

Strange Doctrines – Part One

"...I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine." I Timothy 1:3

This phrase "different/strange doctrine" means, "to play the part of a teacher of other than right doctrine." Paul charged Timothy with the task of ensuring that people do not deviate from Scripture. As he said in his second epistle, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."¹

I find Paul's admonition interesting in that possibly no set of commandments is more thoroughly neglected in the whole of the Bible than those found in Paul's letters to Timothy. It is hard to find a single command in these epistles that is faithfully observed in the body of Christ today. People find it easier to speculate on the obscure and make normative the opinions of men, than to simply obey God's commandments and embrace sound doctrine.

If you wish to be faithful to Scripture, you must be careful not to err in two directions: 1) - Do not teach something that is openly at variance with the Bible. For example, when Paul commands, "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting,"² do not tell people that they do not have to lift up holy hands when they pray.

2) - Do not obscure Scripture with speculations regarding those doctrines that are not clear. For example, when the apostle said, "...ordain elders in every city..."³, do not be dogmatic regarding the manner used in selecting these elders.

Strange Doctrines – Part Two

"...as I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines." I Timothy 1:3

Paul admonishes Timothy to remain faithful to the doctrine entrusted to him by Paul, and not allow himself to be influenced by persuasive heretics. It is instructive to note that often the line between heresy and truth is blurred. What is orthodox in one denomination is heresy in another.

Christianity, coming into existence through Judaism, spread into the Gentile world with its entirely different worldview. For the most part, God used this apostle to navigate through those shoals. Paul notes in I Corinthians 9:20-23: "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you." Where is the line between adapting to culture and heresy?

Timothy must steadfastly follow the teachings given by Paul. People must be warned not to err in two directions: 1) - They cannot teach something that is openly at variance with the Word. 2) - They cannot obscure the Word with speculations regarding those doctrines that are not clear.