Exegesis and Exposition of Titus 3:9-10

Titus 3:9

Avoiding Foolish Controversies About the Law

Titus 3:9 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. (NASB95)

“But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law” is composed of the following: (1) accusative feminine plural form of the adjective mōros (μωρός), “foolish” (2) conjunction de (δέ), “but” (3) accusative feminine plural form of the noun zetesis (ζήτησις), “controversies” (4) conjunction kai (καί), “and” (5) accusative feminine plural form of the noun genealogia (γενεαλογία), “genealogies” (6) conjunction kai (καί), “and” (7) accusative feminine plural form of the noun eris (ἒρις), “strife” (8) conjunction kai (καί), “and” (9) accusative feminine plural form of the noun machē (μάχη), “disputes” (10) accusative feminine plural form of the adjective nomikos (νομικός), “about the Law” (11) second person singular present middle imperative form of the verb periistēmi (περιϊστημι), “avoid.”

De

The conjunction de means “but, however” since it is a marker of contrast meaning that it is introducing a statement which stands in contrast to the previous statement in verse 8, which records Paul communicating to Titus his responsibilities in relation to the Cretan Christian community as his delegate. In verse 8, Paul expressed his Spirit inspired desire that Titus discipline himself in continuing to making it his habit of confidently communicating his instructions in Titus 3:1-7. The purpose of this was so that the Cretan Christian community would be intent on disciplining themselves in making it their habit of performing excellent works which he then says are beneficial for the human race. Now, here in verse 9, Paul employs the conjunction de in order to introduce a statement which commands Titus to avoid foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions and quarrels about the Mosaic Law. He then tells him the reason for this command is that these things are unprofitable and worthless for him to get involved in. Therefore, the contrast is between what Titus was to continue doing and what he was to not do. The contrast is between Paul’s command in verse 8 and his prohibition in verse 9. In other words, the contrast is between Titus obeying Paul’s command in verse 8 and obeying his prohibition in verse 9.
Periistēmi

The verb *periistēmi* means “to avoid” since it pertains to keeping oneself away from something or someone and refraining from getting involved in a particular practice. Here it means that Titus was to avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, strife and disputes about the Mosaic Law in the sense that he was to refrain from getting involved with the Judaizers and those who adhered to their legalistic teaching. He was to refrain from getting involved with these people in the sense that he was to stay away from getting involved in foolish controversies, genealogies, strife and disputes about the Mosaic Law with these people.

The present imperative form of the verb *periistēmi* is a “customary present imperative” whose force is for Titus to simply continue making it his habit of avoiding foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions and quarrels about the Mosaic Law. The present imperative is a command for action to be continued, action that may or may not have already been going on. It is often a character building command to the effect of “make this your habit,” “train yourself in this, discipline yourself.” This is the use of the present imperative in general precepts. The present imperative of *periistēmi* means, “to continue making it your habit of” avoiding foolish controversies, genealogies, strife and disputes about the Mosaic Law.

The middle voice of the verb *periistēmi* is an indirect middle which indicates the subject of the verb acts for himself or herself or in his or her own interest. Therefore, here it indicates that Titus was for his own benefit spiritually avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, strife and disputes about the Mosaic Law.

Zetesis

The noun *zetesis* means “to express forceful differences of opinion without necessarily having a presumed goal or seeking a solution.” (Louw and Nida, 33.440) It refers to pointless disputing. It indicates that rather than a true and sincere search for the truth, the false teachers were involved in argumentative debate and dialogues, which were pointless, useless and of no instructional value whatsoever. Therefore, the word does not mean “controversies” since this refers to discussions marked by opposing views. Rather, it means “pointless debates” since this accurately reflects the meaning of the word.

Its cognate *ekzetesis* appears in 1 Timothy 1:4 where it is used of these same false teachers. *Ekzetesis* is a compound word composed of the preposition *ek*, “out from” and the noun *zetesis*.

1 Timothy 1:3 As I urgently requested you to stay on in Ephesus when I myself was about to depart for Macedonia in order that you may command
certain individuals not to teach at any time, false doctrine nor, at any time be occupied with myths as well as useless genealogies because the nature of which, as an eternal spiritual truth, promotes pointless arguments rather than the administration of God’s household, which is through faithfulness. (My translation)

In 1 Timothy 1:4, the idea behind the noun ekzetesis is that occupation with Jewish myths and useless genealogies causes only “pointless disputes.” He is saying with this word that occupation with these things only causes “pointless arguments.”

Here in 1 Timothy 6:4, the noun zetesis means “pointless debates” since the word denotes that rather than a true and sincere search for the truth, the false teachers in Ephesus were involved in argumentative debate and dialogues, which were pointless, useless and of no instructional value whatsoever.

1 Timothy 6:4 But rather he possesses a sick obsession with pointless debates, yes in fact pointless arguments about words from which he does cause envy, dissension, slanders, evil suspicions. (Author’s translation)

Now, here in Titus 3:9, the noun zetesis again means “pointless debates” since the word indicates that rather than a true and sincere search for the truth, the false teachers were involved in argumentative debate and dialogues, which were pointless, useless and of no instructional value whatsoever. Therefore, the word does not mean “controversies” since this refers to discussions marked by opposing views. Rather, it means “pointless debates” since this accurately reflects the meaning of the word.

This noun is functioning as an accusative direct object meaning it is receiving the action of the verb periistēmi indicating Titus was to continue making it his habit of avoiding pointless debates about the Law.

Kai

The conjunction kai is adjunctive meaning it is introducing an additional thing Titus was to continue to make it his habit of avoiding. So in addition to avoiding foolish pointless debates, he was also to avoid foolish genealogies.

Genealogia

The plural form of the noun genealogia means “genealogies” which refers to a listing of descendants of a particular individual. The word appears in classical Greek in the writings of Polybius in reference “to the stories of the births of the demigod founders of states” (Polybius 9.2.1). The word does not appear in the
Septuagint, though the verb form of the word occurs in 1 Chronicles 5:1. It appears only twice in the Greek New Testament (1 Timothy 1:4; Titus 3:9).

The noun *genealogia* is never used with reference to Gnostic systems. When the word is used in 1 Timothy 1:4 and Titus 3:9, it is used in relationship to those who were teachers of the Mosaic Law (cf. 1 Tim. 1:7; Titus 1:10). Paul’s description of the apostate teachers in Ephesus in 1 Timothy 1:7 as wanting to be “teachers of the Law” indicates the Jewish nature of this occupation with genealogies. Titus 1:10 implicates the Jews or those with Jewish connections.

Towner writes “Within Judaism, genealogies played the key role of establishing a person’s bloodline and link to a particular family and tribe: rights by birth determined in this way allowed, for example, entrance into the priesthood. As its used in Philo demonstrates, the term could refer to the accounts of people in the early parts of Genesis. This usage especially opens up the possibility that Paul is identifying the practice among the false teachers of speculating on stories about the early biblical characters as well as actual genealogical lists such as occur there or in other more speculative noncanonical Jewish writings (e.g. Jubilees). Speculation fitting roughly into this category was known to have been practiced in Jewish communities, and the reference in 1:7 to the opponents’ aspirations to be ‘teachers of the Law’ helps to locate the sources of this practice within the repository of Jewish literature.” (Towner, Philip H., The Letters to Timothy and Titus; pages 110; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Grand Rapids, MI, 2006.

In 1 Timothy 1:4, the noun *genealogia* is modified by the adjective *aperantos* which does not describe these genealogies as “endless” meaning that they cannot be counted since the genealogies in question pertained to the Old Testament, which contained a specific number of genealogies. It is better to interpret the adjective as meaning “useless” since Paul says in the adversative clause that occupation with these genealogies does not help these unidentified pastors fulfill their responsibilities to administrate the household of God. Though it is true that the Old Testament genealogies were important with respect to the claims of Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Jewish Messiah and taught the sovereignty of God over the human race, they did not help these pastors fulfill their administration of the household of God. They did not promote the fulfillment of their duties as pastors. They were in fact “useless.”

“Useless genealogies” in 1 Timothy 1:4 refers to a listing of descendants of a particular individual. Specifically, it refers to the genealogies in the Old Testament. Paul was not against the study of the genealogies of the Bible since they can teach us quite a bit about God’s creation, His desire to redeem mankind, and His sovereign control over history. The apostle was against the misuse of genealogies.

Though it is true that the Old Testament genealogies were important with respect to the claims of Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Jewish Messiah and
taught the sovereignty of God over the human race, they did not promote the administration of God’s household by these pastors. They would not help these pastors to fulfill their responsibilities.

In Titus 3:9, the noun genealogia is in the plural and means “genealogies.” As was the case in 1 Timothy 1:4, the word here in Titus 3:9 refers to a listing of descendants of a particular individual. Specifically, it refers to the genealogies in the Old Testament. It is modified by the adjective mōros which means “foolish.”

This noun genealogia is functioning as an accusative direct object meaning it is receiving the action of the verb periistēmi indicating Titus was to continue making it his habit of avoiding foolish genealogies related to the Old Testament.

Kai

Once again, the conjunction kai is adjunctive meaning it is introducing an additional thing Titus was to continue to make it his habit of avoiding. So in addition to avoiding foolish pointless debates and genealogies, he was also to avoid foolish dissensions about the Law.

Eris

In classical literature, eris means “strife, contention, quarrels.” It appears three times in the Septuagint (Sirach 28:11; 40:4, 9). It is an exclusive Pauline term in the Greek New Testament and always denotes something negative. The noun eris appears nine times in the Greek New Testament where it can have the following meanings: “strife, dissension, factious partisanship, rivalry, inordinate competition, altercation, contentious disposition, contention, discord, dispute, quarrel, disputation” (Rom. 1:29; 13:13; 1 Cor. 1:11; 3:3; 2 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:20 twice; Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:4; Titus 3:9).

Louw and Nida list the following definitions for eris: (1) conflict resulting from rivalry and discord—‘strife, discord’ (39.22). (2) to express differences of opinion, with at least some measure of antagonism or hostility—‘to argue, quarrel, dispute’ (33.447). (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains)


In Titus 3:9, the noun eris is in the plural and means “dissensions” which manifest itself in quarreling, disputing, or controversy and is a point advanced or maintained in a debate or argument. It refers to a perverse and stubborn tendency to quarrel and dispute with people, sometimes deteriorating into bitter violent
conflict or dissension. The word speaks of the dissension that arises within an individual due to jealousy and is an expression of envy for another.

The noun *eris* emphasizes a struggle for superiority rather than the incongruity or incompatibility of the persons or things involved. The word describes arguing about words because of pride and not truth and originates from envy, ambition, competition and the desire for prestige, and status in life.

In Titus 3:9, the noun *eris* is functioning as an accusative direct object meaning it is receiving the action of the verb *periistēmi* indicating Titus was to continue making it his habit of avoiding foolish dissensions.

*Kai*

Again, the conjunction *kai* is adjunctive meaning it is introducing an additional thing Titus was to continue to make it his habit of avoiding. So in addition to avoiding foolish pointless debates, genealogies and dissensions, Titus was also to avoid foolish disputes about the Law.

*Machē*

The noun *machē* means “quarrels, altercations” since it pertains to heated or emotional verbal fights or contentions, emphasizing strained or severed relations which may persist beyond the contention. It speaks of an intense, emotional and bitter verbal confrontation between individuals of differing views.

This noun *machē* is functioning as an accusative direct object meaning it is receiving the action of the verb *periistēmi* indicating Titus was to continue making it his habit of avoiding foolish quarrels.

*Nomikos*

The adjective *nomikos* means “pertaining to the Law, about the Law, concerning the Law.” The word is functioning as an attributive adjective meaning that it is modifying the nouns *zetesis*, “pointless debates,” *genealogia*, “genealogies,” *eris*, “dissensions” and *machē*, “quarrels.” Therefore, it describing these pointless arguments, genealogies, dissensions and quarrels as being related to the Mosaic Law.

*Mōros*

The adjective *mōros* means “foolish, ridiculous, stupid” since it pertains to thoughts or words which are devoid of understanding. It pertains to lacking
judgment or discretion. Here it is functioning as an attributive adjective modifying the nouns zetesis, “pointless arguments,” genealogia, “genealogies,” eris, “dissensions” and machē, “quarrels.” Therefore, it describing these pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions and quarrels about the Law as stupid or foolish since they are lacking in judgment and discretion. The word is in the emphatic position of this prohibition for emphasis meaning that Paul is emphasizing this word to express his attitude towards these pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions and quarrels about the Law.

The Reason for the Prohibition

Titus 3:9 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. (NASB95)

“For they are unprofitable and worthless” is composed of the following: (1) third person plural present active indicative form of the verb eimi (ἐἰμί), “they are” (2) conjunction gar (γάρ), “for” (3) nominative feminine plural form of the adjective anōphelēs (ἀνωφελής), “unprofitable” (4) conjunction kai (καί), “and” (5) nominative feminine plural form of the adjective mataios (μάταιος), “worthless.”

Gar

The post-positive conjunction gar is causal meaning that it is introducing a statement which presents the reason for Paul’s previous prohibition that Titus continue making it his habit of avoiding foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions as well as quarrels about the Law. The conjunction is introducing a statement which says that these foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions as well as quarrels about the Law are unprofitable and worthless to Titus spiritually. Therefore, this conjunction denotes that Titus continue making it his habit of avoiding foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions as well as quarrels about the Law “because” these things are unprofitable and worthless to Titus spiritually.

Eimi

The verb eimi means “to possess a particular characteristic,” which is identified by the adjectives anōphelēs, “unprofitable” and mataios (μάταιος), “worthless.” This indicates that these foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions as well as quarrels about the Law possessed the characteristics expressed by these adjectives.
The present tense and the active voice of the verb are stative indicating that these foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions as well as quarrels about the Law “existed in the state of” possessing these characteristics.

The present tense of this verb can also be interpreted as a gnomic present indicating that these foolish pointless arguments, genealogies, dissensions as well as quarrels about the Law are to be characterized as unprofitable and worthless. The gnomic present is also used for a general timeless fact or spiritual axiom indicating that these foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions as well as quarrels about the Law are “as an eternal spiritual truth” to be characterized as unprofitable and worthless.

The verb indicative mood of the verb *eimi* is declarative presenting this Spirit inspired Pauline assertion as a non-contingent or unqualified statement.

*Anōphelēs*

The adjective *anōphelēs* means “unprofitable” since it pertains to not offering any special benefit. The word is functioning as a predicate nominative meaning it is making the assertion that these foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions as well as quarrels about the Law are unprofitable for Titus.

*Mataios*

The adjective *mataios* means “useless” since it pertains to serving no useful purpose on the basis of being futile and lacking content. The word is functioning as a predicate nominative meaning it is making the assertion that these foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions as well as quarrels about the Law are useless for Titus.

*Kai*

Now, the adjectives *anōphelēs* and *mataios* are joined together by the conjunction *kai* in order to form the figure of speech called “hendiadys,” which takes place when two nouns are used to express one idea or concept. The two words are of the same parts of speech, i.e., two nouns, and are always joined together by the conjunction “and.” The two nouns are also always in the same case. One of the two words expresses the thing, and the other intensifies it by being changed (if a noun) into an adjective of the superlative degree, which is, by this means, made especially emphatic.

In Titus 3:9, the adjectives *anōphelēs* and *mataios* are separated by the conjunction *kai, “and,”* and are both in the nominative case and plural in number.
The adjective mataios intensifies the noun anōphelēs. Therefore, these two words express one idea, namely these foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions as well as quarrels about the Law are unprofitable, yes useless for Titus.

Translation of Titus 3:9

Titus 3:9 However, for your own benefit continue to make it your habit of avoiding foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions as well as quarrels about the Law because they are, as an eternal spiritual truth characterized as being unprofitable, yes, useless.

Exposition of Titus 3:9

This prohibition stands in contrast to Paul’s command in verse 8. However, the contrast is mild since both the command in verse 8 and the prohibition in verse 9 are to be obeyed by Titus and the Cretan church. The apostle reminds Titus here in verse 9, that for his own benefit, he was to continue making it his habit of avoiding foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions as well as quarrels pertaining to the study of the Mosaic Law. The reason for this prohibition is that all these things are unprofitable, yes useless for Titus. Thus, it would be to his own benefit to avoid these things at all costs since they did nothing for his spiritual growth and the spiritual growth of the Cretan Christian community. Of course, this prohibition is not only for Titus but also the entire Cretan Christian community. If the Christian community becomes involved in these things it would cause disunity and hurt the testimony of the church on the island of Crete.

“Continue to make it your habit of avoiding” means that Titus was not to get involved with or participate in foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions and quarrels about the Mosaic Law. He was to refrain from getting involved with the Judaizers and those apostate pastors who adhered to their legalistic teaching in the sense that he was to stay away from getting involved in foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions and quarrels about the Mosaic Law. This command is a reminder since Titus was already faithful in performing this task. This task was also for his benefit spiritually since pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions and quarrels about the Mosaic Law would not help but hurt him spiritually and the Cretan Christian community if he became involved in these things.

“Pointless arguments” indicates that the Judaizers and those apostate teachers who adhered to their legalistic teaching never were in a true and sincere search for the truth but were involved in argumentative debates and dialogues, which were of no instructional value whatsoever.
“Genealogies” refers to the genealogies in the Old Testament. Paul was not against the study of the genealogies of the Bible since they can teach us quite a bit about God’s creation, His desire to redeem mankind, and His sovereign control over history. The apostle was against the misuse of genealogies. Though it is true that the Old Testament genealogies were important with respect to the claims of Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Jewish Messiah and taught the sovereignty of God over the human race, they did not promote the administration of God’s household by these pastors. They would not help these pastors to fulfill their responsibilities.

“Dissensions” would manifest itself in quarreling, disputing, or controversy and is a point advanced or maintained in a debate or argument about the Mosaic Law. It refers to a perverse and stubborn tendency to quarrel and dispute with people over the Law sometimes deteriorating into bitter violent conflict or dissension. It speaks of the dissension that arises within an individual due to jealousy and is an expression of envy for another. It emphasizes a struggle for superiority rather than the incongruity or incompatibility of the persons or things involved. It describes arguing about the Law because of pride and not truth and originates from envy, ambition, competition and the desire for prestige, and status in life.

“Quarrels” pertains to heated or emotional verbal fights or contentions with regards to the Mosaic Law. It emphasizes strained or severed relations between people which may persist beyond the contention. It speaks of an intense, emotional and bitter verbal confrontation between individuals of differing views over the various aspects of the Mosaic Law.

“Foolish” pertains to thoughts or words which are devoid of understanding and lacking judgment or discretion. It is describing these pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions and quarrels about the Law as stupid or foolish since they are lacking in judgment and discretion. It is in the emphatic position of this prohibition for emphasis meaning that Paul is emphasizing this word to express his negative attitude towards these pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions and quarrels about the Law. It expresses his disgust for these things.

“Because they are, as an eternal spiritual truth characterized as being unprofitable, yes, useless” presents the reason for the prohibition. This prohibition is important because getting involved with foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions as well as quarrels about the Law with the apostate pastors on the island of Crete would be unprofitable, yes useless for Titus and the Cretan Christian community. It would result in disunity and hurt their testimony, not to mention it would hinder their spiritual growth.

We wish we did not have “problem people” in our churches; but wherever there are people, there can be problems. In this case, Paul warned Titus to avoid people who like to argue about the unimportant things of the faith. I recall being
approached by a young man after a Bible lesson and getting involved with him in all sorts of hypothetical questions of doctrine. “Now, if this were true … if that were true …” was about all he could say. I was very inexperienced at the time; I should have ignored him in a gracious way. As it was, I missed the opportunity to talk with several sincere people who had personal problems and wanted help. I have learned that professed Christians who like to argue about the Bible are usually covering up some sin in their lives, are very insecure, and are usually unhappy at work or at home. ¹

This prohibition in Titus 3:9 reveals the Jewish nature of the heresy on the island of Crete. The apostle’s statements in Titus 1:10 also indicate this as well. The apostate pastor-teachers on the island of Crete who adhered to the legalistic teaching of the Judaizers were guilty of becoming involved in foolish pointless arguments, genealogies, dissensions as well as quarrels regarding the Mosaic Law.

One of the characteristics of the apostate teachers and Judaizers was that they fought over the Mosaic Law and specifically what commands and prohibitions should be obeyed by the Christian and which should not. Their contentious behavior is mentioned by Paul with Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:4-11 and with Titus in Titus 1:10-14.

Titus 1:10 For many are rebellious, empty talkers as well as deceivers, especially those from the circumcision ¹¹ who must be silenced who because of their evil and sinful character are upsetting whole families by habitually teaching things which are improper for dishonest gain. 12 A certain one from them, their own prophet said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” 13 This testimony is true. For this reason, begin the process of severely rebuking them and continue to do so in order that they would be sound with regards to the Christian faith ¹⁴ so that they would not be occupied with Jewish myths as well as commandments originating from men who cause themselves to reject the truth. (Author’s translation)

“Many” refers to unidentified Jews and Gentile men who were exclusively Christians who rejected the gospel message as communicated by the apostles. They were located on the island of Crete as indicated by Paul’s statements in verse 12. They were exclusively Christians as indicated by Paul’s statements in verse 13 in which he orders Titus to severely reprove these individuals so that they may be sound in the Christian faith. Only Christians can be sound in the faith. It was important that the candidate for the office of overseer on the island of Crete meet the doctrinal qualifications listed in verse 9 because there were apostate Christian pastors on the island of Crete who were rebellious to the gospel and were empty talkers and deceivers.

That these were not only Jewish but also Gentile is indicated by the expression μάλιστα οἱ ἐκ τῆς περιτομῆς, “especially those of the circumcision,” which implies there were Gentiles rebelling as well. That these men were Christians exclusively is indicated by the fact that Paul orders Titus in verse 13 to severely reprove these individuals so that they may be sound in the Christian faith. This clearly indicates that he is speaking of apostate pastors in the church since Paul had no authority over non-Christians but only Christians. Again, only Christians can be sound in the faith and never non-Christians. Furthermore, in 1 Timothy 1:6-11, Paul instructed Timothy to confront certain apostate Christian pastors in Ephesus to stop teaching and misapplying the law and to teach the gospel.

Some might argue that Paul was ordering Titus to reprove Christians in general on the island of Crete. However, this ignores the context since in verse 10 he is describing individuals who oppose his apostolic teaching and thus the gospel message. Then, in verse 11 he is telling Titus that he must silence these men who were upsetting families and teaching things for the sake of sordid gain. Then, in verse 12 he quotes a Cretan prophet who characterized the Cretan people as always liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons. In verse 13, Paul affirms this characterization. Then, he says that for this reason, Titus must severely rebuke “them” so that they may be sound in the Christian faith. “Them” in context must be a reference to these apostate Cretan teachers who were Christians but adhered to the teaching of the Judaizers.

Therefore, in Titus 1:10, Paul is describing apostate Christian pastors from Crete who were adhering to the teaching of the Judaizers just as he did in 1 Timothy 1:6-11. This is again indicated again by the fact that he orders Titus to reprove these men so that they may be sound in the Christian faith.

Thus, it appears that Paul was reminding Titus to appoint elders in every city on the island of Crete because there was great apostasy among many of the pastors on the island. This would indicate that the Cretan church was not as young a church as some expositors in the past have believed since there were apostate pastors on Crete already as indicated by Paul’s statements in verses 10-13. It would take time to identify those who were qualified to be elders and then to fall into apostasy.

“Rebellious” thus refers to apostate Christian pastors who were both Jew and Gentile and describes these individuals in context as rebellious to the gospel message and the teaching of the apostles in the sense that they refused to submit to the gospel message as communicated by the apostles. Thus, they rejected the apostolic authority of the apostles.

“Empty talkers” describes these apostate Gentile and Jewish Christian pastors as using words which had no meaning, and were without substance. It describes their teaching as lacking content and thus cannot produce any significant spiritual results, i.e. growth to Christ-likeness. It denotes that the teaching of these
unidentified men was empty in the sense that it had absolutely no value spiritually. They were speakers whose message had no content which could never produce godly results since it is opposed to the gospel message taught by the apostles.

“Deceivers” describes these apostate Gentile and Jewish Christian pastors as individuals who mislead people with regards to the truth or cause people to not believe the truth or to cause them to no longer believe the truth. It describes them as leading others astray from the truth by imposing a false idea or belief that causes ignorance, bewilderment or helplessness. It refers to them as individuals who deceived people by leading them away from the truth. It speaks of these individuals as leading the unsaved away from faith in Jesus Christ so they cannot receive eternal salvation. They also lead Christians away from the truth so that they cannot grow to spiritual maturity.

“Especially those from the circumcision” singles out the apostate Jewish Christian pastors indicating that when Paul says that many in Crete were rebellious, empty talkers and deceivers, he is singling out these apostate pastors as being primarily from the Jewish race. Paul mentions “Jewish myths” in verse 14, which is a further indication that the individuals he is describing here in verse 10 were adhering to the Judaizers’ teaching.

“The circumcision” is a designation for those who belong to the Jewish race indicating that they are the biological descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. By implication it refers to those Jewish Christian pastors who adhered to the doctrine of the Judaizers since throughout Acts and Paul’s writings they opposed Paul’s apostolic teaching and thus rejected his authority.

The phrase only here in Pastorals. Ὅτι ἐκ περιτομῆς, Acts 10:45; 11:2; Rom. 4:12; Gal. 2:12; Col. 4:11. There can be no doubt of the presence of Jews in Crete. Tacitus (Hist. v. 2) even makes the absurd statement that the Jews were Cretan exiles; and that from their residence in the vicinity of the Cretan Mount Ida they were called Idaei, whence Judaei. There appears to have been some confusion between the Palestinians and the Philistines — the Cherethim or Cherethites, who, in Ezek. 25:16; Zeph. 2:5 are called in LXX Κρῆτες. Jews were in the island in considerable numbers between the death of Alexander and the final destruction of Jerusalem. In 1 Macc. 15:23 the Cretan city of Gortyna is mentioned among the places to which letters were written by Lucius, the Roman consul, on behalf of the Jews, when Simon Maccabaeus renewed the treaty which his brother Judas had made with Rome. Josephus (Ant. xvii. 12, 1; Bell. Jud. ii. 7, 1) says that Herod’s pseudo-son Alexander imposed on the Cretan Jews on his way to Italy. Philo (Leg. ad Cai. § 36) makes the Jewish envoys say to Caligula that all the principal islands of the Mediterranean, including Crete, were full of Jews.

What are these Jewish myths and commandments originating from men? These Jewish myths refer to the false doctrine taught by the Judaizers. Interestingly, in 1
These myths are mentioned along with “endless genealogies.” Then, in Titus 3:9, Paul does not mention these myths but rather “genealogies.” Within Judaism, genealogies played the key role of establishing a person’s bloodline and link to a particular family and tribe. Rights by birth determined in this way allowed, for example, entrance into the priesthood. These genealogies could also refer to the accounts of people in the early parts of Genesis. This usage opens up the possibility that Paul is identifying the practice among the Judaizers of speculating on stories about the early biblical characters as well as actual genealogical lists such as occur there or in other more speculative noncanonical Jewish writings (e.g. Jubilees). Speculation fitting roughly into this category was known to have been practiced in Jewish communities. The reference in Titus 3:9 to the disputes about the Law helps to locate the source of this practice within the repository of Jewish literature. Thus, it appears likely that these Jewish myths are related to the stories related to the genealogies taken from those provided in the Old Testament.

Jewish “myths” would especially be haggadot, stories amplifying or explaining biblical narratives. Pharisees and others who tried to expound and apply biblical law for their own times were forced to surround it with case law, detailing how the Old Testament rules addressed specific situations; Paul apparently dismisses such legal traditions here.²

In Titus 1:14, “the commandments originating from men” harkens back to Isaiah 29:13.

Isaiah 29:13 Then the Lord said, “Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me, and their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote.” (NASB95)

Isaiah 29: The sovereign master says, “These people say they are loyal to me; they say wonderful things about me, but they are not really loyal to me. Their worship consists of nothing but man-made ritual.” (NET)

Isaiah 29:13 The Lord says: “These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught.” (TNIV)

In Matthew 15:9 and Mark 7:7, the Lord Jesus Christ referred to Isaiah 29:13 in order to contrast the Jewish obsession with rites of purification which were not in the Old Testament and the teaching of the Old Testament. The Pharisees were obsessed with traditions or doctrines which were not found in their Old Testament. In fact, they would use their traditions in order to avoid keeping the Old Testament

rules and regulations such as honoring one’s father and mother. The apostle Paul adopted the idea of Isaiah 29:13 in dealing with the situation the Colossian church was facing (Colossians 2:22).

Here in Titus 1:14, “the commandments originating from men” also alludes to Isaiah 29:13 but in reference to the dietary restrictions of the Mosaic Law, which were not applicable during the church age (cf. Mark 7:15; Luke 11:39-41; Colossians 2:29-23; 1 Timothy 4:1-5). This is indicated by Paul’s statement in Titus 1:15.

**Titus 1:15** To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. (NASB95)

The Judaizers’ obsession with dietary regulations of the Mosaic Law were described here by Paul as “the commandments originating from men” even though God did give Israel dietary regulations since the Lord Jesus Christ in Mark 7:14-23 taught that there were no longer any dietary regulations for God’s people. Thus, the dietary regulations of the Mosaic Law were nothing but the regulations of men since God no longer commanded adherence to these regulations of the Mosaic Law. The gospel declares that the one who trusts in Jesus Christ as his or her Savior has died to the Law (cf. Romans 7:1-6). Thus, these dietary regulations are not applicable to the Christian.

In Titus 1:14 Paul says that these Judaizers rejected the truth, which refers to the apostolic teaching of the gospel. In relation to non-Christians, i.e. who have not yet been justified through faith in Christ, the gospel is the good news and God’s victorious proclamation of God’s love in delivering the entire human race from sin, Satan, his cosmic system and eternal condemnation and has reconciled them to Himself through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This reconciliation with God and deliverance and victory over sin, Satan and the cosmic system that God accomplished through His Son’s crucifixion, burial, death, resurrection and session is received as a gift and appropriated through faith in Christ (John 3:16-18; Acts 16:31; Romans 5:1-2).

In relation to the believer, the Gospel message is God’s victorious proclamation regarding the believer’s deliverance and victory positionally from the power of Satan, the old sin nature and the cosmic system of Satan (See Romans 5-7). By positionally, I mean that God views the believer as crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ, which was accomplished at the moment of conversion through the Baptism of the Spirit when the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit placed the believer in an eternal union with Christ.

The Baptism of the Spirit identifies the believer with Christ in the sense that the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit causes the believer to become identical and united with the Lord Jesus Christ and also ascribes to the believer the qualities and
characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ. It identifies the believer with Christ in His crucifixion (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20), His death (Romans 6:2, 7-8; Colossians 2:20; 3:3), His burial (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12), His resurrection (Romans 6:5; Ephesians 2:6; Philippians 3:10-11; Colossians 2:12; 3:1) and His session (Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 3:1). The believer can experience this victory and deliverance by appropriating by faith the teaching of the Word of God that he has been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ (Romans 6:11-23; 8:1-17; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:5-17).

By continuing to teach adherence to the dietary regulations of the Mosaic Law, they were rejecting the apostolic teaching of the gospel in that they contradicted the gospel which says that the Christian has died to the Law. Thus the Christian has died to the dietary regulations of the Law through their identification with Christ in His death on the cross, which freed them from these regulations.

The apostle Paul does not identify if these men were believers or non-believers when he describes them here in Titus 1:14 as rejecting the truth. There is nothing in the context which would indicate their relationship to Jesus Christ. However, more than likely when Paul says that they rejected the truth, he is referring to both Christians and non-Christians since the Judaizers were composed of both Christians and non-Christians. Furthermore, a Christian can reject the truth of the gospel by adhering to the dietary regulations of the Mosaic Law when the gospel declares he has died to the Law through his identification with Christ in His death. The non-Christian rejects the truth of the gospel of course by not exercising faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior. You cannot be saved by adherence to the Law. Thus you can not live by adherence to the Law.

1 Timothy 1:3 also alludes to the contentious behavior of the Judaizers and those Christian pastors who adhered to their legalistic teaching.

1 Timothy 1:3 Since I requested you to stay on in Ephesus when I myself was about to depart for Macedonia in order that you may command certain individuals not to teach at any time, false doctrine....continue making it your habit of performing this task. (Author’s translation)

1 Timothy 1:3 is an elliptical causal clause meaning that Paul does not explicitly command Timothy to command certain Ephesian men to not teach false doctrines but rather he only presents the basis or the reason for doing so. This verse is an urgent request for Timothy to fulfill the task of confronting the false teachers in Ephesus. It presents the basis for Timothy commanding certain Ephesian believers to stop teaching false doctrines.

The emphasis is not upon a comparison between Paul urging Timothy when leaving Macedonia to stay on at Ephesus in order to instruct certain men not to teach false doctrines and Timothy doing exactly that now that Paul has left him in Ephesus. Rather, his emphasis is that he wants Timothy to continue commanding
certain Ephesian believers to not teach false doctrines because he commanded him to do so upon leaving for Macedonia.

His emphasis is as to why he wants Timothy to confront these false teachers. This is to help support Timothy in this task since he is emphasizing in this causal clause his apostolic authority that he received from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. To reject Paul’s instructions was to reject the Lord Himself.

“In order that you may command certain individuals not to teach at any time, false doctrine” is a purpose clause that indicates that Paul’s purpose for urgently requesting that Timothy stay on in Ephesus was so that he could command certain Ephesian believers not to teach false doctrine. The purpose is further described in verse 4 indicating that Paul wanted these Ephesian believers who taught false doctrines to also not occupy themselves with myths and interminable genealogies. It implies clearly that Paul has delegated authority to Timothy to rebuke and hold these false teachers accountable since this word indicates that the false teachers in Ephesus are under Paul’s apostolic authority and are thus Christians.

The fact that Paul is commanding these unidentified individuals to stop teaching false doctrine clearly implies that they are believers since Paul would not have authority over a non-believer. It also indicates that they were pastors since Acts 20:28 records Paul predicting to the pastors in Ephesus that some of them would become apostates.

“Certain individuals” refers to unidentified Christian pastor-teachers who taught false doctrines in fulfillment of Paul’s prophesy recorded in Acts 20:28. It means that there was more than one pastor in Ephesus who was teaching false doctrines. However, it does not mean that all the pastors were doing so.

“Not to teach at any time, false doctrine” speaks of the act of teaching that which is contrary to the apostolic teaching of Paul. It does not refer to the style of teaching or manner of teaching but the content of teaching. It describes the content of the teaching of these pastors in Ephesus as fundamentally and essentially different than Paul’s apostolic teaching. This prohibition denies any idea of these Christian pastors in Ephesus teaching heretical doctrines.

1 Timothy 1:4 Nor, at any time be occupied with myths as well as useless genealogies because the nature of which, as an eternal spiritual truth, promotes pointless arguments rather than the administration of God’s household, which is through faithfulness. (Author’s translation)

This verse is connecting Paul’s prohibition that certain Ephesian pastors were not to teach at any time, false or heretical doctrine with the prohibition for these same pastors to not pay attention to myths and useless genealogies. It makes clear that Paul does not want these unidentified pastors in Ephesus to at any time “occupy their minds” with myths.
“Myths” describes the content of the teaching of these unidentified pastors in Ephesus as falsehood in contrast to Paul’s gospel, which is absolute truth since it is inspired by the Holy Spirit as well as rooted in historical events (crucifixion, death and resurrection of Christ) and an historical individual (Jesus of Nazareth). It has nothing to do with Gnosticism since the phrase “teachers of the Law” and Titus 1:14 describing these myths as Jewish indicate that the myths and genealogies mentioned by Paul in 1 Timothy 1:4 were Jewish in nature.

“Useless genealogies” refers to a listing of descendants of a particular individual. Specifically, it refers to the genealogies in the Old Testament. Paul was not against the study of the genealogies of the Bible since they can teach us quite a bit about God’s creation, His desire to redeem mankind, and His sovereign control over history. The apostle was against the misuse of genealogies. Though it is true that the Old Testament genealogies were important with respect to the claims of Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Jewish Messiah and taught the sovereignty of God over the human race, they did not promote the administration of God’s household by these pastors. They would not help these pastors to fulfill their responsibilities.

The causal clause “because the nature of which, as an eternal spiritual truth, promotes pointless arguments rather than the administration of God’s household” refers to these unidentified individuals in Ephesus fulfilling their stewardship as pastor-teachers. Specifically, it refers to the administration of God’s household, which is the church. It refers to leading the church in Ephesus.

1 Timothy 1:5 However, the result, which this command produces is, as an eternal spiritual truth, divine-love from a pure heart as well as a conscience that is divine good in quality and character and in addition a sincere faith. (Author’s translation)

This verse is contrasting the negative ungodly results of some unidentified pastors in Ephesus teaching false doctrine and being occupied with myths and useless genealogies and the positive results if they are faithful in administrating God’s household. The negative result of the former is that the church in Ephesus will be involved with pointless arguments. The positive result of the latter is the church will function in God’s love for one another since the result of obeying Paul’s apostolic teaching is love for God and love each other.

The noun telos in 1 Timothy 1:5 does not mean “objective” or “purpose” but rather “result” since Paul is contrasting the negative ungodly results of these pastors in Ephesus teaching false doctrine and being occupied with myths and useless genealogies and the positive results of their being faithful in administrating God’s household.

The negative result of the former is that the church in Ephesus will be involved with pointless arguments. The positive result of the latter is the church will
function in God’s love for one another since the result of obeying Paul’s apostolic teaching is love for God and love each other.

Also, further supporting this interpretation is that the noun *parangelia* functions as a genitive of product meaning that it is the product of the noun *telos* to which it stands related. This would indicate that Paul is saying that the result “which (obeying) this command produces” is love for one another in contrast to pointless arguments with one another.

In 1 Timothy 1:5, the noun *parangelia* refers to Paul’s prohibition that appears in 1 Timothy 1:3-4, which prohibited a certain group of unidentified pastors in Ephesus from teaching false doctrine and being occupied with myths and useless genealogies. Supporting this interpretation is the articular construction, which is anaphoric referring back to this prohibition. Related to this is that Paul uses the noun form of the verb *parangello* that appears in verse 3 suggesting that Paul wants us to see the connection with the prohibition in verses 3 and 4 and his statement in verse 5.

Paul’s use of anacoluthon in 1:3-18 strongly suggests that the noun *parangelia* in verse 18 is used with reference to the prohibition in verses 3 and 4. The figure of anacoluthon means that Paul uses two dependent clauses but does not have an independent clause to anchor or control them. The verse begins with a causal clause followed by a purpose clause. The implication is that Paul does not complete his thought explicitly but rather digresses before explicitly completing his thought in verse 18. This is not unusual to take place in mandate letters or in a mind such as Paul’s.

Also, Paul does not use *alla* but rather *de* since he wants to show the connection between the prohibition in verses 3 and 4 and his purpose for having Timothy communicate this prohibition to these unidentified pastors in Ephesus. This would indicate that *parangelia* is referring to this prohibition rather than the general command to love one another. Remember, verse 5 presents a contrast with the previous statement in verses 3 and 4.

So the fact that the apostle Paul in verse 5 is making this contrast strongly suggests that *parangelia* is referring back to the prohibition in verses 3 and 4. Thus, as a result of this, the noun *parangelia* not only refers to the prohibition in verses 3 and 4 for certain pastors in Ephesus to not teach false doctrine or be occupied with myths and useless genealogies but also it refers to them being faithful in administrating God’s household.

As we noted, the noun *parangelia* functions as a genitive of product meaning that it is the product of the noun *telos* to which it stands related. This would indicate that Paul is saying that the result “which (obeying) this command produces” is love for one another in contrast to pointless arguments with one another.
In 1 Timothy 1:5, the noun *agape* means “divine-love” and refers to the Ephesian believers’ divine-love as it functions towards each other since Paul is contrasting the negative ungodly results of these pastors in Ephesus teaching false doctrine and being occupied with myths and useless genealogies and the positive results of their being faithful in administrating God’s household.

“From a pure heart” teaches that a pure heart is the source from which God’s love is exercised towards one’s fellow Christian. This prepositional phrase teaches that when the Christian obeys the command to love one another as Christ loved him it is from a heart that is experiencing fellowship with God and being influenced by the Holy Spirit.

This prepositional phrase refers to the state of the Christian’s soul that does not have any known sin in its stream of consciousness. It refers to the believer experiencing fellowship with God and being influenced by the Spirit. It speaks of the believer bringing his thoughts into obedience to the Spirit.

“A conscience that is divine good in quality and character” refers to the Christian’s conscience or whose standards are in accordance with the Father’s will because the Christian is being influenced by the Spirit. The Christian is filled with or influenced by the Spirit when they bring their thoughts into obedience to the teaching of the Spirit, which is heard through the communication of the Word of God.

Therefore, the conscience, where the norms and standards reside, is divine in quality and character because the teaching of the Spirit as recorded in the Word is the basis for the norms and standards. It describes the Christian’s conscience as being intrinsically valuable, intrinsically good, inherently good in quality but with the idea of good which is also profitable, useful, benefiting others, benevolent because their norms and standards are based upon the teaching of the Spirit in the Word of God.

This prepositional phrase indicates that loving one’s fellow Christian as Christ loved all men also finds its source in a conscience that is divine good in quality and character. This means that loving one’s fellow Christian as Christ loved all men originates from not only a pure heart but also a conscience that is divine good in quality and character, which is the result of being filled with the Spirit and letting the Word of Christ richly dwell in your soul.

“A sincere faith” speaks of the Christians’ post-conversion faith in the Word of God or in other words, their faith in the Spirit’s teaching that is revealed through the communication of the Word of God. It does not refer to saving faith or faith in Jesus Christ for eternal salvation but rather the Christian’s faith in the Word of God after their conversion since in context Paul is addressing the conduct of Christians as a result of their pastors teaching sound doctrine rather than false doctrine.
Also, in context, *pistis* is used in relation to the Christian obeying the command to love his fellow believer as Christ loves, which is accomplished by exercising faith in the Spirit’s teaching in the Word of God and specifically, the command to love one another as Christ loves.

Obedience to the Spirit’s teaching in the Word of God to love one another as Christ loved is the direct result of the believer exercising faith in the Spirit’s teaching since obedience to the commands of the Word of God are the direct result of exercising faith in the Spirit’s teaching in the Word of God.

This prepositional phrase indicates that love for one’s fellow believer originates from a faith in the Word of God that is sincere in the sense that the Christian does not simply talk about loving his fellow believer but rather he demonstrates it by both their words and actions since obeying the command to love one another is the direct result of exercising faith in the Spirit’s teaching in the Word of God. Paul is saying that love for one another is without hypocrisy. It also indicates that loving one’s fellow Christian as Christ loved all men also finds its source in a faith that is sincere.

1 Timothy 1:6 Certain individuals, because they have deviated away from these things, turned aside to pointless talk. (Author’s translation)

“Certain individuals” refers to a particular group of unidentified pastors in Ephesus. The causal clause “because they have deviated away from these things, turned aside to pointless talk” means that the reason why these pastors turned aside to pointless talk was because they deviated from practicing God’s love in the power of the Spirit from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Then, in verse 7 Paul further describes these unidentified pastors in Ephesus who were teaching false doctrine because they were occupied with Jewish myths and useless genealogies. Thus, they were failing to fulfill their duties of administrating the church in Ephesus by communicating Paul’s apostolic teaching.

1 Timothy 1:7 by desiring unsuccessfully to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either the things which they are making a habit of communicating or the things concerning which they make a habit of confidently asserting for the benefit of only themselves. (Author’s translation)

In this verse, he identifies this particular group of pastors as wanting to be teachers of the Law but yet they don’t understand what they are saying or the things they confidently affirm. This further indicates quite clearly that these pastors had fallen victim to the Judaizers who dogged Paul throughout his ministry. Therefore, the heresy in the Ephesian church was of a Jewish nature.

Paul describes how or the means by which they turned aside to pointless talk, namely, by desiring to be teachers of the Mosaic Law. So the expression “by desiring unsuccessfully to be teachers of the Law” is participial clause that
expresses the means by which these unidentified pastors in Ephesus were turning aside from teaching the command to love one another to pointless talk.

“Even though they do not understand either the things which they are making a habit of communicating or the things concerning which they make a habit of confidently asserting for the benefit of only themselves” is a concessive clause that implies that these unidentified pastors in Ephesus lacked understanding or were simply ignorant of the true purpose of the Mosaic Law even though they desired to be teachers of it. This implication is indicated by Paul’s statements in verses 8-10, which deal with one of the usages of the Mosaic Law.

Paul’s purpose for urgently requesting that Timothy prohibit these pastors from doing these things was love. If they obeyed this prohibition and again fulfilled their responsibilities to administrate the household of God, they would communicate Paul’s gospel and teach the command to love one another.

So by attempting to be teachers of the Mosaic Law and not communicators of the gospel and sound doctrine, there were disputes and arguments taking place among believers in Ephesus. On the other hand, if they had remained faithful, no such thing would have occurred unless their audiences rejected the apostolic teaching in the first place. These individuals were not faithful because of a spiritual problem that they had, namely they were out of fellowship with God and had rejected Paul’s apostolic teaching themselves.

1 Timothy 1:8 But we affirm as a confirmed and accepted fact that the Law does, as an eternal spiritual truth exist in the state of being useful, if one at any time does for their own benefit make use of it lawfully. (Author’s translation)

The apostle is contrasting the misuse of the Law by these pastors in Ephesus who aspired to be teachers of the Law with the correct application of it, which he and Timothy and the other apostles taught and was accepted by the Christian community throughout the Roman Empire in general.

1 Timothy 1:8 is a fifth class condition that teaches the spiritual principle that the Law is useful if one uses it correctly. The protasis of this fifth class condition that helps to compose verse 8 indicates that for the Mosaic Law and in particular the moral code aspect of the Law to have its proper result it must be used in accord with this three-fold purpose. This principle helps to expose the error of those pastors in Ephesus who sought to be teachers of the Mosaic Law. In other words, it is useful if one understands and applies its three-fold purpose. In particular if one understands that it reveals God’s perfect standards, personal sins committed by man and his sinful nature as well as his need for the Savior. This usage of the Law is reflected in Paul’s statements in verses 9-10.

In the apodasis, what Paul is asserting about the Law in verses 8-11 is inspired and confirmed by the Holy Spirit and accepted by the apostles and their disciples.
in contrast to those pastors in Ephesus who sought to be teachers of the Law and were not using it properly.

When Paul speaks of the Law in this verse, he is referring to the Mosaic Law and specifically to the moral code or Ten Commandments. This is indicated by the fact that when Paul uses the term *nomos* he usually has the Mosaic Law in mind or the Old Testament as a whole. Secondly, when he speaks of the law in verses 8-10, it has the same ethical concerns as those of the Mosaic Law.

The list of vices in verses 9-10 is similar to the Decalogue as Knight points out (page 81) who also points out that “when Paul elsewhere speaks of ‘law’ and gives ethical lists, it is the Mosaic moral law that is in view (cf., e.g., Rom. 13:9ff.)” (page 81).

Thirdly, in verses 4, Paul has already mentioned that these pastors in Ephesus were occupied with myths and useless genealogies, which we noted were Jewish in nature. The noun *nomodidaskalos* means “teachers of the Law” which is another clear indication that *nomos* in verse 8 refers to the Mosaic Law.

The fourth reason why *nomos* is referring to the Law is that Paul is contrasting his use of the Law with these unidentified pastors who misused the Law and wanted to be teachers of the Law. The reference to genealogies in verse 4, which occur in the Pentateuch indicate that *nomos* refers to the Mosaic Law.

When Paul says that the Law is “good,” he means that it is “useful.” This is indicated in that Paul is contrasting his use of the Law with that of those pastors in Ephesus. Also, this word appears in the apodasis of a fifth class condition. The protasis speaks of using the Law correctly and the apodasis affirms that the Law is useful if one uses lawfully. He is saying that the Law is useful if it is used correctly.

1 Timothy 1:9-10 continue the discussion of the Mosaic Law and in particular the Moral Code portion of the Law, i.e. the Ten Commandments. Paul is speaking about the Law from its condemnatory purpose meaning that the Law was designed to reveal man’s sinful nature and God’s holy character and that man does not measure up to God’s perfect holy standards. This condemnation by the Law was to lead the sinner to Christ.

1 Timothy 1:9 For you see, one must affirm this fact, namely that the Law is, as an eternal spiritual truth, by no means established for the benefit of the righteous but in fact, for the benefit of those who break the Law, for the benefit of those who are insubordinate, for the benefit of those who are irreverent and for the benefit of those who are sinful by nature and practice, for the benefit of those of those who are unholy and for the benefit of those who are worldly, for the benefit of those who murder their father and mother, for the benefit of murderers, 10 for the benefit of those who are fornicators, for the benefit of those who are homosexuals, for the benefit of those who are
kidnappers, for the benefit of those who are liars, for the benefit of those who are perjurers and in addition, if, and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument that any other does oppose itself to that which is sound doctrine and we agree that there is. (Author’s translation)

So in these verses he teaches that this moral code does not apply to the Christian who has been declared righteous through faith alone in Christ alone. Rather, it is for those who are non-Christians who need the Law to show them their sinful nature and that they don’t measure up to God’s perfect standards and that they are in need of the Savior.

Paul is not implying that Christians are at liberty to break the Ten Commandments, i.e. the Decalogue, rather he is merely pointing out that the Christian’s way of life is not governed by this aspect of the Mosaic Law. Again, he is speaking about the Law from the perspective that it was designed to condemn the sinner and thus lead them to Christ.

He teaches in his other epistles and mentions in 1 Timothy 1:5, the Christian’s life is governed by the Spirit and in particular the command of our Lord to love God with one’s entire being and love one another as He loves through the power of the Spirit. These two commands summarize the teaching of the Word of God.

Therefore, those pastors emphasizing obedience to the Ten Commandments to live righteously are missing the point or misapplying the Law. The Christian’s lifestyle is to be governed by walking by faith in the Spirit’s teaching in the Word of God and in particular obeying the Lord Jesus Christ’s command to love one another as He loves through the power of the Spirit and not simply by obeying the Ten Commandments. These apostate pastors in Ephesus were following the Judaizers’ doctrine and were being selective with regards to their obedience to the Law by emphasizing strict observance to the Ten Commandments.

So Paul is teaching in verses 9-10 that the Decalogue is not for the “righteous,” i.e. the sinner justified through faith in Christ, i.e. the Christian but rather for those who are unsaved since this moral code is designed reveal God’s holy character, man’s sinful nature and lead the sinner to Christ for salvation. These pastors were teaching in error that observance of the Law is to govern the Christian’s lifestyle.

“The Law” refers to the Mosaic Law and specifically to the moral code or Ten Commandments. The anarthrous construction of nomos is emphasizing a particular aspect of the Mosaic Law, namely, the moral code or Ten Commandments. This is indicated by the fact that the first three couplets are offenses against God that correspond to the first four of the Ten Commandments and the remaining vices, which are offenses against people, correspond to the next five commandments.

“The righteous” refers to the Christian and describes their state of possessing the “absolute” righteousness of God through imputation as a result of exercising faith alone in Christ alone. It describes those sinners who have been declared
justified as a result of receiving the imputation of righteousness as a gift the moment they exercised faith alone in Christ. It speaks of the positional stage of transforming the Christian into the image of Christ.

The adjective *dikaios* does not refer to the Christian living in the righteousness of God or in other words experiencing divine righteousness but rather it refers to the positional aspect of righteousness. In other words it refers to the state of the sinner who possesses divine righteousness as a result of being declared justified by God as a result of receiving the gift of righteousness through imputation the moment they exercised faith alone in Christ alone.

This is indicated not only by the meaning of the word, which we noted above in detail, which is emphasizing the state of possessing righteousness but also because Paul is contrasting this word with the unsaved. In the adversative clause, he presents a list of sins that are in violation of the Ten Commandments and characterize the unsaved.

The Law was designed to reveal God’s holy character, man’s sinful condition and lead the sinner to Christ. The Christian, i.e. the justified sinner is already convinced that they are a sinner and have come to Christ. Thus, they benefited from this purpose of the Law. The unsaved have not. Thus, when Paul presents the vice list in verses 9b-10, it is a list of sins that characterize those who have not yet responded to this three-fold purpose of the Law.

Paul is saying that those who have already been declared righteous have no need for this three-fold purpose of the Law. However, those who are characterized by the lists of sins in verses 9b-10 still have need of the Law since they have not yet come to Christ, which the Law was designed to lead them to. Therefore, the unidentified pastors in Ephesus who were attempting to be teachers of the Law and were teaching adherence to the Ten Commandments were misapplying the Law by emphasizing obedience to the Law as the basis for the Christian way of life.

1 Timothy 1:9b-10 is an adversative clause. It is contrasting those who are righteous, i.e. the Christian with those who are not. This contrast is also emphatic emphasizing that the Law is for the unsaved. It is expressing an emphatic contrast between the Christian’s relationship to the Law and the relationship that the unsaved have with respect to it.

In this adversative clause Paul employs a rhetorical device known as a vice list in order to make clear to the Ephesian church, which particular group of people that the Law benefits. This vice list does not emphasize sin but a certain group of people, namely the unsaved in contrast to the Christian who is righteous through faith in Christ. This list identifies the unsaved as benefiting from the three-fold purpose of the Law. This vice list corresponds to the Ten Commandments, i.e. the Decalogue. Specifically this corresponds to nine of the Ten Commandments.
The vice list that appears in 1 Timothy 1:9b-10 is given in four pairs, followed by a series of six individual terms and concluded with a general catch-all category. This list characterizes the unsaved since it stands in contrasts with dikaios, “for a righteous person” which speaks of the sinner who is declared righteous through faith in Christ, i.e. the Christian. Thus, for these unidentified pastors in Ephesus to attempt to apply this moral code to those already in the Christian community through faith in Christ was in error.

Titus 3:10

Titus 3:10 Reject a factious man after a first and second warning. (NASB95)

This verse is composed of the following: (1) accusative masculine singular form of the adjective hairesis (αἱρεσία), “factious” (2) genitive masculine plural form of the noun anthrōpos (ἄνθρωπος), “man” (3) preposition meta (μετά), “after” (4) accusative feminine singular form of the adjective heis (εἷς), “first” (5) conjunction kai (καί), “and” (6) accusative feminine singular form of the adjective deuteros (δεύτερος), “second” (7) accusative feminine singular form of the noun nouthesia (νουθεσία), “a warning” (8) second person singular present middle imperative form of the verb paraiteomai (παρατέομαι), “Reject.”

Asyndeton

In Titus 3:10, the apostle Paul is employing the figure of “asyndeton” in order to emphasize with the reader the solemn nature of the command to follow and the importance of this command since it pertains to church discipline and the testimony of the church before the world and its walk with God.

Paraiteomai

The verb paraiteomai appears often in classical Greek from the fifth century B.C. and has a variety of meanings. It can mean “to ask (as a favor)” something from a king, “appeal” or “entreat” a person for something desired, or in even stronger terms “beg” (Liddell-Scott, pages 1310-1311).

The word can mean “to refuse or decline by entreaty” or “intercede” when “begging” for exemption from punishment. It is most often with respect to a dialogue or conversation between two individuals.

The term is found 8 times in the Septuagint where it is used in a similar manner to that of classical Greek. It occurs 12 times in the New Testament where it means “request” (Mark 15:6), “to make excuses” (Luke 14:18-19), “to appeal” (Acts

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In Titus 3:10, the verb paraiteomai means “to reject” a divisive person in the church after a first and second warning. Therefore, Titus and the Cretan Christian community were to “reject” a divisive person in the church after a first and second warning. The verb denotes that Titus and the Cretan Christian church were to refuse to accept a divisive Christian into their fellowship after they have been given a first and second warning.

It does not mean “to avoid” or “have nothing to do with” but rather “to reject” since the former is more passive than Paul’s intention with this word in the sense that he wants Titus and the Cretan Christian community to be active in rejecting a divisive Christian after a first and second warning.

The present imperative form of the verb paraiteomai is a “customary present imperative” whose force is for Titus to simply continue rejecting a divisive Christian after they have received a first and second warning. It is a command for action to be continued, action that may or may not have already been going on. It is often a character building command to the effect of “make this your habit,” “train yourself in this, discipline yourself.” This is the use of the present imperative in general precepts.

Therefore, the present imperative of paraiteomai means, “to continue making it your habit of” rejecting a divisive Christian after a first and second warning. It implies that Titus was already performing this task when he received this letter from Paul.

The middle voice of the verb paraiteomai is an indirect middle which indicates the subject of the verb acts for himself or herself or in his or her own interest. Therefore, here it indicates that Titus was for his own benefit spiritually reject a divisive Christian after a first and second warning. It is for his own benefit since a divisive Christian will disrupt the unity of the church if unchecked.

Hairetikon anthrōpon

The noun anthrōpos means “person” since it is used in a generic sense for a member of the human race. Specifically, it speaks of a Christian, both male and female since Paul is writing in the context of church discipline. Paul would not issue this command to Titus if it was an unbeliever Titus was to reject after a first and second warning since the unbeliever would only need to be evangelized and hear the gospel of Jesus Christ to be saved. The reference to the first and second warning indicates that he is speaking in the context of church discipline.
The noun *anthrōpos* is functioning as an accusative direct object meaning it is receiving the action of the verb *paraiteomai* indicating that a divisive Christian is to receive the action of being rejected by the Cretan Christian community.

It is also modified by the adjective *hairetikos* in classical Greek denotes “one who chooses” or “one who chooses correctly.” In later usage it also denoted “one who chooses a particular group over other groups, one who identified with a group,” that is a “sect” or “party.” This word does not appear in the Septuagint.

The adjective *hairetikos* occurs only once in the Greek New Testament, here in Titus 3:10 where it pertains to causing divisions as a result of adhering to heretical teaching. Here it describes a Christian who is an adherent of heretical teaching and is thus opposed to the apostolic teaching. As a result of being an adherent to heretical teaching, these individuals cause divisions in the Christian community. Thus, *hairetikos* is used in complete to the way the word is used in classical Greek.

*Meta mian kai deuteran nouthesian*

The noun *nouthesia* means “warning” since it pertains to a Christian receiving instruction regarding proper Christian conduct which is in accordance with the apostolic teaching. The word speaks of the exercise of church discipline. Specifically it refers to the warning which a Christian receives after the first and second stages of church discipline. The first warning comes after the first stage and the second warning comes after the second stage. The Christian is forced to leave the fellowship of the church after refusing to repent after the third stage of discipline.

The noun *nouthesia* is modified by the adjectives *heis* which means “first” and *deuteros*, which means “second.” The adjectives are connected by the conjunction *kai*, which means “and.” The adjective *heis* speaks of the first warning after the first stage of church discipline and the adjective *deuteros* refers to the second warning after the second stage of church discipline.

The noun *nouthesia* is also the object of the preposition *meta* which means “after” since it functions as a marker of time and pertains to something is subsequent in time. Thus, this prepositional phrase indicates that Titus was to reject a divisive Christian “after” they have been warned twice by him and the Cretan Christian community.

*Translation of Titus 3:10*

*Titus 3:10 For your own benefit, continue making it your habit of rejecting a divisive person after a first and second warning.*
Exposition of Titus 3:10

The apostle Paul issues Titus a command to continue making it his habit of rejecting a divisive person after a first and second warning. The divisive person is a Christian who is rejecting the apostolic teaching because of adhering to heretical teaching. This is indicated by the fact that Paul is writing in the context of church discipline. He would not tell Titus to do this with regards to an unbeliever since an unbeliever does not cause divisions in the Christian church by opposing the apostolic teaching because they are not fellowshipping among Christians or worshipping the Lord together with other Christians as a corporate unit.

As we noted, “divisive” is the adjective *hairetikos* which describes a Christian who is an adherent of heretical teaching and is thus opposed to the apostolic teaching. As a result of being an adherent to heretical teaching, these individuals cause divisions in the Christian community.

These divisive Christians is a reference to the apostate pastor-teachers on the island of Crete and those who adhered to their false doctrine which they learned from adhering to the legalistic teaching of the Judaizers. This is indicated by the context and specifically Titus 3:9.

**Titus 3:9** However, for your own benefit continue to make it your habit of avoiding foolish pointless debates, genealogies, dissensions as well as quarrels about the Law because they are, as an eternal spiritual truth characterized as being unprofitable, yes, useless. (Author’s translation)

This prohibition in Titus 3:9 reveals the Jewish nature of the heresy on the island of Crete. The apostle’s statements in Titus 1:10 also indicate this as well. The apostate pastor-teachers on the island of Crete who adhered to the legalistic teaching of the Judaizers were guilty of becoming involved in foolish pointless arguments, genealogies, dissensions as well as quarrels regarding the Mosaic Law.

One of the characteristics of the apostate teachers and Judaizers was that they fought over Mosaic Law and specifically what commands and prohibitions should be obeyed by the Christian and which should not. Their contentious behavior is mentioned by Paul with Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:4-11 and with Titus in Titus 1:10-14.

So notice in Titus 3:10 Paul is very concerned about the Cretan Christian community rejecting those who adhered to false doctrine. The church must do the same today in the twenty-first century. Otherwise, it will consequently result in division and will hurt the spiritual growth of the individual Christian and the church as a corporate unit.

The Scriptures emphasize the importance of avoiding false doctrine.

**Matthew 16:12** Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (NASB95)
Romans 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. (NASB95)

1 Timothy 6:3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, 4 he is conceited {and} understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. (NASB95)

Hebrews 13:9 Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited. (NASB95)

2 John 9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting. (NASB95)

Obedience to Bible doctrine is absolutely essential in order to experience fellowship with God. It also serves as a protection for the soul against false doctrine that is propagated by the kingdom of darkness.

2 Corinthians 10:5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, 6 and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete. (NASB95)

Obedience to Bible doctrine purifies the soul.

1 Peter 1:22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. (NASB95)

Paul thanked God for the positive volition in Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. (NASB95)

Paul warned his students to hold fast to the doctrinal instruction that they had received from him.

2 Thessalonians 2:15 So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us. (NASB95)
2 Timothy 1:13 Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you. (NASB95)

This avoidance of false teachers was practiced by the Lord, His apostles and their disciples.

Mark 8:15 And Jesus ordered them, “Watch out! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod!” (NET Bible)

Luke 20:46 Beware of the experts in the law. They like walking around in long robes, and they love elaborate greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. (NET Bible)

Philippians 3:2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh! (NET Bible)

2 Peter 2:1 But false prophets arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. These false teachers will infiltrate your midst with destructive heresies, even to the point of denying the Master who bought them. As a result, they will bring swift destruction on themselves. 2 And many will follow their debauched lifestyles. Because of these false teachers, the way of truth will be slandered. 3 And in their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words. Their condemnation pronounced long ago is not sitting idly by; their destruction is not asleep. 4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but threw them into hell and locked them up in chains in utter darkness, to be kept until the judgment, 5 and if he did not spare the ancient world, but did protect Noah, a herald of righteousness, along with seven others, when God brought a flood on an ungodly world, 6 and if he turned to ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah when he condemned them to destruction, having appointed them to serve as an example to future generations of the ungodly, 7 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man in anguish over the debauched lifestyle of lawless men, 8 (for while he lived among them day after day, that righteous man was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard) 9 – if so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from their trials, and to reserve the unrighteous for punishment at the day of judgment, 10 especially those who indulge their fleshly desires and who despise authority. Brazen and insolent, they are not afraid to insult the glorious ones, 11 yet even angels, who are much more powerful, do not bring a slanderous judgment against them before the Lord. 12 But these men, like irrational animals – creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed – do not understand whom they are insulting, and consequently in their destruction they will be destroyed, 13 suffering harm as the wages for their harmful ways. By considering it a pleasure to carouse in
broad daylight, they are stains and blemishes, indulging in their deceitful pleasures when they feast together with you. 14 Their eyes, full of adultery, never stop sinning; they entice unstable people. They have trained their hearts for greed, these cursed children! 15 By forsaking the right path they have gone astray, because they followed the way of Balaam son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, 16 yet was rebuked for his own transgression (a dumb donkey, speaking with a human voice, restrained the prophet’s madness). 17 These men are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm, for whom the utter depths of darkness have been reserved. 18 For by speaking high-sounding but empty words they are able to entice, with fleshly desires and with debauchery, people who have just escaped from those who reside in error. 19 Although these false teachers promise such people freedom, they themselves are enslaved to immorality. For whatever a person succumbs to, to that he is enslaved. 20 For if after they have escaped the filthy things of the world through the rich knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they again get entangled in them and succumb to them, their last state has become worse for them than their first. 21 For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than, having known it, to turn back from the holy commandment that had been delivered to them. 22 They are illustrations of this true proverb: “A dog returns to its own vomit,” and “A sow, after washing herself, wallows in the mire.” (NET Bible)

The apostle John avoided false teachers, Eusebius writes, “The same Polycarp, coming to Rome under the episcopate of Anicetus, turned many from the aforesaid heretics to the church of God, proclaiming the one and only true faith, that he had received from the apostles, that, viz., which was delivered by the church. And there are those still living who heard him relate, that John the disciple of the Lord went into a bath at Ephesus, and seeing Cerinthus within, ran out without bathing, and exclaimed, “Let us flee lest the bath should fall in, as long as Cerinthus, that enemy of truth, is within.” And the same Polycarp, once coming and meeting Marcion, who said, “acknowledge us,” he replied, “I acknowledge the first born of Satan.” Such caution did the apostles and their disciples use, so as not even to have any communion, even in word with any of those that thus mutilated the truth, according to the declaration of Paul: “An heretical man after the first and second admonition avoid, knowing that such an one is perverse, and that he sins, bringing condemnation upon himself.” (Eusebius Pamphilus, Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History (reprint, Grand Rapids: Guardian, 1955) 141-42)

Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp practiced avoiding false teachers, Eusebius writes, “Inasmuch as certain men have set the truth aside, and bring in lying words and vain genealogies, which, as the apostle says, “minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith,” and by means of their craftily-constructed
plausibilities draw away the minds of the inexperienced and take them captive, [I have felt constrained, my dear friend, to compose the following treatise in order to expose and counteract their machinations.] These men falsify the oracles of God, and prove themselves evil interpreters of the good word of revelation. They also overthrow the faith of many, by drawing them away, under a pretense of [superior] knowledge, from Him who founded and adorned the universe; as if, forsooth, they had something more excellent and sublime to reveal, than that God who created the heaven and the earth, and all things that are therein. By means of specious and plausible words, they cunningly allure the simple-minded to inquire into their system; but they nevertheless clumsily destroy them, while they initiate them into their blasphemous and impious opinions respecting the Demiurge; and these simple ones are unable, even in such a matter, to distinguish falsehood from truth.” (Against Heresies, volume 2 of The Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956) 315.)

Satan promotes religion through his false prophets. The Lord warned His disciples of these false teachers (Matthew 7:15-29). Paul warned the pastors in Ephesus in his farewell address to beware of these false teachers that promote religion (Acts 20:28-30). He warned the Galatians of these false teachers that teach a counterfeit gospel (Galatians 1:8-9). Peter warned his readers of being deceived by false teachers (2 Peter 2:1-3).

The Holy Spirit working through the Word of God is the divine provision that God has given every believer without exception to protect them from the lies of false teachers who are energized and promoted by the kingdom of darkness. The sword that the Spirit employs in spiritual combat is the Word of God.

Ephesians 6:17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (NASB95)

The Holy Spirit is the resident teacher or mentor whom the Father has sent through the Son to indwell every New Testament believer as God’s special anointing to teach and make the truths of the Word understood and real to the heart or mind of believers (John. 14:16-20, 26; 15:26; 16:7-16; 1 Co. 2:10-16; 2 Co. 13:14; Ga. 5:5, 16-25; Eph. 3:16-19; 5:18; 1 Jo. 2:20-27). This anointing, which is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit as our true teacher and mentor, protects us from the lies of the cosmic system, which are promoted by Satan’s false teachers.

1 John 2:20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. (NASB95)

“Anointing,” in 1 John 2:20, is the noun *chrisma* and is a synonym for the indwelling of the Spirit, who provides the believer the spiritual capacity or power to understand and apply spiritual phenomena for producing, in the believer, Christ-like character.
In its broadest sense, *chrisma* refers to anything smeared onto something else, such as coatings of plaster applied to a wall. It is used in the anointing of pots, when a glaze is applied to pottery before it is fired to give it color and finish.

*Chrisma*, therefore, denotes a scented ointment, consisting of an oil and herb mixture, used to anoint persons or things. It is used as the “spiced oil of anointing” to consecrate, or set apart for service, the priests of Israel and the tabernacle and its fixtures (Ex 29:7; 30:25).

In the Old Testament, kings, priests, and prophets were anointed with oil, symbolizing their empowerment by the Holy Spirit and authority to accomplish the appointed tasks given to them by God.

The word *chrisma* is John’s terminology for what Paul called the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who serves as the believer’s true teacher and mentor.

The Holy Spirit’s purpose during the Church-Age, therefore, is to indwell every believer in order to provide a temple for the indwelling of the Shekinah Glory, the Lord Jesus Christ, which serves as the principle of victory over the indwelling old sin nature. He provides the believer the spiritual capacity to understand the Word of God, since the Spirit serves as the believer’s true teacher and mentor in place of the absent Christ.

1 John 2:20 All of you without exception possess permanently *spiritual power* (*chrisma*) from the Holy One (Lord Jesus Christ) so that all of you comprehend everything (pertaining to the doctrines of Christ). (Author’s translation)

The word *chrisma* is John’s terminology for what Paul calls the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit who serves as the believer’s true teacher and mentor. This anointing, which is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit as our true teacher and mentor, protects us from the lies of the cosmic system, which are promoted by Satan’s false teachers.

1 John 2:18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. (NASB95)

“The last hour” is a time of great crisis in the world, in which Satan and the fallen angels are waging war against the kingdom of God in order to prevent the millennial reign of Christ.

“The last hour” began with death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and also entails both the church age dispensation and the tribulation period and will terminate with the 2nd Advent of Christ.

The phrases ‘the last hour, the last days, last times” do not refer to a “duration” of time but a “kind” of time where false teachers will increase in number and influence to deceive the entire world and disrupt the church’s influence in the world.
The church is to wage war against the kingdom of darkness with the Word of truth and Satan’s wages war against the church with lies.

Ephesians 6:17 Also, I solemnly charge all of you to take hold of your helmet, which is your salvation as well as your sword that originates from the Spirit, which is, as an eternal spiritual truth, God’s Word. (Author’s translation)

1 John 2:18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. (NASB95)

“Antichrists” refers to the false teachers (the Gnostics) from Satan’s cosmic system that teach doctrines that contradict the apostle’s teaching concerning the Person of Christ.

Now, it is interesting that John was writing to believers in Ephesus in order to protect them from false teachers and the emergence of false teachers in Ephesus was in fulfillment of the prophesy made by the apostle Paul to the pastors in Ephesus some 25 years earlier.

Paul warned Timothy who was a pastor to guard the teaching that he received that was resident in his soul through indwelling mentorship of the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 1:14 Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you. (NASB95)

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. (NASB95)

The antichrists, the false teachers of whom John spoke came from the ranks of believers and in particular pastors. John used a play on words when he pointed out that they went out “from us” but were not really “of us.”

The first use refers to their physical location-they had been in the local churches but had left. The second use refers to the source from, which they came-their separation showed that they had never really shared in the same fellowship as the others. These believers that left the fellowship of the church had not lost their salvation but would forfeit their eternal inheritance and lose rewards and will be ashamed and embarrassed before Christ at the Bema Seat Evaluation of the church. The context clearly indicates this.

1 John 2:27-28 As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. (NASB95)
John is commanding his readers to remain in fellowship by obeying the apostolic teaching and not to desert it since those who do would be ashamed before Christ at the Bema Seat Evaluation of the church.

1 John 2:20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. (NASB95)

“Anointing” is the noun *chrisma* and is a synonym for the indwelling of the Spirit who provides the believer the spiritual capacity or power to understand the Word of God and apply it for the purpose of producing in the believer Christ-like character.

1 John 2:20 All of you without exception possess permanently spiritual power (*chrisma*) from the Holy One (Lord Jesus Christ) so that all of you comprehend everything (pertaining to the doctrines of Christ). (Author’s translation)

The word *chrisma* is John’s terminology for what Paul calls the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit who serves as the believer’s true teacher and mentor (1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22).

Now, in Titus 3:10, the first warning would take place after administering the first stage of church discipline and the second warning would take place after administering the second stage of church discipline. There would not be a third warning because if the Christian does not repent after the third stage of church discipline, they are removed from the fellowship of the church until they do repent.

Paul is following the guidelines for church discipline which were stipulated by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 18:15 “If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.” (NASB95)

The Lord teaches in this passage that church discipline begins with a private confrontation. The believer who is habitually sinning or possesses a sinful lifestyle must first be confronted privately as taught by the Lord in Matthew 18:15. The second stage would involve confronting the disobedient Christian with two or three witnesses which is taught by the Lord in Matthew 18:16. The third stage of church discipline as taught by the Lord in Matthew 18:17 would require that the entire church rebuke the Christian. If they failed to repent after the third stage, there was to be no further warnings. Instead they were to be removed from the fellowship of the church by the entire church until they repented. 2 Thessalonians 3:14 and 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 along with Matthew 18:17 indicate that the church is to exercise group disapproval by way of social ostracism (refusal to have intimate
fellowship). The church is to remove the offender from the church fellowship, which must be approved of and done by the entire congregation (2 Cor. 2:6). This is the fourth and final stage of church discipline. The fear of being publicly rebuked for a sinful lifestyle would deter the rest of the church from practicing a sinful lifestyle. It would teach the congregation the shamefulness and seriousness of sin and its consequences. The Lord is exercising this discipline through the church’s actions. This rejection of an unrepentant Christian after a second and third warning is for the benefit of the entire Christian community.

J. Hampton Keathley III has an excellent comment, he writes “‘Warnings’” is nouthesia, ‘admonition, warning, instruction.’ Something of the focus of this word may be found in Paul’s instruction to the Thessalonians. One of the shepherding and caring functions of the leaders mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 5:12 is that of admonishing the flock. ‘Admonish’ is noutheteo, the verb form of nouthesia. It means ‘to admonish, warn, instruct,’ but literally it means ‘to put into the mind.’ It might be used of general instruction, but it was often used where there were wrong tendencies that needed correcting as with these false teachers at Crete. It involves a moral appeal to the will, but an appeal aimed at bringing spiritual understanding through biblical instruction and the convicting power of the Spirit. There is a vital difference between biblical admonition from mere protest or reprimand and an admonition that is based on biblical instruction with the goal of correction through spiritual understanding and conviction. While the former is little more than verbal disapproval, the latter works toward reclamation and restoration. A classic illustration of this is Eli the priest. First Samuel 2:24 records Eli’s rebuke or verbal disapproval of the behavior of his degenerate sons, but in 3:13 God rebuked Eli because of his failure to admonish his sons. Interestingly, the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew text) uses the imperfect of noutheteo. The imperfect points to a habitual pattern of failure in Eli’s leadership of his sons. He protested and reprimanded, but failed to truly admonish them.”

Excursus: Church Discipline

One of the most controversial subjects in the Word of God is that of church discipline. Too often, it has not been practiced in many churches which has resulted in disastrous consequences in the sense that it has destroyed the testimony of these churches before the world.

Unfortunately, many churches describe their legalistic bullying of other Christians, who did not fit their non-Biblical requirements for a Christian, as church discipline. This too has produced disastrous consequences resulting in

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damaged souls who have been abused by these hypocritical, self-righteous people. Because of this abuse, many churches don’t even attempt to practice it.

However, the teaching of the Word of God says it must and should be administered by the church when appropriate circumstances call for it. The Bible teaches when and who we are to discipline. The Lord has ordered the church to administer discipline to those who are living ungodly lifestyles and who are habitually living in rejection of the Word of God. It is to be administered for the spiritual well-being of these individuals who are living in apostasy.

Church discipline is based upon God’s holiness and is patterned after God’s discipline of the church. Failure to administer church discipline when it is called for demonstrates a church’s lack of awareness or concern for God’s holiness. Church discipline is taught in Matthew 18:15-18, Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:6-11; Galatians 6:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-16; 2 Timothy 2:23-26; Titus 3:10; 2 John 9-11.

The purpose of church discipline is always restoration and not revenge. The purpose of this discipline is to deliver the offender from sinful patterns of behavior and not to drive him or her away from the fellowship of the church. The church’s attitude is to be one of love and gentleness (Galatians 6:1-3).

J. Hampton Keathley III commenting on church discipline writes, “(1) The discipline of the church is first patterned after the fact that the Lord Himself disciplines His children (Heb. 12:6) and, as a father delegates part of the discipline of the children to the mother, so the Lord has delegated the discipline of the church family to the church itself (1 Cor. 5:12-13; 2 Cor. 2:6). (2) Discipline is further based on the holy character of God (1 Pet. 1:16; Heb. 12:11). The pattern of God’s holiness—His desire for the church to be holy, set apart unto Him—is an important reason for the necessity of church discipline. The church is therefore to clean out the leaven of malice and wickedness from its ranks (1 Cor. 5:6-8). A failure to exercise discipline in the church evidences a lack of awareness of and concern for the holiness of God. (3) Church discipline is to be patterned after and based on the divine commands of Scripture (1 Cor. 4:6). We have numerous passages of Scripture which both command and give us God’s directives on the how, why, when, and where of church discipline. Again, a failure to exercise this responsibility demonstrates a lack of obedience and belief in the authority of the Bible (1 Cor. 5:1-13; Matt. 18:17-18; Titus 3:10; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 5:20; Gal. 6:1). (4) Another basis for the necessity of church discipline is the testimony of the church in the world (1 Pet. 4:13-19). The world observes the behavior and life of the church. When the church acts no differently than the world, it loses its credibility and authenticity (1 Pet. 2:11-18; 3:8-16; 4:1-4”). (Church Discipline, pages 1)
Keathley lists the purposes for administering church discipline “(1) To bring glory to God and enhance the testimony of the flock. (2) To restore, heal, and build up sinning believers (Matt. 18:15; 2 Thess. 3:14-15; Heb. 12:10-13; Gal. 6:1-2; Jam. 5:20). (3) To produce a healthy faith, one sound in doctrine (Tit. 1:13; 1 Tim. 1:19-20). (4) To win a soul to Christ, if the sinning person is only a professing Christian (2 Tim. 2:24-26). (5) To silence false teachers and their influence in the church (Tit. 1:10-11). (6) To set an example for the rest of the body and promote godly fear (1 Tim. 5:20). (7) To protect the church against the destructive consequences that occur when churches fail to carry out church discipline. A church that fails to exercise discipline experiences four losses: The Loss of Purity: Church discipline is vital to the purity of the local body and its protection from moral decay and impure doctrinal influences. Why? Because a little leaven leavens the entire lump (1 Cor. 5:6-7). This is the “rotten apple” problem or the “snowball” effect. An illustration of this is the Corinthian church which showed a lack of concern for purity. They neglected the responsibility to discipline and suffered as a result. Their insensitivity to one moral issue may have led to their compromise on other issues. Laney writes, ‘The Corinthians engaged in lawsuits, misused their liberty, profaned the Lord’s Supper, neglected the primacy of love, failed to regulate the use of their gifts, and questioned the resurrection.’ Failure in church discipline in Corinth could be compared to a snowball tumbling downhill. The Loss of Power: Sin in the life of the church grieves the person of the Holy Spirit and quenches His power. If sin remains unchecked by the loving application of church discipline in a body of believers, the Holy Spirit must abandon such a church to its own carnal resources. The unavoidable result will be the loss of the Lord’s blessing until the sin is dealt with. The defeat of Israel because of the sin of Achan in Joshua 7 illustrates the principle. This is just as true for the church today, especially when we know certain things exist but ignore them or simply look the other way because it is difficult to deal with or because it involves one of our friends and we do not want to risk causing problems in the relationship. The Loss of Progress: A church that refuses to practice church discipline will see its ministry decline. The church may want to grow and reach out and it may try all kinds of stop gap measures, promotional campaigns, and programs in an attempt to turn things around, but if there is sin in the camp, it will all be to no avail. See Revelation 2:5 and 3:16 for illustrations of this principle. The Loss of Purpose: As His ambassadors to a lost and dying world, God has called the church to be a holy people, a people who, standing out as distinct from the world, proclaim the excellencies of the works of God in Christ (1 Pet. 1:14-16; 2:9-15). If this is to occur, we must be different from the world and church discipline helps us to both remember and maintain that purpose. One of the recurring judgments against the church today as demonstrated in various polls taken across the country is the fact
there is little or no difference between the church and the secular world when it comes to attitudes, values, morals, and lifestyle. We have lost our sense of purpose.” (Church Discipline, pages 1-2)

How We Are To Discipline

Church discipline should be administered by those who are in fellowship with God and are knowledgeable of the Word of God and filled with the Spirit (Galatians 6:1). It must be done with an attitude of humility, gentleness and patience, always looking to ourselves that we too might not be tempted (Galatians 6:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:24-25). It must be done impartially (1 Timothy 5:21). Those who are disciplined are to be warned and must be appealed to in love (1 Thessalonians 5:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:1-2; Ephesians 4:15; 2 Timothy 4:2).

This discipline, is not restricted to church leaders, but may be done by any person in the body with another if that person is influenced by the Spirit and governed by Him (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

If the person who is confronted does not stop and obey the Word of God, then they are to be publicly rebuked. No one in the congregation is to fellowship with them. The purpose for withholding fellowship with the sinning Christian is to make clear to them that they have dishonored the Lord and have caused a terrible disturbance in the body. The goal of such discipline is always restoration and the person is still to be counted as a brother or sister in Christ (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15).

Also, this expulsion from the fellowship of the church is designed to create fear in the rest of the flock as a warning against sin (1 Timothy 5:20). Those who do not respond to the discipline are to be excommunicated (Matthew 18:17).

Several examples of church discipline are found in Scripture. The Corinthian church was to gather together for the purpose of taking action against the offending brother or sister (1 Cor. 5:4-5; 2 Thess. 3:6-15). This is defined by Paul as “punishment inflicted by the majority” (2 Corinthians 2:6). It must always be remembered that there must be a readiness to forgive (2 Corinthians 2:6-8).

Who We Are To Discipline

Now, we must be very careful that when administering church discipline that we are not censuring someone for our taboos or pet peeves. As Keathley states “Scripture, not our opinions or dislikes, must be the guide for what is sin.”

The church is to administer discipline for those whose conduct is disorderly and negatively impacts the testimony of the church before the world (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15). Discipline is to be used with divisive or factious people causing divisions
in the church (Romans 16:17-18; Titus 3:9-11). Those involved in immorality such as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5 are to be disciplined. Also, discipline must be administered to those who are habitually involved with covetousness, idolatry, abusive speech, drunkenness, swindling, or idle busybodies who refuse to work and run around spreading dissension (1 Corinthians 5:1, 11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-15). Those who teach false doctrine are to be disciplined as Paul did with Hymenaeus and Alexander.

Why We Discipline

It is extremely important that the church understands why discipline must be administered. First of all, God’s holy character requires it. Secondly, it is for the testimony of the church. It also affects the unity and purity of the church. Lastly, discipline is for spiritual edification and restoration of the individual.

Procedure To Follow In Administering Discipline

The scriptural procedure is clear and specific steps are prescribed. First if one sees the offense or has an accurate knowledge of the sin or sins, one must be sure it calls for discipline and is not merely something that is one of your taboos or pet peeves. The Word of God will guide us. Also, we all must know that we have all sinned and so we are to heed the warning in Galatians 6:1.

We also must go to the Father in prayer before we confront the wayward Christians (1 Sam. 8:6). We are not to procrastinate. Otherwise, the situation will only get worse. There is also to be no gossip about the person who is disciplined (cf. Proverbs 6:19; 10:19; 11:13; 18:8, 21; 20:19). We must first go to the offender in private and seeks to correct the situation privately (Matthew 18:15).

One must express genuine appreciation for the person who is the offender. He is to bring out in the conversation their good qualities. We must listen to the other person’s side of the story and seek the facts in the interest of truth and fairness. If the person fails to respond, warn them that, according to the instructions of Scripture (Matt. 18:16), you will have to get others as witnesses and return with them to deal with the problem.

If the first step fails, take witnesses to strengthen the effect of the discipline, preferably spiritual leaders, so that if it has to be brought before the whole church it can be firmly proven and established (Matt. 18:16-17; 1 Tim. 5:19). The aid of church leadership should be sought if the problem involves an offense that is against the whole body or if it is a threat to the unity of the body.

These initial contacts, private and with witnesses, provide opportunity for correction, and forgiveness in love. On the other hand, if these first steps do not
produce results, it constitutes a warning that further action will be taken and provides occasion for serious rebuke (2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Titus 2:15; 3:10).

If the second step fails, seek reconciliation and restoration through the whole body. If further action is necessary, it is to be taken before the whole church (2 Thess. 3:14-15; Matt. 18:17; 1 Tim. 5:20). 2 Thessalonians 3:14 and 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 along with Matthew 18:17 indicate that the church is to exercise group disapproval by way of social ostracism (refusal to have intimate fellowship). If this does not work, the church is to remove the offender from the church fellowship. This must be approved of and done by the entire congregation (2 Cor. 2:6). The Lord is exercising this discipline through the church’s actions.