

I Timothy 1:3-11

Commentary: False Doctrine 1:3-11

Unlike previous letters penned by Paul, this one does not contain a thanksgiving (refer introductions to Colossians, I Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, I & 2 Thessalonians). Rather, Paul immediately addresses some of the more serious issues affecting the church at Ephesus. These opening words served to remind Timothy to correct the teachers in the Ephesian church who had strayed from sound doctrine and were majoring on minor matters in their Bible teaching (v4). He reminded Timothy of his own responsibility as a preacher of God's truth (v3).

It is likely that some of the “false teachers” spoken of in v 6-7 were Elders. This is supported by their presuming to be “teachers of the law” (v7) and the repeated concern in this letter about Elders, their qualifications (3:1-7), their responsibilities (5:17) and their discipline (5:19-25).

Instructions:

Carefully read through I Timothy 1:3-11 and then attempt to answer the questions which follow.

The word “urged” (v3) is strong language used by Paul towards Timothy.

1. What is it that Paul urges Timothy to do?
2. What does this imply about the desires of Timothy?

The word “instruct” or “charge” (v3) means to strongly command someone. It is used in this context as a command given by a superior. As a shepherd to the Ephesian church and a representative of the apostle Paul, Timothy was the superior giving the instruction.

3. What is the instruction (charge) Timothy is to give to those “certain men” (v3-4)?
4. What does this imply about what some were teaching in the church?

The myths and endless genealogies spoken in v4 were legendary stories about Old Testament history. These extra-biblical stories had become part of the traditions of Judaism that grew out of the genealogies of the OT.

5. What was the result of the false teachers preaching these myths and genealogies (v4)?

6. Alternatively, what does teaching true doctrine result in (v4)?

7. What does Paul say is the goal of sound teaching (v5)?

8. What should be avoided when teaching God's Word (v6)?

The false teachers were using the Law of Moses to reinforce and support their false claims. In his letters to the Romans and Galatians Paul made it very clear that the Law had no power to save sinners, but rather to reveal them.

9. For whom does Paul say the Law was made (v9-10)?

Before his conversion, Paul practised righteousness by the Law.

10. What did God reveal to Paul instead (v11)?