

# Fade Away

## 1 Timothy 4:1-3

### Dr. Pierre Cannings

#### I. Fall V. 1

a. Spirit - 1 Tim. 3:16; 4:1 ; Tit. 3:5; 2 Tim. 1:7

i. Spirit Says

1. Explicit - **to what is stated or has been stated as being precisely so, expressly, explicitly**
2. Despite the mystery of godliness, the Holy Spirit clearly speaks. The Spirit clearly, expressly, specifically, foretold this apostasy
3. Paul (1 Cor 7:26; 2 Thess 2:1–12), the Pastoral Epistles (2 Tim 2:16–18; 3:1–9, 13; 4:3–4), and elsewhere in the *NT* (2 Pet 3:3–7; 1 John 2:18; Jude 17–18). If this is the prophecy to which Paul refers, Timothy could have clearly known that it was coming, but perhaps he would have been somewhat surprised at its occurrence in Ephesus. It is also tempting to refer to Paul’s prophecy in Acts 20:29–30 where he told the Ephesian church that “after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw the disciples after them.” This prophecy fits the context

b. Fall Away

i. Later Times

1. At first glance it appears that the phrase ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς, “in the last times,” refers to some time in the future, especially since the verb is a future tense (ἀποστήσονται, “will apostatize”) and the phrase can be translated “in the later times.” However, a closer examination shows that Paul sees Timothy and himself as being presently in the last times
2. The purpose of 1 Tim 4:1–5 is to show that the problems Timothy is currently experiencing are not unexpected. (2) The actual phrase ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς does not occur again in the PE, but there is a similar phrase that employs a future verb although it refers to the present time: 2 Tim 3:1 says, “But know this, that in the last days [ἐν ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις] there will come [ἐνστήσονται] violent times”; as Paul continues his description he says, “Avoid [ἀποτρέψου] these people” (2 Tim 3:5b). The prohibition in 2 Tim 3:5b is linear in aspect: “Continually avoid”;

“Continue to avoid” (cf. BDF §336). Paul concludes by discussing the present behavior of some of the opponents, not future behavior. (3) From the time of the experience of Pentecost the church viewed itself as being in the last days (Acts 2:17–21; Heb 1:2),

3. Therefore, there is nothing about the word *καιρός* that denotes a specific time period. *καιρός* also occurs by itself in 2 Tim 4:3 where Paul urges Timothy to continue his preaching, “For the time will come [ἔσται] when they will not put up with [ἀνέξονται] sound teaching,” a use similar to that in 1 Tim 4:1. It also is used three verses later to refer to the time of Paul’s death (2 Tim 4:6).
4. The phrase with the verb in the future tense (ἀποστήσονται) might at first incline one to think that Paul is warning about something *yet* to come. But the NT community used futuristic sounding language to describe the present age. Furthermore, when this word was originally said the phenomenon was in a relative sense future, and thus “later.” Therefore, Paul is speaking about a present phenomenon using emphatic future language characteristic of prophecy. That he goes on to an argument addressed to a present situation (vv. 3–5) and that he urges Timothy to instruct the church members in this regard here and now (v. 6) substantiate this understanding.

ii. Fall Away

1. Fall Away –

- a. Fall- apostatize, ***go away, withdraw***
- b. Again we see an indication that the Ephesians are not being tricked into the heresy but are actively rebelling against God (cf. 1 Tim 1:6). The only other occurrence of ἀφιστάναι in the PE is in 2 Tim 2:19 where Paul uses its more basic meaning of “to depart
- c. In the NT the religious sense is at least found alongside others. In Ac. 15:38; 5:37; 19:9 the word seems to acquire increasingly the emphatic sense of religious apostasy. In Hb. 3:12 it is used expressly of religious decline from God. (3:14). This apostasy entails an unbelief which abandons hope. According to 1 Tm. 4:1 apostasy implies capitulation to the false beliefs of heretics. This apostasy is an eschatological phenomenon: ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς. The same view is found in Lk. 8:13, where ἀφίστασθαι is used absolutely. The reference is to the situation of Rev. 3:8.
- d. The idea of apostasy and a proliferation of evil in the end times is found throughout Jewish literature (Dan 12:1
- e. (3) Historically, by the time of writing Christians were falling from the faith (cf. 1 Tim 1:6). (4) The people who

were falling away were a different group from the opponents, those who were hypocritical liars whose consciences were seared. The context therefore envisions three groups: the opponents, the true believers, and those who had been part of the church but had since been lured away from the faith by the opponents. Paul commonly, but not always, refers to the opponents as τινές and not by name in the PE (cf. 1 Tim 1:3).

- f. Such usage brings to mind the warning of Jesus concerning apostasy in Mt. 24:10, 11 and Mk. 13:22. The warning of Jesus is conceptually the closest to this clause in that both speak of “falling away” (1 Tim. 4:1 with ἀφίστημι, Mt. 24:10 with σκανδαλίζω; these words can be used interchangeably as in Lk. 8:13 [ἀφίστημι] par. Mt. 13:21; Mk. 4:17 [σκανδαλίζω]). It is therefore most likely that Paul has this source in view. That he writes τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει emphasizes the ongoing and present significance of this warning, which has been reiterated by the Spirit through him and others (cf., e.g., Acts 20:28–31; 2 Tim. 3:1ff.; 4:3, 4).
- g. Jesus describes those who fall away as those who “have no root” (Lk. 8:13; cf. also Heb. 3:12ff.; 6:4ff.; 10:26ff.; 12:25
- h. For the content of the warning cf. Mk 13:5f., 21–23; 2 Th 2:3, 9–11; Acts 20:29–31. It will be a time of apostasy affecting the church. The source of the apostasy is identified in two ways. On the one hand, it is seen as demonic in origin. On the other hand, it is the work of teachers who tell lies but pretend to be speaking the truth or to be righteous people. But their consciences do not prevent them from acting falsely in this way, either because they have ceased to operate effectively or because they have been perverted. Their teaching is summed up in two practical prohibitions directed against entering into marriage and eating [certain] foods.

## 2. From the Faith

### 3. Paying Attention

- a. Attention - **to pay close attention to someth. pay attention to, give heed to, follow**
- b. Deceitful Spirit
  - i. Deceitful - **leading astray, deceitful**
  - ii. Who were the πνεύμασιν πλάνοις, “deceitful spirits”? πνεῦμα, “spirit,” elsewhere in the PE is always singular, referring to the Holy Spirit (1 Tim 4:1a; 2 Tim 1:14; Titus 3:5), Timothy’s spirit (2 Tim

1:7; 4:22), and Jesus' spirit (1 Tim 3:16). The plural πνεύμασιν πλάνοις could be referring to Paul's opponents, but more likely, especially if the following phrase is to be translated "teachings of demons," it also refers to these same beings, the evil spirits who with Satan are assailing the Ephesian church (cf. 1 Tim 1:20), the spirits to whom the Ephesian church is devoting itself. προσέχοντες, "being devoted to," describes a strong attachment, a lifestyle (cf. 1 Tim 1:4). Those of the faith who have apostatized have become enamored with this new teaching. πλάνη, "deceitful," is a common term in both the LXX and the NT for religious error and is always bad. When people refuse to acknowledge God and are consumed with passion for each other, they bear the penalty for their error (πλάνη) in their own persons (Rom 1:27). Spiritually immature Christians are tossed to and fro by deceitful people (Eph 4:14). Paul's appeal to the Thessalonians comes not from deceit but from (it is implied) God (1 Thess 2:3). Because people refuse to love the truth, God will send a spirit of deceit so they will believe what is false (2 Thess 2:10–11). The term is used elsewhere in the NT to describe false teachers (2 Pet 2:18; 3:17; Jude 11), the spirit of error, which is the spirit of the antichrist (1 John 4:6), and sin resulting in damnation (Jas 5:20;

- c. Doctrines of Demons
  - i. Doctrines - **the act of teaching, teaching, instructions**
  - ii. **Demons** - Demons - Erroneous instruction
    - 1. Rather, the phrase is saying that the opponents are the agents of demons (cf. 2 Cor 11:14–15: "Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness").

## II. Tripped VS. 2-3

- a. Means

i. Hypocrisy

1. Hypocrisy –

- a. Hypocrisy - sense **to create a public impression that is at odds with one's real purposes or motivations, *play-acting, pretense, outward show, dissembling misled by smooth talkers***
- b. In ch. 1 we found that the opponents were concerned to be teachers of the law and laid stress on genealogies, which the author characterised as mythical; as a result they promoted what the author regarded as empty speculations. We now learn more about the teachings (and hence the practices) of the opponents, and this serves to reinforce the need for the instruction which follows. Whereas 2 Tim also is concerned with the rise of heresy (2 Tim 3:1–9) but deals more with the moral and spiritual decline associated with the heresy, here the concern is directly with the teaching of the heretics and characterises it as part of the moral and spiritual deterioration that is prophesied for the last days.

2. Liars

- a. Liars - ***speaking falsely, lying*** dangerous because they play a role [ἐν ὑποκρίσει] that puts their victims off the scent; like actors who play parts so well that their words have the ring of truth)
  - i. **4:2** These “teachings” are mediated (ἐν) “by means of” human beings as the proximate source. These teachers are said to be ψευδολόγοι (a biblical hapax), i.e., those who speak falsely or lie. This substantival adjective is appropriately rendered by the noun “liars.” Their teaching is said to be ἐν ὑποκρίσει because “they contradict the words of the truth of God (cf. 4:3; 6:5; 2 Tim. 3:8; 4:4; Tit. 1:14
- b. Seared in their Own Conscience
  - i. Conscience - **the inward faculty of distinguishing right and wrong, moral consciousness, conscience**
  - ii. The last of these seems more in accord with Paul's evaluation in Rom. 1:18, 28–32, of conduct contrary to God's moral standards, where a sense of self-consciousness is also present, as here, i.e., τὴν ἰδίαν συνείδησιν. ἰδίαν means “their own” and emphasizes the self-deception of sin within their own moral evaluator, ἡ συνείδησις (see 1:5), “the conscience.”

iii. “liars whose own consciences have been branded.” This is in contrast to Paul who has, as a goal of his preaching, a good conscience (1 Tim 1:5). This phrase is important in the overall interpretation of the PE because it raises the question of the opponents’ sincerity. The opponents have not been tricked; they do not deserve the benefit of the doubt. They know that what they are doing and teaching is wrong, and yet “they not only do them but approve those who practice them” (in the words of Rom 1:32).

c. With Branding Iron

- i. This agrees with 2 Tim 2:26, which states that the opponents have been ensnared by Satan to do his will.
- ii. This translation suggests that Paul’s opponents have had their consciences branded by Satan to mark his ownership, somewhat like the “666” of the antichrist
- iii. (2) The nonfigurative translation is “brand with a red-hot iron” (BAGD 425). The reference is to the ancient practice of branding criminals, runaway and disobedient slaves defeated soldiers).
- iv. Much is revealed about the opponents in these five verses. The opponents are hypocritical liars who know that what they are teaching is wrong and yet continue to teach, claiming to be Christians and yet bearing Satan’s brand of ownership. Ultimately Satan lies behind their work and there is a reminder of the opponents’ success. They are promoting asceticism, forbidding marriage, and enforcing dietary restrictions, but their asceticism is false and hypocritical.
- v. by being devoted to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, by the hypocrisy of liars whose own consciences have been branded.” Not since 1 Tim 1:3–6 has such a clear picture been given of Paul’s opponents. Here it is revealed that at the root of the Ephesian heresy lie Satan and his demons, leading people astray and teaching his own doctrines. The role of Satan has already been hinted at in 1 Tim 3:6–7, and it will appear again in 2 Tim 2:26 (cf. 1 Tim 1:20 for a discussion of Satan’s role). It is also revealed that the opponents are

hypocrites whose minds have been branded by Satan. Ultimately they know that what they were doing and teaching is wrong, and yet they persist. They are not honestly mistaken, but in fact carry Satan's brand of ownership on their consciences. This is the battle Timothy must fight, and this is his true enemy.

b. Fallen Message

- i. Some Essenes were celibate and would not eat 'other men's food' (hence they lived on grass when they were expelled from the community; Josephus, *Bel.* 2:143f.). Philo, *Cont.* 34–7 refers to the asceticism (but not abstinence from marriage) of the Therapeutae. At Qumran there is evidence that some were celibate while others were not (CD 7:6f.), but, apart from their general frugality and abstemiousness, nothing is said about restrictions on diet (which certainly included bread and wine), and animal bones have been discovered at Qumran. Apart, then, from the restriction on marriage we do not have a full parallel here.

c. True Message

- i. Believe - *it is a trustworthy saying*
- ii. Know-
- iii. Truth of the content of Christianity as the ultimate truth, recognize
  1. It is important to notice that the passage continues through to the end of v. 10. Already in v. 3 it is clear that the antidote to the false teaching lies in the Christian gospel (the 'truth') accepted by believers. That gospel promises life both now and in the hereafter and centres on God the Saviour. Hence it is arguable that it is not only the doctrine of God as Creator but also of God as Saviour which forms the basis for the argument
  - 2.

## Word Studies

Explicit - **to what is stated or has been stated as being precisely so, expressly, explicitly**<sup>1</sup>

Fall – apostatize, **go away, withdraw** In the N<sup>2</sup>T the religious sense is at least found alongside others. In Ac. 15:38; 5:37; 19:9 the word seems to acquire increasingly the emphatic sense of religious apostasy. In Hb. 3:12 it is used expressly of religious decline from God. The opposite here is: τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν κατέχειν (3:14). This apostasy entails an unbelief which abandons hope.<sup>31</sup> According to 1 Tm. 4:1 apostasy implies capitulation to the false beliefs of heretics.<sup>42</sup> This apostasy is an eschatological phenomenon: ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς. The same view is found in Lk. 8:13, where ἀφίστασθαι is used absolutely. The reference is to the situation of Rev. 3:8. ἀφίστασθαι thus approximates to → ἀρέϊσθαι, as may be seen in Herm<sup>5</sup>. s<sup>6</sup>., 8, 8, 2: τινὲς δὲ αὐτῶν εἰς τέλος ἀπέστησαν ... ἐβλασφήμησαν τὸν κύριον καὶ ἀπηρνῆσάτο λοιπόν<sup>7</sup>

Attention - **to pay close attention to someth<sup>8</sup>., pay attention to, give heed to, follow**<sup>9</sup>

Deceitful - **leading astray, deceitful**

Doctrines - **the act of teaching, teaching, instruction**<sup>10</sup>

Demons - Erroneous instruction

Hypocrisy - **sense to create a public impression that is at odds with one's real purposes or motivations, play-acting, pretense, outward show, dissembling**<sup>11</sup> misled by smooth talkers

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<sup>1</sup> William Arndt et al., [\*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature\*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 905.

<sup>2</sup>NT New Testament.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Herm. v., 2, 3, 2; 3, 7, 2.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Herm. s., 8, 9, 1: ἐνέμειναν τῇ πίστει; Just. Dial., 8, 2: ἀφίστασθαι τῶν τοῦ σωτῆρος λόγων; 20, 1: ... τῆς γνώσεως (θεοῦ); 111, 2: τῆς πίστεως (Χριστοῦ).

<sup>5</sup>Herm. *Pastor Hermae*.

<sup>6</sup>s. *similitudines*.

<sup>7</sup> Heinrich Schlier, “[Ἀφίστημι, Αποστασία, Διχοστασία.](#)” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 513.

<sup>8</sup>**someth. someth.** = something

<sup>9</sup> William Arndt et al., [\*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature\*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 880.

<sup>10</sup> William Arndt et al., [\*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature\*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 240.

<sup>11</sup> William Arndt et al., [\*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature\*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1038.



Liars - **speaking falsely, lying** dangerous because they play a role [ἐν ὑποκρίσει] that puts their victims off the scent; like actors who play parts so well that their words have the ring of truth)<sup>12</sup>

Conscience - **the inward faculty of distinguishing right and wrong, moral consciousness, conscience**<sup>13</sup>

Branding Iron

Gratefully - **the expression or content of gratitude, the rendering of thanks, thanksgiving**<sup>14</sup>

Believe - *it is a trustworthy saying*<sup>15</sup>

Truth - of the content of Christianity as the ultimate truth, recognized<sup>16</sup>

## Commentary Studies

DISCIPLINE: 4:1–16

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<sup>12</sup> William Arndt et al., [\*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature\*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1096.

<sup>13</sup> William Arndt et al., [\*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature\*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 967.

<sup>14</sup> William Arndt et al., [\*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature\*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 416.

<sup>15</sup> William Arndt et al., [\*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature\*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 821.

<sup>16</sup> William Arndt et al., [\*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature\*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 42.

Paul turns from instructions for Timothy and the congregation to warning against an apostasy that involves false asceticism, mentioned for the first time here. The ultimate source of this apostasy is “deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons” (4:1), working “by means of the hypocrisy of liars” (v. 2). By prohibiting marriage and certain kinds of food, it forbids what God created to be received and shared in (vv. 3, 4). The church, however, is not caught unawares by this phenomenon because the Spirit has previously spoken about the apostasy (v. 1). The remedy for this error is recollection that “everything created by God is good,” which will keep one from rejecting God’s good creation and cause one to receive it with prayer and thanksgiving (vv. 4, 5).

Vv. 6–16 urge Timothy to point out these truths to his fellow Christians, to avoid such errors himself, and to engage in godly self-discipline (vv. 6–10). In his ministerial life he is to take heed to two things, his public duties and his personal piety. He is to give attention to “reading, exhortation, and teaching” (vv. 13, 16), be an example to believers (v. 12), and not neglect the spiritual gift within him (v. 14). He is to progress in both public duties and personal piety, and persevere for his own good and that of those who hear him (vv. 15, 16), all the while prescribing and teaching “these things” (v. 11), in particular the hope that can be placed in the living God as Savior of all believers (4:10).

#### APOSTASY AND ITS FALSE ASCETICISM: 4:1–5

**4:1** “But”—and here the  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$  serves most pointedly—the apostasy that Paul now warns of and its source were spoken of beforehand by the Spirit. τὸ πνεῦμα here refers to the Spirit of God as it does in 4 or 5 of the 7 P<sup>17</sup>E occurrences (1 Tim. 3:16; 4:1 [1x]; Tit. 3:5; 2 Tim. 1:7 [?], 14). The definite article with πνεῦμα (see the list in BAG<sup>18</sup>D s.v. 5d) and the following λέγει are further indicators of that fact: *The Spirit that speaks* is in the NT the Spirit of God (see, e.g., the repeated τὸ πνεῦμα in Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). Paul expresses the present reality of the Spirit’s communication by using present tense λέγει. This use of the present tense when referring to the communication of God, even when the communication was given in the past, is seen elsewhere in this letter in “the Scripture says” (1 Tim. 5:18) and conveys a constantly present authority. ῥητῶς\*<sup>19</sup> (a NT hapax), “expressly, explicitly,” emphasizes that the Spirit has communicated in no uncertain terms. The ὅτι clause contains the Spirit’s message, i.e., that there will be a falling away from the faith. Paul explicates the ultimate origin of that apostasy in the remainder of v. 1 and describes how it is taking place specifically at Ephesus in vv. 2 and 3.

How, when, and where did the Spirit give this message? The numerous occurrences of τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει in Revelation (2:7, 11, 17, 25; 3:6, 13, 22) demonstrate that this phrase can be used to refer to the revelation given by Jesus Christ (cf. Rev. 1:1–3, 9–20, especially vv. 1, 19, 20). Such usage brings to mind the warning of Jesus concerning apostasy in Mt. 24:10, 11 and

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<sup>17</sup>PE Pastoral Epistles

<sup>18</sup>BAGD W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, tr. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich. 2nd ed. rev. and augmented by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker from Bauer’s 5th ed. (1958), Chicago, 1979.

<sup>19</sup>\*\* all occurrences of the word or phrase in the New Testament are listed or it is identified as a New Testament hapax legomenon

Mk. 13:22. The warning of Jesus is conceptually the closest to this clause in that both speak of “falling away” (1 Tim. 4:1 with ἀφίστημι, Mt. 24:10 with σκανδαλίζω; these words can be used interchangeably as in Lk. 8:13 [ἀφίστημι] par<sup>20</sup>. Mt. 13:21; Mk. 4:17 [σκανδαλίζω]). It is therefore most likely that Paul has this source in view. That he writes τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει emphasizes the ongoing and present significance of this warning, which has been reiterated by the Spirit through him and others (cf., e.g., Acts 20:28–31; 2 Tim. 3:1ff.; 4:3, 4).

The ὅτι clause communicates what will happen and when it will happen. The what is that “some will fall away from the faith.” The when is “in later times.” ἀφίστημι means here, as often in the LX<sup>21</sup>X (see BAG<sup>22</sup>D s.v. 2a), “fall away” from God, and here from whom or what one falls away is expressed by genitive τῆς πίστεως. “*aphistēmi* thus connotes the serious situation of becoming separated from the living God after a previous turning towards him, by falling away from the faith” (W. Bauder, *NIDNT*<sup>23</sup> I, 608). Jesus describes those who fall away as those who “have no root” (Lk. 8:13; cf. also Heb. 3:12ff.; 6:4ff.; 10:26ff.; 12:25ff.; Hughes, *Hebrews*, ad loc.). Articular ΠΙΣΤΙΣ is used here with the same nuance as in 1:18–20, i.e., primarily subjective but with an objective overtone. The one falling away falls away from faith, a subjective relationship, but at the same time from that which may be objectively referred to as ἡ ΠΙΣΤΙΣ.

This will take place “in later times,” ἐν ὑστέροισι καιροῖς (the phrase is a NT hapax). The virtually synonymous phrase ἐν ἔσχαταις ἡμέραις is used in 2 Tim. 3:1. The NT community is conscious of being “in the last days” (Acts 2:16, 17), i.e., the days inaugurated by the Messiah and characterized by the Spirit’s presence in power, the days to be consummated by the return of Christ (see Ridderbos, *Paul*, 44–49). The phrase with the verb in the future tense (ἀποστήσονται) might at first incline one to think that Paul is warning about something yet to come. But the NT community used futuristic sounding language to describe the present age. Furthermore, when this word was originally said the phenomenon was in a relative sense future, and thus “later.” Therefore, Paul is speaking about a present phenomenon using emphatic future language characteristic of prophecy. That he goes on to an argument addressed to a present situation (vv. 3–5) and that he urges Timothy to instruct the church members in this regard here and now (v. 6) substantiate this understanding.

The ultimate cause of such falling away is that people “pay attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.” “Paying attention” means giving heed to and following (προσέχοντες with dative). πνεύμασιν πλάνοις<sup>24\*</sup> (the phrase here only in the NT) are spirit beings whose wickedness is characterized as “deceitful” and thus as “leading astray” (BAG<sup>25</sup>D s.v. ΠΛΑΝΟΣ; cf. 2

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<sup>20</sup>par. parallel Gospel passages

<sup>21</sup>LXX Septuagint

<sup>22</sup>BAGD W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, tr. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich. 2nd ed. rev. and augmented by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker from Bauer’s 5th ed. (1958), Chicago, 1979.

<sup>23</sup>*NIDNTT* C. Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* I–III. Grand Rapids, 1975–78.

<sup>24\*\*</sup> all occurrences of the word or phrase in the New Testament are listed or it is identified as a New Testament hapax legomenon

<sup>25</sup>BAGD W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, tr. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich. 2nd ed. rev. and augmented by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker from Bauer’s 5th ed. (1958), Chicago, 1979.

Cor. 11:13–15). The teachings are those of “demons” (δαίμονίων, Pl<sup>26</sup>.<sup>27\*</sup> 5x: 1 Cor. 10:20 [2x], 21 [2x]; 53x in the Gospels, usually in the words of Jesus).

**4:2** These “teachings” are mediated (έν) “by means of” (NAS<sup>28</sup>B; “through” in RS<sup>29</sup>V, NE<sup>30</sup>B, NI<sup>31</sup>V) human beings as the proximate source. These teachers are said to be ψευδολόγοι\*<sup>32\*</sup> (a biblical hapax), i.e., those who speak falsely or lie. This substantival adjective is appropriately rendered by the noun “liars.” Their teaching is said to be έν ύποκρίσει because “they contradict the words of the truth of God (cf. 4:3; 6:5; 2 Tim. 3:8; 4:4; Tit. 1:14) and this is ύπόκρισις” (U. Wilckens, TDN<sup>33</sup>T VIII, 569; see especially Gal. 2:13). But further, “Paul is insinuating that their air of devotion and ethical rigour is only a specious mask” (Kelly).

κεκαυστηριασμένων\*<sup>34\*</sup> (perfect passive participle of καυστηριάζω, a NT hapax [following the UBSGN<sup>35</sup>T reading rather than καυτηριάζω]) has been explained as “branded” as slaves were, with the mark of Satan to indicate ownership (Robertson, Lock, Kelly), as “branded” with a penal brand as transgressors (Liddon, Bernard), or as “cauterized,” i.e., made insensible to the distinction between right and wrong (Spicq; see Eph. 4:19). The last of these seems more in accord with Paul’s evaluation in Rom. 1:18, 28–32, of conduct contrary to God’s moral standards, where a sense of self-consciousness is also present, as here, i.e., τήν ιδίαν συνειδησιν. ιδίαν means “their own” and emphasizes the self-deception of sin within their own moral evaluator, ή συνειδησις (see 1:5), “the conscience.” This concluding participial phrase gives the inner basis for the conduct just described as έν ύποκρίσει ψευδολόγων.

**4:3** This verse states that the two actions mandated by the false teachers are abstention from marriage and from certain foods, and then indicates why this mandate is so wrong, i.e., because God has created these things to be received with thanksgiving.

κωλύόντων (genitive to agree with ψευδολόγων) is from κωλύω, which means generally “hinder, prevent, forbid” (BAG<sup>36</sup>D), here “forbid.” The false teachers are forbidding marriage (γαμείν, Pl<sup>37</sup>.<sup>38\*</sup> 12x: 1 Cor. 7:9, 10, 28, 33, 34, 36, 39; 1 Tim. 4:3; 5:11, 14). Although Paul

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<sup>26</sup>Pl. Paul

<sup>27\*</sup> all occurrences of the word or phrase in Paul or in the Pastoral Epistles are cited

<sup>28</sup>NASB *New American Standard Bible*

<sup>29</sup>RSV *Revised Standard Version*

<sup>30</sup>NEB *New English Bible*

<sup>31</sup>NIV *New International Version*

<sup>32\*\*</sup> all occurrences of the word or phrase in the New Testament are listed or it is identified as a New Testament hapax legomenon

<sup>33</sup>TDNT G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, tr. G. W. Bromiley, I–X. Grand Rapids, 1964–76.

<sup>34\*\*</sup> all occurrences of the word or phrase in the New Testament are listed or it is identified as a New Testament hapax legomenon

<sup>35</sup>UBSGNT K. Aland, M. Black, C. M. Martini, B. M. Metzger, and A. Wikgren, *The Greek New Testament* (United Bible Societies). 3rd ed. corrected, Stuttgart, 1983.

<sup>36</sup>BAGD W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, tr. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich. 2nd ed. rev. and augmented by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker from Bauer’s 5th ed. (1958), Chicago, 1979.

<sup>37</sup>Pl. Paul

<sup>38\*</sup> all occurrences of the word or phrase in Paul or in the Pastoral Epistles are cited

commended singleness as an estate in which one could give more time and energy directly to serving the Lord (1 Cor. 7:32, 35), he always insisted that marriage was not wrong (1 Cor. 7:28) and that God had indeed gifted many to marry (1 Cor. 7:7; contra Dibelius-Conzelmann). These errorists forbid marriage as inherently wrong.

The construction ἀπέχεσθαι βρωμάτων following κωλυόντων is a zeugma, “a special type of ellipsis requiring a different verb to be supplied ..., i.e., *one* verb is used with two objects (subjects) but suits only one ...” (BD<sup>39</sup>F §479.2). ἀπέχω means in the middle “hold oneself away from” (Robertson), with the genitive of what one holds away from (BAG<sup>40</sup>D), here βρῶμα, which has the general meaning of “food.” The word is used in a specialized sense in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8, as indicated by its replacement with κρέα, i.e., “meat,” in Rom. 14:21 (cf. also v. 2: “eats vegetables”) and 1 Cor. 8:13 (where the interchange of terms is made in a single verse). It is likely that βρῶμα is used in that specialized sense here. If so, the false teachers are urging abstention from meat as something intrinsically wrong. It is this evaluation of meat as intrinsically evil that distinguishes the false teachers from the “weak” in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 and that elicits condemnation and refutation (cf. Col. 2:16ff., 21ff.).

With ἃ ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν ... Paul indicates the error of this prohibition: It is directly contrary to God’s purposeful action (cf. Lane, “First Timothy 4:1–3”). ἃ agrees with the nearest possible antecedent, βρωμάτων, but it may also include γαμῆν indirectly if not directly. What Paul argues here and in vv. 4 and 5 applies also to marriage, even though his emphasis may be on the nearer antecedent. If his focus is more on the question of food, this may be because marriage is so clearly upheld and affirmed elsewhere in the letter (see 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; 5:9, 14; cf. the remarks in a letter known to this congregation, Eph. 5:22–33) and because the false teachers’ view of marriage is so self-evidently wrong.

The keynote of Paul’s refutation is that these things are what “God created to be gratefully shared in,” i.e., that the personal response appropriate to God’s creation of them is reception with thanksgiving. The implication to be drawn from the fact that God created these things is stated in v. 4a, ὅτι πᾶν κτίσμα θεοῦ καλόν. The action proposed by the false teachers is therefore repudiated, καὶ οὐδὲν ἀπόβλητον, v. 4b.

The use of ὁ θεός (see 1:1, 2) in this sentence states specifically that it is God who has created these things. κτίζω (see especially Eph. 3:9; Rev. 4:11) is used in early Christian literature “of God’s creative activity” (BAG<sup>41</sup>D). The purpose for which God created these things is stated in the prepositional phrase εἰς μετάληψιν<sup>\*42\*</sup> (a NT hapax), “to be received” (RS<sup>43</sup>V,

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<sup>39</sup>BDF F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, tr. and rev. R. W. Funk from the 10th German ed. Chicago, 1961.

<sup>40</sup>BAGD W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, tr. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich. 2nd ed. rev. and augmented by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker from Bauer’s 5th ed. (1958), Chicago, 1979.

<sup>41</sup>BAGD W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, tr. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich. 2nd ed. rev. and augmented by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker from Bauer’s 5th ed. (1958), Chicago, 1979.

<sup>42\*\*</sup> all occurrences of the word or phrase in the New Testament are listed or it is identified as a New Testament hapax legomenon

<sup>43</sup>RSV Revised Standard Version

*NI*<sup>44</sup>*V*). The attitude of the recipients is to be μετὰ εὐχαριστίας, “with thanksgiving” (*NI*<sup>45</sup>*V*), an attitude so important that it is repeated in v. 4, perhaps even a third time in v. 5 in the reference to prayer. εὐχαριστία (the prepositional phrase μετὰ εὐχαριστίας is found in Acts 24:3; Phil. 4:6; 1 Tim. 4:3, 4) is a term repeatedly used by Paul of the gratitude humans should have toward God for his good gifts to them (see also 2 Cor. 9:11, 12).

The concluding words of v. 3, τοῖς πιστοῖς καὶ ἐπεγνωκόσι τὴν ἀλήθειαν, demonstrate “that what was created for all men must therefore be legitimate for Christians” (Guthrie). The one article τοῖς indicates that the two designations, πιστοῖς καὶ ἐπεγνωκόσι, have a certain unity, i.e., they are two ways of referring to one group, namely, Christians (Zerwick, *Biblical Greek* §184). ΠΙΣΤΟῖς is used here in the active sense of “those who believe” (BAG<sup>46</sup>D s.v. 2). To this affirmation of their trust in God and Christ is joined the affirmation that they “know the truth” (ἐπεγνωκόσι τὴν ἀλήθειαν; see 2:4 for the similar phrase ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας; the only other occurrence of the phrase found here is in 2 Jn. 1). The perfect active participle is probably used to emphasize the abiding awareness believers have of the truth that Paul is emphasizing, i.e., that God has created these things, that they are good, and therefore that they should be gratefully received (cf., e.g., Acts 14:15–17; 17:24, 25; also Jas. 1:17, 18).<sup>47</sup>

### **Form/Structure/Setting**

1 Tim 4:1–5 does not begin a new topic. Paul, who has given his instructions on the true understanding of law, grace, and salvation (1:3–2:7) and on church behavior and leadership (2:8–3:13) and has paused to put his instructions into proper perspective (3:14–16), now concludes by pointing out that these types of problems should have been expected because the

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<sup>44</sup>*NIV New International Version*

<sup>45</sup>*NIV New International Version*

<sup>46</sup>BAGD W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, tr. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich. 2nd ed. rev. and augmented by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker from Bauer’s 5th ed. (1958), Chicago, 1979.

<sup>47</sup>George W. Knight, [\*The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text\*](#), *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 187–191.

Holy Spirit had clearly prophesied their occurrence (4:1–5; cf. *Form/Structure/Setting* on 1 Tim 3:14–16). Paul does not deal with the opponents again until 6:3. There is a parallel between chap. 1 and chap. 4. In 1:3–17 Paul describes the Ephesian problem and then in 1:18–20 reminds Timothy of what he already knew—that he had the gifts necessary to perform this ministry—and encourages him to do the task. In 4:1–5 Paul tells Timothy more about the Ephesian heresy, and then in 4:6–16 he encourages Timothy to fight the good fight. The issue of asceticism also ties 4:1–5 together with 4:6–16. The opponents taught asceticism, abstention from marriage and certain foods; by contrast, Timothy is to train himself in godliness (v 8). Vv 1–5 therefore conclude the discussion begun in chap. 2 and are transitional in that they discuss the heresy and are followed by a personal encouragement for Timothy to deal with the problem.

Fee ties 4:1–10 even closer to 3:16, seeing the theology of the hymn as standing in direct conflict with the opponents in 4:1–5. He argues that (1) 3:14 is transitional, concluding all of the preceding, including the general conduct of the false teachers; (2) the *δέ*, “but,” in 4:1 is a true adversative, connecting 3:16 with 4:1; and (3) “what holds this argument together (from 3:14) is the concern over *εὐσέβεια* (‘godliness’); the hymn is intended to give content to *εὐσέβεια*; the pursuit of it is about to be urged on Timothy (4:6–10) in direct antithesis to the false teachers and their errors (4:1–5)” (*God’s Empowering Presence*, 763).

Much is revealed about the opponents in these five verses. The opponents are hypocritical liars who know that what they are teaching is wrong and yet continue to teach, claiming to be Christians and yet bearing Satan’s brand of ownership. Ultimately Satan lies behind their work and there is a reminder of the opponents’ success. They are promoting asceticism, forbidding marriage, and enforcing dietary restrictions, but their asceticism is false and hypocritical. See the *Introduction*, “The Ephesian Heresy,” for a comparison of this passage with the other descriptions of the opponents and their teaching.

The structure of this passage is somewhat cumbersome: it is one sentence with a series of clauses. Paul begins by saying that some believers have fallen away just as the Spirit said they would, and then he gives two reasons for the apostasy: they are devoted to spirits and their teachings, and they have given in to the hypocrisy of liars (vv 1–2). Then, building from the word *ψευδολόγων*, “liars,” Paul describes their asceticism with a participial (*κωλύόντων γαμεῖν*, “forbidding to marry”) and an infinitival (*ἀπέχεσθαι βρωμάτων*, “to abstain from foods”) clause (v 3ab). Finally, Paul gives two reasons that no food is unclean: God’s creative intentions and a believer’s prayer of thanksgiving (vv 3c–5). Paul states each of these reasons three times, interweaving them together.

### **Comment**

**1a** *Τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ῥητῶς λέγει ὅτι ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς ἀποστήσονται τινες τῆς πίστεως*, “Now the Spirit clearly says that in the last times some of the faith will apostatize.” Timothy should not have been surprised at the problems he was having (1 Tim 2:1–3:13) because the Spirit clearly prophesied this apostasy. The emphasis is on the clarity of this prophecy. The same idea is repeated in 2 Tim 4:3–4, also in an eschatological context.

*τὸ πνεῦμα*, “the Spirit,” refers to the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 11:27–28 for a similar example of the Holy Spirit warning the church), but it is not clear through what medium the Spirit spoke

about this apostasy. The idea of apostasy and a proliferation of evil in the end times is found throughout Jewish literature (Dan 12:1; 1 *Enoc*<sup>48</sup> 80:2–8; 100:1–3; *As. Mos*<sup>49</sup> 8:1; 4 Ezra 5:1–12; 2 *Apoc. Bar*<sup>50</sup> 25–27; 48:32–36; 70:2–8; 1QpHa<sup>51</sup>b 2:5–10; 1Q<sup>52</sup>S 3:19–21; 1Q<sup>53</sup>H 4:9; C<sup>54</sup>D 12:2–3), the Gospels (Mark 13), Paul (1 Cor 7:26; 2 Thess 2:1–12), the P<sup>55</sup>E (2 Tim 2:16–18; 3:1–9, 13; 4:3–4), and elsewhere in the NT (2 Pet 3:3–7; 1 John 2:18; Jude 17–18). If this is the prophecy to which Paul refers, Timothy could have clearly known that it was coming, but perhaps he would have been somewhat surprised at its occurrence in Ephesus. It is also tempting to refer to Paul’s prophecy in Acts 20:29–30 where he told the Ephesian church that “after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw the disciples after them.” This prophecy fits the context (see *Introduction*, “Historical Reconstruction from Acts”).

At first glance it appears that the phrase ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς, “in the last times,” refers to some time in the future, especially since the verb is a future tense (ἀποστήσονται, “will apostatize”) and the phrase can be translated “in the later times.” However, a closer examination shows that Paul sees Timothy and himself as being presently in the last times (cf. Spic<sup>56</sup>q, 1:136; Towner, *NT<sup>57</sup>S* 32 [1986] 427–48; Pfitzner, *Agon Motif*, 173). (1) This is required by the context. The purpose of 1 Tim 4:1–5 is to show that the problems Timothy is currently experiencing are not unexpected. (2) The actual phrase ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς does not occur again in the P<sup>58</sup>E, but there is a similar phrase that employs a future verb although it refers to the present time: 2 Tim 3:1 says, “But know this, that in the last days [ἐν ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις] there will come [ἐνστήσονται] violent times”; as Paul continues his description he says, “Avoid [ἀποτρέπου] these people” (2 Tim 3:5b). The prohibition in 2 Tim 3:5b is linear in aspect: “Continually avoid”; “Continue to avoid” (cf. BD<sup>59</sup>F §336). Paul concludes by discussing the present behavior of some of the opponents, not future behavior. (3) From the time of the experience of Pentecost the church viewed itself as being in the last days (Acts 2:17–21; Heb 1:2), and this expectation is throughout Paul. (4) ἀποστήσονται, “will apostatize,” is future because Paul is probably looking at the prophecy from the perspective of the time it was originally given, a future that has now become present (cf. Lock, 47, citing 1 John 4:1–3). The gnomic present λέγει, “says,” shows the abiding force of the prophecy.

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<sup>48</sup>1 *Enoch* Ethiopic, Slavonic, Hebrew Enoch

<sup>49</sup>*Mos. De vita Mosis*

<sup>50</sup>2 *Apoc. Bar.* Syriac, Greek Apocalypse of Baruch

<sup>51</sup>1QpHab *Peshar on Habakkuk* from Qumran Cave 1

<sup>52</sup>1QS *Serek hayyahad (Rule of the Community, Manual of Discipline)*

<sup>53</sup>1QH *Hôdâyôt (Thanksgiving Hymns)* from Qumran Cave 1

<sup>54</sup>CD Cairo (Genizah text of the) Damascus (Document)

<sup>55</sup>PE Pastoral Epistles

<sup>56</sup>Spicq C. Spicq, *Notes de Lexicographie* OBO 22, Editions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse (1978)

<sup>57</sup>*NTS New Testament Studies*

<sup>58</sup>PE Pastoral Epistles

<sup>59</sup>BDF F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the NT*



ὁἔ, “now,” is not a strong adversative introducing a new topic but a gentle reminder that Timothy should not have been surprised at the opposition (cf. BAG<sup>60</sup>D 171). If there is any adversative force present, Paul’s point is that despite the tremendous and significant role the church plays and the truth of the hymn (cf. *Form/Structure/Setting* on 1 Tim 3:14–16), error can and has arisen (Bernard, 64). Ellicott (52) balances the adversative force against the mystery in 3:16. Despite the mystery of godliness, the Holy Spirit clearly speaks. The Spirit clearly, expressly, specifically, foretold this apostasy. ῥητῶς means “clearly, expressly,” adding emphasis to the idea of the clarity of the prophecy (cf. M<sup>61</sup>M, 564). It occurs nowhere else in the NT. ὕστερος functions as both a comparative (“later”) and a superlative (“last”; cf. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 299) adjective (BAG<sup>62</sup>D 849; cf. BD<sup>63</sup>F §62). Superlative forms in general were in decline in the Koine (BD<sup>64</sup>F §60), and the superlative form ὕστατος, “last,” does not occur in the NT.

There is a question regarding whether τῆς πίστεως, “of the faith,” goes with τινές, “some,” or with ἀποστήσονται, “will apostatize.” Will “some of the faith apostatize” or will “some apostatize from the faith”? (In both cases πίστις, “faith,” is used in the creedal sense; cf. *Introduction*, “Themes in the P<sup>65</sup>E.”) “Some of the faith will apostatize” seems preferable. (1) ἀφιστάναι, “to apostatize,” occurs fourteen times in the NT. In ten of those times the verb is followed by the ablative ἀπό, “from,” with the object of the preposition describing what they fell away from (Luke 4:13; 13:27; Acts 5:38; 12:10; 15:38; 19:9; 22:29; 2 Cor 12:8; 2 Tim 2:19; Heb 3:12). In every one of these instances, except in Acts 12:10, the preposition follows immediately after the verb. Of the other four instances (including 1 Tim 4:1), the verb is used absolutely with no object in Luke 8:13 (the seeds take root but in a time of temptation fall away [ἐν καιρῷ πειρασμοῦ ἀφίστανται]), with the ablative without a preposition in Luke 2:37 (Anna did not depart from the temple [ἀφίστατο τοῦ ἱεροῦ]), and with the accusative and a different preposition in Acts 5:37 (Judas the Galilean drew people away with him [ἀπέστησεν λαὸν ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ]). From this it can be seen that in the vast majority of cases if there is a recipient of the verb’s action, it will most likely be indicated by a preposition and will immediately follow the verb. This suggests that τῆς πίστεως modifies τινές and not ἀποστήσονται. (2) τῆς πίστεως is closer to τινές than it is to ἀποστήσονται. (3) Historically, by the time of writing Christians were falling from the faith (cf. 1 Tim 1:6). (4) The people who were falling away were a different group from the opponents, those who were hypocritical liars whose consciences were seared. The context therefore envisions three groups: the opponents, the true believers, and those who had been part of the church but had since been lured away from the faith by the

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<sup>60</sup>BAGD W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*

<sup>61</sup>MM J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder, 1930)

<sup>62</sup>BAGD W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*

<sup>63</sup>BDF F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the NT*

<sup>64</sup>BDF F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the NT*

<sup>65</sup>PE Pastoral Epistles

opponents. Paul commonly, but not always, refers to the opponents as *τινές* and not by name in the P<sup>66</sup>E (cf. 1 Tim 1:3).

*ἀποστήσονται*, “will apostatize,” refers to active rebellion against God and is so used in the LX<sup>67</sup>X (BAG<sup>68</sup>D 126–27), achieving almost the status of a technical term (H. Schlier, *TDN*<sup>69</sup>T 1:514–15; cf. Deut 32:15; Jer 3:14; Isa 30:1; Acts 5:37; 15:38; 19:9). Again we see an indication that the Ephesians are not being tricked into the heresy but are actively rebelling against God (cf. 1 Tim 1:6). The only other occurrence of *ἀφιστάναι* in the P<sup>70</sup>E is in 2 Tim 2:19 where Paul uses its more basic meaning of “to depart” when he says, “Let every one who calls on the name of the Lord depart [*ἀποστήτω*] from unrighteousness.”

*καιρός*, “time,” occurs three times in the phrase *καιροῖς ἰδίοις*, “in the proper time,” referring to the past manifestation of eternal life through Paul’s preaching (Titus 1:3), the present applicability of the creed in 1 Tim 2:5–6a to the Ephesian situation (1 Tim 2:6b), and the future return of Christ (1 Tim 6:15). Therefore, there is nothing about the word *καιρός* that denotes a specific time period. *καιρός* also occurs by itself in 2 Tim 4:3 where Paul urges Timothy to continue his preaching, “For the time will come [*ἔσται*] when they will not put up with [*ἀνέξονται*] sound teaching,” a use similar to that in 1 Tim 4:1. It also is used three verses later to refer to the time of Paul’s death (2 Tim 4:6).

**1b–2** *προσέχοντες πνεύμασιν πλάνοις καὶ διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων, ἐν ὑποκρίσει ψευδολόγων, κεκαυστηριασμένων τὴν ἰδίαν συνειδησιν*, “by being devoted to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, by the hypocrisy of liars whose own consciences have been branded.” Not since 1 Tim 1:3–6 has such a clear picture been given of Paul’s opponents. Here it is revealed that at the root of the Ephesian heresy lie Satan and his demons, leading people astray and teaching his own doctrines. The role of Satan has already been hinted at in 1 Tim 3:6–7, and it will appear again in 2 Tim 2:26 (cf. 1 Tim 1:20 for a discussion of Satan’s role). It is also revealed that the opponents are hypocrites whose minds have been branded by Satan. Ultimately they know that what they were doing and teaching is wrong, and yet they persist. They are not honestly mistaken, but in fact carry Satan’s brand of ownership on their consciences. This is the battle Timothy must fight, and this is his true enemy. Paul says elsewhere, “For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12).

The first clause, “by being devoted to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,” describes the force of the heresy upon the people (*τινές*). They were addicted to the demonic spirits and their teachings. Parallel to the participial clause is the prepositional clause “by the hypocrisy of liars whose own consciences have been branded.” The Ephesians have also apostatized because of the work of Paul’s opponents. Ellicott comments that a person “never stands isolated; if he is

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<sup>66</sup>PE Pastoral Epistles

<sup>67</sup>LXX Septuagint

<sup>68</sup>BAGD W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*

<sup>69</sup>TDNT G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds., tr. G. W. Bromiley *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., ET (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76)

<sup>70</sup>PE Pastoral Epistles

not influenced by [the Holy Spirit] ... he at once falls under the powers of [the deceitful spirit]" (53).

Who were the πνεύμασιν πλάνοις, "deceitful spirits"? πνεῦμα, "spirit," elsewhere in the P<sup>71</sup>E is always singular, referring to the Holy Spirit (1 Tim 4:1a; 2 Tim 1:14; Titus 3:5), Timothy's spirit (2 Tim 1:7; 4:22), and Jesus' spirit (1 Tim 3:16). The plural πνεύμασιν πλάνοις could be referring to Paul's opponents, but more likely, especially if the following phrase is to be translated "teachings of demons," it also refers to these same beings, the evil spirits who with Satan are assailing the Ephesian church (cf. 1 Tim 1:20), the spirits to whom the Ephesian church is devoting itself. προσέχοντες, "being devoted to," describes a strong attachment, a lifestyle (cf. 1 Tim 1:4). Those of the faith who have apostatized have become enamored with this new teaching. πλάνη, "deceitful," is a common term in both the LX<sup>72</sup>X and the NT for religious error and is always bad. When people refuse to acknowledge God and are consumed with passion for each other, they bear the penalty for their error (πλάνη) in their own persons (Rom 1:27). Spiritually immature Christians are tossed to and fro by deceitful people (Eph 4:14). Paul's appeal to the Thessalonians comes not from deceit but from (it is implied) God (1 Thess 2:3). Because people refuse to love the truth, God will send a spirit of deceit so they will believe what is false (2 Thess 2:10–11). The term is used elsewhere in the NT to describe false teachers (2 Pet 2:18; 3:17; Jude 11), the spirit of error, which is the spirit of the antichrist (1 John 4:6), and sin resulting in damnation (Jas 5:20; cf. H. Braun, TDN<sup>73</sup>T 6:228–53; BAG<sup>74</sup>D 665–66).

διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων, "teachings of demons," has two interpretations: teachings taught by demons (subjective genitive) or teachings that are demonic in nature (attributive genitive). Both interpretations understand that Satan and his demons lie at the root of the heresy, although the former makes the connection more direct and almost personal. Because Satan is seen as having an active role in Ephesus, the stronger statement is preferred: at the heart of the problem lies the active teachings of demons. This agrees with 2 Tim 2:26, which states that the opponents have been ensnared by Satan to do his will. Although these two designations—deceitful spirits and teachings of demons—are closely related, they are not a hendiadys; the devotion is to the spirits and to the teaching. The term διδασκαλία, "teaching," is frequent in the P<sup>75</sup>E, describing the gospel, and therefore its use here provides a startling contrast. As opposed to the sound teaching of Paul, the opponents are promulgating a sick, morbid heresy that is demonic in origin and spreading like gangrene (cf. 1 Tim 1:10). διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων does not mean that the opponents themselves are demon possessed; if so we would expect Paul to say so. Rather, the phrase is saying that the opponents are the agents of demons (cf. 2 Cor 11:14–15: "Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness").

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<sup>71</sup>PE Pastoral Epistles

<sup>72</sup>LXX Septuagint

<sup>73</sup>TDNT G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds., tr. G. W. Bromiley *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., ET (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76)

<sup>74</sup>BAGD W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*

<sup>75</sup>PE Pastoral Epistles

Having accused the apostatized Christians of being devoted to demons and their teachings, Paul follows up with a second description of their woeful state. They have been led into apostasy by hypocritical “liars whose own consciences have been branded.” This is in contrast to Paul who has, as a goal of his preaching, a good conscience (1 Tim 1:5). This phrase is important in the overall interpretation of the P<sup>76</sup>E because it raises the question of the opponents’ sincerity. The opponents have not been tricked; they do not deserve the benefit of the doubt. They know that what they are doing and teaching is wrong, and yet “they not only do them but approve those who practice them” (in the words of Rom 1:32). Ellicott (53) comments, “They knew the brand they bore, and yet with a show of outward sanctity ... they strove to beguile and to seduce others, and make them as bad as themselves.” They bear the brand of Satan on their conscience and yet pretend to be servants of God. Paul is justified in his condemnation of both their theology and their actions. ἐν, “by,” indicates the intermediate means of the heresy; the ultimate source is the demons (v 1).

κεκαυστηριασμένων is capable of two translations. (1) The figurative translation is that their consciences “have been burned,” as if pressed with a hot iron, so that they are no longer effective. This would be parallel to the concept of the hardened heart found throughout the NT (Matt 19:8; Mark 6:52; Rom 9:18; 11:7, 25; Eph 4:18; Heb 3:8, 13, 15; 4:7). The problem with this interpretation is that the imagery of a seared conscience does not fit with that of being a hypocritical liar: If a person’s conscience has been seared, he or she cannot know the difference between truth and error, but the term ὑπόκρισις, “hypocrisy,” implies that the opponents did know the difference.

(2) The nonfigurative translation is “brand with a red-hot iron” (BAG<sup>77</sup>D 425). The reference is to the ancient practice of branding criminals, runaway and disobedient slaves (Plutarch *Pericl.* 26), defeated soldiers (Lucian *Syr. dea* 59; Herodotus *Hist*<sup>78</sup>. 2:113), people in certain religious cults, and people in other specific professions (J. Schneider, *TDN*<sup>79</sup>T 3:643–45). This translation suggests that Paul’s opponents have had their consciences branded by Satan to mark his ownership, somewhat like the “666” of the antichrist (Rev 13:16; cf. R. H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977] 261–62). There are several arguments for this interpretation. (a) The participle is passive, suggesting that Satan is the one who does the branding. This fits the context, which just mentioned his role in the heresy (v 1b). (b) It fits with the imagery of the section. Paul has just called the opponents hypocritical liars. For emphasis he points out that although they claim to be from God, they have the stamp of Satan on them, they are his agents. (c) This interpretation does not disagree with the description of the opponents as hypocrites.

ὑπόκρισις, “hypocrisy,” pretending to be what one is not, occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Gal 2:13 where Paul says that even Barnabas was carried away by Peter’s hypocrisy. ψευδολόγος, “liar,” occurs in the NT only here. It is a compound noun meaning “false word.”

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<sup>76</sup>PE Pastoral Epistles

<sup>77</sup>BAGD W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*

<sup>78</sup>*Hist. Historia*

<sup>79</sup>TDNT G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds., tr. G. W. Bromiley *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., ET (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76)

Fee says it “has more to do with speaking falsehood as over against the truth of the gospel” (*God’s Empowering Presence*,” 768 n<sup>80</sup>. 60). The perfect participle κεκαυστηριασμένων, “have been branded,” emphasizes that they continue to carry the mark of their sin with them. This is the only occurrence of the word in the *NT*. On συνείδησις, “conscience,” cf. *Comment* on 1 Tim 1:5.

**3ab** κωλύόντων γαμῆν, ἀπέχεσθαι βρωμάτων, “forbidding to marry, demanding abstinence from foods.” The Ephesian heresy had to do with the law, myths, and genealogies (1 Tim 1:3–11). This verse gives the next clear indication of the content of the heresy. The opponents’ desire to force all to obey the law includes the enforcement of asceticism (as also in Titus 1:15), specifically, dietary restrictions and a forbidding of marriage (cf. Col 2:16–23 for a similar situation). The restrictions on marriage probably included everything associated with marriage, such as bearing children (discussed in 1 Tim 2:15). In light of the previous verses, which show that the opponents were hypocritical liars and agents of Satan, the asceticism of the opponents was surely feigned (cf. *Introduction*, “The Ephesian Heresy,” for a fuller discussion of the heresy). Towner suggests that the opponents may have been attempting “to enact the life of resurrection paradise by following the model given in Genesis 1 and 2” (103–4), accounting for the prohibition against marriage and the vegetarianism. This would help to explain the use of Gen 2–3 in 1 Tim 2:13–15 as reflecting the opponents’ teaching. It would also imply that the phrase “word of God” in 1 Tim 4:5 is God’s statement on the goodness of creation and supports the identification of the “myths and genealogies” in 1 Tim 1:4 with the creation accounts (see *Introduction*, “The Ephesian Heresy”).

Paul does not immediately deal with the issue of marriage. It has been raised in connection with bearing children (1 Tim 2:15) and will be discussed in more detail with the issue of widows in chap. 5. However, in the next several verses Paul deals with dietary restrictions and the goodness of food. Because marital and dietary regulations are found in both Judaism (Josephus *J.W.*<sup>81</sup>. 2.8.2 §§119–21 [cf. 2.8.13 §§160–61]; *Ant.*<sup>82</sup>. 18.1.5 §§18–22; Pliny *Hist.*<sup>83</sup>. 5.17) and Gnosticism (Clement of Alexandria *Strom.*<sup>84</sup>. 3.6; Irenaeus *Adv. Haer.*<sup>85</sup>. 1.22; cf. Oberlinner, 179), this passage does not help us in determining the source of the Ephesian heresy. The perversion of the gospel truth may have been the result of the philosophical dualism present throughout the first-century world (cf. Spicq<sup>86</sup>q, 1:494–5; Jeremias, 32; W. L. Lane, *NT*<sup>87</sup>S 11 [1964] 165 n<sup>88</sup>. 1). Since there is nothing here beyond what we meet in Rom 14, Col 2:16–23, and Heb 13:4, 9, there is no reason to look beyond the first century (cf. Lock, 47). Because 1 Tim 4:1–5 is so closely tied in with chaps. 1 and 2 and because these five verses have nothing in common with

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<sup>80</sup>n. note

<sup>81</sup>*J.W.* Josephus, *Jewish Wars*

<sup>82</sup>*Ant.* Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*

<sup>83</sup>*Hist. Historia*

<sup>84</sup>*Strom. Stromateris* (Clement of Alexandria)

<sup>85</sup>*Adv. Haer. Against All Heresies*

<sup>86</sup>Spicq C. Spicq, *Notes de Lexicographie* OBO 22, Editions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse (1978)

<sup>87</sup>*NTS New Testament Studies*

<sup>88</sup>n. note

the approach to interpreting the P<sup>89</sup>E as a church manual, they give confirmation that the correct interpretation of the P<sup>90</sup>E must take into account the historical situation. Lane argues that the opponents were teaching an over-realized eschatology in which the resurrection was past (2 Tim 2:18) and the new life of the age to come was present (cf. 4:8), a life in which there was no marriage (recalling Matt 22:30) and the food was fish or the honeycomb (recalling Luke 24:42–43; cf. John 21:9–14; Acts 10:41). But much of his argument assumes a closer connection between 4:1–5 and 4:8 than is warranted since v 6 starts a new section (albeit with some ties to the preceding), and it seems doubtful that Luke 24:42–3 is sufficiently significant to create a doctrine concerning dietary law in the eschatological kingdom.

Paul held a much higher view of marriage than did his opponents, encouraging women to bear children (1 Tim 2:15) and younger widows to remarry (1 Tim 5:11–15; cf. 1 Cor 7:8–9, 25–40). There was an obvious contradiction in the opponents' behavior: they eschewed marriage and childbearing, and yet Paul's statement that "For among them are those who make their way into households and capture weak women, burdened by sins and swayed by various impulses" (2 Tim 3:6) implies that they were sexually promiscuous. Paul has rightly called them hypocritical liars (1 Tim 4:2a). γαμεῖν, "to marry," occurs elsewhere in the P<sup>91</sup>E only in 1 Tim 5 where Paul counsels the younger widows to remarry (vv 11, 14). Its only other occurrence in Paul is in 1 Corinthians where the same issue of marriage and remarriage is being discussed (1 Cor 7:8–16, 25–40).

Dietary restrictions were a common problem in the early church (cf. Acts 10:9–16; Rom 14:1–23; 1 Cor 10:23–33; Col 2:16, 21). Although Jesus had declared all foods clean (Mark 7:19), the restrictions persisted. Paul spends the next two and one-half verses explaining why food laws are wrong. There is a question whether the opponents forbade alcoholic drink; most likely they did not since they were well known for their excessive drinking (*Comment* on 1 Tim 3:3). Their asceticism also did not forbid financial gain (1 Tim 6:5). ἀπέχεσθαι, "to abstain," is "an intransitive middle that takes the genitive of the thing from which abstinence is required" (BAG<sup>92</sup>D 85). It is used elsewhere in the *NT* to enjoin abstinence from food offered to idols (Acts 15:29), from fornication (1 Thess 4:3), from every form of evil (1 Thess 5:22), and from the desires of the flesh (1 Pet 2:11). From these parallels it appears that the opponents are insisting very strongly that the church must follow their dietary restrictions. βρῶμα, "food," is used elsewhere with various shades of meaning. Paul uses it in his discussions of food being a stumbling block to "weaker" Christians (Rom 14:15, 20; 1 Cor 8:8, 13). Paul's contrasting of food with milk in his discussion of spiritual immaturity (1 Cor 3:2) suggests that βρῶμα is solid food. Paul interchanges it with κρέας, "meat," in similar discussions (Rom 14:15, 20, 21; 1 Cor 8:13: "If food [βρῶμα] is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat [κρέας]).

**3c–5** ἃ ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν εἰς μετάλημψιν μετὰ εὐχαριστίας τοῖς πιστοῖς καὶ ἐπεγνωκόσι τὴν ἀλήθειαν. ὅτι πᾶν κτίσμα θεοῦ καλὸν καὶ οὐδὲν ἀπόβλητον μετὰ εὐχαριστίας λαμβανόμενον· ἀγιάζεται γὰρ διὰ λόγου θεοῦ καὶ ἐντεύξεως, "that God created to be

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<sup>89</sup>PE Pastoral Epistles

<sup>90</sup>PE Pastoral Epistles

<sup>91</sup>PE Pastoral Epistles

<sup>92</sup>BAGD W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*

received with thanksgiving by those who are faithful and know the truth, since all of God's creation is good, and nothing is unclean if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified through [the] word of God and prayer." Paul's opponents enforced cultic dietary restrictions on their converts. To show that they are wrong, Paul gives these two reasons: God created food good, and the prayer before the meal confirms the food's goodness.

The structure of these verses may seem confusing at first. Paul states both of his arguments three times, each time adding a little more to the argument, and weaves all six of these statements together, first referring to food's creative goodness and then to prayer. The first argument about God creating food to be good runs "that God created to be received ... since all of God's creation is good ... for it is sanctified through [the] word of God." The second argument about the power of prayer is "with thanksgiving by those who are faithful and know the truth ... nothing is unclean if it is received with thanksgiving ... for it is sanctified through ... prayer." The interweaving may be a bit cumbersome, but the constant repetition drives the points home. Because all three statements of each argument help to interpret each other, the three statements arguing from the goodness of creation will first be analyzed, and then the three statements arguing from prayer.

ἃ ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν εἰς μετάλημψιν ... ὅτι πᾶν κτίσμα θεοῦ καλόν ... ἀγιάζεται γὰρ διὰ λόγου θεοῦ, "that God created to be received ... since all of God's creation is good ... for it is sanctified through [the] word of God." Paul's first argument is that God created the food, and since everything God creates is good, so also is all food allowed to be eaten. All food is inherently clean because of God's creative activity, and an insistence on cultic dietary restrictions is now wrong (cf. Titus 1:15). This is the same idea found elsewhere: "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself" (Rom 14:14). There is no room for the dualistic sense of an evil creation in the P<sup>93</sup>E. God created the food, not a Gnostic demiurge as is met in the second century, and that goodness is still valid as the gospel declares, despite the Jewish laws. Again we see both Jewish and Gnostic tendencies in the Ephesian heresy.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>PE Pastoral Epistles

<sup>94</sup> William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 233–240.

*a. The Rise of Heresy and the Need for Sound Doctrine (4:1–5)*

Fee 1994:768–70; Ford, J. M., ‘A Note on Proto-Montanism in the Pastoral Epistles’, *NT<sup>95</sup>S* 17 (1970–1), 338–46; Lane, W. L., ‘1 Tim. 4:1–3: an early instance of over-realised eschatology’, *NT<sup>96</sup>S* II (1964–5), 164–7; Schlarb 1990:91–3, 132f.

The theme of this section is related to what has gone before in that the opening section of the letter was concerned with heresy (1:3–7, 19f.), and the task of the church in upholding and maintaining the truth was stressed in 3:15 (cf. Hasler, 33; Oberlinner, 171). In ch. 1 we found that the opponents were concerned to be teachers of the law and laid stress on genealogies, which the author characterised as mythical; as a result they promoted what the author regarded as empty speculations. We now learn more about the teachings (and hence the practices) of the opponents,<sup>971</sup> and this serves to reinforce the need for the instruction which follows. Whereas 2 Tim also is concerned with the rise of heresy (2 Tim 3:1–9) but deals more with the moral and spiritual decline associated with the heresy, here the concern is directly with the teaching of the heretics and characterises it as part of the moral and spiritual deterioration that is prophesied for the last days.

Dibelius-Conzelmann, 51, and Brox, 166, observe that this is the only section in 1 Tim that is concerned systematically with the heresy, but in fact the section is rather more concerned with Timothy’s personal bearing in the situation than with detail about the heresy, although 4:4f. is in fact a reasoned response to one aspect of it.

The teaching contains some elements that may be associated with the ‘form’ of a farewell discourse, the fact of impending moral decline and the need for the recipient to strive after godliness;<sup>982</sup> vv. 1–5 correspond roughly to 2 Tim 3:1–9, 13; 4:3; and vv. 6–11 correspond with 2 Tim 3:14–4:5.<sup>993</sup>

The presence of heresy is described in the form of a prophetic statement by the Spirit which describes from Paul’s point of view what will happen ‘in later [*or* the last] times’ (cf. 2 Pet 3:3; Jude 18). The prophetic form of statement is used to show the inevitability of what is

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<sup>95</sup>*NTS New Testament Studies*

<sup>96</sup>*NTS New Testament Studies*

<sup>971</sup> Jeremias, 29f., states that ch. 1 is concerned with the beliefs of the opponents and ch. 4 with their practices.

<sup>982</sup> Cf. Wolter 1988:228–30.

<sup>993</sup> Note how the section is structured with pairs (spirits and teachings; liars and branded; to marry and to abstain from foods; believers and people who have come to know the truth; good and not to be rejected; word of God and prayer).



happening, but it also indicates that it is not beyond God's knowledge, and therefore his control (Knoch, 32). Further, what is prophesied is in fact already happening (*pace* Simpson, 64), so that current events are identified as signs of the last days. It is not clear where the prophecy ends and whether the writer is quoting or paraphrasing an existing form of words and/or making his own comments on it (Couser 1992:109). The awkward syntax may be due to incorporating material.

For the content of the warning cf. Mk 13:5f., 21–23; 2 Th 2:3, 9–11; Acts 20:29–31. It will be a time of apostasy affecting the church. The source of the apostasy is identified in two ways. On the one hand, it is seen as demonic in origin. On the other hand, it is the work of teachers who tell lies but pretend to be speaking the truth or to be righteous people. But their consciences do not prevent them from acting falsely in this way, either because they have ceased to operate effectively or because they have been perverted. Their teaching is summed up in two practical prohibitions directed against entering into marriage and eating [certain] foods.

The author begins to respond to this teaching with a relative clause which ignores the question of marriage and takes up the issue of foods. The foods in question were created by God for human consumption, more particularly for consumption by believers who have come to know the truth revealed in the gospel and who can give thanks to God for them. There are thus two elements in the author's response, and these are developed in vv. 4 and 5 in a way reminiscent of Paul's response in 1 Cor 10:30f. If God has created foods, they are good (like the rest of creation) and are not to be rejected; on the contrary, they can be received with thanksgiving, because they are sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

It is important to notice that the passage continues through to the end of v. 10. Already in v. 3 it is clear that the antidote to the false teaching lies in the Christian gospel (the 'truth') accepted by believers. That gospel promises life both now and in the hereafter and centres on God the Saviour. Hence it is arguable that it is not only the doctrine of God as Creator but also of God as Saviour which forms the basis for the argument (Couser 1992:109–17).

The nature of the false teaching demands attention. What exactly was being taught, and what, if any, was the rationale behind it? Some possibilities can be rejected either because the evidence is inadequate that both celibacy and abstinence from certain foods were practised, or because the author's arguments against them here do not seem to fit the rationale for their abstention. It is widely held that a basic view of (certain aspects of) the creation as evil is the underlying issue. Thiessen 1995:326 questions this assumption on the basis that the argument against the false teaching appeals to creation as a fact acknowledged on both sides, but it remains possible that an inconsistent attitude to creation lay at the root of the trouble.<sup>1004</sup> It is significant that the false views are attributed to demonic inspiration. The implication is that the opponents claimed the authority of prophetic inspiration for their views. A variety of background influences may have been at work.

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<sup>1004</sup> The fact that such rejection would have been inconsistent, in that people still had to eat and reproduction still had to take place somehow, is not an argument against the possibility of people who felt that they must reject the world as much as possible.

(a) The opponents were simply Jews or Jewish Christians for whom certain types of ritual abstinence were normal.<sup>1015</sup> However, rejection of marriage was not characteristically Jewish.

(b) Some Essenes were celibate<sup>1026</sup> and would not eat 'other men's food' (hence they lived on grass when they were expelled from the community; Josephus, *Bel.* 2:143f.). Philo, *Cont.* 34–7 refers to the asceticism (but not abstinence from marriage) of the Therapeutae. At Qumran there is evidence that some were celibate while others were not (CD 7:6f.), but, apart from their general frugality and abstemiousness, nothing is said about restrictions on diet (which certainly included bread and wine), and animal bones have been discovered at Qumran.<sup>1037</sup> Apart, then, from the restriction on marriage we do not have a full parallel here.

(c) Spicq, 497f., suggests a broad background in the general mentality that surfaces from time to time in the ancient world; desires for purity were expressed in abstinence from sexual activity and from certain foods. Such a general rejection of aspects of the created order may have influenced a Jewish-Christian group in the church, but it hardly seems an adequate background on its own.

(d) Celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of God was recognised by Jesus (Mt 19:12) and Paul himself remained celibate and encouraged it in certain circumstances (1 Cor 7). Whether Rev 14:4 is to be taken literally is debatable. But in all these cases the abstention from marriage has to do with the needs of the mission and not with the basic asceticism and possible hostility to aspects of the created order that is evident here.<sup>1048</sup> Nor is there any teaching of Jesus that would forbid certain kinds of food or that might be twisted in that direction; if anything, he discouraged Jewish ideas of unclean foods. However, the teaching of Jesus about the absence of marriage in the life to come apparently influenced later Encratites.<sup>1059</sup>

(e) The possibility of a connection with the (Jewish-Christian) apostolic decree which forbade foods sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality (which could be stretched to include marriage, as it was at Corinth) should at least be mentioned. The cult of Jezebel in Rev 2 was characterised by precisely the opposite attitudes and would appear to represent a reaction to the decree. However, a connection is not likely since abstinence from marriage is hardly to be read out of a prohibition of sexual immorality which is usually intended to safeguard marriage.

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<sup>1015</sup> Jeremias, 30f., who thinks that Jewish ritual observances lie behind the abstention from foods, has to allow that the rejection of marriage stems from another background, such as taking Paul's own attitudes to extreme lengths.

<sup>1026</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 18:21; *Bel.* 2:120f.; Philo, *Hyp.* 11:14–17; for other Essenes who did marry see Josephus, *Bel.* 2:160f.

<sup>1037</sup> Beall, T. S., *Josephus' description of the Essenes illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Cambridge, 1988), 38–42.

<sup>1048</sup> Consequently, the present passage cannot be used to rule out the possibility of voluntary celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of God, even though a requirement of celibacy for certain orders of Christian ministry has no biblical basis.

<sup>1059</sup> Aune, D. E., 'Luke 20:34–6: A "Gnosticized" Logion of Jesus', in Lichtenberger, H., (ed.), *Geschichte—Tradition—Reflexion. Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), 187–202.

(f) An over-realised eschatology, with no marriage in the 'heavenly state' (Lane<sup>106\*</sup>; Spicq, 498) is another possibility. Lane suggests that the example of the risen Jesus who ate (only) fish and honeycomb (and possibly bread?) could have been used to defend the prohibition on meat, and also Rom 14:17 with its denial that the Kingdom of God is meat and drink may have played a part. He further argues that the distinction between this life and that to come, which is made here, is directed against those who thought that the former age had now passed away. But the appeal to Jesus can only be seen as a rationalisation of some existing practice and not as the origin of it.

Schlarb 1990:132f. notes the author's *ad hominem* use of the Genesis material in 1 Tim 2:13f. and suggests that the prohibition of marriage (or, positively, the encouragement of celibacy) reflects the attempt to return to a pre-Fall pattern of life—since awareness of sexual distinctions and commencement of sexual relations occur after the Fall. Likewise food asceticism, which he understands as prohibition of eating meat, can be linked to the vegetarian pattern of life in the Garden.<sup>11070</sup> This 'return to Eden' motif can be incorporated in this over-realised eschatology: the heavenly existence is to be similar to that of the original paradise.

(g) The apocryphal Acts bear witness to a development of such attitudes among groups of Christian ascetics and attribute them to Paul.<sup>11081</sup> Irenaeus refers to so-called Encratites led by Tatian who proclaimed celibacy and 'introduced abstinence from eating what they call "animate" food, ungrateful to the God who made all' (Irenaeus, *AH* 1:28); cf. the attitude reflected in *Didasc. 24 (Apost. Const. 6:11)*. They held that the world was so evil that they should not procreate more people to share in its misery (Clement, *Strom.* 3:45:1; Hasler 34). Some believed that they were now risen and the ways of the old world were inappropriate.<sup>11092</sup> But the Encratites described by Irenaeus are to be placed in the later second century. At a later date the *Apostolic Canons (Apost. Const. 8:47:51, 53)* commanded clergy to marry and also to partake of flesh and wine on festival days.

(h) Some second-century Gnostics practised asceticism. The followers of Saturninus regarded marriage and generation as from Satan and abstained from animal flesh (Irenaeus, *AH* 1:24:2). Brox, 168, goes a step further in holding that the opponents must have distinguished between the God who created the world and the God who saves; but there is no indication in the text of belief in a separate creator. Further, there is no reason to believe that such attitudes were peculiar to Gnostics, and therefore it is sensible to look for earlier possible sources.

(i) These prohibitions may have been due to drawing wrong conclusions from the creation story (Knoch, 33), or, more probably, they were defended by appeal to it. Rejection of marriage could have been deduced from the curse on Adam and Eve (or on the prohibition of nakedness and seeing in it an implicit taboo on sexual behaviour) and abstinence from foods from the command not to eat of the two trees in the garden.

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<sup>106\*</sup> An asterisk after an author's name signifies that the work cited is listed in the sectional bibliography

<sup>10710</sup> However, the prohibition of marriage contradicts Gen 1:27f., which would indicate inconsistency on the part of the teachers!

<sup>10811</sup> Cf. *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 12; *Ps-Titus*, *passim*.

<sup>10912</sup> Clement, *Strom.* 3:48:1; 63:1f; 64:1; contrast Mk 12:25; similarly, Roloff, 224; cf. Wolter 1988:258f.

Several of these postulated backgrounds are manifestly unconvincing, whether singly or in combination. There is probably a combination of influences at work here. We need to distinguish between the origins of the asceticism and the justification that was actually proffered for it. Problems about food and drink arose in Corinth and also in Colossae. It appears that some people rejected marriage in Corinth. A belief that it was ‘spiritual’ to be ascetic is not at all surprising. It could have been defended on the grounds that people were already living in the resurrection era and that the conditions of paradise were restored (cf. Towner 1989:33–42; Towner, 103f.). More probably, there may have been people who felt that, if this was how it was to be in the restored paradise, then they should anticipate it here and now. The closest links are thus with a tendentious reading of Genesis and with the tendencies to vegetarianism and abstinence from marriage that are reflected at Corinth and Colossae and that blossomed in the communities reflected in the apocryphal Acts.

TEXT

**1.τῆς πίστεως** Praem. ἀπό (206 1149 1799); cf. 1 Tim 6:10. Elliott, 61, argues that the prep. is needed after this verb (cf. Lk 4:13; 13:27; Acts 5:38; *et al.*). But Hellenistic usage (see exegetical note below) supports the text.

**πλάνοις** πλάνης (P Ψ 104, 614 630 945 *al lat*). The variant is said to be a Semiticism avoided by scribes (Bartlet, J. V., *JT<sup>110</sup>S* 18 [1917], 309), and therefore to be adopted (Elliott, 61f.). But the gen. could be due to assimilation to the next phrase or to 1 Jn 4:6 (Holtzmann, 335) or to itacism (N<sup>111</sup>A).

**2.κεκαυστηριασμένων** (κ A L *al b m*<sup>112\*</sup>; Elliott, 62): καὶ καυ[ς]τηριασμένων (F 0241<sup>vid</sup> *al lat sy<sup>p</sup>*); κεκαυτηριασμένων (C D G I Ψ 33 1739 1881 T<sup>113</sup>R C<sup>114</sup>I Did Epiph). According to Simpson, 65, from καυτήριον, ‘branding iron’, comes the verb καυτηριάζω (found in *Corpus Hippiatricorum Graecorum* 1,28 according to B<sup>115</sup>A) = ‘to brand with a red hot iron’; and from καυστήρ, ‘cauterising apparatus’, comes καυστηριάζω (*v.l.* in Strabo 5:1:9;). However, both nouns can be spelled with or without the sigma. The ς in καυστήριον is vulgar (LS<sup>116</sup>J), and MH<sup>117</sup>T III, 342, 405 brackets it. The textual variants are thus spelling variants rather than separate words with different meanings.

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<sup>110</sup>*JTS Journal of Theological Studies*

<sup>111</sup>NA Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993<sup>27</sup>)

<sup>112\*</sup> An asterisk after an author’s name signifies that the work cited is listed in the sectional bibliography

<sup>113</sup>TR Textus Receptus

<sup>114</sup>CI Classical (Greek)

<sup>115</sup>BA Bauer, W., *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur*, 6e Auflage, hrsg. von Aland, K., und Aland, B. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988).

<sup>116</sup>LSJ Liddell, H. G., and Scott, R., *A Greek-English Lexicon* ed. Jones, H. S. and McKenzie, R. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940).

<sup>117</sup>MHT Moulton, J. H., Howard, W. F., and Turner, N., *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1906–76).

**4.λαμβανόμενον** μεταλαμβάνόμενον (81 2005). Elliott, 64, adopts the variant on the ground that simplex verbs were seen as better style. But the MSS evidence is too weak.

#### EXEGESIS

**1. Τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ῥητῶς λέγει ὅτι ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς ἀποστήσονται τινες τῆς πίστεως προσέχοντες πνεύμασιν πλάνοις καὶ διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων** The new section begins with an implicit contrast between the apostasy about to be described and what has just preceded, the statement of the true gospel (Holtzmann, 335); but δὲ is a weak link before a new topic, and on the whole a fresh start seems to be indicated. The basis for the instruction is a prophetic forecast attributed to the Spirit and standing in sharp contrast to the view of the opponents which are attributed to false spirits. It is debated whether the message is regarded as having come through Christ himself or through a Spirit-inspired prophet (perhaps Paul himself), but the latter is more likely, since elsewhere Christ's teaching is attributed to him personally as 'the Lord'. Nevertheless, in broad terms the message is similar to his teaching (cf. Mt 24:10; Mk 4:17; 13:21f.).

This is the only reference in 1 Tim to the present activity of τὸ πνεῦμα.<sup>1183</sup> It functions as the source of prophecy (cf. 2 Sam 23:2; Acts 21:11; 2 Th 2:2; Justin, *Apol.* 1:63:10). Roloff, 220, however, claims that even here the reference is to a *past* activity of the Spirit: the Spirit is no longer active in prophets in the congregation or even in individual members. But this claim is too sweeping; it ignores Tit 3:5 and the activity of prophets in 4:14 which is not to be regarded as now defunct.

There are, however, various possible ways of envisaging the mode of prophecy attributed to the Spirit. (a) Through Christ, according to his teaching handed down (Knight, 188). But this is improbable here, since elsewhere his teaching is attributed to him personally as the Lord. (b) Through Christian prophets.<sup>1194</sup> (c) Specifically through a private revelation to Paul, whether in reality or as part of a pseudepigraphical fiction.<sup>1205</sup> In this case Paul may be (or is envisaged as) setting down exactly the contents of a revelation that he is receiving (Acts 20:29f. is a possible instance of this). A decision between (b) and (c) is not easy.

λέγει (pres. tense) introduces a statement which remains valid though spoken in the past.<sup>1216</sup> There is, therefore, no need for the explanation that the author means that the Spirit is speaking to him even as he is writing, but equally there is no implication that the activity of the Spirit belongs to the past and no longer takes place.

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<sup>1183</sup> 1 Tim 3:16; 2 Tim 1:7, 14; Tit 3:5 (note) of Holy Spirit; 1 Tim 4:1b of deceptive spirits; 2 Tim 4:22\*\* of human spirit.

<sup>1194</sup> See Rev 2:7; 14:13; 22:17; *EDNT* III, 211; Fee 1994:769.

<sup>1205</sup> For the latter cf. Holtzmann, 335 (who also suggests that the author may have had access to a written prophecy); Hasler, 33f.

<sup>1216</sup> 1 Tim 5:18; Rom 4:3, 6; 9:15; *et al.*; Heb 1:6f.; 3:7; 5:6; *et al.*

The usage of ῥητῶς\*\*<sup>122\*</sup> is ambiguous. It may mean: (a) ‘in these words’ (= ‘*totidem verbis*’). It then serves to introduce a verbally accurate statement.<sup>11237</sup> (b) ‘expressly, explicitly’ (‘*mit klaren Worten*’, B<sup>124</sup>A).<sup>11258</sup> Both possibilities have linguistic support, but the absence of any indications that there is a precise citation favours the second one.

The prophecy relates to the last days.<sup>11269</sup> For καιροί in the pl. cf. 2:6; 2 Tim 3:1; Ignatius, *Eph.* 11:1. ὕστερος, ‘last’, ‘later’ (Mt 21:31 *v.l.* \*\*<sup>127\*</sup>; cf. adv. ὕστερον), is a comparative adj. = ‘second of two’; but here it can have superlative force = ‘last’ (cf. B<sup>128</sup>D § 62). Bernard, 65, takes it comparatively of a period future to the speaker, i.e. the post-Pauline period. Spicq (*TLN*<sup>129</sup>T III, 427–31 [431]) holds that it means not ‘in the last days’ but rather ‘in days to follow, later times, the future’.<sup>21300</sup> But it can be used absolutely for the last times (*Acta Carpi* 5, cited by Lane<sup>131\*</sup>, 164), and the parallel in 2 Tim 3:1 (ἐν ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις) strongly favours this option.<sup>21321</sup> The rendering ‘prior to the last times’ (White, 120) is impossible.

The kind of danger prophesied is regarded as present in 2 Tim 3:6. In both passages fut. verbs (ἀποστήσονται, 1 Tim 4:1; ἐνστήσονται ... ἔσονται, 2 Tim 3:1–2) give way to a discussion that clearly relates to the present of the writer and the readers/hearers (Towner 1989:65). Hence it is generally agreed that here also the present period is understood as belonging to the last days before the End (but not necessarily the very last era, though the distinction is probably not to be pressed). The use of the prophetic form emphasises both the inevitability of what is happening and the fact that it should not take people by surprise. It brings out the need to take the rise of heresy seriously as part of the disasters associated with the last days: what was prophesied as a fearsome future evil is now taking place.

Hence if the letter is post-Pauline the force is: ‘The Spirit prophesied in the past (through Paul) that in the last days there would be apostates—and the prophecy is already being fulfilled:

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<sup>122\*\*\*</sup> After a Greek word or list of references three asterisks that all the references in the NT have been given

<sup>12317</sup> Justin, *Apol.* I.35:10; 63:10, also with reference to the content of prophecies. Cf. Philo, *L.A.* 1:60; Plutarch, *Mor.* 1041A; (so Lock, 47).

<sup>124</sup>BA Bauer, W., *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur*, 6e Auflage, hrsg. von Aland, K., und Aland, B. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988).

<sup>12518</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 1:24; *Ap.* 1:83 [of one word having a particular equivalent in another language]; Philo, *L.A.* 1:60; Dittenberger, *Syll.* 685:76, 83(II BC); Polybius 3:23:5; Plutarch, *Brut.* 29:4; Diogenes Laertius 8:71; so Parry, 24; Simpson, 64; Knight, 188; Roloff, 219 n. 6.

<sup>12619</sup> For the thought see 1QpHab 2:5f.; Acts 20:29; 2 Th 2:1–12; 1 Jn 2:18; Rev 13.

<sup>127\*\*\*</sup> After a Greek word or list of references three asterisks that all the references in the NT have been given

<sup>128</sup>BD Blass, F., and Debrunner, A., *Grammatik des neutestament-lichen Griechisch*, bearbeitet von Rehkopf, F. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1979).

<sup>129</sup>TLNT Spicq, C., *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, translated by Ernest, J. D. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994).

<sup>13020</sup> Cf. Plato, *Leg.* 9:865A: ἐν ὕστεροις χρόνοις = ‘at a later time’.

<sup>131\*</sup> An asterisk after an author’s name signifies that the work cited is listed in the sectional bibliography

<sup>13221</sup> Cf. Wilckens, U., *TDNT* VIII, 592–601. cf. ἔσται ἡμέρα ὅτε ... (2 Tim 4:3).

we are living in the last days, and we can see the signs around us!’ If the letter is genuine, we have to understand Paul as saying implicitly that the last days are here, or that the kind of conduct characteristic of them is already beginning to show itself. If the implied author is quoting a prophecy made in the past (e.g. a saying of Jesus) then the tense is future from the point of view of the prophet but the prophecy is now being fulfilled in the present time of writer (cf. Knight, 188f.).

The prophecy begins with a very general statement concerning people departing from the faith. ἀφίστημι is used intrans. ‘to go away, withdraw’, hence ‘to desert, fall away, become apostate’.<sup>21332</sup> The word was used of apostatising, i.e. of giving up the faith or denying it. ΤΙΝΕΣ (1:3 note) refers vaguely to the heretics, or more probably to those deceived by them (Calvin, 236; Holtzmann, 335; Fee, 97). The gen. τῆς πίστεως has the force either (a) ‘from *the* faith’ (Simpson, 64; Roloff, 220), or (less probably) (b) ‘from believing the gospel’.

The general statement is particularised by describing what leads people astray. They are deceived by paying attention to teaching that is ultimately of demonic origin, and this is mediated by people who teach what is false and pay no heed to conscience. Thus a distinction is made between the people who go astray and those whose influence leads them astray. The demonic background means that discussion and argument is fruitless (Roloff, 220f.).

For προσέχω cf. 1:4; Tit 1:14 note. ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΑ here are evil spirits. For the thought of demonic influence behind the heresy cf. 2:14; 3:6 of deceit by devil.<sup>21343</sup> ΠΛΑΝΟΣ is ‘leading astray, deceitful’.<sup>21354</sup> Deceit is frequently associated with apostasy and heresy and the influence of Satan.<sup>21365</sup>

διδασκαλῖαι (1:10) are pieces of teaching. The use of the plural is possibly traditional.<sup>21376</sup> It may have a derogatory sense by comparison with the singularity of the truth of the gospel (Holtz, 100). δαιμόνιον\*<sup>138\*</sup>, ‘demon’, originally meant ‘deity, divinity’.<sup>21397</sup> The gen. is one of origin—‘taught by demons’ (White, 120).

**2. ἐν ὑποκρίσει ψευδολόγων, κεκαυστηριασμένων τὴν ἰδίαν συνείδησιν** The deceitful teaching ultimately emanates from demonic powers and is mediated through the

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<sup>13322</sup> Deut 32:15; Jer 3:14; Dan 9:9Θ; 1 Macc 11:43; *I Enoch* 5:4; Lk 8:13; Hermas, *Sim.* 8:8:2; with ἀπό Heb 3:12; with gen. as here Polybius 14:12–3; Wis 3:10; Josephus, *Vita* 158; Justin, *Dial.* 8:2; 20:1; 111:2; Hermas, *Vis.* 3:7:2. Cf. Schlier, H., *TDNT* I, 512f. (For the sense ‘to keep away’ see 2 Tim 2:19\*\*).

<sup>13423</sup> Cf. 1 Jn 4:6; for the link with demons cf. Rev 16:14; 18:2; Jas 3:15 (δαμονιώδης). More generally, cf. 2 Cor 4:4; 11:3, 13f.; 1QS 3:18–22; *T. Ash.* 6:2 (Skarsaune 1994:12).

<sup>13524</sup> It is used as a noun in Mt 27:63; 2 Cor 6:8; 2 Jn 7b\*\*\*. Cf. Menander, *Frg* 288; Theocritus 21:43; Josephus, *Bel.* 2:259. Cf. πλανάω, 2 Tim 3:13; Tit 3:3 (note). Cf. Braun, H., *TDNT* VI, 228–53, especially 249f.

<sup>13625</sup> Mt 24:5; 1 Jn 4:1–3, 6; 1 Cor 10:20f.; 12:3; 2 Cor 4:4; 11:3, 13f.; 2 Th 2:3; 2 Pet 2:1–3; 3:3; Jas 3:15; Rev 16:14; *Ass. Moses* 7:3–10.

<sup>13726</sup> Mt 15:9/Mk 7:7 = Isa 29:13; Col 2:22; the sing. with πᾶς in Eph 4:14 is similar.

<sup>138\*\*</sup> After a Greek word or list of references two asterisks that all the references in the PE have been given

<sup>13927</sup> Cf. Rev 16:14; the word is found in Paul only in 1 Cor 10:20f.; Foerster, W., *TDNT* II, 1–20.

deceitful teaching of liars with seared consciences who forbid marriage, and so on. Cf. 2 Tim 2:16–18; 3:13; 4:3f. for related descriptions of apostasy from the faith.

The force of ἐν may be instrumental ('through the hypocrisy of ...') or more general ('in association with' cf. 2 Tim 1:13). The phrase is to be linked with ἀποστήθονται (or with προσέχοντες) indicating the instrument that leads people into apostasy—'through the hypocritical behaviour of liars ...'. Another possibility is that the phrase is dependent on the following word, giving 'paying attention to ... the teachings [emanating] from demons who hypocritically speak lies' (Simpson, 64; Fee 1994:768 n. 59),<sup>21408</sup> but it falls foul of the following participle which must surely apply to human beings, not demons.

ὑπόκρισις is 'pretence, hypocrisy, outward show' (Mt 23:28; Mk 12:15; Lk 12:1; Gal 2:13; Jas 5:12 *v.l.*; 1 Pet 2:1\*\*<sup>141\*</sup>). In Cl<sup>142</sup>. Gk<sup>143</sup>. the word meant 'answer' and then the 'delivery' of a speech'; the corresponding verb was used of acting on the stage. In Hellenistic Judaism the word-group took on a bad sense. The LX<sup>144</sup>X uses it to refer to people who are godless and evil (but not in the sense of being two-faced or 'hypocritical' in the modern sense). However, the word-group came to refer to deception; it is associated with lying and contrasted with truth.<sup>21459</sup> The word-group figures prominently in the castigation by Jesus of people who appeared to be or pretended to be pious but were really evil. The force of the word here, then, is to express the fact that what was said appeared to be true but was in fact in contradiction of the truth (4:3). Cf. 6:5; 2 Tim 3:8; 4:4; Tit 1:14 for such opposition to the truth.<sup>31460</sup> Such conduct is the opposite of what is expected in believers (1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 1:5).

How they practised their hypocrisy is debatable:

(a) They may have deliberately pretended to be Christian teachers and to be speaking the truth in order to deceive people.

(b) They may have put up a show of asceticism which was regarded as an indication of good character (Kelly, 94; Fee, 98). But the phrase is concerned with what they said rather than what they did.

(c) They may have been self-deceived in claiming to be Christian teachers.

The implication of the next phrase is probably that they did not respond to their consciences but sinned deliberately and consciously. They deliberately turned their backs on the truth and silenced their consciences, so that they themselves were by no means innocent victims of deception (Roloff, 221). So active deceit (a) is meant.

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<sup>14028</sup> According to Simpson this is how Chrysostom took it. But this does not seem to be borne out by the text (*PG LXII, 557f.*): the opponents 'do not utter these falsehoods through ignorance and unknowingly, but as acting a part, knowing the truth indeed, but "having their conscience seared", that is, being men of evil lives'.

<sup>141\*\*\*</sup> After a Greek word or list of references three asterisks that all the references in the NT have been given

<sup>142</sup>Cl. Classical (Greek)

<sup>143</sup>Gk. Greek

<sup>144</sup>LXX Septuagint

<sup>14529</sup> Philo, *Jos.* 67f.; *Her.* 43; Josephus, *Bel.* 1:628; *Ant.* 16:206; *T. Benj.* 6:5.

<sup>14630</sup> See further 1 Clement 15:1; Ignatius, *Mag.* 3:2; Polycarp 6:3; Barnabas 19:2; 20:1; *Didache* 4:12; 5:1; Hermas, *Vis.* 3:6:1; *Mand.* 2:5; 8:3; *Sim.* 8:6:2; 9:27:2. Cf. Wilckens, U., *TDNT VIII, 559–71*; *TLNT III, 406–13*.



From this point the description is of the heretics themselves. They are characterised as liars. ψευδολόγος\*\*<sup>147\*</sup>, ‘speaking falsely, lying’ (Cl<sup>148</sup>.), can be used as an adj. or a noun.<sup>31491</sup> Cf. ψεύστης (1:10). According to Fee, 98, the heretics were not necessarily being deliberately deceitful but did not know any better. But in view of the previous word this is not very likely.

συνείδησιν (cf. 1:5; Tit 1:15 note) is acc. of respect with passive verb (6:5). καυστηριάζω\*\*<sup>150\*</sup> (see textual note) is a word that was used of branding animals with a red hot iron and cauterising wounds using a καυ(ζ)τήρ. Its force here is disputed:

(a) ‘to sear, render callous, anaesthetise’.<sup>31512</sup> For the thought cf. Eph 4:19.

(b) ‘to brand’ (RE<sup>152</sup>B) (like a prisoner of war or slave), either with the mark of the devil’s ownership,<sup>31533</sup> or as a penalty.<sup>31544</sup> Oberlinner, 177 n. 19, comments that a distinction between branding as a mark of ownership (to prevent a slave running away) and as a dishonourable stigma should not be made; the two functions belong together.

Roloff, 221f., defends the second possibility—a shameful mark, in this case, on people who are guilty of rejecting conscience; the mark is not necessarily visible to any except themselves. The author is not interested in the subjective reasons for their attitude. However, the absence of any reference to who carries out the branding and the oddity of a mark that cannot be seen combine to make this view unlikely. The former view is to be preferred, since it makes the point that it is the conscience which is affected and is not working (cf. 1:19b; Tit 1:15). Consequently, their consciences did not forbid them to act deceitfully, or they paid no attention to them. The point is that their conscience was no longer effective in condemning what was morally unacceptable.

**3α.κωλυόντων γαμεῖν, ἀπέχεσθαι βρωμάτων** Two examples of their false teaching are given, the forbidding of marriage and asceticism in regard to food. The former presumably implies abstinence from sexual activity (within or outside of marriage), and the latter must refer to abstinence from some foods rather than others (Arichea-Hatton, 91, thinks of general abstinence from foods, ‘eating as little food as possible’). The reference may be specifically to meat (Knight, 190), and possibly to abstinence from alcohol (cf. 5:23) or food regarded as unclean by Jews (Tit 1:10–16; Kelly, 95). Abstinence from sexual relationships was the issue in Corinth (1 Cor 7) and abstinence from certain foods emerges as an issue in Rom 14:15, 20; 1 Cor 8:8, 13, where it is a question of not eating foods that caused problems for other people in the

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<sup>147\*\*\*</sup> After a Greek word or list of references three asterisks that all the references in the NT have been given

<sup>148</sup>Cl. Classical (Greek)

<sup>14931</sup> In Cl. it is a pejorative word (Aristophanes, *Ranae* 1521, cited in *TLNT* III, 517). Josephus, *Ant.* 8:410 and Philo, *Virt.* 182 both have the noun ψευδολογία.

<sup>150\*\*\*</sup> After a Greek word or list of references three asterisks that all the references in the NT have been given

<sup>15132</sup> Chrysostom *PG* LXII, 558; Theodoret III, 659 Schulze = *PG* LXXXII, 812; NIV; NRSV; GNB; BA; LN; Parry, 24f.; Simpson, 65; Guthrie, 104; Spicq, 496f.; Hanson, 86f.; Elliott, 62; Knight, 189; Arichea-Hatton, 90f.; Johnson, 161f.

<sup>152</sup>REB Revised English Bible

<sup>15333</sup> Lock, 48; Dornier, 73f.; Kelly, 94f.; Fee, 98f.

<sup>15434</sup> Bernard, 65; Scott, 45; Easton, 139; Dibelius-Conzelmann, 64.

church; in Col 2:16, 21–23 Paul is concerned with ascetic rules which he strongly rejects. The similarities with the situation at Colossae should be noted. The problem, however, was a continuing one. The creed in *Didasc.* 24 (6:12) includes the statement ‘and that you make use of all his creatures with thanksgiving; and that men should marry’.<sup>31555</sup>

Roloff, 223f., detects a sharpening of Paul’s attitude (1 Cor 10:30); whereas Paul made eating or non-eating a matter of indifference, provided one acted out of thankfulness to God and concern for other Christians, here eating or non-eating has become a matter of orthodoxy and heresy and has become linked to a basic theology of creation. However, the shift in argument is due to the shift in the gravity of the situation; in Corinth Paul was not dealing with people who reckoned the material world to be evil in itself.

The part. κωλύοντων<sup>\*156\*</sup>, ‘to forbid’,<sup>31576</sup> is either parallel to or explanatory of the preceding participle. γαμέω, ‘to marry’, can be used of man or woman.<sup>31587</sup> The sentence continues with a construction in which the infinitive is apparently dependent on the participle ‘forbidding’, but this would give the opposite sense to what must be intended. The simplest proposal is to supply κελυόντων from κωλύοντων by zeugma.<sup>31598</sup> This is quite possible and emendation is unnecessary.<sup>31609</sup> ἀπέχομαι<sup>\*161\*</sup> is ‘to keep away from, abstain’.<sup>41620</sup> βρώμα, <sup>\*163\*</sup> ‘food’, refers especially to solids as opposed to liquids (1 Cor 3:2).

**3b. ἃ ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν εἰς μετάλημψιν μετὰ εὐχαριστίας τοῖς πιστοῖς καὶ ἐπεγνωκόσι τὴν ἀλήθειαν** The rel. pron. ἃ manifestly has βρώματα as its antecedent.<sup>41641</sup> An extension of the reference to cover both foods and marriage is very difficult, if not impossible, syntactically.<sup>41652</sup> The writer thus does not pause to refute the former prohibition here. He has done so implicitly in ch. 2 (especially 2:15) and ch. 3 (Holtzmann, 337; Knight, 190),

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<sup>15535</sup> Cited by Skarsaune 1994:13.

<sup>156\*\*</sup> After a Greek word or list of references two asterisks that all the references in the PE have been given

<sup>15736</sup> Rom 1:13; 1 Cor 14:39; 1 Th 2:16; Légasse, S., *EDNT* II, 332f.

<sup>15837</sup> 5:11, 14\*\*; 1 Cor 7:9, *et al.* Cf. Stauffer, E., *TDNT* I, 648–57; Niederwimmer, K., *EDNT* I, 235–8.

<sup>15938</sup> BD § 479<sup>2</sup>; Holtzmann, 337, but his alleged parallel in 1 Cor 14:34 is hardly close; Bernard, 65, supplies a closer parallel from Lucian, *Charon* 2: κωλύσει ἐνεργεῖν ... καὶ ... [sc. ποιήσει] ζημιούῃν, but according to BD the passage is corrupt.

<sup>16039</sup> Nevertheless amendments to the text have been suggested: the suggestion that κελυόντων has fallen out of the text was made by Bentley (cf. *WH Notes*, 134) and Toup (cf. *NA*<sup>27</sup>); *WH* suggest a primitive corruption of ἢ ἄπτεσθαι or καὶ γεύεσθαι (cf. Col 2:21) to ἀπέχεσθαι.

<sup>161\*\*</sup> After a Greek word or list of references two asterisks that all the references in the PE have been given

<sup>16240</sup> With gen., as in Acts 15:20, 29; 1 Pet 2:11; with ἀπό 1 Th 4:3; 5:22; the active form = ‘to be distant’, ‘to receive’; cf. *TLNT* I, 162–8. For the phrase here cf. ἀπέχεσθαι σιτίων (Plutarch, *Mor.* 157D, cited by Horstmann A., *EDNT* I, 120f.).

<sup>163\*\*</sup> After a Greek word or list of references two asterisks that all the references in the PE have been given

<sup>16441</sup> For the lack of attraction to the gen. cf. Tit 1:2; BA *s.v.* I.4e.

<sup>16542</sup> Fowl 1990:185 n. 3; Couser 1992:113f.; Knight, 190. The alleged parallel in Col 2:22 is not a true parallel.

and in ch. 5 he will encourage marriage for younger widows. He can thus move straight on to a refutation of the second prohibition.<sup>41663</sup>

The doctrine that God is Creator is based on the narrative in Genesis, and there may be a deliberate use of this passage from the law to refute opponents who appealed to the law. The author implicitly draws on the fact that food was created for human nourishment (Gen 1:29; 2:9, 16; 3:2; 9:3; Deut 26:11). It can, therefore, be received and eaten gladly with due expression of thanks to the Creator by Christians. The form of expression is not meant to restrict eating to believers, but to emphasise that their status as believers does not prevent them eating; the truth of the gospel includes the truth of God as Creator and provider and not the false assertions put out by the opponents. There may also be the implication that the asceticism of the false teachers is a form of unbelief.

The writer summarises the account of creation<sup>41674</sup> and draws attention to the Creator's purpose (εἰς) that people should partake of the foods which he provided.<sup>41685</sup> The fact that they can express thanks (εὐχαριστία, 4:4; 2:1) to God for them indicates that he wishes them to have them. The reference here may be to thankfulness as a general feeling or emotion, but more like to 'a [prayer of] thanksgiving'. A specific reference to the eucharist is hardly likely (*pace* Holtz, 102). For grace at meals see Rom 14:6; 1 Cor 10:16, 30 (cf. Phil 4:6). In view of Jewish practice<sup>41696</sup> and its specific exemplification in the practice of Jesus (cf. also Eph 5:20) this is doubtless what is meant. Those who take the view that the author is here dealing with both marriage and food restrictions have to understand the phrase as referring to prayers of thanksgiving in general (cf. Phil 4:6).

The construction of τοῖς πίστοις, 'believers' (4:10, 12), i.e. those who have come to faith, is debatable. It is either (a) dat. of advantage with ἔκτισεν (White, 122; cf. Tit 1:15); or (b) dat. of agent after the pass. verb implicit in μετέλημψιν (Holtzmann, 337; cf. Lk 23:15).

The phrase is defined more precisely by stressing that those who have come to faith acquire a true knowledge of God and of his purpose in creation (cf. Tit 1:1). The whole phrase, τοῖς πιστοῖς καὶ ἐπέγνωκόσι τὴν ἀλήθειαν, which refers to believers who have come through the process (note the perfect tense!), is an adaptation of the phrase which describes the process involved in coming to faith in 1 Tim 2:4 (... σωθῆναι καὶ εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας ἐλθεῖν). Those who have come to know the gospel should know also that foods were created to be received with thanksgiving. The perf. of ἐπίγνωσκω\*<sup>170\*</sup>, 'to come to know', expresses a state of acquired knowledge of the truth contained in the gospel; elsewhere the phrase ἐπίγνωσις τῆς ἀληθείας is used.<sup>41717</sup> Yet believers may be ignorant and weak and lack such knowledge (1

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<sup>16643</sup> Roloff's claim, 223, that the author had no Pauline teaching to appeal to in respect of marriage is hardly persuasive.

<sup>16744</sup> κτιζω, Rom 1:25; 1 Cor 11:9; Eph 2:10, 15; 3:9; 4:24; Col 1:16a, 16b; 3:10; Rev 4:11a, 11b; 10:6; Mt 19:4; Mk 13:19\*\*; cf. κτισμα, 4:4; cf. Foerster, W., *TDNT* III, 1000–35; Petzke, G., *EDNT* II, 325f.

<sup>16845</sup> μετέλημψις\*\*\* (TR μετέληψις), 'sharing, taking, receiving'; Cl. (verb, 2 Tim 2:6; Acts 2:46). Cf. Dellling, G., *TDNT* IV, 10f.

<sup>16946</sup> 1QS 6:4f.; 10:14f.; 1Q28a 2:17–22; *Ber.* 6–8; *Ber.* 35a.

<sup>170\*\*</sup> After a Greek word or list of references two asterisks that all the references in the PE have been given

<sup>17147</sup> 2:4 note; Tit 1:1 note; see further 1 Clement 32:1; Hermas, *Sim.* 8:6:3; 8:11:2.

Cor 8:7). Oberlinner, 181, holds that the identification of believers as people who know the truth is polemical against Gnostic opponents who claimed that *they* had knowledge.<sup>172</sup>

## **5. Understanding False Practice (4:1–5)**

Paul elaborated on the nature of the errors in Ephesus (4:1–5) and on Timothy’s role in opposing them (4:6–16). In describing the nature of the false teaching, Paul was giving new information. However, it is not unrelated to what he had written before. In 1:3–7 he had warned of the “myths” and legalistic demands of the false teachers in Ephesus. He now gave an example of such errors.

In 4:1–3 Paul warned against adopting ascetic practices that would prohibit marriage and also against abstinence from certain foods. In 4:4 he argued that all of God’s creation is good. The expression of gratitude in a prayer of thanksgiving sanctifies everything which God has made (4:5).

### ***(1) A Warning Against Apostasy (4:1–3)***

**<sup>1</sup>The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. <sup>2</sup>Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. <sup>3</sup>They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.**

**4:1** Christians saw themselves as living in the last days. These final days began with Jesus’ ministry and will conclude with his return. Paul’s expression for “in later times” is not the same as the related expression “in the last days” (2 Tim 3:1). However, the two expressions are to be

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<sup>172</sup> I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, [\*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles\*](#), International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 531–544.

viewed as the same in meaning. Paul saw evidence for the arrival of the last days in the persons of the false teachers in Ephesus with their emphasis on asceticism and abstinence from foods.<sup>81735</sup> He later characterized the period in which he was living as “the last days” (2 Tim 3:1–8). Paul’s refutation of the false teaching in 4:3–5 showed the present danger of the heresy.

The “Spirit” is the Holy Spirit, who is the source of prophecy. The word which the Spirit spoke does not appear in any passage of Scripture. It may have been a truth God had revealed to Paul (cf. Acts 20:29). Paul could also have referred to the general teaching of a passage such as Mark 13:22. The word may have come through a Christian prophet in the context of worship (see Acts 11:27–28).

The “some” who were to depart from the faith were professing Christians in Ephesus. They would turn from the doctrinal content of Christianity they had earlier accepted. A mere profession of faith does not guarantee the actual possession of eternal life. The emptiness of mere profession would become clear by the departure from Christianity of some of the Ephesians (see 1 John 2:19 for the same idea).

The “deceiving spirits” may be supernatural evil spirits who work through individuals, but against this view is the fact that Paul later described these false teachers in Ephesus as “deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim 3:13). It is best to view the term “deceiving spirits” as a reference to the false teachers themselves. Deception was a leading trait of the errorists.

Paul’s concluding statement of v. 1 located the source of the deceitful teachings in demonic influence. Satan’s ability to enlist Judas to do his will shows his competence to influence belief and behavior (Luke 22:3).

**4:2** Paul described the false teachers who practiced misleading the Ephesians. It was these false teachers whom the demons were using to carry out their bidding. First, Paul pictured their treachery by denouncing them as hypocrites. They presented themselves as pious followers of Christ, but they were in reality glib tools of the devil. They presented an air of devotion, but it was only a deceitful mask. Second, he described them as “liars.” They used lies to conceal their own arrogance. Sadly they had apparently come to believe their own lies. Third, their consciences were cauterized. Two possible emphases may come from this statement. So insensitive had their consciences become that they had lost the power of moral decision making (cf. Eph 4:19). Grieving the Spirit had led to resistance, and resistance had led to quenching (Eph 4:30; 1 Thess 5:19). Paul may also have been suggesting that their consciences carried the brand of Satan.<sup>81746</sup> By teaching what was actually false, they had been branded by Satan as his

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<sup>17385</sup> In 2 Thess 2:3–12 Paul had stated that the “last days” would be accompanied by apostasy, deceit, and a decline in love for the truth. He would make the same emphasis in 2 Tim 3:1. His words here harmonize with these statements in other locations and serve as clear evidence for Paul that he was living in the time of the end.

Doubtless, Christians had a concept of imminence along with their emphasis on the last days, but they also saw the last days as a new period in the divine plan. The culmination of the work of Christ (see particularly Heb 1:2) inaugurated the last days, and the coming of the Holy Spirit provided strength for living through those days. Christians saw themselves as living the life of the future in the present time (see the emphasis on living in “the heavenly realms” in Eph 2:6), and they anticipated that Christ would consummate his work in the future.

<sup>17486</sup> The translation of the NIV emphasizes the insensitivity that results from the searing of the conscience. The NEB emphasizes that the searing is a mark of Satan’s ownership with its

possession and therefore did his will. This shade of meaning emphasizes that the false teachers were willing tools of Satan. Since the context had already emphasized demonic involvement in spreading error, this likely was Paul's chief emphasis.

**4:3** Paul called attention to two features that characterized the teaching of the heretics. First, some false teachers forbade marriage. Paul's warning in 1 Tim 5:11–15 indicates that younger widows in Ephesus may have been influenced by these prohibitions. The heretics who supported these views probably felt that abstinence from marriage was the means to a higher degree of holiness. They placed the celibate life on a higher spiritual level than the married life.<sup>81757</sup>

Second, the false teachers demanded abstinence from certain foods.<sup>81768</sup> This error likely reflected the Mosaic distinction between clean and unclean foods. This same error is also apparent in Col 2:16, 21–23. To Paul the proper response to the question of eating foods was to eat after having expressed thanksgiving through prayer.<sup>81779</sup>

Paul's statement at the end of v. 3 ("those who believe ... the truth") does not suggest that only believers are to eat. Those who know the truth of the gospel are especially able to offer the thanksgiving that sanctifies the food. Believers have made far better preparation than unbelievers to receive the food in the manner God intended.

Paul's comments about eating call for three observations. First, Paul normally regarded what a person eats as an indifferent matter so long as the practice does not cause spiritual harm to another believer (1 Cor 8:8–9). Second, partial asceticism may be a helpful experience for some, but it should not be enforced as a means of salvation (Col 2:20–23). Third, Paul was resisting a

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translation of "branded with the devil's sign." Either emphasis is possible in rendering the translation, but the context suggests that ownership by Satan is likely the more dominant teaching of the word.

<sup>17587</sup> In 1 Cor 7:1–9 Paul had encountered Greeks who questioned and opposed marriage. Their opposition to marriage was probably based on a Greek concept which emphasized that the human body was evil and that marriage and sex were discouraged. This later became an emphasis of Gnosticism.

Although the false teachers in Ephesus discouraged marriage, they were probably not as negative in their emphases as those whom Paul encountered in Corinth. The heresy Paul encountered in Ephesus had a Jewish emphasis, and Judaism had no inherent opposition to marriage and sex. We think that the Essenes disparaged marriage, but Judaism did not generally have this emphasis. The error about marriage in Ephesus was not a fully developed Gnostic view but a tendency in that direction likely caused by converted Jews who were living in a pluralistic religious setting (see Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 95 for further discussion).

<sup>17688</sup> The word "order" is absent from the Greek text but is a legitimate inference of Paul's meaning so as to make sense of the context. Some interpreters see this as an instance of *zeugma*, and others believe Paul was using ellipsis by omitting the word "order." *Zeugma* is a figure of speech in which a single word governs two or more words but makes better sense with only one (e.g., "He is eating bread and water").

<sup>17789</sup> Jesus' statements in Mark 7:14–19 abolish the Jewish distinction between clean and unclean foods. It is likely that such statements as these influenced Paul's opposition to an enforced asceticism.

theologically based asceticism. He would not necessarily oppose an asceticism whose goal was to give physical strength to the body.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, [\*1, 2 Timothy, Titus\*](#), vol. 34, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 127–130.