

THE PASTORAL
EPISTLES WITH
PHILEMON & JUDE

R I S T O S A A R I N E N



BrazosPress

a division of Baker Publishing Group
Grand Rapids, Michigan

©2008 by Risto Saarinen

Published by Brazos Press
a division of Baker Publishing Group
P.O. Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287
www.brazospress.com

Printed in the United States of America

Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—for example, electronic, photocopy, recording—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Saarinen, Risto.

The Pastoral Epistles with Philemon and Jude / Risto Saarinen.

p. cm. — (Brazos theological commentary on the Bible)

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 978-1-58743-154-8 (cloth)

1. Bible. N. T. Pastoral Epistles—Commentaries. 2. Bible N. T. Philemon—Commentaries.

3. Bible. N. T. Jude—Commentaries. I. Title. II. Series.

BS2735.53.S23 2008

227/.807—dc22

2008026931

CONTENTS

Series Preface 9
Author's Preface 15
Abbreviations 17
Introduction to the Pastoral Epistles 19

First Timothy

Introductory Part (1 Tim. 1:1–20) 31
Apostolic Greeting (1 Tim. 1:1–2) 31
False Doctrines, Divine Economy, and Timothy's Task (1 Tim. 1:3–7) 32
Law and Gospel, Doctrine and Conduct (1 Tim. 1:8–11) 36
Commission of Paul as Apostle (1 Tim. 1:12–17) 42
Admonition to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:18–20) 46

Worship, Life, and Order in the Church (1 Tim. 2:1–3:16) 49
Pray for Everyone: Christianity Is Universal (1 Tim. 2:1–7) 50
How Men and Women Should Behave (1 Tim. 2:8–15) 54
Excursus 1: 1 Timothy 2:15 in Reformation Theology 59
Requirements for a Bishop (1 Tim. 3:1–7) 60
Requirements for Deacons (1 Tim. 3:8–13) 66
Church of the Living God (1 Tim. 3:14–16) 68
Excursus 2: Ecclesiology and Ordained Ministry, Part 1 69

Instructions for the Pastoral Work of Timothy (1 Tim. 4:1–6:2) 75
False Teachers of Asceticism (1 Tim. 4:1–5) 75
Excursus 3: Hospitality and Gratitude 77

- Value of Godliness (1 Tim. 4:6–11) 80
- Conduct of the Church Leader (1 Tim. 4:12–5:2) 83
- Dealing with Widows (1 Tim. 5:3–16) 86
- Position of Elders in the Church (1 Tim. 5:17–20) 92
- Instructions Concerning Right Judgment (1 Tim. 5:21–25) 94
- Duties of Slaves (1 Tim. 6:1–2) 97

True and False Teachers (1 Tim. 6:3–21) 99

- False Teachers Are Mentally Disturbed (1 Tim. 6:3–10) 99
 - Excursus 4: Chrysostom on Self-Control* 105
- Exemplary Life and Teaching (1 Tim. 6:11–16) 107
- Instructions about Rich People (1 Tim. 6:17–19) 111
 - Excursus 5: Chrysostom on Generosity* 113
- Final Admonition to Timothy (1 Tim. 6:20–21) 114

Second Timothy

Opening of the Letter (2 Tim. 1:1–5) 119

- Greeting (2 Tim. 1:1–2) 119
- Thanksgiving (2 Tim. 1:3–5) 120

Witness and Suffering in the Footsteps of Paul (2 Tim. 1:6–2:13) 123

- Gospel as Testimony and as Tradition (2 Tim. 1:6–14) 123
 - Excursus 6: Tradition* 128
- Good and Bad Examples (2 Tim. 1:15–18) 133
- Exhortation to Be a Strong Witness (2 Tim. 2:1–7) 134
- Promise of Salvation (2 Tim. 2:8–13) 137

False Teachers and Their Conduct (2 Tim. 2:14–3:9) 141

- Right Conduct as Purification (2 Tim. 2:14–26) 141
 - Excursus 7: Ecclesiology and Ordained Ministry, Part 2* 144
- Folly of False Teachers (2 Tim. 3:1–9) 148

Concluding Advice to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:10–4:22) 153

- Paul's Example and Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:10–17) 153
 - Excursus 8: Scripture and Tradition* 157
- Final Words of the Apostle (2 Tim. 4:1–8) 158
- Personal Communications (2 Tim. 4:9–18) 161
- Final Greetings (2 Tim. 4:19–22) 164

Titus
Appointment of Elders in Crete (Titus 1:1–16) 169

Greeting (Titus 1:1–4) 169

Requirements for Elders and Bishops (Titus 1:5–9) 171

False Teachers Are Corrupted Liars (Titus 1:10–16) 173

Virtues among Christians (Titus 2:1–15) 177

Virtues of Older Men, Older Women, and Younger Women (Titus 2:1–5) 177

Virtues of Young Men, Titus, and Slaves (Titus 2:6–10) 180

Grace of God in Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11–15) 181

Excursus 9: Self-giving of Jesus 184

Good Works in the Society (Titus 3:1–15) 189

Christians as Good Citizens (Titus 3:1–3) 189

Saving Presence of God through Jesus Christ (Titus 3:4–7) 191

Dealing with Opponents (Titus 3:8–11) 193

Final Instructions and Greetings (Titus 3:12–15) 195

Philemon

Introduction to Philemon 199

Address and Expressions of Gratitude (Phlm. 1–7) 203

Appeal for Onesimus (Phlm. 8–21) 206

Travel Plans and Greetings (Phlm. 22–25) 210

Jude

Introduction to Jude 215

Jesus Christ 218

Christian Faith 222

Summary 224

After the Word: Hermeneutical Postscript 225

Appendix A: Moderation of Emotion 233

Appendix B: Mental Disorders 243

Appendix C: Varieties of Giving 251

Bibliography 257

Subject Index 263

Scripture Index 267

INTRODUCTION TO THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

The First and Second Letters of Paul to Timothy and the Letter of Paul to Titus are usually called the Pastoral Epistles. The three epistles belong together in terms of both their style and content. It is therefore natural to treat them together in this introduction.

Although the present study uses the conventional attribute “pastoral,” it can be questioned as to whether this word conveys the distinctive character of the three epistles in a proper sense. Pastoral situations are often characterized by their particularity. In the churches of today, pastoral care and counseling aim at finding solutions to the individual life situations that cannot be solved merely by looking at the general rules. But if “pastoral” is understood in this sense, then 1 Corinthians and Philemon would be pastoral epistles, whereas 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus would not. The three epistles aim at presenting generally valid rules rather than targeted counseling.

The word “pastoral” is not, however, intended to be read in an individualistic or particularist manner. The three epistles are called pastoral because they have been read as guidance to pastors and other teachers of the church. Already John Chrysostom remarks that in 1 Timothy, Paul is “through the whole epistle adapting his instructions to a teacher” (NPNF¹ 13.408). Understood in this sense, the Pastoral Epistles can be regarded as instruction to advanced Christians, as training in leadership.

Although this interpretation has probably motivated many church leaders to study the three epistles with special intensity, there is no indication that the Pastoral Epistles would have enjoyed a particular prominence in the history of Christianity. The three epistles are missing from one important manuscript, that is, Papyrus 46, as well as from the canon of Marcion. But they are known to Christian writers of the early second century and are used by Polycarp. According to Canon Muratori,

“[Paul writes] one [letter] to Philemon, one to Titus, and two to Timothy in love and affection; but they have been hallowed for the honor of the Catholic church in the regulation of ecclesiastical discipline.” Generally speaking, the use of the Pastoral Epistles in early Christianity is similar to other epistles of the Pauline corpus (Marshall 1999: 2–8; Mounce 2000: lxvii–lxviii; Johnson 2001: 20–26; Bruce 1988; Tertullian, *Marcion* 5.21 [ANF 3.473–74]).

In patristic, medieval, and early modern periods, the Pastoral Epistles were commented upon regularly, though less frequently than the most popular New Testament books. From patristic times to the nineteenth century, the three epistles were understood as Paul’s personal instructions to Timothy and Titus, who, according to Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.4.5 [NPNF² 1.136]), were the first bishops of Ephesus and Crete. Thus 1 Timothy especially came to be read as Paul’s handbook on the office of bishop (so Wengert 2005: 70).

Not many patristic commentaries have survived.¹ Augustine wrote no treatises on the Pastoral Epistles, but we do have Jerome’s exposition of Titus (Patrologia latina 26.589–636). By far the most interesting and influential commentary, in both East and West, is the extensive work of John Chrysostom, consisting of eighteen homilies on 1 Timothy, ten on 2 Timothy, and six on Titus (Patrologia graeca 62.501–700; NPNF¹ 13.407–543).² Chrysostom proceeds verse by verse, focuses on the literal meaning of the text, and avoids allegorical interpretations. In the concluding parts of the homilies he often presents moral conclusions and applications. The Latin translation of Chrysostom’s commentary was printed in Basel in 1536 and used, among others, by Calvin in his detailed commentaries on the three epistles (Wengert 2005: 71; see Calvin 1996: 77, 84, 201; and Corpus reformatorum 52). Among medieval commentaries, Thomas Aquinas’s exposition (1888) of all the Pauline Epistles remains influential.

Martin Luther lectured on 1 Timothy in 1528. Although Luther’s lectures were not printed until 1797 (Wengert 2005: 87; WA 26.1–120; LW 28.217–384), they were used by his students, for instance, by Georg Major in his 1563 commentary on 1 Timothy. Other early Lutheran expositors of 1 Timothy include Caspar Cruciger and Philipp Melancthon.³ Luther also lectured on Titus in 1527 (LW 29.4–90; WA 25.1–69).

1. Spicq 1969: 11–16 lists the patristic and medieval commentaries. The complete interpretation history of the Pastoral Epistles remains to be written. Johnson 2001: 20–54 offers a compact overview of the interpretation of 1–2 Timothy from early Christianity to the early twentieth century. Schenk 1987 covers the research history of the Pastoral Epistles from 1945 to 1987. The interpretation history of some passages has been studied in detail; for instance, the role of women in 1 Tim. 2:9–15 (Doriani 1995; Mounce 2000: 94–102) or the inspiration of Scripture in 2 Tim. 3:16 (Weiser 2003: 286–92).

2. Although Johnson 2001: 27 calls this commentary “moralistic,” it is not. As we will see below, Chrysostom employs sound doctrine for the purposes of Christian character formation.

3. Melancthon’s 1550–51 *Enarratio epistolae prioris ad Timotheum, et duorum capitulum secundae* may be found in Corpus reformatorum 15.1295–1396. Cruciger’s 1540 *In epistolam Pauli ad Timotheum priorem* is edited in Burigana 1986. For Major’s 1563 *Enarratio epistolae Pauli primae ad Timotheum*, see Wengert 2005, which offers an excellent overview of the Reformation period.

The designation “Pastoral Epistles” stems from the eighteenth century,⁴ but already Thomas Aquinas called 1 Timothy “a rule . . . for pastors” (*quasi regula pastoralis*) (*Super 1 Timothy* lecture 2 on 1:4 [Quinn and Wacker 2000: 1; Collins 2002: 1]). Calvin begins his commentary on 1 Timothy by stating that “this Epistle appears to me to have been written more for the sake of others than for the sake of Timothy. . . . It contains many things which it would have been superfluous to write, if he had had to deal with Timothy alone” (1996: 13; cf. 19).

In the era of historical-critical exegesis, the Pastoral Epistles have often fallen into disgrace. Because their style, content, and presupposed ecclesiastical situation differs from other epistles of the Pauline corpus, the Pastoral Epistles are considered to have emerged only after the time of Paul. Their pseudonymity, late date of writing, and “early Catholic” emphasis have been taken as indications that they are less important than other canonical writings.⁵ There are exceptions, most notably Heinrich Schlier (1958: 129–47), who argue that the Pastoral Epistles allow us to see the normative direction of ecclesiastical development within the canon. With the help of the Pastoral Epistles, it can therefore be claimed that the emergence of early Catholicism is biblically grounded. More often, however, this development has been interpreted as departing from the original message of Jesus and Paul.

During the last twenty years, new major commentaries have been published, which are no longer hampered by the polemical discussion on pseudonymity and late date of composition. Especially the German commentaries of Jürgen Roloff (1988), Lorenz Oberlinner (1994, 1995, 1996), and Alfons Weiser (2003) manage to create a synthesis in which the theology of the Pastoral Epistles becomes important in its own right. All these commentaries assume that the epistles are post-Pauline. They are also critical with regard to the identity of “Timothy” and “Titus” and proceed from the assumption that the author intends to defend the Pauline tradition to a broader audience. But these historical presuppositions are not employed to downplay the importance of the theology of the three epistles.

There are also erudite new British and American commentaries. The most important commentary available in English is that of I. Howard Marshall (1999). He defends moderate evangelical positions and manages to show in many cases that the early Catholic frame of the Pastoral Epistles is not as rigid as many interpreters have assumed. Marshall also reports conscientiously on the results of German scholarship (i.e., on Roloff 1988 and Oberlinner 1994–96, but not on Weiser 2003); his work contains many useful excursuses. The extensive 2000 commentary of Jerome D. Quinn and William Wacker is rich in linguistic detail, but it does not offer comprehensive theological interpretation. The 2002 commentary of

4. According to Collins 2002: 1, B. D. P. Anton’s 1753 commentary on the three epistles carries this name. Already in 1703 D. N. Bardot calls 1 Timothy a pastoral letter.

5. See, e.g., Käsemann 1964: 63–94 and Schulz 1976. For critical reviews, see Hahn 1986: 39–56 and Mounce 2000: cxviii–cxix. For research history from 1945 to 1987, see Schenk 1987. Among the first skeptics with regard to Paul’s authorship was Friedrich Schleiermacher; see Collins 2002: 3.

Raymond F. Collins is concise but presents useful parallel material from Jewish and Hellenistic sources. William D. Mounce's 2000 commentary is an attempt to argue in favor of Paul's authorship; Mounce also offers excellent bibliographies on many particular topics. Luke Timothy Johnson likewise defends Pauline authorship. His 2001 commentary offers the best interpretation history and pays some attention to the medical imagery of 1–2 Timothy.

Given this state of scholarship, it would be misleading to say that the interpretation of the Pastoral Epistles suffers from a lack of theological interest or an absence of sophisticated academic discussion. It is difficult to present any plausible interpretation that has not already been competently discussed in the above-mentioned commentaries. At the same time, it can be added that the secondary literature on the Pastoral Epistles is not as vast as on most other New Testament writings. It is possible to follow the ongoing discussion and to master at least the most important secondary works. In this quantitative sense the Pastoral Epistles are still considered today to be less important than most other New Testament books.

While a theological interpreter of the Synoptic Gospels has many good reasons to bypass the enormous existing secondary literature, the author of the present commentary cannot do this for two reasons. The first reason is simply that with the help of the above-mentioned new commentaries the most important trends of the exegetical research can be taken into account. The second reason has to do with the specific nature of the Pastoral Epistles. These epistles deal with theological issues, and we do not know much about their historical background. Thus the exegetical scholarship on the Pastoral Epistles concentrates on issues that are fundamentally theological. The most important issues have already been discussed in the commentaries, and a theological interpreter has to show his or her awareness of them.

Since this task already demands many pages, I will only briefly mention my basic decisions with regard to the introductory issues. These issues are discussed in much detail in the above-mentioned commentaries, and my decisions, for the most part, follow the majority opinion. Therefore I will not return to them in my exposition.

All three epistles are written by the same author. He defends the legacy of Paul and quotes many epistles of the apostle. The style, vocabulary, and situation make it nevertheless improbable that the author could be Paul (see Marshall 1999: 57–92, whose reflections are exemplary in showing why even rather conservative exegetes today take this position). The option outlined by Marshall that the author of 1 Timothy is Paul's "close associate in the immediate post-Pauline period via a letter intended to maintain Paul's influence without any attempt to deceive readers" (I. Howard Marshall in Vanhoozer 2005a: 801) seems fitting with regard to all three epistles. As the leading Lutheran (Roloff), Catholic (Oberlinner, Weiser, Collins), and evangelical (Marshall) commentators can all combine pseudonymity with their own high appreciation of this Pauline legacy, I can side with them on this issue.

For the sake of convenience, the author in my text is called “Paul” and “the apostle.” Those readers who are committed to the immediate authorship of Paul can find some consolation in the observation that, given the concentration on theological exposition, my commentary would not be dramatically changed even if I would affirm Paul’s authorship. The most demanding task would then be that of connecting the Hellenistic philosophical and therapeutic terminology of the Pastoral Epistles with the theology of the other Pauline epistles. Another difficult task would concern Paul’s view of women.

All three epistles are written toward the end of the first century. It is obvious that they contain many mutual dependencies, but they do not allow us to decide in which order the epistles were composed. The canonical order follows the length of the texts (Marshall 1999: 2). This order has been preserved in many commentaries, and I see no reason for changing it. The place of writing remains uncertain and has no theological consequences. Timothy and Titus are historical figures who are connected with Paul’s missions as well as with the churches in Ephesus and Crete.⁶ They are church leaders, but the epistles do not mention their precise titles. Although the epistles are addressed to Timothy and Titus, the author presupposes that the epistles will be read and circulated in the churches.

I use the standard *Novum Testamentum Graece* (NA²⁷) and prefer in most cases the NRSV. As a nonnative speaker of English I do not feel competent enough to compare different translations extensively. But I do mention the Vulgate translation quite often, since it is highly influential for the theological reception of the epistles. Sometimes theologians still instinctively read the Pastoral Epistles through the lenses of Vulgate.⁷ My exposition proceeds verse by verse, and a reader who is interested only in the explanation of a particular passage can consult it without problems.

Although I am indebted especially to the above-mentioned commentaries of Roloff, Weiser, Oberlinner, and Marshall, my exposition aims at accomplishing a distinct profile. I have attempted to construct this profile so that it would be intelligible for both exegetes and systematic theologians and could be discussed both historically and theologically. One way of explaining my strategy is to say that I aim at avoiding two fallacies: (1) the fallacy of downgrading Greco-Roman topics and (2) the fallacy of preferring the extreme options.

Concerning the first fallacy, the perpetual problem in the theological evaluation of the Pastoral Epistles has been that they remain secondary to other Pauline writings. The Pastoral Epistles also seem to be dependent on Greco-Roman thought in ways that are not proper in a canonical text. In order to meet these problems, different ways of downgrading the philosophical and cultural background have

6. On Timothy, see Weiser 2003: 44–51; on Titus, see Barrett 1969. Later tradition (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.4.5 [NPNF² 1.136]) mentions Timothy and Titus as the first bishops of Ephesus and Crete.

7. The words *regeneratio* and *renovatio* in the phrase “water of rebirth and renewal” in Titus 3:5 are a good example. While the Greek words are probably synonymous, the Latin terms involve two stages.

been adopted by interpreters. Their common denominator is that the Hellenistic influences can be bracketed or counteracted so that the distinctive theological profile of the epistles can emerge.

My exposition aims at treating these features (see appendixes A–C) as an integral part of the epistles (for the exegetical assessment of Hellenistic philosophy, see Malherbe 1989: 1–9). The distinctive message of the Pastoral Epistles is, therefore, not found in verses that deviate from popular philosophy and cultural encounter, but the Pastoral Epistles are distinctive in the canon precisely because they witness to the first constructive encounters between “Jerusalem and Athens,” that is, between the proclamation of the gospel and the ideals of the surrounding culture. This distinctive feature does not mean problematic accommodation or the watering down of the gospel, but it is an attempt to express sound doctrine and the Christian life with a terminology that is distinct from, but nevertheless commensurable with, other ideals of character formation. Following this lead, my exposition often aims at finding the distinctive profile in verses that have been downgraded as mere Hellenisms.

Concerning the second fallacy, the expositors have often considered the great problem of the Pastoral Epistles to consist in their lukewarm and compromising answers to the pressing issues at hand. The author seems to be worried about the reputation of Christians among non-Christians. Therefore he recommends civil virtues. The commentators ask “whether the life-style in the [Pastoral Epistles] is over-concerned with a dull respectability” (Marshall 1999: 189). As our late modern era praises original ideas, it also embraces the extreme options and considers them to be more committed and serious than their alternatives. Religion in particular is considered to be the forum of extreme commitments.

In the world of the Pastoral Epistles, however, the habit of preferring extreme options is symptomatic of the lack of good judgment. A virtuous person who can exercise moderation and self-control seldom prefers the extremes. The capacity to discern and to avoid the harmful extremes is a sign of moral and intellectual progress. The Pastoral Epistles argue that the doctrine of a moderated mean is the Christian ideal. The fallacy of preferring the extreme options prevents many expositors from seeing this ideal (Käsemann 1964: 63–94 and Schulz 1976 are symptomatic of this problem). Given this, the Pastoral Epistles are not concerned with compromises and dull respectability, but their distinctive message relates to the ideal of moderated mean. Such a mean is not primarily a civil virtue, but it receives its deeper meaning from the tradition coming from Jesus and the Jewish Bible. In some cases, for instance, with regard to the virtue of being “gentle” (*praus, prautēs*), the radical virtue of Jesus (Matt. 5:5; 11:29) and Moses (Num. 12:3) also expresses a proper mean to be followed by the church leader (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:25; Titus 3:2).

In our age of different extremisms, the ideal of a moderated mean has new actuality, not only among ecumenists like myself, but also among other committed Christians (as well as among people of other faiths) who train their judgment. In

the history of Christian theology, Thomas Aquinas is the most prominent representative of the view that virtue can be identified as a mean between problematic extremes (*Summa theologiae* 2/1 Q. 64).⁸ At the same time theologians must ask whether the view of virtue as mean provides a too narrow description of the ideals of Christian life. As the Christian faith is an unconditional commitment to God through Jesus Christ, does it not lose something essential when it is interpreted as proper moderation? To answer this question, the Pastoral Epistles should be set against the background of the emerging early Christianity as portrayed in other canonical texts of the New Testament.

We may characterize this theological horizon of the Pastoral Epistles with Tertullian's question: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" (*Against Heretics* 7 [ANF 3.246]).⁹ In this paradigmatic question, Jerusalem stands for the core of the Christian faith: the proclamation of Jesus, his death and resurrection, the inner life of the emerging church, as well as the act of faith itself in distinction from reason. Jerusalem further points to the fundamentally important background of Judaism and the Jewish Bible, mostly read through the Greek Septuagint, as the cradle of Christianity. Athens stands for the cultural context of Christianity, the Greco-Roman world in which not faith but reason provides the tools for arguing the personal conviction. In Athens, the individual is primarily surrounded by his or her own household, the *oikos*. The household provides the material basis for individual learning, growth, and flourishing. The broader social circle is that of a *polis*, a city-state that is finally subordinated to the Roman Empire.

The Christian church needed to find its identity vis-à-vis the secular realms of household, *polis*, and empire. It also needed to spell out why and in which sense faith is more important than reason and philosophy. The proclamation of Jesus and the understanding of his life, death, and resurrection as that of the Christ, the Messiah promised by the God of Israel, provided the constitutive understanding of the Christian faith. This essence of Jerusalem is codified in the Four Gospels. The longest and most comprehensive of the Pauline epistles—most notably Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Ephesians—also witness to this self-understanding of the earliest Christian churches.

These early witnesses are primarily concerned with the basic identity of Christianity as the narrative of God's salvation history fulfilled in Jesus Christ and the proclamation of this gospel message. They exemplify the radical commitment to Christ rather than the cultural contextualization of Christianity. In performing this task they, for the most part, remain in Jerusalem and do not visit Athens.

And yet, even this first phase of doctrinal development had to borrow words and phrases from the surrounding world. The very word for the church, *ekklēsia*, is homonymic with the secular legal organ responsible for important decisions in the

8. The only exception for Thomas Aquinas is that the divine side of theological virtue cannot be in excess. But even the human side of theological virtue consists in proper measure (Q. 64a4).

9. The following reflections broaden the original scope of Tertullian, which focuses on the relationship between philosophy and scriptural authority.

polis. The homonymy, however, does not imply synonymy: the church functions in many respects very differently from political meetings. But in order to define the meaning of this word in Jerusalem, the ecclesiologist needs to recognize the existence of the concept of *ekklēsia* in Athens.

In the Pastoral Epistles, the interaction between Jerusalem and Athens becomes more complex. The gospel narratives and the major Pauline epistles are taken for granted. They provide the essence of Jerusalem in the sense of an authoritative story of God's plan of salvation in Jesus Christ. This narrative is not in need of moderation: Christians are expected to have full faith and unconditional commitment to this divine economy (1 Tim. 1:4). At the same time, Christians have begun to realize that they live in two kingdoms at the same time. While their whole heart may already be in the heavenly Jerusalem, their bodies, minds, and external conduct remain in their earthly city and *oikos*. Even their gathering in the church occurs in the material and political reality of the Greco-Roman world.

The Pastoral Epistles are often concerned with the life and conduct of the church, its leaders, and its members in this external reality of Athens. While the Pastoral Epistles do not lose sight of Jerusalem as the eschatological fulfillment, they are "pastoral" epistles in the sense that they deal with the concrete life of the church and its members. The virtuous life of bishops, deacons, rich and poor people, teachers and presbyters, young and old widows, and other women is discussed so that the signal value of their concrete life within the *polis* is taken into account. In other words, the church needs to pay attention to the signals that it gives to people outside Christianity. The church also needs to elaborate its stance with regard to various philosophies and other ideologies that are effectively taught by the so-called false teachers who often promote ascetic practices.

With regard to the false teachers as well as with regard to the reputation of Christians in the eyes of the surrounding society, the Pastoral Epistles often recommend moderation. Christians should witness by their conduct, but exaggerated asceticism is problematic. Christianity offers a new way of life, but the Christian virtues are not totally different from the surrounding society. It is rather the case that the virtues of godliness, self-control, and the genuine care for others affirmed by the philosophers are more effectively practiced by Christians than by the rest of society. Christians should therefore show the distinctive character of their faith through the display of these generally accepted virtues that normally require moderation and peace of mind. Although their heart and spiritual eyes look toward the heavenly city, the civil life of Christians in their earthly *polis* is characterized by the striving after virtues that set an example for everyone.

The frequent use of materials that stem from the older canonical tradition underlines this twofold aim: the Pastoral Epistles want to continue the apostolic tradition of sound doctrine, but they also want to argue in which ways Christians can live in the broader society so that their conduct can witness to their faith in a constructive manner.

Given the overall theological dynamic between Athens and Jerusalem, it is necessary to add some words about the genre and structure of the Pastoral Epistles. Traditionally, the three epistles have been understood as Paul's handbook for pastors and church leaders. In addition to the discussions pertaining to character formation, the Pastoral Epistles employ materials from church tradition. This material underlines the theological and canonical continuity between the Gospels and the earlier Pauline texts and the Pastoral Epistles. Hanson (1982: 42–47) and Marshall (1999: 14) mention no less than nine groups of such materials:

1. extracts from church order (1 Tim. 3:1–7, 8–13; 5:3–16, 17–24; Titus 1:5–9)
2. domestic codes (1 Tim. 2:9–15; 6:1–20; Titus 2:1–10)
3. liturgical fragments (1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 2:11–13; Titus 2:11–14; 3:3–7)
4. confessional or homiletic statements (1 Tim. 2:4–6; 6:11–16)
5. lists of sinners or sins (1 Tim. 1:9–10; 6:4–5; 2 Tim. 3:2–5; Titus 3:3)
6. historical details about Paul's life (1 Tim. 1:3, 20; 5:23; 2 Tim. 1:5, 16; 2:17; 4:9–21; Titus 3:12–13)
7. Pauline passages transposed (1 Tim. 1:12, 20; 2:13–15; 3:15–4:10; 4:12; 5:18, 19; 6:3–5, 12; 2 Tim. 1:3–4, 6–8, 8–9, 9–10; 2:1–3, 8–13, 20–21; 3:2–4, 16–17; 4:6–8, 8, 11b)
8. midrash or haggadah on Scripture (1 Tim. 1:13–16; 2:3–4; 3:15; 2 Tim. 2:19; 3:7; 4:16–18)
9. direct exhortation and instruction (1 Tim. 2:1–2, 8–9; 5:1–2; 6:6–10, 17–19; 2 Tim. 2:2; 3:16; Titus 1:5, 12, 14; 3:10)

It is important that the distinct character of such materials is respected. They reflect doctrines, opinions, and practices that go back to the times of the Apostle Paul.

At the same time this traditional material becomes integrated into the network of character formation, and it appears in the context of philosophical and therapeutic insights. This state of affairs makes it difficult to discuss the overall aim and inner coherence of each epistle. The table of contents of this volume and the introductory paragraphs to the main parts of each epistle elucidate the structural decisions made in my exposition. In keeping with the distinctive profile of this commentary, the overall aim of all three Pastoral Epistles is considered to be educational and therapeutic rather than pastoral in the sense of church order or as a handbook for pastors.

The meaning of “educational” and “therapeutic” should be neither exaggerated nor downgraded. The Pastoral Epistles deal with sound doctrine and connect the word “sound” with health and the presence of judgment. This usage is not merely metaphorical imagery, but the author thinks in a strong sense that false teachers are mentally ill and in need of a strong cure. This conviction should not, however, be read in terms of modern medical science. The view of philosophical therapy

and proper moderation of emotions assumes that mental disorders can be cured with dialogical discussion and persistent character formation. In this sense the Pastoral Epistles discuss the formation of Christian character and especially the character of various groups, such as bishops, widows, or rich people. Reading, listening, and practicing the advice given in the Pastoral Epistles can perhaps even be regarded as facilitating “self-help” for the groups mentioned. At the same time the Pastoral Epistles offer exemplary biographies, household codes, and models of liturgy and leadership.

In sum, the present commentary aims to present a distinct contribution to the exegetical and theological discussion, but it also aims at safeguarding the richness of traditions present in the Pastoral Epistles. Broader discussions on fundamental theological matters, for example, law and gospel, divine economy, the nature of the church and its ministries, are integrated into the commentary and can be identified from the subject index. In many cases these broader discussions appear as distinct excursions. Sometimes I also investigate the interpretation history of crucial passages in more detail, as can be seen from the index of names. But, as the present work is a theological commentary, these discussions remain an essential part of the actual exposition.

The three appendixes aim at outlining the broader historical background of some relevant issues. Appendix A deals with the moderation of emotion; appendix B deals with the therapeutic philosophy of mental disorders; and appendix C outlines some anthropological concepts that relate to the complex idea of tradition as “keeping-while-giving.”

As a last point, it should be mentioned that the Pastoral Epistles contain some difficult passages that challenge a modern theological interpreter to the utmost. The most difficult of these is 1 Tim. 2:11–15, the famous passage that speaks of the submission of women and their salvation through childbirth. It will hardly surprise any reader that the present interpreter has not found a philosopher’s stone that would turn this passage into gold. In such cases my exposition can be defended only by Martin Luther’s words: “Ist niemandt verboten ein besseres zu machen”; that is: “No one is forbidden to do better” or “We are all invited to give better explanations” (WA 30/2.633, 22–23; LW 35.183).



FIRST TIMOTHY



INTRODUCTORY PART

1 Tim. 1:1–20

The first chapter of 1 Timothy is also a complete literary unit. It begins with a greeting and is continued with a description of the task of Timothy, whom Paul has left in charge of the Christian church in Ephesus. Timothy should fight false doctrines and defend sound teaching. In this introductory admonition Paul does not extensively outline the content of sound teaching, but he employs a variety of doctrinal concepts that later played a prominent role in theology. These concepts include law and gospel, the use of the law, good conscience, and divine economy. The author stresses his own authority as an apostle and delegates both his own task and his authority to Timothy.

Because of this emphasis on apostolic authority, the style of the introductory part is often official and solemn. The unity of sound teaching and exemplary moral behavior become important topics. Paul uses his own biography as an example of the grace of Christ. The introductory part concludes with a reverse example: two persons have rejected conscience, and thus the apostle has turned them over to Satan. Through this contrast the apostolic authority is again highlighted.

Apostolic Greeting (1 Tim. 1:1–2)

The greeting employs traditional formulas but also some innovative wordings. As in other Pauline epistles, the opening consists of naming the author and the addressee, followed with a blessing. Unlike most epistles of the Pauline corpus, no cosenders are mentioned, and the greeting does not include a thanksgiving.

Although the epistle is not addressed to a congregation, but to an individual, the opening phrases are more official or authoritative than in most Pauline epistles.

Paul's own role is emphasized: he is "an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God." With the exception of 1 Thessalonians and Philemon, Paul in all his epistles calls himself an apostle of Jesus Christ. The phrase "by the command of God" (*kat' epitaḡēn*; cf. Titus 1:3) is more official and solemn than "by the will of God" (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:1). The phrase appears in many administrative letters of Hellenistic rulers (Roloff 1988: 54; Marshall 1999: 130–31), but here Paul simply stresses the plan of God for the salvation of humankind.

God is called "Savior" (cf. Luke 1:47; Jude 25). Hellenistic gods and rulers, and even other generous people, like mecenates, were called *sōtēr*. The designation may therefore have a polemical edge, namely, that only the Christian God can legitimately be called Savior. The characterization of Christ as "our hope" does not reflect any earlier source, and it may be an innovation of 1 Timothy. The word "hope" is employed in a comprehensive manner, alluding to the eschatological salvation that will be realized in Christ Jesus. The Pauline Epistles express Christian hope as a major virtue connected with salvation history.

Describing Timothy as "my loyal child in the faith" alludes to 1 Cor. 4:17 (maybe also Phil. 4:3), but here the tone of the apostle is again more official. The word "loyal" (*gnēsios*) can also be translated "legitimate" or even "real," though not in any biological sense but rather in true faith. Timothy is a legitimate child of the apostle. He has the right and power to defend the apostle's cause in all matters; he has inherited the right faith and will spread it further. The phrase *en pistei* ("in the faith") is not found in earlier Pauline epistles, but it appears also in 1 Tim. 1:4; 2:7, 15; and Titus 3:15. The phrase does not refer to subjective faith but to the heritage of faith and sound doctrine that Timothy defends.

The high rank of the Apostle Paul becomes emphasized through the claim that he is, in this sense, the father of Timothy. The command of God is realized in the very words of the apostle. Paul normally uses the bipartite phrase "grace and peace," but here the blessing is tripartite, including mercy. Mercy can be understood as a summarizing notion that characterizes God's salvatory action in Christ. Whereas grace points to this salvific action, mercy refers to its motivation and peace to its effects in the life of God's people. Christ and mercy are mentioned together in 1:16.

False Doctrines, Divine Economy, and Timothy's Task (1 Tim. 1:3–7)

The epistle presupposes that Paul writes to Timothy from Macedonia. After working together as missionaries in Ephesus, Paul has left Timothy there to lead and instruct this important congregation. Leaving the historical problems of this description aside (Roloff 1988: 62–63; Oberlinner 1994: 10–11), we can say that the author knows other Pauline epistles and Timothy's role in the history of Paul's missions (e.g., Acts 19:21–22; 1 Thess. 3:2; Phil. 2:19–22). As in other Pauline epistles, Timothy is a trusted figure who can be sent to solve problems and to teach

the right doctrine during the absence of the apostle. Ephesus was a prominent place of Pauline missions and serves well as a paradigmatic case of handling problems related to the heritage of Paul and to the leadership of the church.

In 1 Tim. 1:3–4 the sentence beginning with *kathōs* (“as”) is incomplete so that 1:5 begins a new sentence. The grammatical incompleteness need not be explained with conjectures, since the flow of thought is clear. Timothy is given the task of instructing “certain people” who occupy themselves with false and secondary thoughts. The verb “to instruct” (*parangellō*) appears in Paul’s Epistles as a characterization of binding instructions that can be understood as the commands of the risen Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 7:10; 1 Thess. 4:2, 11). These instructions are contrasted with the “different doctrine” (*heterodidaskaleō*) mentioned in 1 Tim. 1:3. They represent the “sound teaching” (*hygiainousa didaskalia*) spoken of in 1:10.

Both the *heterodidaskaleō* (1:3) and the *hygiainousa didaskalia* (1:10) refer to the teaching of church doctrine. A third related phrase is the “teachers of the law” (*nomodidaskaloi*) in 1:7. Timothy is given the task of teaching sound doctrine, which is closely related to the right conduct. Right instruction and sound doctrine thus concern both the content of faith and the right moral conduct.

In 1:4 the different or false doctrine is concerned with “speculations” (*ekzētēseis*), whereas true faith and sound doctrine express the “divine training” (*oikonomia theou*). The Greek word employed for “speculations” does not appear anywhere else in the New Testament or in the Hellenistic literature, but it is obviously an emphatic form of *zētēseis* (“philosophical inquiries”) (Marshall 1999: 362; Bauer 2000: 303). The author is critical of speculative philosophy, having perhaps 1 Cor. 1:18–21 in mind. He has a specific genre of speculation in mind, namely, “myths” and “genealogies.” The word *mythos* may refer to many kinds of Hellenistic myths, for instance, pagan gods, stories of the origin of the world, esoteric and gnostic teachings in both Judaism (Titus 1:14) and other circles.

“Genealogies” refer to the speculative and allegorical interpretations of the catalogues of generations in Genesis. Such interpretations were popular in the esoteric circles of the first century, as we know from the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS 3.13–15 [Vermes 2004: 101]) and some church fathers (see Gorday 2000: 131–32). Origen (*On First Principles* 4.3.2) and Theodore of Mopsuestia (*Commentary on 1 Timothy*) connect the genealogies mentioned here with Jewish teachers, whereas Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 1.1) has the gnostic demiurge and creation myth in mind. Today’s exegetes continue to discuss both sources, with an emphasis on Jewish genealogies (Roloff 1988: 64; Oberlinner 1994: 13–16; Marshall 1999: 366). The apostle’s warning against myths and genealogies is directed against the intellectual and imaginative stimulation they provide: one should not believe in imagined stories, but had better trust the sound doctrine handed over by reliable witnesses.

“Divine training” means both God’s plan for the universe and the execution of this plan. *Oikonomia* may be translated “training” in the sense of education, but in Hellenistic Greek the divine economy normally means the order established

by God, who steers the universe according to the divine plan. This meaning is connected with the Christian view of salvation history. It is Timothy's task to instruct his fellow Christians of the divine plan that finds its expression in "sound teaching" (1:10) and is referred to as "the glorious gospel" (1:11).

Both this *oikonomia* and the idea that it is "known by faith" (1:4) contain a variety of intentions. Timothy is the master of the household, a church or parish. As such he is an *oikonomos*, a steward of God's salvific economy (Titus 1:7). In this economy faith cannot remain a personal or subjective faith, but it is loyalty to the message entrusted to him by the apostle. Thus faith in 1 Tim. 1:2 and 1:4 approaches the notion of orthodoxy, the right faith that becomes expressed in sound doctrine. Timothy's stewardship consists in this loyalty in which he is supposed to know and follow the divine economy.

In this manner divine economy and right faith become key concepts that set the tune for Timothy's activities. The larger part of 1 Timothy is concerned with right conduct and different concrete problems. Taking care of these problems should finally be measured against the background of the divine plan, the salvation history that is known by faith. The concept of *oikonomia* relates to the manifold reality of the communities in which the Christian individual lives and that are discussed throughout the Pastoral Epistles. The smallest community is that of an *oikos* ("household"). An individual learns the taking care of others within this social reality. The church and its various functions are often compared to the household (3:4–5, 15; 2 Tim. 2:20–21). Bishops and other stewards take care of this larger Christian community. The divine plan of salvation is the most comprehensive economy in which God steers the universe according to his will.

In the history of interpretation, this interplay of divine economy (sometimes translated "dispensation" or "edification") and personal faith has often yielded the conclusion that salvation is by faith. This is expressed by Chrysostom as follows: "For what is dispensed by faith? To receive his mercies and become better men; to doubt and dispute of nothing; but to repose in confidence. . . . Christ has said that we must be saved by faith; this these [false] teachers questioned and even denied" (NPNF¹ 13.410). In a similar vein Calvin concludes: "Knowing that all the worship of God is founded on faith alone, [Paul] therefore reckoned it enough to mention 'faith,' on which all the rest depend" (Calvin 1996: 25).

In 1:5 the opening phrase begins a new sentence that continues the theme of right instruction, pointing out its aim. *Agapē* ("love") is characterized by the three sources from which it is said to come: "pure heart," "good conscience," and "sincere faith." If the three gifts of God were "grace, mercy, and love" (1:2), these three human characteristics round out the Christian *agapē* that emerges as a result of instruction. In the Pastoral Epistles, Paul repeatedly employs similar tripartite groups (1 Tim. 2:15; 4:12; 2 Tim. 2:22; Titus 3:15). They should not be understood as permanent systematic topics. But it would also be misleading to treat them as merely pedagogical or rhetorical instruments. They are theological concepts that can be employed in several different but related ways.

Faith and love become almost synonymous in 1 Tim. 1:4-5, 14; 2:15; and 4:12. Theologically, 1:5 is not a sufficient picture of *agapē*, but only a description of the human, or subjective, affirmation of Christian love. Due to this subjective emphasis, *agapē* here resembles *pistis* (“faith”). In order to get a full picture of *agapē*, the Johannine ideas of God as love should be considered in a more comprehensive manner than is done in 1 Timothy. Pure heart and good conscience are here presented as the integral outcome of right instruction. But they do not define the content of sound doctrine. They witness to the theological truths without actually making them explicit.

“Pure heart” may reflect some aspects of Hellenistic ethics, for example, freedom from sinful passions, but it primarily alludes to the Jewish Bible, especially Ps. 51:10, which is also presupposed in Acts 15:9. The attribute “pure” may also contain a reference to baptism. Given the context of sinful deeds that are to be avoided (1 Tim. 1:9-13), pure heart and good conscience do not here refer to mere inner attitudes in the sense of Stoic inner life, but they comprise the actual conduct of well instructed Christians.

The same consideration pertains to the term “conscience” (*syneidēsis*). Paul and Pauline Christianity adopted this term from the Hellenistic world. *Syneidos* generally means the voice that points out the guilt or debt, being a reflection of the past. In addition to this, Paul also understands conscience to be capable of clarifying the existing norms and understanding the future (Rom. 2:15; Roloff 1988: 68-69; Plutarch, *On Tranquility* 19 [LCL 337.235-37]; Euripides, *Orestes* 391-97 [LCL 11.157]). The “good conscience” of 1 Tim. 1:5, 19 is again different from this Pauline meaning.

In 1:5, “good conscience” is a moral predicate that designates the right conduct of the well-instructed Christian. The phrase corresponds to the “pure heart” as a description of the good Christian existence. It may reflect early Christian baptismal formulas in which people were asked to have a “pure heart” (Roloff 1988: 67). Given this, the three virtues mentioned in 1:5 would be primarily connected with Christian initiation. This begins with a catechetical instruction and is followed by baptism that purifies the heart, gives a good conscience, and presupposes a sincere faith.

Paul thus stresses the right conduct but does not give an account of the content of sound doctrine. The content of sound baptismal instruction was probably known to the recipients of the epistle. But 1 Tim. 1 also avoids elaborate verbal formulations of sound doctrine. Myths and genealogies are criticized as empty speculations, and in 1:6-7 we again hear of “meaningless talk” (*mataiologia*; cf. 6:20 and Titus 1:10) performed by the people who desire to be teachers but have no understanding.

We are not informed of the actual position of the false teachers but learn only that they are wrong. Also in other parts of 1 Timothy (4:3; 6:4-10), their position is not explained in detail. Paul clearly disapproves that some baptized Christians do not find the instruction given to them to be sufficient. They want to speculate and

practice empty or meaningless talk that leads to the loss of sincere faith and other basic virtues. These virtues are in 1:5–7 contrasted with examples of meaningless talk. Thus an ideal of simplicity emerges, an idea that prefers purity and sincerity and turns away from unnecessary commentaries and expositions.

In this undertaking of the apostle we find terminology that is also employed by the Hellenistic philosophers. The verb *ektrepō* means “to deviate or turn away” from the right way. The word *mataiologia* appears in Plutarch meaning “vain discussion” (*On Bringing Up Children* 9 [LCL 197.31]). In Hellenistic philosophical schools one also encounters the idea that a wise man should not talk too much (e.g., Epictetus, *Encheiridion* 33 [LCL 218.517]: “Be for the most part silent, or speak merely what is necessary, and in few words”; see Bauer 2000: 621 and G. Wohlfart and J. Kreuzer in *HWP* 8.1483–95).

Paul’s critical attitude to idle talk is connected with other similar passages in the New Testament. Jesus reminds that “by your words you will be condemned” (Matt. 12:37). According to Jas. 3:6 the tongue “stains the whole body” and “is itself set on fire by hell.” In keeping with this paradigm, 1 Timothy also considers silence to be a virtue. Still another perspective to the issue is offered by 6:4–5, where Paul again says that the false teachers “understand nothing” and even that they are “depraved in mind.” Already in 1:6–7 one can read the text as saying that the turning to meaningless talk and the lack of understanding reflects a sort of psychopathology. People who are obstinately engaged with genealogies and who love meaningless talk have turned away from the ideals of clarity, sincerity, and silent learning (see appendix B).

The identity of “some people” described in 1:6–7 remains unclear. On the one hand the phrase “teachers of the law” clearly alludes to Judaism (as in Luke 5:17; Acts 5:34; 22:3). On the other hand, one can also think of talkative gnostics (1 Tim. 6:20) and, more generally, Christians who can master neither their tongue nor their moral conduct, although they desire to be teachers. The description of these people in 1:6–7 is not without sarcasm. Although the picture of the opponents remains vague, the ethos of a good Christian is portrayed in clear terms of purity and sincerity.

Law and Gospel, Doctrine and Conduct (1 Tim. 1:8–11)

In contrast to 1:6–7, Paul now outlines his authoritative view of the law. As in Rom. 7:16, the law is called “good” (*kalos*). The word *kalos* can also mean “fine” or “attractive.” The Pauline writings employ both *kalos* and *agathos* of the law, its commandments, and the corresponding good works (Rom. 7:12, 16; Titus 1:16; 2:7). The added qualification “if one uses it legitimately [*nomimōs*]” is somewhat enigmatic, especially because 1 Tim. 1:9 seems to undermine the value of the law for pious persons. If the law actually concerns only the “lawless and disobedient” persons, does its “lawful use” mean punishing them? What would be the elegance

or goodness of such use? If one reads 1:8–11 as a unity, there seems to be a gap between the two issues: the good use of the law and the glorious gospel (1:8, 11) on the one hand and the control of sinful people (1:9–10) on the other.

The Reformation, in particular Lutheranism, made “the use of the law” (*usus legis*) a prominent theological topic. It was 1 Tim. 1 that prompted Martin Luther to highlight this terminology. On the basis of Reformation theology and 1 Timothy it is possible to construe distinctions among punitive, civil, and parenetic uses of the law (Roloff 1988: 81–83, referring to Ebeling 1982: 282). Before doing that, however, the immediate context of Paul needs to be deepened.

The meaning of *nomimōs* in 1:8 can be connected with the verb *nomizō* in the sense “to consider as” in 6:5 (“creating a custom or making a law,” according to Collins 2002: 156). The two terms are related to the ability to judge the situation in a customary manner. In 6:5 an idiosyncratic and false custom is described, but in 1:9 the law is put into practice in keeping with its own intentions. The good, or well-considered, use of the law is connected with the ability to judge the situation properly. Law is to be used in a “prudential” fashion, namely, so that it becomes “considered as” pertaining to the particular circumstances. A prudential person can apply moral rules to particular cases and has social skills in this manner (F. Wiedmann and G. Biller in *HWP* 4.857–63; P. Aubenque in *Der Neue Pauly* 6.608–9; and appendix B).

For a proper understanding of 1:8–11, it is illuminating to read the individual claims as units that are only loosely connected with each other. Without being actually incoherent, the apostle makes several different claims. In 1:8 he takes over the view of Rom. 7:16 but qualifies it in his own way. The goodness of the law consists in the right conduct of the good people. In our right conduct the law is tacitly employed as a social capital that allows people to live together. This life-form, or a rule of law, is not thought of as a series of commands, but losing this social capital leads to the vices mentioned in 1 Tim. 1:9–10.

Although 1 Timothy shows an awareness of Romans and other Pauline writings, it broadens the scope of the law in comparison with earlier Pauline epistles. In Romans and Galatians the law is above all the Torah of Israel. It was considered good because it contains God’s promise and covenant with God’s people as well as moral guidelines. Paul’s criticism of this law in Romans and Galatians is motivated by the need to formulate a specific Christian soteriology in conscious distinction to Judaism (for the theological problems related to this complex issue, see Westerholm 2004). The Jewish law was not a way of salvation. In Pauline soteriology, the Jewish law can point out our sin, but it cannot heal it. Only in Christ do we have access to the reality of salvation.

In the Pastoral Epistles the situation is different. Pauline soteriology and the distinction from Judaism are taken for granted. New challenges are offered by the popular Hellenistic philosophy that taught that all people are aware of the basic moral laws that enable them to live together in a society. It would be pointless or very strange to criticize these basic natural laws in the way that Paul criticized the

Jewish law in Romans and Galatians. Romans 7:16 offers a bridge to affirm the basic moral laws as positive reality: even those who miss the ultimate moral mark may agree that the law is good. At the same time, the new context of 1 Timothy influences the understanding of *nomos*. The law is no longer primarily the Jewish Torah. The good law that is known is the natural order of the world; in Hellenistic philosophy, this *nomos* is accessible to reason (Roloff 1988: 72–74; Oberlinner 1994: 23–26).

Obviously, the Jewish Torah is not completely different from the Hellenistic *nomos*. In both, similar guidelines of right conduct are taught. Although the motivation to the right conduct and the background story related to the law may vary, the actual definitions of the good life remain similar. Paul therefore here stresses the “lawful,” in the sense of well-considered or prudential, use of *nomos*. He presupposes a partial merger of the Jewish Torah and the Hellenistic moral law.

The *nomos* of 1:8–11 is not merely a natural moral law, but a law given or “laid down” (*keimai*; 1:9). This verb is employed when the validity and range of Jewish law is discussed. First Timothy 1:8–9 therefore preserves the Jewish background of *nomos*. In addition, as 1:5 points out, the actual good behavior stems from a pure heart and sincere faith that emerge as a result of sound doctrine. Thus we are in 1:8–11 concerned with theological ethics, not only with the Hellenistic understanding of *nomos*.

With the help of these observations, the theological distinction between law and gospel can be elaborated. Although law punishes the wrongdoers, it is important to realize that the law has many uses. In both Judaism and Hellenism, we can discern the “good law” that conforms to sound doctrine and the gospel (cf. 1:11). This good law can be used in punitive justice (1:9–10). Given the criticism of the law in Romans and Galatians, it would be misleading to see the law as a way of salvation, but it is nevertheless important that in 1 Tim. 1:8–11 the good law, the sound doctrine, and the glorious gospel are on the same side, in contrast to the wrongdoers and false teachers (1:7). This means that the Lutheran distinction between law and gospel should not be interpreted in terms of radical separation. As recent studies point out, Luther did leave room for a positive understanding of “good law” (Wöhle 1998; Raunio 2001; Saarinen 2006). To obtain a full picture, we need to see first how 1:9–11 relates the broader reality of divine economy.

The partial merger of Jewish and Greco-Roman ethics is clearly visible in the list of vices catalogued in 1:9–10. Paul does not here report the actual vices of the “certain people” (1:3) in Ephesus, but he describes the ultimate negative alternative: the imagined case of totally lawless people who emphatically act against the law and sound doctrine. The vices listed here break down the natural order and social capital available in human societies. As radical crimes against basic moral codes the fourteen vices identify the external boundaries of Hellenistic *nomos*.

At the same time, the fourteen vices display an affinity to the Jewish Decalogue. “Lawless and disobedient, . . . godless and sinful, . . . unholy and profane”

commit sin against the first table of the Decalogue. “Those who kill their father or mother, . . . murderers, fornicators, sodomites, slave traders, liars, perjurers” act contrary to the second table. While this catalogue displays a proximity to both Hellenistic and Jewish ethics, it is also original. Only four of the fourteen vices appear in similar catalogues of popular philosophy (Roloff 1988: 75). The list also differs significantly from other lists available in the New Testament (Rom. 1:29–31; Gal. 5:18–21; 1 Tim. 6:4–5; 2 Tim. 3:2–5; Titus 3:3).

The originality of this particular list probably reflects its dramatic purpose: it is not given for moral guidance, but in order to identify the most terrible forms of lawlessness that are condemned in every society. Especially the crimes against the second table clearly mirror this purpose. The six vices mentioned first are more diffuse. In them Paul gives a general characterization of lawlessness as disobedience to God before proceeding to particular crimes. The closing phrase “and whatever else is contrary” (1 Tim. 1:10) stresses that the list is exemplary rather than complete.

Without going into the particular vices in detail, one may say that their theological understanding should pay attention to their content and purpose. The vices identify basic laws without which human dignity is lost and society cannot exist. When “the rule of law” in its most basic sense is lost, human beings become objects that can be traded, destroyed, and utilized in all possible ways. The list displays a certain affinity to the modern theories that relate the birth of human society to patricide, incest taboos, or successful control of violence (Girard 1977). In this sense the apostle is not only merging the Decalogue with philosophical ethics, but he also radicalizes the Decalogue to make visible the moral roots and taboos of human society.

First Timothy 1:10b–11 returns to the actual topic of the first chapter, namely, instruction, divine training and sound teaching. “Sound teaching” (1:10b) can often be translated “sound doctrine,” which matches the NRSV’s “different doctrine” in 1:3. *Hygiainousa didaskalia* clearly refers to an established body of teachings that Paul has handed over to Timothy and is now asking him to teach in Ephesus. We know only imperfectly what this body of doctrine actually says, but at least the gospel in Jesus Christ is meant (1:11).

In the New Testament, the distinct phrase “sound doctrine” is established only in the Pastoral Epistles (2 Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1). The adjective “sound” means literally “healthy” and could be so translated, as in the related phrases “healthy words” (1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; Titus 2:8) and “healthy in the faith” (Titus 1:13; 2:2). The Vulgate uses the Latin word for healthy in these places: *doctrina sana, verba sana, sani in fide*. Such phrases essentially belong to the language of the Pastoral Epistles. They witness that for the senders and recipients of these epistles an established set of criteria already existed for judging sound teaching.

The health metaphor is instructive when we tackle the difficult issue of the relationship between law and gospel, or more precisely: right conduct and sound

doctrine. A contemporary reader of 1 Timothy is, to an extent, puzzled that sound doctrine is not opposed to the false doctrine but rather to the dramatic moral crimes. Obviously, sound doctrine is contrary to criminal acts, but 1:10–11, if taken literally, seems to imply that sound doctrine and the gospel would be concerned with the requirements of the law. This is, however, not the point. What the apostle claims is that the “good law” (1:8) is on the same side as what is held to be gospel and sound doctrine.

Although *hygiēs* (“healthy”) can also mean reasonable and sound, the word in 1 Timothy points toward practical and behavioral components of doctrine (Oberlinner 1994: 28–30; Johnson 2001: 393–94). Becoming instructed in “healthy doctrine” and holding this doctrine in faith implies a healing of moral practices. The reality of salvation becomes transmitted in healthy doctrine, and this doctrine brings about the right conduct that is characteristic of Christian life. As we will see later (6:4–5), this view does not exclude the idea of reasonable doctrine, but integrates it into the more comprehensive picture of mental and intellectual health.

Such a behavioral or action-oriented interpretation of doctrine may be difficult for some Protestant denominations, for instance, the Lutheran churches, which traditionally distinguish between law and gospel, or faith and conduct, and hold that the Christian truth is not primarily an ethical view. But the Pastoral Epistles are not questioning that fundamental position. What is referred to as healthy doctrine does not receive its legitimation from morals, but from its being apostolic, namely, that it is handed over by Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus (1:1). The Christian truth is not primarily an ethical matter.

At the same time, in 1:10 the doctrine is described as being in integral connection with law and morality. The apostle is not, however, primarily concerned with morals but rather with the divine *oikonomia* or “training” as a whole. This training proceeds through healthy doctrine. It is visible through the right conduct of the Christians, but at the same time it stems from a pure heart and sincere faith. It is therefore more of a life-form or cultural performance than a moral guideline or ethical conviction. In this sense “healthy doctrine” may perhaps be compared with some modern views of doctrine as a cultural-linguistic code that is expressed in conduct rather than in verbal sentences (see Lindbeck 1984; Vanhoozer 2005b; and the postscript).

The full picture of “law and gospel” that we can obtain from 1:8–11 is thus as follows: this Lutheran distinction points to the essential view that the Christian truth, the gospel, cannot be reduced to ethical matters. At the same time the distinction can be potentially misleading, if it entails the idea that the law would always remain in a contraposition to the gospel. The “good law” of 1:8 is on the same side with sound doctrine and the gospel. The divine economy, or the salvation history, entails the idea that Christians are educated in healthy doctrine that manifests itself as right conduct. Thus Christians can be expected to manifest their faith in their conduct. Affirming this to be the case does not, however, reduce

gospel toward law or moral conduct. The legitimate use of the law needs to pay attention to this many-sided dynamic. The idea of “health-bringing doctrine” captures this dynamic.

Let it be just briefly noted that the practical dynamics of “law and gospel” is not so many-sided as its theoretical analysis. Most religious and other convictions consider it as self-evident that a firm conviction manifests itself as honorable public conduct. Moreover, they do not confuse the inner conviction with the external conduct merely because of this connection. It may rather be the Enlightenment view of “Hume’s guillotine,” that is, a philosophical separation of facts and values that lurks behind some modern ideas of religious conviction that is claimed as being totally separate from concrete character formation.

First Timothy 1:11 is liturgical in its use of *doxa* (“glorious”) and *makarios* (“blessed”). The verse rounds out the first unit by using these terms, in particular through the emphasis that God has entrusted the gospel to Paul who has the authority to hand over this doctrine. For a deeper understanding of this verse one must define the relationship between sound doctrine and the gospel. The verse holds that the “glorious gospel” is the highest instance of Christian truth against which all teaching and doctrine is measured and to which it should conform.

Although the gospel is a higher and greater reality than our teaching, however healthy it may be, the presupposed view of *euangelion* in the Pastoral Epistles is many-sided. The term appears four times (1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:8, 10; 2:8), always denoting the revelatory event of God in Jesus Christ. Also in 1 Tim. 1:11 the word “glorious” points toward revelation. This gospel is entrusted to the apostle to the extent that he may speak of “my gospel” (2 Tim. 2:8). As Paul’s theology of handing over the gospel entails both the idea of “giving” and the idea of “keeping” (see excursus 6 and appendix C), such phrases should not be read as meaning that Paul would develop a particular understanding of his message. He is always handing over the gospel of Christ.

Whereas earlier Pauline epistles speak of the “gospel of Christ” (e.g., Rom. 15:19) that is proclaimed by the first Christians, the Pastoral Epistles connect the gospel strongly with the authority and legitimacy of the apostle. In this sense the term “gospel” approaches “sound doctrine.” Although the gospel is introduced in 1 Tim. 1:11 as fundamental reality and the criterion of healthy doctrine, it is also an established body of Christian truths entrusted to the teaching authority.

For these reasons it would be exaggerated to make a systematic distinction between “doctrine” and “gospel” in 1:10–11. One can say that “healthy doctrine” is a behavioral reality transmitted through instruction, whereas the “glorious gospel” is the fundamental truth available in Jesus Christ. In concrete reality, both go hand in hand (for the mutual relationship of “gospel,” “apostolic deposit,” and “scripture,” see excursus 8).

Commission of Paul as Apostle (1 Tim. 1:12–17)

After this outline of healthy doctrine, Paul undertakes a self-description of his own task as apostle. A modern reader easily doubts whether this passage is a self-portrait or a portrait drawn by an admiring follower. I will not investigate such historical issues in detail but will simply speak of “Paul,” meaning both the author and the model of this portrait (for the issue of authorship, see the introduction to the Pastoral Epistles).

In this self-portrait Paul is depicted as a model Christian who is made “an example to those who would come to believe” (1:16). At the same time, the passage is a small treatise of Christology, describing the work of Christ in simple terms. As in 1:1–11, the passage begins (1:12) and ends (1:17) with solemn, liturgical, and official statements that underline the divine calling of the apostle. At the same time these statements imitate other Pauline writings in which giving thanks to God is typical of Paul’s style.

Christ Jesus is again (1:2, 14) called our Lord. In this typical confessional formula the word “our” marks a distinction to the people criticized above. The idea of strengthening echoes Phil. 4:13. At the same time it relates to healthy doctrine. This doctrine has healed the apostle, who was earlier, as 1 Tim. 1:13 points out, an impious and lawless person. But now Paul is appointed to the “service” (*diakonia*) of Christ. Although this *diakonia* is not a distinct position, 1:12 probably presupposes some kind of ministry (Vulgate: *ponens in ministerio*). God has instituted or appointed Paul to this ministerial task or service, and as such it represents an apostolic ministry.

The view that God “judged me faithful” may be loosely connected with the justification of the sinner in other Pauline epistles (Romans and Galatians). The event of judging is not merely forensic, but it also creates justice or faithfulness. At the same time, as John Chrysostom points out, the judgment of divine forgiveness contains the idea of remembering the sins: “Although I have received the remission of sins, I do not reject the memory of those sins” (*Homilies Concerning the Statues* 12.1 [Gorday 2000: 141]; Roloff 1988: 92; Spicq 1969: 340–41).

In a way, precisely this is done in 1:13, in which Paul recollects his pre-Christian sins. The verse is difficult, since Paul here identifies his former self with the false teachers criticized above. In Phil. 3:6 he describes his own former existence as that of a “blameless” Pharisee whose faults were not of a moral nature but consisted in seeking righteousness under the law. It may be granted that he, as Saul, was a persecutor of some Christians (Gal. 1:13), but hardly a blasphemer or an arrogant wrongdoer, a *hybristēs* (“a man of violence”). The verse should not be read as a part of the apostle’s biography but as a paradigmatic example of how a Christian improves after meeting Christ and receiving mercy.

The difficult end of 1 Tim. 1:13 seems to relativize this picture to an extent. “Act[ing] ignorantly in unbelief” should not, however, be regarded as an excuse for Paul’s former sins, but it belongs to the paradigmatic picture: a godless and

faithless person is also ignorant. The fact of “receiv[ing] mercy” (1:13) or of being “judged . . . faithful” (1:12) is not founded on any hidden quality or excuse visible only to God, but God in these acts anticipates the future improvement of Paul and his future role as apostle. After receiving God’s mercy, Paul may be able to see his own past both as sinful and also in a somewhat better light, admitting that ignorance had something to do with his earlier sinfulness. It is not an excuse, but an aspect to be mentioned together with the memory of those sins.

Although this may be the actual flow of Paul’s thought in 1:13, a reader who needs theological consistence may still ask whether Paul actually makes two different and unrelated points: (1) that he was a very bad person, and (2) that he was ignorant and was therefore granted mercy. In 1:16 Paul says that he “received mercy” not because of his ignorance but “for that very reason”—meaning that he was a sinner.

For the paradigmatic purposes of this conversion story, it is important to realize that God in Jesus Christ acted out of grace and mercy with regard to Paul. The idea of “receiving mercy” appears in both 1:13 and 1:16. In both verses, God’s mercy appears to be a preparatory stage in the process of salvation. It is a divine attitude in which God does not proceed to punitive justice but allows room for other considerations. Readiness to help people who have no lawful right to such help essentially belongs to the attitude of mercy. Loyalty and solidarity with the helpless people are also presupposed. At the same time, God’s mercy is a prerequisite of salvation rather than salvation itself.

In 1:14 Paul describes the positive change that occurred when he became a Christian. Grace is here, as elsewhere in Pauline theology, an eschatological reality of salvation that already here and now permeates and improves the life of a human being. Paul speaks of the “flow” or “fullness” of grace in Rom. 5:20; 6:1; and 2 Cor. 4:15; here the term “overflowed” (*hyperepleonasen*) stresses the fullness of grace in a superlative manner and in dramatic contrast to his earlier sinfulness.

Faith and love are the primary gifts of this grace. Using the Pauline idiom “in Christ,” the apostle stresses that these two are gifts in the sense that they are given to us. The verse also relates to 1 Tim. 1:5: the apostolic instruction aims at bringing forth love that comes from sincere faith. But whereas faith and love in 1:5 are displayed as human virtues, in 1:14 they are characterized as gifts of grace. There is no contradiction between the two, since the exemplary Christian receives everything from God in Christ. Through this reception process, he becomes a participant of a new reality and a new communion.

As elsewhere in the Pauline writings, the phrase “in Christ” has an ecclesiological aspect. Faith and love characterize the new community of Christians. Later in 1 Timothy, Paul turns to the concrete instructions regarding church life, but already here he paints an ideal picture of faith and love that should characterize every Christian living in the new community.

In 1:15 Paul turns away from self-description and recites an elementary confession: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” The grace that is operative

in Paul is thus declared to be universally valid. The confession presupposes some important doctrinal motives of salvation history, at least the incarnation and maybe the preexistence of Christ. Paul is most probably employing an already existing confession that resembles some sayings of the Synoptic Gospels (e.g., Luke 19:10) (Oberlinner 1994: 43).

More importantly, 1 Tim. 1:15 continues the overarching theme of divine economy as salvation history. Within this economy, Jesus Christ receives many different but related roles in the Pastoral Epistles. He is depicted as “mediator” and as human being (2:5). He is addressed as “great God and Savior” (Titus 2:13). The coming of Jesus Christ is often called “epiphany” (1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 1:10; 4:1, 8). This term can relate to both the recent past, meaning incarnation, or the future, underlining the eschatological expectation. The Pastoral Epistles thus already contain a rich Christology in which Jesus Christ becomes described as God and human, as mediator who came into the world and will come in the future “to judge the living and the dead” (2 Tim. 4:1).

Although these aspects are probably assumed in 1 Tim. 1:15, I will leave their treatment to the verses in which they are explicitly mentioned. In 1:15 the focus is on salvation as the fulfilment of the divine plan. Paul has expressed above (1:5, 8) his appreciation of the good law and good conscience, but he nevertheless emphasizes that salvation concerns sinners. The way of salvation that Jesus Christ has opened is not the way of the law, but it has to do with mercy and *makrothymia* (1:16), which are divine rather than human attributes.

The vocabulary of salvation and Savior further employs the medical metaphor of sickness and healing and is thus connected with “healthy” doctrine. This vocabulary is carried over to later Christian expositions. Augustine, for instance, interprets this verse in using a medical view of incarnation: “If a great doctor has come down from heaven, a great invalid must have been lying very sick. . . . This invalid is the whole human race” (*Sermons* 175.1 [Gorday 2000: 144]).

The end of 1:15 returns to Paul in a somewhat puzzling manner. Why is Paul the “first” (*prōtos*) sinner? He is a prototype of the sinner who receives grace, as the paradigmatic story of 1:12–17 tells us. The phrase is also connected with 1 Cor. 15:9: Paul is the least of the apostles, the foremost of the sinners. In addition to these motives, 1 Timothy also wants to say that Paul is the first sinner to be saved. Thus he represents a direct apostolic line from the salvation event to Timothy and his church.

It is also remarkable that Paul now speaks in the present tense. Does he consider himself still as sinner, in keeping with the Lutheran idea of “justified and sinner at the same time”? Or is this a sort of dramatic emphasis in order to say that God’s saving work is not only history, but takes place here and now? Since in 1:16 Paul again moves to the past tense, it may be inadequate to speak of the Christian Paul as the prototype of a sinner.

The “reason” (*dia touto*) for Paul’s receiving mercy is not some hidden quality or ignorance (as noted in 1:13), but simply the sinner’s need for mercy. In 1:13

and 1:6 the reasons and causes mentioned may confuse a modern reader. Paul is not seeking an argumentative foundation for God's mercy, but he simply points out the causative sequence. God sees that this person can be made good only through mercy and grace. This need moves God in Christ to give the gifts of grace to Paul, the sinner. The word *makrothymia* ("utmost patience") in 1:16 employs the same logic.¹ This word is sometimes employed in the New Testament of God (Matt. 18:26; 1 Pet. 3:20), but Paul here thinks that Jesus Christ participates in the divine judgment, acting as a judge who exercises *makrothymia* instead of punitive justice. First Timothy 1:15–16 thus employs a rich Christology that stretches from possible preexistence through incarnation to the eschatological, but also present, judgment. The use of *makrothymia* lends Christ a divine attribute.

God is called *makrothymos* already in the Septuagint (e.g., Exod. 34:6). Given the nature of mercy as God's free decision to show sympathy and even *makrothymia*, one does not need to seek reasons for why mercy is shown. But, as in 1 Tim. 1:13, Paul wants to elucidate the general significance of this mercy. Through the merciful act Jesus Christ makes Paul a *hypotypōsis* ("example") in the sense "model, paradigm, prototype" for other Christians. *Hypotypōsis* is not primarily a moral example; it is rather the life story of Paul, which can be employed as an illustration of how the gospel is operative.

The paradigmatic story does not primarily depict Paul or his qualities, but it witnesses to the utmost patience of God in Jesus Christ. It is further meant to reflect God's mercy and the grace of God that brings forth the gifts of faith and love. Above all, it witnesses to the salvation in Jesus Christ. In this sense the story told in 1:12–16 should be employed as a paradigm for "those who would come to believe in him for eternal life."

The story narrated in 1:12–16 is clear in its theological purpose: through presenting an autobiography of Paul, some central insights of Christology and soteriology are highlighted. The story also strengthens the authority of Paul as an apostle. The most important purpose of this story is to present a paradigm of Christian existence based on mercy, grace, faith, and love, all of which are provided to sinners through the utmost patience of God in Christ.

The doxology that appears in 1:17 is most probably taken from early Christian liturgical practice. Its vocabulary resembles Jewish and Greco-Roman counterparts. "King of the ages" appears in Jer. 10:10; Tobit 13:7, 11; and Rev. 15:3. "Immortal" and "invisible" resemble philosophical language, but are also compatible with Judaism (Philo, *Moses* 2.171 [LCL 289.533]; *Cherubim* 101 [LCL 227.69]; see Marshall 1999: 405). "The only God" is a general biblical phrase that connects the doxology with the universalist view expressed in 1 Tim. 2:5.

1. Although this concept has Jewish/Septuagint origins (see J. Horst in *TDNT* 4.374–87), it may be said that it connotes a "positive" suffering or passion of God. See also the positive *epithymia* in 3:1 and appendix B.

Given that the significance of Jesus Christ is emphasized in the preceding passages, one may wonder why this doxology employs many Greco-Roman predicates. Since 1:12–16 speaks of Christ without mentioning God, it may be proper to address God in 1:17. And since 1:12 marks the beginning of the autobiographical story that is essentially christological, a theological balance is achieved by 1:17.

Admonition to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:18–20)

First Timothy 1:18–20 concludes the introductory part. These verses also prepare for the actual instructions that begin in 2:1. The key word is *parangelia* (“instructions”), relating to both 1:3–5 and the particular teachings given below. The instructions are not simply “given,” since the verb *paratithēmi* here means that the recipient is endowed with responsibility and power over the instruction received. The apostle solemnly hands over his message as well as his authority and responsibility to Timothy. The recipient is again (cf. 1:2) called “my child,” which may imply the idea of legal heir.

What are the “prophecies made earlier” about Timothy? A possible clue is given in Acts 13:1–3, in which the ordination of Barnabas and Saul is described and the ministry of prophets is mentioned. Similar allusions can be read from 1 Tim. 4:14. We do not know for certain whether the ordination liturgies of the early church included or presupposed prophets and prophecy, but it is likely that 1:18 refers to Timothy’s ordination, in which at least prophetic texts were read and their message was applied to the ordained persons. It is even possible that the Latin term *praeformatio* in the ordination liturgy comes from “prophecy.” The two terms are coined already in Tertullian (*Apology* 18.5 [ANF 3.32]; Roloff 1988: 101–2). In speaking of Timothy’s ordination, I will simply leave open the complex historical discussion whether and in what sense this ritual contained more than the commission present in Act 13:1–3 (see Marshall 1999: 409–10 and excursus 2). In keeping with this decision, I will not label Timothy as “bishop,” but will speak of him as “church leader.”

When Timothy follows the prophetic prayers recited in his ordination, he may “fight the good fight.” In this phrase we again meet the metaphoric language of the Hellenistic world, this time transferred from warfare and sport. This language is taken over from other Pauline epistles in which it is extensively used. Paul does not, however, apply this imagery to moral life in general, but concentrates on the tasks of apostolic service and church leadership (e.g., 1 Cor. 9:24–27; 2 Cor. 10:3–6; Phil. 1:27–30). The minister’s task is described in terms of athletics and warfare. A Christian leader is called to compete with others and to fight against those people and circumstances that prevent the proclamation of the gospel.

In his task as church leader, Timothy participates in the same fight as the apostle. In order to fight a good fight he also needs “faith and a good conscience.” These were already mentioned in 1 Tim. 1:5, but in 1:19 the phenomenon of conscience

is particularly highlighted. Faith comes from our Lord Jesus Christ and remains loyal to the good instruction received (1:5, 14). As in 1:5, the good conscience is here a moral term denoting the right conduct of the Christian. As faith and love are very closely connected in 1 Timothy, so too is good conscience an indication that the faithful persons have preserved their integrity in actual moral conduct.

In this moral sense conscience is self-consciousness, “knowing with” oneself. An ordained leader like Timothy who is entrusted with authority and healthy doctrine must be able to consider himself as “healthy” not only in terms of pure doctrine but in his moral conduct. Faith is the believer’s attitude; good conscience is the ability of one’s self-consciousness to affirm this attitude without inner doubts or misgivings. Because people are endowed with conscience, they cannot simply believe and act contrary to this belief at the same time. In this way the phenomenon of conscience preserves the personal integrity.

The picture of “shipwreck” is taken from Greco-Roman imagery, in which it is a general metaphor of human failure (Marshall 1999: 412). People who “reject conscience” are Christians who in their moral conduct have not followed the “healthy” path of doctrine. Hymenaeus and Alexander are portrayed as examples of shipwrecked people. Their names also appear in 2 Tim. 2:17 (Hymenaeus) and 4:14 (Alexander), but otherwise they remain unknown. Given the context of ordination and leadership, they may have been ordained leaders.

Theologically more interesting and challenging is the statement that Paul has turned these two over to Satan “so that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:20). The verse alludes to 1 Cor. 5:5. In both verses, the event of handing over is not merely a punishment or a final destruction, but Paul attaches some educational value (*paideuō* in 1 Tim. 1:20) to this act. In 1 Cor. 5:5 the act is performed to save the sinner; here, Hymenaeus and Alexander are expected to learn better. The imagery of pedagogical and medical hell, in which the sinners were healed or learned to be better, was surprisingly common in patristic times and still later played a certain role, especially in Eastern Christianity. Although it sounds very strange that Satan could teach the heretics to learn better, such ideas were extensively applied by later and more speculative Christian theologians (Vorglimler 1994 offers an abundant supply of patristic material on medical and pedagogical hell).

On a more concrete and everyday level, 1 Tim. 1:20 and 1 Cor. 5:5 probably describe some disciplinary acts in metaphorical terms. Sinners and heretics were to be excommunicated from the church in order that they may repent and return to faithful doctrine and a morally good life. Given this concrete meaning, one can pay attention to some differences between the two verses. In 1 Cor. 5:5 it needs the decision of a church assembly “with the power of our Lord Jesus” to execute the act of excommunication. But here Paul is performing this act by himself. The recipients of 1 Timothy nevertheless may have understood this act to have required more decision-making bodies. But as it stands, the text clearly ascribes more disciplinary power to the apostle than most other Pauline writings. This is in keeping with the high rank of the apostle throughout 1 Timothy.

A mature theological understanding of 1 Tim. 1:20 would require some answer to the most difficult question, namely, whether this kind of solitary authority is a model to be followed in the Christian church. The author clearly intends his behavior to incorporate such a model. In order to decide otherwise, a theologian needs to relativize the role of this text by other canonical texts. In addition, one needs to question the sense in which contemporary church leaders have an apostolic authority to perform disciplinary measures. At the same time, one should see that in both 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy the intention is not to punish or to destroy, but to educate and finally to save the person in question. Harsh language is thus connected with the optimistic ideas of a pedagogical (1 Tim. 1:20) or purifying (1 Cor. 5:5) Satan.