

I Timothy 3:14 - 4:5

Commentary: The Purpose of The Local Church 3:14-16

It is at this point that we hit the climax of the letter as Paul clearly lays out his purpose for writing it. Paul hoped to come to Timothy soon and help correct the situation in Ephesus and deal with the false teachers. However, he felt the urgent need to instruct Timothy and the believers at Ephesus on how they ought to conduct themselves in the church of God. The purpose of the local church has not changed since Paul wrote this epistle; to be the “pillar and ground of the truth” which is Jesus Christ.

Comprehension Questions

Carefully read through I Timothy 3:14- 4:5 and then attempt to answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the purpose of Paul writing to this epistle to Timothy (v15)?
- 2) What is revealed in this epistle about the purpose of the local church (v15)?

In the various religions and philosophies of Paul’s day, the idea of a mystery was knowledge that was intentionally hidden from others. When the word mystery is used in the New Testament it refers to full revelation to all people

- 3) What does Paul mean by his use of the word mystery in v16?

In v16 Paul quotes what many commentators today believe to be an early church hymn.

- 4) Read through the 6-line hymn and list the church doctrines which are in evidence.

Commentary: Apostasy 4:1-5

Having just expounded the basis of truth and good doctrine in the church (v15-16), Paul now warns Timothy (and today’s church leaders) of the certainty of false teaching that will infect the church causing believers to turn away. Paul outlines the

character and source of this false teaching, as well as refuting a major theme of the teaching.

Comprehension Questions

5) What were some of the teachings that were causing the believers in Ephesus to depart from the faith (v1-3)?

6) What is the source of all false teaching?

I Thessalonians 5:19 states “Do not quench the Spirit”. To quench the Spirit means to despise the work of the Spirit to the point where He is prevented from convicting an individual of their sin. With this understanding in mind attempt to answer the following question.

6) What is meant by “conscience seared with a hot iron” (v2)?

In Paul’s day, a false teaching known as dualism (an early form of Gnosticism) was circulating in the church that claimed the physical realm was all evil but the spirit was all good, alive, and well.

7) Why would false teachers command others to avoid marriage and certain foods (v3)?

8) Can you list any religions/cults today that require individuals to abstain from marriage and certain foods?

9) What should our attitude be toward the things God has given us to enjoy (v3)?

10) How does Paul respond to this false teaching (v4-5)?