

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 291 – October 18th – 1 Timothy 3:1-16

Works frequently referenced in these notes on 1 & 2 Timothy

Mounce, Willian D

Word Biblical Commentary Vol 46: Pastoral Epistles, Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 2000

Chapter 3

Mounce writes, "Chap. 3, perhaps more than any other chapter in the PE, has been interpreted as a church manual written apart from a specific historical situation... However, the message of the chapter is missed if the reader does not interpret it in light of the Ephesian situation. Almost every quality Paul specifies here has its negative counterpart in the Ephesian opponents. They are bringing the church into disrepute, so at the head of the list Paul says that a church leader must be above reproach. They are teaching only for financial gain; Paul says that the overseer must not be greedy or a lover of money. They are promiscuous; Paul says that the overseer must be a 'one woman' man... Once a full picture of the opponents is developed, chap. 3 becomes one of the strongest arguments that the PE are directed toward a specific historical problem and should be understood in light of that situation."

Having argued that the PE does not reflect the rigid pattern of ecclesiastical offices later advocated by such as Ignatius, Mounce includes a useful excursus on 'Bishops and Presbyters in the Postapostolic Church.'

Verse 1

Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος· εἴ τις ἐπισκοπῆς ὀρέγεται, καλοῦ ἔργου ἐπιθυμεῖ.

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy, reliable

A few MSS read ἀνθρωπίνος rather than πιστος – a puzzling variant. The sense would then be 'popular.'

ἐπισκοπη, ης f place of service, office of overseer (bishop)

"The basic meaning of the word group is 'oversight': the idea of watching over someone or something. The TEV translates ἐπισκοπος as 'church leader' and διακονος (v.8) as 'church helper.' This clearly differentiates the two offices and avoids any possible anachronism of the translation 'bishop.' The translation here uses 'overseer' because it too avoids anachronism and emphasises that the primary function of this office was general oversight." Mounce

ὀρεγομαι be eager for, long for, desire

καλος, η, ον good, right, proper, fine
 ἐπιθυμειω long for, desire

Mounce suggests that "any hesitancy to accept positions of leadership by members of the Ephesian church was the result of the excess of the opponents. They were bringing reproach not only upon the church itself but also upon anyone in leadership. Perhaps as well people were hesitant to accept positions that would bring them in direct confrontation with the opponents."

Verse 2

δεῖ οὖν τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνεπίλημπτον εἶναι, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα, νηφάλιον, σώφρονα, κόσμιον, φιλόξενον, διδακτικόν,

δεῖ impersonal verb it is necessary, must
 ἐπισκοπος, ου m overseer, guardian;
 bishop

ἀνεπιλημπτος, ον above reproach

This basic principle is then elaborated in what follows. The emphasis is primarily on character rather than gifts. The contrast is with the character of the false teachers. "This concern for a Christian's reputation runs throughout the PE and is frequent in Paul (cf. Titus 2:5; also 1 Cor 10:32; Phil 2:15; Col 4:5; 1 Thess 4:1; cf. Acts 6:3). The opponents are not only hurting themselves and other believers; they are damaging the church's reputation." Mounce.

εἷς, μια, ἐν γεν ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one, single
 γυνη, αικος f woman, wife
 ἄνδρα Noun, acc s ἀνηρ, ἄνδρος m man

Mounce writes, "This phrase is one of the most difficult phrases in the PE, and yet it is one of the most significant because the opponents have forbidden marriage (1 Tim 4:3; cf. 2:15) and sexual promiscuity is a serious problem (see on 2 Tim 3:6). That it is first on the list after ἀνεπιλημπτον, as it is in Titus 1:6 (after ἀνεγκλητος, 'beyond reproach'), suggests that marital faithfulness is a serious problem in the Ephesian church." The meaning is not simply 'the husband of one wife', but 'a one woman man' – not having straying affections. This does not preclude from office those who are single.

νηφαλιος, α, ον temperate, sober

Means sobriety of judgment, clear mindedness, wit the nuance of self-control.

σωφρων, ον gen ονος sensible, self-controlled

κοσμιος, ον well behaved, respectable
φιλοξενος, ον hospitable

In the first century, leaders in the churches would need to be ready to look after strangers and travellers, especially those fleeing from persecution or travelling teachers or messengers from other churches.

διδακτικός, α, ον able to teach

Having an understanding of the truth and able to convey it clearly, accurately and appropriately and particularly able to refute error, cf. Titus 1:9.

Verse 3

μη πάροινον, μη πλήκτιν, ἀλλὰ ἐπιεικῆ, ἄμαχον, ἀφιλάργυρον,

παροινος, ου m drunkard, given to strong drink

"The fact that the same injunction is repeated in all three lists suggests that this was a serious problem in the Ephesian church; evidently the opponents were well known for their drunkenness even though they were ascetics with respect to their food (1 Tim 4:3). Drinking is mentioned two other times in the PE: Timothy is to use a little wine for medicinal purposes (1 Tim 5:23), and the older women are not to be enslaved to drink (Titus 2:2). It is possible that Timothy himself was totally abstaining from alcohol because of its overuse in the Ephesian church." Mounce.

πληκτής, ου m a quick tempered or violent man

ἐπιεικῆ Adjective, acc s ἐπιεικής, ες gentle, forbearing, considerate

Suggests magnanimity, sweet reasonableness.

ἀμαχος, ον not quarrelsome, peaceable

"This quality stands in direct opposition to the opponents, whose lives were characterised by their quarrelsome attitudes." Mounce.

ἀφιλάργυρος, ον not greedy for money

"Another significant indication of the nature of the Ephesian heresy. The same prohibition is repeated for deacons (μη αἰσχροκερδεις, 'not greedy for gain'; 3:8) and elders (μη αἰσχροκερδη, 'not greedy for gain'; Titus 1:7). This is the first hint of what Paul will later spell out with absolute clarity. The opponents were teaching not for the sake of the gospel but in order to make money. Not only were they liars, but they were also hypocrites (cf. ... 1 Tim 6:5). The overseers may have controlled the church's finances, so it was especially important that they be above reproach in this area." Mounce.

Verse 4

τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου καλῶς προϊστάμενον, τέκνα ἔχοντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ μετὰ πάσης σεμνότητος·

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

οἶκος, ου m house, household, family

καλως has the sense not only of doing something acceptably but also in a commendable manner.

προϊστημι be a leader, have authority over, manage; care for

Cf. 1 Tim 3:5,12. The picture is one of caring and protecting, not dictating.

τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

ὑποταγη, ης f obedience, submission

I.e. not rebellious and troublesome, not out of control.

σεμνοτης, ητος f seriousness, proper conduct, respectability

Could apply to the father or to the children, probably the former.

"Those who know ordinary life and are well practiced in the duties that human relationships impose, are far better trained and fitted to rule in the church." Calvin

Verse 5

(εἰ δέ τις τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου προστῆναι οὐκ οἶδεν, πῶς ἐκκλησίας θεοῦ ἐπιμελήσεται;)

προστῆναι Verb, 2 aor act infin προϊστημι οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church

ἐπιμελεομαι take care of, look after

Verse 6

μη νεόφυτον, ἵνα μη τυφωθείς εἰς κρίμα ἐμπέση τοῦ διαβόλου.

νεοφυτος, ον recently converted

Here only in the NT.

τυφωθείς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s τυφοομαι be swollen with pride

κριμα, τος n judgement, verdict,
condemnation, punishment
ἐμπέση Verb, 2 aor act subj ἐμπιπῶ fall
into
διαβολος, ου m the devil

The condemnation or judgment of the devil
"refers to the judgment Satan incurred because
of his pride." Mounce.

Verse 7

δεῖ δὲ καὶ μαρτυρίαν καλὴν ἔχειν ἀπὸ τῶν
ἔξωθεν, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ὀνειδισμὸν ἐμπέση καὶ
παγίδα τοῦ διαβόλου.

δει see v.2

μαρτυρια, ας f testimony, witness,
reputation

καλος, η, ον see v.1

"Rather than being an unknown neophyte, the
overseer should be one whose reputation is
tried and known. This same concern can be
found throughout Paul's epistles (cf. 1 Cor
10:32-33; Col 4:5; 1 Thess 4:12; cf. 1 Pet
2:12,15)." Mounce

ἔξωθεν outside; ὁ ἕ. outsider, unbeliever
ὀνειδισμος, ου m reproach, abuse;
disgrace, shame

ἐμπέση see v.6

παγίς, ιδος f snare, trap

Here the snare set by Satan.

Verses 8-13

On the matter of the qualities required of a
deacon, Mounce writes, "The similarity of the
list to the preceding one for overseers is
striking... Of the nine characteristics of a
deacon, six are directly parallel to the
characteristics of an overseer: dignified
(although the actual words used are
synonyms), not drunkards, not greedy for gain,
blameless, 'one-woman' men, and good
managers of their households (cf. also the use
of καλος, 'good,' in 3:1 and καλως, 'well,' in
3:13)... Both the office of church leader and
the office of church worker require the same
type of person: a mature Christian whose
behaviour is above reproach... Paul is giving
an official, but not exhaustive, ad hoc
description of the type of person who should
be allowed to function as an official church
worker, and most of the requirements stand in
opposition to the opponents' behaviour."

Of their function he writes, "Paul is not
concerned to enumerate the duties of the
deacon and consequently reveals little
information about this question. It may be
surmised that a deacon was responsible for the
daily serving required in the church. Deacons
probably had daily contact with people in
visitation and disbursement of the funds for the
poor. Although the burden of the official
instruction in church did not lie directly on
their shoulders, they were required to
understand the gospel and to be able to present
its claims. Paul does not teach that the deacon
is under the overseer; in the PE both overseer
and deacon serve the church in different
capacities."

Verse 8

Διακόνους ὡσαύτως σεμνοῦς, μὴ διλόγους, μὴ
οἶνω πολλῷ προσέχοντας, μὴ αἰσχροκερδεῖς,

"The close connection between this paragraph
and the preceding one is seen in its
grammatical structure. V 8 assumes the δεῖ ...
εἶναι, 'it is necessary for ... to be,' of v 2 (δει is
repeated in v 7). ὡσαύτως, 'likewise,' ties the
requirements of a deacon to those of an
overseer." Mounce

διακονος, ου m & f servant, helper,
minister, deacon

The Greeks viewed serving others as a menial
task. Christianity presented a radically
different view, modelled on Christ as the one
who came not to be served but to serve (cf.
Matt 23:11; Mk 9:35; 10:43 also Jn 13:1-20).

ὡσαύτως adv in the same way, likewise
σεμνος, η, ον serious; of good character,
honourable, worthy, respectable
δίλογος, ον two-faced, insincere

Saying one thing to one person and something
different to another. "Deacons thus must be the
type of people who are careful with their
tongues, not saying what they should not,
being faithful to the truth in their speech."
Mounce

οίνος, ου m wine

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much,
many

προσεχω pay close attention to, hold on to
αἰσχροκερδεῖς Adjective, m/f nom/acc pl
αἰσχροκερδης, ες greedy for material
gain

"Suggests that deacons would have some
contact with the church's purse, possibly the
disbursement of funds to the poor." Mounce

Verse 9

ἔχοντας τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει.

μυστηριον, ου n secret, mystery (of something formerly unknown but now revealed)

πιστις, εως f faith, the Christian faith

He must stick to the Scriptures – the content of the Gospel as revealed by God. Cf. Rom 16:25-26; Eph 6:9; Col 1:25-27 for the explicit identification of this mystery with the gospel.

καθαρος, α, ον pure, clean, innocent
συνειδησις, εως f conscience, awareness

"The opponents have shipwrecked the faith (1:19), and their consciences have been branded (4:2)." Mounce

Verse 10

καὶ οὗτοι δὲ δοκιμαζέσθωσαν πρῶτον, εἶτα διακονείτωσαν ἀνεγκλητοὶ ὄντες.

δοκιμαζέσθωσαν Verb, pres pass imperat, 3 pl δοκιμαζω test, examine, prove
πρῶτον adv. first, in the first place, first of all

Mounce suggests, "At a minimum the testing entailed some sort of formal examination: the candidate's background, reputation, and adherence to the mystery of the gospel would be checked. Anything less than this would not correct the Ephesian problem. Whether this examination involved a formal probationary period is more difficult to decide... The screening process would probably have involved the whole church with special responsibility falling on the overseers since they were responsible for the general oversight of the church and rebuking error (Titus 1:9)."

εἶτα adv. then, and then

διακονείτωσαν Verb, pres act imperat, 3 s
διακονεω serve, serve as a deacon
ἀνεγκλητος, ον beyond reproach, without fault

Verse 11

γυναῖκας ὡσαύτως σεμνάς, μὴ διαβόλους, νηφαλίους, πιστάς ἐν πᾶσιν.

γυνη, αικος f woman, wife

ὡσαύτως adv see v.8

σεμνος, η, ον see v.8

There are good arguments to suggest that the reference here is to women deacons rather than deacons' wives:

- i) There is no similar requirement laid down for elders' wives;
- ii) If it were referring to deacons' wives it would more naturally follow verse 12;

iii) The context and the way in which the subject is introduced matches the introduction of the subject of male deacons. Finally, there is no biblical reason to suppose that women may not and did not take on the role appropriate to a deacon (cf. particularly Phoebe mentioned as a 'deacon of the church in Cenchrea' in Rom 16:1).

Jerome, Calvin, Bengel, Warfield, Jeremias, Riddebos and Mounce favour the translation, 'wives,' while Chrysostom, Ellicott, Hort, Kelly, Ellis, Spicq and Fee favour the view that the reference is to women deacons.

Mounce includes an excursus on 'The Deacon and Deaconess in the Postapostolic Church.'

διαβολος, ον adj. given to malicious gossip

Cf. 1 Tim 5:13.

νηφαλιος, α, ον temperate, sober

Cf. v.2.

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy, believing

Verse 12

διάκονοι ἔστωσαν μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρες, τέκνων καλῶς προϊστάμενοι καὶ τῶν ἰδίων οἴκων·

ἔστωσαν Verb, pres imparat, 3 pl εἶμι

μιᾶς γυναικος ἄνδρες see v.2

τεκνον, ου n see v.4

προϊστημι see v.4 for this phrase

Verse 13

οἱ γὰρ καλῶς διακονήσαντες βαθμὸν ἑαυτοῖς καλὸν περιποιῶνται καὶ πολλὴν παρρησίαν ἐν πίστει τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

"Far from being a menial task as some might surmise, providing daily service to the church has its rewards, and in summary Paul mentions two: deacons are building a good reputation within the community, and they are developing an even deeper confidence in their faith. All this is a far cry from Paul's opponents, whose reputation in the community is reprehensible and whose heretical behaviour has shipwrecked the faith instead of increasing confidence in the church." Mounce

διακονήσαντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl

διακονεω see v.10

βαθμος, ου m standing, position, status

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

Probably meaning 'before the outside world.'

καλος, η, ον see v.1

περιποιεομαι obtain, acquire, win

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ see v.8

παρρησια, ας f boldness, assurance

πίστει Noun, dat s πιστις, εως f faith, trust, belief

Verse 14

Ταῦτά σοι γράφω, ἐλπίζων ἐλθεῖν πρὸς σὲ ἐν τάχει,

ταυτα refers back to all that precedes in chapters 1-3 and to 4:1-5.

γράφω write

ἐλπίζω hope, hope for, hope in, expect

ἐλπίζων is a concessive participle, 'even though.'

ἐλθεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐρχομαι

ταχος, ους n speed, quickness; ἐν τ.

speedily, quickly, without delay, soon

Verse 15

ἐὰν δὲ βραδύνω, ἵνα εἰδῆς πῶς δεῖ ἐν οἴκῳ θεοῦ ἀναστρέφεσθαι, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἐκκλησία θεοῦ ζῶντος, στῦλος καὶ ἐδραῖωμα τῆς ἀληθείας·

ἐαν if, even if, though

βραδυνω be delayed

Mounce says that the verb is active, 'if I wait.' He might delay his visit because of ministry elsewhere.

"The ἐαν, 'if,' clause is not followed by a 'then' clause with a main verb, but the ἵνα, 'in order that,' conceptually, if not grammatically, tells of Paul's intent." Mounce.

εἰδῆς Verb, perf act subj, 2 s οἶδα know

δει impersonal verb should, ought

The behaviour Paul looks for from them is not optional: "it is mandated because the church is the house of the living God, a protector of the truth, and it is therefore absolutely essential that its integrity be maintained." Mounce.

οἶκος, ου m house, household, family

ἀναστρέφω return; pass live, conduct oneself

ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι who, which

ἐκκλησία, ας f congregation, church

On the church pictured as a house or household, cf. Eph 2:19-20.

ζωω live, be alive

A living God will not tolerate lifeless religion. The church is God's: "The community of those gathered in the house is not constituted by the will and the decision of those who are religiously likeminded, but it is based on the call of God." Oberlinner.

στῦλος, ου m pillar, column

ἐδραῖωμα, τος n support, foundation

This word does not seem to occur in any other writings and it is difficult to be certain of its meaning. The only cognate in the NT is ἐδραῖος which means 'firm,' or 'steadfast.' The sense may be 'bulwark' for this is suggested by its Latin rendering *firmamentum*. "If 'bulwark' is chosen, then the idea is that the church not only supports the gospel but also provides ramparts surrounding the gospel for protection, much like battlements protect a town."

Mounce

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

I.e. the gospel.

The construction is anarthrous. "The church is not ὁ στῦλος καὶ τὸ ἐδραῖωμα, 'the pillar and support,' but is rather στῦλος καὶ ἐδραῖωμα, 'a pillar and support.' This could mean that the Ephesian church is one of many supporting churches, or it could mean that the church is only one of several entities that support the gospel, another support possibly being Scripture. Even if the church fails in its task, the gospel will continue (2 Tim 2:9)." Mounce.

Verse 16

καὶ ὁμολογουμένως μέγα ἐστὶν τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον· Ὃς ἐφανέρωθη ἐν σαρκί, ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι, ᾧφθη ἀγγέλοις, ἐκηρύχθη ἐν ἔθνεσιν, ἐπιστεύθη ἐν κόσμῳ, ἀνελήμφθη ἐν δόξῃ.

ὁμολογουμενως undeniably

The adverb here retains something of the meaning of the adjective. "The basic idea is that all must confess that the gospel is indeed great; it is undeniable. This phrase is reminiscent of the cry *μεγαλη ἡ Ἀρτιμις Ἐφεσιων*, 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians' (Acts 19:28,34...), and Kelly says that there is evidence that this was a common cultic cry throughout Ephesus in the first century. It is possible that Paul chooses a hymn that contrasts with the cultic language of the Ephesian culture, claiming that what they worship in fact finds its true fulfilment in Christ and not Artemis." Mounce.

μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great

εὐσεβεια, ας f godliness, godly life, religion

μυστηριον, ου n secret, mystery (of something formerly unknown but now revealed)

της εὐσεβείας μυστηριον The Gospel message now revealed through God's act in Christ is great and glorious and demands a corresponding response from us in devotion and godliness. "εὐσεβεία, 'godliness,' is one of the main terms in the PE for the Christian faith, emphasising the behaviour appropriate to a believer (cf. 1 Tim 2:2), an emphasis in keeping with this context." Mounce.

The following part of the verse is thought to be part of an early Christian hymn. There is a great deal of discussion about its structure. Mounce favours an arrangement of two, three line stanzas:

Who

was revealed in flesh

was vindicated in spirit

was seen by angels

was preached among the nations

was believed in the world

was taken up in glory

The first stanza concerns Christ's life and the second the world's reception of him.

Mounce suggests that the first and last line may "serve as the bookends of Jesus' earthly ministry, his birth and ascension. The remaining four lines can refer to events either before or after the ascension, spelling out aspects of Christ's earthly and risen life."

On the textual variants to ὅς Mounce writes, "ὅς, 'who,' has the best attestation, being read by κ^* A* F G 33 365 442 2127 sy h^{mg} pal got aeth^{pp} and some church fathers (Or^{lat} Epiph Jerome Theodore Eutherius [according to Theodoret] Cyr Liberatus), and refers to Jesus. It is a typical way to introduce a hymn (cf. Phil 2:6 and Col 1:15), and it is not necessary to locate an antecedent in the text.

"The neuter, ὅ, 'which,' in the Western text probably arose as an attempted correction of the ὅς, making μυστηριον, 'mystery,' the subject of the hymn. It therefore supports ὅς as the original reading. It is read by D* and almost all of the Latin tradition.

"θεος, which makes God the subject of the hymn, is read by the Byzantine text and correctors (κ^c C² D² Ψ). In majuscule script, ὅς is OC, and the abbreviation for θεος is $\overline{\Theta C}$, so one could be mistaken for the other. More likely, ὅς was changed to θεος in an attempt to glorify Christ as God. It is almost inconceivable that a scribe would change θεος to a pronoun. The pronoun is also more difficult because there is no antecedent."

Massinger suggests that "although there is grammatical irregularity in referring the masculine relative pronoun ὅς to the neuter pronoun μυστηριον, the result is a wonderful truth, namely that the mystery of godliness, hidden in ages past, has now been revealed, and is seen not to be an abstract ideal, a mere attribute of personality, but actually a person, the Lord Jesus Christ."

ἐφανερώθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

φανερώ make known, reveal

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human nature

Cf. Jn 1:14.

ἐδικαιώθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s δικαιοῶ

justify, acquit, declare & treat as

righteous

The sense here is 'vindicated.'

Cf. Rom 1:3,4 and also 1 Peter 3:18. The risen Christ is declared by God to be his righteous one, the one over whom sin and death have no claim. "It is within the redemptive-historical contrast of flesh and Spirit as the mode of existence of the old and new creation that Paul now views the life of Christ before and after his resurrection... It is in that new existence of the resurrection and of the Spirit that the Church may now know Christ (2 Cor 5:16), and may also judge itself as joined with him." Ridderbos

ὤφθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ὄραω trans

see; pass. appear

Probably a reference to his return to glory.

ἐκηρύχθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s κηρυσσω

preach, proclaim

ἔθνεσιν Noun, dat pl ἔθνος, οὐς n nation; τα ἔ. Gentiles

Here probably meaning all nations, Jew and Gentiles.

ἐπιστεύθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s πιστεῶ

believe (in)

ἀνελήμφθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

ἀναλαμβάνω take up

δόξῃ Noun, dat s δόξη, ἡς f glory

"Line 6 contrasts with line 1, breaking the consistent chronology but providing the bookends of Jesus' ministry, his birth and ascension." Mounce.