

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study of Paul's Second Letter to Timothy – Part 7

I. Exposition of Chapter Two (Continued).

A. Verse 16 – “But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.”

1. The word “shun” means; “to turn one’s self about for the purpose of avoiding something, hence to avoid”¹
2. The word “profane” means; “pertaining to being profane in the sense of worldly or godless”²
3. The words “idle babblings” mean; “talk which lacks significant content—‘foolish talk, empty talk...’to talk the way fools talk”³
4. “...for they will increase to more ungodliness.” – The word “ungodliness” means; “to live in a manner contrary to proper religious beliefs and practice—‘to live in an ungodly manner, godlessness.”⁴ This tells us that our words can have a part in our behavior. This goes along with James’ warning about the power of the tongue (James 3:1-12). Linda Belleville writes:

“Language creates the world. It does not merely respond to and talk about; it alters the world. At the very least, language shapes perceptions and values, and these shape conduct and larger movements, even the physical state of things. It can destroy, and it can build (e.g., Prov 12:18; 15:4; 18:21; 26:28). Words are too potent to be used flippantly or carelessly, and for our conversation—most of which we presently could not call to mind if we tried—we will give a strict accounting (Matt 12:36; Jas 3:1-12).”⁵

B. Verse 17 – “And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,” – The message of “profane and idle babblings” is what Paul is still referring to the false teachers he’s been dealing with.

1. Regarding the words “...spread like cancer...” Gordon Fee writes;
“...their teaching is metaphorically described as will spread (lit., ‘have pasture’) like gangrene. This can mean either that it spreads like sheep in a pasture, similar to the spread of gangrene, or, as the GNB, that it ‘is like an open sore that eats away the flesh,’ implying that their teaching will feed upon, or eat way at, the life of the church. In either case it ‘spreads’ or ‘eats away’ like a disease, and therefore must be avoided at all costs.”⁶
2. “Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,” – Two false teachers are mentioned by name. Hymenaeus is probably the same as the one mentioned in I Timothy 1:20 where Paul mentions him along with a man named Alexander. Paul says he delivered them “...to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.” (cf. I Corinthians 5:4-5). Philetus is only mentioned here.

C. Verse 18 – “...who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.”

1. The word “strayed” means; “to go astray as the result of departing from the truth—‘to abandon the truth, to lose one’s way”⁷ This tells us that at one time they knew the truth but deliberately departed from it. (cf. II Peter 2:20-22). Dr. Bob Uteley asserts:
“This is literally ‘to miss the mark,’ which is a metaphor from archery (cf. 1 Tim. 1:6; 6:21). The general word for sin (*hamartia*) means to fall short of the mark. This relates to the emphasis in this chapter on cutting a straight path (cf. 2:15–16). God is ‘straight’ which equals right or ‘just.’ His people should reflect His character, but these false teachers and their followers had clearly demonstrated by their deviation from Apostolic truth that they had left the straight path (i.e. ‘The Way’ which was an early title for the church).”⁸

¹ Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889), 503.

² Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 754.

³ *Ibid.*, 431.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 532.

⁵ Linda Belleville, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Volume 17: 1 Timothy*, (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2009)

⁶ Gordon D. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1988)

⁷ Louw and Nida, 373.

⁸ Robert James Uteley, *Paul’s Fourth Missionary Journey: I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy*, vol. Volume 9, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 154.

2. **“...saying that the resurrection is already past...”** – As we mentioned in **Part 5**, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the completion of His redemptive work. It is also that which was wrought for the believer’s resurrection. The Bible makes it clear that this resurrection will occur at the coming of Christ (**I Corinthians 15:20-23**). Dr. Wayne Grudem writes:

“When Christ redeemed us he did not just redeem our spirits (or souls)—he redeemed us as whole persons, and this includes the redemption of our bodies. Therefore the application of Christ’s work of redemption to us will not be complete until our bodies are entirely set free from the effects of the fall and brought to that state of perfection for which God created them. In fact, the redemption of our bodies will only occur when Christ returns and raises our bodies from the dead.”⁹

3. **“...and they overthrow the faith of some.”** – The word **“overthrow”** means; **“to cause something to be completely overturned—to turn over, to upset, to overturn”¹⁰** Duane Litfin writes:

“The heresy of Philetus and Hymenaeus probably involved the idea that resurrection was a purely spiritual affair which occurred at conversion or baptism. But bodily resurrection is the keystone of Christian doctrine, as Paul showed (1 Cor. 15). Without it, the entire edifice of the gospel collapses. Little wonder then that Paul said that these two false teachers destroy the faith of some (cf. 1 Tim. 1:19).”¹¹

D. Verse 19 – “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.’” With the word **“nevertheless”**, Paul goes from a negative tone to encouraging words.

1. **“...the solid foundation of God stands...”** – The word **“solid”** means; **“strong, firm, immovable”¹²** The word **“foundation”** means; **“that on which a structure is built”¹³** Dr. Bob Utley writes:

“God’s people as a building built on Christ as the foundation is one of Paul’s favorite metaphors (cf. 1 Cor. 3:10ff; Eph. 2:20ff; 1 Tim. 3:15). In this context it refers to God’s truth remaining sure and solid in contrast to the false teachers. The believer’s hope is in the character of God and His trustworthiness to His promises.”¹⁴

2. **“...having this seal...”** – The word **“seal”** here means; **“an engraved object used to make a mark denoting ownership, approval, or closure of something...”¹⁵** Gary Leggett states:

“It carries the idea of ownership (compare Ephesians 1:13). The presence of God’s seal identifies the true Christian. Two quotations from the Old Testament make up this ‘seal’; the first reflects God’s ownership, the second speaks of man’s responsibility. ‘The Lord knoweth them that are his’ is a paraphrase of Numbers 16:5. That text comes from the narrative of Korah’s rebellion. Moses told the people God would show them who was His and who was not....The second quotation, ‘Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity’, is a reflection of Moses’ words in Numbers 16:26 – again from the Korah narrative....They present two principles regarding the Church. First, the Church consists of those who belong to God. Second, the Church consists of those who have departed from unrighteousness.”¹⁶

E. Verse 20 – “But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.” – In context, the **“great house”** is referring to the Church (**cf. I Timothy 3:15**). The analogy is showing two kinds of believers. **“...vessels of gold and silver”** represent believers who are faithful and useful in serving Christ. On the hand, vessels **“...of wood and clay”** represent believers who fail to honor the Lord.

⁹ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004), 828.

¹⁰ Louw and Nida, 213.

¹¹ A. Duane Litfin, “2 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 754.

¹² Thayer, 587.

¹³ Louw and Nida, 86.

¹⁴ Robert James Utley, *Paul’s Fourth Missionary Journey: I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy*, vol. Volume 9, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 154.

¹⁵ Louw and Nida, 59.

¹⁶ *The Complete Biblical Library: Acts – Revelation, Volume 2*, (Empowered Life, Tulsa, OK, 2016.), 921.