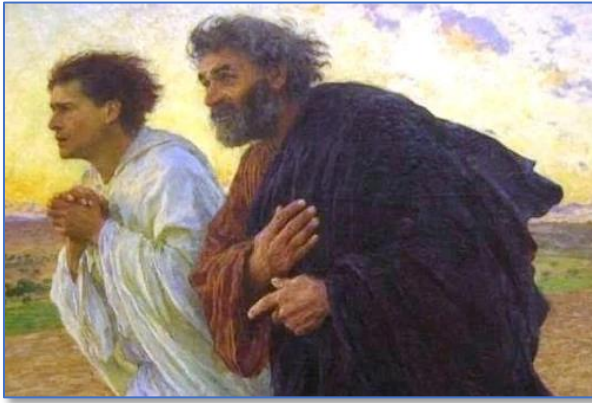


1-2 Timothy – Introduction



About Timothy

The first Biblical mention of Timothy is in Acts 16:1. Paul met Timothy during his second missionary journey at Timothy's hometown of Lystra. The exact location of ancient Lystra is not known. The town was a Roman colony somewhere in the region of Galatia in what is now south-central Turkey. Timothy's grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice were messianic Jews living in Lystra when Paul and Silas arrived there around 50 AD. Timothy's father was a Gentile, but little else is known about him. It is very likely that Timothy's father was

neither a Christian nor a Jewish convert. Otherwise, Paul would almost certainly have mentioned Timothy's father's faith along with his mother's and grandmother's in 2 Timothy 1:5.

Timothy's own faith was firmly grounded through his mother's and grandmother's teaching, but he had apparently not received the Holy Spirit until Paul arrived and laid hands on him (2 Timothy 1:6). Although he was apparently still quite young, Timothy then accompanied Paul and Silas on their mission.

NOTE – Luke also joined the group just before they crossed over from Asia Minor to Macedonia. We can infer this by Luke's change from using "they and them" in his narrative prior to Acts 16:11 to using "we and us" afterward.

Timothy journeyed and worked with Paul for over a decade, often serving as Paul's emissary to the churches in Greece and Asia Minor while Paul ministered to other churches. Timothy accompanied Paul for the establishment of the church at Ephesus where they ministered together for two years about 52-53 AD. After Paul was imprisoned, Timothy took on a larger role ministering to the churches they had established together throughout the region. The last mention of Timothy in Acts is found in chapter 20 as Paul was returning from his third missionary journey. Timothy and some others had gone ahead and waited for Paul at Troas on the western tip of Asia Minor. Timothy likely remained with Paul as he returned to Jerusalem where he was arrested and eventually sent to Rome for trial. We can infer that Timothy continued with Paul during at least some part of his two-year house arrest in Rome about 60-62 AD from the statement in Hebrews 13:23 that Timothy had been released. Timothy returned to Ephesus from Rome sometime before Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy from Rome about 62-64 AD. Church tradition holds that Timothy became the leader (bishop) of the Ephesian church, and that he was beaten to death at Ephesus in 97 AD while trying to intervene against a pagan festival. However, there is no Biblical evidence to this effect.

About Paul's Pastoral Epistles

Paul's two letters to Timothy and his letter to Titus are known as "pastoral" epistles. They are distinct from Paul's other letters (except Philemon) in that they are addressed to specific individuals rather than entire congregations. All of Paul's letters contain sometimes lengthy doctrinal instruction and exhortation, but the pastoral epistles also contain specific instructions for church leaders regarding how they are to minister to their flocks. It is unclear whether Paul intended for the recipients of these pastoral epistles to share them with others inside and outside the congregations they led, but Timothy and Titus evidently found such value in Paul's letters that they were moved by God's Spirit to make the contents public. Praise God they did, so that Christian believers and particularly those in church

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leadership positions nearly two thousand years later may also benefit from the wisdom Paul shared with Timothy and Titus.

Paul wrote his first pastoral epistle to Timothy sometime during or right after Paul's first house arrest in Rome after Timothy had left Rome for Ephesus. Of course, both Paul and Timothy were well familiar with the church and community at Ephesus, having ministered there together for two years when the church was first established some ten years earlier. So, they both knew where all the skeletons in the Ephesian closets were hidden. Furthermore, several heresies had arisen throughout all the churches in the three decades since Jesus' ascension. Paul addressed these in his epistles including his first letter to Timothy.

1 Timothy

It was traditional in Paul's time to begin letters by identifying the letter's author. The letter to the Hebrews contains no such greeting. Consequently, the authorship of Hebrews which was attributed to Paul for most of church history has been called into question. Since Hebrews contains no traditional greeting, it has been proposed that the beginning of the letter to the Hebrews is missing or was suppressed by church leaders – perhaps at the Council of Nicaea called by Roman emperor Constantine in 325 AD. But regardless of who God's Spirit used as the human author of Hebrews (or any of the other books of the Bible), and regardless of any nefarious schemes on the part of church leadership, the texts that we have received are the ones God Himself intended us to have, as Paul wrote in his second letter to Timothy...

¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. ² Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)

With that reminder in anticipation of what God will teach us through His Word, let's delve into the text of 1 Timothy.

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

Timothy 1:1 (ESV)

Paul refers to himself as “***an apostle of Christ Jesus***” in the initial greeting of several of his epistles. The word **ἀπόστολος** **apostolos** like the word **ἅγιος** **hagios** (saint) has acquired unwarranted connotations over the years largely due to the doctrines of the Roman Catholic church. The word **ἀπόστολος** **apostolos** simply means messenger or one who is sent forth with orders. In particular, Paul says here in 1 Timothy 1:1 that he is “***an apostle of Christ Jesus,***” sent forth “***by command of God our savior and Christ Jesus our hope.***” Paul is unique among those we call apostles of Jesus in that Paul was not sent forth during Jesus' earthly ministry as the original twelve were.

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14And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach 15and have authority to cast out demons. 16He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); 17James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); 18Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, 19and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. Mark 3:14-19 (ESV)

HANDOUT – The synoptic gospel accounts and the book of Acts each contain a list of Jesus’ original apostles. These lists are not identical as you can see from this handout. For a more detailed discussion of these lists refer to my study in Matthew 10 at – <https://huppobrian.us/all/notes/matthew-101-4-jesus-sends-twelve-apostles-forth-part-1/>.

Paul was sent forth several years later when the risen and glorified LORD Jesus appeared to him on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1-9). Perhaps Jesus chose Saul of Tarsus (whom He renamed Paul) to replace Judas Iscariot. But regardless of Jesus’ reasons for choosing him, Paul found himself needing to defend and explain his apostleship throughout the remainder of his ministry. As Saul the new apostle lay blind in Damascus following his encounter with the LORD, Jesus appeared in a vision to Ananias – one of the Christians in Damascus – directing him to go and minister to Saul. Ananias raised his own concerns about Saul, so Jesus Himself verified His choice to send Paul forth as an apostle...

But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. Acts 9:15 (ESV)

***2To Timothy, my true child in the faith:
Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 1***
Timothy 1:2 (ESV)

Paul was fond of referring to Timothy as his spiritual child. It may be that God’s Spirit first indwelt Timothy when Paul laid hands on him and prayed for him.

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, 2 Timothy 1:6 (ESV)

Certainly, as the much younger Timothy labored for years together with Paul in ministry and in suffering for their Gospel testimony, Timothy was as much Paul’s disciple as his fellow servant of the LORD. During those years, Paul instructed his spiritual son in carrying out the ministry to which God had called them both in much the same way earthly fathers instruct our sons in the “family business.” Later when Paul was imprisoned, Timothy ministered to Paul’s needs just as earthly sons care for their aging fathers. Thus, Timothy was indeed a true son to Paul in God’s Spirit if not physically. Paul’s final farewell at the end of his second pastoral epistle to his beloved son is among the most tender passages in all of God’s Word.

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3As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, 4nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship [οικονομία oikonomia] from God that is by faith. The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 6Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, 7desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions. 1 Timothy 1:3-7 (ESV)

It is not clear exactly when Timothy remained behind in Ephesus while Paul traveled to Macedonia (presumably to visit the churches in Thessalonica and Philippi). These events aren't recorded in Acts. Regardless of that though, it is apparent that Paul recognized a danger of false teaching already making itself manifest in Ephesus soon after the church was established despite the two years of discipleship there that Paul and Timothy had given the Ephesians.

There were also several more dangerous forms of false teaching already present among the churches around the Mediterranean basin by the time Paul wrote this letter. The particular form of false teaching Paul speaks of here is more of an annoyance and distraction than an outright heresy. That trend continues to this day. Teachers of the Word need to continually be on guard to keep ourselves from dwelling on minutia instead of the clear and simple preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul himself fell into this trap. When he was at Athens (Acts 17), Paul crafted a clever Gospel argument proclaiming to the idolaters in that city that Jesus is the “unknown God” to whom they had built a shrine. Yet despite the truth of this point, few in Athens believed in the Gospel through Paul's preaching there. Thus, when Paul arrived in Corinth from Athens, he determined to try a more straightforward approach to Gospel preaching.

1And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 1 Corinthians 2:1-2 (ESV)

One night in Germany as our church men's fellowship was studying through the book of Ezekiel, one of the brothers and I got ourselves embroiled in an entertaining, esoteric discussion of some minor point we encountered in the text. Years later, I can't even remember what that discussion was about. But what **is** branded forever into my consciousness is the unintended outcome of that evening. As I was taking one of the young soldiers in our group back home to his barracks, he asked me “What were you and Charles talking about?” He then went on to say that he hadn't understood a word of it. Then he absolutely chilled me to the bone when he said he was worried that if he couldn't understand our silly discussion, he might not even be saved! Of course, I immediately stopped the car, and we had a long conversation about the essentials of our faith (Jesus Christ and Him crucified) versus the gravy of God's Word like the genealogies Paul speaks of here in his letter to Timothy.

At the very best, getting ourselves bogged down in the finer points of the Biblical text can distract young disciples from their devotion to the simple truth of the Gospel. But there may also have been a more sinister aspect to the speculations resulting from devotion to myths and endless genealogies that

1-2 Timothy – Introduction

Paul warned Timothy about in this passage. Possibly, those who raised these speculations at Ephesus were promoting the false doctrine that somehow certain people are more deserving of salvation in Christ than some others by virtue of their birthright. Perhaps these certain persons whom Paul wrote about were saying that those of Jewish heritage (particularly perhaps those of the tribe of Levi or Judah) were more honorable and deserving of salvation than Gentiles. This of course is outright heresy that poses a clear danger to those not yet saved. The fact of the matter of course is that none of us is deserving of the mercy and grace God has shown us by rescuing us out of death in our sins by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross in our place. Paul urges Timothy here to be faithful to the stewardship of this **true** Gospel in his role as pastor of the church in Ephesus, and to not allow this straightforward Gospel of salvation by God's grace alone through our faith alone in Jesus alone to be derailed by those who were muddying the waters either intentionally or not.

Perhaps even worse as Paul points out in verse 7 is the promulgation of erroneous doctrine by persons who have either not been well disciplined themselves or have chosen to ignore and pervert for their own purposes the sound doctrine they have been taught. I like to call this "Ignorance Speaking with the Voice of Authority." Often, false teachers espouse false doctrine that they themselves believe. We must therefore be continually "Berean" in our approach to **any** Biblical teaching. In this we have an advantage over most of those in the ancient church that Timothy led at Ephesus. We have the full counsel of God's Word accessible in an instant wherever we are, and we can read it in our own native language. Let us therefore make use of that gift rather than simply accepting Gospel teaching uncritically. Let us put our trust in God and His own Word rather than in men and whatever they may say about God.

⁸Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰the sexually immoral [πόρνος *pornos*], men who practice homosexuality [ἁρσενοκοίτης *arsenokoitēs*], enslavers [ἄνδραποδιστής *andrapodistēs*], liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted. 1 Timothy 1:8-11 (ESV)

Although Paul had no doubt thoroughly schooled Timothy on the Law of Moses during their travels together, reinforcing the teaching he had received as a child from his mother and grandmother, Paul gives his protégé a concise recap here in this passage. For the most part, this passage is fairly straightforward, but it will be beneficial to take a look at two of the Greek words we find here in verse 10 because some of those who seek to promote the modern homosexual and transgender ideologies have made the claim that the widely accepted English translations are erroneous. It will also be helpful to look at the rendering of these words in various English translations. In particular, we will compare some of the "mainstream" English language translations with the Queen James "Translation" (QJV) – the so-called "gay Bible."

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The first of these controversial words is **πόρνος pornos**. It means...

- 1) a man who prostitutes his body to another's lust for hire
- 2) a male prostitute
- 3) a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse, a fornicator

πόρνος pornos is found ten – times in the New Testament. In the KJV it is translated five times as fornicator and five times as whoremonger. Interestingly, in the generations prior to my own “sexually liberated” generation of the 1960s, fornication outside the bonds of matrimony was considered an egregious sin. Surely it was widely practiced, but it was certainly not encouraged or even mentioned in polite conversation. Those caught in fornication were shamed and shunned by society, as were the offspring of such illicit sexual unions.

πόρνος pornos is translated into English variously...

KJV – whoremongers

NKJV – fornicators

NLT – people who are sexually immoral

NIV, ESV, CSB, NASB₂₀₂₀, QJV – sexually immoral

NASB₁₉₉₅ – immoral men

Note that the QJV simply leaves the translation of **πόρνος pornos** in 1 Timothy 1:10 untouched from the 1769 edition of the KJV upon which the QJV is based.

More controversial is the Greek word **ἀρσενοκοΐτης arsenokoitēs**. It means “one who lies with a male as with a female, sodomite, homosexual.” It is a compound word made up from the Greek words for male and bed.

ἀρσενοκοΐτης arsenokoitēs is found only twice in the New Testament – here in 1 Timothy 1:10 and in the similar list of sinful behaviors listed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:9. The editors of the QJV took exception with the “mainstream” translations of the word in these verses.

ἀρσενοκοΐτης arsenokoitēs is translated into English variously...

KJV – them that defile themselves with mankind

NKJV – sodomites

NLT – [people] who practice homosexuality

NIV – those practicing homosexuality

ESV – men who practice homosexuality

CSB, NASB₂₀₂₀, NASB₁₉₉₅ – homosexuals

NET – practicing homosexuals

QJV – them that defile themselves

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The editors of the Queen James Version and other professing Christians who defend and encourage the homosexual and/or transsexual ideologies rightly point out that the word “homosexual” did not enter common English usage until the late 1800s. Therefore, they claim that English translations which render ἀρσενοκοίτης *arsenokoitēs* as “homosexuals” or “those who practice homosexuality” are erroneous. The KJV is no help in this regard, using the cumbersome phrase “them that defile themselves with mankind” to render ἀρσενοκοίτης *arsenokoitēs*. The QJV sidesteps the issue in 1 Timothy 1:10 altogether by simply omitting the phrase “with mankind” from their so-called “translation.”

But the whole argument conveniently disregards the immutable fact that common usage in all languages is continually in flux. Words slowly take on new meanings and lose previous connotations as time passes. New words are invented to represent new ideas while other words fade from use altogether. For example, modern translations of 1 Corinthians 13 render the Greek word ἀγάπη *agape* using the English word “love” while the KJV renders it as “charity.” The English word charity no longer carries the same meaning it did four hundred years ago when the KJV was first produced. Conversely, when the English word homosexual came into use, it became the most convenient and valid means of rendering of the Greek word ἀρσενοκοίτης *arsenokoitēs* in modern English translations – a rendering that simply wasn’t available to the KJV translators, so they had to resort to the clumsy euphemism “them that defile themselves with mankind.”

Furthermore, there is frequently no perfectly matching means of representing an idea expressed in the words of a source language using the words of another language. Taking the example of 1 Corinthians 13 again, we find that the original Greek language has different words to express different kinds of love. The Greek word ἀγάπη *agape* found throughout 1 Corinthians 13 carries the connotation of the perfect unconditional love that God offers to all mankind – a kind of love that human beings are utterly incapable of apart from the indwelling of God’s Spirit within our hearts. Thus, when Bible translators render ἀγάπη *agape* into English as “love” they necessarily do the original Greek word a disservice simply because the English language has no word that carries the same connotations as the original Greek word.

Before we move on, let’s be careful to note that all the English translations listed except the CSB, NASB, and NKJV make a clear distinction between the state of being a homosexual or sodomite and fulfilling that state through homosexual behavior. The NET makes this important distinction crystal clear with the phrase “**practicing** homosexuals.” God ordains and encourages only one form of human sexual behavior – between exactly one man and exactly one woman within the confines of a life-long marriage covenant. Jesus certainly taught that even lusting sexually after anyone other than one’s spouse is a sin tantamount to adultery. Yet clearly there is a distinction between sexual desire and putting sexual desires into practice.

Homosexual and transsexual people often say that they were simply born the way they are and can’t do anything about it. Maybe so, but God’s Word clearly says that carrying out sexual desires except between one man and one woman within the confines of marriage is a sin and an abomination before God. Personally, even in my feeble dotage I am sexually attracted to women. Yet I am bound in matrimony to a single woman. God clearly states that fulfilling my sexual desires with anyone except my wife is a sin called adultery which God condemns repeatedly in His Word.

In closing, let’s look at one final Greek word in 1 Timothy 1:10 – ἀνδραποδιστής *andrapodistēs*. The ESV translates this word as enslavers. But the word has a more explicit meaning...

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- 1) a slave-dealer, kidnapper, man-stealer
 - a) of one who unjustly reduces free men to slavery
 - b) of one who steals the slaves of others and sells them

Slavery was widely practiced throughout the world in Paul's time and continues even until today. In fact, under the Law of Moses even Israelites were permitted to sell themselves as slaves to other Israelites. The Law called for slaves to be freed in the year of Jubilee but made specific provision for slaves to voluntarily remain enslaved out of love for their masters. The Greek word *ἀνδραποδιστής* **andrapodistēs** found here in 1 Timothy 1:10 doesn't refer to slave holders per se, but to those who buy and sell slaves, capture free people and enslave them, or steal the slaves of others for resale.

Please don't misunderstand or misquote me here. It is not and will never be my intent to encourage slavery in any form. I am merely reporting the meaning of this Biblical passage without editorial comment insofar as my meager intellect has been given to understand it.

Looking Ahead

God willing, next time we'll continue our examination of Paul's first letter to Timothy.