

Paul's
First
Letter to
TIMOTHY

An English Translation of the Greek Text

Digital file version: Version 1.0

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Address and Greeting

PART 1

- 1** From: Paul, an apostle of Messiah Jesus,¹ in accord with the directive of God,² our *Soter*,³ and of Messiah Jesus, our hope.
²To: Timothy, my true child in belief.
³Grace, mercy and *shalom*⁴ from God, the Father, and from Messiah Jesus, our Lord.

1:1-2

Introductory Remarks

§ 1 • Paul's Purpose for Leaving Timothy in Ephesus

PART 2

- 2** Now then, upon departing for Macedonia, I encouraged you to remain on at Ephesus in order that you might enjoin certain individuals not to approach their teaching differently,⁵ and not to give heed to false ethical judgments supported by endless lines of defense.⁶ ²Such things give rise to investigations other than an investigation of the distribution of the mercy of God that is described in our system of belief.
- 3** Now the goal of our instruction is love for God,⁷ coming from a cleansed heart,⁸ from a sound *suneidesis*,⁹ and from a genuine, unfeigned belief. ²Some men,

1:3-4

¹ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶1.1, note 1.

² See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶1.1, note 2.

³ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶1.1, note 3.

⁴ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶1.1, note 4.

⁵ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶2.1, note 1.

⁶ The noun phrase μύθοις καὶ γενεαλογίαις ἀπεράντοις [*muthois kai genealogiais aperantois*] is usually translated something like "myths and endless genealogies." I have translated it "false ethical judgments supported by endless lines of defense." For a discussion of this translation see *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶2.1, note 2.

⁷ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶3.1, note 1.

⁸ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶3.1, note 2.

⁹ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶3.1, note 3.

who are missing the mark, have turned aside from these things to foolish talk.

³While they want to be teachers of *Torah*,¹⁰ they understand neither what they are saying, nor the things about which they are making confident assertions.

1:5–7

- 4 Now we know that the *Torah* is good, if one uses it rightly. ²Namely, by understanding this: that the *Torah* is not given to a righteous person, but to those who are evil¹¹—even to those who are rebellious, neglectful of God¹², and sinful; to those who are not sacred, but profane: to father-killers and mother-killers, to murderers, to those who are sexually immoral, to homosexuals, to kidnappers, to liars, to perjurers, and to those who practice any other thing that is contrary to sound teaching—that is, contrary to teaching that is in accord with the good news of the glory of the blessed God¹³, the good news with which I have been entrusted.

1:8–11

§ 2 • God's Purpose for Mercifully Saving Paul

PART 3

- 5 I am grateful to the one who gave me authority¹⁴—to Messiah Jesus, our lord—because he counted me a trustee¹⁵ of his message and put me into service¹⁶ when, formerly, I was a blasphemer and persecutor and arrogant man. ²Instead of what I deserved, I was shown mercy. ³For—being ignorant—I acted in unbelief; yet the grace of our Lord overflowed in me with the belief and love that characterizes those in Messiah Jesus.

1:12–14

- 6 It is a trustworthy statement—and deserving of full acceptance—that “Messiah Jesus came into the world to rescue sinners.” ²Foremost among them am I. ³And, indeed, for this reason I was shown mercy—namely, so that in me, the foremost sinner, Messiah Jesus might show forth the entire depths of his forbear-

¹⁰The Greek noun νόμος [*nomos*] here—which I have translated *Torah*—denotes the set of commandments contained in the Covenant made with Israel under Moses as a source of teaching with regard to how to live righteously. For further discussion of this see *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶3.3, note 1.

¹¹See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶4.2, note 1.

¹²See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶4.2, note 2.

¹³See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶4.2, note 3.

¹⁴See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶5.1, note 1.

¹⁵See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶5.1, note 2.

¹⁶The noun “service” here translates the noun διακονία [*diakonia*]. Note that this makes Paul, in his own mind, a διάκονος [*diakonos*] of Messiah Jesus. See footnote 37 and see ¶16 ff.

ance¹⁷ as an example to those about to believe in him for *aionic* life.¹⁸

1:15–16

7 Now to the King of the Ages¹⁹—to the immortal one, the invisible one, the one and only God—may there be honor and glory into the ages of the ages. ²*Amen*.

1:17

Body of Letter: Miscellaneous Instructions and Exhortations

§ 1 • Paul's Primary Charge to Timothy

PART 4

8 This charge I give to you, Timothy, my child—in accord with the prophecies previously spoken about you—that, in consideration of them, you put up a good fight to hold on to your belief and a sound *suneidesis*.²⁰ ²Certain individuals, having rejected a sound *suneidesis*, have suffered shipwreck with regard to their belief. ³Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, in order that they might be taught not to blaspheme.

1:18–20

§ 2 • How Paul Wants Timothy to Instruct Other Believers to Live

§ 2.1 • Instruct Men to Live Lives of Godliness, Calm Contentment, and an Acceptance of Their Subordinate Role

PART 5

9 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties, prayers, intercessions, and expressions of thanks to God be made on behalf of **all** men—on behalf of kings and all those who are in positions of preeminence—such that, in every circumstance, we are living a calm²¹ and *hesuchios*²² life based on a proper regard for and genuine seriousness toward God.²³

2:1–2

10 This is good and acceptable before our *Soter*;²⁴ God, who desires all men to be rescued by coming to a knowledge of the truth. ²Now God is one; and there is one mediator between God and men—the man Messiah Jesus, the one who

¹⁷ The “entire depths of his forbearance” translates τὴν ἅπασαν μακροθυμίαν [*ten hapasan makrothumian*].

¹⁸ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶6.3, note 1.

¹⁹ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶7.1, note 1.

²⁰ By a “sound{*agathos*} *suneidesis*” Paul means a good and accurate understanding of God and reality—that is, a sound and accurate “worldview.” See note 9 on page 1.

²¹ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶9.1, note 1.

²² See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶9.1, note 2.

²³ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶9.1, note 3.

²⁴ See note 3 on page 1.

gave himself a ransom for all. ³This is the testimony for our own times, for which I was appointed to be a herald and an apostle.²⁵ ⁴I speak truth with regard to the Messiah.²⁶ ⁵I do not speak falsehood. ⁶I am a teacher of the Gentiles in this true belief.²⁷

2:3–7

11 Accordingly, I want men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands without wrath and dissension.

2:8

§ 2.2 • Instruct Their Wives to Live Lives of Godliness, Calm Contentment, and an Acceptance of Their Subordinate Role

PART 6

12 Similarly, I want their wives, with modesty²⁸ and *sophrosune*²⁹, to adorn themselves in appropriate apparel—not in braided hair, and in gold, and in pearls, and in expensive clothes. ²Rather, what is fitting for wives who make a profession of reverence for God is to adorn themselves with good works.

2:9–10

13 In *hesuchia*³⁰, a wife is to accept instruction in complete subordination. ²And I do not give a wife permission to instruct or impose her will on her husband. ³Rather, she is to be in *hesuchia*.³¹ ⁴For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

2:11–13

-- (b) --

An Aside: The Ironic Symmetry in God's Purposes and the Universal Necessity of Sophrosune

14 Now indeed, it is said³²:

²⁵ The “testimony for our own times” of which Paul speaks here is the testimony that Jesus is the Messiah and that he gave himself as a ransom for all, etc. This testimony is “for our own times” because it has only recently been revealed to humanity. It was revealed to us, in “our time.” Paul states that he was appointed to herald this testimony.

²⁶ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶10.4, note 1.

²⁷ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶10.6, note 1.

²⁸ Paul means “modesty” in the sense of humility here. Paul wants their adornment to reflect a spirit of humility, and not a spirit of pretense and ostentation.

²⁹ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶12.1, note 1.

³⁰ See note 22 on page 3.

³¹ See note 22 on page 3.

³² Apparently a pithy doctrinal summary statement devised by some anonymous early believer that had caught on and become popular among the believing communities of this time.

“²Adam was not deceived. ³But, because his wife was completely deceived, he fell into transgression. ⁴Yet, he will be rescued through the child-birth.”

⁵If they persist in belief and love and sanctity, with *sophrosune*,³³ this is a trustworthy statement.

2:14–3:1a

§ 3 • The Standards Paul Wants Timothy to Employ When Appointing Delegates

PART 7

15 If anyone is inclined to be an *episkope*,³⁴ he desires a good work. ²Now then, it is necessary for an *episkope* to be **above reproach**—a man of one woman; serious; right-thinking; respectable; hospitable; able to teach; not addicted to wine; not contentious, but forbearing, peaceable; not a lover of money; one who leads his own household well, having children who live in subordination to him with complete respect for him (now if a man does not know how to lead his own household, how will he take care of the household of God?); not a new convert, lest, growing conceited, he fall and become subject to the condemnation of the detractor.³⁵ ³And it is indeed necessary for him to have a good testimony from those outside the community, so that he will not fall into disgrace, the snare of the detractor.³⁶

3:1b–7

-- (b) --

16 Similarly, it is necessary for *diakonoī*³⁷ to be **worthy of great respect**—not two-faced, not seeking after much wine³⁸; not seeking after dishonest advantage³⁹; grasping the secret of our belief with a flawless *suneidesis*.⁴⁰

3:8–9

-- (c) --

³³ See note 29 on page 4.

³⁴ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶15.1, note 1.

³⁵ The noun “detractor” translates the Greek word διάβολος [*diabolos*]. See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶15.3, note 1.

³⁶ See note 35 above.

³⁷ The word here is a transliteration of the plural form of διάκονος [*diakonos*, typically translated “servant”], hence, “servants.” I have left it untranslated here. See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶16.1, note 1.

³⁸ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶16.1, note 2.

³⁹ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶16.1, note 3.

⁴⁰ See note 9 on page 1.

17 Indeed, these men must first be evaluated; then—if they are *above reproach*⁴¹—they are to be appointed to serve. (2. Their wives should similarly be *worthy of great respect*—not malicious gossips, serious, trustworthy in all things.)

3:10–11

-- (d) --

18 *Diakonoi* are to be men of one woman; men who lead their children and their own households well. 2. For those who serve their households well obtain a good standing for themselves and much freedom to speak among those belonging to the belief that is in Messiah Jesus.

3:12–13

§ 4 • Instructions and Personal Exhortations to Timothy Himself

PART 8

19 I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long. 2. But in case I am delayed, I write this so that you will know how it is necessary to proceed in the household of God,⁴² which is the *ekklesia* of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

3:14–15

20 And—so far as our common assent is concerned—the “secret” that underlies our *eusebeia* is great.⁴³ 2. He who became manifest as a human being, was declared right in his claims by the Spirit, was seen by the messengers, was proclaimed among the nations, was believed upon in the *kosmos*, was taken up in glory.⁴⁴

3:16

-- (b) --

21 Now the Spirit expressly states that in times afterward certain ones will turn away from their belief,⁴⁵ giving heed to deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons—the teachings of men who lie through their hypocrisy, the teachings of indi-

⁴¹That is, if they meet the qualifications listed under Part 7(a)—or, in other words, if they meet the qualifications listed for an *episkope* [see ¶15.2 above, “it is necessary for an *episkope* to be *above reproach*.”] See *Translator’s Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶17.1, note 1.

⁴²The phrase “how it is necessary to proceed in the household of God” translates πῶς δεῖ ἐν οἴκῳ θεοῦ ἀναστρέφεσθαι [*pos dei en oiko theou anastrephesthai*]. See *Translator’s Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶19.2, note 1.

⁴³See *Translator’s Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶20.1, all of the notes.

⁴⁴See *Translator’s Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶20.2, all of the notes.

⁴⁵See *Translator’s Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶21.1, note 1.

viduals who have damaged their own *suneidesis*⁴⁶ such that they discourage marriage and abstain from foods that God created to be gratefully enjoyed by those who believe and know the truth. ²For everything created by God is good,⁴⁷ and nothing is excluded, if it is received with gratitude. ³For, in light of the word of God⁴⁸ and prayer, it is set apart as holy.

4:1–5

22 In pointing these things out to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Messiah Jesus.

4:6a

-- (c) --

23 Be nurtured by the truths of our belief⁴⁹ and of the sound teaching⁵⁰ that you have been following, and have nothing to do with shallow, popular fictions.⁵¹
²Rather, train yourself for *eusebeia*.⁵²

³“Now bodily training is profitable for a little, but *eusebeia*⁵³ is profitable for all time, since it holds promise for the present life and for the coming one.”

⁴This statement is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. ⁵For this, in fact, we labor and strive,⁵⁴ for we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the *Soter* of all men—certainly, of the believing ones. ⁶Teach and demand these things.

4:6b–11

-- (d) --

24 No one is to look down on your youthfulness. ²Rather, in speech, in conduct,

⁴⁶ See note 9 on page 1. Also, see *Translator’s Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶21.1, note 2.

⁴⁷ See note 48. Also, see *Translator’s Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶21.2, note 1.

⁴⁸ See *Translator’s Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶21.3, note 1.

⁴⁹ The phrase “the truths of our belief” translates τῶν λόγων τῆς πίστεως [*tois logois tes pisteos*].

⁵⁰ The phrase “of the sound teaching” translates τῆς καλῆς διδασκαλίας [*tes kales didaskalias*].

⁵¹ The phrase “shallow, popular fictions” translates τοὺς δὲ βεβήλους καὶ γραώδεις μύθους [*tous de bebelous kai graodeis mutheis*]. The typical English translation of this goes something like this: “worldly [*bebelous*] fables [*mutheis*] fit only for old women [*graodeis*].” See *Translator’s Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶23.1, note 1.

⁵² See note 23 on page 3 regarding the meaning of *eusebeia*. Also, see *Translator’s Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶23.2, note 1.

⁵³ See note 52 above and the notes referenced there.

⁵⁴ See *Translator’s Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶23.5, note 1.

in love, in belief, in purity—be an example to those who believe.

4:12

25 Until I come, give attention to reading, exhortation, and teaching.⁵⁵ ²Do not neglect the gift placed upon you, which was given to you through prophecy along with the placing on of hands by a group of *presbuteroi*.⁵⁶ ³Attend carefully to these things. ⁴Be absorbed in them, such that your progress will be evident to all. ⁵Give careful heed to yourself as well as to your teaching. ⁶Persevere in these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

4:13–16

26 With regard to an older man, do not excoriate⁵⁷ him. ²Rather, exhort him to complete purity⁵⁸ as if your father. ³To the same end, exhort younger men as if a brother, older women as if a mother, and younger women as if a sister.

5:1–2

§ 5 • Practices and Policies That Paul Wants Timothy to Implement

§ 5.1 • Practices and Policies Concerning Widows

PART 9

27 Show regard to widows who are truly widows.⁵⁹ ²But if a certain widow has children or grandchildren, these must learn to practice *eusebeia*⁶⁰ first and foremost in regard to their own household and to repay their parents. ³For this is pleasing in the sight of God. (⁴Now a true widow has in fact been left all alone. ⁵She has placed her hope in God and persists in entreaties and prayers night and day. ⁶But the one living self-indulgently has died, though she lives.) ⁷Do, in fact, demand these things, so that they might be above reproach.⁶¹ ⁸But if anyone does not care for his own—and especially for his household—he has denied our belief and is worse than an unbeliever.

5:3–8

28 A widow, who is not less than sixty years old, who has been the wife of one man, who has had testimony born of her by her good works—if she has

⁵⁵ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶25.1, note 1.

⁵⁶ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶25.2, note 1.

⁵⁷ This translates the verb ἐπιλήσσω [*epiplessō*], which more literally means “to strike.”

⁵⁸ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶26.2, note 1.

⁵⁹ By “to show regard for widows who are truly widows” Paul is instructing Timothy that the Jesus-believing community ought to ensure that any “true widow” is taken care of physically and materially. They will “show regard” for them by providing for them.

⁶⁰ See note 52 above and the notes referenced there.

⁶¹ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶27.7, note 1.

brought up children, if she has shown hospitality, if she has washed the feet of the *hagioi*,⁶² if she has assisted those in trouble, if she has pursued every good work—she is to be enrolled.⁶³

5:9–10

29 But reject the younger widows.⁶⁴ ²For if and when they experience strong inclinations drawing them away from their pledge to the Messiah, they want to get married, incurring condemnation, since they have set aside their prior pledge. ³And, at the same time, they learn to be idlers. ⁴Going around to the houses, not only do they become idlers, but they also become gossips and busybodies, telling things that they should not be telling. ⁵Therefore, I want the younger women to marry, to bear children, to manage a household, and to give no opportunity for reproach to our opponent. ⁶Indeed, some have already turned aside to go after Satan.

5:11–15

30 If any believing man or woman has widows among his kin, he (or she) is to take care of them. ²Indeed, the church is not to be burdened by them in order that it might assist the true widows.

5:16

§ 5.2 • Practices and Policies Concerning Elders

PART 10

31 The *presbuteroi*⁶⁵ who lead well are to be considered worthy of double honor,⁶⁶ especially those who work hard at the word and teaching. ²For the Scripture says,

“³You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.”⁶⁷

⁴The laborer is indeed deserving of his wages.

5:17–18

⁶² See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶28.1, note 1.

⁶³ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶28.1, note 2.

⁶⁴ That is, do not let them be included on the roll just mentioned in the preceding paragraph. This does not mean that the community must altogether refuse to support them.

⁶⁵ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶31.1, note 1.

⁶⁶ Presumably, the “double honor” Paul has in mind is (i) the honor of being materially remunerated, along with (ii) the social honor and prestige of being recognized as a leader.

⁶⁷ *Deuteronomy* 25:4.

32 Do not receive an accusation against a *presbuteros*⁶⁸ except on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²Those who do in fact sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest of the community will gain a fear of rebuke as well. ³I earnestly warn—in the presence of God and of Messiah Jesus and of the messengers to the elect⁶⁹—that you keep these instructions without prejudice, doing nothing out of favoritism.⁷⁰

5:19–21

33 Do not lay hands upon anyone hastily; do not share in the sins of others; keep yourself pure.⁷¹ (²No longer drink water, but use a little wine on account of your stomach and your frequent ailments.)⁷² ³The sins of some men are quite evident, preceding them to judgment; but for others, they follow.⁷³ ⁴In the same way, good deeds can also be quite evident; but the things suggesting otherwise cannot be hidden.⁷⁴

5:22–25

§ 5.3 • What to Instruct Believers Who Are Slaves

PART 11

34 As many as are slaves under a yoke, they are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor in order that the name of God (and our teaching) will not be bad-mouthed. ²Those who have believers as their masters are not to be disrespectful, because they are brothers. ³Rather, they are to serve all the more, because those who benefit from their acts of service⁷⁵ are believers and are loved. ⁴Teach and urge these things.

6:1–2

§ 6 • More Personal Exhortations to Timothy Himself

§ 6.1 • Exhortation for Timothy to Avoid the Competitiveness of False Teachers and the Love of Money

PART 12

35 If someone is teaching differently⁷⁶ and does not concur with claims that are

⁶⁸ See note 65.

⁶⁹ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶32.3, note 1.

⁷⁰ See James 2:1–9.

⁷¹ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶33.1, note 1.

⁷² See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶33.2, note 1.

⁷³ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶33.3, note 1.

⁷⁴ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶33.4, note 1.

⁷⁵ The phrase “acts of service” (= actions that provide assistance, care, or help) translates the noun εὐεργεσίας (*euergesias*).

⁷⁶ See note 5 on page 1. Paul's emphasis in this particular statement has shifted to the false doctrines that a false teacher might

sound—namely, with those of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah—and with the teaching that is consistent with our *eusebeia*, then he has become conceited, understanding nothing, and rather is unhealthily prone to controversies and quarrels.⁷⁷ ²Out of these come envy, strife, slander, evil suspicions, and the constant wranglings of men who have been ruined in their mind and have been defrauded of the truth, men who think that our *eusebeia* is a path to personal benefit.⁷⁸ ³Now our *eusebeia*, when accompanied by an inner disposition free of needs, wants, and desires,⁷⁹ *is* a path to great personal benefit.

6:3–6

-- (b) --

36 Now we have brought nothing into the world. ²It is evident that we cannot take anything out of it either. ³If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. ⁴But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge men into ruin and destruction. ⁵For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil. ⁶Some, by longing for it, have wandered away from our belief and have pierced themselves with many griefs.

6:7–10

-- (c) --

37 But you, O man of God, flee from these things, and pursue righteousness, *eusebeia*,⁸⁰ belief, love, perseverance, and meekness.

6:11

§ 6.2 • Exhortation for Timothy to Live His Life Faithfully in the Light of the Truth

PART 13

38 Fight the good fight for belief. ²Lay hold of the *aionic* life to which you were called. (³Indeed, you declared agreement with the good confession⁸¹ in the presence of many witnesses.) ⁴I charge you in the presence of God (who gives life to all his people) and in the presence of Messiah Jesus (who testified with regard to

teach. However, there is no reason to think that, by “teaching differently,” Paul means anything other than what he did in his opening statements.

⁷⁷ See *Translator’s Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶35.1, note 1. Also, regarding the meaning of *eusebeia* throughout this entire paragraph, see note 52 on page 7.

⁷⁸ See *Translator’s Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶35.2, note 1.

⁷⁹ See *Translator’s Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶35.3, note 1.

⁸⁰ See note 52 on page 7.

⁸¹ See *Translator’s Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶38.3, note 1.

the good confession before Pontius Pilate⁸²) that you keep this instruction unmarred and without reproach⁸³ until the appearing of our Lord, Jesus the Messiah. ⁵This appearing he will bring about⁸⁴ in his own time—he who is the blessed⁸⁵ and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the only one having immortality, the one dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no one among men has seen or is able to see.⁸⁶ ⁶To him be honor and *aionic* rule. ⁷May it be so!

6:12–16

§ 7 • More On How Paul Wants Timothy to Instruct Others

§ 7.1 • Instruct Wealthy Believers to Put No Confidence in Their Riches, But to Use It For Good Instead

PART 14

39 Urge those who are rich in this present age not to think highly of themselves and not to place confidence in the unreliability of riches, but in God, who richly provides us with all things to meet our needs. ²Urge them to work toward what is good—to be rich in good works, to be generous, inclined to share—in order to put in store for themselves a good foundation for what is about to come, so that they may obtain *real* Life.

6:17–19

§ 8 • Final Personal Exhortation to Timothy and Benediction

PART 15

40 O Timothy! Guard what has been entrusted to you, rejecting popular,⁸⁷ vacuous views, and views contradicting the gospel that are wrongly named knowledge. ²Some, professing such so-called knowledge, have missed the mark concerning our belief.⁸⁸

6:20–21a

41 Grace be with you. *Amen*.

6:21b

⁸² See note 81. And see *John* 18:33–37, *Matthew* 27:11 (along with *Matthew* 27:17, 22), *Mark* 15:2 (along with *Mark* 15:9, 12), and *Luke* 23:3.

⁸³ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶38.4, note 1.

⁸⁴ The verb phrase “bring about” translates the Greek verb δείκνυμι [*deiknumi*].

⁸⁵ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶38.5, note 1.

⁸⁶ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶38.5, note 2.

⁸⁷ This translates the adjective βεβήλους (*bebelous*). See note 51 on page 7.

⁸⁸ See *Translator's Notes, Sentence-By-Sentence Comments*, ¶40.2, note 1.

Translator's Notes

General Remarks

1. As is always the case when it comes to bible interpretation, it is incumbent upon the reader of *1 Timothy* to resist reading Paul's letter from the standpoint of his own reality and experience. Our standpoint is nearly two thousand years after the letter was written. Two thousand years later, we live within the reality of institutionalized churches led by elders, bishops, and deacons. It is very tempting to assume that the institutions that we have inherited are the legitimate descendants of institutions that Paul was instructing Timothy to create in Ephesus. We are tempted to read it that way because the institutions of modern Christendom just are the reality we experience. And it is very difficult for us to conceive of a reality different from the reality in which we live. But this is a huge mistake. We will not and cannot understand what Paul is saying to Timothy unless we remove the lenses born of our experience and reality as modern Christians and seek to reconstruct the experience and reality of Paul and Timothy in the first century. Paul, I would argue, is not seeking to establish Christian institutions at all. Therefore, he is not instructing Timothy to create them. Rather, Paul is seeking to lead and guide a burgeoning social movement that is centered in the belief that Jesus is the Messiah sent from God. This first letter of Paul to Timothy is a letter written by the apostle to his young protegee, whom he has delegated to guide and oversee the development of this Jesus-movement in Ephesus. It is very important to read this letter through those lenses, and not through the lenses we naturally put in place as modern Christians. We must seek to imagine the character of this early Jesus-movement in the time and place in which it occurred—for that is the true historical setting for this letter. We must not picture the character of this early Jesus-movement as if it were an early version of Christianity as we live and experience it today.
 1. Paul will use three different terms to describe leaders within the communities of Jesus-follows that are beginning to emerge—*episkope*, *diakonos*, and *presbuteros*. In my judgment, each of these terms is being used to describe one and the same individual functioning in one and the same role—namely, the role of providing spiritual guidance to members of the community and providing oversight over their life of belief. There is no good reason to think that this role is a formal or official “office” within an organized structure that Paul is seeking to institutionalize. Rather, it is an entirely informal, unofficial role that is utterly dependent upon the community's respect for the apostles. Any authority that might be granted to a leader [*episkope*, *diakonos*, *presbuteros*] whom Timothy appoints, would not be granted because of the authority attached to some “office” to which that man was appointed. Rather, it would be granted to such an appointed leader because of the authority already granted to Timothy, who appointed him. And any authority granted to Timothy would be granted because of the authority granted to the apostle Paul, whom Timothy represents.
2. I have no firm conviction with regard to when and from where Paul wrote this letter. It is difficult to reach a definitive conclusion about this from the data that we have available. It is always helpful to know exactly what circumstances surround the composition of a letter—hence, it is always important to know when it was written, where the author was writing it from, under what circumstances he wrote it, and why he wrote it. Sometimes that information can be inferred from the content of the letter. Other times it cannot. Sometimes it is impossible to accurately interpret a letter without taking that information into account. Other times the letter can be interpreted without having a full knowledge of such things. This letter is the latter sort. While it is not possible to determine where Paul was when he wrote it, when in the chronology of his life he wrote it, why exactly he wrote it at

this particular point in time, nor what specific circumstances were being confronted by Timothy at the time that Paul wrote it, the nature of this letter is such that we are nonetheless able to understand it in spite of our ignorance of these facts. The problems and issues that Paul addresses are general enough, and the approach he takes to addressing them is universal enough in scope, that we do not need to know any of the particulars about Timothy's situation in order to understand what Paul is saying to him. The few distinctive particulars that are important to understanding the letter can be readily inferred from the letter itself.

Sentence-By-Sentence Comments

• ¶1.1

1. The Greek noun *apostolos* describes a person who is sent [*apostello*] by a ruler [or other person having authority] with the delegated authority to represent him in whatever business, diplomacy, or other affairs need to be conducted on his behalf. Here Paul identifies himself as an apostle [an *apostolos*]—as one “sent” by Jesus (and God) to declare the truth about Jesus to the world, especially to the Gentile world. We know from other New Testament teaching that Paul—as an “apostle”—possesses the authority to speak for the Messiah himself. Paul has an inspired understanding of the truth that Jesus came into the world to proclaim. This inspired understanding permits him to speak with authority about the Truth revealed by Jesus the Messiah. Because his inspired understanding gives him the authority to represent Jesus himself to the world—hence, he is called an *apostolos* of Jesus the Messiah.
2. Paul's role as an apostle was given to him at the directive of Jesus, when Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus, and afterward. Jesus appeared to Paul [as Saul] and instructed him that he was going to be sent to the Gentiles to testify to the truth of the gospel. (See *Acts* 9:1–30, 22:1–21, and 26:1–23.) In effect, Paul was being sent by Jesus—as an *apostolos*—to take the gospel message to the Gentiles. While this directive was issued to Paul directly by Jesus himself, Paul recognizes that the ultimate authority underlying this directive was the will and purpose of God himself. Paul captures this fact by stating here that the directive was both “of God ... and of Messiah Jesus... ”
3. The directive that Paul serve as an *apostolos* is described as coming from “God, our *Soter*.” The Greek word *soter* denotes a heroic individual who has attained his hero status by rescuing a people from some danger, threat, or oppression. [*Soter* was a favorite title of the Roman Caesars.] To call God our *Soter*; therefore, is to identify him as the heroic champion who delivered us from a fate that threatened us. Through Messiah Jesus, God has arranged to rescue those who belong to him from being justly destroyed by God's wrath at the final judgment. Hence, in view of this rescue from death and destruction that awaits us, God is our Deliverer (our *Soter*).
 - a. The noun σωτήρ [*soter*] is typically translated “savior.” However, after several centuries of Christendom, there are some misleading connotations that have attached to the word “Savior.” Therefore, I have chosen not to translate σωτήρ [*soter*] as “savior” here. I have simply transliterated it.
4. The word *shalom* translates the noun εἰρήνη [*eirene*]. Typically *eirene* is translated “peace.” Here, however, it occurs as a greeting. In my judgment, Paul is intending to render the typical Hebrew greeting—*shalom*—using a Greek equivalent [*eirene*]. In my translation, I have rendered it as the original Hebrew, *shalom*, so that its function as a greeting is more apparent.

• ¶2.1

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1. Contrary to what most translators and lexicons seem to suggest, the focus of Paul’s instruction to Timothy here is not on discouraging different doctrines from being taught (that is, “different” from those taught by Paul and the apostles). Rather, his focus is on ensuring that every teacher in the believing community approach the Scriptures the same way he does. He does not anyone to deviate from the approach to the Scripture that he himself modeled for them while among them. Granted, Paul knows that a different approach to Scripture will result in different conclusions about what it teaches—and, hence, to the teaching of different, false doctrines. But his explicit concern here is that anyone who would presume to teach *Torah* would approach it in just the same way that he himself does. Paul assumes that the way he approaches the interpretation and teaching of Scripture is, in turn, consistent with the way Jesus approached it and, therefore, is the “right” approach.
- a. In the light of Paul’s focus here, I have rendered the verb *ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω* [*heterodidaskaleo*] as “to teach differently,” of “to approach their teaching differently.” The more typical English translations—“to teach strange doctrines,” “to teach different doctrines,” or “to teach false teachings”—suggest that Paul’s primary focus is on discouraging divergent content in what these false teachers are teaching and not, more broadly, on discouraging divergent approaches by these false teachers.
- b. The verb *ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω* [*heterodidaskaleo*] occurs only twice in the entire New Testament. Both occurrences are in this letter—one is here and the other is in ¶35.1. In both occurrences, virtually all translations, lexicons, and commentaries take *ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω* [*heterodidaskaleo*] to describe the act of teaching different doctrines. (Presumably, they understand this verb to describe teaching that conveys doctrines that are inconsistent with the set of standard, apostolic doctrines that Paul has taught to Timothy.) This interpretation misunderstands Paul—both here and in ¶35.1. Certainly Paul would not want these individuals to teach false doctrines. However, his focus here is specifically on how they handle the Scriptures, not on the unorthodox content that comes as a result. Accordingly, I take the verb *ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω* [*heterodidaskaleo*] to mean “to teach differently” in the sense of “to teach in a different way.” In a different way from what? Presumably, in a different way from the way Paul teaches.
- When Paul was among them, he presumably taught the Scriptures to them. When he did so, he taught the Scriptures from the standpoint of a specific set of assumptions about (i) how to derive the meaning of the text (hermeneutics), (ii) the nature of Scriptural authority, (iii) the essential nature of the Scriptures’ content, (iv) how one is expected to respond to the Scriptures’ teaching, (v) the goal one has for his teaching of the Scriptures, and several other related things. Paul’s belief is that the “way” he taught them the Scriptures is the right way to teach the Scriptures. He wants anyone and everyone who presumes to teach the Scriptures to teach in the same “way” that he does. Paul would not be content with a Bible teacher teaching “orthodox” doctrine while approaching the teaching of the Bible in a manner that was completely different from his own. Paul wants the teachers within the community to use the Scriptures in the way they ought to use them. So Paul has left Timothy behind in Ephesus to encourage anyone and everyone who presumes to teach the Scriptures to do so as Paul himself had modeled it for them.
 - Paul’s instruction to Timothy here would appear to be in response to a specific approach to the Scriptures that is making inroads in the believing community at Ephesus. In the very next sentence Paul writes, “{enjoin certain individuals} . . . not to give heed to false ethical judgments supported by endless lines of defense.” Apparently, a number of individuals who “want to be teachers of *Torah*” (see ¶3.3) are attracted to an approach to the *Torah* that leads to “false

ethical judgments supported by endless lines of defense.” For a hypothesis regarding what this wrong approach to the *Torah* amounts to, see the note that immediately follows.

2. The individuals whom Paul has in view when he instructs Timothy to enjoin them “not to teach differently” are apparently the Jews who would like to be “teachers of *Torah*.” (See ¶3.3.) What approach to *Torah* are these individuals being tempted to take that differs from how Paul approaches the *Torah*? It would seem that they are being tempted to teach *Torah* in just the same way a typical rabbi of that day would teach *Torah*. Two things characterized the typical rabbinic method of that day (and for many days afterward): (1) the rabbi would focus on what the *Torah* teaches about how a person ought to conduct himself (in other words, his focus was on what *Torah* taught with regard to righteous living); and (2) the rabbi would engage in a meticulous investigation of what a long line of famous and respected rabbis before him had concluded with regard to what an assertion within the *Torah* required for righteous living.
 - a. Such a thorough and exhaustive investigation as the rabbis conducted could disparagingly be labeled “endless” or “unending.” Paul intends just that—to be disparaging—when he calls such investigations “endless lines of defense” (γενεαλογίαις ἀπεράντοις [*genealogiais aperantois*]). Furthermore, the faulty conclusions that were typically reached through such a process could disparagingly be called “myths” (μύθοις [*muthois*])—not in the more technical sense that we tend to give to that word, but in the broader sense of simply being false. This seems to be what Paul means when he uses the phrase, *muthois* and *genealogiais aperantois*. The conclusions that contemporary Jewish rabbis reach about the meaning and significance of the Law are “myths” (false conclusions) that they derive from “endless investigations.” Paul expects Jesus-believers not to give heed to such things and not to focus on them.
 - On the one hand, the conclusions reached through this approach were contrived and unreliable as a guide to righteous living. And, on the other hand, the method derives from a faulty mindset toward Scripture to begin with. A person is already wrongly oriented toward *Torah* if he expects it to guide him toward righteousness simply by telling him what to do.
 - Paul expects Jesus-believers to approach the *Torah* differently and with a different purpose. That is why, in the preceding instruction, he told Timothy to “enjoin certain individuals not to approach their teaching differently.” Paul wants *Torah* teachers to approach their teaching from the same mindset and with the same set of assumptions that he had. And he does not want them to approach their *Torah* teaching from the mindset, assumptions, and methods of the rabbis of that day.

• ¶3.1

1. Paul’s assertion here about the “goal of our instruction” follows immediately upon his instruction to enjoin certain individuals among them not to “teach differently.” It follows that one of the important ways that certain individuals might be tempted to “teach differently” is to teach with an entirely different *goal* in mind. The goal of his *Torah*-teaching, Paul says, is to promote love. By that, he means *love for God*, not love for one another. The goal of the “problem” teachers in their *Torah*-teaching is to instruct others how to live righteous lives whereby they can please God. That was undoubtedly the goal that the typical rabbi of that day had for his teaching of *Torah*. Paul would see such a goal as misguided. One should not be seeking how to please God through righteous living from *Torah*. That would be wrong-headed. For, as Paul sees it, no human being can possibly live a life that is intrinsically pleasing to God. (The gospel is about God’s mercy made available to unrighteous people.) Hence, from *Torah*, rightly taught, one should come to know and love God. From *Torah* one

can who God is, what God has purposed, who he himself is as a human creature, and how he himself fits into the purposes of God. As a result of learning such things, Paul thinks, one will be induced to “love God.” Hence, the goal of Paul’s *Torah* teaching is *love for God*. The goal of the Jewish rabbi’s *Torah* teaching is *righteous living*. Paul, therefore, has a significantly different mindset and approach to his teaching of *Torah* from that of the typical rabbi. That is why Paul has just instructed Timothy to enjoin these certain individuals not to “teach differently”—which is to say, not to teach *Torah* from the mindset and approach of the typical rabbi of that day. Paul had modeled a radically different mindset and approach while among them. He wants teachers in the believing community to emulate his mindset and approach, not that of the Jewish rabbis.

2. Paul describes a heart that has been “cleansed” as a way of describing a heart that has been made “pure.” A “pure heart” describes a person who—in the depths of his inner being (his heart)—possesses a single, undivided, unadulterated commitment to know, love, serve, honor, and obey God.
 - a. The notion of being “cleansed” (καθαρός [*katharos*]) can, and sometimes does, serve as a metaphor for being forgiven of one’s sins. Here, the notion of being “cleansed” is being used differently. It is being used to describe a “heart” (καρδία [*kardia*]), that has had its tendencies to disregard God “washed away” by the Spirit of God. As the Spirit sanctifies those individuals who belong to him, he “washes away” the sinful impurities within that individual’s mind or spirit.
3. The noun συνείδησις [*suneidesis*], while typically translated “conscience,” is actually used in a variety of different ways in the New Testament. It is sometimes used to denote an individual’s moral self-assessment (that is, a person’s assessment with respect to whether he is guilty or not guilty, good or bad, blameworthy or blameless, right or wrong, etc.). When it is used in this way, translating it “conscience” seems to be an appropriate translation. {However, unlike “conscience” in modern English, *suneidesis* does not denote **feelings** that we have about our blameworthiness (e.g., guilt feelings, etc.). Rather, it denotes a **rational assessment** of our blameworthiness. In other words, *suneidesis* would not describe the state of my feelings—whether I feel blameworthy or blameless. Rather, it would describe the state of my judgment—whether I judge myself to be blameworthy or blameless.} The mistake that some translators have made is to assume that every occurrence of συνείδησις [*suneidesis*] can rightly be translated “conscience.” Every occurrence cannot rightly be translated “conscience.” The noun συνείδησις [*suneidesis*] is also used in at least four other ways.
 - a. The noun συνείδησις [*suneidesis*] is sometimes used to denote (i) the varying mental states that a person experiences and passes through as a part of ordinary experience. When it is used in this way, translating it “consciousness” is a more accurate and appropriate translation. Or, it is sometimes used to denote (ii) the rational ability that an individual has for making moral judgments. In other words, it denotes his faculty for deciding whether an action is right or wrong. When it is used in this way, it could be translated something like “ability to make moral judgments,” or even, “faculty for making moral judgments.” Or, it is sometimes used to denote (iii) the set of moral values and judgments that one embraces and that form the basis upon which a person makes choices with regard to how he is going to act. When it is used in this way, it could be translated something like “moral values,” or “value system.” Or, it is sometimes used to denote (iv) the set of beliefs that one holds about the nature of reality in general—the belief system that serves as the lens through which a person views and seeks to understand his experience. When it is used in this way, it could be translated something like “worldview,” or “belief system.” (And, in the context of the New Testament, one could appropriately translate it something like “theology”—where one’s “theology” is construed as one’s system of beliefs.) In certain occurrences of the word when it is used in this last sense, the focus is on a person’s worldview or system of beliefs as the basis upon which he

makes choices about how to act. When it is used in this way, it becomes very close in meaning to meaning (iii) above. However, it is more broad than (iii). It is not merely one's moral values *per se*. It is one's *entire* belief system functioning as the basis for one's moral judgments.

b. Here in ¶3.1 the noun συνείδησις [*suneidesis*] is being used to denote the belief system (or worldview or theology) that an individual holds. A “sound” (ἀγαθός [*agathos* {typically translated “good”}]) *suneidesis*, therefore, is a belief system that is made up of beliefs that are true, valid, and right, rather than untrue, invalid, and wrong.

- It is significantly misleading to translate συνείδησις [*suneidesis*] here as “conscience”—as our typical English translations do. The modern American tends to think of his “conscience” as certain “guilt feelings” that attend to his doing something wrong. His “conscience”—bad feelings that result when he transgresses some moral rule—is his moral guide. But that is not at all what Paul has in mind here in ¶3.1 by συνείδησις [*suneidesis*]. Paul does have in view that by which a person makes judgments about what course of action he will take, but the συνείδησις [*suneidesis*] in view here is not some sort of psycho-emotional warning signal. Rather, it is the person's understanding of reality (his worldview) that serves as the basis upon which he makes those judgments.

c. In this particular statement here, the word συνείδησις [*suneidesis*] seems to denote a person's understanding of things in a very broad sense. Paul speaks here of teaching the *Torah* in order to promote a love for God that arises out of a “sound” *suneidesis* (among other things). Paul has in mind a love for God that would arise out of an understanding of who God is, what his purposes are, what his promises are, all that he has done to demonstrate his mercy toward mankind, and anything else that one could come to understand about God. In other words, Paul seems to have in mind a love for God that would arise from a “sound,” accurate understanding of God and the reality that he is authoring. If one would look at his own life and existence through the lens of a “sound” and accurate understanding of God and reality (that is, through a “sound” and accurate worldview), then he would (or, at least, he should) be led to love God.

• ¶3.3

1. The Greek noun νόμος [*nomos* {Law / *Torah*}] can be used in a variety of different ways. One way it is used (among several) is to denote the first five books of our Old Testament (the Pentateuch). Or, it can also be used to denote the entirety of the Scripture as it existed in Paul's day—that is, our Old Testament. The latter is the way it is used here. Paul is using it to denote what we today would call the “Scriptures,” or, the “Bible.” Hence, to say that there are certain men who want to be “teachers of *Torah*” is to say that these men want to be (and presume to be) Bible teachers. In particular, they want (and presume) to be teachers of what we call the Old Testament.

a. From the context, it becomes apparent that these would-be *Torah* teachers view the *Torah* through a particular set of lenses. Namely, they view the *Torah* as a set of instructions or commandments given to Israel by God that require them (the people of Israel) to exhibit a particular kind of righteousness. Accordingly, these would-be *Torah* teachers seek to learn from *Torah* what constitutes righteous living. Paul views such an approach to the *Torah* to be short-sighted and misguided. While it is true that instruction in righteous living does constitute a part of what one finds in the *Torah*, it is only a part of what one finds. There is much more to learn from *Torah* than instructions about how to live righteously. There is much more to see and understand. *Torah* is not God's attempt to instruct incurably unrighteous sons of Adam in rules of righteous conduct. Rather, *Torah* is more concerned to tell the story of how God plans to overcome the condemnation that

sinful mankind justly deserves. It also informs us with respect to the nature of God, the true nature of mankind, the larger purposes of God in history, etc. If one's sole focus and interest is in abstracting from *Torah* instructions about how to be righteous, then he will inevitably miss the main point of the *Torah*. By making righteous living their sole focus and interest, these would-be *Torah* teachers have missed the mark and lost their way.

• ¶4.2

1. The word “evil” translates the Greek adjective ἄνομος [*anomos* {typically translated “lawless”}]. In an occurrence like this, *anomos* does not mean lacking instruction from the *nomos* (the *Torah*, the Law of God, the Mosaic Covenant). Rather, it means existing with **no** significant moral limits or boundaries whatsoever. Hence, it means “evil.”
2. The phrase “neglectful of God” translates the Greek adjective ἀσεβής [*asebes* {typically translated “ungodly”}]. This word describes a disposition to disregard God, to have no concern for God. It is the opposite of εὐσεβής [*eusebes* {typically translated “godly”}], which describes having a disposition to honor God and show him his due regard. The typical English translation of *asebes* as “ungodly” is too vague to be helpful.
3. In my translation, “***in accord with the good news of the glory of the blessed God***” translates κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς δόξης τοῦ μακαρίου θεοῦ [*kata to euangelion tes doxes tou makariou theou*]. However, I could also offer an alternative translation of this phrase that, syntactically, would be no less viable and that would, in other respects, be superior: “***in accord with the good news of the glory of the fortunate one of God.***” This latter rendering would, I think, mean to convey something like — “***in accord with the good news of the glory that awaits the fortunate one chosen by God.***”
 - a. In this prepositional phrase—κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς δόξης τοῦ μακαρίου θεοῦ [*kata to euangelion tes doxes tou makariou theou*—we are presented with more than one interpretive issue.
 - One of the important interpretive issues is how to construe the phrase τοῦ μακαρίου θεοῦ [*tou makariou theou*]. I have translated it “of the blessed God,” taking the adjective μακαρίου [*makariou*] to be an attributive adjective modifying θεοῦ [*theou*]. That is, I have taken *makarios* to be a description of God—God is “blessed” [*makarios*]—and Paul is describing God as the *makarios* (=blessed?) God. This way to translate the phrase concurs with the typical English translations in this regard. If this translation is accurate, it would be one of only two places in the entire New Testament where God is described as “blessed (μακάριος [*makarios*]).” The other occurrence is in this same letter (*I Timothy* 6:15). See note 85. The interpretive challenge is to come to understand what it would mean to describe God as “blessed (μακάριος [*makarios*]).” The adjective *makarios* is typically used to describe human beings. It describes a human being who possesses something, experiences something, or exists in a state that benefits their existence. In other words, it describes a human being who is “fortunate,” “lucky,” or perhaps “enviable.” The individual who is *makarios* has acquired something positive. Within the biblical worldview, *makarios*—under this meaning (= fortunate / lucky)—is a rather odd attribute to ascribe to the one and only transcendent God. To characterize God as lucky, fortunate, or enviable seems like a serious mischaracterization. God is unique, holy, completely other than, and beyond all other beings. What sense does it make to call such a unique, holy, and transcendent being as “fortunate”? God is not “fortunate,” he just IS. Hence, if Paul is using *makarios* to describe an attribute of God, then we must understand it to have a somewhat different sense from what it

means when describing an ordinary human being. So here is the interpretive challenge: what does *makarios* mean when used as an attribute of the transcendent author of all of reality?

- Being *makarios* does, in fact, occur as an attribute of God in the writings of Philo and others influenced by the Hellenistic (Platonic) tradition. Upon a little reflection, it would seem just as odd to use *makarios* to describe the ultimate being within the Platonic tradition as it does the ultimate being within the biblical worldview. In other words, it is no less odd to call the God of Philo *makarios* than it is to call the God of Paul *makarios*. Nevertheless, Philo does just that. So how should we understand it? It seems likely that, for Philo (as well as for Paul), the adjective *makarios* is being borrowed from paganism. The natural home of this adjective as a description of a deity is, I should think, ancient polytheism. To describe the very anthropomorphized gods of the pantheon of ancient polytheism as *makarios* is not nearly so odd as calling the transcendent God of the Bible *makarios*. The polytheists' gods are "fortunate" because they get to spend their time in leisure, to eat ambrosia, to drink nectar, and to lead a generally trouble-free existence. It makes sense to think of their divine existence as *makarios* in comparison to the wretched existence that humans have to lead. As the gods are conceived in ancient polytheism, it would indeed seem "fortunate" to be a god. It seems possible, therefore, that Paul (as well as Philo *et. al.*) calls God *makarios* more out of linguistic habit (that's just what you call a divine being), than out of an attempt to say something meaningful.
- Perhaps it is something like the linguistic habit of many contemporary Christians who do not hesitate to call God "infinite." Strictly speaking, when we consider the actual meaning of the word "infinite," it makes no sense to call God infinite. If "infinite" means without boundaries, then God is not "infinite." God is what he is and he is not what he is not. God is good, and he is not evil. There are very definite boundaries upon what is and is not God. So, strictly speaking, God is not "infinite." However, he is unlimited and unbounded in certain respects (e.g., in his power over creation). That seems to be what people mean when they call God infinite. By analogy, while God is not "lucky" to be God, it surely is a good thing for God to be God. That is likely all that is meant by calling God *makarios*. In any event, given its use as an attribution of God among the contemporaries of Paul, there is no reason to think that Paul could not do likewise—even if it is a rather odd attribute to ascribe to the God of the Bible, the transcendent author of all of reality.
- There is another possibility for how to construe the phrase τοῦ μακαρίου θεοῦ [*tou makariou theou*]. It could be understood as "of the fortunate one of God." As noted above, the entire prepositional phrase would then read, "*in accord with the good news of the glory of the fortunate one of God.*" A paraphrase of what it would then mean is, "*in accord with the good news of the glory that awaits the fortunate one chosen by God.*" So, in this translation, rather than describing God as "blessed" [*makarios*], the phrase *tou makariou theou* is taken to denote a fortunate individual who has been chosen by God for an inheritance in glory. If we take the phrase this way, it is not an odd statement at all. It is in perfect accord with Paul's teaching elsewhere. This is the interpretation that I would have judged to be most likely if Paul had not, later in the letter, described God as "the *makarios* (blessed) and only Sovereign." (See ¶38.5) I translated this phrase here as "of the blessed God" in view of the fact that Paul seems to speak of God as the "blessed and only Sovereign" later in the letter. However, the alternate translation that I am proposing here in this note is equally possible, syntactically, and is less problematic theologically. For that reason, this alternate reading (which I did not choose to reflect in my translation) stands as a viable alternative to the reading reflected in my translation.

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- A second interpretive issue is how, in the phrase “the good news **of the glory** of the blessed God,” we are to understand the relationship between the noun “glory” and the noun “gospel.” {I will assume here the rendering of this phrase that I adopted for my translation [namely, “of the blessed God”], and not the equally viable alternate rendering mentioned in the note above.)
 - Many English translations take this phrase to be the equivalent of “the glorious good news of the blessed God.” That does not seem right to me. It makes way too much sense for “of the glory” to describe the *content* of the good news. What is the “good news”? The good news is the news about the *glory* of the blessed God (that is, the *glory* that will be granted to us who belong to Jesus by the blessed God). Those of us who embrace the truth about Jesus (and, therefore, belong to him), we are not condemned to destruction. Rather, because of the blessed God’s mercy, we will be granted an inheritance in “glory.” **That** fact is “the good news of the glory of the blessed God.”
 - Given the conclusions we reached above, a third interpretive issue is how, in the phrase “the good news **of the glory** of the blessed God,” we are to understand the relationship between the noun “glory” and the noun phrase “blessed God.”
 - The phrase “of the glory of the blessed God” is meant to describe the inheritance that will be granted by “the blessed God” to those who belong to him. According to the “good news,” God—before the foundation of the world—purposed to grant a truly “glorious” everlasting existence to a select set of individuals whom he predestined to belong to him. So, the “blessed God” chose that select set of individuals for an inheritance “in glory.” The good news, then, is the good news message about the glory that the blessed God has purposed to grant to those who belong to him (and that believe in his Son, Jesus). **That** is what Paul describes as “the good news of the glory of the blessed God.”
- ¶5.1
 1. The phrase “to the one who gave me authority” translates the phrase τῷ ἐνδυναμώσαντί με [*toi endunamosanti me*]. The majority of English translations take Paul to be saying that Messiah Jesus gave Paul “strength” to proclaim the gospel (taking the verb ἐνδυναμώω [*endunamoo*] to mean something like “to impart strength”). I disagree. The verb ἐνδυναμώω [*endunamoo*] here is not describing God as imbuing Paul with “strength” or “power.” It is describing God as granting δύναμις [*dunamis*] to Paul. But δύναμις [*dunamis*] can mean different things. One of its meanings is to denote the sort of “power” that derives from authority. That, I think, is what Paul is describing here. In order to perform his mission to proclaim the gospel, God has granted him “authority” (δύναμις [*dunamis*]) to speak for Jesus. While Paul certainly would have needed physical and psychological strength to fulfill his mission, that is not what Paul is talking about. He also would have needed “authority” from Jesus to fulfill his mission. It is the latter that Paul has in mind here. He was granted “authority” (δύναμις [*dunamis*]) by Messiah Jesus for the service with which he had been tasked..
 2. The phrase “because he counted me πιστός [*pistos*]” is typically translated “because he considered me faithful.” This is consistent with the typical meaning of πιστός [*pistos*], for *pistos* means faithful or trustworthy. However, the typical translation would not capture Paul’s point here. Paul is not saying that he was tasked with the mission of taking the gospel to the world because God had assessed him to be trustworthy. Rather, for God “to count Paul πιστός [*pistos*]” is to appoint Paul a “trustee” (a πιστός [*pistos*]) of the gospel message. Paul is using the adjective *pistos* here as a substantive (a noun) to indicate “the one who is accepted as trustworthy.” If—e.g., in some legal or financial matter—I assign someone to the role of being trustworthy with respect to some documents or funds, that

someone is called a “trustee.” That is how Paul is using the word *pistos* here. To describe someone as the one who is “regarded as *pistos* {=trustworthy}” is a way of describing him as “the one who has been entrusted with something.” In other words, it is a way of describing him as “the one who was appointed the ‘trustee.’” {Note that one can be tasked with the role of being a trustee whether he is trustworthy in character or not. To be a “trustee” describes the **role** that has been given to a person, not a character trait.} Hence, in this context, for Paul to be “counted *pistos*” means nothing more, and nothing less, than that Paul was tasked with taking the gospel to the Gentiles. In other words, God had “entrusted” the gospel to Paul to keep it and proclaim it. God had made Paul a “trustee” of the gospel message.

• ¶6.3

1. This phrase—*aionic* life (ζωὴν αἰώνιον [*zoen aionion*])—is typically translated “eternal life.” *Aionic* life is life as it will be experienced in the future ages, after one has been raised from death in the resurrection to come. *Aionic* life is granted only to those who, by God’s grace and mercy, are chosen to receive it. *Aionic* life will be wonderful and glorious for a number of different reasons. Its “eternality” is only one of the reasons it will be wonderful. There are many others besides. Hence, to translate it “eternal life” is inaccurate to the extent that it emphasizes its eternality at the expense of its other, more glorious characteristics.

• ¶7.1

1. It would certainly be possible for Paul to be referring to Messiah Jesus when he refers to the “King of the Ages.” Arguably he could be calling for praise to be given to Jesus. However—all things considered—it is more likely that Paul is calling for praise to be given to God himself. (The one being praised is described as “the invisible one, the one and only God.”) Now, in the context, it is the forbearance and mercy shown by Jesus to sinners like himself that has elicited Paul’s call to praise. (See ¶6.3) Accordingly, Paul is calling for praise to be given to God for the forbearance and mercy shown by Jesus. He does this because he understands that any forbearance shown by Jesus is ultimately a reflection of the will and purpose (and, hence, of the character) of God. Therefore, God is ultimately to be praised for mercy and forbearance shown by Jesus.

• ¶9.1

1. The adjective “calm” in this sentence translates the adjective ἤρεμος [*eremos*]. Paul is using *eremos* here to describe an inner calm. Rather than living one’s life in angry turmoil and upset, Paul believes that the Jesus-believer can and should live his life in inner peace and quiet. He uses the word *eremos* to denote such an inner state of calm. There is no remarkable difference in meaning between *eremos* and the word *hesuchios* which follows. In the way Paul is using them in this sentence, they appear to be close synonyms.

a. In this sentence, Paul is making reference to the inner state of the Jesus-believer, not to the outward circumstances of his life. A person can be *eremos* and *hesuchios* in his inner being even while living in the midst of chaos and turmoil in his outward circumstances. Paul’s concern is that the Jesus-believer have an authentic trust in God. He believes that a Jesus-believer can and should trust God in such a way that it results in his being *eremos* and *hesuchios* in his spirit.

b. We can see from the context here that the opposite of a spirit that is *eremos* and *hesuchios* is a spirit that is unsettled, restless, frustrated, discontent, vaguely angry, and desperate for a change of circumstances. We see the opposite of a spirit that is *eremos* and *hesuchios* warned against explicitly in ¶11.1 > “lifting up holy hands *without wrath and dissension*.”

2. In this particular subsection of Paul’s letter, there are three occurrences of the relatively infrequent noun ἡσυχία [*hesuchia*] or of the adjective ἡσυχίος [*hesuchios*], and two occurrences of the relatively infrequent noun σοφροσύνη [*sophrosune*]. These two word groups seem to embody the theme of this subsection. The point of this subsection is that Paul wants believers to manifest ἡσυχία (*hesuchia*) stemming from σοφροσύνη [*sophrosune*]. Paul uses the noun ἡσυχία [*hesuchia*] to describe the inner calm, inner quiet, and restful contentment that an individual has if and when he is not waging battle against the boundaries and limits he finds placed on his existence—in other words, if he manifests *sophrosune*. If one is content to accept whatever circumstances God has placed him in, then he is in a state of *sophrosune*, and—as a result—he will experience an inner calm or quiet. Such an inner calm or quiet is what Paul means to capture by the word ἡσυχία [*hesuchia*] in this context. Paul believes that ἡσυχία [*hesuchia*] should be the prevailing condition of the Jesus-believer’s inner life.

3. The phrase “a life based on a proper regard for and genuine seriousness toward God” translates the phrase βίον... εὐσεβεία καὶ σεμνότητι [*bion ... eusebeia kai semnoteti*]. I have translated the noun *eusebeia* as a “proper regard for God.” I have translated the noun *semnotes* as a “genuine seriousness toward God.” Paul will use the noun *eusebeia* several times throughout this letter. It is difficult to know how best to translate it. *Eusebeia* is the opposite of *asebeia*. In *Romans* 1:18, Paul identifies the essence of human sin—that is, the reason why the wrath of God will be directed against us human beings—as *asebeia*. He says that the wrath of God will be directed against all the *asebeia* and unrighteousness of men. Paul next goes on to describe mankind’s total disregard for God. Rather than acknowledging the truth about God and responding with the appropriate regard for him, we humans live in complete disregard of God. That, it would seem, is the *asebeia* that Paul offers as the reason why God will direct his wrath toward us. So, if *asebeia* is a way of life that fails to show a proper regard for God, it would seem that *eusebeia* is a way of life that **does** show a proper regard for God. The only question is this: what way of life is that? What way of life would show a proper regard for God? We see later in this letter that Paul offers this answer to that question: the way of life that shows a proper regard for God is a life that is lived in the light of the truth of the gospel of Messiah Jesus. While pagans manifest *eusebeia* (a proper regard for the gods) by offering up offerings and practicing various forms of religious piety that they assume will please their gods, the Jesus-follower manifests *eusebeia* (a proper regard for the true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) by embracing the gospel of Jesus as true, and by earnestly living his life in the light of its truth.

a. The pagan polytheists conceived of *eusebeia* exclusively in terms of outward conduct. If you offered the appropriate offerings and engaged in the requisite religious acts, then you were manifesting *eusebeia*. Paul conceives of *eusebeia* quite differently. He conceives of it in terms of inner heart attitudes, beliefs, and convictions. *Eusebeia* does not explain *what* you do, it explains *who* you are. It is not a matter of one’s outer life, it is a matter of one’s inner life.

- This entire subsection of the letter is concerned with the inner life of the Jesus-believer. All three of the traits mentioned in this sentence— being *eremos* [calm], being *hesuchios* [quiet], and manifesting *eusebeia*—are not primarily a matter of what one does. They are not a matter of how one conducts himself. They are primarily a matter of what mindset one adopts in the inner core of his spirit.

• ¶10.4

1. When Paul states that he “speaks truth” and then follows that with the claim that he “does not speak falsehood,” to what is he referring. The impression one gets from our modern English translations is that Paul is saying that he is telling the truth with regard to his claims to be an apostle. That is not

right. Rather, Paul is saying that when, as an apostle, he testifies to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah and then further testifies to the fact that Jesus gave himself as a ransom for all, he is speaking the truth in his testimony. He is not lying or conveying any falsehood at all. One must remember that, within Judaism generally, Paul's testimony with regard to Jesus the Messiah was highly controversial. He was undoubtedly charged with lying in his claims about Jesus. Here Paul is making a brief rebuttal to such charges: when he tells what he knows about Jesus, he is proclaiming what is true; there is no falsehood in what he asserts.

a. The phrase “with regard to the Messiah” (ἐν χριστῷ [*en christo*] {remember Christ = messiah}) does not occur in some manuscripts. And that is why it does not occur in many modern English translations. In my judgment, the phrase does belong to the original text and should be included in a translation of the text. However—even if I am wrong about that—it is implicit in Paul's meaning anyway. The “truth” that Paul speaks is unquestionably the truth with regard to the Messiah. So, whether the phrase is explicitly contained in the original text or is only implicit in what Paul means, it is certainly appropriate to translate the text as I have here.

• ¶10.6

1. The phrase “in this true belief” translates ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀληθείᾳ [*en pistei kai aletheia*]. While it does not make a great deal of difference, I believe that *en pistei kai aletheia* should be seen as an instance of hendiadys rather than as a phrase describing two distinct things. The phrase describes “the belief that is true,” not “belief AND truth.” In other words, Paul is not intending to describe his mission as teaching the Gentiles in “belief” and also teaching them in “truth.” Rather, he intends to describe his mission as teaching Gentiles in the “true belief”—by which he means the gospel of Messiah Jesus.

• ¶12.1

1. The noun σωφροσύνη [*sophrosune*] denotes “soundness of mind” in some sense. Here, it seems to denote “right-thinking”—specifically, right-thinking with regard to oneself. The one who exhibits σωφροσύνη [*sophrosune*] has an accurate understanding of oneself and of one's own importance. He does not think more highly of himself than he ought to think. He does not exhibit a sense of entitlement—where he thinks that God owes him a better and more agreeable set of circumstances than he has. Accordingly, the one who exhibits σωφροσύνη [*sophrosune*] is one who fully accepts and embraces the existence that God has given to him and is not restlessly resisting the boundaries, limitations, and restrictions that his particular God-given circumstances place upon him. Hence, the one who exhibits σωφροσύνη [*sophrosune*] will experience ἡσυχία [*hesuchia* {quietness of spirit}] as a result. That is why we see the correlated concepts of σωφροσύνη [*sophrosune*] and ἡσυχία [*hesuchia*] occurring together in this subsection. They represent the core message of this particular subsection of the letter.

• ¶15.1

1. The word *episkope* is a transliteration of the noun ἐπισκοπή. Fundamentally, an ἐπισκοπή [*episkope*] is a person who is in the role of “overseeing” others. Here, in this context, it refers to the role of overseeing the growth of other Jesus-believers in their journey to understand and believe the gospel. Therefore, an *episkope* is a “leader” within the believing community in the sense that he is an individual who “leads” the believing community in their common journey of belief. In this context, Paul is instructing Timothy with regard to how to identify individuals whom he would be suited for this role. He wants Timothy to specifically and explicitly appoint qualified individuals to this

leadership role. (See *Titus* 1:5, where *presbuteros* {"elder"} is used as a synonym for an *episkope*. [See *Titus* 1:7])

• ¶15.3

1. While many English translations translate this noun—διάβολος [*diabolos*—as “the Devil” (assuming that it refers to Satan), I do not believe that is what Paul has in mind here. The word *diabolos* can refer to anyone who opposes, slanders, criticizes, or functions as a detractor to someone else. So, Paul does not have to have Satan in mind here, and I do not believe he does. Rather, Paul has in mind some person within the larger community that opposes the gospel and is ready and eager to find fault with it. The διάβολος [*diabolos*] whom Paul has in view here is the human being within the unbelieving community within which the believing community exists who is looking for an excuse to criticize and condemn the gospel and the community of people who believe in it.

• ¶16.1

1. While any individual who “serves” God (or Jesus) in any way could be described as a *diakonos*, Paul, in this context, is talking about Timothy’s purposely selecting individuals to assume the responsibility of serving Jesus by leading and guiding others in their journey to understand and embrace the truth of the gospel. Paul is instructing Timothy here with respect to whom to appoint to this particular servant role. (Note *Titus* 1:5.) As I would understand it, the individual that Paul would here designate a διάκονος [*diakonos* {servant}] is one and the same individual as the one whom he has just designated an ἐπισκοπή [*episkope* {overseer}] in the preceding paragraph. The term *diakonos* does not denote a different, distinct role from that of the *episkope*—nor a different and distinct individual. Rather, it is a different description of exactly the same role. If Timothy appoints a particular individual to oversee and lead the community of believers (such that that individual could aptly be called an *episkope*), then Timothy is—at one and the same time—appointing that same individual to serve as a servant of Jesus within that community (hence, he could aptly be called a *diakonos*).
2. This is not a repetition of the trait listed above, in Part 7(a). In that earlier list in Part 7(a), I would understand “not addicted to wine” (μη πάροινον [*me paroinon*]) to be the trait of not being frequently drunk on wine. Here, “not seeking after much wine” (μη οἴνω πολλῶ προσέχοντας [*me oino pollo prosechontas*]) is the trait of not being a habitual wine drinker—that is, of not being overly fond of wine. One can be overly fond of wine without being habitually drunk. So, this latter requirement seems to be a stricter limitation on one’s relationship to wine than the former one. The former requirement (not being a drunk)—just like all the other requirements in Part 7(a)—ensures that one is not a disgrace in the eyes of the community at large. This latter requirement (not being overly fond of wine)—just like all the other requirements in Part 7(b)—ensures that one is respected and trusted inside the believing community.
3. This is not a repetition of the trait listed above, in Part 7(a). In that earlier list in Part 7(a), I would understand “not a lover of money” (ἀφιλάργυρον [*aphilarguron*]) to be the trait of not lusting after money and material possessions. Here—unless it can be demonstrated that the word must refer to monetary gain—I would understand “not seeking after dishonest advantage” (μη αἰσχροκερδεῖς [*me aischrokerdeis*]) to be the trait of not being willing to be dishonest and underhanded in order to gain some kind of advantage over another person. As I would understand it, the gain implicit in the word αἰσχροκερδεῖς [*aischrokerdeis*] need not be monetary gain. It can mean some other sort of gain as well: social, political, interpersonal, competitive, etc. I would understand Paul to be disqualifying from leadership here any person who is so ambitious for social, political, interpersonal, or competitive advantage that he is willing to resort to underhanded or dishonest means to get it. That is, he is willing

to cheat; or, he is willing to secure advantages over others that are gained in less than noble ways. Note that, in *Titus* 1:11, the “shameful gain” of the teachers from the “Circumcision” is not likely to be material gain so much as it is to be some sort of competitive gain. They want to win followers for the sake of winning followers, not because they are motivated by an authentic love for the people. See *Galatians* 4:17 in this regard.

• ¶17.1

1. In the earlier list—Part 7(a)—an *episkope* is to be *above reproach* (ἀνεπίλημπος [*anepilemptos*]) is a summary statement of what would qualify an individual to serve as an *episkope*. Here, Timothy is to appoint a person to serve as a *diakonos* if, after evaluation, he is found to be *above reproach* (ἀνέγκλητος [*anegkletos*]). Clearly these are different words. However, it does seem to be the case that ἀνεπίλημπος [*anepilemptos*] and ἀνέγκλητος [*anegkletos*] are close synonyms. Hence, it is not unreasonable to conclude that Paul means virtually the same thing by them. Hence, Timothy is to appoint a person to serve as a *diakonos*, if he meets the qualifications for an *episkope*.
 - a. The fact that Timothy is being instructed to appoint an individual as a *diakonos* if he meets the qualifications for an *episkope* is one piece of evidence that Paul is conceiving of the *diakonos* and the *episkope* as being one and the same individual. These are not two different individuals being assigned to two different roles. These are one and the same individual being assigned to one specific role. That role is given two different descriptions.

• ¶19.2

1. The verb ἀναστρέφεσθαι [*anastrephesthai*] describes the way the group or community of believers is to conduct itself—how it is to live and function together as a community. Here, in this context, Paul does not have in mind how an individual Jesus-believer is supposed to conduct himself. (Paul does not need to instruct Timothy with regard to that. If Timothy knows and understands the gospel, then he already knows how a Jesus-believer is supposed to conduct himself.) Rather, Paul has in mind the way of life that the community of Jesus-believers is to pursue together as a community. All of the following instructions Paul gives pertain to how the community is to live and function together. They are not focused on how an individual believer is to live.

• ¶20.1

1. The phrase “the ‘secret’ that underlies our *eusebeia*” translates the Greek phrase τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον [*to tes eusebeias musterion*]. I transliterate the noun εὐσεβείας [*eusebeias*] here. I do not translate it. In this context, Paul uses *eusebeia* to denote the way of life that the Jesus-believer ought to follow. It describes how a Jesus-believer is to conduct himself in order to show regard for God. (See note 23 on page 3.)
 - a. Paul continues in ¶20.2 to identify the “secret” (μυστήριον [*musterion*]) that underlies our *eusebeia* as the man Jesus himself. In what sense is Jesus the “secret”? He is the “secret” at the heart of the gospel because—contrary to what the Jews believed before the coming of Jesus—salvation is based on one’s connection to Jesus, not on one’s keeping of *Torah*. The fact that the Messiah would have the authority to grant forgiveness of sins and the authority to grant Life, and the fact that the Messiah would be the path to salvation for mankind—these were not facts that the Jews prior to Jesus had understood. Therefore, when Jesus came into history, declaring that he was the way to Life, that was a “secret” that was being revealed to the Jewish people. Such a truth had previously been hidden from them. See *Romans* 16:25; *Ephesians* 1:9, 3:3–9, 6:19; *Colossians* 1:26–27, 2:2, 4:3.

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- We have a very important clue here concerning what Paul believes is the way of life that constitutes showing a proper regard for God—that is, the way of life that constitutes *eusebeia* [εὐσεβεία]. If Jesus is the essential core “secret” underlying such a life, then it follows that a life of proper regard for God is a life that is centered in the truth about who Jesus is and what role he plays in our salvation. Hence the essence of the way of life that shows a proper regard for God (that is, the essence of *eusebeia*) is not found in offerings, religious piety, or any other religious practices. Rather, it is found in a simple, straightforward belief in the gospel of Jesus, and a life lived earnestly in the light of that truth. In other words, the religion (religious piety / religious discipline) that comports with following Jesus consists of nothing more (and nothing less) than straightforward belief in the gospel and a life lived accordingly.
2. The phrase “so far as our common assent is concerned” translates the single Greek adverb ὁμολογουμένως [*homologoumenos*]. It means “confessedly” or “confessionally-speaking.” And I take Paul to mean “so far as confession of it is concerned.” The claim Paul is making here is that the “secret” (μυστήριον [*musterion*]) is great (μέγα [*mega*]). This adverb—*homologoumenos*—is being used by Paul to qualify exactly in what sense the “secret” is great. Namely, the “secret” is great so far as the number of people who have come to confess it is concerned. While it started as a “secret (*musterion*) hidden from past ages and generations,” it has come, in Paul’s time, to be widely known and believed. No longer is it only a handful of individuals who know and understand the secret. Now it is known, understood, and believed broadly around the empire. That is, so far as the numbers of people who confess it are concerned (ὁμολογουμένως [*homologoumenos*]), the secret has become great in its extent.
 - a. Note what Paul is not saying. Paul is not making a statement with regard to how wonderful the “secret” is. It is not “great” in the sense that it is a truly magnificent truth. It is a truly magnificent truth, no doubt. But that is not the point Paul is making. Paul’s point is that this secret has come to be great in the extent to which it has become known and believed. That is why he says that *homologoumenos* (with regard to its confession) the *musterion* is great.
 - b. This understanding of what Paul means by the *musterion* being great is confirmed by what he goes on to say in ¶20.2. The *musterion* was “seen by the messengers, was proclaimed among the nations, and was believed upon in the *kosmos*.” Of all the truths that he could list about Messiah Jesus—aside from the most important events of Jesus’s life—Paul emphasizes these particular facts: eyewitnesses spoke of what they saw, their testimony was proclaimed among the nations, and their testimony was embraced in belief by the whole *kosmos*. These facts are cited to explain why the *musterion* is becoming more widely known and believed.
- ¶20.2
 1. Paul’s primary purpose here is not to explain the content of the “secret” (*musterion*). Rather, his purpose is to explain how it is that this “secret” (*musterion*) has come to be “great” (*mega*). It is a mistake to think that Paul’s purpose in this series of brief assertions is to outline the “confession” that constitutes the “secret” of *eusebeia* (godliness). Rather, he is making a series of assertions about how that “secret” came to be, and how it came to be known. He is not spelling out the content of the secret.
 - a. This series of brief assertions intertwines two different categories of assertions:

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- **(1) Assertions that outline the major events that define the role and importance of Jesus.**
(Arguably, these could legitimately be said to describe the content of the “secret.” However, they would form an exceedingly bare outline of its content.)
 - (i) Jesus became manifest as a human being,
 - (ii) Jesus was declared right in his claims by the Spirit,
 - (iii) Jesus was seen by the messengers {the categories overlap in this assertion}, and
 - (iv) Jesus was taken up in glory.
 - **(2) Assertions that declare that the truth about Jesus spread and became known and believed.**
 - (iii) Jesus was seen by the messengers {the categories overlap in this assertion},
 - (α) Jesus was proclaimed among the nations, and
 - (β) Jesus was believed upon in the *kosmos*.
2. The clause “He who became manifest as a human being” translates ὃς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί [*hos ephanerothe en sarki*]. Paul’s essential point here is that Jesus (who is the “secret” underlying the Jesus-believer’s *eusebeia*) entered into history as a human being (*sarx*). This was the beginning, the starting point of the secret that had been hidden from past ages and generations.
- a. The word σάρξ [*sarx*] is typically translated “flesh.” However, it is not infrequently used to denote a human life, a human existence, in the physical, material world in which we live. That is the sense of it here. The “secret” underlying our *eusebeia* began when there came a particular physical, material human being into the world.
3. The clause “was declared right in his claims by the Spirit” translates ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι [*edikaiothe en pneumatī*]. This human being who came into the world was “vindicated as being right” (ἐδικαιώθη [*edikaiothe*]) by the Spirit himself. That is, he was “vindicated as being right” by God himself.
- a. This man needed to be “declared right” or “vindicated as right” because he made rather remarkable and exalted claims about himself. He claimed to be the promised Messiah, the Son of God. These claims he made about himself were shown to be correct by the work of the Spirit of God (ἐν πνεύματι [*en pneumatī*]).
- b. In and through the miraculous “signs” that were created by the Spirit of God in connection with Jesus’s life and ministry, God offered evidence that Jesus’s claims about himself were true. More specifically, when the Spirit of God raised Jesus up out of his grave after he was crucified to death, Jesus was dramatically vindicated in his claim to be the Messiah.
- While it is true that all the miracles done by the Spirit (ἐν πνεύματι [*en pneumatī*]) during the life and ministry of Jesus vindicated his claim to be the Messiah, from what immediately follows, it would appear that Paul primarily had Jesus’s resurrection in mind. Of all the miracles connected with the life and ministry of Jesus, his resurrection from the dead was the miracle that most truly and compellingly proved that Jesus was the *messiah*.
4. The clause “was seen by the messengers” translates ὃφθη ἀγγέλοις [*ophthe angelois*]. This is Paul’s next claim with respect to the “secret” underlying our *eusebeia*. It is that Jesus was seen by those individuals who proclaimed the message of the good news. This is only remarkable if what they saw was this man Jesus raised back to life after he had died. So, what Paul seems to be saying is this: there

were eyewitnesses who saw Jesus raised up from the dead out of his tomb and they proclaimed that fact to the world. They passed the message on to us that “Jesus lives!”

- a. The typical English translations translate *angelois* {=messengers} here as “angels,” concluding that Paul means to denote those special beings who serve God as messengers whom we typically call “angels” in English. But this translation makes no sense here. What would the fact that Jesus was seen by angels have to do with anything? How would that contribute to Paul’s point in any way? But the fact that there were human eyewitnesses who relayed the message that Jesus had risen from the dead (that is, the fact that the messengers who reported the good news to us had actually seen the risen Jesus)—that fact contributes directly to Paul’s point. The spread of the “secret” began with messengers of the resurrection spreading their message abroad.
 - b. On the one hand, this assertion describes something that occurred chronologically after the first two events. That is, first a human being entered history, then—in time—he was vindicated as being the Messiah by his being raised up from the dead, and then—subsequent to that—he was seen by eyewitnesses who passed on the news of his resurrection to others.
 - c. On the other hand, this assertion is working together with the two assertions that follow it. It provides the content of what subsequently was proclaimed to the nations and believed upon in the world. What was proclaimed? What was proclaimed is what the “messengers” saw—namely, Jesus alive from the dead. That was the message at the core of what was proclaimed among the nations and believed upon in the world.
5. The clause “was proclaimed among the nations” translates ἐκηρύχθη ἐν ἔθνεσιν [*ekeruxthe en ethnesin*]. In his next assertion, Paul leaves off listing the string of crucial events that constitute the bare outline of the story of Jesus’s existence. Now he inserts two important ramifications of the fact that Jesus’s resurrection was witnessed by eyewitnesses who spoke to others of what they had seen. Namely, that very message (along with all that it implied) came to be broadcast far and wide. It was (i) proclaimed “among all the nations.”
- a. I translate this as “among the nations” rather than “among the Gentiles” because the point Paul is supporting here is how widespread belief in this “secret” centered in Jesus has become. He is not here supporting the point that Gentiles can be saved too.
 - Paul does not intend to suggest that the proclamation of the good news “among the nations” occurred chronologically in the interval between Jesus’s resurrection and his ascension. This assertion does not belong to the chronological order followed by the previous assertions. It is simply inserted as a relevant fact. The event and significance of Jesus’s resurrection was, in the course of time, made known far and wide in the world of Paul’s day.
6. The clause “was believed upon in the *kosmos*” translates ἐπιστεύθη ἐν κόσμῳ [*episteuthe en kosmo*]. Not only was the message of Jesus’s resurrection proclaimed among the nations, it was also widely believed among the nations—or, as he puts it here, “in the *kosmos*.” The words “nations” and “*kosmos*” are virtually synonymous in the way Paul is using them here. Both denote the various regions and cultures that make up the Roman empire of that day.
- a. While “*kosmos*” and “the nations” are intended to define the same domain, what Paul says occurred in each domain is significantly different. The truth about Jesus was *proclaimed* among the nations (Paul’s previous assertion). But, in the assertion, the truth about Jesus was also *believed* among the nations (that is, in the *kosmos*). That is why the “confession” of the “secret” underlying our *eusebeia* has come to be “great.” Many people around the whole world know and share this

“secret.” For after his resurrection, the news about Jesus spread far and wide and became widely *believed*.

- Paul does not intend to suggest that the proclamation of the good news “among the nations” occurred chronologically in the interval between Jesus’s resurrection and his ascension. This clause does not belong to the chronological order followed by the other assertions. It is simply inserted as a relevant fact. The event of and significance of Jesus’s resurrection became, in the course of time, widely believed by individuals in the world of that day.

7. The clause “was taken up in glory” translates ἀνελήμφοθι ἐν δόξῃ [*anelempothe en doxe*]. This describes the final event of Jesus’s life and ministry: his ascension into the sky, marking his exaltation to his status as rightful king of God’s kingdom to come.

• ¶21.1

1. The phrase “in times afterward” should not be taken as referring to the “last times” as if referring to the times at the end of history. Paul is describing what the Spirit has revealed concerning what can be expected with regard to the course of certain believers’ lives. These believers, *after* having believed in Jesus and having believed the gospel, will turn away from their belief and begin to listen to the lies of false teachers. So, what Paul means by “in times afterward” (ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς [*en husterois kairois*]) is “at some time after they have initially believed.”

- a. It seems likely that, by the phrase “as the Spirit expressly states” here, Paul is referring to some special revelation that he (or someone else he knows) has received from God. It also seems likely that Timothy is aware of this revelation. It is also possible that Paul is referring to something that Jesus taught with regard to people falling away from belief and not staying the course. But, if that were the case, it would seem more likely that Paul would attribute the claim directly to the Lord (Jesus), and not to the Spirit (God).

2. The phrase “of individuals who have damaged their own *suneidesis*” translates (κεκαυστηριασμένων τὴν ἰδίαν συνείδησιν [*kekausteriasmenon ten idian suneidesin*]). Paul is describing certain false teachers whose rejection of the truth of the gospel has been accompanied by self-damage inflicted upon their own ability to make moral judgements. They have ruined the faculty by which they make their moral judgments (their *suneidesis*). Paul describes this damage or ruin, metaphorically, as having been done by “searing” (καυστηριάζω [*kausteriazō*]) their *suneidesis*.

- a. The verbal idea that I have translated “damaged” here translates κεκαυστηριασμένων from καυστηριάζω [*kausteriazō*]. This verb would appear, generally, to mean “to sear.” Or, more specifically, it can mean “to mark with a branding iron.” In this context, it would appear to mean “to sear” as a metonym for “to damage by searing.” When a person sears his skin, for example, he scars it. And when he scars it, he ruins or damages it. That seems to be how Paul is using this verb here. These men, who have turned away from their original belief in Jesus and the gospel, have correspondingly done damage to their own *suneidesis* (as if by searing it). They have destroyed their own ability to make sound moral judgements.

- Paul is not referring to a “seared conscience” in the sense that we use that metaphor in modern English. We speak of a “seared conscience” to describe the state of a person who has become desensitized to doing evil. He can commit evil acts without *feeling* guilty. He has lost his ability to *feel* empathy for the victims of his evil acts. That is NOT what Paul is describing here. In the first place, *suneidesis* is not being used to describe *feelings* of guilt. It is being used to describe a man’s faculty of moral judgment. And, correspondingly, Paul is not using the idea of the

suneidesis being seared as a description of one's being made insensitive to guilt feelings. Rather, he is using the idea of the *suneidesis* being seared as a way of describing damage being done to one's faculty of moral judgment.

- Paul is clearly assuming that there is a connection between the free, responsible choice that one makes with respect to how to respond to the truth of God (that is, whether to believe it or reject it) and the condition of one's ability to make moral judgments. If one has chosen to reject the truth of God, that fateful moral choice has serious ramifications for one's ability to make other moral judgments. It destroys it.
- ¶21.2
 1. Given the context here, by "everything" Paul means "all food," or "every kind of food." Paul is addressing whether God considers some foods "unclean" and forbids them, or whether God considers all foods acceptable to eat. His claim here is that no food is "unclean" and forbidden. While the Mosaic Covenant did declare certain foods unclean, that was in a particular sense and for a particular purpose. That purpose did not imply a universal prohibition against all foods for all time for everyone. On the contrary, according to further revelation, God himself declared all foods "clean." See *Mark* 7:19.
- ¶21.3
 1. The phrase "word of God" (λόγος θεοῦ [*logos theou*]) here is probably a reference to the teaching of Jesus that is recorded in *Mark* 7:14–23. But it could—more generally—be the truth that God has revealed with regard to the nature of food and uncleanness on a number of different occasions, without having any particular event or episode in mind. Hence, it could include the revelation that God gave to Peter, in a vision, wherein he declared "unclean" foods to be "clean" as a way to instruct Peter that he was to regard no human beings as unclean. See *Acts* 10:9–29.
- ¶23.1
 1. The adjective γραῶδεις [*graodeis*] is derived from the noun γραῦς [*graus*], which means "old woman." The adjective βεβήλους [*bebelous*] seems to describe something as "profane," in contradistinction to its being sacred or holy. However, "profane, old-womanish myths" is not a particularly helpful translation. It is difficult to find the right English words to capture exactly what Paul means in this context. It would seem that what Paul is trying to describe with this phrase are false and misguided teachings [*mutheis*] that appeal to the typical, average human being, precisely because they appeal to the lowest values and interests found among human beings. These are teachings that do not appeal to the highest values and interests found among human beings. These false and misguided teachings are γραῶδεις [*graodeis*]—perhaps, "silly and shallow" (the sort of thing "old women" are attracted to)—because they appeal to a person's desire to be entertained, rather than to a person's desire for true knowledge and wisdom. Generally speaking, a teaching that appeals to lower human values (e.g., entertainment, comfort, etc.), rather than to higher human values (e.g., truth, wisdom, righteousness, etc.), will have a broad appeal, because the vast majority of human beings are ignorant sinners who are driven by lower impulses. In other words, such a teaching will be βεβήλους [*bebelous*]. Therefore, the false and misguided teachings that Paul has in mind here appeal to and are appreciated by the common man and are broadly popular. They are popular because they do not appeal to the small minority of human beings who seek truth, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. Rather, they appeal to the majority of sinful humanity who are content to be entertained, and are not interested in becoming truly enlightened.

- ¶23.2

1. Here, as throughout the letter, the noun εὐσεβεία [*eusebeia*] denotes that particular way of life that is meant to show a proper regard for God. As Paul uses it throughout the letter, it denotes specifically the distinctive way of life that is followed by Jesus-believers in order to show a proper regard for God. Timothy is to “train” himself for εὐσεβεία [*eusebeia*] by diligently studying to know and understand the truth from God so that he can discern the difference between it and the shallow, popular fictions to which people will tend to be attracted.

- ¶23.5

1. The pronoun “this,” the subject of this clause, is likely a neuter pronoun because its antecedent is not a specific word in the preceding clause but, rather, a complex idea. Its antecedent is likely the entire concept of a promise that is held out to those who practice *eusebeia*. Hence, Paul is suggesting that for which we labor and strive is to practice *eusebeia* so that we might obtain the promise that will come to those who do so. And this comes to the same thing as saying that we labor and strive to maintain our hope in the living God in accord with the truth of the gospel of Messiah Jesus.

- ¶25.1

1. A study of the Scriptures at this time likely involved reading the scriptural text aloud to everyone who had gathered, followed by an explication of its meaning, and accompanied by any appropriate exhortations that follow from the meaning of that text. These three things taken together constitute what modern Jesus-followers would call bible study. The “reading” here is undoubtedly the public reading of the Scriptures to the assembly of believers gathered together. It is unlikely that every individual in the community of believers possessed his own copy of the Scriptures. (Such manuscripts would have been quite expensive.) So access to the Scriptures came through the public reading of the Scriptural text during their meetings together. Public reading of the Scripture was an essential part of any study of the Scriptures that believers would do together. Translated into modern terms and practice, Paul’s exhortation to Timothy here is that he “give attention to group bible study” for the benefit of the community of Jesus-followers.

- ¶25.2

1. We seem to have another description of this same event in *2 Timothy* 1:6–7. It would seem to be an occasion where a group of leaders (*presbuteroi*) within one of the communities of Jesus-followers—in order to express solidarity with Timothy in a mission upon which he was about to embark—gathered to “lay hands” on him. (Presumably, in that context, laying hands on Timothy was a physical symbol used to express identification with and solidarity with him.) Paul himself participated in that symbolic act of the laying on of hands on that occasion. Apparently, one of those *presbuteroi* (perhaps even Paul himself) received a prophetic revelation on that occasion. In that revelation, it was prophesied with respect to Timothy that God would use him to teach the Scriptures. Hence, God was announcing that his gift to Timothy was the role of teaching the Scriptures.

a. Paul uses the noun *presbuteros* (typically translated “elder”) as a way to designate a “leader” within the believing community. Paul uses it more or less synonymously with *episkope* and *diakonos*. He does not use these different terms to describe different offices in an institution that he is working to establish. Rather, he uses these terms as alternative descriptions of one and the same role that a specific individual might play—namely, the role of providing leadership in the community by assuming a responsibility to guide other members of the community in their journey of belief in Jesus.

- ¶26.2

1. The phrase “to complete purity” translates the Greek phrase ἐν πάσῃ ἀγνεΐᾳ [*en pase hagneia*], which occurs at the very end of the paragraph in the Greek text. It describes exactly what it is that Paul wants Timothy to urge upon the individuals whom he teaches—whether they be older men, younger men, older women, or younger women. Namely, he wants Timothy to exhort them to be “pure” [*hagnos*]. Presumably, in this statement, Paul has purity of heart in mind rather than moral purity. While Paul would want a Jesus-believer to set moral purity as an ideal goal to work and strive toward [see, for example, *1 John 3:3*], it is more likely, in this context, that he has in mind purity of heart instead. Paul wants Timothy to exhort those whom he is teaching to have a deep inner commitment to the truth of the gospel and a single-minded desire for the kingdom of God. And he wants the desire for the kingdom of God in their heart to be “pure”—that is, unadulterated by any competing desires and commitments. He instructs Timothy to exhort them toward just such “purity” in their desires and commitments.

- ¶27.7

1. The pronoun that is the subject of this clause—“they”—denotes the members of the Jesus-believing community who have a widowed relative for whom they should provide. It would be a disgrace for anyone to neglect his responsibility to provide for a widowed relative within his family.

- ¶28.1

1. The word *hagioi* (plural of *hagios*) is often translated “saints.” It is a very common term in the New Testament for denoting someone who believes the gospel and, therefore, has been set apart (made *hagios* =holy) by God to receive the blessing of eternal Life.

a. To “wash the feet of the *hagioi*” is a figurative way of describing an act of humbly serving the *hagioi*. This figure of speech undoubtedly derives from the incident described in *John 13:1–17*.

2. It would seem that Timothy is to create a list of widows who have pledged to devote themselves to ministering to the believing community—presumably in exchange for material, financial support. Paul is instructing Timothy with respect to whom he should allow to be included on this list.

a. This is one of the ways that Paul wants the believing community to “show regard” for a true widow. However, it is not the only way. Another way would be through direct charity, where there is no *quid pro quo*. There is no reason to think that Paul would forbid supporting a “true widow” through direct charity—not expecting her to engage in some service to the believing community in exchange for being provided for. This would be another valid way that the community might “show regard” for a true widow.

- However, Paul is instructing Timothy is to show regard for a “true widow” in this particular manner—namely, by enrolling her in a ministry to the community and supporting her materially in exchange—only if she is *qualified* for the ministry in which she would be enrolled to serve.

- ¶31.1

1. A *presbuteros* (*presbuteroi* is the plural form) is a recognized leader within the believing community. The word *presbuteros* means “elder.” However, as Paul uses the word here, it need not be referring to chronological age. It probably refers to maturity with respect to one’s understanding of and experience with the gospel. Hence, it is not impossible that a younger man could have the role of a *presbuteros* (“elder”). Timothy himself is a prime example.

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- a. Employing the term *presbuteros* to denote a leader is probably derived from Judaism. The leaders within the Jewish community were labelled *presbuteroi* precisely because they typically were the older men within the community. Paul has likely appropriated this term from Judaism. However, for Paul it denotes a leadership role within the believing community, not chronological age.
 - b. For more on what a *presbuteros* is see note 56 on page 8.

• ¶32.3

1. The phrase “and of the messengers to the elect” translates the Greek phrase καὶ τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν ἀγγέλων [*kai ton eklekton angelon*]. The typical English translation translates this “and of his chosen angels.” The typical translation construes ἐκλεκτῶν [*eklekton*] (=“chosen”) as an attributive adjective modifying ἀγγέλων [*angelon*], taking *angelon* to denote “angels”—hence, “of his chosen angels.” I have taken ἐκλεκτῶν [*eklekton*] (=“chosen” or “elect”) as a substantive describing those individuals to whom the ἄγγελοι [*angelloi*] came as messengers (that is, as ἄγγελοι [*angelloi* = messengers]). Hence, I translate it “messengers to the elect.”
 - a. In all likelihood, the “messengers to the elect” that Paul has in view are the eyewitnesses of Jesus and his resurrection who first proclaimed the message of the gospel. These original eyewitnesses were the one’s to whom the truth about Jesus and his resurrection first came. Paul is warning Timothy—in the presence of God, Jesus, and these original eyewitnesses to the life, ministry, and resurrection of Jesus—not to show favoritism as he performs his oversight of the leaders of the believing community. To do so, Paul thinks, would be a betrayal of the truth that was originally passed down from the first eyewitnesses of Jesus’s life, ministry, and resurrection. That is why he “earnestly warns” Timothy in the presence of “the messengers to the elect” (*ton eklekton angelon*). Timothy must avoid insulting the gift that they delivered to us when they delivered the message good news message of Jesus’s resurrection.

• ¶33.1

1. In Paul’s use of the word ἄγνός [*hagnos* {usually translated “pure”}] here, Paul means to describe a state of being free of culpability for sin or wrongdoing. Paul instructs Timothy not to be overly quick to “lay hands upon” individuals—that is to say, not to be overly quick to appoint them to positions of leadership within the believing community. Why? Because, if it turns out that these individuals he appoints turn out not to be spiritually qualified and become trapped in some sin, then Timothy himself would bear some culpability for their sin and for any harm done by their sin. In other words, Paul warns Timothy, “do not share in the sins of others,” and “keep yourself *hagnos*.” Therefore, it would seem that to “keep yourself *hagnos*” is to “keep yourself free of culpability for the sins of some unrighteous *presbuteros* that you appointed prematurely.”

• ¶33.2

1. This parenthesis seems to be a complete tangent that is totally unrelated to the paragraph in which it is found. It does not appear to contribute anything at all to the point that Paul is making in this context—namely, the inadvisability of appointing individuals to be *presbuteroi* too quickly. It would appear that Paul has said something that reminded him of something else entirely different that he did not want to forget to tell Timothy—namely, to be sure to drink a little wine for his health’s sake. He abruptly interrupts his flow of thought to convey this to Timothy, and then, once he has conveyed it, he immediately drops the subject, just as abruptly as he raised it.
 - a. I can only guess what Paul’s train of thought might have been. It is possible that he was reminded of what he needed to tell Timothy when, immediately prior to this, he wrote, “keep yourself pure

[*hagnos*].” The word “pure [*hagnos*]” is ambiguous. It can refer to various different things. Paul’s exhortation was an exhortation to Timothy to keep himself free from moral culpability. However, “pure [*hagnos*]” can also describe ritual purity. And perhaps Paul’s mention of “purity” brought to his conscious awareness the notion of ritual purity. Ritual purity, in turn, may have brought to his conscious awareness the import of what one eats or drinks. That thought, then, reminded Paul of the health advice that he intended to pass on to Timothy. That perhaps led Paul to interject it before he once again forgot it.

- ¶33.3

1. If a certain man’s sins “precede” him to judgment, then when that man’s judgment (condemnation) manifests itself, it is no real surprise, for his actions prior to that point in time have made it clear what kind of man he is. But if another man’s sins “follow,” then, when that man’s judgment manifests itself, it is a complete surprise, for none of his actions prior to that point in time have given any indication of what kind of man he actually is. Only in retrospect do his prior sins and sinfulness become clear. The “judgment” Paul has in mind here is some critical moment in that man’s life where his ultimate condemnation becomes evident. When that critical moment comes, it serves as a clear indication that that particular man is not qualified to be a leader within the believing community.

- ¶33.4

1. This is a somewhat confusing remark by Paul, but I think we can understand it to mean essentially this: WHILE SOMETIMES A MAN’S GOODNESS OR SINFULNESS IS QUITE EVIDENT FROM THE START, OTHER TIMES A MAN’S SINFULNESS AND UNBELIEF CAN ONLY BE SEEN IN RETROSPECT. BUT, ULTIMATELY, SIN AND UNBELIEF CANNOT BE KEPT HIDDEN. THEY MUST EVENTUALLY SHOW THEMSELVES. This sentence, in conjunction with the preceding one, is intended to make this point: FOR SOME INDIVIDUALS, IT IS QUITE EASY TO SEE THAT THEY ARE NOT GOOD AND RIGHTEOUS MEN RIGHT FROM THE START. FOR OTHERS, IT WILL LOOK LIKE THEY ARE GOOD AND RIGHTEOUS MEN UNTIL THEIR SIN AND UNBELIEF MANIFESTS ITSELF MUCH LATER. EVERY MAN’S SIN WILL INEVITABLY SHOW ITSELF OVER TIME, EVEN IF IT TAKES QUITE A WHILE BEFORE IT BECOMES MANIFEST. That is why Paul has counseled Timothy not to be too hasty in appointing a person to be a leader within the believing community. Paul would have Timothy delay long enough so that, by the time Timothy is ready to appoint a person to leadership, if there are any hidden, disqualifying sins in him, they would have likely already shown themselves.

- a. The “things suggesting otherwise” are evil deeds that show an individual not to be qualified to be a leader (*presbuteros*). We could re-word Paul’s statement here this way: Just as, in the case of some men, their sinful deeds are quite evident, so likewise, in the case of other men, their good deeds are quite evident. But, in the case of yet other men who, while appearing good initially, are not actually good men, the evidence that they are not actually good men cannot remain hidden. It must eventually show itself.

- The phrase καὶ τὰ ἄλλως ἔχοντα κρυβῆναι οὐ δύνανται [*kai ta allos exonta krubenai ou dunantai*] could be literally rendered, “and the things having otherwise are not able to be hidden.” By “the things having otherwise,” Paul seems to mean “the things having contrary implications.” That is, in an individual who initially appears to be a good and righteous man when, in fact, he is not, “THE THINGS IN HIM THAT WOULD GIVE EVIDENCE THAT HE IS NOT A GOOD AND RIGHTEOUS MAN” (τὰ ἄλλως ἔχοντα [*ta allos exonta*]) cannot ultimately be hidden.

- ¶35.1

1. Note what Paul is saying here: there is teaching that is consistent with the Jesus believer’s *eusebeia* and there is teaching that is not consistent with the Jesus believer’s *eusebeia*. That means that the

Jesus believer's *eusebeia* is closely connected to a particular understanding of reality, a particular worldview and a particular set of doctrines. Why? Presumably because the Jesus believer's *eusebeia* (his way of life adopted as a way of honoring God) is nothing other than a life lived consistently in the light of a true understanding of things. The *eusebeia* of the Jesus believer amounts to conducting his life in the light of the truth that Jesus revealed to us.

a. Paul's point in this statement is this: when a false teacher's teaching is not consistent with the true understanding of God and reality that forms the foundation of a Jesus-believer's way of life (his *eusebeia*), then that is a telltale sign that that teacher is a conceited man who is driven by a spirit of competition in his study and teaching. He is not motivated to find the truth. Rather, he is motivated to look more intelligent and more knowledgeable than the other bible teachers with whom he has decided to compete. That is why this man's teaching is always accompanied by controversies and quarrels. And that is why these quarrels always lead to "envy, strife, slander, evil suspicions and constant wrangling." (See the next sentence, ¶35.2.) Such things are the inevitable result, precisely because the driving energy behind his teaching is competition rather than collegial truth-seeking.

• ¶35.2

1. The phrase "men who think that our *eusebeia* is a path to personal benefit" translates νομιζόντων πορισμὸν εἶναι τὴν εὐσέβειαν [*nomizonton porismon einai ten eusebeian*]. A typical English translation runs something like this: "[men] who suppose that godliness is a means of gain [or, making a profit]." The impression one forms is that these translators understand Paul to be saying that there are men who believe that they can make monetary gain off of *eusebeia*. This would, in fact, appear to be supported by the following paragraph (which speaks explicitly of the evils that follow from the "love of money"). However, in my judgment, the following paragraph begins a new topic. The personal gain of which Paul speaks here, in this paragraph, is not monetary or material gain. It is rather psycho-social gain (fame, good reputation, praise, admiration, etc.)

a. In this context, it would seem that the personal benefit that is being sought by these men that Paul has in view is a certain respect from or admiration by others. In particular, these men want to be respected for their intellect and/or erudition. They engage in "controversies" and "quarrels" because they are *competing* with one another for the admiration and respect of others as they purport to teach the Scriptures and instruct others in the belief. That is what Paul is criticizing. The study and teaching of the Scriptures should not be competitive. It should be collegial and cooperative. If it is competitive, then those who are competing with one another are engaged in it for illegitimate reasons. The Jesus-follower should not allow himself to have any need for the acclaim of others. (In that regard, he should be Stoic in his outlook [see notes on ¶35.3 below]—free of any need, want, or desire for the acclaim of other men.) He should be content, whether he is acknowledged, recognized, and respected by others or not.

- This is one of the primary ways in which these false teachers are "teaching differently" [see ¶35.1]. Paul teaches the Scripture to discover and come to understand the truth revealed in them. These other teachers teach the Scripture in order to obtain a certain social and psychological reward (fame, recognition, acknowledgement). And they "compete" with other teachers to obtain it. This is one very important way in which they are "teaching differently" from Paul: they are motivated by an entirely different set of motivations.

• ¶35.3

1. The phrase, “an inner disposition free of needs, wants, and desires,” translates the single Greek noun, *autarkeia* [αὐτάρκεια]. The noun *autarkeia* [αὐτάρκεια] denotes an inner state wherein one is devoid of desires, wants, and/or perceived needs. This inner state (αὐτάρκεια [autarkeia]) was much vaunted by the Stoics in their philosophy. If you do not desire anything, you will not suffer the pain of disappointment when you do not obtain it. Hence, one is better off not being plagued by wants and desires of various sorts. Being in such a state—a state of being devoid of wants and desires of various sorts—is what Paul intends to denote through the noun *autarkeia* [αὐτάρκεια] here. Paul’s point is this: the Jesus-believer’s way of life is, in fact, of great benefit to a person. But it will only benefit him if he is not driven by various lusts for things that he believes he wants and needs. The person who seeks to have his desires and perceived needs satisfied by his pursuit of the Jesus-believer’s way of life will not get what he wants from that way of life. The person who will find benefit from the Jesus-believer’s way of life is the person who wants and expects nothing from it except what the gospel actually promises.

a. The phrase “an inner disposition free of needs, wants, and desires” translates the noun *autarkeia*. In *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, under the entry for ἀρκέω / αὐτάρκεια {arkeo / autarkeia}, we find: “In the moral philosophy of Stoicism the ability to be content (ἀρκεῖσθαι {arkeisthai}) became the essence of all the virtues. So the Stoic Diog. Laert. says about Socrates, Αὐτάρκης τε ἦν καὶ σεμνός {autarkes to en kai semnos}, ‘He was content and venerable’ (Vitae 2.24). To practice the virtue of contentment was to acquiesce wisely in that which suited one’s own nature; becoming independent of external things, people had to rely on themselves—or, as Epict. taught, they submitted to the lot meted out to them by the gods (1.1.13). To have no needs was the ideal of Stoicism.” This, I think, is the sense of *autarkeia* in Paul’s assertion here in this sentence. The true Jesus-follower will learn to “have no needs,” but to be content with “the lot meted out” to him by God. If he does learn this, then he will be a true child of God who will inherit the blessing of eternal life in the end. If he does not learn this, then he will forfeit the blessing of eternal life and following Jesus will prove to have had no real benefit to him. However, when a person follows Jesus because he hopes to satisfy some personal need that he has, he is not following Jesus as he should. Only the person who follows Jesus without regard to certain personal needs is following Jesus authentically. Ironically, this latter person will find profit in doing so (namely, the blessing of eternal life), while the one who follows Jesus in order to meet some personal need will lose out completely.

• ¶38.3

1. The “good confession” (καλὴ ὁμολογία [kale homologia]) is the declaration that “Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” This is the confession that came out of Peter’s mouth and was affirmed by Jesus. (See *Matthew* 16:13–20.) Paul indicates here that the fact that Timothy has declared his agreement with this “good confession” has qualified him for *aionic* life. (See *John* 20:31.)

• ¶38.4

1. “...that you keep this instruction unmarred and without reproach...” The word “instruction” (ἐντολή [entole]) here is referring to the “good confession” that Paul has mentioned just prior to this. Namely, it is the teaching (ἐντολή [entole]) that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. More specifically, it is the instruction (ἐντολή [entole]) to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, *in order to obtain aionic life*. So what does it mean to keep this instruction “unmarred” and “without reproach”? How would Timothy do that? He would do so by living a life of righteousness and integrity that reflects well on this confession, rather than living a life or unrighteousness that reflects poorly on this

confession. Timothy's confession that Jesus is the Messiah would be marred and made subject to reproach if Timothy were to live a life of wicked, unjust, and/or unloving deeds.

• ¶38.5

1. The word “blessed” translates the Greek adjective *makarios* [μακάριος]. This is one of only two occasions in the New Testament (both occur here in *1 Timothy*) where *makarios* [μακάριος] is used to describe an attribute of God. (But see note 13 on page 2.) What does it mean to call him the “*makarios* and only Sovereign”? Is Paul describing God as the “fortunate and only Sovereign,” or perhaps the “happy and only Sovereign”? The word *makarios* is admittedly an odd attribute to ascribe to God within the biblical worldview. It seems likely that Paul is ascribing to God—as the one and only sovereign ruler—an attribute (being *makarios*) that is at home and meaningful within some other worldview (notably, a polytheistic worldview), but has passed into common usage as an apt way to describe a sovereign ruler. I have translated it “blessed” to try to capture the vagueness of meaning that results.
2. Presumably, the light within which God dwells is not approachable by any human being, because its brightness and intensity is too great for a human being to handle. Normally, light is what allows us see. We can see things because they are illumined by light. However, if for some reason a light that illumines our surroundings is “not approachable” (that is, it is too intense for us to handle), then it does not enable us to see what is illumined by it. Quite the contrary, it precludes our being able to see what is illumined by it. This is how Paul is describing God. The “light” that forms the environment within which God lives—and, therefore, which shines upon and illumines him—does not enable us to see him and know him. On the contrary, it precludes us from seeing and knowing him, because it is “unapproachable” due its brightness and intensity. Paul is asserting here that God has been, and always will be, beyond human capability to see, perceive, and know directly.

• ¶40.2

1. The fact that certain alternative sets of beliefs—that differ from and are incompatible with the gospel—are explicitly purported to reflect true knowledge (γνώσις [*gnosis*]) does not mean that that alternative belief system is Gnosticism. Paul's statement here does not require us to conclude that the false teaching that he is warning Timothy against is Gnosticism. There is no clear, strong evidence in this letter that Gnosticism is even an issue that Paul and Timothy are confronting. It is completely predictable that a false teacher—no matter who he is and what he teaches—would promote his false doctrines under the guise of their being “true knowledge.” Gnosticism would claim this as well. However, it is hardly unique in making such a claim.