**Armed Against Apostasy**

*1 Timothy 4*

**Introduction**

1. While the instruction of 1 Timothy would be for the benefit of those in Ephesus Timothy preached to (**4:16**), the epistle was also written for the personal advantage of Timothy, especially for the effectiveness of his ministry in the gospel – **3:15** – ***“how YOU ought to conduct yourself”***
2. Such instruction for Timothy was undoubtedly directed toward his preaching of the word, and in defense against false teaching – **1:18** – he was a part of the ***“pillar and ground of the truth” (3:15***).
3. Chapter 4 continues with instruction for Timothy, specifying matters which would equip him to be a ***“good minister”*** as he taught them to the brethren – **4:6**
4. This text especially stands as a warning against apostasy, and through instruction to Timothy as a defender of the gospel, a blueprint for arming us against falling away from the truth.
5. The Reality of Apostasy **(vv. 1-5)**
6. A Foretelling of Apostasy
   1. The prophecy of the HS **(v. 1a)**
      1. Expressly – explicitly – not that it might happen, BUT IT IS GOING TO HAPPEN.
      2. Latter times:
         1. Last days – last dispensation – began on Pentecost **(cf. Acts 2:16-17).**
         2. Later times (ASV, NASB, ESV) – i.e. sometime later, i.e. in the future in reference to his writing at the time.
      3. Departure from the faith:
         1. Apostasy – the abandonment or renunciation of a religious or political belief. (New Oxford American Dictionary)
         2. The faith – object of faith, the gospel.
         3. Like Hymenaeus and Alexander – **1:19-20** – others will too.
   2. How?
7. The Nature of Apostasy
   1. Doctrine which contradicts “the faith:”
      1. Nature of the message – **(v. 1b)**
         1. Message – anything contrary to ***“the faith,” “the truth,” “the word of God.”***
            1. **(v. 1)** – is a departure from ***“the faith.”***
            2. **(v. 3)** – Specifics mentioned, BUT ESPECIALLY CONTRARY TO THE TRUTH.
            3. **(v. 5)** – Forbidden in contradiction to it being sanctified by ***“THE WORD OF GOD.”***
         2. Origin – Satan, for the purpose of deception.
            1. Spirits = teachers with messages claiming divine truth. (**cf. 1 John 4:1** – false prophets)
            2. Doctrines of demons = a teaching of Satan. (Demons being his ministers)
            3. **Cf. 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15** – speaking of men who teach falsely and claim apostleship.
      2. Nature of these particular false teachers – **(vv. 2-3)** – hypocrites who have ignored their conscience until it is past feeling.
         1. NOTE: Not true of all false teachers.
            1. Some are honestly mistaken, BUT FALSE TEACHING IS DESTRUCTIVE REGARDLESS.
            2. If they are honestly mistaken, they will make the correction when they’re shown they’re wrong.
            3. NOTE: the apostasy of the teachers themselves – they had to fall away from the faith at some point – LOOK HOW FAR THEY’VE FALLEN.
         2. **(v. 3)** – distinction between knowing and believing the truth.
            1. They may know it, but they don’t believe it.
            2. Contrast – **(v. 10)** – Paul and Timothy trust in God – why they teach the truth.

NOTE: ***“especially of those who believe”*** – I.e. His salvation is an offering to all, but only those who believe the truth (not simply know it) will receive it.

* 1. Apostasy comes by “giving heed” to such false doctrine **(v. 1).**
     1. “lit., ‘to hold to’ (pros, ‘to,’ echo, ‘to have, to hold’” (VINE)
     2. In **(v. 13)** – ***“give attention”***
     3. Which is why there is no tolerance with false teaching – ***cf. Galatians 2:5 (“did not yield submission even for an hour”***)

1. NOTE: While the Spirit obviously warns of a specific apostasy regarding specific doctrine, the truth stands that apostasy is going to occur. Measures must be taken to ensure that we are not ones who become apostate.
2. Arming Against Apostasy **(vv. 6-16)**
3. The Work of the Preacher
   1. Instruct the brethren:
      1. Instruct of ***“these things” (v. 6):***
         1. Warn of apostasy **(v. 1).**
         2. Distinctly label error **(v. 3).**
         3. Refute the error with the truth **(vv. 3b-5).**
         4. All are included in the nourishment of truth (**v. 6b).** (Positive and negative)
         5. Teach THESE things **(v. 11).**
   2. Need for continuing in study and teaching:
      1. Exercise toward godliness **(vv. 7b-10)** – How?
         1. **3:16** – mystery of godliness (metonymy – effect put for the cause)
         2. Study the mystery of godliness to become godly.
         3. **(v. 10)** – this **(v. 8b)** is why they labor in the gospel, because they trust in God to save them through that message, and they believe. (Why be given to any other thing – fables?)
      2. Study and teach the word **(vv. 13-15):**
         1. **(v. 13**) – read (the word), exhort (others to faithfulness – includes warning), doctrine (teach the word – ***“these things” v. 6***).
         2. **(v. 14)** – don’t neglect your ministry.
            1. ***“Gift”***

Not of necessity miraculous.

How does he “not neglect” it? – (**v. 13** – by giving attention to these things – **v. 15** – entirely to them)

Gift **– 1 Corinthians 7:7** – ability. (Context – control self sexually.)

* + - * 1. “Gift” (ability) given ***“by prophecy:”***

***1:18 – “according to the prophecies which led the way to thee, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare” (ASV)***

Prophecy = inspired word of God. (By God’s word Timothy would wage the good warfare.)

When Paul met Timothy – **Acts 16:2-3** – well-spoken of to the extent that Paul wanted to take him – i.e. on his preaching journey.

**2 Timothy 3:15** – made wise for salvation from childhood.

**Psalm 119:97-100** – made wiser than teachers by God’s word.

He had an ability in the knowledge of God’s word to teach it to others, so Paul took him initially.

* + - * 1. ***“laying on of the hands of the eldership”***

For appointment to work – **Acts 13:3** (Barnabas and Saul)

Possibly happened when Paul initially took him with him **– 2 Timothy 1:6** – along with the laying on of Paul’s hands in appointment.

* + - * 1. I.e. do not neglect your ministry in the word by failing to give attention to these things **(v. 13**), but GIVE SELF ENTIRELY TO THEM **(v. 15).**

1. **(v. 15)** – not for the purpose of self-glory, but for leading men in the way of salvation.
   1. Reject Fables (**v. 7).**
      1. Why? What do they cause? – **1:4** – disputes rather than godly edification. (Administration of God – His will)
      2. Cannot fight false doctrine with profane (unholy – not from God) stories of men.
   2. Be an Example by Living Faithfully **(vv. 12, 16).**
      1. Brethren need to know your conviction and sincerity.
      2. You need to be faithful in what you preach if you are to have the influence needed.
2. The Result **(v. 16)** – the salvation of souls who hear the gospel taught.
   1. Not by ignoring the false doctrine, and possible apostasy (**v. 6).**
   2. Not by tickling ears (**v. 7).**
   3. By commanding and teaching God’s word (**v. 11**)
3. Application
4. Apostasy is Possible **(v. 1) – Hebrews 2:1-3** – give the more earnest heed to God’s word.
5. The Only Protection Against Apostasy is a Knowledge and Belief (trust) of the Truth **(vv. 3-5, 10) – 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12** – did not receive love of truth, not believe truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
6. A Good Preacher is One Who Exposes Error (distinctive preaching) **(vv. 6, 11) – Acts 20:26-27** – not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God.
7. Christians Should Want to Hear the Truth **(v. 16) – cf. 2 Timothy 4:3** – not want their ears itched.

**Conclusion**

1. It is evident that apostasy has occurred among God’s people and can/will occur again.
2. The church must be armed against such apostasy by having the unadulterated word of God preached faithfully.
3. This requires a preacher who understands the job of a minister of the gospel – to study to know the truth, and error, in order to ***“instruct the brethren in these things.”***
4. This requires a people who ***“trust in the living God”*** by not only knowing but believing the truth.