

## THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS

### **I. 1 Timothy: Basic Local Church Ministry**

#### **I. Discerning Apostates And Their Errors**

(1 Timothy 4:1-5)

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. In view of reports of great needs and problems in various churches, much of which has been produced by Church leaders themselves, we view the Pastoral Epistles, handbooks on local pastoral ministry.
- B. Since Paul had established in 1 Timothy 3:14-16 that the local church is the pillar and foundation of God's spiritual truth in the world, which truth is centered on the Person and work of Jesus Christ, 1 Timothy 4:1-5 provides God's instructions on discerning the errors of the Satanic opposition to that Biblical truth.
- C. We thus view this passage for insight and application on discerning apostate errors in the church (as follows):

#### **II. Discerning Apostates And Their Errors, 1 Timothy 4:1-5.**

- A. Paul wanted Timothy to know that the information he was about to give on discerning apostates and their actions had been **emphatically** expressed by God the Holy Spirit, 1 Timothy 4:1a: the Greek adverb *hretos* describes how the Holy Spirit had communicated this truth, which adverb means "explicitly," "in set terms," U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 724; Moulton & Milligan, The Vocab. of the Grk. N. T., 1972, p. 564.
- B. Accordingly, **God** wants us to **pay close attention** to the discerning descriptions on apostates in 1 Timothy 4:1b-2 that we avoid being deceived and misled by them, and those discerning descriptions are as follows:
  1. Apostates *aphistemi*, "fall away, withdraw" (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 126) from "the faith" (*pistis*, in this context, "the doctrine, body of faith or belief," *Ibid.*, p. 669; 1 Tim. 4:1b. They withdraw from a commitment to the body of truth that was "once for all" (*hapax*, *Ibid.*, p. 80) delivered by Christ and the apostles to the Church, Jude 3. [In other words, this truth does **not change!**]
  2. Apostates *prosecho*, "give heed to" (*Ibid.*, p. 721) *planos*, "deceitful" demonic spirits and *didaskalia*, "teaching, instruction" of *daimon*, "demons, evil spirits," *Ibid.*, p. 168; 1 Timothy 4:1c,d.
  3. Apostates *pseudologos*, "lie" (*Ibid.*, p. 899) in *hupokrisis*, "hypocrisy" (*Ibid.*, p. 852-853), 1 Timothy 4:2a.
  4. Apostates *kausteriazō*, "(here perfect passive) have been permanently seared with a red-hot iron" (*Ibid.*, p. 426) in their *suneidesis*, "consciences," *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 794; v. 2b.
- C. Applied specifically to what Timothy was facing in "the forerunners of the Gnostics of the second century" (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 739), Paul described specific teachings by such apostates in 1 Timothy 4:3a:
  1. Gnostic apostates would teach that the spirit is good but matter is evil (*Ibid.*), and one brand of Gnosticism then taught the need to root out the natural desires of the body like the desires for food and for sex, *Ibid.*
  2. They would thus forbid marriage and command to abstain from certain foods, 1 Tim. 4:3a; Col. 2:21; *Ibid.*
- D. Paul corrected these false teachings, using Scriptural authority, 1 Timothy 4:3b-5 (as follows):
  1. He taught that God made matter, including the body's drive for food and sex. Indeed, Genesis 1:27-28a records how male and female humans were to be fruitful and multiply, what involved sexual activity, and Genesis 1:29 taught God gave man plant life to eat, and in Genesis 9:3 He added meat. (1 Timothy 1:3b)
  2. Regarding man's diet, since the issue of diet had been very significant in the dispensational shift from the Mosaic Law where there were dietary restrictions to the dispensation of the Church where all those restrictions were removed (Acts 10:9-16), Paul added that God had created all meats to be received in the Church with thanksgiving from those who believe and know the truth, 1 Timothy 1:3c-5.

***Lesson:*** *God has clearly emphasized the fact that apostates will fall away from the doctrinal beliefs once-for-all given by Christ and His apostles to the Church, that they instead will heed deceitful teachings of demons, their consciences being permanently seared. They will promote unnatural views in violation of the decent, sensible order set by God in creation and/or in His Word. [2 John 9-10 directs us to part fellowship with such apostates.]*

***Application:*** *(1) May we understand that we in the local church are called of God to pay close attention to parties who come our way that we discern those who depart from the Biblical doctrines once-for-all set down by Christ and His apostles. (2) May we understand that those who depart from that once-for-all faith may also pay heed to deceitful spirits and their demonic doctrines in lying hypocrisy with permanently seared consciences. (3) May we also understand that apostates can go to extremes in beliefs and practices rather than heed the Biblical and hence sensible moderations established by God in His creation and/or in His Word. (4) [May we part company with such apostates in obedience to 2 John 9-10.]*