

Introduction To 1 & 2 Timothy And Titus

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Text: 1 & 2 Timothy; Titus

Introduction:

- I. In the living room of Scott Smelser in Prague, Czechoslovakia in 1991, Dale Smelser preached his first sermon to the twenty-five or so Czechs. He said, “We are not here to start an American Church.” He emphasized the need to look at Biblical teaching and establish the church which belongs to Christ.
 - A. When preaching to people without a cultural context of true Christianity we must ask ourselves, “What is essential for me to teach ‘the faith’? What is part of my American religious culture and what is part of the essence of God’s pattern?”
 - B. Whether we, like Timothy and Titus, are working with a young church or one that has been in existence for generations, we must continue to ask, “What is essential for me to teach ‘the faith’? What is the essence of God’s pattern?”
 - C. Wherever in the world, no matter the time frame this side of the cross, whatever the culture, regardless of the morals of our peers, we must push aside the accumulated traditions of man and adhere to God’s revealed pattern of sound words.
 - D. The Spirit, through Paul, recognized and fulfilled this need for Timothy, Titus and each of us in writing and preserving the first and second letters to Timothy and the letter to Titus.
- II. Note on the term “Pastorals”.
 - A. “. . . the first name given to them was *Pontifical Letters*, that is written by the *pontifex*, the priest, the controller of the Church. . . .
“Bit by bit they came to acquire the name by which they are still known – The Pastoral Epistles. In writing of *1 Timothy* Tomas Aquinas, as long ago as 1274, said, ‘This letter is as it were a *pastoral rule* which the Apostle delivered to Timothy.’ . . . But this title, the Pastoral Epistles, really became affixed to these letters in 1726 when a great scholar, Paul Anton by name, gave a series of famous lectures on them under that title.” (Barclay 1-2)
 - B. Since these manmade titles perpetuate the modern false teaching of the “Pastor” system found in some Protestant denominations, I appreciate Robert Harkrider’s title – “The Minister’s Epistles”. (Harkrider 1)
 - C. 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4 – It is significant that Paul addresses these men by their names without any titles attached. Rather than titles, terms were used to describe their work.
 1. 1 Tim. 4:6: “*you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ*”
 2. 2 Tim. 4:5: “*do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*”
- III. In this lecture we will:
 - A. Examine important features of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: author, recipients, date of writing and occasion.
 - B. We will also explore the major theme: truth versus error.

Body:

- I. **Author**
 - A. 1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:1: “*Paul*”

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1. It is not the intent of this lesson to examine the spurious argumentation concerning the Pauline authorship.
 - a. “That anyone should deny Paul’s authorship of these epistles, especially in view of the affirmation of the text itself in all three epistles, is indeed strange. The argumentation used by those who oppose Paul’s authorship has been satisfactorily answered again and again so that Paul’s authorship need not be doubted.” (Patton xi)
 2. Several authors outline the extensive evidence for the Pauline authorship. (Hamilton 4-13 and Hendriksen 4-39)
- B. 1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:1: *“an apostle of Jesus Christ”*
1. To claim apostleship was significant in establishing the Divine authority of the words of these letters.
 - a. Some would deny that Paul the apostle wrote these letters, and therefore, their inspiration. They find it difficult to accept, for example, that the church could have had such an advanced organization at this early date.
 - 1) Hendriksen quoted an opponent of the Pauline authorship, “The Pastorals reveal a marked advance in ecclesiastical organization, far beyond the time of Paul. In his day there was as yet no official ministry. When the Pastorals were written, on the other hand, there was a rather complex organization, with salaried officials whose qualifications had become standardized.” (22)
 - b. Paul’s apostleship confirms the fact that the organizational pattern taught in these letters was not a reflection of what developed by man’s tradition but was what God established by Divine decree.
 2. Acts 26:16-18: Jesus appeared to Saul/Paul on the road to Damascus *“to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. . . the Gentiles, to whom I now send you”*.
 - a. Paul was “sent” (apostle) by Jesus Christ to preach to the Gentiles.
 - b. Paul was also clearly designated as one through whom Jesus would reveal His will.
 3. Acts 13:2: Paul and Barnabas were called by the Holy Spirit to accomplish the *“work to which I have called them.”* As Paul traveled and established churches:
 - a. Romans 15:20: He went where the gospel had not yet been preached.
 - b. He traveled with a group of preachers/teachers.
 - 1) Cf. Acts 20:4: a list of traveling companions on his 3rd journey.
 - c. At times, he left preachers behind to establish the new converts.
 - 1) Cf. Acts 17:14: Timothy and Silas were left behind in Berea when Paul was forced to leave and traveled to Athens.
 - d. At times, he sent out men to check on churches newly established.
 - 1) Cf. 2 Cor.7:5-7, 13-16: Titus was sent to the church in Corinth and returned with a firsthand report to Paul who, in turn, wrote a letter to deal with their situation.

- 2) Cf. 1 Thess. 3:1-7: Timothy was sent to the church in Thessalonica and returned with a firsthand report to Paul who, in turn, wrote a letter to deal with their situation.
- e. At times, his companions carried letters from Paul.
 - 1) Cf. Col. 4:7: Tychicus delivered the letter of Paul as well as news about him to the church in Colossae.
 - 2) Cf. Titus 3:13: Zenas and Apollos apparently delivered Paul's letter to Titus.

II. Recipients

A. 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2: *"to Timothy"*

1. Timothy is mentioned 24 times in the NT: Acts 16:1; 17:14-15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4; Rom. 16:21; 1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10; 2 Cor. 1:1, 19; Phil. 1:1; 2:19; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 3:2, 6; 2 Thess. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:2; Phile. 1; Heb. 13:23.
2. Paul had a very close relationship with Timothy. He described him as: *"my true son in the faith"* (1 Tim. 1:2, 18), *"my beloved son"* (2 Tim. 1:2), and *"O, man of God"* (1 Tim. 6:11)
 - a. Paul calls 3 men his *"son"*: Timothy, Titus and Onesimus (Phile. 10).
3. 49 AD: Perhaps Paul taught Timothy the truth during his first journey.
 - a. Acts 14:6-7: Timothy might have been in this first group of converts in Derbe and Lystra.
 - b. Acts 14:19-20 compared with 2 Tim.3:10-11: Timothy was aware of the persecutions Paul endured during his first journey.
4. 51 AD: Timothy was invited to join Paul and Silas on their second journey.
 - a. Acts 15:36-41: Paul chose Timothy after vehemently rejecting John Mark as a traveling companion.
 - b. Acts 16:1-2: Timothy was *"well spoken of by the brethren."*
 - c. Patton estimates his age at 23 (xxii). Reese estimates 20 (564).
5. Timothy became a highly trusted fellow-worker of Paul.
 - a. Paul included Timothy in his address in 6 of his letters: 2 Cor., Phil., Col., 1 Thess., 2 Thess. and Philemon.
 - 1) Silvanus shared this honor with Timothy in 2 letters: 1 Thess. and 2 Thess.
 - 2) Paul identified himself alone as the author in 6 other letters: Rom., Gal., Eph., 1 Tim., 2 Tim. and Titus.
 - 3) Paul included Sosthenes in 1 letter: 1 Corinthians.
6. 62 AD: While imprisoned in Rome, Paul sent Timothy to Philippi with a very high endorsement. Phil.2:19-24: *"no one like-minded"* *"proven character"* *"as a son."*
 - a. The letter to the Philippians was written not long before Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy.

B. Titus 1:4: *"to Titus"*

1. Titus is not mentioned in the book of Acts although he was a fellow-worker of Paul. He is mentioned 13 times elsewhere in the NT: 2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6, 13, 14; 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18; Gal. 2:1, 3; 2 Tim. 4:10; Titus 1:4.
2. Titus 1:4: *“my true son in our common faith.”* Paul shared a close relationship with Titus although the terms of endearment are not as numerous as with Timothy.
3. 42 AD: Acts 11:19-26: Although the time and place of Titus’ conversion is uncertain, perhaps it was in Antioch of Syria when Paul worked with Barnabas.
4. 50 AD: Acts 15:2: Titus was among *“and certain others”* in Antioch of Syria who journeyed with Paul to Jerusalem to discuss whether the Jerusalem church had sent with approval those who were teaching the need for Gentiles to be circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law.
 - a. Gal. 2:3: Titus, although a Greek, was not compelled to be circumcised.
5. Titus was a trusted co-worker of Paul.
 - a. 2 Cor. 2:13: Paul called Titus *“my brother.”*
 - b. 2 Cor. 8:23: Paul gave a strong endorsement of Titus as *“my partner and fellow worker.”*
 - c. 2 Cor. 12:18: Titus proved his character by not taking advantage of the Corinthians.
 - d. 2 Tim.4:10: Titus was with Paul in his 2nd imprisonment but traveled to Dalmatia before Paul’s death.

III. Date Of Writing

A. 63 AD: 1 Timothy and Titus

1. 61-63 AD: Acts 28:30-31: Paul is in prison in Rome for 2 years.
 - a. During these years he lived in relatively pleasant conditions in a *“rented house”* and was able to receive guests and continue preaching.
 - b. He wrote the letters to the churches in Philippi, Colossae and Ephesus as well as an individual member in Colossae named Philemon.
 - c. The fact that Luke stopped his Divine historical record with Paul in prison in Rome makes the rest of the chronology a matter of our best guess.
2. Phil. 1:25: While in prison, Paul expressed his confidence that he would be released.
 - a. Patton notes that the burning of Rome by Nero took place in 64 AD which would have made Paul’s release later than 63 AD improbable. (xiii)
3. 63 AD: Titus 1:5: Paul left Rome and passed through Crete leaving Titus behind.
4. 1 Tim. 1:3-4: Paul traveled through Ephesus leaving Timothy behind.
5. Rom. 15:23-24: Perhaps en route to Spain, Paul wrote to Titus and his first letter to Timothy with instructions.
 - a. The fact that Paul wrote these letters rather than staying in these places and doing the work himself indicates a very full travel plan.

B. 65-67 AD: 2 Timothy

- a. Paul returned to Rome. “Whether he was arrested before or after his arrival in Rome, we do not know. We do know that Titus was with Paul in Rome and from there went to Dalmatia (2 Tim.4:10)”. (Patton xv)
- b. 2 Tim. 4:6-8: Paul wrote with a tone of finality and no expectation of being released from prison.
- c. 2 Tim. 4:21: Paul urged Timothy to come to him before winter. We do not know if Timothy arrived before Paul’s execution.

IV. Occasion Of The Writing Of Each Of The Letters

A. 1 Timothy:

1. Ephesus:
 - a. 53 AD: Acts 18:19-21: Paul’s first contact with the people of Ephesus was at the end of his second journey.
 - 1) “Ephesus was one of the great cities of the world during the New Testament times. There were political (it was the provincial capital), economic (all commerce with the interior of Asia Minor flowed through the harbor of Ephesus), and religious (the Temple of Artemis) reasons for her importance.” (Reese 666)
 - b. 53-54 AD: Acts 19:10: During his third journey, Paul returned and continued to teach for 2 years.
 - c. 57 AD: Acts 20:17-38: At the end of his third journey as he traveled to Jerusalem, Paul spoke with the elders of the church in Ephesus and warned them of impending trouble. “*Savage wolves*” would pull away some of the disciples.
2. 63 AD: 1 Tim. 1:4: After spending several years being shuffled through the legal system, Paul visited the church in Ephesus and was so concerned about them that he left Timothy behind. This letter added direction and focus to the work of Timothy.
 - a. 1 Tim. 3:14-15: Although Paul intended to return he wrote this letter “*so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of God, the pillar and ground of the truth*”.
 - b. The Temple/House of Artemis/Diana was first built about 555 BC, destroyed and rebuilt by Alexander the Great in 356 BC. It was one of the Seven Wonders of the World measuring 300’ x 150’. “One of its features was its pillars. It contained one hundred and twenty-seven pillars, every one of them the gift of a king. All were made of marble, and some were studded with jewels and overlaid with gold”. (Barclay 89)
 - c. Paul was concerned about a much more important *house* which is THE wonder of the world – “*the church of the living God*”.
 - 1) He wrote of its high purpose – to be “*the pillar and ground of the truth*”.
 - d. 91-95 AD: Rev. 2:2-4: The church at Ephesus was commended by Jesus for facing a great test and passing it doctrinally.
3. 1 Timothy is an instructional letter from a mentor to his beloved student. It is difficult to outline but throughout Paul exhorted, warned and commanded Timothy and, in turn, told Timothy to exhort, warn and command others.

4. Since Timothy and Titus were long time companions of Paul and would have been very familiar with these teachings, these letters added credibility to what each was trying to accomplish. They became a standard by which all who would threaten the “house of God” would be judged.
5. The language indicates that these letters were not destined for one man in one specific occasion but for all men, especially preachers, in any circumstance and for all time.
 - a. 1 Tim. 3:15: “*how you ought to conduct yourself*” – The term “*yourself*” is in the subjunctive mood rather than the indicative.
 - 1) “The subjunctive mood expresses wish, intention, possibility, or probability” (Clark 158).
 - 2) Paul is not expressing the way Timothy **was** acting but the way he **should** act. He is setting up a standard of behavior, I believe, for all.
 - b. Titus 1:5: “*in every city*” – This command is in harmony with the practice of Paul in other cities (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Phil. 1:1).

B. Titus:

1. Crete:
 - a. “The mountainous island is located southeast of Greece; its dimensions are 160 miles by 35 miles. . . . towns were heavily populated, described by one writer as ‘Neither peaceable among themselves, nor very patient of foreign dominion.’” (Jensen 386)
 - b. “Morally and socially the Cretans had a bad reputation in the Mediterranean world, illustrated by these two sayings from classical writings: ‘Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons’ (Epimenides, quoted by Paul in 1:12). ‘The Cretans are always brigands and piratical, and unjust’ (Leonides)”. (Jensen 387)
 - c. Nothing is recorded about the beginnings of the church in Crete. Perhaps some of the Jews who were present on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:11) were converted and, when dispersed because of persecution (Acts 8:1-4), taught the truth to those of the island.
 - d. It must be remembered that the first century infant church was “an island in the sea of paganism”. (Barclay 2)
 - 1) The Gentile Christians who made up these churches were only recently removed from a culture permeated with error. Slipping back into these errors, or at least borrowing from them, would be much easier than being established in the truth.
2. 63 AD: Titus 1:5: Paul briefly visited the church in Crete but was unable to accomplish all that he wanted. He, therefore, left Titus to “*set in order the things that are lacking.*”
 - a. As in 1 Timothy, God had a picture of what the church should be. The letter to Titus revealed what was needed to fill in any deficit.
 - b. Tit. 1:5-9: Titus’ primary job was to appoint elders.
 - c. Tit. 1:10-16: The primary reason for appointing elders was because of the false teaching and immorality prevalent among and/or around the Christians.

- d. Tit. 2:1-3:11: The balance of the letter addressed personal morality with the *“faithful saying, . . . those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works”* as the climax of the section and in direct contrast to the false teaching.

C. 2 Timothy:

1. AD 65-67: 2 Tim. 4:6: Paul knew that *“the time of my departure is at hand.”* His life’s work was about to end but the tone of this letter was not one of despair but victory and hope, *“the Lord stood by me . . . and the Lord will deliver me.”* (cf. 2 Tim. 4:17-18)
2. 2 Tim. 1:4: Now at the end of Paul’s life, his thoughts turned to Timothy and he longed to see him. Timothy was about to lose his mentor, brother in Christ, and friend.
3. Paul’s final words to Timothy were to firm up his courage and faith. Perhaps Paul had doubt that Timothy had the endurance to finish the task or perhaps, as a loving parent, wanted to give one last word of encouragement.
 - a. 2 Tim. 1:6: *“stir up”*
 - b. 2 Tim. 1:13-14: *“hold fast . . . keep”*
 - c. 2 Tim. 2:1: *“be strong”*
 - d. 2 Tim. 2:7-8: *“consider . . . remember”*
 - e. 2 Tim. 2:22: *“flee”*
 - f. 2 Tim. 3:10-14: *“you have carefully followed . . . continue”*
 - g. 2 Tim. 4:1: *“I charge you . . . preach . . . be watchful . . . endure . . . do the work . . . fulfill your ministry”*
2. 2 Tim. 2:14-16: Timothy was to find his approval in the eyes of God not his peers.
3. 2 Tim. 4:2: Timothy’s job success was not found in the number of adherents he attracted but his faithfulness to his message. *“Preach the word”*.

V. **Major Contrast Within Each Of These Letters – Truth Versus Error**

A. Error:

1. 1 Tim. 1:3-4: *“no other doctrine, . . . fables and endless genealogies”*
2. 1 Tim. 1:6: *“idle talk”*
3. 1 Tim. 1:20: *“blaspheme”*
4. 1 Tim. 4:1-3: *“depart from the faith, . . . deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, . . . forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods . . .”*
5. 1 Tim. 4:7: *“profane and old wives fables”*
6. 1 Tim. 6:3: *“teaches otherwise . . . disputes and arguments over words . . . useless wranglings of men”*
7. 1 Tim. 6:20: *“profane and vain babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.”*
8. Titus 1:10-16: *“idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, . . . teaching things which they ought not, . . . Jewish fables and commandments of men”*

9. Titus 3:9: *“foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law.”*
10. 2 Tim. 2:14-19: *“strive about words . . . profane and vain babblings . . . resurrection is already passed”*
11. 2 Tim. 2:23: *“foolish and ignorant disputes”*
12. 2 Tim. 3:5: *“a form of godliness but denying its power”*
13. 2 Tim. 4:4: *“fables”*

B. True teaching:

1. *“Truth”*
 - a. 1 Tim. 2:4: *“knowledge of the truth”*
 - b. 1 Tim. 2:7: *“I am speaking the truth . . . in faith and truth”*
 - c. 1 Tim. 3:15: *“pillar and ground of the truth”*
 - d. 1 Tim. 4:3: *“by those who believe and know the truth”*
 - e. 1 Tim. 6:5: *“the truth”*
 - f. Titus 1:1: *“acknowledgement of the truth”*
 - g. Titus 1:14: *“who turn from the truth”*
 - h. 2 Tim. 2:15: *“rightly dividing the word of truth”*
 - i. 2 Tim. 2:18: *“strayed concerning the truth”*
 - j. 2 Tim. 2:25: *“that they may know the truth”*
 - k. 2 Tim. 3:7: *“come to the knowledge of the truth”*
 - l. 2 Tim. 3:8: *“resist the truth”*
 - m. 2 Tim. 4:4: *“turn their ears away from the truth”*
2. *“The word”* – revelation of God
 - a. 1 Tim. 4:5: *“sanctified by the word of God”*
 - b. 1 Tim. 5:17: *“those who labor in the word”*
 - c. Titus 1:3: *“manifested His word through preaching”*
 - d. Titus 1:9: *“holding fast the faithful word”*
 - e. Titus 2:5: *“the word of God”*
 - f. 2 Tim. 2:9: *“the word of God is not chained”*
 - g. 2 Tim. 2:15: *“rightly dividing the word of truth”*
 - h. 2 Tim. 4:2: *“Preach the word!”*
3. *“Sound doctrine”* – healthful teaching for the soul
 - a. 1 Tim. 1:10: *“sound doctrine”*
 - b. 1 Tim. 6:3: *“wholesome words”*
 - c. Titus 1:9: *“by sound doctrine”*
 - d. Titus 2:1: *“proper for sound doctrine”*

- e. 2 Tim. 1:13: *“pattern of sound words”*
- f. 2 Tim. 4:3: *“not endure sound doctrine”*
- 4. *“The faith”* – the defined set of truths.
 - a. 1 Tim. 1:19: *“concerning the faith”*
 - b. 1 Tim. 3:9: *“the mystery of the faith”*
 - c. 1 Tim. 3:13: *“in the faith which is in Christ Jesus”*
 - d. 1 Tim. 4:1: *“some will depart from the faith”*
 - e. Titus 1:13: *“sound in the faith”*
 - f. 2 Tim. 3:8: *“disapproved concerning the faith”*

C. First century applications:

1. Jews:
 - a. Gen. 3:3: *“God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die’”*. According to the Jewish Study Bible, Eve added to God’s prohibition by adding, *“nor shall you touch it”*. *“In relaying the prohibition to his wife, Adam has obeyed the rabbinic principles that one should ‘make a [protective] hedge for the Torah.’”* (Stern 16)
 - b. *“Midrash is a specific name for the activity of biblical interpretation as practiced by the Rabbis of the land of Israel in the first five centuries of the common era.”* (Stern 1863)
 - 1) The Mishnah (ca. AD 200) and the Talmud (ca. AD 500) are results of this type of interpretation.
 - 2) The Rabbis believed that every word, number and name had a present day application. The task of the interpreter was to “find” it. This led to volumes being written based on a single word or name in a genealogy even when there was NO additional information given in the Biblical text.
 - 3) One Midrash technique was to use the numerical sum of the word’s letters to decode its meaning.
 - a) For example, The first word in the book of Lamentations is “Alas” (*‘ekhah*). *“The numerical sum of the word’s four letter (alef = 1; yod = 10; kaf = 20; heh = 5) is 36, and this number, according to R. Levi, points to the 36 transgressions punishable by excommunication that the Jews committed, thereby bringing upon themselves the destruction of the Temple.”* (*Jewish Study Bible* 1866)
 - b) Another example, some changed the letters to numbers and interpreted them acrostically. *“. . . ben Azzai used the same word’s four letters [“Alas” in Lam. 1:1] as a key to showing that the Jews were not punished until they had denied the One (alef) God; transgressed all Ten (yod) Commandments; spurned circumcision (which was given after twenty [kaf] generations), and-on top of everything else!-rejected all the commandants in the Five (heh) Books of Moses.”* (*Jewish Study Bible* 1866)
 - c. The Book of Jubilees, sometimes called the Lesser Genesis, was written in the 2nd century AD and is considered one of the Pseudepigrapha books. It claims to be

the secret revelations given to Moses by angels as he waited on Mount Sinai for God to reveal His Law. It is a book that reworks Genesis and Exodus by filling in some of the gaps in the story.

- 1) For example, Jubilees 4:9 tells us the name of Cain's wife. "And Cain took 'Âwân his sister to be his wife and she bare him Enoch at the close of the fourth jubilee."
 - 2) Another example, Jubilees 5 gives more details about how Enoch walked with God. "¹⁶ And in the eleventh jubilee Jared took to himself a wife, and her name was Bâraka, the daughter of Râsûjâl, a daughter of his father's brother, in the fourth week of this jubilee, and she bare him a son in the fifth week, in the fourth year of the jubilee, and he called his name Enoch. ¹⁷ And he was the first among men that are born on earth who learnt writing and knowledge and wisdom and who wrote down the signs of heaven according to the order of their months in a book, . . . ²³ And he was taken from amongst the children of men, and we conducted him into the Garden of Eden in majesty and honour, and behold there he writeth down the condemnation and judgment of the world, and all the wickedness of the children of men. ²⁴ And on account of it (God) brought the waters of the flood upon all the land of Eden; . . ."
- d. According to Adam Clark, the genealogical records would have been impossible for the Jews to verify in the days of Timothy and Titus. This would have led to a great deal of confusion, speculation and debate.
- 1) "Herod destroyed the public registers; he, being an Idumean, was jealous of the noble origin of the Jews; and, that none might be able to reproach him with his descent, he ordered the genealogical tables, which were kept among the archives in the temple, to be burnt. See Euseb. H. E., lib. i. cap. 8. From this time the Jews could refer to their genealogies only from memory, or from those imperfect tables which had been preserved in private hands;" (584)

2. Gnostics:

- a. Gnosticism may have still been in its infancy during the days of Timothy and Titus; yet it was a destructive force inside and outside the church. These "knowing ones" arrogantly believed they had superior intellect and knowledge.
- b. "Between man and God there stretched a series of these emanations, each with his name and genealogy. So Gnosticism literally had endless fables and endless genealogies." (Barclay 7)
- c. "Sometimes Gnosticism and Judaism joined hands. We have already said that the Gnostics insisted that to climb the ladder to God a very special knowledge was necessary; and that some of them insisted that for the good life a strict asceticism was essential. It was the claim of certain of the Jews that it was precisely the Jewish law and the Jewish food regulations which provided that special knowledge and necessary asceticism." (Barclay 7-8)

D. Modern applications:

1. Modern Gnosticism:

- a. "The Lectorium Rosicrucianum is the youngest link in a chain of communities which repeatedly at significant moments come forward in the service of mankind.

And so the young Gnostic brotherhood, the Lectorium Rosicrucianum, is in the present day the instrument of the Universal Brotherhood.” (Unknown #1:18)

- b. The modern Gnostics continue to make a distinction between the spirit (good) and material (evil). “Therefore, we distinguish between two nature-orders: one, the kingdom of heaven, which is not of this world, the Immovable Kingdom wherein exists the human being who did not become a victim of the fall; the other, this our movable nature-order, this nature-order of change and degeneration, of birth and death, of rising, shining and fading to which we belong!” (Unknown #2:10-11)
 - c. Their idea of salvation/freedom from the material is, “the path of return to cosmic obedience, of return to harmony with the Logos. Now this path is within ourselves; it is latent in what we have just called a germ of life, a seed-atom, the spirit-spark-atom. It is situated in the top of the right heart-ventricle and is the only remnant from the time of our existence as God’s children, from the time before the fall.” (Unknown #2:11)
2. Premillennialism:
- a. One example from the book titled *88 Reasons Why The Rapture Will Be In 1988*, “From 28 A.D., when Jesus revealed himself to the Apostles as the Son of God (John 5:10-38), we have 28 A.D. + (7 x 280) = 1988, the Rapture of the Church year. Seven means complete, and 280 means the gestation period (of a human child); therefore, the numbers would say that the complete gestation period of the Church has been accomplished, and the Church is now ready to be born into eternity in the House of God in heaven.” (Whisenant 29)
 - b. Tim LaHaye is the co-author of the “Left Behind” series. This series has sold millions and puts the premillennial doctrine in easy to read form. Another book he co-authored shows how combative he and other false teachers like him can be, “Many teachers today are confusing Christians by teaching that Scripture was never intended to be interpreted literally. Instead, the call for a spiritualizing or allegorizing of the Bible’s prophecies. This only leads to confusion! Did God mean what He said and say what He meant? The study of fulfilled prophecy says a resounding yes.” (LaHaye 13)
3. Liberal Theologians:
- a. A Baptist theological journal explained the “real” story of the crossing of the Red Sea. Eakin says, “The tradition of the sea’s crossing has long been problematic for interpreters, and numerous scholars have attempted to clarify the sea event.” After sufficiently “clarifying” or explaining away the miraculous aspects of the Bible record he concludes, “The reality that the tale intends to convey is not past historical but present affective: the experience of events as they were taken in first by eyewitnesses, then through the consciousness of the generations who perennially relived and reflected on them as the basis of their own living faith.” (Eakin 477, 479)
 - b. I heard a Methodist Pastor preach on the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000. Because of his ability to “read between the lines to separate the real story from the accumulated legend” he was able to understand that Jesus used the boy sharing his meal to teach the need for all of us to share.
4. Catholicism:

- a. In a section of a Catholic Catechism discussing the effects of baptism, the writer listed the sources the Second Vatican Council used to determine truth: “the New Testament and the ancient Fathers, others are described in the liturgical prayers and instructions of the baptism rite that have come down through the centuries, and still others are the result of prayerful study and reflection that the Church has incorporated into her official teaching of the faithful.” (Hardon 506)
- b. The development of the teaching surrounding Mary, Purgatory, Celibacy, Infant Baptism and others illustrate the Catholic Church’s departure from “*the faith*” with *fables and strivings about words*.

Conclusion:

- I. With the teaching of Dale Smelser and others, the church in Prague continues today. Any Christian from any culture or any time would be comfortable there (if he could speak Czech) with their teaching and practice. The reason is that the Lord has revealed His pattern of truth in the first century and has preserved it for us today. Each knows how he “*ought to conduct [himself] in the house of God*”.
- II. What is the essence of our teaching? The answer is as simple and profound as, “*Preach the word!*”

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