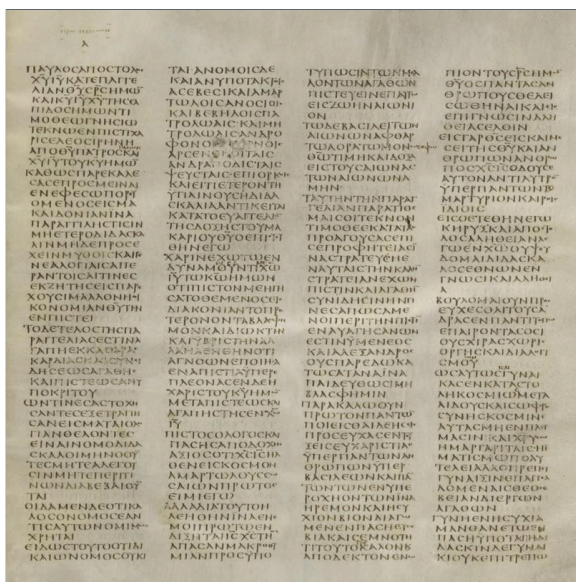


1 TIMOTHY

How to Run a Church

AUTHOR	Paul, 1:1. Most critical scholars think a follower of Paul wrote this letter and the other two Pastoral Letters, 2 Timothy and Titus, later, about AD 90 to 130, because the words and church offices sound different.
WRITTEN FROM	Probably Macedonia, in northern Greece, after Paul left Ephesus, 1:3.
DATE WRITTEN	About AD 62 to 64, after Paul was set free from his first arrest in Rome. Acts ends before this part of the story.
WRITTEN TO	Timothy, Paul's young helper, son of a Jewish mother and a Greek father, Acts 16:1. Paul left him in charge in Ephesus.
WHY HE WROTE	False teachers were stirring up trouble in Ephesus. Paul wrote so Timothy would know how people should act in God's household, 3:15.
KEY VERSE	1 Timothy 3:15. You will know how each one must conduct himself in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.



AN EARLY COPY OF 1 TIMOTHY

The first page of 1 Timothy in Codex Sinaiticus, copied about AD 330 to 360, the oldest complete New Testament. It holds 1:1 to 2:12. 1 Timothy is not in Papyrus 46, the oldest collection of Paul's letters, or in Codex Vaticanus, which breaks off in Hebrews. The oldest scrap is Papyrus 133, in Oxford, published in 2016.

Historical Setting

Paul had spent about three years in Ephesus, Acts 20:31, the big port city famous for its temple of Artemis. Before he left, he warned the elders that savage wolves would come,

even from their own group, Acts 20:29 to 30. It happened. Now Paul is gone, and he has left young Timothy behind to fix it. This letter is Paul's coaching memo: how to pray, who can lead, how to care for widows, how to pay pastors, and how to handle money. It is the first church manual. For the city, see Ephesians and the Ephesus Field Notes in Acts, p. 7.

What Was Going Wrong in Ephesus

FALSE TEACHERS. They loved myths, endless family trees and arguing about the law, 1:4 to 7.

FAKE HOLINESS. Some banned marriage and certain foods, 4:3.

MESSY WORSHIP. Anger and arguing in prayer, 2:8, and showing off wealth, 2:9.

WIDOWS. Who should the church support, and who should family support, 5:3 to 16?

MONEY. Some treated faith as a way to get rich, 6:5.

The Idiot Proof Summary

1 Timothy is a letter from an old coach to a young pastor. The church in Ephesus had problems, and Paul tells Timothy how to fix them. Teach the truth. Pray for everyone. Pick leaders with good character. Take care of the needy. Do not fall in love with money. And live it out yourself, so no one can look down on you. If you have ever wondered how a church is supposed to work, start here.

1 Timothy at a Glance

CH 1	WATCH THE TEACHING Stop the false teachers. Paul, the worst sinner, saved by grace.
CH 2	HOW TO WORSHIP Pray for everyone. Men and women in worship.
CH 3	WHO CAN LEAD Elders and deacons. The great mystery of godliness.
CH 4	TRAIN FOR GODLINESS Fake rules about food and marriage. Do not let anyone look down on your youth.
CH 5	THE CHURCH FAMILY Older and younger, widows, and elders.
CH 6	MONEY AND THE GOOD FIGHT Contentment, the love of money, and fight the good fight of faith.

Where Jesus Shows Up

1 TIMOTHY 1:15 Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

1 TIMOTHY 2:5 TO 6 The one Mediator between God and men, who gave Himself as a ransom for all. Job longed for this, Job 9:33 and 33:24.

1 TIMOTHY 3:16 God revealed in the flesh. Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6.

1 TIMOTHY 6:13 TO 15 He made the good confession before Pontius Pilate, and He will appear again in God's own time. Still to come.

What to Watch for in 1 Timothy

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES	3:16
MESSIANIC FORESHADOW	2:5-6
PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN HISTORY	4:1-3
END TIMES PROPHECIES	6:14-15

THE HEART

1:5

NOTABLE

1:15, 2:1-2, 4:7-8, 4:12, 5:8, 6:6-10, 6:12 and 1 more

JESUS SPEAKING

Words in red are Jesus speaking, or God the Father speaking from heaven.

Cool Stuff Most People Miss

A SAYING OF JESUS CALLED SCRIPTURE

In 5:18 Paul quotes Deuteronomy 25:4 and the words of Jesus in Luke 10:7, and calls them both Scripture.

SLAVE TRADERS

In a world built on slavery, Paul lists slave traders, people who kidnapped and sold human beings, with murderers, 1:10.

AN EARLY SONG?

3:16 has six short lines that may come from a hymn the first Christians sang.

KING OF KINGS

Paul calls God the King of kings and Lord of lords, 6:15. Revelation gives Jesus the same title, Revelation 19:16.

Did It Work?

Timothy stayed with it. Paul wrote him again from prison in 2 Timothy, and Hebrews 13:23 says Timothy was set free from a prison of his own. Church historian Eusebius, about AD 325, says Timothy was the first bishop of Ephesus. About AD 95, Jesus praised the church in Ephesus for testing false apostles, but warned them they had lost their first love, Revelation 2:2 to 4. About AD 110, Ignatius wrote that no false teaching had a home among them.

THE HEART | NOTABLE

1

CHAPTER 1 IN 30 SECONDS

Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to shut down some false teachers who love myths and family trees. Then Paul gets personal: I used to hunt Christians. I was the worst sinner there is. If Jesus can save me, He can save anybody.

PAUL'S GREETING TO TIMOTHY // 2 TIMOTHY 1:1-2

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

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

CORRECTING FALSE TEACHERS // TITUS 1:10-16

³As I urged you on my departure to Macedonia, you should stay on at Ephesus to instruct certain men not to teach false doctrines ⁴or devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculation rather than the stewardship of God's work, which is by faith.

⁵The goal of our instruction is the love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and a sincere faith. ⁶Some have strayed from these ways and turned aside to empty talk. ⁷They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not understand what they are saying or that which they so confidently assert.

⁸Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it legitimately. ⁹We realize that law is not enacted for the righteous, but for the lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinful, for the unholy and profane, for killers of father or mother, for murderers, ¹⁰for the sexually immoral, for homosexuals, for slave traders and liars and perjurers, and for anyone else who is averse to sound teaching ¹¹that agrees with the glo-

■ **1TI 1:3 [FIELD NOTES]** See the Artemis of the Ephesians Field Notes page. For the city of Ephesus, see Acts 19 and Ephesians, p.~.

■ **1TI 1:5 [HEART]** The goal of our teaching is love from a pure heart.

■ **1TI 1:10 [ALLUDES TO]** Refers to < LEV 18:22; 20:13 p.~

■ **1TI 1:10 [NOTE] THE WORD.** Homosexuals is one Greek word, arsenokoitai, also in 1 Corinthians 6:9. It joins two words found side by side in Leviticus 20:13 in the Greek Old Testament, male and bed. Most churches through history read it as men having sex with men. The KJV says them that defile themselves with mankind. Others argue it meant a narrower sin, like men who used boys or

rious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

GOD'S GRACE TO PAUL

¹²I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, that He considered me faithful and appointed me to service. ¹³I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a violent man; yet because I had acted in ignorance and unbelief, I was shown mercy. ¹⁴And the grace of our Lord overflowed to me, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵This is a trustworthy saying, worthy of full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶But for this very reason I was

shown mercy, so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display His perfect patience as an example to those who would believe in Him for eternal life. ¹⁷Now to the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

¹⁸Timothy, my child, I entrust you with this command in keeping with the previous prophecies about you, so that by them you may fight the good fight, ¹⁹holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and thereby shipwrecked their faith. ²⁰Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

2

CHAPTER 2 IN 30 SECONDS

Pray for everybody, even the people running the government. There is one God and one go between, Jesus. Men, pray without fighting. Women, skip the over the top hair and jewelry and dress up in good deeds. Then come the verses about women and authority that churches still argue over.

slaves, because the word is rare and its exact meaning is debated.

■ **1TI 1:15 [NOTABLE]** The KJV says chief of sinners. Paul had hunted down Christians, 1:13. He does not say I was the worst. He says I am. If Jesus could save him, He can save anyone, 1:16.

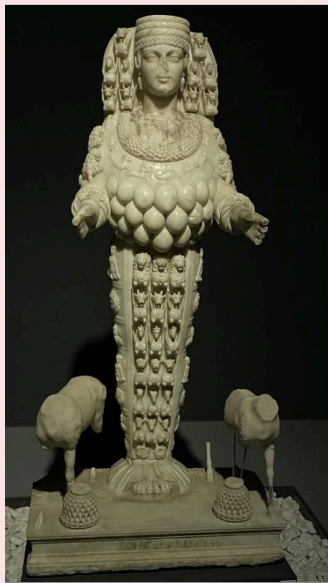
■ **1TI 1:20 [NOTE] HANDED OVER TO SATAN.** Put out of the church, back into Satan's world, so they would learn their lesson. The goal was to win them back, not destroy them. See 1 Corinthians 5:5, p.~. Hymenaeus shows up again in 2 Timothy 2:17.

MESSIANIC FORESHADOW | NOTABLE

DEBATED FIELD NOTES · ARCHAEOLOGY · CONFIDENCE: HIGH FOR THE STATUE · THE LINK TO 2:12 IS DEBATED

ARTEMIS OF THE EPHESIANS

1 TIMOTHY 1:3 · ACTS 19:23 TO 41 · 1 TIMOTHY 2:12 TO 15



The Beautiful Artemis, marble, AD 125 to 175, Ephesus Museum, Selçuk, Turkey. Photo Furkan Akkurt, CC BY SA 4.0.

WHAT IT IS

A marble statue of Artemis of the Ephesians, the goddess of the city where Timothy was pastor. She is not the slim Greek hunter. She stands stiff like an idol, with rows of round shapes on her chest, animals carved all over her skirt, and a deer on each side. It was found buried in the town hall of Ephesus in the 1950s and is now in the Ephesus Museum.

HOW OLD IT IS

About AD 125 to 175, some 60 to 110 years after Paul wrote. It copies the famous statue that stood in her temple, which is lost.

THE GODDESS OF EPHESUS

Her temple was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. When Paul preached there, the silver-smiths who sold her shrines started a riot, Acts 19:23 to 41. The city proudly called itself her temple keeper. Women prayed to Artemis for help in childbirth.

WHAT ARE THE BUMPS?

Nobody knows. Some say breasts, some say eggs, and some say bull parts from her sacrifices. Others say gourds or jewelry.

WHY IT MATTERS HERE

Some scholars think her worship, with its priestesses and its link to childbirth, helps explain why Paul wrote 2:12 to 15 to this city. Others answer that Paul never names her, that most of that evidence is weak or from later times, and that Paul bases his words on Adam and Eve, 2:13. See The Big Question pages.

WHAT IT DOES NOT PROVE

The statue shows who Ephesus worshiped. It cannot tell us what Paul meant. For the temple and the theater, see Acts 19, p. 3.

A CALL TO PRAYER

¹First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be offered for everyone—²for kings and all those in authority—so that we may lead tranquil and quiet lives in all godliness and dignity. ³This is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

⁵For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave Himself as a ransom for all—the testimony that was given at just the right time.

⁷For this reason I was appointed as a preacher, an apostle, and a faithful and true teacher of the Gentiles. I am telling the truth; I am not lying about anything. ⁸Therefore I want the men everywhere to

■ **1TI 2:1 [NOTABLE]** Paul wrote this while Nero was emperor. Pray for leaders you like and leaders you do not. The goal is peaceful lives and people coming to know God, 2:4. Jeremiah told the exiles to pray for Babylon too, Jeremiah 29:7.

■ **1TI 2:5 [FULFILLS]** Job's longing for a Mediator fulfilled in Christ ← JOB 9:32-33 · MEDIUM p. 3

■ **1TI 2:5 [FULFILLS]** A mediator says spare him from the pit, I have found a ransom ← JOB 33:23-24 · MEDIUM p. 3

pray, lifting up holy hands, without anger or dissension.

INSTRUCTIONS TO WOMEN

⁹ Likewise, I want the women to adorn themselves with respectable apparel, with modesty, and with self-control, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, ¹⁰ but with good deeds, as is proper for women who profess to worship God.

¹¹ A woman must learn in quietness and full submissiveness. ¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; she is to remain quiet. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, and then Eve. ¹⁴ And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman who was deceived and fell into transgression. ¹⁵ Women, however, will be saved through childbearing, if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

DEBATED THE BIG QUESTION

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

What Did Paul Mean?

1 TIMOTHY 2:8 TO 15 • 1 CORINTHIANS 14:34 • ROMANS 16:1 TO 7

WHAT PAUL SAID

Let a woman learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man. Then he gives a reason: Adam was formed first, and Eve was deceived, 2:11 to 14. And women will be saved through childbearing if they continue in faith, 2:15. Christians who love the Bible have argued over these five verses for 2,000 years. Here is how the argument grew.

THE EARLY CHURCH

Women were all over the early church. Priscilla taught Apollos, Acts 18:26. Philip had four daughters who prophesied, Acts 21:9. Paul called Phoebe a deacon and Junia outstanding among the apostles, Romans 16:1 and 16:7. But as churches got organized, the leaders who taught and led worship were men.

Tertullian, about AD 200, wrote that a woman may not speak, teach or baptize in church. When the Montanists, a movement led partly by two prophetesses, Priscilla and Maximilla, were rejected in the late 100s, that made church leaders even more careful.

DEACONESSSES

At the same time, women served as deaconesses for centuries. The governor Pliny wrote about two in about AD 112. The Council of Nicaea, AD 325, mentions them, and the Council of Chalcedon, AD 451, said a woman must be at least 40. They helped baptize women and cared for the sick. Over time the office faded, first in the West. See the Phoebe, Pliny and Sophia Field Notes page.

REFORMATION TO REVIVAL

The Reformers taught that every believer is a priest, 1 Peter 2:9, but kept pastors male. Then new voices came. The Quaker Margaret Fell wrote *Women's Speaking Justified* in 1666. John Wesley let some Methodist women preach. Catherine Booth wrote *Female Ministry* in 1859 and helped start the Salvation Army. At the Azusa Street Revival in 1906, women preached, and the Assemblies of God has given women preaching papers since it began in 1914. Aimee Semple McPherson opened Angelus Temple in 1923 and started the Foursquare Church.

WHERE CHURCHES STAND TODAY

Only men are priests in the Catholic and Orthodox churches. Pope John Paul II said in 1994 that the church has no authority to ordain women. The Southern Baptist Convention's statement of faith, 2000, says the office of pastor is limited to men. The Church of England ordained its first women priests in 1994 and its first woman bishop in 2015. Most Pentecostal, Methodist and mainline churches ordain women. In 1987 two groups formed on opposite sides: the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, with its Danvers Statement, and Christians for Biblical Equality.

■ **1TI 2:9 [FIELD NOTES]** See the Braided Hair and Gold Field Notes page.

■ **1TI 2:12 [NOTE] WOMEN AND AUTHORITY.** Christians are split on what these verses mean today. See The Big Question pages, which give the history and every view without taking a side.

The Case Each Side Makes

1 TIMOTHY 2:11 TO 15 · GALATIANS 3:28 · GENESIS 2 AND 3

TRADITIONAL, OR COMPLEMENTARIAN

Men and women are equal in worth but have different roles. Pastors and elders should be men. Key verses: 2:12 to 13, 1 Corinthians 11:3 and 14:34, Ephesians 5:22 to 24, and 3:2, the husband of one wife. Best case: Paul does not base his rule on Ephesus or culture. He goes back to creation, before sin, Adam was formed first, 2:13. Jesus picked twelve men as apostles. Held by Catholics and Orthodox, Southern Baptists and many others. Teachers like John Piper and Wayne Grudem.

THE MIDDLE GROUND

Many churches let women preach, teach and lead ministries, but keep the office of elder or senior pastor for men. They read 2:12 as being about that one office of authority, not every time a woman speaks.

EQUAL, OR EGALITARIAN

Every role is open to women and men, based on gifts, not gender. Key verses: Galatians 3:28, Acts 2:17 to 18, Deborah who judged Israel, Judges 4:4, Huldah, 2 Kings 22:14, Priscilla, Phoebe and Junia, Romans 16, and women praying and prophesying, 1 Corinthians 11:5. Best case: Paul praised women leaders by name, so 2:12 must be a fix for a problem, not a rule for all time. The Greek can mean I am not permitting, right now. Held by Pentecostals, Methodists, the Salvation Army and many others. Teachers like Gordon Fee and Philip Payne.

THE EPHEBUS PROBLEM

Many egalitarians add this: false teaching was spreading in Ephesus, 1:3, and young widows were going house to house saying things they should not, 5:13. Women had not been allowed to study, so Paul says first let them learn, 2:11. Some point to the goddess Artemis or to later stories that made Eve the hero. Critics say most of that evidence comes from after Paul's time.

THE RARE WORD

Exercise authority is the Greek word *authentein*, used only here in the whole

Bible. Most Bibles say have authority. The KJV says usurp authority. Some, like Catherine and Richard Kroeger in 1992, said it means domineer or take control by force. Others, like Andreas Köstenberger in 1995, said the grammar shows teach and have authority are both normal good things that Paul limits.

SAVED THROUGH CHILDBEARING

Nobody thinks a woman earns heaven by having babies, Ephesians 2:8 to 9. Views: saved through the Childbirth, the birth of Jesus promised to Eve, Genesis 3:15; kept safe through childbirth; or a woman living out her calling in faith. The Greek says the childbearing.

WHAT WE ALL AGREE ON

Men and women are both made in God's image, Genesis 1:27, saved the same way and gifted by the same Spirit. Women sat at Jesus' feet to learn, Luke 10:39, and were the first to see Him risen. The argument is about one role, not about worth. See the Romans 16, 1 Corinthians 14:34 and Ephesians 5:21 notes, p. ...

3

CHAPTER 3 IN 30 SECONDS

Want to lead a church? Here is the job description. Elders and deacons must be faithful in marriage, sober, gentle, not money hungry, and good at running their own homes. Then Paul breaks into what sounds like an early song about Jesus.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR OVERSEERS // TITUS 1:5-9; 1 PETER 5:1-4

¹This is a trustworthy saying: If anyone aspires to be an overseer, he desires a noble task. ²An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not dependent on wine, not violent but gentle, peaceable, and free of the love of money.

⁴An overseer must manage his own household well and keep his children un-

■ 1TI 3:2 [NOTE] HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE. In Greek, a one woman man. Most read it as faithful to his wife. Some say it means not a polygamist. Others say never divorced and remarried. Many in the early church said not married a second time, even after his wife died. A few say he must be married. Whatever the view, the point is a man of proven faithfulness, 3:2 to 7.

FIELD NOTES • ARCHAEOLOGY • CONFIDENCE: HIGH

BRAIDED HAIR AND GOLD

1 TIMOTHY 2:9 TO 10 • 1 PETER 3:3 TO 4



The Fonseca Bust, a rich Roman woman, about AD 90 to 110. Capitoline Museums, Rome. Photo Mark Landon, CC BY 4.0.

WHAT IT IS

A marble portrait of a rich Roman woman with a giant tower of tight curls. Hairstyles like this were the fashion for wealthy women in the empire.

HOW OLD IT IS

Experts date it about AD 90 to 110, a generation after Paul. Some date it a little later. It is in the Capitoline Museums in Rome.

HOURS IN THE CHAIR

A look like this took hours. Rich women owned slaves whose only job was doing hair, and many added hairpieces and wigs. The poet Juvenal joked about towers of curls stacked like floors on a building. Pliny the Elder said a woman named Lollia Paulina wore pearls and emeralds worth 40 million sesterces to a dinner.

WHY IT MATTERS HERE

Paul says not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, 2:9. Peter says the same, 1 Peter 3:3 to 4. Paul is not against hair. He is against showing off. In a church of slaves and rich people side by side, a rich woman walking in like this would make the poor feel small. Paul's answer: dress up in good deeds, 2:10.

HOW PEOPLE READ IT

Some churches, like many Holiness churches, ask women not to wear jewelry or makeup. Most churches read it as a call to modesty and humility, not a list of banned items.

WHAT IT DOES NOT PROVE

This woman has nothing to do with the church in Ephesus. Her bust shows the kind of style Paul had in mind.

der control, with complete dignity. ⁵For if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for the church of God? ⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same condemnation as the devil. ⁷Furthermore, he must have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the snare of the devil.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR DEACONS // ACTS 6:1-7

⁸Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued or given to much wine or greedy for money. ⁹They must hold to the mystery of the faith with a clear con-

science. ¹⁰Additionally, they must first be tested. Then, if they are above reproach, let them serve as deacons.

¹¹In the same way, the women must be dignified, not slanderers, but temperate and faithful in all things.

¹²A deacon must be the husband of but one wife, a good manager of his children and of his own household. ¹³For those who have served well as deacons acquire for themselves a high standing and great

■ **1TI 3:11 [NOTE] WOMEN DEACONS?** Many believe Paul means women who served as deacons, like Phoebe, Romans 16:1. Others read it as the deacons' wives. See the Phoebe, Pliny and Sophia Field Notes page.

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES | PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN HISTORY

confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

¹⁴ Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these things ¹⁵ in case I am delayed, so that you will know how each one must conduct himself in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

¹⁶ By common confession, the mystery of godliness is great:

God was manifest in the flesh,
was vindicated by the Spirit,
was seen by angels,
was proclaimed among the nations,
was believed in throughout the world,
was taken up in glory.

4

CHAPTER 4 IN 30 SECONDS

Some will fall for fake spiritual rules like no marriage and no certain foods. Paul says everything God made is good when you thank Him for it. Hitting the gym is fine, but training for godliness pays off forever. And Timothy, do not let anyone look down on you because you are young.

A WARNING AGAINST APOSTASY

¹ Now the Spirit expressly states that in later times some will abandon the faith to follow deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons, ² influenced by the hypocrisy of liars, whose consciences are seared with a hot iron.

³ They will prohibit marriage and require abstinence from certain foods that God has created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For every creation of God is good, and nothing that is received with thanks-

■ **1TI 3:16 [FULFILLS]** He would be Immanuel ← IS 7:14 p. 7

■ **1TI 3:16 [FULFILLS]** A Son would be given ← IS 9:6 p. 7

■ **1TI 3:16 [TEXT]** The KJV says God was manifest in the flesh, and this Bible uses those words. The oldest Greek copies say who, so most modern Bibles say He appeared in the flesh. See the God or Who? Field Notes page.

■ **1TI 4:1 [PROPHECY]** In latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons... forbidding to marry, commanding to abstain from foods → HISTORY: Fulfilled in various ascetic movements — Encratites

■ **1TI 4:1 [DEMONIC]** Doctrines of demons in the last times

■ **1TI 4:4 [NOTE]** EVERY CREATION OF GOD IS GOOD. The false teachers made up rules: no marriage, no certain foods, 4:3. Paul goes back to Genesis: everything God

giving should be rejected, ⁵ because it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

DEBATED | FIELD NOTES · ARCHAEOLOGY · CONFIDENCE: HIGH FOR THE SOURCES · 3:11 IS DEBATED

PHOEBE, PLINY AND SOPHIA

1 TIMOTHY 3:8 TO 13 · ROMANS 16:1 TO 2



Part of the marble plaque honoring Pliny the Younger, early 100s AD, in the wall of the church of Sant'Ambrogio, Milan. Photo Giovanni Dall'Orto, free with credit.

WHAT IT IS

A piece of a marble plaque honoring Pliny the Younger, a Roman governor. His name PLINIUS is on the top line. Matching pieces let scholars rebuild the whole text, which lists his job as governor of Pontus and Bithynia, in today's Turkey.

HOW OLD IT IS

It was carved about AD 113, around the time Pliny died. It is now built into the wall of an old church in Milan, Italy.

TWO WOMEN CALLED DEACONS

As governor, about AD 112, Pliny wrote to the emperor Trajan about the Christians, Letter 10.96. To get the facts, he tortured two slave women who were called ministrae. That Latin word means servants, the same idea as the Greek diakonos, deacon. This was about 50 years after 1 Timothy.

PHOEBE AND SOPHIA

Paul calls Phoebe a diakonos of the church at Cenchrea, Romans 16:1, the

made was very good, Genesis 1:31. Jesus declared all foods clean, Mark 7:19. Receive what God made with thanks and prayer, 4:5. Freedom still has limits: not everything is helpful, and nothing should control you, 1 Corinthians 6:12.

NOTABLE

same word used for deacons in 3:8. A gravestone from the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, from the late 300s, says: Here lies the servant and bride of Christ, Sophia the deacon, the second Phoebe. We could not find a free photo of it.

HOW PEOPLE READ 3:11

Paul says in the same way, the women must be dignified. Many believe these are women deacons, since Paul switches from the deacons' job to the women and back, and Phoebe was one. Others read it as the deacons' wives, since 3:12 says a deacon must be the husband of one wife.

WHAT IT DOES NOT PROVE

Pliny does not tell us what the two women did. A deacon was a serving role, not the same as an elder.

A GOOD SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST

⁶By pointing out these things to the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished by the words of faith and sound instruction that you have followed.

⁷But reject irreverent, silly myths. Instead, train yourself for godliness. ⁸For physical exercise is of limited value, but godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for the present life and for the one to come. ⁹This is a trustworthy saying, worthy of full acceptance.

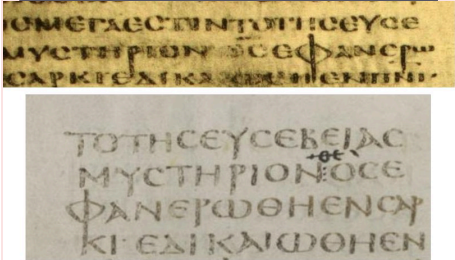
¹⁰To this end we labor and strive, because we have set our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of everyone, and especially of those who believe. ¹¹Command and teach these things.

■ 1TI 4:7 [NOTABLE] Train is the Greek word our word gymnasium comes from. Paul is not against working out. He says it helps for this life, but godliness pays off now and forever. Put in the reps for your soul.

DEBATED FIELD NOTES · ARCHAEOLOGY · CONFIDENCE: HIGH

GOD OR WHO?

1 TIMOTHY 3:16 · JOHN 1:14



Top: 1 Timothy 3:16 in Codex Alexandrinus, British Library.
Bottom: 1 Timothy 3:16 in Codex Sinaiticus, with a later correction written above the line. Both public domain.

WHAT IT IS

Close ups of 1 Timothy 3:16 in two of the oldest Bibles in the world. In both, the word after mystery is the one people fight over.

HOW OLD IT IS

Codex Sinaiticus was copied about AD 330 to 360. Codex Alexandrinus was copied about AD 400 to 440. Both are in the British Library in London.

TWO LETTERS APART

Scribes wrote God in a short form, ΘΣ, with a line on top. The word who is ΟΣ. The only difference is a tiny line inside the O and the bar on top. In Sinaiticus the first scribe wrote ΟΣ, who. Later someone wrote small letters above it to make it God. You can see them in the bottom photo.

THE ALEXANDRINUS FIGHT

In Alexandrinus the word looks like God. But in the 1700s the scholar Johann Wettstein said the line inside the O was ink showing through from the other side of the page. Others said it was real. The page is so worn that people still argue.

ISAAC NEWTON JOINS IN

The famous scientist wrote a long letter in 1690 arguing that 1 Timothy 3:16 and 1 John 5:7 had been changed. Newton did not believe in the Trinity. His letter was published in 1754, after he died.

WHICH IS RIGHT?

Most modern Bibles follow the oldest Greek copies and early translations: He who appeared. The KJV and most later

NOTABLE

Greek copies say God. This Bible prints God was manifest in the flesh, the KJV wording.

WHAT IT DOES NOT CHANGE

Either way, the verse is about Jesus, and only someone who already existed can appear in the flesh. The Bible calls Jesus God in other places that no copy disputes, like John 1:1 and 20:28.

12 Let no one despise your youth, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. ¹³ Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, and to teaching.

¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given you through the prophecy spoken over you at the laying on of the hands of the elders. ¹⁵ Be diligent in these matters and absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. ¹⁶ Pay close attention to your life and to your teaching. Persevere in these things, for by so doing you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

5

CHAPTER 5 IN 30 SECONDS

How to treat people in the church family: older men like fathers, younger women like sisters. Take care of widows who are truly alone, but family comes first. Pay good leaders well. And Timothy, drink a little wine for that stomach of yours.

REPROOF AND RESPECT

¹ Do not rebuke an older man, but appeal to him as to a father.

Treat younger men as brothers, ² older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

■ **1TI 4:12 [NOTABLE]** Timothy was young for a leader, maybe in his thirties. Paul does not tell him to argue. He tells him to outlive the critics: speech, conduct, love, faith and purity.

■ **1TI 4:14 [NOTE]** THE LAYING ON OF HANDS. The elders laid their hands on Timothy and prayed, and prophecies were spoken over him, 1:18. Paul laid hands on him too, 2 Timothy 1:6. The church did the same when it sent out Paul and Barnabas, Acts 13:3. Many churches still do this to set apart pastors and leaders. Paul warns: do not rush it, 5:22.

HONORING TRUE WIDOWS // RUTH 1:1–5

³ Honor the widows who are truly widows.

⁴ But if a widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to show godliness to their own family and repay their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God.

⁵ The widow who is truly in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day in her petitions and prayers. ⁶ But she who lives for pleasure is dead even while she is still alive.

⁷ Give these instructions to the believers, so that they will be above reproach. **8 If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**

⁹ A widow should be enrolled if she is at least sixty years old, faithful to her husband, ¹⁰ and well known for good deeds such as bringing up children, entertaining strangers, washing the feet of the saints, imparting relief to the afflicted, and devoting herself to every good work.

¹¹ But refuse to enroll younger widows. For when their passions draw them away from Christ, they will want to marry, ¹² and thus will incur judgment because they are setting aside their first faith. ¹³ At the same time they will also learn to be idle, going from house to house and being not only idle, but also gossips and busybodies, discussing things they should not mention.

¹⁴ So I advise the younger widows to marry, have children, and manage their households, denying the adversary occasion for slander. ¹⁵ For some have already turned aside to follow Satan.

¹⁶ If any believing woman has dependent widows, she must assist them and not allow the church to be burdened, so that it can help the widows who are truly in need.

■ **1TI 5:8 [NOTABLE]** In context, Paul means caring for your own widowed mother or grandmother, 5:4 and 5:16, instead of leaving it to the church. Even unbelievers take care of family. A believer who will not is worse.

OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW **NOTABLE**

HONORING ELDERS

¹⁷ Elders who lead effectively are worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. ¹⁸ For the Scripture says, “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,” and, “The worker is worthy of his wages.”

¹⁹ Do not entertain an accusation against an elder, except on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁰ But those who persist in sin should be rebuked in front of everyone, so that the others will stand in fear of sin.

A CHARGE TO TIMOTHY

²¹ I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels to maintain these principles without bias, and to do nothing out of partiality.

²² Do not be too quick in the laying on of hands and thereby share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

²³ Stop drinking only water and use a little wine instead, because of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

²⁴ The sins of some men are obvious, going ahead of them to judgment; but the sins of others do not surface until later. ²⁵ In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even the ones that are inconspicuous cannot remain hidden.

6

CHAPTER 6 IN 30 SECONDS

Slaves, work hard. Teachers who use faith to get rich, beware. Godliness plus contentment is the real jackpot, because the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Fight the good fight, tell the rich to be generous, and guard what God gave you.

■ **1TI 5:18 [QUOTES]** Direct ← DT 25:4 p.-

■ **1TI 5:18 [NOTE]** CALLED SCRIPTURE. Paul quotes two things and calls both Scripture: Deuteronomy 25:4, and The worker is worthy of his wages, the words of Jesus in Luke 10:7. It is one of the earliest times a saying of Jesus is called Scripture. Some scholars think Paul knew the saying by word of mouth, not from Luke's book. Peter calls Paul's letters Scripture too, 2 Peter 3:16.

■ **1TI 5:19 [QUOTES]** Quotes ← DT 19:15 p.-

■ **1TI 5:23 [NOTE]** A LITTLE WINE. Timothy had been drinking only water. Paul tells him to use a little wine for his stomach, since water was often unsafe. The Greek word *oinos* means real wine. In 1869 Thomas Welch made grape juice for communion, and many churches in the anti alcohol movement taught that Bible wine was juice. Most scholars say it was fermented, Ephesians 5:18. Paul says a little, and leaders must not be given to much wine, 3:3 and 3:8.

SERVING WITH HONOR // EPHESIANS 6:5-9; COLOS-
SIANS 3:22-25

¹ All who are under the yoke of slavery should regard their masters as fully worthy of honor, so that God's name and our teaching will not be discredited. ² Those who have believing masters should not show disrespect because they are brothers, but should serve them all the more, since those receiving their good service are beloved believers. Teach and encourage these principles.

REJECT FALSE DOCTRINES

³ If anyone teaches another doctrine and disagrees with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and with godly teaching, ⁴ he is conceited and understands nothing. Instead, he has an unhealthy interest in controversies and disputes about words, out of which come envy, strife, abusive talk, evil suspicions, ⁵ and constant friction between men of depraved mind who are devoid of the truth. These men regard godliness as a means of gain.

GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT

⁶ Of course, godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into the world, so we cannot carry anything out of it. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these.

⁹ Those who want to be rich, however, fall into temptation and become ensnared by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. By craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

¹¹ But you, O man of God, flee from these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you

■ **1TI 6:6 [NOTABLE]** The false teachers saw faith as a way to get rich, 6:5. Paul flips it: knowing God and being content is the real jackpot. You came in with nothing and you leave with nothing, Job 1:21.

■ **1TI 6:9 [NOTABLE]** Paul's classic warning, often misquoted as money is the root of all evil. He actually says the LOVE of money is the root of ALL KINDS of evil.

END TIMES PROPHECIES | NOTABLE

were called when you made the good confession before many witnesses.

¹³ I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who made the good confession in His testimony before Pontius Pilate: ¹⁴

Keep this commandment without stain or reproach until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ which the blessed and only Sovereign One—the King of kings and Lord of lords—will bring about in His own time. ¹⁶ He alone is immortal and dwells in unapproachable light. No one has ever seen Him, nor can anyone see Him. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.

A CHARGE TO THE RICH // PROVERBS 23:1–5;
JAMES 5:1–6

¹⁷ Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, who richly provides all things for us to enjoy. ¹⁸ Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹ treasure up for themselves a firm foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

GUARD THE FAITH

²⁰ O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid irreverent, empty chatter and the opposing arguments of so-called “knowledge,” ²¹ which some have professed and thus swerved away from the faith.

Grace be with you all.

■ **1TI 6:12 [NOTABLE]** The word fight is agon, used for athletes in a contest. Faith takes effort. At the end of his life Paul could say, I have fought the good fight, 2 Timothy 4:7.

■ **1TI 6:14 [PROPHECY]** Keep this commandment until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time → STILL TO COME

■ **1TI 6:17 [NOTABLE]** Paul does not tell the rich to become poor. He tells them not to be proud, to trust God instead of money, and to be rich in good works, generous and ready to share. God richly provides all things for us to enjoy, 6:17.

■ **1TI 6:20 [NOTE]** SO CALLED KNOWLEDGE. The Greek word is gnosis. In the 100s a movement called Gnosticism taught that secret knowledge saves you and the body is bad. Irenaeus, about AD 180, named his famous book against them after this verse: On the Detection and Overthrow of Knowledge Falsely So Called. Some scholars think Paul was facing an early form of it; others say it was simply the false teaching of his day.