, for they were His body. And He Himself had pointed this out to Paul in saying that "I am Jesus, whom you persecute" (Acts 9:5). Paul knew that ignorance was no basis for innocence before God; and he is not to be read here as preaching that. He is saying that *even though* ignorance is not an excuse, yet the utter, extreme grace of Jesus in His prayer for His personal tormentors was applied by Jesus to those who likewise tormented those in His body. And so the same extreme grace was shown by Him to Paul. And he urges us to realize that this happened in order to set him up as a pattern for everyman who should afterward believe. Nobody should ever therefore feel that they are somehow beyond the scope of God's grace- because of the parade example shown to us all in Paul.

If ignorance is indeed no excuse for sin, the idea may be that Paul's "belief" was what enabled Divine mercy to cover what he had done in the years when he was "ignorant". "Ignorance" does not simply mean that he genuinely didn't know what he was doing was wrong. For the Lord said that Paul's behaviour was a kicking against the prods of conscience. "If any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant" (1 Cor. 14:38 s.w.; also 2 Cor. 6:9 "as unknown [ignorant, s.w.] yet well known") shows how you can be "ignorant" in the sense of refusing to act upon what you do in fact know. It doesn't have to mean that you are genuinely uninformed and unaware. Paul's comment that he persecuted Christians in "ignorance" is therefore using 'ignorance' in the sense of 'willful ignorance', as in 1 Cor. 14:38. He did those things kicking against the prods of conscience; he knew what he was doing was wrong. Many times Paul uses the word to appeal to his readers not to be "ignorant". The very fact he is appealing means that he is using the term in the sense of 'willful ignorance'. 'I obtained mercy *because* I did it ignorantly in unbelief' therefore requires some retranslation. The common word *hoti*, rendered "because", doesn't have to mean "because". "As though I did it ignorantly..." would also be a fair translation. His ignorance was not the basis of forgiveness- for sins of ignorance still needed atonement. But he who deserved great punishment was by grace (:14) treated as if he had been ignorant- when in fact, he was willfully ignorant and kicking against the prods of conscience. This continues to exemplify what he has said in :12- that he was "counted" faithful, even though he was not.

1:14 *And the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus-* See on :13 *I obtained mercy*. God's grace to him was indeed outstanding. But the sense seems to be as in the GNB: "Our Lord poured out his abundant grace on me and gave me the faith and love which are ours in union with Christ Jesus". "Grace", *charis*, carries the idea of 'gift', and there is here a reference to the Lord's gift of the Holy Spirit to

Paul after his baptism, the point of our "union with Christ"; see on :12 *Him that enabled me*. The gift of the Holy Spirit was fundamentally a gift of a new spirit, a mind / psychology. And it included such internal spiritual, mental attributes as faith and love. In Ephesians, Paul calls faith itself "the gift of God". It is not of ourselves. That a sinner like Paul should be given such a transforming gift was grace / gift indeed. And in this, he is the pattern to all who subsequently believe- we too receive that same gift. See on :16 *Believe in Him*. "With faith and love" could however be saying that this super abounding grace of the Lord Jesus is all the same made actual by our faith which, if it is really faith, will manifest itself in love. Because we cannot be passive to the greatness of the gift given; we will respond, and that response will be to love as He has first loved us.

1:15 *Faithful is the saying and worthy of all acceptance*- This could refer to inspired prophetic sayings being judged by other inspired prophets to be "worthy of acceptance", and coming to form a corpus of Holy Spirit inspired material which was accepted as authoritative in the early church. Perhaps this corpus of material is referred to as the "form of sound words" or "form of Godliness" (2 Tim. 1:13; 3:5). The idea that Paul was the parade example of the Lord's operations and grace to all believers was therefore accepted and distributed in the early community.

That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief- Clearly perception of sinfulness grew in Paul after his conversion. He considered himself blameless in keeping the law (Phil. 3:6); and yet chief of sinners. He realized that sin is to do with attitudes rather than committed or omitted actions. I'd paraphrase Paul's personal reminiscence in Rom. 7:7-10 like this: "As a youngster, I had no real idea of sin. I did what I wanted, thought whatever I liked. But then in my early teens, the concept of God's commandments hit me. The command not to covet really came home to me. I struggled through my teens and twenties with a mad desire for women forbidden to me (AV, conveniently archaic, has "all manner of concupiscence"). And slowly I found in an ongoing sense (Gk.), I grew to see, that the laws I had to keep were killing me, they would be my death in the end". Paul's progressive realization of the nature of sin is reflected in Romans 7:18,21,23. He speaks there of how he came to *know* that nothing good was in him; he *found* a law of sinful tendency at work in him; he came to *see* another law apart from God's law at work in his life. This process of knowing, finding and seeing his own sinfulness continued throughout his life. His way of escape from this moral and intellectual dilemma was through accepting the grace of the Lord Jesus at his conversion. In one of his earliest letters, Paul stresses that he felt like the least of the apostles, he honestly felt they were all better than he was (1 Cor. 15:9). However, he reminisces that in his earlier self-assurance, he had once considered himself as not inferior to "the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. 11:5). Some years later, he wrote to the Ephesians that he felt "less than the least of all saints" (Eph. 3:8). This was no Uriah Heep, fawning humility. He really felt that he was the worst, the weakest, of all the thousands of believers scattered around the shores of the Mediterranean at that time. As he now faced his death, he wrote to Timothy here that he was "chief of sinners", the worst sinner in the world, and that Christ's grace to him should therefore serve as an inspiration to every other believer, *in that* none had sinned as grievously as he had done. It could well be that this is one of Paul's many allusions back to the Gospels- for surely he had in mid the way the publican smote upon his breast, asking God to be merciful "to me *the sinner*" (Lk. 18:13 RVmg.). Note that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" is rooted in the Lord's words that He came to call sinners and to seek and save the lost (Mt. 9:13; 18:11).

1:16 *However, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as the chief sinner might Jesus Christ*- Peter uses the same term in saying that all God's people have obtained mercy (1 Pet. 2:10). He took his friend Paul at his word, seeing in Paul a pattern of everyman's conversion.

Show all his patience- The Lord had spoken of how Paul had kicked against the goads. His patience with Paul was amazing, even allowing him, as it were, to torture and murder Christians until Paul finally surrendered to conversion. This is a template for His patience with us all.

As a pattern- He saw in his conversion a pattern or template for all those who would afterwards believe (see on :15 *Faithful is the saying*). Having said that he was "chief" of the tribe of sinners, Paul goes straight on to say that this "was so that in me *as chief* might Jesus Christ shew forth *all* his longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should later believe on him" (1 Tim. 1:15,16 RV). This sounds as if Paul realized that he was being set up as the chief, supreme example to us; a template for each of us, of forgiveness and zealous response to that forgiveness. His conversion and subsequent spiritual growth are recorded as they are because they are a pattern for every subsequent believer- not just for those involved in preaching and pastoral work. It's because of this, it seems to me, that we have *so much* information about the man Paul; we really are enabled to enter into his spirit and personality. His physical appearance is stressed (Gal. 4:13,14; 1 Cor. 2:3,4; 2 Cor. 10:10; 12:5,7,9; Phil. 3:21; and especially his hands: Acts 21:11; 27:19; 1 Cor. 4:12). We imagine him as having a dark complexion, seeing he was confused with an Egyptian (Acts 21:38).

To those that would later believe in him to gain eternal life- According to John's Gospel, the eternal life begins now, in that through the work of the Spirit we begin to live the kind of life which we shall eternally live. The Greek literally reads "Believe on Him in[to] eternal life". Faith in Christ, demonstrated by baptism into Him, results in the Spirit empowering us to live the life eternal, the kind of life we shall eternally live. Paul has touched on this idea in :14.

1:17 *Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen-* The whole style of this suggests that :15-17 are all part of the "Faithful saying" which Paul is quoting. Note especially the "Amen" at the end, followed by a resumption of the argument in the next verse and continuing on with the rest of the letter. It could be that the "Saying" about Paul being our pattern of grace was part of a liturgy, said or sung in prayer or hymn. Yet the first person pronoun, "I", might suggest that it was said or sung about each believer and not just about Paul; everyman should see in himself a pattern of amazing grace for others. This would explain why such a "Saying" was used in hymn or prayer- as a witness to the unbelievers listening.

1:18 *This charge I commit to you, my child Timothy-* The charge of remaining in Ephesus and resisting the false teachers (:3); a charge which had been supported by inspired prophecy.

In accordance with the prophecies which were made about you, that by them- There were prophecies about Timothy which had gone before, or "led the way to thee" (1 Tim. 1:18 RVmg.). But Paul had to encourage Timothy to fulfil them, to make them come real and true for him. Likewise the fearful and timid Jeremiah was told "I have made thee this day a defenced city... be not dismayed" (Jer. 1:17,18). He had to live out the potential personality which God had enabled him to have.

You may war- But Paul had to warn Timothy that whoever goes to war cannot entangle himself in the things of this world (s.w. 2 Tim. 2:4). It seems that Timothy had the potential to pull down great strongholds in his warfare; but he was distracted by the things of the world. Not living up to potential is a tragic feature of so much spiritual life.

The good warfare- The word is only used elsewhere in 2 Cor. 10:4: "The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds". The warfare was too much for timid Timothy; but he had access to great spiritual strength to cast down the strongholds of false teaching.

1:19 *Holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some having thrust from them, made shipwreck of their faith*- The lead examples were Hymenaeus and Alexander (:20). 2 Tim. 2:17 informs us that these two men had lost their faith in the resurrection, and taught this, resulting in the faith of others being overthrown. Those who lose their own faith so often seek to overthrow ["shipwreck"] the faith of others. Their teaching that the resurrection was past already was therefore rooted in their lack of faith. False teaching so often has a root in a lack of faith or other moral deficiency. Human nature seeks to bring others down to our own level; whereas the call of the Gospel is to seek to raise our own aspirations and to encourage others to aim higher and be elevated to Heavenly things.

1:20 *Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme*- The fact they were still causing trouble in 2 Tim. 2:17 means this intention didn't work out; they continued their blasphemy. The mention of blasphemy is in the context of :13, where Paul has admitted to being a blasphemer, who had been converted by the long patience of the Lord Jesus as an example to others (:16). And now Paul seeks to reflect to others the patient, seeking, saving grace which he has experienced. And this was his motive in whatever courses of action were involved in his 'delivering [these men] to satan'.

1 TIMOTHY CHAPTER 2

2:1- see on 1 Pet. 3:7.

I urge therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made- In view of the way believers fall away and also because of our great duty to witness to the world, *first of all* (i.e. most importantly), *prayer* must be made (1 Tim. 2:1 and context). Indeed, it is an actual sin- albeit a sin of omission- to cease to pray for our brethren (1 Sam. 12:23).

We naturally ask why these four forms of prayer are spoken of here: "supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings". One possible explanation is that these terms are all elsewhere used about the prayer work of the Lord Jesus; indeed, "intercessions" are spoken of as being specifically *His* work and not within our capability to make (Rom. 8:26,27,34; for the other words, see Heb. 5:7; Lk. 22:19,45). And directly in this context, Paul emphasizes that there is only one mediator, one who can make intercession- and that is not us, but the Lord Jesus (:5). This leads us to reconsider the opening words of this verse: "I urge...". This translates *parakleo*, to call near. It could be that Paul is calling out to the Lord Jesus to pray / draw near to God for the things he now mentions.

For all men- If as suggested above Paul is calling the Lord Jesus to pray / intercede "for all men", this enables us to understand the same phrase being used in :4 concerning God's willingness to save "all men". The Judaists would have felt that prayer was only appropriate for Jews and not for Gentiles.

2:2 *For kings, and all that are in high place, that we may live a calm and quiet life in all Godliness and dignity*- This implies that environment does indeed affect our spirituality, and we should pray for that environment to be such that it allows us to live in "proper conduct". And perhaps it follows that we ought to consciously seek environments which enable us to lead Godly lives. Yet on the other hand, according to the parable of the vineyard in Isaiah 5, God seeks our spiritual fruitfulness and gives us ultimately the optimal environment for that. Also remember that Paul is writing to Timothy about the situation in Ephesus, where the believers were very much at the mercy of the mood of the governing bodies towards them.

The Greek for “dignity” conveys the idea of soberness, gravity, seriousness. This is indeed appropriate for those who are face moment by moment with the very real issues of eternity, eternal life or death... both for themselves and others. Perhaps this was a reference to Timothy's need to “flee youthful passions” (2 Tim. 2:22 ESV). He needed to act with a gravity beyond his years.

God's own Son made the point that He did not pray for the world, but for His own people (Jn. 17:9). The way He tells the Father this in prayer would seem to emphasize how strongly He felt about this. The commands to pray for the world are in the context of requesting that human Governments might permit God's people to live spiritual lives among them (Jer. 29:7; 1 Tim. 2:2); not for the Governments etc. in themselves.

2:3 This is good and acceptable- A reference to the incense and sacrifices being acceptable before God. For prayer really is our equivalent of incense and sacrifice under the new covenant. Again, remember that Paul is writing to Timothy in the context of the problems faced from Judaizers.

In the sight of God our saviour- With the Governments so against them, it would've been tempting for Christians to think that they should publicize their prayers for their rulers in order to show that they were not against the Governing bodies. But Paul, as so often, foresees that likely tendency and urges them to pray because it is acceptable *before God*. Prayer should never be used for image or to impress men.

2:4 Who would wish all men to be saved- See on 2:1 *For all men*. I have suggested that Paul bids the Lord Jesus pray for all men, especially those in the Governments; and he here gives the reason. The Lord's will that all be saved requires the taking of the Gospel to all men, and their acceptance of the message. And so Paul bids the Lord Jesus to pray for those in authority, because it was and is typically them who hinder the spreading of the Gospel and who create environments which penalize accepting the Gospel.

Paul tells Timothy [or calls the Lord Jesus- see on :1] to pray for the Government to allow him to continue preaching, because God “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:1-4). There is here the suggestion that Timothy's prayers would enable more men to come to the knowledge of the Truth, and thereby fulfil God's intention. But that intention and will of God had been made dependent on the prayers and preaching of the likes of Timothy. God's “will” is that all will be saved; yet not all will be. His will is that not one of the little ones perish (Mt. 18:14); but we can offend the little ones, so that they do perish. His *intention* is that the church reveals His wisdom to this world (Eph. 3:10); but it doesn't always do so. None can resist His will; and yet His will is not necessarily what He does, in that His will does not force men and women into obedience or compliance. God is not a manipulator nor a bully, i.e. He does not enforce His will over others. Only in the future Kingdom of God will His will be done on earth as it is now done in Heaven. His will to save all has been frustrated by the church. The Gospel was to be taken to every person under heaven, from the first century onwards. So why, then, did billions live and die in ignorance? I have no final answer, but I would suggest that this was not His will; just as our behaviour so often is not His will. The church was potentially empowered to take the Gospel to the planet, right from the start. And yes, I include to the remotest islands of the Pacific, the jungles of South America etc. The technology would have been raised up- the logistical side of it would've been nothing for God to fix if believers had wished to do it with all their hearts. Instead they argued over theology and got lost in legalism and divisions

between themselves, and allowed the world and all its limitations to influence their thinking. Here, Paul is appealing for prayers for Governments so that "all men" can be saved. He realized that state opposition hinders the salvation of all men, because people

It could also be observed that "all men" need not mean 'every human being', but 'all types of men'. In our age we see this happening. The Gospel *is* going to all the world. Not only to every nation, but to every type of person. Even in the West, men from prisoners to the highest business executives are now being baptized; and women from prostitutes to politicians. There is repeated Biblical emphasis that "all men" will hear and respond to the Gospel (Jn. 1:7; 5:23; 12:32; Acts 17:30,31; 1 Tim. 2:4). It can't mean 'every man, woman and child who ever live'; for many have lived and died knowing nothing of Christ. It must surely mean that a few of 'all [types of] people', ethnically, linguistically, socially, in terms of personality types... will be saved; just as there were representatives of all types of animal gathered into the ark [a type of baptism into Christ, as Peter informs us]. If the rain is a type of the second coming, it follows that before that time, all types of animal, clean and unclean [which Acts 10 interprets as Jews and Gentiles] must be gathered into the ark of Christ. And now in this century, as we come to the end of human history, all types of people are realising deep within them that something is up with this world. They are starting to feel their desperation, for all their show of hedonism. There are far more believers in God today than there were 50 years ago. That's a fact. Never say or think that people 'just aren't interested'. Some of them are, indeed more and more of them are, and they are desperately interested. Men and women are somehow turning to Him, but lack the knowledge. And if we go on with this work, the end will shortly come.

And come to the knowledge of the truth- Paul sometimes writes of *the* truth, with the article; but this is one of the 14 times in the pastoral letters where he doesn't use the article. So I don't think his sense is that God wishes all men to pass through a process of knowledge / study until they come to a defined set of theological understandings which he calls "the truth". The very same phrase is used in 2 Tim. 3:7: "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth". So learning, 'Bible study' of itself will not necessarily lead to "the knowledge of the truth". And that is true to observed experience; for all manner of folks study the Bible but come through all their learning to a different set of truths at the end of it. I suggest that as so often, there are two halves to this verse, which state the same thing but in different terms. "To be saved" is parallel with 'coming to the knowledge of the truth'. Jn. 17:3 speaks of life eternal as knowing the one true God; the great salvation which we shall experience in terms of knowing Him and His Son, the relationship with them then which begins now- that is the knowledge of truth. This is the one and ultimate truth. And that is not the same as sitting for eternity reciting the terms of a statement of faith, the various correct Biblical interpretations we have come across. Knowing God and His Son is all about relationship with them, as is made clear so often and especially in John's Gospel. Phil. 3:8 speaks of "knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" and parallels it with 'winning Christ' at the last day; the 'knowledge' which is in view here in 1 Tim. 1 is also, I suggest, speaking of our relationship with Christ in the Kingdom. This is the 'knowledge' of 1 Cor. 13:12: "Then shall I know, even as also I am known". For now we "see through a glass darkly", our 'knowledge' is blurred and incomplete; and only then shall we see / know Him "face to face".

Unfortunately, an over hasty and slipshod reading of this verse has led to the phrase 'saving truth', by which the impression is given that the possession of true Biblical interpretation will somehow save the possessor thereof. And thus the attitude develops that if we 'know the truth', in the sense of understanding a particular set of teachings, we shall thereby be saved; and maintaining those same understandings up to our grave planks is seen as the most essential part of Christian endeavour. But we cannot be saved by intellectual knowledge; but rather by faith in the simple truth of Christ and God's saving grace. This is what can lead us to the faith that is certain that if the Lord returns at this moment, by grace I shall indeed be saved. Focusing upon 'saving truth' gives high priority to the issue of whether we have our interpretations all completely right; and it creates inevitable tension over words and meanings, with the need to disfellowship others who differ however slightly from the supposed 'saving truth' of our interpretations.

2:5- see on Heb. 4:14.

For there is one God and one mediator- The "for" here suggests that we are being given another reason for Paul's statement that the Lord wishes the salvation of "all men". The fact the Lord Jesus was human, a man, shows God's desire to save all men. A representative man was required to save men. God is not passive to human salvation or the extent of it; having given His only beloved Son to save men, He wants all men to be saved. He wants us saved! He therefore has no pleasure in the death or condemnation of the wicked; exactly because He gave His only Son to *save* men. He wants to see the purpose of the sacrifice achieved. The logic of encouragement here is powerful indeed. The reminder that there is only one God and one mediator may suggest that their total and unique focus is combined upon "men". There are no other creations God is saving through His Son, because His Son was *human* and therefore is a saviour of humans.

Between God and men, the man Christ Jesus- Against the Judaist background of this letter, it would seem that Paul is emphasizing that God is seeking connection with "men", indeed "all men"- and not just the Jews. Moses was a mediator between God and Israel, but the Lord Jesus between God and "all men". The word for "mediator" is mainly used about the Lord Jesus being the mediator of the new covenant (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). The "men" in view would then be all those who are in the new covenant; and these, therefore, would be the "all men" whose salvation God wishes, the "all men" for whom the ransom was given, i.e. those redeemed / ransomed (:6). However, the problem is that the "all men" is surely that of :1 for whom prayer is to be made, and includes governors. However it could be argued that "for all men; for kings, and all that are in high place" (2:1,2) could refer to leaders within the ecclesia; although *basileus*, "kings", is hard to apply to church elders.

The extent of Christ's humanity is brought out by the RV translation of 1 Tim. 2:5. "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus". Paul is writing this after the Lord's ascension and glorification. A mediator might be thought of as being somehow separate from both parties; but our mediator is actually "himself man", so on our side, as it were. Having received Divine nature doesn't take anything away from the Lord's appreciation of our humanity, to the extent that Paul here [for all the other exalted terms he uses elsewhere about Jesus] can call Him even now "himself man".

He is described even now as "the man Christ Jesus", able to feel the pulse of our humanity. This, in passing, opens a window into what Divine nature will be like: we

will be able to completely feel the human experience, to the extent of still bearing the title 'men' even in immortality. On this account we will be able to relate to the mortals in the Millennium.

Throughout this exposition I take the position that the Ephesian church was under strong influence from the Diana cult. This cult taught that there were many gods; whilst Paul's statement stands true in a global sense, it is clear that as so often in these letters, he is alluding to the specific errors of the Diana cult.

The Jewish obsession with Angels influenced the early Christians in the area of Christology [i.e. theories about Christ], just as it did on the topic of the Devil. Chapters like Hebrews 1 and Colossians 2 deal with this in detail, stressing that Jesus was *not* an Angel [something which the Watchtower movement of today needs to consider more fully]. The Jewish *Testament Of Daniel* 6.1 exhorts Israel to "draw near unto God and unto the angel that intercedes for you, for he is a mediator between God and man". This is alluded to by Paul in 1 Tim. 2:5, when he underlines that to us there is "one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus". Clearly Paul is alluding to the apostate Jewish angelology and correcting it- as in Hebrews 2, the point is laboured that Jesus was a man and not an Angel, and He is the only mediator.

Much has been made of the similarities between Jn. 1:1-3 and the 'Wisdom' literature of the Jews. Judaism believed in a number of intermediaries who interceded between God and Israel- Wisdom, the *Shekinah* [glory], the *Logos* / word. The *Torah* [law] had become so elevated and personified that it was spoken of almost as a separate 'God'. John and Paul are picking up these terms and explaining their true meaning- Jesus is the glory [*shekinah*] of God, He alone is the one and only true mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5). By stressing that the mediator was "the man Christ Jesus", Paul is also taking a swipe at the Greek idea of a superhuman mediator between the world and the world's creator, sometimes called a "second God". And when it comes to the Logos, John is explaining in his prologue that the theme of all God's word in the Old Testament was ultimately about Jesus, and that 'word' became flesh in a person, i.e. Jesus, in His life and death. Understanding this background helps us understand why John appears to use very 'Divine' language about the logos. He's doing so because he's alluding to the mistaken beliefs of Judaism and showing where the truth really lies in Jesus.

2:6 *Who gave himself as a ransom*- see on Rom. 3:19; Gal. 5:1. We were bought out of slavery by His death- and should not remain under bondage to any legal code nor to anything.

For all- Christ died a ransom "for all", and yet more specifically "a ransom for many", i.e. not all (1 Tim. 2:6 cp. Mk. 10:45). See on 1 Cor. 11:3. The Lord was "a ransom for all", although it was only us, the redeemed, who were ransomed by Him out of sin's slavery (Lk. 1:68; Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18; Rom. 8:13; Rev. 5:9; 14:3,4). The "all men" of our 'world' could therefore be limited to those who constitute God's world, as here defined. The real solution to being 'too inward looking' is to go out into the highways and byways, and compel men to come in to the covenants of promise.

Do we admit that we just don't preach as we should, failing to engage people with the Gospel because we assume 'nobody's interested'? 1 Tim. 2:1-6 has something for us. The Lord's death on the cross was a ransom payment "for all men"; and in this context, Paul urges that because God therefore wishes "all men to be saved" we

should therefore pray "for all men, [even] for kings and those in authority". If the Lord's death truly was for all, in that He was representative there of all men, He there "tasted death for every man" (Heb. 2:9)... then we should pray for "all men" quite literally to be saved, knowing that God is willing that "all men be saved". And Paul makes this point in the context of appealing for us to pray for all men, even Kings. This means that we should pray for even those we consider most unlikely- that they might be saved. For the cross of Christ has potentially saved them- if they will accept it. Thus Paul comments in 1 Tim. 2:6 that the cross was "a ransom for all, to be testified". The testifying or witnessing to it is to be done by our preaching. Notice how Paul draws a dynamic parallel between praying for all men and witnessing to all men (1 Tim. 2:1 cp. 6). Preaching- when it is truly inspired by the cross- can never be a prayer-less exercise, a mere presentation of information. It will be done prayerfully, thoughtfully targeted at specific individuals whom we're praying will accept the message.

Paul exhorts that prayers be made "for all men", just because "Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all", and He thereby is the one and only mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:1-6). Because of what He enabled for all, we should pray for all, that somehow circumstances might be allowed which enable all men's salvation in Jesus to indeed spread to all men.

The testimony made at the due time- The idea is overall as in GNB: "That was the proof at the right time that God wants everyone to be saved". The cross of Christ is the assurance that God wants human salvation. He is not passively waiting for us to clear some bar, but rather urges us on through demonstrating in the cross His passion for our salvation.

2:7 To this [end] I was appointed a preacher and an apostle- This continues to be in the context of the Lord's desire to save all men. Any effort we make to preach and save men has His full passion, will and enabling behind it.

I speak the truth, I do not lie- As noted on 1:1, it would seem that Timothy was perhaps doubting Paul's authority over him; or at least, those Timothy was caring for had such doubts. I sense that Paul is really speaking to Timothy's doubts; for throughout the correspondence we have the impression of Timothy having doubts and fears about everything. And yet in Rev. 2:2 the Lord later commends the church at Ephesus for having tested and rejected false apostles in their church. So we can work out that Paul's apostleship was under challenge from false apostles, and Timothy was prone to be taken in by them. The fact that finally he rejected those false apostles shows how a man was made strong out of psychological weakness.

A teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth- Preacher, apostle, teacher is allusive to the titles of Jewish rabbis and teachers. Paul is saying that he has indeed been appointed rabbi with responsibility for teaching Gentiles, just as there was such a position within Judaism. However, in practice Paul didn't focus on his commission to the Gentiles, but rather was obsessed with preaching to Gentiles- which was Peter's commission.

2:8 I therefore desire that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands- I suggested on 2:1 that Paul has called upon the Lord Jesus to pray for all men, to enable the Father's will to save all men to be progressed and achieved. Now he asks the "men" who were part of the "all men" to be saved- to themselves pray. The subject of the prayer is clearly the progression of the plan to save "all men".

Having reminded us that there is “one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all”, Paul drives home the practical result of understanding Christ’s work: “*Therefore* I desire that the men pray everywhere... without wrath and doubting” (1 Tim. 2:5-8). “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are- yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Heb. 4:15,16 NIV). Really appreciating that Christ is our personal High Priest to offer our prayers powerfully to God, should inspire us to regularly pray in faith.

Without anger- Perhaps the warning is to not pray like Jonah did, angry that Gentiles and "all men" could be saved. In this case the words of prayer would have been said with an agenda, not to God but designed more for the hearing of men or as a duty which the heart was not in. This is an easy pitfall in prayer- to pray to oneself as did the Pharisee (Lk. 18:11), or to pray with attention to how our human hearers will receive the words. To begin prayer with “Our Father” and a few thoughts on the God to whom our words are being directed is surely wise advice from the Lord. We can pray with an impure heart; and yet the very practice of prayer can make us think we are somehow spiritually acceptable before God. Thus Paul had to warn that prayer should be made “without wrath and doubting”. He knew that a man can pray to God with an angry heart, thinking the act of prayer cancels out his anger.

And dispute- Or, “argument”. This connects back to Paul’s warning to Timothy not to allow himself or others to get obsessed with endless questions and disputes about interpretation, “which only produce arguments” (1:4). One problem with all that argument and inter-personal tension arising therefrom is that prayer is hindered, especially intense prayer for the salvation of "all men".

2:9- see on 1 Cor. 14:34.

In like manner, I urge that women adorn themselves- "I also" (AV), or "In like manner" means the women are being addressed in the context of :8. And that is of prayer. I suggest that the warning is not to pray as the pagans and some Jews did- whereby women thought that by dressing up nicely they would somehow impress God and give power to their prayers. It is in this context that Paul is criticizing dressing up. The whole figure of a bride adorning herself is used positively in the Bible; it's not that God is against cosmetic adornment *per se*. But it adds nothing to the acceptability of prayer- that's the point in the context. The 'speaking' of women which is in view later in this chapter is probably likewise in this context, alluding to some local custom of women in the church at Ephesus.

In modest apparel- As noted above, I suggest the reference is to prayer not being made acceptable by some gaudily dressed priestess. Remember Paul is writing to Timothy in the context of his work in Ephesus- which was a city devoted to the worship of Diana, descriptions of whom fit exactly with the language Paul uses here about the kind of dress which is not appropriate to associate with the acceptability of female prayer. Now we can understand why Paul was just emphasized that there is only *one* mediator between God and man (:5); the Diana cult featured a mass of female priestesses, the Melissai, who were claimed to be mediators. Paul is teaching that men should pray to God through the one mediator- and not think that gaudily dressed women in the church were adding something to the prayers of males. For more reason to think that the Diana cult was the problem in the Ephesian church, see

on 3:15 *The house of God*. The priestesses of Diana, like many such cult priestesses, had sex with male worshippers in return for money under the excuse that they were enabling the worshippers to have intercourse with the god or goddess. The sex act, ejaculation within a woman, was understood as intercourse / fellowship / worship / prayer to the idol, through the idol's representative. This is why this challenge to these young women was so serious. Here, Paul says that these young women must not do this, because Christ is the only mediator, and must save themselves from their path to condemnation by having children. Later in 1 Timothy he addresses the same group of young women, saying that they must stop defrauding the widow's welfare fund, and instead have children (5:14). The funds given to them from that fund were nothing less than payment for sexual services rendered; but it was all dressed up under a Christian guise. If the young widows of 1 Timothy are the same women here addressed, they may not have been that many- for there were not that many young widows in the congregation, surely, who were engaging in this activity. It may have been as few as four or five, but surely not more than 20. But all the same- it was a huge problem, as it involved a considerable number of male Christians in the church.

With bashfulness and sobriety; not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly clothing- 'Goddess Diana' earrings feature pearls in gold; all this is the language of Diana, goddess of the Ephesians, with whom Paul was dealing.

2:10 *But apparel which becomes women professing reverence towards God through good works-* Rev. 19:8 likewise speaks of the apparel of the saints as good works. But their apparel is granted to them by Christ; it is His good works which are counted to them. "Good works" is a term used several times by Paul to Timothy. It is used twice about women in the church (1 Tim. 5:10). Perhaps the sisters felt they were not a fundamental part of the church or had no meaningful part to play. Here again in 2:10 Paul is urging the women towards being proactive, to get involved with "good works" which backed up their prayers for the spread of the Gospel to "all men"; rather than dressing themselves up in the belief that thereby they would somehow make the prayers of the men more acceptable with God. Some conservative Protestant churches of our age have come not too far away from this very kind of position, and need the same call to action. Significantly, the Lord's letter to the Ephesian church in Rev. 2 commends them for their good works, and for how they have resisted false teachers. So it would seem that Timothy's ministry was successful; all Paul's challenging, rebuking and encouraging of him actually paid off. We can easily get the impression that such appeals for change and improvement never really achieved anything, but the Lord's letter to the Ephesians seems to indicate that in Timothy's case, the letters we are reading did indeed bear fruit in his response.

2:11 *Let a woman learn-* Judaism discouraged women from learning or studying the Scriptures. Perhaps Timothy was caught up with that pressure; and Paul urges him to let the women learn. As noted on :10, it would seem that the sisters were not being encouraged to see themselves as in personal relationship with the Lord or to be proactive in their faith and works.

In quietness with all subjection- I read this in the context of Paul's concern that all the argument about abstract interpretation in the Ephesian church had led to a lack of "quietness". See on 2:8 *Or argument*. The men couldn't pray properly without bringing in the various arguments which were ongoing in the church (:8); and the women likewise couldn't learn without being tempted to be distracted by the background noise. The teacher from whom the women were to learn was Timothy. That is the context of 1 Timothy. He was to teach, and Paul wished him to include the women as his students; and they were to be allowed a learning environment free from

background noise distraction. That is a perfectly valid meaning for the word translated "silence" or "quietness".

2:12- see on 1 Cor. 14:34.

I do not permit- The Greek suggests 'I have not given over / transferred'. Paul could here be answering a claim made about him, as he often does in his letters.

A woman to teach nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in submission- It is clear that in some contexts, women did publicly teach in the early church. We think of Philip's daughters (Acts 21:9) and the command that female teachers should do so with covered heads in the Corinth ecclesia (1 Cor. 11:4-6). It could be that they were not to teach at some meetings, perhaps the breaking of bread meeting, but they could at others. Or it could be that the commands we are reading in 1 Cor. 14 about female silence were specific to Corinth, these in 1 Tim. 2 were specific and context limited to Ephesus; whereas in other areas, such as Philip's church, it was allowed. But I suggest that here in 1 Tim. 2 we are reading Paul's commands to Timothy in Ephesus where there was a specific threat to the church from Judaist infiltrators and false teachers. Timothy was being told by Paul to pull himself together, take responsibility, and secure the platform in the church, not allowing the Judaists to teach. I have sought to demonstrate that in commentary on chapter 1 and elsewhere. Perhaps it was that some very pushy Jewish women were insisting on teaching their Judaistic teachings in the church, claiming that Paul had allowed them to do so when he was in Ephesus. Paul is saying that he has *not* permitted them to do that; and he is telling Timothy to ensure they do not teach because as Judaist influenced believers, they were like Eve in Eden, deceived by the serpent. And Paul has used that very figure elsewhere in describing how the early converts likewise were as Eve in Eden but prone to be deceived by the serpent of Judaism (Rom. 16:20; 2 Cor. 11:3). Paul wants Timothy to do the teaching- not any Judaists, including women. This interpretation would fit the context seamlessly. Otherwise, why would Paul suddenly start talking about the place of women, when his letter to this point has been concerned with Judaist false teaching? He is urging that these female false teachers should not be given the platform. They should be in submission to the teaching of the true teachers.

2:13 *For Adam was first formed, then Eve-* See comment on 2:12. Paul wants Timothy to do the teaching, perhaps setting him up as Adam; the group of Judaist women wanting to teach were as Eve. The emphasis upon Adam being formed *first* and Eve being the one deceived may be in order to challenge a particular wrong emphasis or teaching within the church at Ephesus. The commentary on chapter 1 has surely established that the church was under threat from Judaists. But we also know from Acts that many former worshippers of Diana were in the church. The pull of paganism would always be significant. We have deduced from :9 that some women within the church believed that their part in prayer was in dressing up with the same opulence as Diana. It could be that wrong Jewish speculations about Eve were mixed with pagan ideas about Diana. This kind of Jewish-pagan synthesis was what led to the doctrine of the trinity. Perhaps this is why Paul here draws their attention to Eve's weakness, and Adam's primacy in creation. Reading this teaching about women in its context, it would seem to me that Paul is tackling some specific group of women in the church who were advocating a quite wrong attitude to prayer, and who were glorifying unspirituality.

2:14- see on Rom. 5:12.

And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived fell into transgression- These female false teachers were misinterpreting the story of Eve, and

adding to it various Jewish myths. And so Paul alludes to it and shows them what it really means, and how by associating themselves with Eve, they are condemning themselves. As Eve was deceived by the serpent, so believers were being deceived by false teaching (s.w. Eph. 5:6 "let no man deceive you with vain words"). Eve, then, contrary to Jewish ideas and myths (1:4), was not to be glorified and pretended to. Nor was she to be crossed with Diana. She was deceived, just as they had been by false teachers. And Timothy was to challenge and correct this. Note that the same word for "deceived" is used about the deceit of Jewish false teachers in Col. 2:8 and 2 Pet. 2:13. Note that Paul is not saying that Eve 'transgressed' and Adam did not. He uses the very same word about Adam's transgression in Rom. 5:14. He is saying that Eve fell into the transgression through having been deceived; whereas Adam, it would therefore seem, entered into the transgression clearly understanding what he was doing.

2:15 *But she shall be saved through the child-bearing-* Contrary to what is sometimes claimed, there is no article here. No reference is being made to "the child bearing", as if the birth of Messiah is in view. The sentence continues "If they continue in faith..."- so the reference is to plural women and not to the singular woman, Mary, who bore the Lord Jesus. And the salvation of Mary or women generally is surely not just because Mary was the channel for the Lord's birth. Likewise, general child-bearing is not the salvation of women.

We must look for the answer to this apparently strange statement in the context. And a glance at standard reference works (such as the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* edited by James Orr) reveals that the priestesses of Diana / Artemis in Ephesus "were all virgins". They did not have children because they were devoted to Diana; even although some of them slept with the worshippers, they aborted their children conceived as a result of this. Such abortion was common amongst temple prostitutes of many cults, but was apparently particularly enforced in the worship of Diana at Ephesus. Paul is saying that the group of sisters in the Ephesian church who were acting like these priestesses, claiming to make the prayers of males acceptable (:9), acting like mediators rather than accepting the one mediator (:5), dressing up in luxurious clothing in imitation of the Jewish Eve cult and the pagan Diana cult... these women were not to teach. Their influence was to be cut off by Timothy. They were to have children, and not abort them, and not to denigrate child-bearing. And they were to realize that Eve was not a heroine to be pretended to in that she sinned, was deceived by false teaching- as they had been. Instead they were to copy her in moving on after she realized her sin- by doing what first century women generally did, child-bearing. But with the difference that they were to raise a Godly seed, doing this work in faith and Godliness. Paul is advising this group of Ephesian women to get on and have children rather than imitate the Diana cult priestesses by not having children. The only other time the Greek word for "child-bearing" occurs is in 1 Tim. 5:14, where a group of young widows in the Ephesian church are advised to "bear children" and focus on leading their families- rather than giving the enemy an opportunity. Perhaps this same group are being referenced here. A group of young widows were becoming attracted to the cults of both Eve and Diana. Paul didn't want Timothy allowing them to teach, and he advises them to settle down and have children rather than playing at being priestesses.

So it would seem to me that Paul is addressing a particular group of women in Ephesus, and is advising Timothy how to deal with them. Those women are probably those referenced in 2 Tim. 3:6, influenced by false teachers "that creep into houses [house churches] and take captive weak minded women laden with sins, led away by

various lusts". Timothy had been charged to stop and root out this false teaching, as it was particularly influencing the sisters. But Paul is not making global statements about women and their place. For as pointed out, there is New Testament evidence of other [more Godly] women speaking and teaching in the churches.

If they continue in faith, love and sanctification with sobriety- These terms are used elsewhere about men as well. So there is no intention of telling all women globally how they as women must behave. Instead of their involvement in the behaviour discussed above, these women in Ephesus were to focus upon the positive spiritual attributes required of all believers, male or female. Paul uses the same words translated here "continue in faith" in saying that God continues faithful (2 Tim. 2:13); His abiding faithfulness to us is to result in our abiding faithfulness to Him. This same idea of mutuality between God and man, whereby we both trust in each other, has just been used by Paul in 1:12 [see note there].

1 TIMOTHY CHAPTER 3

3:1 The picture we get of Timothy is of a young man with frequent health issues, timid, with a spirit of fear rather than of power and a stable mind, easily tempted by "youthful lusts", easily awed by older, loud mouthed false teachers ["let no man despise your youth"], apt to forget what he had learned from his mother and grandmother; and yet with a desire to minister. And Paul gave him the ministry of being the bishop at Ephesus (1:4), with the brief to charge false teachers not to further teach. I speculated in discussing chapter 2 that he faced a powerful group of women in the church who were influenced by the cults of Eve and Diana, who had to be conclusively dealt with. And he was to model good works and encourage the church to likewise do them. The list of qualifications of a bishop are Paul telling Timothy how he should be; and how he should appoint brethren to leadership who met these criteria. We wonder how ever he coped. But we know- because soon afterwards, the Lord wrote to the church in Ephesus, telling them that they had done well in doing good works and in limiting the false teachers. His words were addressed to "the angel of the church"; either Timothy or those whom Timothy had appointed in leadership. So Timothy for all his weakness of character, which we can probably identify with, did indeed rise above all his limitations and achieve the spirit of what Paul is asking here.

Faithful is the saying- As noted on 1:15, there appear to have been inspired 'sayings' which were accepted as genuine by those with the Spirit gift of discernment. These short sayings were doubtless remembered and were valuable in a largely illiterate community.

If a man seeks the office of a bishop- I assume from :14,15 that Paul is writing with Timothy in view as the bishop of the church at Ephesus: "These things I write to you, hoping to come to you shortly. But if I am delayed, I write so you may know how you ought to behave in the house of God". A bishop or overseer was exactly the role Paul gave Timothy- for Timothy was to be in a position where he could charge church members not to teach (1:3). Perhaps timid Timothy in naive youthful zeal desired to be a bishop- and Paul having made him one, is now telling him what it involves in practice. To 'seek' means literally 'to stretch oneself unto'. So it could be that Timothy actually didn't have the ambition to be the bishop in that difficult situation. Rather, Paul thrust it upon him and he stretched himself out to it, he accepted it, although it clearly was a major stretch for Timothy, well outside his comfort zone.

He desires a good work- There is nothing wrong with spiritual ambition. The Greek *epithumeo* literally means 'to lust'. The noun is used by Paul when later warning Timothy to "flee youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2:22). We could translate the phrase before us as meaning that if a man seeks / stretches out to the office of bishop, then he must lust after good work. The passions which are part of our nature must be directed into good work rather than for our own sensual pleasure. Instead of desiring wealth (s.w. 1 Tim. 6:10 "love of money, which some reaching after..."), we are to desire / reach out after spiritual things. This redirection of sexual or passionate energy is likewise found in Eph. 5:3,4, where we are told that "fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness" is inappropriate, "but rather giving of thanks". It seems that Timothy failed to make that complete redirection of passion, because he had to be reminded in 2 Tim. 2:22 about fleeing his lusts. In another figure, we are to draw near to God; fleeing lusts means running towards God. And He will draw near to us.

We must be aware that the leadership of the early church was the obvious focus for persecution by the Roman authorities. To desire being a bishop would therefore have been a reflection of self sacrifice and willingness to give up all for the sake of the Lord's work.

3:2- see on Rom. 12:13.

The bishop therefore must be without reproach- Paul's advice to Timothy in 1 Tim. 3 as to what constituted good eldership was shot through with reference to his address to the Ephesian elders [remember Timothy was in Ephesus], where he outlined what manner of man he had been: Blameless = "pure from the blood of all men" (Acts 20:26); Husband of one wife = Paul? Sober = "serving the Lord with all humility of mind" (:19); Given to hospitality = his example was in that he was "ready to support the weak...it is more blessed to give than to receive" (:35) and his whole attitude to care for the Jerusalem poor was evidence enough. Apt to teach = "I have taught you publicly, and from house to house...I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (:20.27). Not covetous = "I have coveted no man's silver" (:33). One that ruleth his own house well = Paul as the father of so many. Not a novice = Paul. A good report of them without = "These things cannot be spoke against" (19:36), and witness his appeals to a good conscience before both God *and men* when on trial.

The husband of one wife- This could refer to not being polygamous; or it could equally mean 'a man of one woman'. These qualifications suggest Timothy was married.

Temperate, sober, orderly, given to hospitality- The Greek *philoxenos* could be read as being the opposite of xenophobic. A love of strangers / foreigners would not have come easily to any first century Jew; indeed, society was very parochial, with anyone from outside the local area being seen as suspicious. Love was to be shown to one's own rather than to strangers; and the characteristic of being *philoxenos* would have been distinctly a Christian virtue. As some bishops may not have had homes large enough to entertain visitors, we can be sure that this word doesn't refer to 'hospitality', but rather as suggested.

Able to teach- This could imply that some were being chosen as bishops because of their secular status rather than their familiarity with scripture or ability to teach.

3:3 *Not given to wine-* As noted on :1, Timothy took Paul's words to him very seriously. He had to be later advised to at least take a little wine for his stomach problems; he had totally quit alcohol on the basis of Paul's words here and drunk only water (5:23).

Not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not argumentative, not covetous- The implication would be that within the church, as potential for being chosen as bishop, there were Christians of whom these things were true. We see here the tolerance in the early church when it came to baptism and acceptance of sinners; and yet the way that the leadership positions, the platform, was not at all open.

3:4 *One who rules his own family well, having his children in submission with all reverence-* See on :15. As explained on :1, Paul is writing specifically with Timothy in view, at least in the first instance. Perhaps Timothy's weak character meant he had a tendency to allow anarchy in his home. And if he indeed was married, then Paul's warning to flee youthful [sexual] lusts and to be a man of one woman (:2) suggest that Timothy was tempted not to be a solid husband.

1 Tim. 3:4,5 lays down that an elder in the house [church] of God must be one who rules his own household well. The implication perhaps is that the ecclesias of which Paul wrote were household churches. The 1st century household was governed by the *paterfamilias*, the head of the house. In terms of the household ecclesias, this person was the 'elder'; but to govern a household church required that such a person governed their own domestic household well. My point is that there is an implied equation between the 'church of God' and the domestic household; understandable, if the early churches were in fact household groups. Where things would've got awkward was if the 'elder' or leader of the household church was not in fact the *paterfamilias* of that house where the church gathered. We are left to imagine wealthy brother A opening up his home to the house church, in which poorer brother B was the leader of the spiritual house. This is the radical import of Paul's teaching that eldership in the ecclesia was to be based upon spiritual criteria and not human wealth or social position. No wonder the extraordinary unity and social bonding of the early churches proved so attractive and startling to the world. And we in our day are invited to practice similar sociological impossibilities in our ecclesias.

The commands relating to bishops (overseers) stress that he should only be treated as such if his own family is in order (1 Tim. 3:4,5,12). This could suggest that he was the one who had converted others; for the image of our converts being our spiritual children is a frequent one (1 Cor. 4:14,17; 2 Cor. 6:13; Gal. 4:19; Tit. 1:4; Philemon 10; 1 Pet. 5:13). In the same way as a father ought to be respected by his children, so converts ought to respect those who converted them. The fact Paul had made converts and founded ecclesias was used by him as a proof that he deserved at least some respect- they were his 'seal', the hallmark that showed him genuine (1 Cor. 9:2). My sense is that the first century Gentile ecclesias were very similar to many Christian groups throughout Africa, Europe and Asia today; somebody was converted by a visiting preacher, and they in turn converted a group of their associates. Such groups need leadership, and the logical leader is the one who converted. This is why elders are defined in Heb. 13:7 as those who preached the Gospel to those they lead. Yet there can be a tendency for groups of converts to forget the eternal debt they owe to those who brought them to new life in Christ, just as there can be a forgetting of responsibility to our natural parents. The respect afforded to such leaders should, however, be qualified by their meeting of the standards Paul lays down: e.g. their own natural children should be well led by them. The integrity and manner of life of those who converted us is what inspires us to carry on

3:5 *For if a man does not know how to rule his own family, how shall he take care of*

the church of God?- Maybe the stress is on 'know *how*'. Timothy as a young parent and husband needed to realize that family life doesn't just happen; there must be a conscious learning *how* to conduct family life and operationalizing it, rather than just allowing life to take its natural course; which is a frequent reason for the failure of spiritual development in family life.

Perhaps it should be noted that the bishop's qualification is that he *knows* how to rule his own house (1 Tim. 3:5). It may be that as with Samuel and other elders, their children or converts do not 'turn out' well. If this is because there was a lack of spiritual leadership, this disqualifies a brother. But if he *knew* how to rule, but they rebelled, then he is not thereby disqualified. Fathers cannot be held responsible for the spiritual failure of their children in all cases (Jer. 31:29,30; Ez. 18- and the example of Yahweh with Israel). Likewise, Paul was clearly a bishop and yet was single. "A bishop *must be* the husband of one wife" therefore requires us to again read in an ellipsis: '[If he is married he must be...] the husband of one wife'.

3:6- see on Lk. 12:49.

Not a new convert, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil- There is a word play here, because "new convert" translates a Greek word literally meaning one newly sprouted or puffed up. Seeing Paul is in the first instance writing to Timothy, perhaps he is warning him that as a new convert, he must be aware that he will be prone to pride in his new conversion.

A new convert should not be made an elder because he may fall into "the condemnation of the devil". This may refer to the Jewish 'devil' eagerly waiting to accuse the leadership of the Christian ecclesia in Ephesus. But *diabolos* is often used in the pastorals in relation to gossipers (1 Tim. 3:6,7,11; 2 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 2:3). Gossip is the clearest manifestation of the 'devil' within our natures, and we should be aware of this. "The condemnation of the devil" may therefore mean that the gossipers, whether within or outside the ecclesia, will more easily condemn a novice. If a brother has behind him all the qualifications listed in 1 Tim. 3, of faithful children, a reputation as stable, patient etc., then such gossips will have less power to condemn him in the eyes of others. Paul indicates that he understands the power of gossip in the church- he knew that a spiritually young elder was going to face slander, as sure as day follows night. And therefore, young elders aren't a good idea, he concludes. We too need to face up to the reality of gossip, that it will happen, and we need to seek to protect those vulnerable to it before it starts.

3:7- see on 1 Tim. 6:9.

Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace or into a snare of the devil- "The devil" or false accuser is paralleled with "outsiders" who were waiting to catch Christian leaders in a trap. The church at Ephesus was surrounded by Jews who were bent on destroying Christian congregations and were happy to work with the pagan Government to effect this. Timothy is being warned against being naive, which was perhaps another of his characteristics. There were people out there, perhaps members of the 'Jewish satan' which dogged early Christianity, eager to set snares for people in Timothy's position and indeed any church leader. Not falling into snares himself would enable Timothy to persuasively exhort others not to fall into the snare of seeking wealth (6:9). We are enabled now to better understand Paul's later warning to Timothy to help some escape from the "snare of the devil" which they were caught up in (2 Tim. 2:26). This snare could have involved some Jewish plot aimed at entrapping Christians, perhaps by an

offer of wealth or some get rich quick scheme. Hence those chosen for leadership were not to be "greedy for money" (:8). The fact Timothy had become aware of the snares and avoided them empowered him to help others out of them. And that principle is true for us all.

3:8 Likewise, deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine- For this to be said we can infer that there were such within the church whom Timothy would consider for the office of deacon. The early church was open to all sinners and some clearly didn't change very quickly if ever; but the leadership structure was to be held to standards of behaviour and doctrinal position. Note too that it was Timothy who would appoint the deacons. Democracy was never used in order to choose leadership.

Not greedy for money- This was important because of how the Jewish satan outside the church was using offers of money in order to ensnare people. See on :7 *A snare*.

3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience- In discussing chapter 2 I suggested that the believers in Ephesus were under pressure from their pagan background in the Diana cult and also the myths pedalled by Jewish false teachers such as the Eve cult. These cults and indeed all paganism loved the idea of "mystery". Paul is saying that deacons must wholeheartedly be committed to the mystery of the Christian faith. They were to hold it in a good conscience, i.e. not also holding to other mysteries as were the women forbidden from teaching in chapter 2.

3:10- see on Gal. 6:4.

And let them first be tested- This idea of a probation period is found also in the command to Timothy to "Lay hands hastily on no one" (5:17), i.e. do not hastily appoint anyone to office, but require a probation period first. Perhaps here we see a hint that Timothy had a tendency both to naivety and to impetuous, quick action. He was perhaps not naturally a wise man; the way he succeeded at his difficult calling (see on :1) shows the real power of personal change which is possible to those led by God's word.

If they are found blameless, then let them serve as deacons- Gk. 'unaccused'. Perhaps a reference to the way that the church in Ephesus was surrounded by critics eager to falsely accuse ["the devil"] and thereby entrap the unwary in snares. Truly Timothy's position is one not to be envied.

3:11 Likewise, their wives must be reverent- This could mean that their wives served as part of their office as deacon; for Phoebe was a female deaconess. Deacons in this case would refer to husband and wife teams. Or it could be that the sign of a suitable deacon was that he had influenced his wife for spiritual good. Because otherwise, the objection could be raised that a man is not surely to be judged by the behaviour of his wife.

Not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things- "Slanderers" is from the same word as "devil". In the immediate context, the snare of the devil has referred to the schemings of the Jewish and pagan opposition to bring down the church at Ephesus (:6,7). The requirement may be that a deacon's wife was to have no part in those systems. "Temperate" and the other characteristics of a deacon's wife are the same

requirements for the bishop himself (:2; Tit. 2:2). The implication could be that ideally a deacon and his wife should work as a husband and wife team, each with the same spiritual qualifications.

3:12 *Let deacons be men of one woman*- Not polygamous, or at least, not womanizers, focused upon their wife as their one woman.

Ruling their children and their own families well- As noted on :5, family life was not to be allowed to just follow a natural course. There was to be conscious leadership.

3:13 *For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus*- The "for" connects with the previous verse, talking about ruling in one's own family. The idea may be that if they have served as deacons in their own family first, then they will be qualified to do so in the church. In the process of being a deacon, faith is developed. The very process of service and obedience leads to greater faith in practice in the upward spiral of spirituality. The "good standing" is surely before God and not men.

3:14 See on Acts 20:25 *I know*.

These things I write to you, hoping to come to you shortly- Paul had appointed Timothy the bishop of the church at Ephesus (1:4), and so we are to read these principles about eldership as Paul reminding Timothy of how he should be living. This is not to say that the principles do not have wider, general application; but the first context reference was to Timothy. These principles were to explain to Timothy how he personally should behave in the church (:15).

3:15 *But if I am delayed*- Paul had no miraculously provided itinerary. He realized the many variable factors in the life of a believer.

I write so you may know how you ought to behave in the house of God- The existence of house churches within the Ephesus ecclesia would explain the slightly unusual Greek construction here which in the Greek speaks of behaviour "in a house of God". Maybe Paul refers to the same distinction between house churches and larger gatherings in Ephesus when he advises that a bishop should rule well his own house [church] and have his children in subjection (:4,5). There is a common New Testament understanding of 'children' as referring to converts; and the Greek word translated "rule" is only used elsewhere, both in 1 Timothy and in the rest of the New Testament, about 'ruling' or 'providing for' the church in a pastoral sense (Rom. 12:8; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 5:17; Tit. 3:14). This interpretation would solve a commonly observed difficulty- that the children of many fine elders aren't not always believers, they're not always "in subjection", and neither were those of many Biblical heroes. And further, seeing even the children of believers ultimately have freewill choice, how can it be that church leaders are held as it were responsible for their children's choices? If we understand the 'ruling' here to mean spiritual provision for those in one's own house church, as a qualification for appointment to being a minister of the larger, joint congregational gatherings- then this difficulty disappears. And this idea- of being faithful over a household and then being promoted to greater responsibility- would then be an obvious allusion to the Lord's parable about the faithful house-manager [AV "steward"] who is then promoted to greater responsibility in the Master's own household (Lk. 12:42 compared with Mt. 24:45).

Which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth- I have pointed out that most of the Ephesian church were Gentiles- hence the letter to the

Ephesians several times refers to "you Gentiles". Most of them would have been converts from the temple of Diana, which was put out of business by the Christian preaching. And yet as noted on chapter 2, various rituals and ideas associated with temple worship had not been fully jettisoned by all the converts. Paul here uses language associated with a temple- and applies it to the ecclesia or church of God, making the point that the true temple is the Christian community and not an edifice with literal pillars and foundations. The *oikos* of God uses a word elsewhere translated "temple" (Lk. 11:51). The final phrase "of the truth" may simply mean that the *true* edifice, the *real* pillar and foundation of the temple, was the ecclesia- the group of individual Christian believers, and not any literal physical edifice. Excavations of the temple of Diana / Artemis at Ephesus have found that its pillars were an unusual feature of it- there were 127 pillars, 60 feet high, supporting a striking roof. It would've been easily identified by the large number of pillars all around it. All that now remains standing of the temple is in fact one pillar. So without doubt it is the temple of Diana, from whence many of the converts had come, which was the point of the allusion; the true pillars and supports [NEV "ground"] of God's temple were the converts. Contrary to what was being taught, no physical building had any significance in God's saving plan. And this confirms our suggestions on chapter 2, that the converts had brought with them the baggage from Diana worship. The church at Ephesus may well have been relatively small, a house church or a group of Christian homes. And yet this was the true temple, compared to that of Diana.

3:16 *And without controversy, great is the mystery of reverence towards God: He who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory-* See on :9 *The mystery.*

1 Tim. 3:16 speaks of how Christ was:

1. God manifest in the flesh [on the cross]
2. justified in the Spirit [in the resurrection- Rom. 1:4]
3. seen of angels [at the resurrection]
4. preached unto the Gentiles
5. believed on in the world
6. received up into glory [the ascension].

It must have occurred to many expositors that this would be nicely chronological- were it not for stages 4 and 5. "Preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world" seems a clear reference to the great commission- to preach the Gospel of the resurrection to all the world, and whoever believes it will be saved. But the tenses are definitely past tense, not future. Indeed, the whole passage seems to have Mark's record of the resurrection, preaching commission and ascension specifically in mind [not surprising if tradition is right in saying that this Gospel was learnt by heart by candidates for baptism in the early church]. I would suggest that Paul is using a Hebraism although writing in Greek (and E.W. Bullinger provides scores of other examples of where Paul does this, in *Figures Of Speech Used In The Bible*). Paul is thinking in the Hebrew 'prophetic perfect' tense, to describe something yet future as already past, so sure is it of fulfilment. He *is* referring to the great commission when he speaks of Christ as "preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world"; and he *is* giving a chronological account of the Lord's resurrection, with reference to Mark's Gospel record. But he sees the command to go and preach to the Gentiles, to make them believe, as so sure of being obeyed that he speaks of it in the past tense. The fact the Lord asked us to do this, for all the many reasons outlined in this study...this of

itself is such a strong imperative to do it that Paul sees it as *already done*. And so the Lord's bidding should weigh as heavily with us. In fact, He had just the same idea when in Luke's record of the commission He says: "Beginning at Jerusalem you *are* witnesses" (Lk. 24:48 RVmg., cp. Acts 1:8). What He meant, according to Mark's version, is that 'You are to go world-wide and be witnesses'. But He speaks as if they have already done this, as if He were saying: 'Go and be world-wide witnesses, you are witnesses, it's axiomatic to your experience of my resurrection that you will witness, so I see it as if its already being done, even as you stand here before me'. L.G. Sargent, quoting C. Spicq, tabulates the following parallels in *The Gospel Of The Son Of God* p. 210 (Birmingham: CMPA):

	1 Tim. 3:16
Mark 16:9-19	
:12 appeared (i.e. was manifested) in another form	manifest in flesh
:15 preach the gospel	preached unto the Gentiles
:15 into all the world...:16 he that believeth	believed on in the world
:19 was received up into heaven	received up, into glory

1 Tim. 3:16 seems to have been a well-known confessional formula in the first century church; perhaps it was recited by the candidate in the water before being baptized. It can be read as a chronological description of the Lord's death and resurrection:

1. "God was manifested in the flesh" in the Lord's *crucifixion*, not just His *life*. The manifestation of the Son was supremely in His death (s.w. 1 Jn. 3:5,8; 4:9 cp. Jn. 3:16; Heb. 9:26 Gk.; Jn. 17:6 cp. 26).
2. "Justified in the Spirit" - the resurrection (Rom. 1:4)
3. "Seen of Angels" - at the tomb (Mt. 28:2)
4. "Preached unto the Gentiles for belief in the world" (Gk.)- cp. Mk. 16:15,16
5. "Received up into glory" - what happened straight after the commission to preach the Gospel world-wide.

This chronological approach suggests that "God was manifest in the flesh" refers to the Father's especial manifestation in His Son's crucified human nature during those hours of final suffering- rather than just to His birth. There on Calvary, Almighty God Himself was supremely revealed. He, *God Himself*, was despised and rejected by men; *His* love and self-sacrifice were so cruelly spurned; *He* was spat upon and made the song of the drunkards (Ps. 69:12). The same word for "manifest" occurs in other passages which relate it to the crucifixion:

- Heb. 9:26: "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he *appeared* to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself".
- 1 Pet. 1:19-20: "...But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without

blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world [as the sacrificial lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Rev. 13:8], but was *manifest* in these last times for you".

- 1 Jn. 3:5-8: "And ye know that he was *manifested* to take away our sins [on the cross]; and in him is no sin... For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil", which He did through His death (Heb. 2:14-18).

It may be added in passing that the same word is also used about the final manifesting of the Lord Jesus at His return (Col. 3:4; 1 Pet. 5:4; 1 Jn. 2:28; 3:2). This explains the link between the cross and His return; who He was then will be who He will be when He comes in judgment. And this explains why the breaking of bread, with its focus upon the cross, is a foretaste of our appearing before Him then. See on Jn. 1:14; 19:19.

Another option is to see this hymn as based upon the hymns which went with enthronement ceremonies: "Jeremias and Spicq add a history-of-religions dimension by suggesting that in form the hymnic quotation is patterned, perhaps unknowingly, after the enthronement ceremony in ancient Egypt. The first stage is exaltation: the new king receives divine attributes (lines 1 and 2). The second stage is presentation: the deified king is presented to the gods (lines 3 and 4, here to angels and men). The third stage is enthronement: the king receives his rulership (lines 5 and 6)". In this case, "believed on in the world" would refer to acceptance by the masses of his kingdom. "Manifest in the flesh" would also make it clear that the King was not the God who was being manifest in his flesh.

1 TIMOTHY CHAPTER 4

4:1 *But the Spirit says expressly*- The reference may be to the Lord Jesus, the Lord the Spirit, stating clearly that there must be false teachers and a falling away amongst the believers before He returned (Mt. 24:10,11,24). Interestingly, Paul has commissioned Timothy to try to *stop* that happening (1:4). This is an interesting example of how human freewill effort dovetails with God's foreknowledge and developing purpose.

That in the last times some shall fall away from the faith- We either depart from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:12), or we depart from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19, 22; 1 Tim. 6:5). We're always moving in one direction or the other.

Giving heed to seducing spirits- Yet Timothy's job was to ensure that the church did *not* "give heed" to false teachers (1:4)- who are the "seducing spirits" spoken of here. Like Moses reasoning with God about Israel's fate, it could be that Paul is encouraging Timothy to reason with God, to do what he can so that the Lord's express prediction will not come true. Just as the Ninevites did, and succeeded. As noted on 3:1, Timothy's ministry was successful, according to the Lord's letter to the Ephesians in Rev. 2. He did shut down false teaching and inspire the doing of good works.

And teachings of the idol worshippers- So far in this exposition I have suggested that the Ephesian church was prone to influence by the Diana cult, from which many of the converts had come; and also from Jewish false teachers from the synagogue where Christian preaching had first begun in Ephesus. And that picture is confirmed by these warnings here in chapter 4. Paul will go on to warn also against those who taught that only some foods could be eaten (:3); this clearly was the Judaist false teaching. Paul saw in these attacks, and the fact some believers fell for them, a fulfilment of the Lord's Olivet prophecy where He had warned that these were signs

of the last days. The Lord could have come in the first century- all was in place. But the church didn't take the Gospel to the world nor bring forth spiritual fruit which enabled that potential to happen, and so it has been deferred until our last days. The body of Christ is likewise suffering from legalism on one hand [cp. Judaism] and worldly idolatry on the other.

4:2- see on Mt. 23:28; Rev. 13:15.

Through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies- Hypocrisy suggests the Lord's warnings against the Pharisees, i.e. Jewish false teachers.

Branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron- Paul felt that Christian co-crucifixion with Jesus meant that we too are branded with His marks. He uses the same figure in Gal. 6:17. So he feels that we bear the marks of ownership, either of Jesus or of some other system. This is exactly the picture we have in Revelation- believers in the last days marked either for the beast or for the Lord Jesus.

4:3 *Forbidding to marry-* This fits with our comments upon Paul's encouragement of female child-bearing in chapter 2. The Diana cult forbade their female followers to marry and have children. Paul is not making a global command to women to marry and have children, rather is he countering the false teaching of the Diana cult which had affected some sisters in the Ephesian church.

And to abstain from food- which God created to be received with thanksgiving- Jewish false teaching which was also a pressure upon those in Ephesus.

By them that believe and know the truth- Not 'know and believe'. 'Knowing the truth' is used by Paul to refer to an ongoing relationship with the Lord; he doesn't mean 'those who correctly understand a set of theologies'. We ought to be deeply, deeply moved by the fact that we have been called into God's world, into His sphere of vision. He even created the different types of meats "to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth"; they were made for us, not the world, and therefore we ought to give thanks for our food with this realization.

4:4 *For every creature of God is good and nothing is to be rejected-* Paul often alludes to Peter, and this clearly references Peter's experience on the housetop. I have argued elsewhere that Paul pretended to Peter, wishing dearly that he was the apostle to the Jews as Peter was. But it can also be so that Paul genuinely respected Peter- which is an essay in humility, that a leading rabbi would so respect an illiterate fisherman.

If it be received with thanksgiving- Here and in :5 Paul assumes that believers will pray before food, and this ought to be our pattern too in these days. Perhaps he has in view the standard Christian prayer "Give us this day our daily bread", which he understands as a thankful admission that our food is indeed a gift from God. And if a Divine gift, then surely it is sanctified by Him.

4:5 *For it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer-* Peter had been taught that it was the Lord's sacrifice which sanctified unclean food. So "the word of God" may refer, as it often does, to the Lord Jesus rather than the Bible. For the Bible in that sense doesn't cleanse unclean food. It could also refer to 'the Gospel'. Or it could be that Paul had in mind the simple statements of Genesis, that we have been given all food by God (Gen. 1:29; 9:3). This would be typical of Paul- as he does so powerfully

in Galatians, he bids us return to God's original intentions in Genesis and consider the Mosaic Law as a temporary addition which has now ended. Food is not of itself sanctified or not sanctified (Rom. 14:14), so I doubt that Paul meant that the chips on your table are made somehow holy because you prayed over them. It is human life which can be sanctified to God, as Paul so often says in his letters. Thanksgiving for food is therefore a recognition that we have been given food in order to live life which must be sanctified to Him.

4:6 If you put the believers in mind of these things- Gk. 'put them under'. Clearly Paul had set up timid Timothy in a position of authority which was quite foreign to his natural disposition, especially as the believers included many forceful, dogmatic individuals. Our ministries too are often not naturally compatible with who we are.

You shall be a good minister of Christ Jesus- A good deacon. Timothy was to be act as both a bishop and deacon. This is in contrast to later abuses of the position of "bishop" in orthodox Christian churches. Timothy has been advised how to choose deacons in chapter 3, and he is being asked to model to them how they ought to be. Such servanthood is ultimately service to Jesus- "a good minister of Jesus Christ". Our service to others in Christ, including the dogmatic, the difficult and the woefully misinformed, is all service to Him. He would be a "good minister" insofar as he was nourished in the "good doctrine".

Nourished in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine which you have followed- By teaching these words to others, Timothy would himself be nourished by them. By feeding others, he would himself be fed; see on :16 *By so doing.* and 5:18 *The ox when he treads out the corn.* This is one reason why the Lord has chosen to work through the process of evangelism. The very process of teaching something makes us come to that material ourselves in a more intimate way than we would if we didn't teach it but simply mentally assented to it within ourselves. "The words of the faith" may refer to the 'faithful sayings' which Paul several times alludes to in his letters- brief inspired sentences which were distributed amongst the new converts. "Followed" is a word used again by Paul in 2 Tim. 3:10 where he says that Timothy has fully followed his own teaching and example. This is quite some commendation. As noted on 3:1, Timothy was very obedient to Paul, and thus his ministry was successful, in that the Lord's judgment of the Ephesian church in Rev. 2 reveals that the very things Timothy was asked to do- he achieved. Despite not at all being cut out for that task. Timothy was to be "nourished up in the words of the faith [a reference to 'words' of basic doctrine which comprised a first century Statement of Faith?], and of the good doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:6 RV). True doctrine has the power of growth; it is the seed which is sown, leading to the fruit of good works. The basic Gospel ("doctrine", AVmg.) of the cross is the active, outstretched arm of Yahweh the Almighty (Is. 53:1). We must let that power work. "Let your conversation (way of life) be as it becomes the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27). By nourishing others with good teaching, he would himself be "nourished up in the words of faith". Caring for others on whatever level is what stimulates an upward spiral in our personal spiritual growth. In doing so, we will ourselves find spiritual growth. Practically, this is evident- in that the brother who looks through the Bible readings before doing them with his family, or reads a chapter with his five year old daughter and then the same chapter again with his wife, who makes an effort to prepare a different sermon each time he speaks rather than re-hash an old one... the one who benefits is ultimately himself.

4:7 But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself with reverence towards God- This rejection meant 'Do not let these things be taught in the church', because that was his brief in 1:3, to not allow false teaching. There was clearly a problem with some women in the Ephesian church. We saw in chapter 2 how Timothy was to stop some women teaching who were advocating a version of the pagan Diana cult mixed with the Jewish cult of Eve. And there were older women who likewise were teaching "fables"; and Timothy has been told in 1:4 not to allow Jewish fables to be taught in the church. Here and in chapter 2 it could be argued that we have evidence that women were indeed allowed to teach in the Ephesian church; but Paul's concern was with *the content* of what some of them were teaching. This was why these women should not be allowed to teach; not because they were women, but because of the content of their teaching. This also explains why Paul advises Timothy as to how old and young women should be living; this was not just general pastoral advice, but was given in the specific Ephesian context of women who were teaching false doctrine, who needed to be redirected to more positive spiritual pursuits. The double reference to "profane and old wife's' fables" may refer to the dual pressure there was in Ephesus- from paganism and the Diana cult ["profane"], and from Jewish women teaching Jewish fables such as the Eve cult. We have noted this double problem several times in this exposition. It's noteworthy that public recitations were something that women were allowed to participate in. Slave women especially were known to make such recitations to the women of a large household, including the female freewomen. This doubtless laid the basis for the phenomenon [portrayed on some frescoes] of female house churches, with slave women leading the gatherings even when their mistress was present.

4:8 For bodily exercise is profitable for a little time- This is in contrast to the need to exercise spiritually (:7). This may well have been one of the profane [pagan] or old wives' fables of :7. Otherwise it is hard to see why Paul would suddenly start speaking about it. Mt. 6:2,3 = 1 Tim. 4:8. The implication is that we aren't to take Mt. 6:2,3 ("they have their reward") as implying that we have *no* reward in this life. We do (cp. Mt. 19:29).

But reverence towards God is profitable for all things- "Profitable" is only used elsewhere in 2 Tim. 3:16 [the Scriptures are profitable] and in Tit. 3:8, where "good works" are "profitable". The disciplines of the spiritual life, of daily Bible reading and good works, carry their blessings in this life too- "having the promise of the life which now is"; and those present blessings are far more than those achieved by physical exercise.

Having the promise of the life which now is and of that which is to come- There is a link between the spiritual life lived now, and that which shall eternally be lived. The life which now is, is connected with the life which is to come. Our experience now is the promise of life tomorrow. John's Gospel expresses the same truth in saying that we now have the eternal life- we are living now the kind of life which we shall eternally live. Godliness having the promise of life both now and in the future is a reflection of Christ's teaching that the life of self-denial would have its present as well as future rewards (1 Tim. 4:8; Mk. 10:29).

4:9 Faithful is this saying and worthy of all acceptance- Another example of where brief inspired messages from the New Testament prophets were "accepted" as indeed inspired and distributed; see on :6 *The words of the faith*.

4:10 *For to this end we labour and strive*- In contrast to striving in physical exercise to preserve our own lives a bit longer (:8) we instead strive so that "all men" may experience the eternal life now possible. These words are used about Paul's labours in preaching and pastoral work (1 Cor. 15:10; 16:6; Gal. 4:11; Phil. 2:16; Col. 1:29). Paul uses the same word to encourage Timothy to likewise labour in the Ephesian church (1 Tim. 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:6). And again, Paul's exhortation was taken to heart; for some time later, the Lord commended the eldership ["the Angel of the church"] at Ephesus for labouring so hard (Rev. 2:3 s.w.).

Because we have our hope set on the living God- The Greek *elpis*, "hope", means certainty, trust. We are certain that God wishes to save all men, as explained under 2:1-6; and so we labour and strive so that this great salvation is shared with all men.

Who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe- If we understand this literally, then God is the Saviour of "all men" including Hitler. But the Bible doesn't teach universal salvation. There's a difference between being a Saviour- and saving. God gave Israel a "saviour" in the form of Jesus (Acts 5:31; 13:23). But this doesn't mean that "Israel" were all saved, because many of them have rejected their Saviour. This is the tragedy- that God is a "Saviour" for all men through His Son, but not all men wish to accept that salvation. This verse does not touch on the problem of those who have not heard the Gospel (for whatever reason). Frequently, the New Testament speaks of "God our Saviour" (1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3 etc.). Perhaps the emphasis needs to be put on the word "our". He is *our* Saviour because we have accepted His plan of salvation- but others have not. There is a salvation potentially possible for all- but it is a salvation unaccepted. Rom. 5:18 speaks of how by Christ's righteousness "the free gift came upon all men unto justification". But not literally all men will be justified. The "all men" is limited and not universal, because salvation is not universal. Jn. 1:5-11 speaks of Jesus as the light which came into the world, but the darkness preferred to remain in the darkness: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it... John... came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, [so] that all might believe through him... He was in the world... yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him". God's intention was that "all men" in the "world" of Israel might believe. John preached "so that all might believe". But "all" did not believe. They "might" believe- they had the possibility of doing so, but did not. Note that "the world" here is "His own"- the Jewish world. Clearly "all men" is not to be understood literally. It's obvious from how "all men" is referred to in the New Testament that the term doesn't mean literally every single person:

- 'All men' thought John was a prophet (Mt. 21:26). But not all in Israel did (Lk. 21:6), and the whole planet definitely didn't know anything about John
- 'All the Gentiles' are defined as those who "seek after the Lord" (Acts 15:17)
- Paul was to be a witness to "all men" of his vision of Jesus (Acts 22:15)- clearly not every person on the planet; and he speaks of how he had taught 'all men' (Col. 1:28 Gk.- the same words as in 1 Tim. 4:10 "all men")
- We are to live at peace "with all men" (Rom. 12:18)- all people in our lives, not every human being on the planet
- "All Judaea... Jerusalem" were baptized by John the Baptist (Mt. 3:5).

4:11 *These things command and teach*- The commanding *and* teaching may refer to teaching both formally, from the platform, and informally. A church leader like Timothy was not to simply teach from the podium and assume the job was done. The

"things" to be thus taught were that we ought to "labour" for the Lord (:10) and do the good works associated with reverence to God (:8). And Timothy was obedient- for some time later, the Lord commended the eldership ["the Angel of the church"] at Ephesus for labouring so hard (Rev. 2:3 s.w. :10 "we labour").

4:12 *Let no one despise your youth-* They surely did despise his youth, but people can only do such things to us if we let them. And Timothy was not to allow them to do this, in that he was not to feel despised, but rather to be strong in the sense of his own mission and significance in the Lord's larger plan. Paul has just called Timothy to do battle with the older sisters who were teaching Jewish fables in the church (:7). For a young man to shut them up was going to be difficult, especially for someone of Timothy's sensitive or weak character. The fact he succeeded shows the power of God's word through Paul and the real possibility of personal transformation and achievement in the Lord's service.

Be an example to those that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity- Any teaching ministry is only effective insofar as the word is made flesh; and this was and is the ultimate power in the Lord's ministry to us. "Purity" carries the specific idea of sexual purity. Paul has commanded Timothy to be a man of one woman in chapter 3, he will go to warn him to deal with the younger sisters "with all purity" (5:2) and will later tell him to flee youthful [i.e. sexual] lusts (2 Tim. 2:22). Putting all this together, it would be fair to assume that Paul perceived a weakness in Timothy in this area. And yet all the same, Paul put him in to the position of eldership, with all the inter-personal contact with females which this required. But he warned him to beware of his weakness.

4:13- see on 1 Thess. 5:27.

Until I come- The implication of how the argument develops could be that Paul intended to give Timothy some Spirit gift which would further empower his ministry, presumably by the personal laying on of hands [as in :14; see note there]. He wrote similarly to the Romans (Rom. 1:11). Until then, Timothy was to focus on his own study and teaching.

Give attention to reading, to preaching, to teaching- The "reading" could refer to Timothy's own Bible study being the basis for his preaching [to the unbelievers] and teaching [of the converts]. But it could equally refer to the public reading of the Scriptures- which was especially necessary in largely illiterate congregations. The same word for "give attention" is used about not giving attention to Jewish fables (1:4) nor false teachers (4:1); but these negative commands must be replaced by a positive giving of attention to God's word and to sharing that word with others. Positive preaching and teaching of God's word, if focused upon, will mean we will not have mental space to give attention to false teaching. And maybe we are to read this appeal for focus, mental 'giving attention', as the antidote to Timothy's proneness to sexual weakness touched on in :12.

4:14 *Do not neglect the gift you have-* Paul may be intending to give him another gift [see on :13 *Until I come*], but he asks Timothy not to neglect the one he already has. Timothy had desired the office of a bishop (3:1) and had been given the potential power to achieve it. But he wasn't, it seems, using his potential because of his natural weaknesses and the difficulty of dealing with the opposition. Neglecting, not taking seriously, our potential... is one of our most common failings. We have all been dealt

talents by the Lord and are to use them, and not neglect them in the ground.

Given to you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you- There presumably had been an inspired, prophetic word from one of the New Testament prophets to the effect that Timothy could achieve his mission in Ephesus. Paul had appointed him as a bishop on the basis of that prophetic word (1:18). The elders had laid their hands on him to empower him. That council of elders may refer to those in Jerusalem [s.w. Acts 11:30; 15:2,4,6,22,23; 16:4]; or it could have been some group of elders who were present at the time that Paul first told him to remain in Ephesus. If the reference is to the elders in Ephesus who were appointed soon after their conversion and before Timothy was appointed over them (1:3), then again we find Timothy in an awkward, embarrassing position. He would have been given power by the elders, who were older than him, and then he was appointed over them. He is told not to rebuke elders but to appeal to them, to carefully consider allegations against them and to honour the elders who deserved it (5:1,17,19). So there were "elders" in Ephesus, and the same word is used in this phrase "council of elders". So he was in a position where he had to rebuke the elders who had given him the power to rebuke them. And the Lord chose a young, shy man, struggling with many weaknesses, for this apparently impossible mission given his personality. And yet he succeeded, as noted earlier several times [e.g. on 3:1].

4:15 *Be diligent in these things-* Gk. 'keep practicing', a present active imperative, alluding to the command to exercise spiritually (:8).

Give yourself wholly to them- Gk. 'be in these things'. His whole being was to be in the things of serving the Lord. Such total dedication is often smiled off as fanaticism, obsession and imbalance. But if indeed we shall live eternally and can help others to, and if the Lord's glory is truly achieved by our efforts- then it follows that we will be "be" them now, for we shall eternally be continually and totally "in" them.

That your progress may be manifest to all- The obvious personal progress of a teacher is the greatest inspiration to those being taught. Otherwise, he or she becomes merely a purveyor of facts and truths which may as well be read in a book. But if the teacher models growth, then the word really becomes flesh and powerful to transform. Such progress also reveals a humility, in that the teacher themselves is a pupil and also on a learning curve. This was quite contrary to the popular conception that a teacher was some static figure passing on truths which had long been held as a kind of conduit.

4:16- see on Dt. 4:1,9; Acts 20:28.

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching- To see ourselves from outside of ourselves is difficult, but the Bible often asks us to do it. This kind of self knowledge is a large part of our growth in Christ.

Persist in this- The sense of keeping on keeping on, of abiding and enduring, are common in Paul's words to Timothy [see on :15 *Be diligent*]. It would appear that Timothy easily gave up and was too quickly swamped by the immediate, just like ourselves.

For by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers- This continues the theme discussed in :6 *Nourished*. Efforts to save others result in our salvation. It could

be argued that the Lord's perfection and His own salvation out of death was a function of His devotion to our salvation. We see here the huge importance attached to teaching; it is connected with the salvation of the hearers. The salvation of some is dependent to some degree upon third parties. Illiterate people will simply not hear God's word unless it is read to them; and many who are literate come to that word so burdened with limitations and issues that unless somebody explains it to them, they like the Ethiopian eunuch will simply never understand.

1 TIMOTHY CHAPTER 5

5:1 Do not rebuke an elder but exhort him- See on 4:14. Timothy would have had to discipline some of the church elders, and these were the very ones who perhaps had laid their hands on him to grant him the Spirit gift required to be their bishop. We wince as we think of a man so lacking in self-assurance and maturity as Timothy... having to do this. Truly his ministry, like every ministry, was not easy; and he was empowered hugely in order to achieve something which was so against his grain of nature. It could be argued from the list of different groups now mentioned (old men, young men, old women, young women) that in all cases, Timothy was not to rebuke but to exhort. The natural way that a group leader operates is to rebuke when necessary; but in Timothy's case, given his weak personality and persona, this would just not have worked. And so he was advised to not rebuke but to appeal / exhort / come near to folk who needed to change and be changed. Just in fact as the Father and Son have done with us.

As a father- This again was difficult; the young Timothy, who was despised for his youth, had to act as a father to men older than him. Only the psychological strengthening of the Holy Spirit enabled him to achieve this- the gift bestowed by these elders in :14. We too find ourselves in psychologically and emotionally impossible situations as we do the Lord's work, and require the same mental strengthening. Paul uses the same words to describe how he too charged those under his care, as a father does his children (1 Thess. 2:11). The same words are used of the Father exhorting or entreating the hypocritical *older* son (Lk. 15:28). Perhaps Paul is consciously alluding to this in advising Timothy how to deal with the *older* ones. The older son clearly speaks the language of the Judaists; perhaps in order to discharge his responsibility to stop false teaching by the Judaists (1:3), Timothy had to deal with older men and older women who were distributing the Jewish "fables". Perhaps these were amongst the earliest converts in Ephesus, who had come to Christ as a result of Paul's initial preaching in the synagogue. Therefore their 'age' may be a reference to how long they had been in Christ relative to others.

The younger men as brothers- Timothy was of their age, and yet he was their spiritual elder. He was to emphasize what he naturally had in common with them, to exhort them as their leader but not as their superior, ever remembering that he was an equal brother in Christ as they were. Here again we see a great psychological and interpersonal challenge; which in the internal strengthening and wisdom of the Lord's Spirit, it seems Timothy achieved.

5:2 The elder women as mothers- I suggested on 4:7 that there were a group of older women teaching Jewish fables in the church, who had to be stopped. And Paul advises him to go about this by exhorting / appealing rather than direct rebuke. How could

Timothy, young and despised for his youth, remove older women from their teaching ministry, and keep them within the church? Only by the wisdom of the Spirit.

The younger women as sisters- The younger women who needed rebuking may refer to the former followers of the Diana cult who had to be removed from their positions of influence in chapter 2. How could Timothy, who seems to have had a particular temptation from women, successfully engage with the younger women and get them to accept his position, and remove them from their teaching positions? For the positive outcome to be achieved which the Lord's later letter to Ephesus suggests, Timothy must have been powerfully blessed to achieve what would have appeared to be psychologically, sociologically and spiritually impossible. And that same strengthening of the Spirit is available to us in similar missions apparently impossible.

In all purity- See on 4:12 *Purity* regarding Timothy's tendency to sexual weakness.

5:3 Honour widows that are indeed widows- This section reveals that there was clearly a problem with a group of widows in the Ephesian church. They were living off the church, and yet instead of praying (:5) were giving themselves to sensual pleasure to the point they were spiritually dead (:6). Some of the widows were young and would be best to remarry and have children (:14), other widows were elderly with adult children and grandchildren (:4). These are the same two groups who were giving false teaching. Chapter 2 speaks of the younger women who were acting still like the prostitute priestesses of the Diana cult, claiming that their sexual services empowered the prayers of the men who used them (see commentary there). It was these women whom Paul urged to get on and have children (2:17); and he gives the same advice here (:14). They were remaining single in order to act as the priestesses of Diana but in a Christian garb. And Paul condemns this and encourages them not to see marriage and bearing children as so dishonourable. The older women represented the Judaist problem in the church; they were teaching Jewish fables (4:7). The simple problem was that these widows were financially supported by the church and had time on their hands. Indeed we could go so far as to say that if indeed [as suggested on chapter 2] they were acting like the Diana cult priestesses, they would have been paid money for their sexual services by the men of the congregation. Effectively they were prostitutes, even if the whole system was justified by having drawn up a register of widows and the claim that they were being supported by charity. This level of immorality in the early church ought not to surprise us when we recall that the Corinthians were getting drunk at the breaking of bread service, and there is the implication in Corinthians that there was sexual misbehaviour going on there too. Jezebel is rebuked for teaching the Lord's people to commit fornication. The letter of James suggests grave abuse and even murder going on in the church. I have seen all this kind of thing happening in churches in the developing world today. So the picture I am painting of Ephesus is not beyond imagination. The fact the Lord doesn't mention this kind of thing in His letter to Ephesus some time later is highly significant; for He does mention such things to other churches. It shows that Timothy's difficult mission did in fact succeed. To reform such an awful situation would seem not at all the mission for a young, insecure, timid man like Timothy. But his success and empowering just shows what can be achieved by the work of the Spirit. Timothy was being asked to differentiate between the genuine widows who really did need support; and these other widows, both young and old, who frankly needed to focus on good works and serving the Lord in family life, rather than the roles they had been adopting. Again we note that it was

the content of their teaching, rather than their gender, which was what Paul took issue with.

5:4 But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show devotion towards their own family- The presence of the elderly in our lives is in order to teach us something. It is a form of "devotion", the Greek meaning 'worship' (only s.w. Acts 17:23). Again there may be a hint at the idol worship / devotion to Diana- for the word is only elsewhere used about idol worship (Acts 17:23). The Christian equivalent of 'devotion' to idols / Diana was to look after your mum and dad or your granny... and not the grandiose external rituals which passed as 'devotion'. Another track is suggested by the way in which a related word is used about *Jewish* devotion to Judaism (Acts 10:2,7; 22:12). And again... *Christian* devotion was not so external and public, it was all about the daily nitty gritty of caring for your elderly relatives. Perhaps Paul chose this word in order to address the two elements of the Ephesian problem- devotion to Diana on one hand, and to Judaism on the other.

And to repay their parents- The Greek seems to suggest an equal, measure for measure repayment. I have been raised by parents and cared for those parents in their old age. And I have raised my own children. I can therefore comment that in no way is the care for aged parents an adequate or equal repayment for the care they gave you. But Paul says that by attempting to do this, we learn. We learn grace, that were it not for parental grace, we would not have survived babyhood and would not be here today. And we seek to reflect that grace in caring for the elderly within our families. And this learning and response to that learning- is pleasing to God.

For this is acceptable in the sight of God- The language of the acceptability of sacrifice before God. Sacrifice was a part of both paganism and Judaism; Paul is saying that the acceptable sacrifice to Him under Christianity is to care for your relatives.

5:5 Now she that is indeed a widow and alone has her hope set on God, and continues in supplications and prayers night and day- The allusion is to Anna in the temple. The elderly are limited in what they can physically do, but Paul seems to envisage here a very serious and organized prayer ministry, made possible by the widow being materially cared for. That care should come from her family, and if not, then the church. And in response, she should use her time and freedom from secular cares to seriously pray "night and day". This is a wonderful idea for all of us whenever or however we find ourselves indisposed. But it obviously has particular relevance to elderly believers. Regarding widows and prayer, see on :3.

5:6 But she that gives herself to pleasure is dead while she lives- See on :3. I have suggested that the younger widows were acting similarly to the priestess 'mediators' of the Diana cult from which they had come out. They were in serious sin, and although they had the name of the living Jesus, they were spiritually dead, in anticipation of the condemnation to death they would receive unless they repented. Eph. 4:17,18 was written to the same Ephesians, and urges them to "*No longer walk as the Gentiles walk... alienated from the life of God*", that is, dead. Eph. 5:14 makes the same appeal to these Ephesians- to awake spiritually out of the sleep of death.

5:7 These things also command, so that they may be without reproach- The concern seems to be that the surrounding opposition to Christianity in Ephesus, both Jewish

and pagan, could so easily use the situation with the widows in order to bring reproach upon the name of Christ and to finally stamp out Christianity in Ephesus. The "things" may be the practical commands regarding how to reform the system of widow support in Ephesus which follow in :8-16. The Greek for "reproach" means literally 'not arrested'. Paul could imagine how the Christians could easily be arrested for things related to what they were doing; they were laying themselves wide open to all manner of accusations and legal problems.

5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own family and specially his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever- This seems rather an extreme thing to say about someone who doesn't care for their elderly relatives as they might do. And it can hardly be true as it stands, because not everyone is able to provide for their elderly relatives, due to economic, health or geographic reasons. But the statement here makes perfect sense if we accept the reconstruction of the scene as suggested in these notes. Instead of looking after parents, money was being paid to a class of 'widows' in the church who were effectively prostitutes, who claimed they could empower the prayers of the men to be better heard by God (see on chapter 2). This indeed merits the kind of condemnation Paul hands out here.

But then the deep error of ignoring care for parents must still be faced. If we selfishly build up our own possessions through ignoring the needs of others, we have denied the Faith- even if we hold on to a clear understanding of the doctrines. Loving money is erring from the Faith- again, even though we may keep our theoretical understanding (1 Tim. 6:10). It is perhaps intentional that three times in the same section in 1 Tim., Paul speaks of those who leave the Faith; once he speaks of this in the context of doctrinal error (1 Tim. 6:21); the other two references (5:8; 6:10) concern leaving the Faith through being materialistic, whilst holding on to true doctrines. The point is, the one is as bad as the other. The fact the Kingdom will be on *earth* not in Heaven is not just incidental. It means that we *now*, as we live on this planet which will be our eternal possession, will not strive for present possession of it, neither will be swayed by the pressure groups and political groups who only look at the state of the world as it *now* is. "The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again [because he dies before he can repay his mortgage?]; but the righteous dealeth graciously, and giveth. *For* such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth" (Ps. 37:21,22 RV). Exactly because we will inherit this planet gives us strength against materialism; it means that we will be generous; we will not focus our lives upon temporarily buying a spot of land which in any case we will eternally inherit.

5:9 Let no one be registered as a widow who is under sixty years old- This is proof enough that the commands being given here were relevant to sorting out the situation in Ephesus and not global commands. We must read the commands about a certain group of women being silenced in chapter 2 in the same way. The fact he recommends some younger widows to remarry (:14) is also proof enough that "widows" doesn't mean 'all widows'. It may be that single and widowed brethren and sisters made open statements of their decision to devote themselves to the Lord Jesus. 1 Tim. 5:9 suggests there was a specific "number" of widows in the Ephesus ecclesia who were financially supported by the ecclesia. But as noted above, this was being abused and turned into what was effectively prostitution.

Only register those who have been the woman of one man and- This confirms our earlier suggestion that the group supported as 'widows' included some who were sexually immoral, acting [as suggested in chapter 2] effectively as church prostitutes, taking money for acting as the Christian equivalent to the priestesses of the Diana

cult, in order to supposedly enhance the prayers of the men they slept with. Note that Timothy and other elders in this church are warned to be the man of one woman (3:2,12)- modelling to these church members the kind of life required of a believer. Thinking it through, "the woman of one man" surely cannot mean that over the course of their lives, they must not have been promiscuous. For surely such sins are washed away at baptism and should not be a reason for not supporting such a woman after she has been baptized and is widowed, being over 60 years old. Rather the logic surely requires that she should not *now* be promiscuous, a woman of many men. This again supports the idea that there was a problem in Ephesus of some female members, even those over 60, being promiscuous. And this is explained by our suggestion on chapter 2 that some of the sisters were offering sexual services supposedly to improve the power of the men's prayers. No wonder Paul tells Timothy to end this system and haul them off the platform.

5:10 *Well reported of for good works; if she has brought up children, if she has used hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has helped the afflicted-* This is not just a random list of good works for a believing woman. I suggest that each of these works are in conscious contradistinction from the behaviour of the priestess prostitutes of the Diana cult. They did not believe in having or therefore raising children; hence Paul tells the younger widows to have children (:14) and in chapter 2 suggests those particular women save themselves from their immorality by childbearing. The Diana cult was fiercely xenophobic- we recall how the appeal was made to the citizens of Ephesus to destroy Paul and his missionary work on the basis that he was bringing their beloved Ephesus into dishonour. The problematic sisters were clearly influenced by these wrong attitudes although they had left the Diana cult. Hence the requirement for them to show hospitality to strangers; and they were to wash the feet of their brethren rather than take money for having sex with them on the excuse they were assisting in the power of their prayers [according to our reconstruction offered in chapter 2]. "Helped the afflicted" may well refer to how Paul went through awful problems with the mob there (Acts 19); the Greek for "afflicted" means literally 'the thronged', which is how it is translated in Mk. 3:9. 1 Cor. 15:32 suggests he may even have been thrown to the wild beasts in the arena there. Those who had ministered to Paul and other persecuted preachers then were thus qualified to be supported. The hint might be that these Christians who were still so influenced by the Diana cult may not have been so forward in coming to his assistance. It is Onesiphorus and not the local believers who is mentioned as ministering to Paul in his great afflictions in Ephesus (2 Tim. 1:18). Paul mentions this in writing to Timothy there at Ephesus.

If she has diligently followed every good work- Notice the double emphasis in this verse alone on good works; and so often in the letters to Timothy. The fact the Lord later commended Ephesus for their good works in Rev. 2 shows that Timothy's ministry was in that sense successful. He, the weak and unlikely one, took Paul's inspired words at their full weight and implemented them. The same relatively rare Greek word translated "followed [after]" is found soon after, where in :24,25 Paul says that the good works of the faithful follow them to judgment. Whilst salvation is by grace and not works, works will be taken into account in our final judgment and will play a part in forming the nature of the person whom we shall eternally be.

"Good work" is the same phrase as in Eph. 2:10, where we are to do the good works which were "beforehand prepared" for us. "Beforehand prepared" suggests we were prepared for the performing of our good works from a specific beginning point. And that surely was at 'the beginning'. Our entire genetic history, the nature of our

early childhood experiences and surrounding family, was prepared so that we would be born with the wiring required to do the works intended. It is often noted of heroes that they were 'born for this hour'; but that is in fact true of us all. To turn away from those works, through disinterest, laziness, wilful lack of perception, self absorption... is to waste so much. We on our side must be prepared unto every good work (2 Tim. 2:21); "be eagerly ready [s.w. prepared] unto every good work" (Tit. 3:1). We are to abound in good works (s.w.) because of God's abounding grace to us (2 Cor. 9:8). The good works are therefore a way of life and not some occasional good charitable deeds. We will be 'established' in this life of good works (2 Thess. 2:17); we are to "follow every good work" (1 Tim. 5:10), a strange phrase until we undersand that the good works were prepared for us ahead of time, and we are to follow after them. We are to be on the look out, prepared, for those good works.

5:11 But refuse to register younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry- There is nothing wrong with marrying. Indeed Paul commands it for these women in :14. It would appear that they had entered a voluntary vow to Christ not to remarry- hence the sin. As suggested on chapter 2, actually these young sisters were acting like the prostitute priestesses of the Diana cult, vowing virginity to their god whilst sleeping with the male worshippers and aborting any pregnancies. They had of course left the Diana cult, but were acting in a similar way, instead taking a vow of virginity to Christ- will apparently sleeping with brethren on the pretext of strengthening the acceptability of their prayers, and then receiving money for this from the widows' support fund. This would be a classic example of pagan mentality mixing in with Christianity, and apparent devotion to Christ being mixed with immorality. This kind of thing is far from unknown in the church of today.

5:12 Having condemnation, because they have rejected their first pledge- As there were consequences for breaking the Nazirite vow and other vows under the Mosaic law, so it was and is wrong to vow things to the Lord and then break them. But all the same, the language of condemnation seems rather strong- see on :8. And yet it is understandable if my reconstruction of the situation is correct. To use such a pledge to Christ as an opportunity for immorality, and earning money by effective prostitution in the name of worshipping God and mediating Christian prayers- this is indeed behaviour that has to call for condemnation. If we don't read it this way, we are left with the apparent severity of judging those who pledge singleness to Christ and then feel they want to get married. In 1 Cor. 7, Paul speaks exactly to this situation. He seems to refer to this pledge of singleness when he writes of those who promise to keep their virginity; but Paul says that if even after that, they cannot "contain", then they should marry. Yet here he is saying that such breaking of the pledge warrants condemnation. I therefore feel justified in resolving that contradiction by seeing in the pledge breaking far more than meets the eye if we just read these words without their context.

5:13- see on Lk. 9:4; Acts 20:20.

Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not- The Greek for "idlers" means literally 'not workers'; the compound includes the same word for "works" used in 2:10 about the need for the young sisters to do good "works" rather than dress up as the equivalent of the priestesses of the Diana cult. The antidote to their bad behaviour and immorality was to do works; not that works would save them, but passionate involvement in the Lord's service in practice would preserve them from

involvement in immorality. This is actually, reading between the lines, Paul's advice to Timothy regarding his wayward sexual urges. And it is true for all time that the [Biblical] devil finds work for idle hands. One reason why God's purpose operates through human works is that the works are a necessary part of our own spiritual path and development; although the works in themselves are not needed by God nor are they the basis of our salvation *per se*. "They learn to be idlers" can bear the translation "they give to understand / teach"- as they went from "house to house". This is the very phrase used in Acts 2 about the early brethren going from house to house, i.e. from one home group to another, breaking bread and doing Bible study. We can assume that these women were going around the house groups which comprised the Ephesus church, teaching idleness, teaching against good works. The fact Ephesus are commended for their good works in Rev. 2 shows that all this advice really did work for the church and Timothy managed to obey it all successfully. "Saying what they should not" uses *laleo*, a word elsewhere translated 'preach' and 'teach'. And they were repeating gossip and busybody material in the name of teaching. No wonder in chapter 2 that Paul says they should no longer be teachers. But we notice that it is the content of their teaching, rather than their being teachers, which is the burden of his difficulty with them.

By publicly getting a bad name for "wandering about from house to house", these women were giving opportunity to the Jewish adversaries to "rail against" (A.V. margin) the Christians. Jude 9,10 implies that the Judaizers brought "railing accusation" against the Christians. "Speaking things which they ought not", recalls Jude 10 about the Judaizers: "these speak evil of those things which they know not". "Wandering" connects with Jude's description of "wandering stars" (Jude 13). Diotrefes, one of the Judaizers who was trying to discredit the apostle John and the other apostles, (as the Judaizers did to Paul) is described as "prating against us with malicious words" (3 Jn. 10). "Prating" is from the same word translated "tattlers" in 1 Timothy 5:13 concerning these women. The women going from house to house may imply from church to church, as that is how the word "house" is often used in the New Testament (due to the many house churches then in existence). This is what the Jewish false teachers did; 2 John 7 talks about deceivers or seducers that had entered into the Christian world, i.e. the false brethren "unawares brought in" to the church of Galatia. There are many references to these "seducing spirits" (1 Tim. 4:1) – i.e. false teachers (1 Jn. 4:1) – within the church, to which the church was not to give "heed" (1 Tim. 4:1). That these were Jewish false teachers is suggested by other references to "giving heed" in the context of being watchful against Jewish infiltration of Christianity:

- "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees" (Mk. 8:15);
- "Not giving heed to Jewish fables" (Titus 1:14);
- "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies" (1 Tim. 1:4) – the source of which genealogies was probably the Old Testament, over which the Judaizers were encouraging the Christians to argue to no profit.

5:14 *I desire therefore that the younger widows marry, bear children*- I have repeatedly connected this with the comment that the young women of 2:15 should quit their effective prostitution and teaching within the church, renounce their vow of virginity which they had copied from the Diana cult priestesses, and have children. And by submitting to the spiritual disciplines which come with Christian family life, they would save themselves from a path which was otherwise leading to their condemnation (5:12).

Rule the household, give no occasion to the adversary for slander- These women, as teachers, were clearly capable. Paul encourages these particular women to exercise their abilities in spiritually leading their households. But it could be that Paul is also encouraging them to start their own house groups of believers which they would "rule", instead of going around teaching idleness to the other house groups (see on :13).

The New Testament speaks of households run by women: Mary (Acts 12:12), Lydia (Acts 16:14,40); Nympha (Col. 4:15) and Chloe (1 Cor. 1:11). These women were presumably wealthy widows or divorcees who hadn't remarried. We are left to speculate whether they were in some way the 'leaders' of the house churches which met in their homes. Women are described as ruling households in 1 Tim. 5:14; Tit. 2:4,5. The woman of Prov. 31 clearly had autonomy within the private sphere of the household, even though the husband was the public leader. Seeing Christianity was initially a house-church, household religion, we are left to wonder how much women actually led house churches, especially seeing that the majority of early Christian members appear to have been women. The wall paintings [frescoes] found in the Christian catacombs around Rome are highly significant for our present study. The significant ones for our purposes are the catacombs of Priscilla on the Salaria Nuova, Callixtus on the via Appia Antica, and that of Domitilla on the via Ardeatine. They feature in places scenes of female Christians raising cups, with the inscription *agape* over them. Some show a woman occupying the central place in the meal, with a large cup in her hand, with the other women looking at it intently. Some of the frescoes [there are many of them] show women dressed as slaves doing this in what appears to be a wealthy home. These frescoes seem to me indicative of how groups of slave women formed house churches, and faithfully kept the breaking of bread. Some frescoes show the women sharing the bread and wine with children around the table; one shows a woman holding a scroll, as if she is reading Scripture to the others. One fresco features a woman holding a cup of wine inscribed '*nobis*'- 'for us'. Some frescoes show men in the group, but the woman in the centre, as if she is leading the meeting, or as the host of the household.

Paul encourages younger mothers to "rule their households", using a word [*oikodespoteo*] which would usually be used about the man ruling the house. His implication is surely that in Christ, husband and wife together rule the household, notwithstanding the wife being in submission to her husband.

"The adversary" is not the same word as "Satan", although it may still refer to the Jews seeking opportunity to criticize the. It can mean "an adversary at law" in a legal sense, implying that the Jews could get them in trouble at a Roman court. There's plenty of historical evidence of this.

5:15 For already some are turned aside after satan- The Greek for "turned aside" is used four times in the letters to Timothy. Paul knew that some would be turned aside by false teaching (1:6; 2 Tim. 4:4), and he didn't want Timothy to be turned aside by it either (6:20). We see here the importance of Timothy's commission to stamp out false teaching- because this is what it leads to. People listen, and they are led aside from the Kingdom path.

Note that the widows turn themselves aside after Satan – Satan is not necessarily seeking the women. Verses 12 and 13 explain that the widows "cast off their first faith" – something they did themselves. "They learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house". It was by their doing this that they "turned aside after Satan" – their evil desires, and the Jewish temple cult. Using the tongue in the wrong way is a result

of an evil state of the heart – “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Mt. 12:34). Their turning aside after Satan involved being “tattlers... and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not” (v. 13). Thus “Satan” refers to their evil heart. Through profitless talking and not keeping hold of the true spirit of the Word of God, some had “turned aside unto vain jangling” (1 Tim. 1:6). Paul is now pointing out that some of the young widows in that ecclesia had also turned aside for the same reason “unto Satan”, or their evil desires, expressed in their idle talking.

The “seducing spirits” of :1 had seared consciences (:2), implying that they were apostate believers. They forbade to marry, “commanding to abstain from meats” (:3), which especially the latter, was the big contention of the Jewish element in the church in the first century. Notice that what is said here about the Judaizers is also true of the Catholics – supporting the idea that 2 Thessalonians 2 is about both Jews and Catholics.

Thus the “seducing spirits” of 1 Timothy 4:1 were the Jewish infiltrators of the church, which were doubtless amongst the “deceivers” of 2 John 7, which 2 John 10 implies were going from house to house (church to church) spreading their doctrine of belittling the person of Christ. These Judaizers “subvert whole houses” (Titus 1:11). Back in 1 Timothy 5:13, the fact that the women also went from house to house is another indication that what they were doing was also what the Judaizers were doing. Thus it is an interesting possibility that when their husbands died, these women lacked spiritual leadership, and therefore turned aside after the Jewish Satan, being influenced by the Jews to undermine the church. Using such apparently innocent members of the church would have been a very effective way of infiltrating. Perhaps there is a reference to this in 2 Timothy 3. This speaks of men within the ecclesia, “having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof” (v. 5), unsound judgment in church decisions (v. 8 A.V. margin). “Their folly shall be manifest unto all men” (v. 9) – at the Judgment, where the responsible appear. They are likened to Jannes and Jambres, who, according to Jewish tradition, were apostate Jews. These false teachers (probably Judaizers), “creep into (i.e. subtly infiltrate) houses (churches), and lead captive silly women” (v. 6). Note how the Judaizers are described as capturing Christians to become infiltrators in 2 Timothy 2:26 and in 1 Timothy 3:7. This view of the women is confirmed by the following two points:

i) Acts 13:50 describes the Jews stirring up “the devout and honourable women and (thereby)... raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas”.

ii) There is evidence in profane history that many Gentile women were influenced by the Jews. Thus Josephus (*Wars of the Jews*, II, 20.2) claims that when the Jews of Damascus were persecuted, the proselyte wives of the Gentiles living there were also attacked. Josephus describes the Gentile wives of the men of Damascus as “almost all of them addicted to the Jewish religion”. William Barclay says that during the first century “the Jewish religion had a special attraction for a woman... round the synagogues were gathered many women, often women of high social position, who found in this (Jewish) teaching just what they so much longed for. Many of these women became proselytes” (William Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Louisville: Westminster / John Knox, 2003) p. 114). That the women Paul refers to were also wealthy is shown by them having time to go around from house to house, instead of having to work.

5:16 *If any woman that believes has widows in her family, let her help them and let not the church be burdened, so that it may help those that are indeed widows-* This appears to be a summary of the commands in this section about widows. But in some

MSS, such as those followed here by the NEV, it seems specifically addressed to women. In this case, given our previous reconstructions, it would seem these young women were justifying the payment for their sexual services by saying they were being paid not only for their own widowhood but for their widowed mothers too.

5:17- see on Mt. 7:24.

Let the elders that rule well- There were some Ephesian elders that did "rule well", despite all the problems in the church which we have pointed out. And "the angel of the church at Ephesus" was commended by the Lord for stamping out false teaching and excelling in works. Although it was the loss of *agape* love which was their downfall in the end. We recall Paul's last meeting with the Ephesian elders in Acts 20, where he glumly warned them that of their own selves, men would arise destroying the flock at Ephesus; and urged attention to God's word in view of this. I see that warning in the same way as I see God's inspired message that in 40 day, Nineveh would be destroyed. But these expressions of future doom of themselves invite repentance and spiritual effort, which God rewards and takes deep notice of, to the extent that the threatened catastrophes either don't happen or are delayed. And the existence of an acceptable church in Ephesus by the time of Rev. 2 is a proof case of this. The command to appoint faithful elders and pass on the baton to them (2 Tim. 2:2) was therefore fulfilled well by Timothy.

Be counted worthy of double honour- If this has some financial reference (:18 "wages", and see the parallel in 1 Cor. 9:8-10 which is in a financial context), then we should connect it with the preceding comment that the money spent on the fraudulent widows' welfare fund was a 'burden' on the church (:16). Paul states plainly enough that he is not against a paid ministry although he didn't use it himself. But this verse would appear to be saying that Timothy decided what was paid to whom, and there seems the surprising idea of payment according to spiritual integrity. We would rather have expected payment to be simply according to basic living needs, but he does appear here to go beyond that. Presumably his idea was not to offer a financial carrot towards spirituality, but to demonstrate that good service to the Lord was to be recognized and rewarded by the congregation. I am uncomfortable with that conclusion but I find it hard to see any other consistent interpretation. The only alternative I can think of is that the "double honour" may be referent to the money paid to widows- those elders who ruled well were to get double what they were being given. But still the problem remains that it was because of the 'wellness' of their work that they were to be rewarded; and "honour" is not completely relevant to the widows. And see on :18 *The labourer is worthy of his wages.*

Especially those who labour in the word and in teaching- A reference to Bible study and then teaching the results of that study. Teaching is therefore not entertainment, re-casting secular stories or wisdom in spiritual terms accessible to the congregation; it is to be preceded by study of the word itself. The idea may be that the labour of the elders was not in secular life, but their work in study and teaching was equal to that of secular employment. The Lord commends the "Angel" at Ephesus, presumably referring to the eldership, for "labouring" (Rev. 2:3 s.w.).

5:18 *For the Scripture says-* We find a very significant feature in both the New Testament itself, and in the historical, uninspired writings of the early Christians: *they speak about the New Testament writings as being inspired Scripture just as they speak of the inspired Old Testament writings.* So Peter, writing in A.D. 68, speaks of Paul's letters as being amongst "the other Scriptures" (2 Pet. 3:16), i.e. on the same level of acceptance as the Old Testament Scriptures. Here in 1 Tim. 5:18, Paul combines two

quotations, one from the Old Testament and another from the Gospel of Luke, and calls them both "Scripture": "For the Scripture saith 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn' [Dt. 25:4]; and, 'The labourer is worthy of his hire'" (Lk. 10:7). Polycarp, writing in about AD115, combines the Old Testament Psalms and Paul's letter to the Ephesians in a similar manner: "In the sacred books... as it is said in these Scriptures, 'Be ye angry and sin not,' and 'Let not the sun go down upon your wrath'." Some years later, the [uninspired] second letter of Clement (2:4) quotes Isaiah and then adds: "And another Scripture, however, says, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners'" -quoting from Matthew. The first epistle of Clement, dating at the latest to AD95, quotes from many of Paul's letters and from the Gospels; but very significantly, it doesn't quote from any of the books which later were rejected at the Councils. So, the 'new' writings of the New Testament were accepted on an equal footing as the Old Testament Scriptures, from soon after they were first circulated. Notice that this was all *before* the Councils met to assemble the canon. The books were widely accepted as inspired *before* them! They didn't give those books an inspired status. It's also apparent that the 'new' books didn't go through much of a process of being recognized as inspired. They were accepted as inspired immediately. See on 1 Cor. 14:29; 1 Jn. 4:1.

You shall not muzzle- The word means literally to render speechless. The idea may be that if an elder was not paid, then they would not have time to prepare their talks for the congregation. The Old Testament contains examples of where the Levites failed to teach the people because the tithes for supporting them were not paid.

The ox when he treads out the corn- The stress may be on the word "when"; the elder must do this if he is to be fed. The treading out of the corn represents the labour in the word which is required before teaching it to the church congregation (see on :17). The corn represents God's word and the treading out the processing of it. And yet in this figure, the ox [cp. the elder] eats some of the corn he processes. This has been a theme of Paul in advising Timothy- that the very process of spiritually feeding others leads to the spiritual benefit of the feeder (see on 4:6 *Nourished up*).

And, The labourer is worthy of his wages- The wages are to be *axios* the worker, appropriate to the quality and amount of work. Hence those who worked "well" were to receive "double" (:17).

5:19 *Do not receive an accusation against an elder, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses-* The way Paul commanded Timothy not to even *consider* a complaint against an elder unless another two or three had been eye-witnesses is proof enough that he expected elders to be slandered from within the ecclesia. The more you read between the lines of Paul's letters, the more evident it is that his very own brethren almost unbelievably slandered him. See on Gal. 5:11; 1 Thess. 2:3. The context is the problematic group of sisters spreading gossip and being busybodies (:13). This kind of thing happens today, with the internet facilitating it. Paul seems to be saying that such gossips should not be 'taken up' or responded to unless there are two or three eye-witnesses.

5:20 *Those elders that sin, reprove in the sight of all-* The "all" may refer to all the elders; the "rest" who are to take warning from the reproof. I say this because there appears to be a parallel in the next verse, where Timothy is charged before or "in the sight of" "the elect angels", who I suggest refer to the eldership. For the Lord addresses them as the Angel of the church at Ephesus in Rev. 2.

So that the rest may also be in fear- Reproof in the sight of others is shame based, which we may be somewhat uncomfortable with. But shame was a hugely powerful

component in first century Mediterranean psychology and sociology. And perhaps the "sin" in view was connected to this whole issue of good appearance in the sight of others- which pride to this day is the root of so many sins.

5:21 *I charge you in the sight of God and Christ Jesus*- If the elders were to be reproved in the sight of each other (:20), then who was Timothy as the 'boss' to be reproved in the sight of? The answer to that was 'In God's sight and that of Jesus- as well as of the Angels'.

And the elect Angels- The context in 1 Timothy warns against the Jewish obsession with effectively worshipping Angels. Paul wishes to refocus their attention on Angels in the correct sense. I suggested on :20 that this refers to the elders of the church. But they in turn were represented by literal Angels in Heaven. Hence the Angel of the church at Ephesus in Rev. 2 was [in the context] both a literal Angel and the human elder or group of elders in Ephesus which were represented by an Angel in Heaven. Scripture abounds with reference to this 'court of Heaven', in which individuals and situations on earth are reflected in Heaven, and Heaven's structure is reflected on earth. Angels represent the face and presence of God; the fact they are physically present in our lives means that we should live in a sense of awe and humility at the nearness of God to us. Often this presence of the Angel is used as a means of motivating us to higher endeavour for the Lord. Jacob conceived of his guardian Angel as "the fear of my father Isaac". This then is one of the ways we should fear God- to live in constant respect and awareness of the Angel in our lives. Paul uses the idea of charging brethren "before the elect Angels that thou do these things without preferring one before another" (1 Tim. 5:21), as if to say that the physical presence of the ecclesia's representative Angels should inspire humility and obedience in the running of ecclesial affairs. In a judgment context, Paul charges Timothy before the angels of the elect, i.e. our guardian Angels- as if to say 'They are watching over you now, they will be there again at judgment and look back to your present life; so behave as you should as a man under God's judgment'.

The present nature of the judgment ought to powerfully motivate us. "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things..." (1 Tim. 5:21 AV) is full of judgment language: before God, Christ and the Angels of the elect (i.e. our 'guardian Angels'). 'Before God' is the language of the judgment in Mt. 25:32; Lk. 21:36; Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 2:14; 1 Jn. 2:28; Jude 24; Rev. 14:5. It's as if Paul was reminding Timothy that he was present before the judgment already, and should therefore be obedient. 2 Tim. 4:1 makes the link even more apparent: he charged Timothy to preach as being before (Gk.) both the Father and Son, who *will judge* the living and dead at His appearing. Because we effectively stand before the judgment seat now, therefore preach now, because preaching is one of those things that will be taken into account at the final judgment day (Lk. 12:8). As men being before the Lord's throne, who will be finally judged just as we are now being judged, therefore act according to the principles which we know will lead to acceptance then.

That you observe these things- The same word is used to Timothy in 2 Tim. 1:14, where he is again told to 'keep / observe these things' "by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us". The Holy Spirit or mind is an internal power, working "within", in order to empower obedience. But like Timothy, we must be exhorted to make full use of it rather than attempting to be obedient in our own strength.

Without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality- This was so hard for Timothy without the spiritual strengthening just alluded to. There were many different interest groups within the church, Jewish and pagan. Timothy the timid and young had to deal with older people who were teaching wrong things and shut them up. Timothy the afflicted with sexual lusts had to tell attractive young women to get married and have children. It would've been so very easy to act with partiality. He needed the psychological Holy Spirit strengthening mentioned under *Observe these things* in order to achieve this.

5:22 Lay hands hastily on no one- This is in the context of elders, who like Timothy were appointed by laying on of hands. He is being told not to appoint anyone hastily, in chapter 3 he has been warned to give deacons a probationary period before appointing them. We can infer that Timothy was liable to over hasty and naive decision making. Again, the fact his mission succeeded was and is a testimony to the power of the Holy Spirit working within such a weak young man; see on :21 *Observe these things*.

And do not participate in other's sins. Keep yourself pure- It would be fair to say that the church at Ephesus, including its leadership, was in a very bad moral state. It would've been a big temptation for someone as weak minded as Timothy to justify bad behaviour because the other elders were doing it. Paul has just spoken of the "sin" of elders (:20), and the "others" of :20 would seem to be the other elders. So Timothy, the newly appointed elder, is being told not to participate in the sins of the other elders, but rather reprove them (:20). *Koinoneo*, "participate", is from the common word family for 'fellowship'. We are not to fellowship the sins of others in the sense of not participating in them by doing them- Timothy was to "Keep yourself pure", with the emphasis on "yourself". Not fellowshiping other's sins clearly here doesn't mean 'cast them out of the church as individuals'. The fact the Lord positively addresses the eldership at Ephesus in Rev. 2 is a testament to the power of Timothy's example; he turned around that church by obedience to Paul's inspired advice and commands, rather than by throwing the offenders out of the church. Significantly, Paul doesn't tell Timothy to do that- despite the errors being serious indeed. As has been witnessed so many times, the problems aren't ultimately resolved by throwing people out and 'breaking fellowship' with them.

5:23 No longer drink only water; instead use a little wine for your stomach's sake- A theme of the Timothy correspondence is that Timothy is indeed obedient to Paul's inspired commands- and therefore ultimately his ministry succeeds. He was clearly aware that Paul was concerned that he might abuse alcohol; for Paul commands Timothy not to be given to much wine (3:3). It seems Timothy took this to the extreme and would not touch any alcohol. Such total abstinence was rare in first century society, so we can assume Timothy adopted this position from purely spiritual reasoning. Seeing alcohol was one of the most commonly available medicines for stomach and other ailments, this meant enduring much suffering. And Paul doesn't believe that stoic suffering for the sake of it is required; rather he wants Timothy to be active and useful in the church. And to that end he had been given the gift of the Spirit within him, i.e. in his mind, within his psychology (2 Tim. 1:14). But he had to allow himself to "be strengthened in the grace [gift- of the Spirit] that is in Christ" (2 Tim. 2:1), to "stir up the gift that is [with]in you" (2 Tim. 1:6). It was only due to doing this that [according to the Lord's later letter to the Ephesians] his ministry succeeded in the areas he was charged with [inspiring good works and shutting down false teachers].

"No longer" may be alluding to the way that in Roman culture, wine was only to be drunk over the age of 30. Adam Clarke quotes ancient writers to this effect, "among the Romans, no servant, nor free woman, nor youths of quality, drank any wine till they were thirty years of age". Timothy is here described as a water drinker- although surely he drunk things apart from water. This is a technical term for a young person, not old enough to be seen as fit to drink wine, or not at the age when wine was considered necessary for the male metabolism. Perhaps Timothy had passed that age, although he is still called a 'young man' (1 Tim. 4:12). This could be a way of telling Timothy to 'grow up'. We get the same impression when Paul tells him to "flee youthful lusts". And in our age, too many adults are living the psychological lives of overgrown adolescents. This command is given at this point because Timothy is being called upon to discipline others and to be a leader of men; and he had to show himself mature to do this. This better fits the context- which is of Paul's personal appeal to Timothy, "keep yourself pure" (:22), lest all the focus upon judging others' spiritual qualifications led him to ignore personal spirituality. So I suggest in terms of structure that :22-25 is Paul's specific personal advice and comfort to Timothy, although not solely; for the reference to "sins" clearly connects with the previous commands about dealing with and awareness of others' sins.

And your frequent infirmities- We continue to get the picture of Timothy as weak both physically and in personality. To be given such a demanding, stressful commission, when stomach problems are often connected to nervous strain, means that his obedience and success is the more noteworthy. And it is a testimony to the internal, psychological power of the Holy Spirit within Timothy which empowered him mentally to pull through it.

Consider Timothy's weaknesses, both directly stated and implied:

- He first of all flunked the calling to remain in Ephesus (see on 1 Tim. 1:3)
- The commands concerning bishops were firstly Paul's commands to Timothy (see on 1 Tim. 3:14,15). The suggestion would be that Timothy needed to pay attention to things like not womanizing and being a solid family man
 - Liable to be taken in by the Jewish myths pedalled by the old Jewish sisters (1 Tim. 4:7; 6:20)
 - Easily discouraged by older people despising his youth, needing encouragement to set a good example (1 Tim. 4:12)
 - Liable to neglect his gifts, not using his full spiritual potential (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6,14; 4:5 "make *full* proof of your ministry")
 - Needing to take heed to himself (1 Tim. 4:16)
 - Tempted to show partiality (1 Tim. 5:21) and to do the sins he saw other elders doing, being easily led (see on 1 Tim. 5:22)
 - Frequently ill with stomach upsets (1 Tim. 5:23). Paul says that he himself had to work as a tentmaker in order to meet the needs of Timothy whilst Timothy was with him; he had to work because of Timothy's weakness, mentally or physically, because he was unable to work to make himself a living (see on Acts 20:34).
 - Often in tears (2 Tim. 1:4)
 - Being a fearful person rather than a positive one (2 Tim. 1:7)
 - Fearful of suffering and having to identify with Paul from fear of persecution, easily embarrassed by association with Christ (2 Tim. 1:8), needing encouragement to "endure hardness" and have a disciplined mind and life (2 Tim. 2:3)
 - Weak and needing to be stronger (2 Tim. 2:1)
 - Easily caught up in secular things (2 Tim. 2:4) and to try to take spiritual shortcuts around the difficult inevitabilities of the true Christian life (2 Tim. 2:5)

- Needing to flee sexual lusts (2 Tim. 2:22), even though he was a married man with children, according to 1 Tim. 3. He had to be exhorted to "purity" (1 Tim. 4:12), the word carrying the specific idea of sexual purity. Paul commanded Timothy to be a man of one woman in chapter 3, and warns him to deal with the younger sisters "with all purity" (1 Tim. 5:2). Putting all this together, it would be fair to assume that Paul perceived a weakness in Timothy in this area. And yet all the same, Paul put him in to the position of eldership, with all the inter-personal contact with females which this required. But he warned him to beware of his weakness.

- Needing to be constantly reminded to "continue" and not give up, as he was near to doing (e.g. 2 Tim. 3:14).

All these issues could have been the result of being a 'rich kid'. 2 Tim. 3:16 says he was taught to read from the Scriptures by his mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5). He was very blessed to have both a mother and grandmother to raise him; for female mortality was very high in the first century world. And the vast majority of the Roman empire was illiterate. So Timothy had advantages from birth which put him in a favoured minority. But this is no reason to despise him; he was made strong out of the weaknesses associated with his background.

Yet out of all this weakness, Timothy was made strong and according to the Lord's letter to the Ephesian church, he achieved his calling to stamp out false teaching, purify the eldership, and encourage the doing of "good works". Perhaps he did it so zealously that the church ended up lacking the *agape* love for which finally it was condemned. But so far as his obedience to his particular ministry goes- he succeeded. Out of such weakness.

5:24- see on 1 Cor. 4:5.

Some men's sins are evident, preceding them to judgment- The sins in view are surely those of the elders just mentioned (see on :20 and :22). Paul is saying that although some sins are open and need to be rebuked openly, Timothy should be aware that there are many other secret sinners around whose sins he may never know about in this life. He was not to judge the evident sinners on a basis which assumed everyone else was innocent and had no secret sins. And that is important to be aware of in church life today too. Any church discipline is only dealing with the evident sins. And those evident sins will in any case be dealt with by the Lord's judgment; any rebuke we may give is not therefore to be seen as equivalent to His judgment.

Although the advice in :24,25 is appropriate for dealing with people within a church, it could be that Paul is also encouraging Timothy personally here, as he is in :23. Verse 23 is Paul directly addressing Timothy, and :24,25 may be the same. In which case Paul is encouraging Timothy that one tendency of a pastor is to not admit secret sins. But he must realize that these too would be judged. And another tendency is to feel that good works are never appreciated. And the comfort is that they will be given full weight at the day of judgment. Both sin and good works go before us, as a herald, to judgment. Judgment is not therefore the point at which books are opened and information considered for the first time by the judge. Our behaviour is already 'there'. We live now under judgment. "God is the judge" now. In the light of the cross, we are revealed even now to God and to ourselves, if we allow the cross its intended effect.

But those of others follow them there later- The Greek could equally mean 'Those of others accompany them there'. The idea being that some have sins which they quit, which go before them to judgment; other men are accompanied by their sins to judgment. The idea would be, in the context of open rebuke in :20, that the motive for

bringing out another's sins to the light is so that those sins do not follow him to judgment later, but are openly made evident now.

5:25 *Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden-* The idea may be that in seeking to inculcate a culture of good works, Timothy should be aware that some good works are not "evident" not, but will not be hidden at the day of judgment. For then, according to the Lord's parable, He will openly go through the good deeds of the accepted; their feeding of the hungry, clothing the naked etc. Nothing then will be hidden. Timothy's mission of encouraging good works was recognized as successful by the Lord's letter to the Ephesian church in Rev. 2. But Paul is encouraging Timothy that it would be hard for him to judge his own success, because good works are not always evident. The same phrase is found in Mt. 5:14, to which Paul likely alludes; the good works of the city set on a hill "cannot be hid". But Paul would then be interpreting this as meaning 'cannot be ultimately hidden because they will be displayed at the day of judgment'. Here we have the final answer to the human desire for recognition of works. They will not be hidden from God and although salvation is by grace alone, our works will also be openly rewarded and will not remain hidden. The hours of silent effort and patience with difficult situations and people will not remain hidden. The times when 'Someone around here has to be the Christian', and that person was us... will all be somehow openly displayed. It is part of our human wiring to want recognition. But we don't get it much in this life, indeed no good deed goes unpunished; those helped so often complain and bite the hand which fed them. Yet we naturally long for recognition. The composer whose music is never performed longs for his work to be appreciated. The housewife and young mother longs to be thanked and valued. Thankless service for others is found to be one of life's cruellest cards. And without faith and the perspective of the judgment and the eternal consequence of the Kingdom, we will live in frustration over this, and will never get that appreciation and recognition. This is an example of where God "has set eternity" in the heart of man, a longing and wiring which will only find resolution in the life of faith which leads to eternity. Our longing for perfect relationships is another example.

However, the "otherwise" could mean '*bad* works'; the comfort being that secretly committed bad works will all the same be judged, and Timothy should not worry unduly about the bad works which he could not detect or find enough evidence to openly rebuke. Again, in this case, we see Timothy's tendency to overly worry.

For the righteous, our acceptability before God now is related to our acceptability with Him at judgment day. Our good works are manifest before we reach the judgment, which will manifest them again (1 Tim. 5:25). Thus David reflected on the experiences of his life: "Thou hast made my judgment; thou satest in the throne judging right... and he shall judge the world (at the second coming, through Christ, Acts 17:11) in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness" (Ps. 9:4,8 A.V.mg.). This shows the continuity between God's attitude to him in his mortal life, and God's attitude at the coming judgment. If Christ is glorified by us now, we will glorify Him in that day (2 Thess. 1:10,12).

1 TIMOTHY CHAPTER 6

6:1 *Let all that are under a yoke as slaves-* This reads rather strangely, because a slave was axiomatically under a [AV "the"] yoke. It appears to be saying the same thing twice. And there is no evidence that 'under the yoke' was a common term for slaves in New Testament times. Perhaps the idea is to remind slaves that actually they

were under the yoke of Christ, which is "light" (Mt. 12:29,30). Whatever slavery we may feel under, perhaps in our working or domestic lives, we can remind ourselves that ultimately we are under slavery to the Lord Jesus, and His yoke is light. But Acts 15:10 and Gal. 5:1 speak of those under the yoke as being those in bondage to the Mosaic law. Perhaps Paul is addressing the delicate question of how a slave was to behave if he came to Christ but was under the yoke of Jewish law because his master was Jewish. This was likely a live issue in Ephesus because the church there began with Paul making converts from within the synagogue. He does not urge rebellion against those masters or sticking on points of principle; but rather to treat these masters as Christ and thus get higher than them (see next comment).

Regard their own masters as worthy of all honour- This is a clever word play. The Greek translated "regard" is elsewhere translated as the noun "Governor" (Mt. 2:6; Acts 7:10), "he that is chief" (Lk. 22:26), "chief speaker" (Acts 14:12), "chief men" (Acts 15:22). By regarding their masters as "worthy of honour" because they were to serve them as they served Christ- who alone is the One "worthy of all honour"- they were effectively masters of their masters. It recalls the spirit of the Lord's command to offer to take a Roman soldier's bags another mile when asked. Those treated as low become the high by their Christian attitude. Let's remember that many slaves were abused by their masters; not even their bodies belonged to themselves. Sexual abuse was common. Yet never does Paul tell slaves to refuse the sexual demands of their masters. And slaves, according to contemporary references to Christianity, formed a large percentage of Christian congregations. This is not to say that the moral teaching of Christianity in this regard was not to be taken seriously- to refuse such demands and face the consequences was clearly the highest level to be taken by a Christian slave. But Paul in this matter surely makes a concession to human weakness and the nature of human situations, which the letter of the law could never accommodate. The way of Christ however elevates the drudgery of slavery and dead end situations, of the type faced today by many in effective slavery to minimum wage employment, abusive employers or very claustrophobic, limited domestic situations.

So that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled- "Reviled" or "blasphemed" is exactly what the pagans in Ephesus had accused Paul of doing to Diana (Acts 19:37 s.w.). Clearly the pagan opposition were looking for every opportunity and reason to do the same back to the God of the Christians, whose name they carried by baptism. Paul makes an assumption here, in warning believing slaves to act faithfully before their unbelieving masters, lest the doctrines of God be blasphemed by them. Paul takes it as read that the slave would have taught the doctrines of the faith to his master, and therefore any misbehaviour by him would cause those teachings to be mocked. He assumed that radical preaching would be going on. And again in Tit. 2:5, he writes that wives should behave orderly so that "the word of God be not blasphemed". He assumes that all believing men and women would be preachers of the word, yet if the wives were disorderly in their behaviour they would bring mockery upon the message preached. Paul so often in writing to Timothy expresses concern about the disrepute possible in the eyes of outsiders. Clearly there was a conscious effort to destroy the church in Ephesus through legal procedures, and so care had to be taken not to give genuine reasons for this to happen. Further, Paul had entrusted Timothy with a teaching ministry, and bad behaviour amongst the converts would mean that his teaching would be "reviled". The message preached was therefore backed up by the behaviour of those who believed it. Conversions are not often won by the simple attraction of the message of itself; that

word is made flesh in the eyes of the world by those who believe it. "The teaching" would be reviled if those hearing it behaved in a way which invited mockery. So the teaching and the example of the believers of that teaching are parallel.

6:2 And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brothers- Why should a Christian slave despise his believing master? Perhaps because slavery was so obviously wrong; a Christian master should not participate in the style of slavery then practiced. The master should release his slave- because that is just the language used of what Jesus did to all in Him. He released us from slavery, redeeming us from it, paying the price of manumission whereby a person could be bought out of slavery. But for whatever reason, these believing masters hadn't responded as they might. The Lord had warned His followers to "despise not" the 'little ones' (Mt. 18:10). Paul picks up this phrase here in warning servants not to despise their masters who were brethren; the implication that they were to treat those wealthy but perhaps not very spiritually mature masters as 'little ones', with all the patience this would require. The command is not to despise them; but we might think that the dominant emotion in this case would be anger. Yet Paul focuses on not despising because his point is that we must respect others because of their status in Christ; every believer in Him should be respected by us. We must ask whether our churches are places of respect, or whether various strata of respect and acceptance have robbed them of the spirit of mutual respect which ought to characterize the communal life of God's people.

But rather serve them because those whom they are serving are believers and beloved- The reference to "beloved" invites connection to Christ who is "the beloved"; just as unbelieving masters were to be given "all honour", i.e. served as Christ, to whom alone "all honour" is due. In any difficult relationship with a believer, however abusive to us we consider them to have been, no matter how much better we feel they ought to be able to do in their relationship with us, let us remember that 'God loves this person'. They are beloved. So much so that He gave His only begotten Son for them. Some MSS, followed by the AV, add here: "Partakers of the benefit", literally, 'partakers in the good deed', referring surely to the cross. The Lord died not only for me. But for those who name His Name whom I consider to have abused me. We cannot condemn another believer, so we are to presume their acceptance by the Lord. This will mean that they have partaken in the benefits of His death, just as we have. This is so easy to write, but it was equally difficult for first century Christian slaves being abused by their Christian masters.

Teach and exhort these things- The idea is of comfort, and the message to abused slaves was indeed a comfort.

6:3 If anyone teaches a different doctrine- Paul's opening charge to Timothy at Ephesus was to stop false teaching (1:3). From those who taught different teaching, Paul says that Timothy is to "withdraw thyself" (:5 AV- although omitted in some MSS and NEV). Timothy was to distance himself from such teachers, which is equivalent in 1:3 to not allowing them the platform. This little phrase "withdraw thyself" has been much abused in closed table communities to mean that we are to withdraw ourselves from anyone who differs from us on some matter of understanding or practice. But the context here, and the parallel with 1:3, is that the persons in view should not be allowed to teach. Who takes bread and wine is one issue, and does not ultimately affect anyone much. But who is allowed to teach is another issue altogether. The "different doctrine" or teaching references the teaching about the possibilities for slaves in :1 and :2. We can imagine that the teachers were

also materially wealthy and may have been those referred to as the "believing masters". We can assume that they would have been tempted to not agree with the teaching of :1 and :2, and not to teach it- despite the simple command at the end of :2 to teach these things.

And consents not to sound words, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ- The teaching in view is that about slaves and masters in :1 and :2. To disagree with what Paul has said would be to disagree with the words of the Lord Jesus. This could be because Paul's inspired words were effectively the words of the Lord Jesus, although in that case we wonder why the reference is to the words of Jesus rather than of God. Or Paul may mean that the teaching he had just given was a repetition of the essence of the *logos*, the essential idea, of the Lord Jesus. He may not have been quoting recorded words of the Lord Jesus (although maybe he is alluding to words of Jesus which were then well known but were unrecorded in the Gospels)- but in any case, Paul was repeating the *logos*, the word or essential ideas, of the teaching of the Lord Jesus.

And to the doctrine which shows reverence towards God- The teaching or doctrine in view is that of :1 and :2 which have spoken of the need not to bring God's Name to disrepute; and to reverence / respect people because God is working through them and they in a sense represent Him. But "reverence towards God" is the word for "Godliness" which often occurs in 1 Timothy; and it occurs in this context in :5, where these alternative teachers are portrayed as men teaching "that reverence towards God ["Godliness"] is a way of gain". They didn't want to teach things like those in :1 and :2 because they used their teaching as a way of gain. So far in this exposition I have suggested that there were female teachers in the church who were acting like the female mediators of the Diana cult, and taking money for their sexual services to brothers in Christ by getting money from the church for their services under the front of the widows' support fund. And here we find Timothy again being told to remove some from teaching- and again money is involved. These people were using 'Godliness' to get gain for themselves and were abusing their teaching ministry to that end. It sounds like the same group. It was doubtless with this money that the women could dress themselves up with such expensive and provocative clothing in 2:9,10.

6:4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words- This is the warning of chapter 1 repeated now at the end of this first letter. Those who 'know nothing' are those of 1:7: "They neither understand what they say, nor what they confidently affirm". They did of course know something theoretically, for they were teachers. But in real spiritual essence, they knew nothing. They were "bereft of the truth" (:5), which is Jesus and the great, real salvation in Him. All else is insignificant. The obsession with disputing and arguing about words frankly sounds like elements of many small time Protestant groups in their neo-Judaism. And the fruit of that attitude is the same- envy, strife and division. "Obsessed" translates a word meaning 'to be sick', in the sense of vomiting. That is what all the disputes and arguments amount to- vomit. The only time Paul uses the term 'arguments over words' again is in 2 Tim. 2:14, where Timothy is told that he must still stamp out this attitude. I have mentioned several times that the Lord's assessment of the church at Ephesus in Rev. 2 is such that we can conclude Timothy's charge was carried out successfully by him; for they are then commended for not having false teaching. But the way Paul has to repeat these charges about not allowing false teachers suggests that this was not so easily achieved; in the gap between the

two letters, Timothy had not made total progress. His final success is therefore the more noteworthy and commendable.

From which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions- We see here the importance of having a good teaching ministry. The congregation become this way according to the kind of teaching they are receiving.

6:5 Wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth- The word can mean 'meddlings' and is used about being a busybody. Although a different word is used, this is the very accusation made about the female false teachers of 5:13. Again we get the impression that the same group of teachers are in view; the women and their male supporters, teaching a heady mixture of Jewish and pagan [Diana cult] heresy.

Who suppose that reverence towards God is a way of gain- See on :3 *To the doctrine.*

Some MSS and AV add "From such withdraw thyself". See on :3.

6:6 But reverence towards God with contentment is great gain- In chapter 2 and elsewhere, Paul urges the false teachers to settle down into Christian family life and where appropriate, have children. We note that he doesn't tell Timothy to cast these people out of the church. He wants their salvation. And from personal experience I would tend to think that the "Godliness with contentment" which is "great gain" is a reference to a Christ-centered family life which is not focused upon getting personal wealth and success nor leadership in the church.

6:7 For we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out- This is a quote from Seneca, contemporary with Paul. The Bible is full of allusions to contemporary literature and wisdom, approving some of the ideas and deconstructing others. Some of the Bible's most difficult passages are likely difficult to our eyes because they are alluding to material we are unaware of. For the Bible is written *for* us but not directly *to* us in our generation. The fact we cannot take anything material with us is proof enough that any amassing of personal wealth is for this life only. The deception of wealth is the idea of permanent ownership of property, in various forms. But the permanence is only until death. The opening "for" connects with the idea of 'gain'. Overall in life, we gain nothing. We start and finish with nothing, so why stress about 'gaining' as we pass through the life process. Ps. 49:17 may be in view: "For when he (the rich man) dieth, he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him". In saying this, Paul is alluding to how Job faced up to the reality of our condition by saying that we entered this world naked and return naked (Job 1:21). Paul is saying that we are all in Job's position, facing up to the loss of all things, and should count it a blessing to have even clothing. We need not pass through Job's experience if we learn the theory. Solomon says the same in Ecc. 5:15, but only after passing through the wealth experience. It is our wisdom to absorb this principle without having to be dragged through a hedge backwards to make us realize its truth.

6:8 But having food and covering we shall be content- The reference may be to God's provision of these two things, food and clothing, to Israel in the wilderness. Their journey towards the promised land is a common prototype of our path towards the Kingdom. Note that there is no promise of a stable place to live; Paul himself had "no certain dwelling place" and neither did Israel in the wilderness. So much angst goes with the question of property ownership. But the promise we can take comfort from is that we ourselves shall always be provided with food and clothing.

6:9- see on Lk. 5:7.

But they that are intent on being rich- Paul had thought deeply about the parables. He doesn't just half-quote them in an offhand way. For example, Mt. 13:22 says that riches choke a man's response to the word. 1 Tim. 6:9 warns that those who *want to be rich* are choked by their *desire* for riches. Likewise Paul saw the rich man of Mt. 19:23 as actually one who *wanted* to be rich (= 1 Tim. 6:9,10). So Paul had thought through the parable. He saw that possession of riches alone wouldn't choke a man; he saw that the Lord was using "riches" as meaning 'the desire for riches'. And because "riches" are relative and subjective, this must be right. And therefore the Spirit was able to use Paul's deductions. My point is that the Spirit *could* have used just anyone to write (e.g.) 1 Tim. 6:9. But it was no accident that God chose to use a man with a fine knowledge and appreciation of His Son to be His pen-man.

Fall into a temptation and a snare- Twice in 1 Timothy, Paul speaks about a snare; the snare of the devil (1 Tim. 3:7), and the snare of wanting wealth (6:9). He mentions the snare of the devil again in 2 Tim. 2:26. In the immediate application, the 'devil' referred to the enemy of the church which surrounded them in Ephesus- a combination of Jewish and pagan powers who were eager to trap the Christians by accusations regarding financial and moral matters in order to close down the church. The clear influence of the Jewish Eve cult and the pagan Diana cult indicates that this snare was very real. Yet the Ephesian church survived, for the Lord wrote a letter to them in Rev. 2. Again we sense that Timothy's difficult ministry was successful, for despite all this surrounding desire to snare and strangle the church to death, it survived.

The desire for wealth in whatever form is the very epitome of the devil, our inherent sin which we must struggle against. The idea of a snare is that it results in a sudden and *unexpected* destruction. The unexpectedness of the destruction should set us thinking: surely the implication is that those who are materialistic don't realize that in fact this is their besetting sin, and therefore their rejection in the end because of it will be so tragically unexpected. It's rather like pride; if you're proud and you don't know it, then you really are proud. And if we're materialistic and don't know it, we likewise really have a problem. The idea of riches being a snare connects with copious OT references to idols as Israel's perpetual snare (Ex. 23:33; Dt. 7:16; Jud. 2:3; 8:27; Ps. 106:36; Hos. 5:1). Paul's point is surely that the desire of wealth is the equivalent of OT idolatry. But there is another, even more telling Biblical usage of the "snare". The day of the Lord will be a snare to the unsuspecting worldling, who will suddenly find that the Lord has come and destroyed him (Is. 8:14; 24:17,18; Jer. 50:24; Lk. 21:35). Yet the materialistic believer falls into the snare of riches here and now. Surely the point is that our attitude to riches is a preview of the judgment; the materialistic believer has condemned himself, right now. Not only does such a man fall into the devil's snare, but he pierces himself through with sorrows (1 Tim. 6:10), which is the language of crucifixion. This connection suggests a powerful logic. We face a cross either way; either the cross of the Lord Jesus, with the matchless eternity it heralds; or the cross, the twisting, unsatisfied pain of a life devoted to material advancement, which finally results in the darkness of rejection.

And many foolish and hurtful lusts- The lust for wealth spawns many other lusts, for the things which can be done with wealth or for things which are thought to lead to wealth. Hence :10 says that the desire to be wealthy is the root of all evil.

Which drown men- The word is only elsewhere used about the disciples almost drowning because they overloaded their boats with fish (Lk. 5:7); which Paul saw, through this allusion, as rooted in a desire to be wealthy. The fish were given by the

Lord, all the same; He could give or not give them, but by giving them, the disciples almost drowned.

In destruction and condemnation- Quite simply, men will be condemned at the last day because they wanted to be rich in this life. This is a sober warning.

6:10 *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil-* We could read the "all" literally, as if all evil can be traced back to a love of wealth. Or we can read these "kinds of evil" as referring to the "many foolish and hurtful lusts" of :9 which arise directly or indirectly from a desire for wealth. In the context of Ephesus, Paul's reference to love of wealth would apply to the women / sisters receiving money for sexual services to brothers, taken under cover of spirituality from the widows' relief fund. "Love of money" is literally 'love of silver'. Again in the context of Ephesus, we recall that the images of Diana were made of silver; and it was the guild of silversmiths who raised the persecution against the early church in Ephesus and sought to have Christianity banned. Their literal love of silver led them to "all kinds of evil". But those materialistic ones *within* the church were in essence no better than those in the world outside who were persecuting them.

Which some, by seeking for, have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows- The Greek translated "pierced themselves through" is related to the verb 'to crucify'. We are asked to crucify ourselves, to give up the brief materialism of this life. Yet if we refuse to do this, we still pierce ourselves through, we crucify ourselves, with the pain which comes from a mind dedicated to materialism and self-fulfilment, a life devoted to reaching the end of a rainbow. So what is the logical thing to do? It's crucifixion either way. The idea of piercing self through with sorrow is actually a direct quote from the LXX of 1 Kings 21:27, where Ahab was pierced with sorrow as a result of his coveting of Naboth's vineyard. And yet when Naboth was dead, Ahab tore his clothes and put on sackcloth, in sorrow for what he had done (1 Kings 21:16 LXX- omitted in the AV); but these very words are used in describing how when Ahab heard the words of his condemnation, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth (21:27). His sin brought him to tear his clothes, just as he did when his condemnation was pronounced. In his seeking for happiness he pierced himself through with the sorrow of condemnation. Quite simply, people who are bent on getting wealthy are not happy. Wealth

6:11 *But you, o man of God, flee these material things-* The call to flee suggests weak minded Timothy was tempted by material things.

And instead pursue after righteousness- There must always be something positive in place if we decide to flee sin. The fleeing from must become a pursuing after. Paul repeats this idea in 2 Tim. 2:22- flee youthful [sexual] lusts and [instead] follow after the same positive attributes.

Reverence towards God, faith, love, patience, meekness- To aspire to meekness is the acme of spiritual endeavour.

6:12- see on 2 Tim. 4:6-8; Lk. 13:24.

Fight the good fight of the faith- In 2 Timothy, Paul urges Timothy to accept the disciplined life of a soldier, as if Timothy was naturally weak minded and not well disciplined; we recall the command to him to have his children more firmly in order in chapter 3. Paul uses the same words in saying that he has "fought a good fight" (2 Tim. 4:7), unashamedly and consciously setting himself up to Timothy as an example. This is possible to do, without pride and any self affection, if truly we live in integrity before God and man.

Lay hold on the everlasting life- We can experience eternal life by starting to live now how we shall eternally live. Hence the Lord in John's Gospel speaks of having

eternal life now. Paul goes on to write of how the wealthy can lay hold on everlasting life (:19 s.w.) by giving away their wealth in the Lord's service. But Timothy was to be their example of laying hold on the Kingdom life right now. We are frequently spoken of as having been 'laid hold of' by the Lord; and we are to respond by laying hold of the things of the Kingdom as firmly as He has taken a grip upon our lives.

Whereunto you were called and did confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses- The confession was perhaps related to confessing that we have been called to eternal life, and have taken hold of that offer and will try to live that eternal life now. This was such a fundamental idea that it was part of some unrecorded "good confession" which was presumably declared by baptismal candidates (s.w. Rom. 10:9,10 "If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus... confession is made unto salvation"; "the obedience of your confession" of the Faith, 2 Cor. 9:13). We note that such materials have not been preserved for us- so that we would not slavishly hold to any form of words. For a confession of faith by its nature is personal and unique. Yet the confession before witnesses may not necessarily refer to Timothy's baptism, but rather to the time when the elders, the "many witnesses", laid hands on him to grant him the Holy Spirit for his ministry (4:14). The Greek for 'confess' means essentially 'to agree'; the agreement was therefore regarding the reality of the hope of eternal life, and Timothy's promise to live that eternal life now and fight for the faith. The "good fight" he was to fight connects with the *good* confession he had made.

6:13 *I urge you in the sight of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate made the good confession-* Timothy's confession was one of faith and commitment to the life and work appropriate to the belief that God really will give life to all in His Son. And the essence of that confession of devotion and faith in the life to come was seen in the Lord's confession before Pilate.

Paul speaks with pride of how the Lord Jesus "before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession" (1 Tim. 6:13). Paul's saying: 'Lord Jesus, your self control, your strength of purpose, was great. I salute you, I hold you up to Timothy as the supreme example'. As He witnessed in His ministry, so must we (Rom. 2:19 cp. Mt. 4:16). As He witnessed before Pilate, so must we witness (1 Tim. 6:12,13).

6:14 *Keep the commandment without stain-* Which charge or commandment? Presumably here at the end of the letter, Paul is summarizing and referring back to his opening charge to Timothy to remove false teachers and inculcate good works, with love as the intended end result (1:3-5). Yet in the immediate context, the charge / commandment might be that to which Timothy had given a good confession (:12); which would suggest his 'good confession' was not at his baptism but rather in agreement to the commission given him to care for Ephesus. The sentence as it stands can be read two ways- either the commandment itself was to be unstained; or Timothy was to keep the commandment without stain. The question is whether "without stain" refers to the subject or object of the sentence, and in my judgment of the Greek it refers to keeping the commandment itself unstained- until the Lord's return. This could only be achieved by handing on the commandment / charge to maintain pure doctrine to faithful men of the next generation (2 Timothy 2:2). If Paul meant that Timothy was to keep the commandment until the Lord returned, then it would mean that Paul expected the Lord's coming to be within Timothy's lifetime. And indeed Paul does write like that and in other places he does appear to make that assumption- as we all should live in the hopeful expectation of the Lord's imminent return.

Without reproach- Timothy as the bishop at Ephesus was to be without reproach (3:2). This strengthens the impression that "the commandment" was the command to Timothy to take care of Ephesus.

Until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ- See on :14 *Keep the commandment*.

6:15 *In due time He shall reveal him, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords*- Caesar was seen as king of many subject kings, Lord of many conquered and inferior lords. In this we see the radical challenge of 1 Tim. 6:15,16: that Jesus Christ is the *only* potentate, the Lord of Lords, the King of all Kings. The RV margin brings out the Greek even more radically: "them that rule as lords"- those who think they are lords when compared to the Lord Jesus they are nothing. Many of the terms used in relation to Caesar worship are deliberately used in the New Testament and redefined in an exclusive Christian context, setting the Christian view of them up against any other use of them, and insisting upon it as the only valid meaning of the term. Thus '*evangelion*' was a well-known concept. It meant the good news of victory, and the corresponding duty to make thank and praise offerings for it. The Imperial Cult used the word for announcing Caesar's victories, his birthdays, his accession to power, his granting of *salvation* to his people... Mark's Gospel especially uses the word *evangelion* in a way which sets it up in contrast to the way it was used in the Imperial Cult. It is the good news of the birth, victory, resurrection and Kingdom of the Lord Jesus, and the *evangelion* calls men and women to make self-sacrifice in response to it. It has been noted that "King of kings and Lord of lords", along with the surrounding couplets, are rhythmical. They are likely a quotation from some early Christian liturgy- a hymn or prayer. This means that such radical challenge of the Caesar cult and the Roman empire would have been a regular part of church life; just as we should be constantly aware of our radical collision course with the spirit of this world.

When Paul exalts that Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto, this isn't just some literary flourish. It is embedded within a context of telling the believers to quit materialism, indeed to flee from its snare. 1 Tim. 6:6-14 concern this; and then there is the passage about Christ's exaltation (:15,16), and then a continued plea to share riches rather than build them up (:17-19). Because He is Lord of all, we should quit our materialism and sense of self-ownership. For we are His, and all we have is for His service too. And the principle of His being Lord affects every aspect of our spirituality. Dennis Gillet truly observed [in *The Genius Of Discipleship*]: "Mastery is gained by crowning the Master as Lord and King".

6:16 See on Ex. 32:30-32.

Who only has immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable- This may be a final swipe at the Diana cult, which taught there were thousands of immortal gods; and of course they lived in the Artemisian temple at Ephesus, rather than "dwelling in light unapproachable". And it is also for sure a swipe at the imperial cult, which claimed that many of the dead emperors of Rome had been deified and were now immortal.

Whom no one has seen, nor can see. To whom be honour and power eternal. Amen- This likewise is a contrast between the one true God, and the pathetic idea of a god who is a visible idol like the Diana statue or the silver images made of her.

6:17 *Instruct those that are rich in this present world*- The connection between wealth and world continues the theme of :7. We come into this world naked and exit naked.

Any wealth is only for this present world- and we who have the sure hope of eternity are looking for the world to come.

That they are not proud, nor have their hope set on the uncertain riches; but instead on God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy- The same Greek phrase for “not proud”, “be not high minded”, is used in Rom. 11:20 about those who think they are spiritually superior to others. And so perhaps the idea was that the wealthy liked to think their wealth was a result of their spirituality, and therefore they despised the poorer brethren. And Paul directly warns against any such thinking, the like of which is seen so much in Pentecostal circles. The rich fool was not read by Paul as referring to some Hollywood millionaire; he saw that character as being in the ecclesia (Mt. 19:21 = 1 Tim. 6:17-19).

6:18 *Let the rich do good, that they be rich in good works-* The true wealth is in giving away rather than accumulating.

Ready to distribute- “Ready” suggests Paul is not envisaging selling all and giving away. The rich should be “ready” to share, rather than looking for reasons not to.

Willing to communicate- Literally, ‘to fellowship’. Fellowship is not an on paper agreement based on dry theology. Fellowship in practice means sharing wealth with others.

6:19 *Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation-* The Spirit describes our final redemption as our “soul” and “spirit” being “saved”; our innermost being, our essential spiritual personality, who we *really* are in spiritual terms, will as it were be immortalized (1 Pet. 1:9; 1 Cor. 5:5). This means that our spiritual development in this life is directly proportional to the type of person we will be *for evermore*. If, for example, we develop a generous spirit now, this is “a good foundation” for our future spiritual experience (1 Tim. 6:19). This is a stupendous conception, and the ultimate fillip to getting serious about our very personal spiritual development. Our mortal bodies will be changed to immortal, Spirit nature bodies according to the Spirit which *now* dwells in us (Rom. 8:11 Gk.). The attitude which we have to the Lord Jesus *now* will be the attitude we have to Him at the day of judgment (Mt. 7:23 cp. Lk. 6:46). So the wealthy who give their wealth away are not buying a place in the Kingdom for themselves, but who they eternally will be shall eternally reflect the generous character they developed in this life. In this sense they have ‘laid hold’ on the eternal life; they have begun to live the kind of life which we shall eternally live.

Against the time to come- They have ‘laid up in store for themselves’ spiritually, in that the future day [“time to come”] which in is subconsciously in the mind of all savers, hoarders and folk rich and poor... is going to be revealed as the day of judgment. Those who have given away wealth [so that they are left at a real minus, and not simply being generous in ways they wouldn’t notice]... have laid up a store of wealth for *that* day.

That they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed- God richly gives things to *all of us*, Paul says; and by our being “liberal and generous [we] thus lay up for [ourselves] a good foundation for the future, so that [we] may take hold of the life which is life indeed”. “The life which is life indeed” is not the lower middle class striving-for-security life of slowly saving and occasionally splashing out on something, building up, watching the interest slowly grow, worrying about inflation and the possible need for a new boiler or roof... Much as those things are all part of our human experience in this age, they’re not “the life which is life indeed”.

That life begins now, in a counter-instinctive going against the grain of being generous.

6:20 *O Timothy, guard-* We sense from Paul's emotional appeal that Paul really feared Timothy was not going to hold on, and would allow his weaknesses of character to dominate, with the result that the truth of Christ would be lost in Ephesus. The Lord's letter to the Ephesians some time later shows that Timothy did hold on and discharged his commission. The only problem was that all the emphasis on good works and maintaining purity of teaching was achieved without *agape* love- and this was why the Ephesian church was finally reprimanded. But from the point of view of Timothy's calling and mission- he fulfilled it, and out of weakness was made strong.

That which was committed to you- Paul urges Timothy a while later to guard or keep what was committed to him, i.e. the charge of 1:3,4 of maintaining true teaching and good works in Ephesus, "by the power of the Holy Spirit which dwells within us" (2 Tim. 1:14). Given Timothy's weaknesses of personality, the only way he could have achieved his calling was by internal psychological strengthening. And that is exactly what the Holy Spirit / mind "which dwells *within* us" is all about. It works within the human mind. The ability to do miracles etc. was not in view. And Paul uses the same idea about keeping what the Lord committed to us in saying that the Lord is able to guard / keep what *we* have committed *to Him* (2 Tim. 1:12). He has committed His work to us to do, and we have committed our lives to Him. We have undertaken to be totally taken up with His work, and thus we have staked our entire lives and future on His existence and real working with us. There is thus an indescribable mutuality between God and man if we are committed to what He has committed to us.

Turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of false knowledge- Again we see a connection with the opening of the letter, where Paul has noted that some have 'turned away' unto vain ideas; and Paul urges Timothy to likewise 'turn away' these ideas, perhaps in practice by not granting a platform to those teaching them. The idea is not just that Timothy personally should turn away from such babblings, but should himself turn those babblings away- by stopping them being taught, according to his charge in 1:3,4. Again we note that Timothy was being asked to stem a tide which the prophetic word had said would not be turned away- for in the last days, men would depart from the faith (4:1), and be turned away unto fables (2 Tim. 4:4). But Timothy was asked to bravely still battle that tide of apparent inevitability. Just as Moses prayed for the destruction of Israel not to happen. And it succeeded; for the Lord's summary of the Ephesian church in Rev. 2 stated that they were doctrinally intact. "False knowledge" is *gnosis*, possibly a reference to incipient Gnosticism, but more likely a criticism of the mentality which is alive and well to this day in the internet generation: 'I know something you don't, I've got access to sources you don't have access to... so do what I say'. The immediate reference would have been to the Jewish fables taught by the old Jewish women, and the nonsense connected with the cults of Eve and Diana which Timothy had to engage in chapter 2.

6:21 *Which some professing-* The female false teachers of 2:10 had 'professed Godliness' at their baptismal confession; and yet it seems they had also made some profession / confession to the Diana cult, and had seriously erred from the Christian faith as a result.

Have erred concerning the faith- Another connection with the opening section of the

letter, where Paul notes that some have 'swerved' (1:6). "The faith" is a path, a road with an end point- spiritual mindedness, the imitation of Christ, resulting in eternity in God's Kingdom united with Christ. Smart ideas, philosophies, Jewish fables etc. all cause people to swerve from that path. 2 Tim. 2:18 uses the same word in giving concrete examples of those who have 'erred' by saying that the resurrection has already come- first century form of the Preterist heresy which is rife today. Those who hold false doctrines have "missed the mark concerning the faith" (1 Tim. 6:21 RVmg.). The true faith has an aim, a mark to which it aims. A false 'faith' misses that aim. "Profane and vain babblings... increase unto more ungodliness" (2 Tim. 2:16)- they precipitate a downward spiral of practical behaviour.

Grace be with you- The word *charis* means literally 'the gift', and refers surely to the internal gift of Holy Spirit strengthening commented on under :20 *Guard that...*