

***“Paul’s First Letter to Timothy –
It’s Dispensational Significance”***

Review: *“Son, Timothy, O Man of God, Flee”*

Last time we reviewed the entire letter chapter by chapter. Today we will do it again, but theme by theme.

Our Outline Today:

- ***1 Timothy – Its Dispensational Importance: An Exhortation (1 Tim. 1:4)***
- ***1 Timothy – Its Dispensational Importance: Its Essence (1 Tim. 1:6)***
- ***1 Timothy – Its Dispensational Importance: Its Foundation (1 Tim. 1:15-17; 3:16)***
- ***1 Timothy – Its Dispensational Importance: Its Application (all chapters)***
- ***1 Timothy – Its Dispensational Importance: Amplified (1 Tim. chapters 1,4,6)***

I. 1 Timothy – Its Dispensational Importance: An Exhortation (1 Tim. 1:4):

[READ] 1 Tim. 1:1-4

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, [which is] our hope;

2 Unto Timothy, [my] own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, [and] peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, **that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,**

4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: [so do].

- ***Verse 4 is so essential here to our study of this letter, but first let’s look at the introductory verses to the opening exhortation to Timothy here as the apostle launches his first letter to his dear son in the faith:***

- Paul, [an] apostle of Jesus Christ ... by the commandment ... God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ ... which is our hope: **Yes, praise God he is. Amen!**
- ... my son in the faith, grace, mercy, and peace ...: **His standard introduction.**

- ***Now to the heart of the teaching, the “charge” or “command” to Timothy that was given before, perhaps at his ordination:***

no other teaching (of a different sort), namely, fables and endless genealogies which minister questions ...

But these teachings only bring more questions and never the sure and eternal word of the living God. Many of us here can testify to that from our experience in earlier years. Praise God for intersecting in our lives to bring us the true and transforming word of grace. Praise God! I very well remember those days of his mercy and grace abundant.

- ***... rather than than godly edifying which is in faith: [so do]***

Better Greek manuscripts have been identified since the KJV was translated and published in 1611. There we find not the Greek words translated “godly edifying”, but the dispensation of God, the one which is by faith!” THERE ARE NO MINCED WORDS HERE, EVEN IN THE FIRST FOUR VERSES.

- ***So the apostle even here in his very first words of this letter establishes the “dispensational” significance of the letter. That is how important it was to him. What about for us??***

II. 1 Timothy — Its Dispensational Importance: Its Essence (1 Tim. 1:6):

1 Tim. 1:5-7

5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and [of] a good conscience, and [of] faith unfeigned:

6 From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;

7 Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

- ***So the real issue is mentioned right here at the beginning — LEGALISM. They didn’t really understand what they were talking about though. They desired to be “law-teachers” since they were opposed to Paul’s “grace” teaching. Why the emphasis though on “dispensational teaching” here? Because they were promoting a legal-dispensation, whether that might have been a revised Mosaic legal system, or perhaps the law of the coming kingdom. Either way, it conflicted with grace as Paul taught it. Paul taught a dispensation of grace — they taught one of law.***

That dispensation was NOT IN EFFECT, AND THAT WAS THE REAL ISSUE HERE AND THE DANGER OF THEIR TEACHINGS.

○ ***What is a “dispensation”?***

- ***This word speaks of “household management”, in a nutshell, though here it is in reference to God and his sovereign management over all but more specifically, over his own children.***
- ***So the importance of this is clear then. Practically speaking, if God is doing one thing and we are doing another, we are conflicting with the plan, purpose, and work of Almighty God.***

That always pleases the enemy and not the Lord! IF GRACE IS GOD’S WORKING, THEN SATAN WILL ALWAYS BE OPPOSED TO THAT AND WILL BE PROMOTING WORKS, OFTEN OF A RELIGIOUS SORT THOUGH NOT ALWAYS. WORKS PLUS FAITH IS A MOST COMMON TEACHING, FOR EXAMPLE, THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DOCTRINE PRESENTED (AND NEVER REVOKED) AT THE COUNCIL OF TRENT IN 1563 WHICH CONDEMNS ALL PROTESTANTS TO ETERNAL HELLFIRE.

- ***If we compare also with Acts 20:32, we gain additional understanding of the apostle’s expectations for Timothy. Paul and others (including Timothy), called for the elders of the church of the Ephesians to meet them in the ancient city of Miletus:***

[READ] Acts 20:30-32 [to the Ephesian elders]

30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

- ***Verse 32 is a key verse here: “I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.” **Grace builds up, works can not. One provides an inheritance eternally, the other only leads to works*****

to be burned by the fires of the judgment seat of Christ. One “lays hold” on eternal life, the other can never even relate to that new life in Christ Jesus.

III. 1 Timothy — Its Dispensational Importance: Its Foundation (1 Tim. 1:15-17; 3:16):

[READ] 1 Tim. 1:15-17

15 This [is] a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, [be] honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- *Paul was sent forth to be our example (the word is the Greek word transliterated into our English word “type”) for the dispensation of grace, the dispensation which is distinguished by being by faith alone (verses 4-7 & 16). There would be constant spiritual warfare regarding the faith, he writes here. So don’t be surprised. And it has been in every period of time since this was written.*
- *But as verse 17 says, the Lord is still sovereign and it is to him we look for salvation. He is “the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, [be] honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”*

[READ] 1 Tim. 3:15-16

15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

- *“God manifest in the flesh”. This is, he writes here, “the mystery, the one of godliness”, or, “the godliness mystery”. And it is a great one indeed that he writes of here, summarizing in a way the entire redemptive history of mankind. God manifest “in flesh”.*
- *“Without controversy ...”: Not that there are no controversies regarding this but that there should be no controversies regarding it!*

- *But let's not forget the key subject here: Paul is writing about a "mystery" so we should not assume that this is simply the Incarnation truth though that is foundational to everything. For that was not a mystery in the scriptural sense. So what is this mystery? A mystery is a "sacred secret", or what has not been revealed and cannot be known until it has been made known by Almighty God. But the Incarnation was revealed in both the Old and the New Testament in prophecy. So many go astray here in their interpretations because they are thinking of what is "mysterious" when they read this word rather than what has not been revealed until now.*
- *For our understanding, it would be wise to compare this with Col. 1 where Paul gives additional insights and depths of meaning:*

Col. 1:25-28

25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

26 [Even] the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

27 To whom God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

- *Who is preached according to this key scripture? It is "the Christ in you", the riches of the glory of the mystery. As verse 27 states, it is Christ in you the hope of glory! Even now a preview of our eventual glorification in Christ Jesus is well underway.*
 - *But that is possible only because Christ was raised from the dead as a "life giving spirit", 1 Cor. 15:45.*
 - *So we possess him as such a spirit, Rom. 8:9.*
 - *And this newness of life, Rom. 6:4, is what we manifest of him ...*
 - *... to the world and to angels (1 Tim. 5:21)!*
 - *... preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. [For the latter, compare Rom. 6 & 8, the past tenses even for our death, resurrection, and glorification with him!!] "Since ye therefore be risen with Christ, seek those things which be above ..." (Col. 3:1).*

- *These are such transforming truths to consider that it is no wonder that satan's efforts are so focused against us. We must preach this Christ or we preach a false Christ. That is the bottom line as Paul teaches here.*

1 Cor. 4:14-17

14 I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn [you].

15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet [have ye] not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

- *The essence of dispensational teaching is that it is NOT primarily about "ages" as many are still teaching today. No, it is about God's management of his realm, his creation, and especially the saints of God, his redeemed. That management is not always the same but varies. Once the law ruled under Moses, but no more. There is no more common theme in Paul's letters than that. Not even the Kingdom Law rules today. If it did a great many would have suffered the death penalty for their gross transgressions. Our nation would be no more. And, the lion and the lamb would be our friends along with the serpents!*

Today all is about God's abundant grace through the finished work of Christ on Calvary's cross, and not about works. Paul preached, taught, wrote that and lived it out for all to see. He was our example as the heavenly Christ was his example (1 Cor. 11:1 et. al.).

IV. 1 Timothy — Its Dispensational Importance: Its Application (all chapters):

Its "application" — there are so many applications here in this letter, applications of his exalted teaching about the mystery of godliness and the dispensation, the one which is "in faith":

- *Chapter 1 [the beginning - and final - exhortation outlined]*
 - *Setting the stage with Timothy in charge*

- **Chapter 2 [Godly authority works itself out in and out of the church]**
 - **Submission to kings, by women to church leadership**
 - **The seed of the woman promise**
- **Chapter 3 [proper order in the ministries of the church is necessary]**
 - **Elders, overseers qualifications with their wives**
 - **And deacons too with the mystery of the faith and of godliness at the center of it all**
- **Chapter 4 [the godliness works itself out in fruitfulness]**
 - **Marriage**
 - **Food**
 - **Oversight and teaching responsibilities in the church**
- **Chapter 5 [the practical teaching continues, all in the context for the mystery of godliness!]**
 - **Elder respect and support**
 - **Widows**
 - **Care for family members**
- **Chapter 6 [then the final exhortation and a great one indeed]**
 - **The rich and their responsibilities**
 - **Timothy's final challenge - keep the faith, lay hold on eternal life**

1 Tim. 2:13-15 [You will well remember this application as our series on "Prisoners of Hope" was focused so carefully here in this passage]

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

- **The creator's authority over all his work is a continuing theme here in this letter. In chapter 2 we see that his authority must also be reflected in the marriage bond. This may be an unpopular teaching indeed, but it is the word of God found here in 1 Timothy. Proper attention to context is necessary, as we have seen, to understand this teaching.**
- **"Saved in [or through] childbearing", though a statement troubling to many in our day I am so sad to say, without the context here cannot be properly understood. The context of Genesis 3 is**

essential to understand the teaching. This is all about the Seed of the Woman prophecy in Gen. 3:16.

The burden brought upon Eve and upon all women to follow after her disobedience to Adam's headship was so great and enduring that only the hope of her coming Seed, the Seed of the Woman, would be sufficient to carry her through this life.

Indeed, we are all Prisoners of Hope, but especially believing women. See Zech. 9:12 for that phrasing that has come to mean so much to us here.

1 Tim. 5:3-5

3 Honour widows that are widows indeed.

4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.
5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

1 Tim. 6:17-19

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. [see verse 12 also]

- ***So here the apostle focuses on some very practical issues all churches face. Widows are one and the rich are another. That the apostle considered the most exalted teachings and doctrines to be the source of deliverance from the common trials of believers and therefore of the churches is noteworthy.***
- ***Times of increasing persecution were anticipated with an increasing need for the assembly's care for widows and especially those now designated formally as "widows indeed". The sentence is short but with significant impact for the life of the church, I am sure.***
- ***There is a special focus here on the rich. Why? Probably because of the inordinate power that wealth brings. It is so easy (natural?) for that power to be misused. Need I say more? We all have seen the evidence of this, I am sure.***

V. 1 Timothy — Its Dispensational Importance: Amplified

1 Tim. 1:18-19

18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning *[the]* faith have made shipwreck:

20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

- *The mention by name here (and in 2 Tim. 2:17, where another, Philetus, is mentioned) underscores the seriousness of the challenge here to Timothy. The bottom line is that if false teachers are allowed to continue in the churches then the evil roots will bear fruit.*
- *Separation from those promoting evil doctrine is therefore critical to the health and wellbeing of the church of God. Compromise with the enemy of the faith can never bring the blessing of God. Rather, separation is the correct course forward. It is true warfare—know your enemy well that he may be defeated.*

The great danger of teachings that do not honor properly the dispensational plan of God is amplified greatly here by these final words.

[READ] 1 Tim. 4:1-2

1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.

- *Some challenges would be coming to Timothy soon enough, it seems. Well, it might rather be that these “latter days” cover the entire period until the Rapture of the church and the warning in Acts 20 refers to the beginning of those troubles. It seems, therefore, that we are in those times today, doesn’t it?*
- *The strong words “watch and warn” underscores the critical importance of Timothy’s challenge here, to maintain the purity of church doctrine even when divisions in the assembly are the inevitable outcome.*

- *The contrast of this “departure” with another in 2 Thess. 2 should not be missed. Again, the context is so important in interpretation. The summary of this work of God, the mystery of godliness, in 3:16 is exactly the opposite of what the mystery of lawlessness is working out today as described in 2 Thess. 2:7. So we should not be surprised at his fierceness in attacking this truth. His lies and wonders are directly opposed to what God is doing today, under grace.*

[READ] 1 Tim. 6:20-21

20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane [and] vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace [be] with thee. Amen.

- *“Grace [be] with thee. Amen.”: Today this is everything in a short, one word summary. GRACE. What a great way to end this letter. Praise God for his unsearchable and glorious riches. These are simple words but with so much meaning. At beginning and at the end ... This was his blessing to offer.*
- *That is eternal life for now with eternal rewards as written in chapter 5 verse 21: “even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord”.*
- *The importance of this teaching required that it be protected. Timothy is charged to do that in chapter 1 but here in chapters 4 and 6 he is enjoined to make this his central priority in ministry.*
- *Is the Mystery of Godliness in the center of our teaching and our thinking as it was for Paul? Well, is it? And what about the Genesis revelations the apostle relies on so much here for his exposition?*
- *My Final Exhortation to You, Timothy — The Faith Itself Is Under Attack. Keeping the faith is therefore of critical importance.*
 - *“... Which some professing have erred concerning the faith”: This is all about the false teachers, of course. They professed the faith but they missed the mark, he writes here. The “vain babbling” and the “oppositions of [a false] science [or knowledge]” had led them all astray. Timothy was to have nothing to do with them. Satan’s lies were at the heart of their*

teachings, their profession of faith. What an amazing statement this is. But their profession of faith was “believable” for many although it was a false profession of faith that they were making.