1 Timothy

Chapter 1

1:1. “by the command of.” The Greek is (κατ᾽ ἐπιταγήν; the lemma is kата epitagē;) and it is a technical phrase that means “by the command of; by order of.” A. Nyland writes that this expression is strongly attested in the papyri, and “shows the person is under divine injunction” (The Source New Testament). The Greeks used it of commands by people, but especially of commands by oracles and gods (Word Biblical Commentary note on 1 Tim. 1:1). The specific phrase κατ᾽ ἐπιταγήν appears in Romans 16:26; 1 Corinthians 7:6; 2 Corinthians 8:8; 1 Timothy 1:1; and Titus 1:3.

1:2. “my true child.” Although the Greek omits the word “my,” and some commentators try to assert that Timothy is “a” child and not “my” child, it is clear the “my” is implied. As Hendrickson and Kistemaker point out so clearly, “The omission of the possessive in such a case is not at all unusual” (New Testament Commentary: Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews). That Timothy was considered Paul’s spiritual child is clear (1 Cor. 4:15 and Gal. 4:19).

“in regard to the faith.” The Greek reads, “ἐν πίστις” (ἐν πίστις), which is a difficult phrase to translate easily into English. It means, “in” as “in the sphere of, in the realm of, in respect to, when it comes to,” (Cp. Lenski, Hendriksen-Kistemaker; Meyer’s Commentary; International Critical Commentary by Walter Lock). The phrase means more than just “in the faith,” which would have been easy for Paul to write (and easy to translate). The fact that Paul did not write that means there is more to “in faith” here that just “in the faith” which is a way of saying, “in the Christian faith,” it is Timothy’s faith in, and loyalty to, Christ and the things of God, including the entirety of the Christian faith. Also, we must keep in mind that “faith” here is a noun, not a verb. This verse is not talking about the action of faith. Some people in the faith movement have tried to make this into a verb, as if Timothy was a true child of Paul’s by virtue of his great faith. That is not the meaning here.

1:4. “genealogies.” The Jews had a great interest in genealogies, but now there is neither Jew nor Gentile in Christ, and any Jewish believers needed to leave arguments about genealogy behind and fulfill their calling as an individual member of the Body of Christ. See commentary on Titus 3:9.

“in connection with faith.” The word “God” is in the genitive case, and the next phrase, starting with the article, becomes like a genitive of apposition. (cp. Robertson, Grammar, p. 776, and the explanation by Lenski).

1:5. “goal.” The Greek is telos (τέλος), end, finish; here well understood as “goal.” (cp. HCSB; NASB; NIV).

1:10. “teaching.” The Greek word is didaskalia (διδασκαλία), a noun, and it has two primary meanings: It is used of the act of teaching or instruction (as if it was a verb), and it is also used for what is taught, i.e., the doctrine or material that was presented. In this verse we felt bringing didaskalia into English as “teaching” was better than “doctrine,” because the subjects the verse is speaking about need to be covered by more than just “doctrine,” i.e., more than just is written down as commands, but “sound
teaching,” which involves logic and logical deductions from all God has given us. Of course, sound “doctrine” is the fundamental basis for sound teaching. [For more on didaskalia see commentary on 1 Tim. 4:13].

1:15. “this statement is trustworthy.” This is the first of the five “trustworthy statements” found in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11; Tit. 3:8). Interestingly, they only occur in the Pastoral Epistles. Here and in 4:9 Paul adds the phrase “and deserving of full acceptance.” “Statement” is translated from logos (#3056 λόγος), which here does not refer to the Bible as the Word, nor as Christ as the Word of God, but is used idiomatically to mean a “dictum, maxim or weighty saying” (Thayer). This statement is said to be pistos (#4103 πιστός), that is “worthy of belief or trust, trustworthy, faithful, dependable, inspiring” (BDAG). When the Bible says, “this statement is trustworthy,” sometimes it is referring to the statement that was made immediately before (1 Tim. 3:1; 4:9; Tit. 3:8), and sometime it refers to what is written next (1 Tim. 1:15; 2 Tim. 2:11).

1:16. “life in the Age to come.” This is the everlasting life that begins with the new Messianic Age, the Millennial Kingdom. [See Appendix 2: “Life in the Age to Come”].

1:18. “this command.” This is the command (made up of several different commands) that is in 1:3-17.

“The prophecies previously made about you.” Timothy was publicly ordained and prophesied over, something that is clear from 1 Timothy 4:14 and 2 Timothy 1:6 (see commentary on those verses). Those prophecies would further identify his ministry, and most likely give him encouragement and direction in his life. By those prophecies he is to war the good warfare. There is a huge lesson in this. God has called each person to a specific “ministry,” that is, a way of serving in the Body (“ministry” means “service”). As the illustration of the human body shows (1 Cor. 12:12-27), each part of the Body serves a different function. This makes perfect sense. If a person in the Body of Christ did not have a ministry, it would be the same as saying God had no way for that person to serve, which is absurd; everyone has a way of serving in the Body of Christ. Timothy must war the good warfare by serving in the area where he was called, not by trying to serve in areas where he was not called.

1:20. “whom I delivered to the Adversary.” The Greek word for Adversary is Satanas (#4567 Σατανᾶς), which has been transliterated into “Satan” in most versions. This causes the meaning of the word, which is important, to be lost. For more information on it, see the note on Mark 1:13. [For information on the names of the Devil, see Appendix 14: “Names of the Slanderer”.]

One of the uses of “the Adversary” in the early Christian world was the same as the Moslems today use “the Great Satan,” meaning things outside their religion that are considered evil. Thus to “deliver someone to the Adversary” was to kick that person out of the Church, to excommunicate the person (Cp. Robertson on 1 Cor. 5:5; Lenski). Then, in the “world” (the realm of the Adversary”) the person would be badly treated and not loved, and thus would “learn” not to speak injuriously, or defame, others. When he learned his lesson, he would be allowed back in the congregation.

“Speak injuriously.” The Greek verb blasphêmeô (#987 βλασφημέω) means showing disrespect to a person or deity, and/or harming his, her, or its reputation. [For more on blasphêmeô, see commentary on Matt. 9:3].
Chapter 2

2:5. “mankind, a man.” This is one of the great and clear texts in the debate as to who Jesus really is. If Jesus were God, this would have been a wonderful place to say it. Instead, Jesus is clearly called “a person” using the Greek word *anthropos*, “person, human, man.” The lexicons state that it is “man” in contrast with animals, plants, angels, and of course, God. The Greek text reads that there is one mediator between God and “mankind,” or “people” (*anthrōpōn, ἄνθρωποι;* the noun is plural), “a person” or “a man” (*anthropos, ἄνθρωπος;* the noun is singular), Jesus Christ. Although Trinitarians say that this refers only to his human nature, that is an interpolation, not the text of Scripture. If Jesus were a God-man, this would be one of the many places to say it, but Scripture never says it, ever. Instead, Jesus is stated to be a member of the human race, just as the Old Testament prophecies foretold he would be.

This verse is commonly translated, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,” but there is no definite article, no “the” in the Greek text before “man, Christ Jesus.” Adding the “the” before “man” distorts the verse a little, as if it were saying that Jesus was “the man.” This verse is not pointing out that Jesus is “the” man, it is pointing out that he is “a man,” “a person,” a human being. Romans 5 shows that it was a person who sinned and got mankind into the mess it is in, and it was a person, Jesus, who got us out of that mess.

Because the word *anthropos* has some latitude in translation, we should know that if we were to translate *anthropos* as “human being,” then the verse would read, “...For there is one God, and one mediator between God and human beings, a human being, Christ Jesus.” Similarly, if we were going to translate *anthropos* as “man,” then the verse would read that there is “one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus.

2:6. “proper time.” Technically, “its own” time, but the meaning of the phrase is the proper or right time.

2:9. “modesty.” The Greek is *aidōs* (#127 αἰδώς; pronounced “eye-dōs”). It is used only here in the NT, and it means “modesty,” and “a sense of shame.” If a woman has a “sense of shame,” it should prevent her from acting in a shameful, or immodest, way. There have always been women who refuse to be modest and flaunt their bodies to get attention. Over seven hundred years before Christ, Isaiah rebuked the immodest women of his generation, stating, “…the daughters of Zion are haughty, walking with heads held high and seductive eyes, going along with prancing steps, jingling their ankle bracelets” ( Isa. 3:16 HCSB). It was common for women who had the means to do so to wear necklaces, bracelets, etc., but a modest woman would be careful not to draw attention to herself by jingling her ankle bracelet.

“good judgment.” The Greek is *sōphrosunē* (#4997 σοφροσύνη), which generally means “soundness of mind, reasonableness, rationality,” but when this clear thinking is applied to circumstances it comes to signify the “practice of prudence, good judgment, moderation, self-control” (BDAG). Here Paul is declaring that women must be reasonable about their dress, they must exercise good judgment when deciding what to wear. The word does not simply emphasize the action of being proper (“propriety” [NIV]); rather it points to the underlying wisdom that causes one to implement such discretion. Cp. *Holman Christian Standard Bible*, “with decency and good sense.”
“pearls.” Pearls were very expensive in the ancient world, and very highly valued. [For more on pearls, see commentary on Revelation 18:12].

2:11. “A woman.” The Greek is gunē (#1135 γυνή; pronounced “goo-nay’”). It is the feminine singular noun for woman or wife. The Greek word for woman and wife were the same. Here the context shows the meaning is “woman.”

“must learn, and be learning.” The Greek verb translated “learn” is manthanō (#3129 μανθάνω), and it means “learn, be instructed.” It is in the imperative mood, active voice, present tense, which are all important to its meaning here. The imperative mood is the mood of command (or exhortation; hence the number of versions that read, “Let a woman learn”). We pick up the imperative mood by “must,” since in English, “let” comes across more as a permission, like “allow,” than a command and exhortation. Women are to learn, they are not to remain ignorant about the things of God. This verse was very important in light of the first century culture, both Semitic and Greco-Roman, because women were very limited when it came to education. Although there was some encouragement for women to get a limited education in the Jewish culture, most women, whether Jewish or Greco-Roman, had either a very limited education or none at all. It was not at all like the men, particularly the men from more well-to-do families, who got an advanced education (thus the need for the paidagōgos (#3807 παιδαγωγός) the trusted slave who escorted boys safely to and from school; Gal. 3:24).

In this verse Paul shakes his culture to the core and writes that women are to learn! Of course they are to learn in quietness and submission, but that is how the men learned too. The verse is not saying that somehow men can learn and be raucous and aggressive in the classroom, but women have to be quiet and in subjection. Paul’s point is that the women were to learn just like the men. The present tense active voice emphasizes that the women are to “be learning.” The women are to “be learning” just as every Christian is to be constantly learning and growing in the things of God. Education in the things of God is not to be like it often was in the culture—study for a few years and then stop. We all, men and women, must press ourselves to continually grow in our knowledge of God. It is true that in the Greek text the verb manthanō (“learn”) only occurs once, and we place it twice in the REV, but given the importance of capturing the meaning of the verb in its full conjugation, and given the fact that this verse has been misread and misunderstood for generations, we felt the doubling of the verb was justified. It is a common Christian myth that Paul was somehow against women. Of course, given the way his writings have been mistranslated and misinterpreted, it certainly could seem Paul was against women. However, when we properly translate this verse and others like it, we can see that the New Testament was a Magna Carta for women, giving them rights and privileges they had never had before. [For other verses in the NT that elevate women’s position in the culture, see commentary on 1 Cor. 7:2; 14:34, 35; 1 Tim. 2:12; 3:2; 5:14; and 1 Pet. 3:7].

“without causing a disturbance.” In this context, the Greek phrase, en hēsuchia (ἐν ἡσυχία; #2271), does not mean “without noise; being quiet; being silent;” it means without causing a disturbance, or “making a fuss” (A. Nyland, The Source NT; cp. Richard & Catherine Clark Kroeger, I Suffer Not A Woman). The Greek word hēsuchia (#2271 ἡσυχία; pronounced “hay-soo-key’-ah”), has two different meanings, and the usual meaning that has been assigned in this verse is not the product of scholarship, but
rather the product of the traditional orthodox Christian position when it comes to women. The two meanings of ħēsuchia are presented well in the BDAG Greek-English lexicon:

1) A state of quietness without disturbance, without any fanfare; of a quiet scholar’s life with implied contrast of being engaged in public affairs; harmonious peace; living in a way that does not cause disturbance.

2) A state of saying nothing or very little.

Anyone who really understands the learning process knows that students learn best when they are fully engaged in the lesson and there is dialogue and interaction between the students and teachers, and among the students themselves. That kind of “active classroom” is every teacher’s dream. In contrast, no teacher wants a classroom where there are constant interruptions and disturbances by unruly students, or the opposite; a classroom where all the students just sit and say nothing and never interact with the teacher.

Due to the long-standing Christian tradition that women are inferior to men (and thus supposedly cannot be clergy or teach; cp commentary on 1 Pet. 3:7), translators of most English versions have chosen definition #2 above, and thus English Bibles have read that women, if they do learn, must be “silent” during the process. Any teacher will attest that making the student be silent during the lesson only retards the learning process, so if that is the case, why would Paul write the women “must” (imperative!) learn, but be silent while doing so? That inconsistency has been ignored by the Church. The phrase “without causing a disturbance” (en ħēsuchia; ēv ἡσυχία) is defined by “in subjection,” which is not about being silent, it is about being in control of oneself (see commentary on “in all subjection”). The woman who is learning is to be under control and not cause a disturbance. If the text were trying to say that women should be silent, the word sigē (#4602 σίγη; pronounced sī-gay), which means “silent, without any noise,” would have been a better choice than ħēsuchia (cp. Acts 21:40; Rev. 8:1).

Women make up at least one-half of almost every Church congregation, and it is a real victory on the part of the Devil to establish a tradition that disqualifies that half of the congregation from learning the deep truths of God or presenting those truths from a woman’s perspective and with her insights. The Christian world, and Christian women, need to become aggressive in learning about God and not worry about not asking questions and/or speaking up in the process.

Since the Greek phrase is en ħēsuchia, other translations could be considered, translations such as “in a non-disturbing way;” or “in a harmonious way.” However, due to the difficult nature of the subject and the general misunderstanding of the verse in Bible versions and commentaries, we felt that “without causing a disturbance” captured the sense of the Greek very well.

“in all subjection.” The word “subjection” is the Greek noun hupotagē (#5292 ὑποταγή), and it means to be in subjection, be in submission to. It is used in 1 Timothy 3:4 of a man having his children in subjection, which many versions translate as “under control.” The phrase “in all subjection” defines “without causing a disturbance” (en ħēsuchia) and is a reason we know that ħēsuchia refers, not to being “silent,” but to not cause a disturbance. The woman who is learning is to be under control and not cause a disturbance.

2:12. “I do not.” In explaining this verse, it is important to note that more literature has been written on verses 11 and 12 in recent years than on any other passage in the Pauline Epistles.
(Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles, p. 117). If anything, this should alert us to the fact that the standard orthodox translation, that women should not teach men and should be silent in the Church, is not something the Greek text clearly says. There are well known and highly educated scholars who take totally different positions on how these verses are to be translated and interpreted. Also, the fact that there is so much disagreement about these verses shows us that no interpretation is free of problems: there is no “easy translation and clear meaning” of this passage of Scripture. There is no interpretation posited by any scholar that has not been criticized by other scholars who take opposing viewpoints, and we realize that not everyone will agree with our interpretation of this verse, but we set it forth as the best explanation we know.

The best answer we have found to the difficult grammar and the difficult context of 1 Timothy 2:12 are solutions set forth in works such as I Suffer Not a Woman by Richard and Catherine Clark Kroeger, and The Source New Testament (text and notes) by Dr. A. Nyland. Although the Clark Kroegers offer several translations (pp. 103, 191, 192), and these differ from Nyland’s translation, the gist is the same. Paul was writing to Timothy, who was based in Ephesus. Between some types of Gnostic doctrine, and some of the types of the “mother goddess” worship of Asia Minor, it was being taught in the culture surrounding Timothy that a female god created Eve before Adam, or that God created Eve before Adam. It is typical of converts to Christianity that they blend Christian beliefs with their past pagan beliefs (this is referred to by scholars as syncretism, and is how orthodox Christianity picked up many of its modern beliefs and practices, such as “Easter Sunday”). Syncretism could have certainly been occurring in Ephesus, and would have been a very important reason why Paul would tell the women to learn, but forbid them from teaching things from their pagan past such as that a woman was the origin of men.

Added to the above historical context is that authenteō can mean “originator” or “author,” and when linked to the word “teach,” can refer to a person teaching that woman is the originator of man. The translation given by the Clark Kroegers that they feel is the most likely is: “I do not allow a woman to teach nor to proclaim herself author of man” (p. 103, 192). However, they also say the verse could be translated: “I do not permit a woman to teach that she is the originator of man...” (p. 191), or “I categorically forbid a woman to teach [anyone] to maintain that she is responsible for the origin of man” (p. 192). Nyland translates the verse: “I most certainly do not grant authority to a woman to teach that she is the originator of man....”

Given the historical context of 1 Timothy, the difficult vocabulary and grammar of the verse, and the “reason” for the verse in the first place, which is verses 13 and 14, we felt that the best understanding of 1 Timothy 2:12 was the general understanding of Nyland and the Clark Kroegers, that Paul was forbidding women to claim feminine origin of man [For more information and full commentary on this verse, see Appendix 12: “The Role of Women In The Church”].

2:13. “For Adam was first formed, then Eve.” This is a wonderful and logical explanation of why women should not claim to be the originators of men (see commentary on verse 12). It is certainly what Genesis teaches. The orthodox conservative teaching that this is the reason women cannot teach men in “formal church settings” does not make sense. For one thing, since women not teaching men would be linked to their creation (thus, a “creation ordinance”), then women not teaching men should be the standard for all teaching situations, not just in the Church. Why would the fact that women were created after men only restrict women from teaching men in formal church settings? If being created last restricted them in one setting, it
should restrict them in every setting, including schools and universities, in work related situations, etc.

Another reason the standard orthodox explanation falls short is that the New Testament is clear that there is neither male nor female in Christ (Gal. 3:28). Men and women are “one” in Christ, and that means that they must be “one” in the Church. We should pay careful attention to the fact that, due to the differences in the sexes, God has placed the man as the head of his wife (Eph. 5:23), and the woman as ruler of the home (1 Tim. 5:14; see commentary), but that relationship exists in the marriage, not in the Church. No man in the Church is head over my wife, and similarly, my wife does not rule in any home but her own.

When it comes to primacy in the Church and who is to teach whom, the Bible does not direct us to who was created first. There are several biblical standards for who should be teaching others in the Church. For one thing, the Bible says that Christ appointed equipping ministries in the Church (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers; Eph. 4:11-13), and these ministries, which are given to both men and women, are to do their job and equip the believers, and that includes teaching them. Also, the Bible tells us, “And God has set some in the congregation, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, various kinds of tongues” (1 Cor. 12:28). Again we see no mention that being a man or woman makes a person “first” or “second,” but rather if a person has a gifting, particularly a gifting that elevates the person in the function of the Church, he or she must do what it takes to fulfill that gifting. Another order of primacy in the Church is that the wise and knowledgeable are to teach those who are inexperienced. This often shows up as the elders are to teach those who are younger, because generally the younger ones need the instruction, but there are exceptions. For example, Timothy was a powerful and experienced man of God in spite of his youth, so Paul wrote, “Let no one look down upon you because you are young.” Paul also told Timothy to set a good example to the believers, read the Scripture publicly, encourage, and teach (1 Tim. 4:12, 13).

The biblical mandate is that each Christian is to fulfill his or her ministry and make disciples, and that has nothing to do with whether or not Adam or Eve was created first. There is also a biblical mandate to teach the truth and refute error. In that light, it is important that Paul did not ignore the erroneous teaching that women created men, but instead he directly confronted it. This sets a good example for us. There are some things we are unsure of biblically that get discussed and argued back and forth in churches. But when the Bible is clear about something, then especially leaders are called to support that truth and stand against error, and this section of Scripture in Timothy is a good example of Paul doing that very thing.

2:14. “and Adam was not deceived.” Adam was not deceived by the serpent [the Devil]. Eve was deceived, and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil before Adam did (Gen. 3:6). The fact that Adam knew exactly what he was doing—breaking a command of God—and did it anyway, meant that Adam sinned deliberately. That is surely one reason the Bible attributes the Fall of mankind to Adam, not to Eve or even to Adam and Eve (Rom. 5:12-15).

The conservative orthodox Church gives this verse as part of the reason that women cannot teach men, but that cannot be correct. While it is bad for Eve or anyone else to be so misinformed or confused that they can be deceived into sinning, it is much worse to sin intentionally. We never hold gullible children who get talked into sinning as responsible as the evil people who convince them to do wrong. Similarly, if we are considering a man for service in a church, we never hold someone who unknowingly made a mistake in his past as guilty as someone who knowingly sinned against God. If this verse is indeed part of a reason about who
should teach whom, in light of the scope of Scripture about doing wrong, we would ordinarily conclude that women would be allowed to teach and men would not.

It seems clear that verse 12 is about women teaching what they had learned in their culture, that a female god created Eve first (and the man sinned), and that verses 13 and 14 are part of the refutation of that error.

“deceived… thoroughly deceived.” There are two different Greek words for “deceive” in this verse, and most versions translate them both as simply “deceived.” However, this covers up the interesting fact that Eve’s word has the intensifier ex as a prefix, indicating that she was thoroughly deceived. Adam is said to have not been “deceived,” apataō (#538 ἀπατάω), while Eve was “deceived wholly,” “thoroughly deceived,” exapataō (#1818 ἐξαπατάω). There is a variant reading within the Western textual tradition that has apataō twice, however the most favorable manuscripts include exapataō (Tischendorf, Critical Apparatus). Eve was confused and thoroughly tricked by the Devil. In contrast, Adam sinned knowingly.

“fell into transgression.” The Greek literally reads, “has come to be in transgression.” This emphasizes that Eve changed states of being; it portrays her coming into a fallen state, into the sphere of transgression, as this is most likely a dative of sphere (cp. Wallace, Greek Grammar, pg. 153).

2:15. “but she will be saved through the birth of the Child.” That this verse refers to “the” birth of the Child, i.e., Jesus Christ, has been set forth as a possible interpretation of this verse for many years by an impressive list of scholars (cp. Word Biblical Commentary, p. 145). In her book God’s Word to Women (1916), Katherine Bushnell translated the verse: “And she will be saved by the Child-bearing [i.e., the bearing of Jesus Christ],....” Since that time various translators have followed suit. In 2004, Ann Nyland (The Source New Testament), translated the verse, “and she will be saved by means of the Birth of the Child....” The New English Bible gives “saved through the Birth of the Child” as a marginal reading and thus a possible translation of the text.

It has been argued that the noun translated “childbearing,” teknogonia (#5042 τεκνογονία) is the act of childbearing, not the product of childbearing, but the word is rare and unclear enough that that claim cannot be clearly substantiated, thus the many scholars who think it does refer to the birth of “the child.”

The text note on this verse in the “First Edition” NET version says, “This verse is notoriously difficult to interpret....” There are several reasons for that, the obvious one being that women are not saved through childbearing, they are saved through faith in Christ. This difficulty becomes even more obvious in light of the scope of the New Testament, because in 1 Corinthians 7, Paul writes that he wished every person was unmarried, like he was (v. 8), and he says that because the woman who is unmarried cares about the things of the Lord, while a married woman cares about how to please her husband (v. 34). God cannot contradict Himself and is not the author of confusion, and He would not tell women that it would be good to stay unmarried in one place in the New Testament but then say that they would somehow be “saved” through childbearing in another place.

Most orthodox commentators agree that the “salvation” being referred to in this verse cannot be eternal life salvation because that salvation does not come through giving birth. However, although they word it differently, the essence of their argument almost always somehow gets around to an assertion that the “salvation” the woman experiences refers to, or is closely tied with, “daily sanctification,” i.e., the fact that on a day to day basis, having children helps with a woman’s holiness or helps her understand her true place in society and the Church
(cp. text note on this verse in the NKJV Study Bible; Thomas Nelson, publisher; ). Schreiner writes: “Childbearing, then, is probably selected by synecdoche as representing the appropriate role for women” (Women in the Church, p. 151.) But explanations such as these cannot be right, because, as we just saw above, Paul said it was easier for a woman to care for the Lord if she were unmarried. The Bible cannot contradict itself. 1 Timothy 2:15 cannot say that a woman is somehow more godly, more balanced in life, more fulfilled, or fulfilling her role in a more natural way if she has children than if she does not, when 1 Corinthians 7:34 says that an unmarried woman is in a better position to concentrate on how to please the Lord than a married woman is. There must be another explanation for the verse.

To properly understand the verse, we must once again realize, as we have for this whole section, that the context and historical context are vital to the proper interpretation of the verse. For one thing, the word translated, “she will be saved” σωθῆσεται (σωθήσεται; from the root σῶζō #4982 σῴζω; to be saved or rescued) is singular, and normally would refer back to Eve, the subject of the sentence from verse 14. We can clearly see that if we remember that the original text had no punctuation, and read it in versions such as the REV: “Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being thoroughly deceived, fell into transgression, but she will be saved through the birth of the Child....” Eve, like everyone else, will be saved through the birth of the Christ. Furthermore, although this is not a conclusive argument, it is noteworthy that as it is used in the Pastoral Epistles, σῶζō (“saved”) always refers to everlasting life salvation, not some kind of earthly wholeness or holiness. This adds to the evidence that this verse is speaking of Eve and her everlasting salvation.

Some commentators have taken issue with the tense of “saved,” saying that if the verb referred to Eve it would not be, “she will be saved.” However, in fact no person is “saved” at this time (see commentary on Eph. 2:8). Everyone’s salvation will occur at the time Christ raises us from the dead and gives us new, everlasting bodies. Until then, what people have is the hope of salvation.

In light of understanding this verse in the context and historical setting, it has been postulated by the Clark Kroegers that some of the Gnostic teaching of the culture where Timothy lived had to do with women not being able to be saved if they did not give up their femininity and “choose the salvation of masculinity” (I Suffer Not a Woman; p. 176). Although this is possible, it is less likely because the verse opens with the singular verb, which naturally refers back to Eve. Nevertheless, the verse is difficult to interpret, and this must be allowed as a possible interpretation.

In summary, we agree with the conclusion of Charles Ellicott, who concluded that the “child bearing” referred to the birth of Christ. He wrote in 1864: “...when however we consider its extreme appropriateness, and the high probability that the Apostle, in speaking of woman’s [Eve’s] transgression, would not fail to specify the sustaining prophecy which even preceded her sentence; —when we add to this the satisfactory meaning which dia thus bears—the uncircumscribed reference of σωθῆσεται [“will be saved”—the force of the article (passed over by most expositors),--and, lastly, observe the coldness and jejuneness of [the interpretation, “child bearing” referring to women’s natural birth of children], it seems difficult to avoid deciding in favor of [the interpretation “by the child-bearing,” i.e., by the relation in which woman stood to the Messiah”] (Ellicott; The Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul)

“if they continue.” At this point in the sentence the verb changes from singular to plural. The problem is that since earlier the text was speaking of Eve, there is no clear indication as to who the “they” are. Interpretations vary from “Adam and Eve” to women in general. The fact
that salvation in the verse is tied both to the birth of the child and continuing in faith, this seems to be a natural reference to Adam and Eve, since salvation in the Old Testament was not a one-time event based on the New Birth, as it is after the day of Pentecost, but rather in the Old Testament salvation was based on faith (Rom. 4:1-3), but that faith had to continue through the lifetime of the person (Ezek. 33:11-20).

“good judgment.” See commentary on 2:9.

Chapter 3

3:1. “this saying is trustworthy.” When the Bible says, “this statement is trustworthy,” sometimes it is referring to the statement that was made immediately before (1 Tim. 3:1; 4:9; Tit. 3:8), and sometime it refers to what is written next (1 Tim. 1:15; 2 Tim. 2:11). Because 3:1 naturally goes with the closing part of chapter two, we have broken the chapter with verse 2 in the REV. See commentary on 1 Timothy 1:15.

3:2. “It is necessary.” (For the translation, see Lenski; Wuest, An Expanded Translation.) It is not optional that ministers be of good character. All the attributes in the list that follow, with the exception of being skillful in teaching, are character issues. They, more than any other sector of Christianity, represent Christ both to other Christians and to the world. It is important that a minister be able to function well in his office, but if he does so without also taking on the character of Christ, at the Judgment he will be disappointed (see commentary, Matt. 7:23). This list is above and beyond the character and actions of all Christians, such as the fruit of the spirit in Galatians 5, etc.

“above reproach.” The Greek word is anepileptos (#423 ἀνεπιληπτός) literally, “That which cannot be taken hold of.” Anepileptos is used of a wrestler that is so completely prepared that he cannot be grabbed and thrown by his opponent. A leader is to exhibit positive qualities that set an example, and carefully avoid behaviors that can be used against him or the ministry. As well as sinful or illegal actions, reproachful behavior includes unwise behaviors that the Adversary can use against a person. God is holy, and wants to be in relationship with people who take holiness seriously. Furthermore, through the ages unbelievers have mocked God because His people have behaved badly (cp. Rom. 2:24). God wants Himself, His leaders and His ministry to have a good reputation so they are attractive to outsiders.

“the husband of one wife.” This character issue is also spoken of in Titus 1:6 (and in 1 Tim. 3:12 is mentioned in reference to deacons). In the first century, the Greco-Roman culture was monogamous. The Jews were usually monogamous due to their custom at the time, but polygamy still occurred. Thus, a primary meaning of the verse is “not a polygamist.” However, there are other cultural overtones that must be considered in the interpretation of this verse.

Not only must a minister not have more than one wife (see the commentary on 1 Corinthians 7:2), he must not have more than one “woman.” The Greek word for “wife” and “woman” are the same (gunē #1135 γυνή), so while the most proper interpretation of the verse is “husband of one wife,” it has overtones of a leader being a “man of one woman.” In the Greco-Roman culture, men usually had more than one “woman.” For example, any slave was the sexual property of the owner, and so for the men of the house to have sexual intercourse with the household slaves was not only accepted, it was more
or less expected. Furthermore, it was the common custom that if a family had the financial means to afford an extra bedroom in the house, in Roman society a man and his wife would usually sleep apart, giving the man ample opportunity to be with the slaves. Thus, Jerome Carcopino writes: “slavery degrades and besmirches marriage if it does not wholly stamp it out” (*Daily Life in Ancient Rome*; 1968, p. 101; 164-166). Also, prostitution was common in the Roman world, and a man visiting prostitutes was not considered wrong in the society. Christianity introduced good sexual morality into the Roman world.

Thus from the culture of the time and from the scope of Scripture, it is clear that another primary meaning of this verse is that the Christian leader must be a “one woman man.” He must be faithful to his wife with his heart and eyes. Being an adulterer or have mental obsessions about other women is not acceptable behavior for a Christian leader, nor is ogling women and making inappropriate comments about their size or shape.

This verse is not forbidding singles, divorcees, or women from being leaders, even though it is written from the point of view of a man. When women are ordained, the application of this verse would be the “wife of but one husband.” Women leaders are not to be flirts, immodest dressers, teases, or sexually immoral.

Another thing that is clear from the grammar and the context is that the traits mentioned in this list refer to present behaviors, and do not include past behavior. To understand this, let us take the example of alcohol use, which comes up later in the list. A person is not disqualified from being a leader if he abused alcohol in his past. This is true for all the character traits in the list. The leader must be above reproach now, not violent now, not a novice now, and so on. It is well known that many of the best pastors are people who led troubled lives in the past. Paul was certainly violent at one time in his life, but that did not disqualify him from being an apostle and great leader. Thus, “the husband of one wife” is not forbidding a divorced person from being a minister, but rather is saying that he cannot be the husband of more than one wife now.

Many commentators disagree with that conclusion, asserting that the verse is saying that a divorced person is not eligible for leadership, a point they often substantiate by Church Fathers. However, there are Church Fathers who agree with our conclusion. Also, we must keep in mind that the later Church Fathers taught that women were inferior to men, and even believed that sexual intercourse with a woman had a deleterious effect on a man’s spirituality (which became a major reason that a few centuries after Christ the Roman Catholic Church decreed that priests must be celibate forbid them to marry). Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 7 gives examples when a divorced person can remarry, and there is no stipulation such as, “you can remarry, but you will not be able to be a leader if you do” (1 Cor. 7:15, 27, 28). Thus, Timothy and Titus are not forbidding divorcees from being in leadership.

God does make provision for divorce, although He does not like it, and would prefer that couples work out their problems. However, there are times that cannot happen and divorce occurs. Israel was so obstinate and set on sin that God finally had to divorce her and send her away (Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:8). The Churches that assert that going through a divorce disqualifies a person for ministry cannot have God as their pastor! On the other hand, if anyone thinks that God is qualified to pastor a church even though He has gone through a divorce, then His ministers who go through divorce can also be qualified to minister.

981

1 Timothy
This is one of the verses in the New Testament that elevated women in the family, Church, and society, and stood against the cultural degradation of women. It is a common Christian myth that Paul was somehow against women. Of course, given the way his writings have been mistranslated and misinterpreted, it certainly could seem Paul was against women. However, when we properly understand this verse and others in the NT about women, we can see that the NT was a Magna Carta for women, giving them rights and privileges they had never had before. By specifically saying that Christian leaders were to have only one woman in their life, it elevated the importance of women considerably. [For other verses in the NT that elevate women’s position in the culture, see the commentary on 1 Corinthians 7:2; 14:34, 35; 1 Timothy 2:12; 5:14; and 1 Peter 3:7].

In spite of the fact that verses such as 1 Timothy 3:2 elevated women, it produced significant challenges for both men and women. For the men, it clearly separated them from their non-Christian friends. The average man in the Greco-Roman culture would have thought it strange indeed not to fulfill one’s sexual desires by having sex with one’s slaves and also with prostitutes. For a Christian leader to be completely sexually monogamous caused a division, and some suspicion, between him and the non-Christian Romans around him. Christian leaders are expected to stand out from the rest, and stand against immorality even if it costs them “acceptance” in the society.

For Christian men to be monogamous in their marriages also placed the women in a difficult position. At the time of Paul, the average lifespan of a woman was in the low 30’s, around age 32. This was in large part to the fact that between 5 and 10 percent of the women died in childbirth (also, some died as a result of an attempted abortion, trying to avoid the risk of childbirth). This fact was not lost on the women of the time, and thus many of them preferred their husbands to have sex with their slaves or a prostitute rather than risk their lives in childbirth. Thus the demand that Christian leaders be completely monogamous required a lot of commitment on both the part of the husband and the wife.

“clear-minded.” (cp. also 1 Tim. 3:11). “Clear-minded” is the Greek word nēphalios (#3524 νηφάλιος) and the base meaning is temperate concerning wine. That developed into the further meaning of temperate, watchful, vigilant (all which apply to leaders, and all of which tipsy people are not). The temperate person has a clear perspective, is watchful, and has a proper orientation in life. Because in English the word “clear-minded” can refer to general sober behavior as well as one’s relation to alcohol. Since the fundamental meaning of the Greek refers to being temperate in relation to wine, we felt that “clear-minded” was a good translation.

“sensible.” The Greek word is sōphrōn (#4998 σώφρων). It means sensible, self-controlled. “Sober” (KJV) or “sober-minded” (ESV) is too often taken as “serious,” as if the person could not laugh. That is not the meaning here. Sōphrōn is used of one who follows sound reason. Thus there is no arrogant elevation or pride about himself, and no unreasonable self-hate or self-degradation. It also involves the restraint of passions (Cp. Titus 1:8).

“respectable.” The Greek word is kosmios (#2887 κόσμιος), and means orderly, decent, and refers to one who is modest, well behaved, respectable, orderly in life. It refers to a person who quietly fulfills his duties and is not disorderly, rude, arrogant, or exhibiting other self-important behaviors.

“given to hospitality.” The Greek word is philoxenos (#5382 φιλόξενος), which literally means “love to strangers.” We felt “given to hospitality” (REV) was a better
translation than “hospitable” (NIV) which seems too much like “friendly.” It is more than “friendly,” because it involves opening your home and life to others. Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon points out that the meaning includes being generous to guests, and Friberg’s lexicon says, “kind to strangers.”

The Roman world was vulgar and dangerous, and it was important for Christians to open their homes and lives to one another for mutual support, protection, and even outreach. Every Christian is an ambassador for the Lord (2 Cor. 5:20), and one of the ways we win people is by being “given to hospitality.” For more on hospitality, see commentary on Romans 12:13.

“skillful in teaching.” The Greek word is didaktikos (διδακτικός), and means “skillful in teaching.” It is important to note that this is the only thing on the list of qualifications for an overseer that is a skill or ability. Everything else on the list involves one’s personal character. Character counts with God! However, it is important for those who are going to oversee others that they learn to teach well. This requires meekness, because teaching does not always come easy to people, and many people think they are far better at it than they are. It is very important that teachers receive feedback about their teachings to be the best teachers possible. Being skilled in teaching also requires grounding in the Word of God. The overseer must be grounded in Scripture to the end that he or she can teach the truth and refute error (Titus 1:9).

3:3. “not an excessive drinker.” The Greek is me paroinos, (me is “not,” and πάροινος, addicted to wine, a drunkard), which means not an excessive drinker or drunk (cp. 1 Tim. 3:8; Titus 1:7). Thus, not an excessive drinker. Since Ephesians says not to get drunk, drunkenness is wrong for any Christian. Thus this does not specifically refer to drunkenness. There are times when drinking in any amount causes behavior to become less godly, more sarcastic and quick tempered, etc., or it may just be a bad example at the time. Especially among leaders, all alcoholic consumption should be watched closely. One reason for this is that Christian leaders can be called upon in a moment’s notice to pray, prophesy, heal, witness, etc. (cp. Proverbs 31:4-7). This requirement should be taken in the “wider” sense as well as the “narrower” sense. God mentions alcohol here, but surely no one would suggest that because other “mind effecting” substances were not mentioned that they are okay with God. Since the Christian minister is to be available to serve at any time, in the larger scope of Scripture this directive applies to any “mind effecting” substance. For example, a Christian leader would not get “high” on drugs just because God did not specifically mention it in Timothy or Titus.

“Not violent.” The Greek is me plektes (me is “not” and πλήκτης), and it means “not ready with a blow,” i.e., not contentious or quarrelsome. The leader is not one who puts others down with words or fists. A leader is not a bully or “hard” leader, and does not have a belligerent attitude because of his or her position.

“reasonable.” The Greek word is epieikes (ἐπιεικής), which is an adjective, (occurs Phil. 4:5; 1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 3:2; James 3:17; 1 Pet. 2:18). The noun is epieikeia (ἐπιείκεια; occurring Acts 24:4; 2 Cor. 10:1). R. C. H. Lenski writes, “[I wish] that we had a good English equivalent for this noble term!” (Cp. his note on Philippians 4:5).

The concepts of “moderation, forbearance, gentleness, “sweet reasonableness” all touch a side of the full meaning of this word. The meaning is yielding, not insisting on one’s legal rights to the end that the legal rights become moral wrongs.
R. Trench (Synonyms of the New Testament) writes: “Epieikeia refers to the sort of moderation that recognizes that it is impossible for formal laws to anticipate and provide for all possible cases and that the asserting of legal rights can be pushed into moral wrongs, so the highest right can in practice prove to be the greatest injustice.” As to the accusation that someone would be overly “reasonable” or yielding to evil, Lenski writes, “Only perverted reason would think that “yieldingness” might include a yielding of truth to error, of right to wrong, of virtue to vice and crime” (Lenski: note on Philippians 4:5). There are times when the “rules” obviously need to be bent to minister the grace of God effectively. This word covers exactly that situation—the true leader is “reasonable,” not rigid.

“not quarrelsome.” The Greek word is amachos (#269 ἄμαχος), meaning not always wanting to pick a fight. Leaders must be positive and constructive in their thoughts and actions. The world wants to set Christians against each other and divide us. Yes, there are Christians who are wrong in what they do or teach, but the true minister of God point that out without unduly dwelling on it or unnecessarily denigrating someone.

“not a lover of money.” The Greek is aphilarguros (#866 ἀφιλάργυρος) from “a” which is “not;” philos, which is “like or love,” and arguros “silver.” It is not loving money. The godly overseer has a good perspective on money. God is his sufficiency, not money. It can be easy for the shrewd overseer to “pump” people for money, and a godly overseer never does this.

3:4. “one who is leading his own house well.” The minister’s family is always to be his or her primary responsibility. Running a family is difficult, and requires a lot of time and energy. Running the church is not to be an escape from family responsibilities, or an excuse to put them on a back burner. The minister is attentive to his own family such that things are not out of control in his household. A leader will generally lead people the way he leads the people in his house. If he is a dictator in his house, he will usually eventually be one in his ministry, and if he provides no effective leadership in his house then that will probably show up in his ministry also.

“having his children in subjection.” This point is made about the children of leaders here and in Titus 1:6. Children that are disobedient, disrespectful, or generally out of control reflect on any person’s ministry. The way a person deals with his children will almost certainly be the way he deals with people in the Church. However, care must be taken not to go overboard with this with older children. In the Bible times a girl was usually married and on her own by her mid-teens and a boy by the late teens. It is common to see children who were well behaved until 14 or 15 become rebellious at 17 or 18. Just because an older teen is rebelling against parental authority does not mean the parents are disqualified for the ministry, although it might, depending on the circumstances. On the other hand, there are men and women who just cannot seem to handle their smaller children, and the chances are that if they allow themselves to be pushed around by a self-willed child, they will be pushed around by strong willed people in the Church.

3:5. “indeed.” The Greek word is de. In this context, “indeed” is a good translation, as it is in K. Wuest, An Expanded Translation. Many versions translate it as “for,” and a couple do not translate it at all (cp. HCSB; NIV).

3:6. “not a novice.” The Greek is me neophutos (me is “not,” and #3504 νεόφυτος) and it means not newly planted, not a neophyte. There are many temptations and hardships in
Christianity, and even more so in Christian leadership. A leader should be one who has been tested and stayed faithful over a period of time, and in hard times. There is just no effective way to do this quickly. Many prospective leaders do well as long as they are contributing and not leading, but begin to abuse their authority or do not stand up to the pressure when given leadership. Other people lead well for a short time, but have no longevity. There is simply no way to tell how a person is going to do over time except that he is tested over time. Thus ministers are not ordained when their ministries are first noticed in the Body, but rather after they have been functioning in their ministry for a period of time.

“the Slanderer.” This is “the Devil.” The Greek is *diabolos* (#1228 διάβολος). The Greek word *diabolos* means “slanderer,” the one who slanders others, and that is a primary characteristic of the Devil. He has no regard for a person’s reputation or the illicit means he uses to discredit and destroy people. Slander is a primary tactic of the Devil. [For information on the names of the Devil, see Appendix 14: “Names of the Slanderer”].

3:7. “he must have good reputation among those who are outside.” Sometimes a minister will treat one group of people well, but others with disdain or disrespect. Ministers need to be people who manifest the fruit of the spirit (cp. Gal. 5:22, 23), such that they are well thought of by people outside their immediate “group.” This discourages “cult” mentality, and encourages evangelism.


3:9. “holding the sacred secret of the faith.” The Administration of Grace (Eph. 3:2), God’s Sacred Secret (Eph. 3:9 Rotherham), is one of the greatest things God has ever done for mankind. God sent His son to die so that over and above the gift of everlasting life available to all mankind, we in the Church can be part of Christ’s very Body. We Christians have the gift of holy spirit sealed in us, permanent salvation, nine manifestations, are joint heirs with Israel, and more. What we have is so awesome and amazing that had Satan known it, he would not have crucified Jesus (1 Cor. 2:8). Yet today the Sacred Secret is practically unknown. The NIV does not even hint at the fact that ministers are to hold the Sacred Secret, translating it by the phrase “deep truths.” The administration of the sacred secret is very important to the Lord, and leaders are charged to keep hold of it. To be “holding” it means more than just knowing about it. “Holding” is the common Greek word, *echo* (#2192 ἔχω), and it means to have or to hold. Here, as in Philippians 1:7 and John 14:21, it means “to have in one’s heart, to keep in mind” (see Thayer). Leaders are to teach about it, and should also hold the Sacred Secret...
by walking in the power available to them and setting an example by boldly operating the manifestations of the spirit. [For more information on the “Sacred Secret” and the Administration of Grace, see Ephesians 3:9.]

3:10. “blameless.” The Greek is anegkletos (#410 ἀνέγκλητος), which means “without legal charge.” It is very important that a minister live according to the laws of the land. A minister is not to risk getting caught breaking the law and thus bringing a charge against himself and also besmirching Christianity.


3:13. “that is rooted in Christ Jesus.” The Greek texts reads, “the faith in Christ Jesus,” and the word “in” (en; #1722 ἐν) here refers to a relationship. The phrase could be translated, “the faith in connection with Christ Jesus,” or “the faith connected with Christ Jesus,” or something similar. The point is that it is the Faith [the Christian Faith], the Faith that is connected with Christ, not some other Faith, like the worship of the Roman gods. For more on en, see commentary on Ephesians 1:3.

3:16. “by common confession” (NASB; Frieberg). Because the thing in question is agreed upon by all, it becomes, by extension, “unquestionable” or “undeniable,” but the root idea is that it is by agreement of all. In this case, the facts about Jesus were, in the first century Christian world, by consent of all. It is possible, and believed by many scholars, that there was a well known hymn with these lyrics.

“sacred secret.” We translate the Greek word musterion (#3466 μυστήριον) as “sacred secret” because that is what musterion actually refers to: a secret in the religious or sacred realm. [For more information on the “Sacred Secret” and the Administration of Grace, see Ephesians 3:9.]

“he.” There are some Greek manuscripts that read, “God appeared in the flesh.” This reading of some Greek manuscripts has passed into some English versions, and the King James Version is one of them. Trinitarian scholars admit, however, that these Greek texts were altered by scribes in favor of the Trinitarian position. The reading of the earliest and best manuscripts is not “God” but rather “he who.” Almost all the modern versions have the verse as “the mystery of godliness is great, which was manifest in the flesh,” or some close equivalent.

Bruce Metzger writes, quite technically, about the change from “which” to “God” in some Greek manuscripts:

The reading which, on the basis of external evidence and transcriptional probability, best explains the rise of the others is ὁς [“who,” “which”). It is supported by the earliest and best uncials (א* א* vid C* G* G\b) as well as by 33 365 442 2127 syr hmg pal goth ethpp Origen lat Epiphanius Jerome Theodore Euthérius acc. to Theodoret Cyril Cyril acc. to Pe-Occumenius Liberatus. Furthermore, since the neuter relative pronoun ὁ must have arisen as a scribal correction of ὁς (to bring the relative into concord with μυστήριον [mystery]), the witnesses that read ὁ (D* it d. g. 61. 86 vg Ambrosiaster Marius Victorinus Hilary Pelagius Augustine) also indirectly presuppose ὁς as the earlier reading. The Textus Receptus reads θεός [God], with ες (this corrector is of the twelfth century) A δ C δ D δ K L Π Ψ 81 330 614 1739 Byz Lect Gregory-Nyssa Didymus Chrysostom Theodoret Euthaliius and later Fathers. Thus, no uncial (in the first hand) earlier than the eighth
or ninth century (Ψ) supports θεός [God]; all ancient versions presuppose ὸς or ὅ; and no patristic writer prior to the last third of the fourth century testifies to the reading θεός. The reading θεός arose either (a) accidentally, through the misreading of θc as ὸc, or (b) deliberately, either to supply a substantive for the following six verbs, or, with less probability, to provide greater dogmatic precision” [in other words, to more directly support the doctrine of the Trinity]. (Bruce Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament).

When properly translated, 1 Timothy 3:16 actually argues against the Trinity. It all fits with what we know of the man, Jesus Christ. If Jesus were God, this section of Scripture would have been the perfect place to say so. Instead of saying that “he was made known in the flesh,” we would expect to see some phrase such as, “God was incarnate,” or “God came in the flesh,” or “he came as true God and true man,” etc. But nothing like that occurs. Instead, the section testifies to what non-Trinitarians believe—that Jesus was a man, begotten by the Father, and that he was taken up into glory.

“made known.” The Greek verb is phaneroō (#5319 φανερῶ), and it is in the passive voice. It means, “to become manifest, to become known, to be made known, to appear: to be plainly recognized, to be thoroughly understood (see Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon). Jesus Christ was the plan of God, and he “became flesh” at his conception. Until then, what people knew about Jesus was what they read about the promised Messiah in the Bible, and frankly, they misunderstood a lot. They did not know there would be a virgin birth (see commentary on Luke 1:34). They did not understand how his ministry would unfold, so his mother and relatives thought he was out of his mind (Mark 3:21). Whenever Jesus spoke of his death or resurrection, even the apostles and disciples who were close to him were confused and did not know what he meant (see commentary on Luke 18:34). Similarly, they did not understand what Jesus was talking about when he spoke of his ascension into heaven (John 14:5; 16:17-19).

It was when Jesus was “in the flesh” that he was finally made known and more clearly understood, and even more so after his resurrection. The meaning of phaneroō includes his appearing in the flesh, that is, his going from the plan of God to actually existing as a person, and it also includes his “becoming known” for who he really was, instead of there being a lot of vague and even false ideas of who he would be as the Messiah.

Trinitarians teach that Jesus’ appearing in the flesh refers to the incarnation, but the word phaneroō does not have to refer to that. It can simply mean that Jesus was unknown before, and then appeared (via divine conception) and became known.

“declared righteous in spirit” (cp. Young’s Literal Translation). Jesus was pronounced righteous as to his spirit, his attitude, his emotions, and the life they produced.

Chapter 4

4:1. “paying attention.” The participle can also be causal, so many versions translate it by the word “by” (cp. NRSV, “by paying attention;” cp. CJB; ESV; RSV). The point is
that the people’s involvement with evil draws them away from the faith, and as they are
drawn from the faith, the “dark side” becomes more and more attractive.

“things taught.” The Greek word is *didaskalia* (#1319 διδασκαλία), a noun, and it
has two primary meanings: It is used of the act of teaching or instruction (as if it was a
verb), and it is also used for what is taught, i.e., the doctrine or material that was
presented. In this verse we felt bringing *didaskalia* into English as “things taught” was
better than either “teachings” or “doctrines.” We felt the phrase “things taught” included
anything taught by demons, while “doctrines” was too limiting. [For more on *didaskalia*
see commentary on 1 Tim. 4:13].

4:2. “liars.” The Greek noun is *pseudologos* (#5573 ψευδόλογος), those who speak
(logos) lies (pseudo). It is important that we understand that these people are “liars” from
God’s perspective, that is, they are not speaking what is actually true. This verse is not
saying that the people themselves know they are lying. Many of them are very sincere
and believe what they say is the truth, but it is not. It is because people often speak “lies,”
falsehood, without knowing it, that Christians must be so schooled in the truth of God.
Sincerity is no guarantee for truth, and Christians must not be deceived by sincerity.

4:6. “teaching.” The Greek word is *didaskalia* (#1319 διδασκαλία), a noun, and it has
two primary meanings: It is used of the act of teaching or instruction (as if it was a verb),
and it is also used for what is taught, i.e., the doctrine or material that was presented. In
this verse we felt bringing *didaskalia* into English as “teaching” was better than
“doctrine,” because the subjects the verse is speaking about need to be covered by more
than just “doctrine,” i.e., more than just is written down as commands, but “sound
teaching,” which involves logic and logical deductions from all God has given us. Of
course, sound “doctrine” is the fundamental basis for sound teaching. [For more on *didaskalia*
see commentary on 1 Tim. 4:13].

4:7. “But refuse profane and old wives’ myths.” In Christian culture, the women hold
together the social fabric of the church. In the Greek culture, there were “old women”
who kept many of the myths alive by passing them down (Cp. Robertson).

“in godliness.” This phrase can have two different meanings, both of them important.
The first and most basic is that we need to train ourselves to be godly (cp. NIV). We do
not “just become” godly. We have to work at it, one thing at a time. The phrase also
means, train ourselves “in” godliness, that is, even when we are godly in some aspect of
our lives, our training to be like Christ goes on. We are never totally where we want to
be.

4:8. “bodily training is profitable for a little while.” Bodily exercise is of some good,
and that is correct. In the biblical culture, most people got plenty of exercise, and many
were actually hungry or even starving. In the Greek culture, those who exercised did so to
excel in some area, such as running, wrestling, javelin throw, etc., or they exercised as a
form of religious asceticism, to purify themselves in some way (Cp. Col. 2:23). In any
case, bodily training was profitable for a little while, and it is contrasted with godliness,
which profits in all things, both in this life (for a little while), and in the life to come.

4:9. “This statement is trustworthy.” See commentary on 1 Timothy 1:15.
4:10. “who is the savior of all people, especially of those who believe.” God is the
ultimate savior of all people. He is the Author of the plan of salvation, and He sent the
Christ and then later raised him from the dead. This verse in Timothy has caused some
confusion because people have taken it to mean that God saves everyone, which it does
not say. It simply says God is the savior for everyone, meaning that if anyone is going to be saved, then God is going to be the one to save them, which He does via His Son, Jesus Christ. The second part of the verse, “especially of those who believe,” is added because believers are the ones who have accepted the offer of salvation from the God their ultimate savior, and thus will actually be saved. It helps to keep in mind that biblically, we are not “saved” yet. We are said to be saved (cp. Eph. 2:8) because it is promised and guaranteed to those who believe. But in fact what we have now is only the promise of salvation. That is why Romans 13:11 says our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed, and why the helmet is called the “hope of salvation” (1 Thess. 5:8). It is why Romans 10:9 says that if you confess and believe [aorist tense, indicating a one time even, usually in the past), you “will be saved” (future tense). If you have confessed and believed, you “will be saved” when God saves people in the future and we get our new bodies and sickness and death are no more.

4:13. “to public reading.” The context of this verse indicates that Paul meant public reading. At a time when often only a small percentage of the people could read (perhaps 10%), it was very important to read the Bible to the people in the congregation. This was why there was public reading of the Scriptures in the synagogue, as Jesus did in Nazareth (Luke 4:16ff). Several Scriptures mention public reading: Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27. Revelation 1:3 says “he who reads and those who hear” are blessed. “He” would read, because one person would read, and “those” would hear because usually more than one person would be being read to. This is an example of how a strictly literal translation of the Bible can be misleading. When the average modern Christian reads the phrase, “give yourself to reading,” he does not think of public reading out loud, because almost no one does that today. Instead he thinks of dedicating himself to his own personal study. Of course we have to study the Bible to understand it, so personal study is very important, but it is not what this verse is talking about.

“teaching.” The Greek word is didaskalia (#1319 διδασκαλία), a noun, and it has two primary meanings: It is used of the act of teaching or instruction (as if it was a verb), and it is also used for what is taught, i.e., the doctrine or material that was presented. Interestingly, we use “teaching” in English in the same way. If, in the middle of the day, someone calls a friend who is a schoolteacher, she may hear, “I can’t talk now, I’m teaching.” In that context, “teaching” is being used as a verb” the teacher is in the act of teaching. If, on the other hand, the two are walking out of church, one might say to the other, “What did you think of the teaching?” In that context she is using “teaching” as a noun, and what she means is, “What did you think about what we were taught?” It is the context that determines whether didaskalia is the act of teaching or the subject matter that was taught.

Didaskalia is used 21 times in the NT. One of the problems we have in translating from the Greek to the English is that in almost every use of didaskalia, we have to separate the act of teaching from what is taught (the doctrine). Most English versions use “teaching” for the act of teaching, and “doctrine” or “what is taught” for the subject matter that is taught. But in Greek there are times when the Scripture verse can easily refer to both the teaching and what is taught, (this is a kind of amphibologia (cp. Bullinger, Figures of Speech. An amphibologia occurs when a word means two things, and both are meant in the passage). A good example is Titus 1:9, where we encourage with “sound didaskalia.” In that verse, both “teaching” and “doctrine” fit perfectly,
because we encourage with sound teaching (not all teaching is “doctrine”), and we encourage with sound “doctrine.” The Greek reader instinctively sees both meanings in the word, but that is not true of English, where we usually have to make a distinction.

In this verse we felt “teaching” was better than “doctrine” because “teaching” fit better in the list of the active things: public reading and exhortation.

4:14. “by prophecy.” The word “by” is from the Greek preposition dia (#1223 διά) which has many different meanings according to the context, one referring to attendant circumstances (cp. BDAG Greek-English lexicon). In this case it seems clear that the prophecies did not confer the ministry, but were a public recognition due to the ministry that Timothy had already demonstrated in his life. [For more information on Timothy’s ordination, see commentary on 2 Timothy 1:6].

4:16. “teaching.” The Greek word is didaskalia (#1319 διδασκαλία), a noun, and it has two primary meanings: It is used of the act of teaching or instruction (as if it was a verb), and it is also used for what is taught, i.e., the doctrine or material that was presented. In this verse we felt bringing didaskalia into English as “teaching” was better than “doctrine,” because the subjects the verse is speaking about need to be covered by more than just “doctrine,” i.e., more than just is written down as commands, but “sound teaching,” which involves logic and logical deductions from all God has given us. Of course, sound “doctrine” is the fundamental basis for sound teaching. [For more on didaskalia see commentary on 1 Tim. 4:13]. In this verse, Paul writes about “the teaching.” Some versions translate the verse as if the Greek text said, “your teaching,” but that is not what it says. Of course Timothy is supposed to pay close attention to what he teaches, but this verse is also commanding him to pay attention to what is being taught in all the churches he oversees. A leader is not just responsible to God for what he teaches in his church, but what everyone teaches in his church.

Chapter 5

5:10. “hospitality.” The Greek word here is xenodocheo (#3580 ξενοδοχεύω). It is partially comprised of the Greek word for “stranger or guest friend,” xenos (#3581 ξένος). The word designates hospitality particularly to those who are not immediately within one’s private circle: “to receive and show hospitality to a stranger, that is, someone who is not regarded as a member of the extended family or a close friend” (Louw-Nida). However, this does not necessarily refer to “total strangers,” as a xenos could very well be an acquaintance.

“diligently pursued.” The Greek is epakoloutho (#1872 ἐπακολουθέω), and it can mean to follow after, or follow closely after (if it is used that way here, it would be idiomatic, like a disciple following closely after the teacher), however, it is more likely that in this case it takes on the meaning of “devote yourself to” or “diligently pursue.”

5:14. “rule the household.” The Greek word is oikodespotes, (#3616 οἰκοδεσπότης). It is a compound word built from oikos (house, household) and despotes (#1203 δέσποτης), which means, “lord, master, owner.” God is referred to as a despotes in Luke 2:29 and Acts 4:24, and Jesus is in 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 1:4; Revelation 6:10, and likely in 2 Timothy 2:21. In 1 Timothy 6:1 and 2; Titus 2:9; 1 Peter 2:18; a despotes is a slave owner. When oikos and despotes are combined into oikodespotes, the word refers to one who is to rule
a household or manage family affairs. This is a very powerful word, and it has been largely ignored by the Church, which has historically been committed to the teaching that the man is the head of the house, and the woman must obey him unconditionally.

To get the truth on any subject, we must be careful to listen to what God is teaching us in the Scripture, because Scripture does not contradict itself. The Word of God does say that the husband is to be the head of the wife (Eph. 5:23; 1 Cor. 11:3). However, it also says that there is neither male nor female in Christ (Gal. 3:28), and that we are to submit to each other (Eph. 5:21), which indicates that there must be spheres of responsibility in the Church and in the family. 1 Timothy 5:14 lays out part of the sphere of responsibility of the woman, in that she is to rule the house. The man has responsibilities, among other things, to provide and protect the family, and to lead it spiritually. A man who lets his wife or family go without spiritual leadership is not acting as head of the woman and family.

In most ancient societies, the men were outside the house working during the day, while the woman was at home with the children, taking care of them and the house. In that context, it was clear the woman was to “rule the house.” However, this verse does not say “rule the house while the man is at work” or otherwise gone. God has placed it in the hearts of women to care about and oversee the house in a way that most men do not (there are always exceptions), and God has given women the authority to rule that matches their desire to have their house a certain way. Thus, it is not unusual for women to want certain furniture, certain colors, and specific ways for things to be done in the house. It is godly for the members of the house, including the husband, to submit to those desires. Of course, the authority to rule the house comes with responsibilities. Just as God and Christ are also despotes, and have a responsibility to do things in a way that provides for the welfare of those in their care, so the woman has the responsibility to run the household in a way that cares for those who live in the house, and interweaves graciously with the responsibility of the husband to be the family head.

It is worth noting that the full impact of this verse has sometimes not been seen due to the way that oikodespoteō is translated. Translations in some of the English versions such as “guide the house,” “keep house,” or “be the mistress of the house,” do not really communicate forcefully enough the authority and responsibility of the wife when it comes to her house.

**“the Opposer.”** This is one of the many names for the Slanderer (the Devil). God uses many different names to describe His arch enemy, the Slanderer. The very next verse, 5:15, uses a different name, the Adversary. The Opposer is a very good name for the Slanderer because he always opposes God. [For more on the names of the Slanderer, see Appendix 14: “Names of the Slanderer”.]

**5:15. “the Adversary.”** The Greek word for Adversary is Satanas (#4567 Σατανᾶς), which has been transliterated into “Satan” in most versions. This causes the meaning of the word, which is important, to be lost. See commentary at 1:20.

**5:17. “teaching.”** The Greek word is didaskalia (#1319 διδασκαλία), a noun, and it has two primary meanings: It is used of the act of teaching or instruction (as if it was a verb), and it is also used for what is taught, i.e., the doctrine or material that was presented. In this verse we felt bringing didaskalia into English as “teaching” was better than “doctrine,” because the subjects the verse is speaking about need to be covered by more than just “doctrine,” i.e., more than just is written down as commands, but “sound
teaching,” which involves logic and logical deductions from all God has given us. Of course, sound “doctrine” is the fundamental basis for sound teaching. [For more on didaskalia see commentary on 1 Tim. 4:13]. Good teaching does not just happen. It is the result of diligent study and prayer. It is a “labor of love.”


5:19. “except on the basis of two or three witnesses.” There are two primary ways this verse has been interpreted. The first, but least accepted, is that an accusation should not be received against an elder except “in the presence of” two or three witnesses. In other words, before Timothy (or any other leader), could hear an accusation against an elder, he would have to gather two or more witnesses to make sure the case was heard accurately. This does not seem to be what the verse is saying. The issue does not seem to be how clearly the case is heard, but rather, how decisively the case is made, which leads us to the second and far more prevalent translation of the verse, including the REV. It was standard practice in Jewish law that there had to be two witnesses to any act before it could be conclusively adjudicated on (Nu. 35:30; Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1; Heb. 10:28).

This is to prevent malicious accusers from tearing the Church apart. If an elder does something offensive, the individual wronged is to go to the person and work out the problem. If there is no solution, he or she is to take others (Matthew 18:15-17). At that point there would be witnesses. This is to be a general practice. It is not to be a law that allows for unrighteousness to continue. The Bible is not against common sense, and one of the requirements of leaders is that they are to be “reasonable,” and we write in the note on 1 Timothy 3:3 above:

“The concepts of “moderation, forbearance, gentleness, sweet reasonableness” all touch a side of the full meaning of this word. The meaning is yielding, not insisting on one’s legal rights to the end that the legal rights become moral wrongs.”

If a leader had case after case where usually credible people said that they were spoken or acted against one on one by a certain individual in leadership, but that the leader had denied what he had done when the wronged person went to him to rectify the situation, and again when the individual went back to the leader with witnesses about both the original problem and the denial, then “reason” would dictate that the accused leader must be doing something wrong, or so many people would not witness to the same fault in his life. Leaders are to have a good report among the people, and when that ceases to be the case, the leader will cease to be effective and should step out of leadership, or be removed by others.

5:21. “out of.” This is not the Greek word ek but kata. The Greeks way of speaking was to say, “do nothing according to (kata) partiality,” but we would not word it that way in English. Hence, we translated this phrase, “do nothing out of partiality,” which accords with modern English usage. The “partiality” spoken of in this verse refers to the honoring and rebuking of elders from the immediate context (vv. 19-20). We are not to pay double honor only to ministers we particularly like, nor are we to overlook the sins of those in leadership whom we are well disposed towards. Instead, the solemn charge of honoring and rebuking is to be kept without prejudice.

5:22. “and thus share in the sins of others.” Compare NASB and NET translations. The laying on of hands describes the implementing of a leadership position in the Church; this verse falls in the context of eldership and moral requirements for leaders (see entry on
We are instructed not to lay hands on anyone too hastily, lest we share in the responsibility for their sins (cp. NASB’s translation); that is, if we establish a morally corrupt leader by neglecting the requirements laid out in chapter 3 or not first testing them to be proved beyond reproach (1 Tim. 3:10), then we heap upon ourselves a portion of the responsibility for the damage they will cause the people of God and the name of Christ. This is reminiscent of the spiritual Watchman God speaks of in Ezekiel 3:17-21; 33:2-9. In order for a watchman to “keep pure” and not share in the other man’s transgression, he had to speak what God had commanded him to say to the one in sin. If he did not speak against their sin, but let them go merrily on their way, then God charged the Watchmen also with the blame. So it is with elders who lay hands on those to put them into leadership positions. If they do not hold to the requirements of 1 Timothy 3 and rebuke those who sin (5:20), they share in the sins of that leader.

5:23. “No longer drink only water.” It was customary to drink wine in the Roman world, so it is worth asking why Timothy apparently did not drink it, particularly when the water-only diet was obviously hurting his health. The answer seems to be apparent from reading Ephesians. Timothy was in Ephesus, and the Ephesian church had a problem with drinking. Of the seven Church Epistles, Ephesians is the only one that mentions being drunk: “And do not be drunk with wine, which leads to reckless actions....”

Timothy had apparently tried to set a good example to the Ephesians by not drinking wine at all, in spite of the ill effects it had on him. Paul corrects him, and tells him to go back to drinking some wine. This should be a good lesson for leaders. It often happens that leaders want so badly for their congregation to live righteous lives that they abstain from things that never needed to be abstained from in the first place, but so many people were being abusive that the leader thought abstinence was the best course. While there are situations in which that is the case, it is usually better to teach people to obey God, which includes moderation in most things, and allow them to be responsible before the Lord for their own lives. It is often better to set the example that moderation is both godly and possible than to simply abstain.

5:24. “[their sins] follow after them.” This verse teaches a great truth especially helpful for leaders in the Body of Christ to understand—for this is in the context of eldership (5:17-25). Paul is talking about the administering of leadership roles in the church. He has already laid out the moral requirements for leadership positions (3:1-14). Here in chapter five he is addressing the protocol for when a practicing elder fails to meet the mark (5:19-21) and what to look for when admitting new people into leadership by the “laying on of hands” (v. 22). All leaders are to be held accountable to the same moral standard: “observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing out of partiality” (v. 21). Thus, the word “judgment” here in verse 24 does not refer to God’s Day of Judgment but rather the judgment we must make about others when considering their qualifications. R. C. H. Lenski points out that, as with any leader who picks others to serve, “Timothy is obliged to render [judgments] when he is accepting or rejecting applicants for the eldership.” Only with all this context in mind can we see the application of this verse for leaders. Some people’s sins go out before them, like a trumpet declaring them unfit for representing the Church in a leadership role, but with others, their sins follow after them into their office of leadership, and like good works (v. 25) they cannot remain hidden forever. In such a case we must “reprove them in the sight of all” (v. 20).
It is essential for the health and growth of the Christian Church that when leaders are chosen to lead the flock of God, these men and women are well qualified, spiritual, Christ-like people. Weak, self-willed, and sinful leaders hurt the Church both directly, by hurting God’s people, and indirectly, by making Christianity a laughingstock or object of ridicule to others. Leaders have such a huge impact on the Church that it is irresponsible for one leader to bring another person into leadership in the Church too quickly, without doing due diligence about the person. Thus the Word of God exhorts leaders to not lay hands hastily on anyone, because if a leader does that he is partly responsible (he “partakes of”) the sins of the other (v. 22).

Chapter 6

6:1. “masters.” The Greek is despotēs (#1203 δεσπότης) means master or lord, and it refers to someone who has legal control and authority over others, such as subjects or slaves (cp. 1 Tim. 6:1; Titus 2:9). It is used both as a title for God (Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24), and a title for Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 1:4). See commentary on Luke 2:29.

“doctrine.” The Greek word is didaskalia (#1319 διδασκαλία), a noun, and it has two primary meanings: It is used of the act of teaching or instruction (as if it was a verb), and it is also used for what is taught, i.e., the doctrine or material that was presented. In this verse we felt “doctrine” was better than “teaching,” because the subject is about what is taught, not the way it is taught. Unbelievers mock Christians because of their beliefs and doctrine. For more on didaskalia see commentary on 1 Tim. 4:13).

“defamed.” The Greek verb blasphēmeō (#987 βλασφημεῖω) means showing disrespect to a person or deity, and/or harming his, her, or its reputation. This verse is an example of how not only God, but right doctrine, can be defamed. [For more on blasphēmeō, see commentary on Matt. 9:3].


6:4. “defaming speech.” The Greek noun is blasphēmia (#988 βλασφημία; pronounced blas-fay-me'-ah), and was used of someone speaking against another. The primary meaning as it was used in the Greek culture was showing disrespect to a person or deity, and/or harming his, her, or its reputation. [For more on blasphēmia, see commentary on Matt. 9:3].

6:9. “are determined.” The Greek is boulomai (#1014 βούλομαι; pronounced boo-lo-may), and it means to have a purpose, an intent; to plan, to desire something. It means more than thelō, “want,” but to combine that desire with purpose. Thus here it refers to people who are determined to be rich.

“ruin.” See commentary on “ruin” in 1 Corinthians 5:5.

6:12. “life in the Age to come.” This is the everlasting life that begins with the new Messianic Age, the Millennial Kingdom. [See commentary on this phrase in Appendix 2: “Life in the Age to Come”].

6:15. “He will bring about.” God is the “he.” God will bring about the return of Christ at its proper time.

6:18. “fellowshipping.” The Greek is koinōnikos (#2843 κοινωνικός), it is the adjective of the noun koinonia, and occurs only here. Lenski is right-on when he writes: “Many
regard this as a synonym of the preceding [generous]. ... Others find some difference and include in the giving also friendliness, inclination, and the like. We are pleased to note that Wohlenberg has presented a more accurate meaning of the word. The word means “fellowshipping,” ready to fellowship and actually doing so. The adjective, the noun, and the verb have the same meaning. ... The Christian man is to be in fellowship with all his Christian brethren, ...."