

Notes on

Paulus' First Letter to Timotheos

Authorship and Date Issues

The two issues, those of authorship and date, are in some sense tied to one another. Generally speaking, there are three schools of thought regarding the authorship and dating of the two letters to Timotheos (and the letter to Titus):

- The letters were written by a second century follower of Paulus. They were written in his style and therefore in his name.
Proponents of this view point to what they perceive as an acceleration in the development of positions within the church (e.g., 3:1ff.). Recognizing that the "genuine" Pauline letters do not display this level of structure, supporters of this viewpoint conclude that the letters were written later. Also in support of this view is the fact that the earliest collections of Paulus' letters do not contain the three "pastoral" letters.
The difficulty with this opinion is that if the assumption is removed that the author was writing about an increased church structure in chapter three, then there is little reason to suppose that the letters were written as late as the 2nd century. The target audience of the three pastoral letters was different than that of his more general letters, so one would expect differences in style and the like, but there also seem to be Pauline themes in the letters.
- The letters were written by Paulus after the end of the book of Acts.
Supporters of this view contend that Paulus was released from his "chains" and made a Fourth Missionary Journey, which included Spain (since Paulus had intended to visit Spain). They regard the three letters as not fitting into the framework established by Acts and yet as genuinely Pauline. Consequently, the letters must have been written after the termination of Acts.
The difficulty with this opinion is that there is no evidence of a Fourth Missionary Journey, inside or outside of the New Testament. The fabrication of Paulus' release in order to establish Pauline authorship seems too convenient for some scholars.
- The letters were written by Paulus within the timeline established by Acts.
Supporters of this view (such as John A.T. Robinson) argue that with little imagination, the events mentioned in the letters may very well have been recent (such as Paulus' trip to Makedonia, 1:3). In this case, a revision is necessary in the traditional interpretation of various passages (including the identity of Timotheos' opponents).
The difficulty with this opinion is chiefly that the traditional interpretations of the entire book are labeled "wrong" by its supporters. Additionally, it is quite possible that a later author would mention genuine events in Paulus' life (like the Makedonian journey) if writing in his name.

I attribute the letter to Paulus and place its time of composition around the time of Acts 20.

Commentary

First, we should make a note regarding the translation. As in the other elements of this commentary series, the *Non-Ecclesiastical New Testament* is the translation being employed. However, in 1 Timotheos only the NET pays homage to an earlier (unpublished) translation known as the "Revised Group Version". Therefore, certain Greek words are rendered differently here than elsewhere in the NET. For instance, "deliver" appears in the place of "save." Although these differences are minor, the reader should be aware of them.

After the traditional greeting, Paulus continues:

"I urged you to remain in Ephesus when departing for Makedonia..."

This places the date of the book some time around Acts 20, when Paulus left Ephesus for Makedonia (20:1), sometime around 55 CE. Paulus had been with Timotheos in Ephesus prior to that time (Acts 19). The letter was written before his trip to Syria, though, because he was joined by Timotheos some time during his three month stay (Acts 20:4).

"...that you may charge certain persons not to teach differently, nor to occupy themselves with fables and endless genealogies--which promote worthless speculations rather than that work of God in trust."

Paulus had spent 3 months in the Jewish gatherings in Ephesus (Acts 19:8) and a total of two years in the city (19:10), helping the Christian group get established. During that time, Paulus experienced opposition both from Jews and from gentiles; most of this opposition came from outside the Christian community (see the rest of Acts 19), and Lukas leads us to believe that Paulus left Ephesus in somewhat less than the best repute among the populus.

The problems that arose within the group were severe enough that even after sending the letter to Timotheos, he took matters into his own hands by calling together the old people from Ephesus (Acts 20:17ff.) a few months later and charging them specifically to watch out for their fellow Christians who would steal students away from the true teachings (Acts 20:29-30).

At this point in the letter, Paulus says very little about the nature of the opponents or their teachings--only that they dwell on genealogies (such as the Jewish reliance on their lineage from Abraham) and fables (which were present in both Jewish and Greek mythology).

"Now the aim of this charge is love out of a clean heart, and a good conscience, and a trust without hypocrisy."

Paulus urges his assistant to tell these certain people not to dwell on matters such as genealogies and fables. Why say this? Rather than dwell on elements of Jewish mysticism (such as, possibly, questions about the messengers "angels"), Paulus urges "love out of a clean heart." "Clean" here is the normal word used for ritual cleanliness. It is possible that Paulus is deliberately using the

word that would have most significance to the Jewish opponents. We will see shortly that they are binding others to the minutiae of the Torah, and Paul's use of "clean heart" (Psa 51) is a contrast to the ritual purification of objects.

"A trust without hypocrisy" may indicate that the Judaizers were not binding themselves to every minute point, as much as they were interested in binding the gentile Ephesian Christians to the Torah. This legalism would be nothing new, for Jesus himself had encountered it.

"Some who have missed the mark regarding these were turned to worthless discussion. They desire to be law-teachers, yet they understand neither what they are saying nor the things that they are positively asserting."

Here, Paulus attacks the exegetical opinion of his opponents. With what they are doing, clearly they don't understand the Torah at all! So how can they possibly be "law-teachers?!" {The word "law teachers" is very rare, seeming to refer to anyone who is revered among Jews as being knowledgeable about the Torah.} In this passage, we will use "Law" instead of the usual "Torah," because Paulus makes use of several points relating to the concept of law.

"Now we know that the Law is good, if one should use it lawfully; knowing this, that a law is not set down for a just person but...."

The Torah MUST be used according to its own principles, and not however we happen to want to apply it. His next point establishes the purpose not only of the Torah but of "law" or ethical codes in general.

Paulus is about to explain law in terms of the Torah and the Torah in terms of the "Ten Words." The Decalogue is the basis for the entire Torah, and Paulus will argue that good people are not to be bound to it (or to any ethical code).

"...for

1. The lawless and disorderly;

These are people who reject instruction (from God) entirely, thus the connection between "law" and "lawless." The term "disorderly" is appropriate also, because God's order is the only true order. They are the violators of the "first commandment" -- to have no gods besides Yahweh. Rejecting Yahweh's primary teaching, "I am Yahweh your God," is a rejection of his government, and vice versa. How can one follow God and reject his principles?

2. for the impious and sinners;

These are violators of the second commandment: to keep Yahweh's name holy. Those who misuse the name of Yahweh, taking oaths on his name spuriously, these lack any piety. They are sinners.

3. for the irreverent and profane;

These are the people who ignore the Sabbath. "Profane" is often used of someone who fails to keep the Sabbath holy.

4. for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers;

What would be a flagrant violation of the 4th commandment to honor one's father and mother? Murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, of course.

5. for assassins;

"Do not murder," reads the precept. One who murders for hire, an assassin, is the flagrant violator of commandment 5.

6. for prostitutes; for homosexuals;

Being unfaithful is the problem behind commandment 6. Sexual sin with other men, or selling your body (i.e., to marrieds) for money--these are flagrant sexual sins.

7. for kidnappers;

What is worse stealing than to steal a human being?

8. for liars; for perjurers;

"Do not bear false testimony." The term "liar" connotes someone who does so regularly or repeatedly and so cannot be trusted. One who deliberately lies in a legal setting (a perjurer) is another sort of violator of the 8th precept.

9-10. "and if there is anything else..."

The coveting.

"that is set down against the good message of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted."

The purpose of law is to regulate the actions of the ungodly. Rules and regulations are NOT for the godly person! Interestingly, there is dispute over how the precepts should be numbered. Paulus here provides us testimony as to how Jews in the First Century numbered the ten precepts.

Paulus then says that he too was a berserker for the Torah, even murdering Christians because he thought it was right. But he calls himself a *"slanderer, and a persecutor, and a violent person."* He was WRONG, just as the Judaizers are wrong in their application of the Torah.

"But I received mercy...the generosity...superabounded with the trust and love in Anointed Jesus."

Paulus didn't need justice. Though he thought himself innocent, he was guilty. He needed mercy, which he got when he came around to the principles of trust and love. A parallel can be drawn for the Judaizer, who now needs the same things that Paulus needed

"This statement is reliable and worthy of all acceptance: 'Anointed Jesus came into creation to deliver sinners,' of whom I am foremost."

Paulus is qualified to write about such things, and to admonish the Judaizers about such things, because he was the worst of all--or at least he considers himself to have been so!

"...in me, the foremost, Anointed Jesus might display all longsuffering as a prototype for those who are about to trust in him for eternal life."

But if Paulus could be forgiven and be made an envoy of God, taking the message to others, then anyone could be forgiven of any sin. Paul concludes the first section with a doxology--a statement of praise to God, referring to God in traditional Jewish form as *"King of the Ages, imperishable, invisible, the only god."*

1:18-2:7 A Need to Pray

"This charge I set before you, Timotheos my child, according to the previous prophecies about you, so that you might fight the good battle, holding trust and a good conscience, which some have shoved away."

Paulus is entrusting Timotheos with a great responsibility--to help steer the people in Ephesus away from Judaizing and toward the freedom in Jesus. Timotheos has "spiritual gifts" to help him confirm the true message. We find out elsewhere that Paul wants to make sure that Tim continues to use these gifts, or perhaps he may lose them. The nature of the prophecies about Tim we do not know, but perhaps they indicated that Timotheos would be a strong leader, and Paulus is recognizing that by entrusting the Ephesian matter to him.

Again he mentions maintaining trust (in God) and a good conscience. He is about to remind Tim of two people who have "shoved away" these things.

"Concerning the faith, they were shipwrecked. Of these are Humenaeus and Alexandros, whom I delivered up to the enemy, so that they might be taught not to speak evil things."

Humenaeus is mentioned again in Paul's later letter (2 Tim, written c. 58). There it is said that his worthless talk became like a festering sore, and that he (and Filetos) claimed that the resurrection had already happened. Paulus does not mention this in the first letter, so it is possible that Humenaeus had not yet acquired that belief.

Alexandros here is normally assumed to be "Alexandros the Coppersmith." We read of a Jewish Christian named Alexandros in Acts 19 who attempted unsuccessfully to defend Jesus in Ephesus, and it is possible that this is the same man. Within a few years, Paulus will again write to Timotheos, saying that Alexandros "openly did many bad things to me" (2 Tim 4:14). We do

not see this in Acts 19, but if it is the same Alexandros, then it may have been his insistence on binding the Ephesians to the Torah which caused them to riot and give praise to Artemis (19:34).

Paul writes, "...whom I delivered up to the enemy." This may be the Enemy, "Satan," or it may refer to the Judaizers as an adversarial force. Either way, Paulus' purpose in "delivering them up" was so that they might be taught a lesson. As we read in the later letter, they did not learn their lesson, and Paulus is much more harsh toward them in the second letter.

"Therefore, I advise first of all that you make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings on behalf of all people: on behalf of kings, and of all those who are in high positions, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all piety and seriousness."

Paulus does not want this religious dispute to turn into a civil matter. He urges Timotheos to pray for the benevolence of all secular officials, so that "we (Christians) may lead a tranquil and quiet life...." Paulus takes this admonition to prayer very seriously, seeing the intervention of God as crucial in achieving a peaceful resolution to the matter. The Judaizer situation has been a problem now for ten years, and Paulus sees it escalating. It will not be very long before he is arrested and incarcerated for his beliefs (Acts 21).

"This is good and acceptable in the presence of God our deliverer, who wants all people to be delivered, and to come into recognition of the truth."

The "all people being delivered" refers to the faithful Christians. He does not want them to suffer political persecution, although they will have to endure it shortly. The "coming into recognition of the truth" refers to Alexandros, Humenaeus, and the other Judaizers.

"For God is one, and there is one mediator between God and human beings: the human being, Anointed Jesus..."

This is his statement of "the truth," that the author has just mentioned. This is what the Judaizers need to realize. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Torah. He is the "one mediator," and not the various priests and sacrifices.

"...the one who gave himself to be a ransom for all--the testimony for its own seasons--for which I was placed as a herald and an envoy (I am telling the truth; I am not lying), a teacher of nations in trust and in truth."

What Jesus did is the testimony for Paulus' time. It is the very reason he does what he is doing. Paulus affirms that it is for this message, the coming of the Anointed One and fulfillment of the Torah, that Paulus was made...

a herald -- a speaker sent to announce a message; and

an envoy -- a personal, official, representative (of God).

He then affirms with an oath (for the Ephesians, not for Timotheos), that God made him a "teacher of nations in trust and in truth." His calling to teach the nations (the word can include both Jews and gentiles and is often translated "gentiles"; here, his commission to teach gentiles is

surely meant). Paulus affirms not only his own calling; but if his calling, then also the content of his message, which does not include making gentiles become old covenant Jews (see Acts 15).

2:8-10 Directions to public prayer

"So, I direct the men everywhere to pray, lifting up godly hands without anger or disputing."

Paulus has been instructing everyone to pray for assistance in the current situation. Now, he points out a few hindrances to prayer. For the Ephesian men, anger and disputing are seen as the main problems.

"In the same way also, women are to adorn themselves in suitable attire, with an appropriate attitude and soundness of mind: not with wreaths, or gold, or pearls, or expensive clothing, but through good deeds, which are becoming for women who are professing piety toward God."

The problem that the Ephesian women are having--which might hinder them in prayer--is vanity. The author fears that when they gather to pray, the men might not have the proper attitude (being angry or argumentative), and neither might the women (being more concerned with their outward appearance). When they pray together, everyone needs to have the proper pious attitude.

2:11-15 Allow Women to Learn the Torah

"Let a woman learn in quietness and in all submission."

This is Paulus' primary statement for the section that follows: that women should learn. If his Jewish opponents were quick to cite rabbinical philosophies, then they were openly opposed to women studying the Torah. At various times, the rabbis said things like, *"Rather should the words of the Torah be burned than entrusted to a woman,"* and, *"One who teaches his daughter the Torah is like one who teaches her obscenity."*

It appears from the passage that Paulus' opponents were advocating this view, while certain of the leading Ephesian women were taking a strong public role in advocating the opposing view. Paul essentially sides with the women, but he is quick to make certain temporary restrictions.

First, they should learn in "quietness"--just like "a quiet and tranquil life." They should not be causing social disruption when they do so. And they should learn in all submission to their inspired teachers. Submission is a voluntary act of treating another person as at least an equal. It is the attitude of Philippians 2:1ff., although in that passage, the attitude is taken to its logical extreme. The other person is as important to you as you are, and in this case, the student should treat her inspired teacher as someone with knowledge. On the flipside, the woman should submit; she is not being forced to adhere to a particular teaching model, nor is she being forced to learn.

"Now I do not allow a wife to teach or to dominate her husband, but to be in quietness."

Paulus has not yet given his reason for such a strange admonition. It is his opinion ("I do not allow" vs. "the Lord says") that none of the Ephesian wives, who are beginning to learn, should

be allowed to teach what they learn to their husbands. That reason follows, but Paulus adds "or to dominate her husband." The word "dominate" is the strongest word possible for domination. Literally, it signifies personally assassinating someone. In this setting, the husband is not to use what she learns to run her husband's spiritual life. This would cause a disruption, and the wife is to be "in quietness," as the author has previously written.

"For Adam was formed first; then Eva. And Adam was not deceived, but when the woman was totally deceived, she became in transgression."

Adam and Eva were in a similar situation. Adam was on earth first. He had the direct teaching from God about what to do and what not to do. Eva came along and was told something new, by the "serpent." She took her "new knowledge" to Adam and persuaded him to do what he knew was wrong. (Elsewhere, Paul blames Adam for his folly.) Paulus is concerned that someone who is just learning might come to wrong conclusions and persuade her husband to do wrong--just as Eva did.

"Now she will be delivered through child-bearing, if they continue in trust, and love, and holiness with soundness of mind."

The couple needs to be rooted in the sound teaching. Paulus consoles the wife by saying, "So for the time being, don't try to teach your husband what you are learning. However, through the honorable family role, you will not lose your salvation." It's a consolation. Losing the ability to teach, even if such a loss is temporary, is not like losing one's salvation. Continue with your husband in the important matters.

3:1-12 Care for the Poor

"This statement is reliable: 'Whoever longs for oversight is strongly desiring a good work.' Then it is necessary that the overseer be blameless: a man of one woman, vigilant, sedate, orderly, friendly to strangers, able to teach; not someone who drinks a lot of wine, not one who strikes others (but gentle), not quarrelsome, not a money lover...."

This is what the Ephesians SHOULD be doing: caring for their poor. By this time, there was a large enough group of poor among them that not only a few servants (to actually feed the poor) but also an overseer (to ensure that all the needs were being met) were necessary in Ephesus. Of course, had the people been meeting one another's needs to begin with, neither overseer nor servants would have been necessary.

Paulus constructs the section, "the overseer...servants...the women," separating the three descriptions by "in the same way," a word which normally indicates a similar function. Yet "overseer" appears singular here and in Titus 1, indicating that there was one overseer for the task of feeding the poor. Even as early as Clement of Rome (c. 96CE), this is the case: one overseer, usually chosen from among the older people of the group.

Paulus states but one "qualification" for the overseer. Since the overseer will be making sure everyone's needs are fairly met, he must be "blameless."

What the author means by "blameless," he sketches out with a description:

"this sort of thing...not that sort of thing." If someone were greedy or violent, others would not regard him as blameless. Aspersions might be cast on his ability to carry out his task fairly and vigilantly. The person would attract attention, both from within the group and from outside, and therefore would need to have a good reputation.

"...one who is an outstanding example for his own household, who has his children in submission with all dignity (Now how can someone be an example to a group of God's people if he is not an outstanding example to his own household?);..."

He sums up the aspects of blameless as "an outstanding example." If this person has a family, the family (here, the children are adults) must be following God and following this godly person's good example. If he's a bad example to his family, he won't be seen as a good example among the group. How can someone care for the concerns of all of the poor Ephesians if he's not even viewed as worthy by his own family?

"...not a new convert (so that he will not be puffed up to the point of falling to the judgment of the accuser)."

Paulus recaps the negative aspects by adding, "not a new convert." In order to be an example, the prospective overseer must have been established as an example. If he hasn't been a Christian long, it might be easier for him to be swayed to favor one faction or another. If he becomes "puffed up" in this fashion, others will accuse him (rightly) of being a poor example of an unfair overseer.

"Now it is necessary that he also have a good testimony from those who are outside, so that he might not fall into reproach and into a snare of the accuser."

Recapping the positive statement to close out his description, Paulus mentions that one's good reputation should extend outside the group as well. If people outside the group consider the person unfair, unjust, or crooked, then he will be a disgrace. Those who wished to accuse him of wrongdoing could point to the fact that he is regarded as crooked. Paulus has completed his rationale as to why the overseer must be blameless.

"In the same way, servants should be dignified: not contradicting themselves, not those who are addicted to a lot of wine, not those who are eager for monetary profit; those who hold the secret of the faith in a clean conscience."

Having spelled out in detail what to look for (i.e., for an overseer), Paulus only sketches out briefly those same things again for the (male) servants... the ones whose task it will be to take the food to the poor. These people too need to have the same kind of spotless reputation, so that there might be no reason to accuse them.

"Now, let these ones also be proved first, then let them serve if they are blameless."

Make sure someone is blameless before letting them take over the task of feeding the poor. You don't want any incidents to develop. You don't want people to accuse him of being unfair, or a crook, or unable to do the task well.

"In the same way, the women should be serious: not accusers; vigilant, trustworthy in all things."

Whether the servant is male or female makes no difference: he or she must be blameless and trustworthy.

"Servants should be men of one woman, doing well at being outstanding examples to their families, and to their own households. For those who have served well are acquiring a good standing for themselves and much freedom of speech in that trust which is in Anointed Jesus."

Concluding the section on servants, Paulus adds a note of dedication (like that for the overseer) and concludes by stressing the importance of their examples. In fact, he adds, their examples will put them in the position of being able to speak freely (about their example, about what is the right thing to do) if the occasion comes.

It is distinctly possible that Paulus mentioned the poor at this point not only to tell them what they **SHOULD** be doing (rather than quarrelling) but also to stave off any possible problems between the poor families of the Judaizers and the poor families of the other people. There should be no discrimination on anyone's part in how they deal with one another. There should be no accusations of unfairness between the factions.

3:14-end of chapter 4

"I am writing these things to you hoping to come to you very soon. But if I delay, I am writing so that you may now how it is necessary to conduct yourself in God's house, which is a group of people belonging to the living God."

As it turned out, Paulus would be joined by Timotheos in Troas (Acts 20:5), but Paulus was hoping to see his friend and assistant soon. His wording is interesting. He refers to God's people as his "house." This may be in contrast to the expression "the house of Israel," indicating the Jewish people. The Greek word for "assembly," ἐκκλησία, here has been rendered "group (of people)," as it is occasionally in Acts.

"The secret of piety is a pillar and basis of truth, and is acknowledged as great: the one who was displayed physically was justified spiritually, was seen by messengers, was proclaimed among nations, and was taken up into glory."

The group of people who belong to God are those who adhere to the basic teachings about Jesus. It is Jesus who came to earth as Messiah, was righteous before God, was seen (to have resurrected) by messengers (human and divine), who ascended, and whom Paulus himself and others "proclaim among nations." Once again, Paulus subtly argues in favor of the gentile mission and against the points made by the Judaizing opponents. But this gentile mission is part

of the "pillar and basis of truth." Learning such things is "the secret of piety"--you cannot be devout without it.

"Now the Spirit [or breath] declares that in future seasons, some will fall away from the faith, adhering to spirits of wandering and to teachings of spirit beings in the hypocrisy of lying speakers whose own consciences have been seared."

Paulus begins his strongest attack so far on his opponents by asserting that what he says was told him through revelation. "The breath declares..." or "the Spirit declares..." indicates that God told him (verbally) what he is about to share with Timotheos and the Ephesians.

Some will fall away from the faith -- i.e., they will abandon the "pillar and basis of truth," teaching things contrary to what Jesus taught his students. The "spirits of wandering and teachings of spirit beings" are not meant literally. Paul does not mean that his opponents are listening to "demons." He is contrasting the source of his message (THE Spirit or breath) with "breaths" or "spirits" of wanderings. Where do they get these "teachings of spirit beings"? From "lying speakers." These teachings exist "in the hypocrisy" of these teachers "whose own consciences have been seared." These are people who knowingly are persuading others to act contrary to what Jesus taught. What exactly are they teaching? Paulus indicates at least a few things.

"They will forbid marriage...."

That is, they will not allow marriage between Jews and gentiles, because the Torah teaches so. Paulus' opponents are "binding people to the Torah" (chapter 1), and this is one of their points. But marriage between one Christian and another should not be limited by racial concerns, and Paulus takes a stand here. Perhaps this is part of the "hypocrisy," because the Jews themselves often ignored this particular teaching.

"...and will abstain from foods that God created to be partaken with thanksgiving by the faithful--those who have known the truth:

"That every creation of God is good, and nothing should be cast away, but should be received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy through God's message and through prayer."

Here, Paulus addresses the practice of the Judaizers' binding their gentile brothers and sisters to the dietary ("kosher") code of the Torah. Paulus insists that pork, shrimp, and the like are to be eaten "with thanksgiving." The typical Jew cannot eat such foods, but the Christians, "who have known the truth," can eat the "unclean foods." The truth of the matter is that all the food is good--"nothing should be cast away." In the Torah, it was regarded as ceremonially unclean, but Paulus calls it "holy," i.e., to be used for purposes devoted to God--the opposite of unclean. Why is it holy now? It was made holy "through God's message and through prayer." God's message in the NT consists of the teachings of and about Jesus. These Jewish opponents are Christians. Rather than quote one saying or two of Jesus' (in which he declares all foods clean), he appeals to the whole of the teaching of Jesus. The Messiah, God's representative, taught it. Through prayer, we dedicate food to God, in expressing our thanks to him. That which is dedicated to God becomes holy.

"If you set forth these things to the brothers, you will be a good servant of Anointed Jesus, nourished with the sayings of trust and of the good teaching, which you have followed closely."

Timotheos is charged with telling ALL the Ephesian assembly (Judaizing and not) about what he has just written.

"Now, avoid the profane things and ridiculous fables. But exercise yourself toward piety. For bodily exercise is profitable for a short time, but piety is profitable for all time, since it has a promise of the present life and the life which is about to come."

The author urges his confidant not to get wrapped up in his opponents' game, which involves "fables and endless genealogies" (ch. 1). The kind of arguments they make to support their case are ridiculous; don't even try to answer their logic. Instead, work on becoming more pious, more godly, more holy. After all, that's more beneficial in the long run.

"This statement is reliable, and is worthy of all acceptance (for we are toiling and striving for this reason): because, 'we have hoped in the living God, who is a deliverer of all people, especially of those who trust.'"

God's being a "deliverer of all people" is directed to mean "both Jews and gentiles." God saves both Jews and gentiles, especially members of his new covenant. In fact, Paulus, Timotheos, and the other envoys and teachers are "toiling and striving" for that very reason.

"Charge and teach these things. Do not let anyone despise your youth. Instead, become a pattern in speech, in conduct, in love, in trust, and in purity to those who trust."

Timotheos himself, because of what he must say, needs to be "blameless."

He could easily be ridiculed by the Judaizers if he is not the best possible example of "speech, conduct, trust, and purity" to both the Judaizers and the others--to all the Ephesian Christians.

"Until I come, attend to the reading, to advising, and to teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands of the elderly. Tend to these things. Be involved in them, so that your progress may display itself in all things. Watch yourself and what you teach. Continue doing these things, for when you do this, you will save both yourself and those who hear you."

In case Timotheos was considering quietly avoiding possible conflict, Paulus strongly urges him several times to involve himself just as he normally would (if there were no conflict). Keep reading (probably publically), advising others, and teaching. Stay actively involved with others. Timotheos is inspired by God, and whatever gift he was given, he must continue to use. Then everyone will see Tim's good example, and the fact that he is from God, and he will save himself, yes, but he will save others, too, by freeing them from the bondage of the Judaizers.

5:1-21 Assisting the Elderly

"Do not harshly rebuke an elderly man. On the contrary, advise him as a father. Treat younger men as brothers, elderly women as mothers, and younger women as sisters. Do this in all purity."

Having addressed the leading Ephesian problem, Paulus turns to presenting advice for the Ephesians and for Timotheos himself. The first issue he takes up is care for the elderly, which he treats in a manner similar to his treatment (elsewhere) of care for the poor. It is a good time here to note that these elderly people in question are without families. Every person was expected to support the members of his/her own family. Paulus himself will write this shortly.

First, he says merely that both the elderly and the youthful should be treated well; he is setting up ground for his next position.

"Honor those widows who really are widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them be taught first to be dutiful to their own households and to properly repay their ancestors, for this is what is acceptable in God's presence."

By "honor," Paulus apparently means a monetary stipend--help with the food budget and rent. The older people who have no other means of support will need help from somewhere. Who but their fellow Christians should help? But if they have living family, the family ought to recognize their obligation to honor their parents/ancestors. It is possible that the author's use of "honor" reflects back to, "Honor your father and mother," understanding honor to include the support necessary to survive.

"Now the one who is truly a widow and has been left alone puts her hope on God and continues in supplications and in prayers night and day. But the one who lives in luxury is dead. And you are to charge these things, so that they may be blameless."

If the widow has enough money to sustain herself, then there is no need to provide assistance. But the poor widow has only her trust in God to sustain her; she needs help.

"Now if anyone does not provide for his own people, and especially for his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than one who is faithless."

Before continuing to give advice about supporting the poor widows, Paulus again emphasizes that the Ephesians had better be taking care of their own families. To fail to do so is utterly irreligious. We are reminded of the "pure and undefiled devotion" being that of taking care of widows and orphans.

"Do not allow a widow to be put on the list who is less than sixty years old; she should be a woman of one man, and whose good deeds testify about her: if she raised a family, if she took in strangers, if she washed the feet of holy ones, if she relieved the pain of the afflicted, if she closely followed every good deed."

Paulus has just mentioned that the widows "on the list" should be "blameless"-- the same word he uses for the overseer and servants. Here, the widow must be 60. That age was a good eight

years above the life expectancy and would be the equivalent of about age 80 today. In other words, these women were old and could not do hard work. And she ought to have an excellent reputation, of which Paulus provides examples. The same expression, "one woman man," is used here as in the earlier characterization of the overseer as a "one man woman."

"Now reject younger ones, for when they become uncommitted to the Anointed One, they want to get married, and they have condemnation because they set aside their first trust. And at the same time, they learn to be idle, going from house to house. And not only are they idle, but also they are gossips and busybodies, saying things that are inappropriate."

Paulus envisions the elderly retirees as devoting their entire lives to serving others. The younger ones won't want to do that, he asserts. They'll want to marry. The assistance they receive will make them lazy, where they might turn to gossip and meddling.

"Therefore, I want the younger ones to marry, to bear children, to rule the household, to give the opponent no opportunity for reproach, since some have already turned aside to follow the enemy."

The younger widows should get married, instead of being put on the list. Their livelihood will come through their own and their husband's work. If they are young enough to have children, they can still raise a family. By keeping occupied with these things, they will avoid the reproach of Paulus' Judaizing opponents. The "some have turned aside" may be using "some" to mean simply "some of the Ephesians," or it may mean "some of the younger widows." At any rate, some of them had left the group and gone away to "the enemy." Again, Paulus may be referring to his Judaizing opposition, or to the anti-Christian Jews, or he may be using the Enemy (Satan) as a metaphor for evil.

"If any faithful woman has widows in her family, she should support them, and should not burden the group, so that those who are truly widows may be relieved."

Like the statement on servants includes women, Paulus makes sure that the Ephesian women realize that the obligation to help one's family does not extend only to men.

"Regard the older people who are outstanding examples as worthy of a double honorarium, especially those who are working in speaking and teaching. For the writing says, 'You will not muzzle an ox that is treading grain,' and, 'The worker is worthy of his wage.'"

Literally, the passage reads, "double honor," but this is normally understood to mean that the elderly people who are particularly effective at helping the group (which, recall, they should all be doing) should get more than just enough to survive. They should get twice as much. Paulus' midrash on the OT passages definitely stretches their intent, but he means to say that if they're working hard (though retired from secular work), they should be paid. The author's earlier statement about blamelessness implies that the elderly who are obtaining assistance are good examples, but those who are "outstanding" as examples should be honored more. This would serve both as a reward and an incentive.

Paulus never had "Social Security" to contend with, and so I will address it. Clearly, if the program pays a decent wage, Paulus would say that they don't need assistance, but whatever the SS program doesn't pay, if they need more assistance, Paulus would urge the group to supplement what they get for retirement.

"Do not accept an accusation against an elderly person unless there are two or three witnesses. But reprove those who are sinning in the presence of all, so that the rest may have fear."

This closes the section on assistance to the elderly, barring the author's summary comments. The "accusations" here probably refer to accusations against the old person's "blameless" status. If an elderly person is found not to have good character, (s)he would be dropped from the list as unworthy, since the retirees are expected to be spending their time working for God. Therefore, this is a serious matter, and their guilt must be established in the traditional way--via witnesses. If they are guilty, all of the retirees should be made aware of what is going on, in public, so that they "may have fear." If they are not motivated otherwise to live for God, perhaps seeing someone dropped from assistance because of ungodliness will help them live more godly lives.

"I am fully testifying to you in the presence of God and Anointed Jesus and the chosen messengers, so that you may keep these things without prejudice, doing nothing according to partiality."

This harkens back to the situation in Acts 6, where certain of the widows were apparently going neglected. The elderly need to be supported impartially, and Paulus' pact with his son in the faith is that Timotheos should be sure that the elderly are being helped without partiality.

5:22-end of chapter Advice for Timotheos

"Do not lay hands hastily on someone, and do not share in others' sins."

The laying-on of hands was a sign of approval. Paulus tells Timotheos not to do so hastily, nor should he share in the sins of others.

"Stop drinking water, but use a little wine on account of your stomach and your frequent illnesses."

A personal health tip for a friend. Not all water is pure water, and the organisms in the water might aggravate Tim's digestive problems, whatever they were.

"The sins of certain people were previously displayed, and they led to judgment. But in some people, these things follow. In the same way also, the good deeds were previously displayed, and the deeds that are otherwise cannot be hidden."

Both good and evil deeds will eventually reveal themselves...an admonishment to Timotheos to continue doing good.

6:1-10 Slaves and Lords

"As many as are slaves under a yoke, they should regard their own masters as worthy of honor, so that God's name and teaching will not be spoken bad of. Now the ones who have trusting masters should not despise them, because they are brothers. On the contrary, they should be good slaves instead, because they are trusting and beloved ones who grant good deeds. Teach and advise these things."

We know little of the problem with the Ephesian slaves, but apparently they were becoming restless about being slaves, perhaps feeling that they should be free. We do know that there were others teaching that wealth was a sign of god's approval (vv.3ff.), which was a common belief among the Jews. This was causing the unrest in the slaves, and perhaps it was creating both jealousy and greed.

Paulus urges the slaves to remain good slaves. If your lord is a Christian, you should treat him like a brother; do not act like he is an oppressor. A trusting (Christian) lord might grant you good things.

"If anyone teaches otherwise and does not approach the healthy sayings of our Lord Anointed Jesus, and the teaching according to piety, he has been puffed up and understands nothing. Instead, he has a sick desire about confrontation and bickering, out of which come envy, strife, evil speaking, evil suspicions, and constant disputes between people whose minds have been corrupted and have been deprived of the truth, while they assume that financial profit is piety."

Paul attacks the Jewish opponents, lambasting their promotion toward "class envy." Focusing on material wealth as they do, they are promoting envy and strife; they have been "deprived of the truth," rejecting Jesus' teachings on helping one another. They "assume that financial profit is piety." Fortunately, NO ONE does that today. *Wink*

"Now piety with self-sufficiency is a great profit. For we have brought nothing into creation; neither can we carry anything out. But if we have food and clothing, we will be satisfied."

Since "you can't take it with you," if you are content with whatever state you're in (and he's talking mainly to the slaves who are becoming envious), then you'll really profit!

"But the ones who resolve to be wealthy are falling into temptation, and a snare, and many foolish and harmful strong desires, which cause people to sink into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of bad things. Certain people who are coveting money have wandered away from the faith and have pierced themselves with many sorrows."

Paul's attack on his wealthy opponents. Here, they are money-seekers, who fall, then are snared, and then sink...into destruction. This is what seeking material wealth does to a person! Paulus' next comment, directed at Timotheos, starts with an admonition for him to avoid seeking wealth: "But you, God's person, flee these things...."

6:11-close

"Now you, God's person, flee these things, and pursue what is right, and piety, trust, love, endurance, and meekness. Fight the good fight of the faith, as you lay hold of eternal life, into which you were called and for which you made the good acknowledgement before many witnesses."

The "good acknowledgement" is that Jesus is Messiah, something that he doesn't want the Ephesians (or Timotheos) to forget.

"I charge you before God who makes alive all things and Anointed Jesus who testified the good acknowledgement in front of Pontius Pilatus, to keep the precept unspotted and without reproach until the appearing of our lord Anointed Jesus, which will be shown to us in his own time by the blessed and holy power, the highest king and highest lord, the only one who has immortality, who lives in unapproachable light, whom no human being has seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal might. A-mein."

Jesus, too, admitted who he was before the gentile Governor, and so, Timotheos (and by extension, the Ephesians) are to "keep the precept unspotted"-- they should live in a manner worthy of Jesus' messiahship, keeping that in mind. Following the doxology to God, Paulus will give some examples of what he means by this.

"Charge those who are wealthy in the present age not to have superior attitudes, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of wealth but on a god who is richly offering us all things for our enjoyment. Charge them to do good, to be wealthy in good deeds, to be ready to give and willing to share. Then they will be treasuring away for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may hold on to what life really is."

The wealthy Judaizers need to forget the so-called importance and status of wealth, for it is nothing. Instead, they should live in a worthy manner, holding on to "what life really is."

"Oh Timotheos, guard what has been deposited with you. Turn aside from the profane and empty babble and from what teachings are contrary, falsely called knowledge, which some are professing; and they have missed the mark regarding the faith. May generosity be with you all."

This is a final reminder to Timotheos himself that as he works to help the Ephesians overcome the problem with Judaizers, he must guard himself to stay out of the arguments they are creating. These so-called "law teachers" (1:7) think they have the true knowledge, but their legalistic and ritualistic approach to life has "missed the mark regarding the faith"--we'd say, "missed the point." The point of Jesus' coming was to do away with that sort of mentality.