

DIDASKALOS: THE TEACHER

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DIDASKALOS: THE TEACHER

James W. Garrett

From its very first occurrence in the Greek language, the term, *didaskalos* (**didaskalov**), tends toward being a technical term for "master of instruction."¹ The *didaskalos* is not just a teacher in general, but one who teaches definite skills like reading, fighting, or music, developing the aptitudes that already are present in the student...The decisive point is that systematic instruction is given.² Among the Jews, the term referred to the one who gave direction in the way of God, according to His Law.

PART ONE: JESUS AS TEACHER

The Greek term, *didaskalos*, occurs 58 times in the New Testament. 48 of these are in the Gospels and refer to Jesus, with the one exception of Luke 2:46 (the term is used to refer to the teachers in the Temple). Of the 47 times that this word is used to describe Jesus, the KJV renders the term, "Master," except in John 3:2 (since both the Hebrew, *Rabbi*, and the Greek, *didaskalos*, occur in this verse, the KJV translators chose to render *didaskalos* as "teacher" in this one verse only). In modern English versions, "Master," is replaced by the term, "Teacher." Even though "Teacher" does convey more accurately the meaning of the Greek term, the KJV "Master" does impart a sense that is important for our understanding. Jesus was viewed as a Rabbi. The Hebrew word for "teacher" is Rabbi. A Rabbi was a highly respected teacher of the Law. This is in line with the classical use of the Greek term, *didaskalos*, who, as noted above, was a teaching specialist. The Hebrew term, "Rabbi," is applied to Jesus 15 times in the Gospels and He never did reject the label.

The Jews set the Rabbi (teacher) above his own parents. When a teacher entered the room, even his own father stood up. There is an interesting account of Akiba's returning from school. The young man now was an established teacher. His father-in-law and his wife reverently kissed his feet. Another interesting account is that of a Rabbi named Ishmael. His mother sought permission to wash her son's feet when he returned from the assembly, then to drink the water that she had used.³

This reverence was accorded the teacher because he handled the Word of God. When Jesus came forth as an expositor of the Scriptures, and since his form of rhetoric was that of the Rabbis, He was treated as such. The KJV rendering of *didaskalos* as, "Master," is not just an archaic form. It is an effort to communicate the respect that Jesus' hearers, even His enemies, had for Him because He was a teacher.

The esteem accorded the Rabbis was seductive. Many, perhaps most, Rabbis came to revel in this esteem. They participated in outward display in order to enlarge their reputation. Jesus strongly condemned this behavior.

Matthew 23:5 "But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries, and lengthen the tassels of their garments. 6 "And they love the place of honor at

banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues, 7 and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called by men, Rabbi. (Note that Jesus did not condemn their teaching vv 1-3)

Concerning the Rabbis' love of titles, Jesus declared that no man should be elevated through titles that belong only to divinity.

Matthew 23:8 *But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers.*

Matthew 23:9 *And do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.*⁴

Matthew 23:10 *And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader⁵, that is, Christ.*

These words of Our Lord should forever prevent a teacher or a leader from seeking position or title in the Church, but, unfortunately, such is not the case. Titles, rather than job descriptions, have become the norm. Pastor, The Reverend, Bishop, Arch-bishop, The Right Reverend, Father, The Most Holy Reverend, etc., flood Christendom. Even "Brother" is used as a religious title by some.

Let it be noted that Scripture does speak of teachers (*didaskaoi* - *didaskal oi*) in the New Testament Church. However, the term is used to describe a function, rather than a title. The human inclination is for one to find his identity in what he does. Note that in our secular culture, one of the first things that we do when we meet someone for the first time is to ask, "What do you do?" In our society, one's job becomes his identity. Sadly, this is no less true in the Church. For example, if a man views himself as a prophet, that becomes his self-perception. He is troubled if others do not perceive him as such, because this is who he is. This is his self-identity. Jesus said to not do that. A believer's identity should be only that he is a servant, a disciple of Jesus Christ. This is how we are to view one another, "you are all brothers" (Matthew 23:8).

The Jewish Rabbi had been trained in a recognized Rabbinical school. He had credentials. He was versed in the *Torah* (the Law), in the *Targums* (a kind of paraphrased interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures), and in the Rabbinical traditions. His ministry usually was conducted in a synagogue.⁶

In His teaching ministry, Jesus combined the style of the Greek peripatetic philosopher/teacher with that of the Jewish Rabbi. Aristotle began the practice of walking about while lecturing and drawing lessons from what was observed as he and his disciples strolled about. From that time onward, the peripatetic style became a fixture among the Greek philosopher/teachers. Jesus used this style of teaching to great advantage. Many of His parables and analogies sprung from what he and his disciples saw as they walked about.

The Rabbi's focus was on the exposition of Scripture and the Rabbinical interpretation, especially as it related to conduct. For example, the Second Commandment states,

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your

son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11)

The question arose among the Rabbis, "What is work? Is walking work?" The Rabbis decided that walking one mile from one's home was "work." So they declared a Sabbath's Day's journey to be 7/8 of a mile.⁷ Then the question arose, "What is one's home? What if one were visiting friends or were on business in a city other than the one where he dwelt, and thus was not at his true dwelling place on the Sabbath? Where is home, for one in such circumstances?" The Rabbis decided that home is where one eats. From this decision came another legalistic expression of Sabbath keeping. A man who wanted to travel more than 7/8 of a mile on the Sabbath, would put some food in a pouch. He would walk 7/8 of a mile, sit down and have a snack, walk another 7/8 of a mile, have another snack, and so on until he reached his destination. Each time he had a snack, he was "home."

Jesus taught with an authority that was missing in the Rabbis' teaching. The Rabbis taught what Moses said and then brought forth what various Rabbis had said on the topic. They spoke of tradition. They were much like the courts today in which "precedent" often determines legal interpretation. Jesus spoke differently. He said, "It has been said, but I say..." At the conclusion of his record of the sermon on the mount, Matthew comments,

Matthew 7:28-29 The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Jesus said that the source and authority of His teaching was the Father in heaven, not the commentary and pronouncements of esteemed Rabbis.

John 3:11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen;

John 7:16 Jesus therefore answered them, and said, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.

John 8:26 I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world."

John 8:28 Jesus therefore said, "...then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.

John 8:38 I speak the things which I have seen with My Father;

John 8:40 But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God;

John 12:49 *For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak.*

John 14:10 *Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.*

John 14:24 ... and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

These statements of Jesus throw us into the area of the relationship between the Father and the Son, the Divinity and the humanity of Jesus. This is a realm that no man understands in spite of our having 2000 years of trying to understand it and explain it to ourselves. Suffice it to say, the Son was in submission to the Father and delivered the Father's message, which the Son accurately heard.

Jesus did not deliver the Father's entire message, because His disciples could not understand it. The Holy Spirit, to be given after Jesus was glorified,⁸ would cause the Apostles to remember all that Jesus said and would make clear the things which they had not been able to grasp, while in the physical presence of Jesus.

John 14:26 *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*

John 16:12-15 *I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. "He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you. "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you.*

Thus Jesus modeled for all future teachers in the Kingdom the need to avoid their own ideas, interpretations, and agendas. As Jesus spoke only that which He received from the Father, so the Holy Spirit would speak only that which He heard from God the Father and God the Son. The apostles would speak only that which was spoken to them by Christ and made clear to them by the Holy Spirit. Any godly teacher in the Kingdom will speak only that which the Holy Spirit has given through the apostles. For it was to the apostles that Jesus gave the promises recorded in John 14:26 and John 16:12-15 (the context makes this clear). These apostles rightly are called, "revelatory apostles."⁹

PART TWO: THE TEACHER IN THE FIRST CENTURY CHURCH

SECTION I: GENERAL COMMENTS

It is interesting to note that in the light of the many occurrences of the term, "teacher," in the Gospels (48 times), the term occurs only ten times in the rest of the New Testament. Only eight of these refer to a recognized ministry in the Church (including those verses that apply to Paul's own special ministry). The other two passages are (a) Romans 2:20 in which Paul comments on

the Jew's belief that they were moral teachers to the rest of the world, and (2) Hebrews 5:12, which addresses the assumption that every Christian should be able to communicate Gospel truth.

The first use of the term to describe a ministry in the Church is in Acts 13:1, in which teachers are listed, along with prophets, as comprising the primitive eldership at Antioch.

Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

The next three uses of the term describe ministers that God has given to the Church. Two of these are in the same passage, I Corinthians 12:28-29, so they really count as only one.

And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they?

The other passage relating to ministers given to the Church, Ephesians 4:11, clearly refers to elders.

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers

Twice the term is encountered in Paul's letters to Timothy, whereby he describes his own ministry.

And for this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. (I Timothy 2:7)

...for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. (II Timothy 1:11)

Once, in II Timothy 4:3, the term is used to describe apostate teachers.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires;

The final occurrence, James 3:1, is a warning to teachers.

Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.

In the New Testament, the ability to be a *didaskalos* in the church is viewed as a supernaturally imparted gift.

And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching... (Romans 12:6-7)

Translators have added some words to this passage in an effort to make it more intelligible. Let's remove these additions and note how the verse reads in the Greek.

Having gifts according to the grace given to us, differing, whether prophecy according to the proportion of faith; or serving in the serving; or the one teaching in the teaching...

When we remove the words that the translators have added, the emphasis is upon the source of the ability to perform the task, i.e., the "grace given to us."

The New Testament teacher is one who has been given the grace gift of "teaching." Training and development in the use of the gift may make the teacher more effective, but if the grace gift has not been given, no amount of training or education will make one an adequate teacher in the local church.

SECTION II: THE SACRED TASK OF TEACHING

James warns of the special risk faced by teachers.

Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well (James 3:1-2)

This paragraph (James 1:1-12) often is quoted with reference to the tongue. It is important to note that its nexus is James' comments on teachers. Teachers face a serious risk, because they talk. Exercising care in speech is something rare in most people. Unfortunately, many teachers do not exercise the care that they should. Teachers constantly should remember the words of Our Lord,

And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned."
(Matthew 12:36-37).

Careless, idle, useless words reveal an irreverent heart, something that a teacher cannot risk, because he is speaking as God's representative. To that end, Peter warns, *Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.* (I Peter 4:11)

Romans 3:2, describes the Old Testament Scriptures as *the Oracles of God*. In Acts 7:38 Stephen calls the Old Testament Scriptures, *the Living Oracles*. Hebrews 5:12 calls the basic elements of the faith, *the oracles of God*. In all of these passages, as well as in the Septuagint,

the Greek term translated, *oracle*, is the word, *logion* (λογιον), meaning simply, a Divine utterance, a communication from God. This also is the word in I Peter 4:11, quoted above (the KJV does translate the word, "oracles," in I Peter 4:11).

The teacher is to consider himself as a conduit for God's words. He is an "oracle" who is charged with delivering the "oracles of God." Thus, he must approach his work reverently and cautiously. He must be careful to speak only God's word. His role does not include speaking his own words, which might reflect some personal agenda. As noted above, Jesus spoke only what He heard from the Father. In like manner, the Apostles were to speak only what Jesus had said to them, as clarified by the Holy Spirit. Teachers should speak only what the Apostles deposited for us in Holy Scripture.

Romans 1:21 describes a condition that is the underlying problem in the world and in much of the Church.

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

The absence of holy awe results in a man-centered world-view that manifests itself in what Paul calls, "futility of the mind" (Ephesians 4:17). A futile mind easily drifts into futile speculations. One thing that has plagued the Church from its earliest days has been the tendency to sophistry and speculation. The human mind tends to make things complicated. Thus Paul cautioned both Timothy and Titus

I Timothy 6:4 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,

II Timothy 2:23 But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.

II Timothy 2:14 Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers.

Titus 3:9 But shun foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law; for they are unprofitable and worthless.

Not honoring *Him as God*, results in reinterpreting God to make Him acceptable to man (the very thing of which those indicted in Romans 1:21ff were guilty). The very influential Alexandrian school of Christianity is a prime example of this error. Here is how it happened. Philo, the respected Jewish philosopher of Alexandria, adopted from the Greek stoics the practice of allegory. Philo taught that any passage of Scripture that contains anything unworthy of God must be interpreted allegorically. The same was true of any passages that are hard to understand. Alexandrian Christianity was led by men who were eager to make Christianity acceptable to the Alexandrian community of philosophers. They adopted the allegorical hermeneutic of Philo. Origen (185 - 254 AD) became the dominant leader of the Alexandrian

Church in the Third Century. He probably was the most talented and creative teacher of the early Church and was the most effective promoter of the allegorical hermeneutic. For example, Origen could not accept the literal account of God's instruction to Joshua to slaughter an entire population of a city, men, women, and children, such as at Jericho and Ai. This seemed so unworthy of a loving God. So Origen, applying his allegorical interpretation, denied that these accounts represented any real historical event. He said that the people of Jericho represent our sins and that God wants to eliminate them, right down to the tiniest one. This preserved Origen's beneficent view of God.

Origen's sympathetic understanding of God would not allow him to believe that God would condemn anyone to eternal damnation. Therefore, he developed the doctrine of *apokatastasis* (*apokatastasis*), the teaching that God ultimately will reconcile all creation and created beings unto himself, including Satan. Although a very influential teacher in the Third Century, Origen is not considered to be a "Father in the Church" because of his insistence on *apokatastasis*. The flaw in Origen was his flawed view of God and his efforts to conform God to that view. Origen could not let God be God, as He literally revealed Himself in Scripture.

Because he speaks as an oracle of God, the teacher must be careful to recognize his own tendencies to interpret the Word through his own paradigm. Objectivity, honesty, diligent research, and a deep relationship with God, maintained through constant prayer, are prerequisites for a teacher. Rather than trying to have an answer for every question, a teacher with integrity often must say, "We don't know; the Word of God is not clear." The teacher must be careful to not make statements unless he responsibly has researched Scripture and knows whereof he speaks.

Not honoring *Him as God* results in teachers becoming "ear-ticklers."

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; (II Timothy 4:3)

In Romans 3:10-18, Paul describes the universal sinfulness of humanity by linking together a number of Old Testament passages. Verses 10 - 17 describe the symptoms. Verse 18, quoting Psalm 36:1, gives the diagnoses of the problem, *there is no fear of god before their eyes*.

We are in a day in which God is being reinterpreted along the sympathetic humanistic lines of the age. One of the most frequently heard refrains is, "God is love," and "a loving God wouldn't do [or require] that." Men such as Robert Schuller teach that lack of self-esteem is the underlying sin. A horde of teachers proclaims that "God wants you rich." As Judge Bork has pointed out in his landmark book, *Slouching Toward Gomorrah*,¹⁰ egalitarianism is replacing authority, even in the Church. In the midst of this milieu is a coterie of ear-tickling Bible teachers, who evidently, have *no fear of God before their eyes*.

Even those who are not "ear-ticklers," sometimes lose their sense of awe and reverence for the *Oracles of God*. Let those who are teachers remind themselves of the gravity of their role, every time they exposit the Word.

SECTION III: TEACHING ELDERS

Every elder must be a teacher. The requirement is clear.

I Timothy 3:2 *An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,*

Titus 1:9 [The elder/overseer, {vv 5,7} must...] *holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.*

I Timothy 5:17 *Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.*

Whatever else these passages mean, it is clear that one of the primary roles of elders is the exposition of Scripture and for some, it is the primary role. Ephesians 4:11 describes elders as pastor/teachers.

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers...

Although it has been popular to teach on The "Five-Fold Ministries of Ephesians 4:11," such teaching is in error. There are only four: apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor/teachers. That pastor/teachers are one group is clear from the Greek syntax. In the Greek language, there is a device for listing the parts of something. This is the *men...de* device. The "something" in the Ephesians 4 passage is the gifts that the ascended Christ gave:

Ephesians 4:8 *when he ascended on high, he led captive a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.*

Verse 11 then lists those gifts. The manner in which the separate parts are distinguished from one another is by the use of the adversative particle *men...de* pattern. The list begins with *men*, then each separate part is partitioned off by the use of *de*. Here is how this works in Ephesians 4:11 (the *tous* is translated, "some.")

Tous men apostolos (apostles)

Tous de prophetas (prophets)

Tous de euangelistas (evangelists)

Tous de poimenas kai didaskalous (shepherds and teachers)

A common way of rendering the *men...de* device is "on the one hand... on the other hand." If that were the manner in which we chose to render Ephesians 4:11, we would render it, "On the one hand, He gave some as apostles, on the other hand He gave some as prophets, on the other hand He gave some as evangelists, on the other hand, He gave some as shepherds and teachers." The final *some* is one group that has as its designation, pastor/teachers.

Verse 12 of this passage says that the pastor/teachers have the responsibility to *katartidzo* (*katartizw*) the saints. The term, *katartidzo*, translated "equipping" (NAS), "perfecting" (KJV), "to prepare" (NAS), is the work of the pastor/teacher.¹¹ The goal of that work is corporate, *the building up of the Body of Christ*. The term, *katartidzo* is quite appropriate in this passage. In classical Greek the term referred to putting something in order, or repairing something in a manner that required putting it back into order. Notice how this concept comes into play in this passage.¹²

- *...walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, (v1)*
- *There is one Body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; (v4)*
- *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. (v7)*
- *...and He gave some ...for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; (vs 11-12)*

To summarize, every believer is to live in a manner that is appropriate to his calling as a disciple of Jesus Christ. There is one Body and one Spirit, but within that Body each member is given a grace-gift from Christ. The pastor/teachers are to *katartidzo* the believers, helping each one grow in his grace-gift and to oversee the orderly function of those gifts within the body. Notice how this fits the classical definition of the *didaskalos* at the beginning of this paper, i.e., "developing the aptitudes that already are present in the student." This type of teaching/training deals with the honing of those skills that have been divinely imparted to each believer, then helping that believer to find his proper place for the exercising of those skills in the Body. This is the thrust of the first half of the Fourth Chapter of Ephesians.

SECTION IV: THE QUESTION OF NON-PASTORAL TEACHERS

The question has to be asked, "Are there teachers in the Church who are not pastor/teachers, whose work is not necessarily *katartidzo*?"

Saul of Tarsus was brought to Antioch by Barnabas, to help him teach the members of this new Gentile church. For a full year, Barnabas and Saul met with the Antioch church and taught many people (Acts 11:25-26). There is no evidence that either Barnabas or Saul ever were ordained as an elders. At this point, they were mature teachers helping the young church to mature. In Acts 13:1, they are listed as two of the five prophets and teachers in Antioch. This group seems to have been the overseeing group at Antioch, although none of them were called elders. This probably was a primitive elder council. It is interesting to note that Paul never applied the term, "elder," to himself and there is no indication, other than this early comment in Acts 13:1, that he ever was a part of an elder council. After the Holy Spirit commissioned him to trans-local ministry, Paul always was apart from, and somewhat over, local elder councils. Yet, he always was a teacher. When he and Barnabas returned from their first missionary trip, they spent eighteen months back in Antioch, teaching (Acts 15:35).

I Timothy 2:7 *And for this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.*

II Timothy 1:11 *for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.*

So, here is one example of someone other than a pastor/elder's being appointed by God to the role of teacher. Both Barnabas and Saul (who became Paul) were apostolic teachers.

Another example is Apollos.

Acts 18:24-26 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

Even though Apollos was deficient in his knowledge of Christian baptism (a default that was corrected by Aquila and Priscilla),¹³ he taught accurately the things concerning Jesus. After he left Ephesus, he went on to teach at Achaia. So, here is an itinerant teacher who was not a pastor/teacher. Paul seems to apply the label, "apostle," to Apollos in I Corinthians 4:6-9. Unlike Paul, Apollos never planted a church. However, as a teacher, he "watered" the seed that Paul the planter had sown.¹⁴

Timothy, Paul's apostolic delegate, was given the work of teaching in the churches. Although some Bible studies have called Timothy a "pastor," there is no biblical warrant for giving him such a label. He always is presented as Paul's helper, a delegate left behind in certain churches to finish the work that Paul left undone, especially the appointment of elders. Note the following exhortations to Timothy:

I Timothy 4:11 *Prescribe and teach these things.*

I Timothy 4:13 *Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.*

I Timothy 4:16 *Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.*

I Timothy 6:2... *Teach and preach these principles.*

Thus Timothy, not a pastor/elder but an apostolic delegate, was a teacher. Furthermore, Paul urged Timothy to teach what Paul had taught, with a view to seeing other men teach the same truths.

II Timothy 2:2 *And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.*

The term, "faithful men," is so general that it would be irresponsible exegesis to insist that they were all pastor/teachers or apostles.

From these and other passages, we conclude that in the New Testament Church there are apostolic teachers (who have some degree of itinerant ministry), pastor/teachers who are elders in the local church, and a less specific group of teachers.

SECTION V: THE CONTENT OF TEACHING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Three terms are used in the New Testament to describe the content of the teaching that was acceptable and required in the New Testament Church. These terms are

paradosis (**paradosiv**)
didaskalia (**didaskalia**)
didache (**didachē**)

Paradosis

Paradosis (**paradosiv**), usually is translated, *tradition*. The term itself means, "a giving over," referring to something given by word of mouth or in writing. Jesus often spoke of the manner in which the Pharisees allowed their traditions to overrule the intent of Scripture.¹⁵ Both Paul and Peter both continued Jesus' warning.

Colossians 2:8 *See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.*

I Peter 1:18 (KJV) *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;*¹⁶

Paul noted that before his conversion, *and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.*¹⁷

Yet, even though the ancestral traditions were to be avoided, even rejected, Paul said that there are traditions that the Church must honor.

I Corinthians 11:2 *Now I praise you because you remember me in everything, and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.*

II 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.*

II Thessalonians 3:6 *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.*

In these passages, the term refers to the body of teaching that Paul delivered to the churches. Being tradition, it was something that he had received.

I Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

Paul clearly identified the origin of the tradition, which he had received and passed on.

I Corinthians 11:23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread;

Galatians 1:11-12 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Each of the other apostles could have made the same statement. The origin of the teaching of the Twelve and Paul, were the statements made to them by Jesus. Paul and the Twelve passed these teachings on to others. Those to whom they passed on the traditions were to pass them on, unchanged, to others.

II Timothy 2:2 And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

Thus, the apostolic teaching became the "Tradition" of the Church. Teachers in the Church are to propagate these Traditions through every generation.

Some of the traditions deal with facts about the Christ.¹⁸

Some of the traditions deal with an understanding of the Godhead¹⁹

Some of the traditions deal with our part in our salvation²⁰

Some of the traditions deal with an understanding of the implications of salvation²¹

Some of the traditions deal with the results of salvation²²

Some of the traditions deal with Church order and corporate life.²³

Some of the traditions deal with personal conduct and relationships.²⁴

Some of the traditions deal with the believer's future²⁵

Some of the traditions deal with the lost²⁶

Some of the traditions deal with correcting false or inadequate doctrine²⁷

Some of the traditions deal with the commands of Christ²⁸

Some of the traditions deal with the Kingdom of God²⁹

In discussing the questions that the Corinthians posed to him concerning marriage, Paul was careful to distinguish between the statements of Christ and those which were his own Holy Spirit inspired pronouncements. Notice how carefully he does this in I Corinthians Chapter 7.

I Corinthians 7:6 But this I say by way of concession, not of command.

I Corinthians 7:10 *But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband*

I Corinthians 7:12 *But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, let him not send her away.*

I Corinthians 7:17 *Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And thus I direct in all the churches.*

I Corinthians 7:25 *Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy.*

I Corinthians 7:40 *But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.*

Note that Paul clearly states which of the above pronouncements could be found in the Gospels (the words of Christ), and which are his pronouncements. He concludes by declaring that he is confident that his pronouncements are from the Holy Spirit (verse 40).

The statements which Paul received from Christ, he received and passed on as tradition. Those which were not the words of Christ, were from the Holy Spirit, which Paul spoke and they thus became tradition. Again, we must acknowledge the importance of the Revelatory Apostles, the Twelve and Paul. From them came the tradition that forever is the teaching that is to be proclaimed in and by the Church.

Didaskalia

Didaskalia displays the same sense as, "tradition," but usually is translated, "teaching," or, "doctrine." Interestingly, when this term is used in the plural in the New Testament, it always refers to false teachings. It is so used four times.

Matthew 15:9 and Mark 7:7 (quoting Isaiah 29:13) *but in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.*

Colossians 2:22 (*which all refer to things destined to perish with the using*)-- *in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men*

I Timothy 4:1 *But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons*

All four of the above uses of the plural (three of which are based on Isaiah 29:13) refer to teachings other than those given by God. On the other hand, the singular is always used when the will of God is understood as being behind the *didaskalia*. It is so used 17 times (14 of these are in the Pastoral Epistles)³⁰. As the writing of the New Testament progressed the term came to refer to the "sum of teaching",³¹ the body of teaching that came from the lips of the apostles. It became the term that referred to the entire doctrinal corpus that the apostles passed on to the

Church. One author, discussing the term in a derogatory sense, calls it the "ossification" of the apostolic teaching.³²

The only time when the term in the singular is used to refer to teaching not truly from God is Ephesians 4:14.

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

Since the term in the singular refers to teaching that is purported to be from God, we see the reason for Paul's using the term here. The Ephesian Christian community possessed the historically guaranteed witness concerning Jesus (4:1-11). Paul is warning them against being swayed by each variable wind which comes with the claim of being doctrine and the claim of bringing the will of God. Since these various winds of doctrine claim to come from God, they claim to be *didaskalia*. Hence, the use of the term is appropriate here. This warning is appropriate for the Church in every generation. The true *didaskalia* consists of historical and factually grounded truth. Where it is revelatory truth, it is confined to the words of the Apostles which for all future generations has been codified in Scripture. Those in any subsequent generations who come with a spiritual revelation apart from Scripture, claiming that it is from God, should be considered suspect. The thrust of Ephesians 4:11-16 is that when the local church leaders have done a good job of grounding and edifying the local church, sound doctrine will be upon the lips of the Christians (v15). False doctrine will have less chance of appealing to those who are grounded in the truth.

Didache

Didache, even more than *didaskalia*, conveys the idea of a corpus of teaching, both in form and content. *Didache* is used 12 times for the teaching, or doctrine, of Jesus. It is used in the Revelation for the *doctrine of Ballam* (2:14), the *doctrine of the Nicolaitanes* (2:15), and of *this doctrine..the deep things of Satan* (2:24). In Hebrews 13:9, it refers to *varied and strange teachings*. Thus, it carries the idea of the entire corpus of a doctrine, whether of God or from some other source. Thirteen times in the New Testament, it refers to the corpus of teaching that is to be presented in the Church.³³

It is apparent that the three terms, *paradosis*, *didaskalia*, and *didache*, describe a body of truth that is the required material for teaching in all generations of the Church. Nothing beyond this is to be taught. II John 9-11 declares, *Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching [didache] of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching [didache], he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching [didache], do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.*

Even though these verses in II John were written in response to a particular "wind of doctrine" (gnosticism), a timeless principle is laid down. We must be careful to not "go too far" and get beyond the *didache*. We must not welcome those who bring teachings outside of the *didache*. There is special significance to the fact that this warning was given in response to gnosticism. This wind of doctrine claimed to have "deeper truths." In every generation there are those in the

Church who are not satisfied with the *didache*. They always are searching for something "new" or some "deeper revelation" or some esoteric experience. The *didache* seems to be "milk" to them, whereas the "deeper spiritual truths" entice them onward into a constantly changing spiritual landscape. They tread on dangerous ground.

Paul's First Epistle to Timothy has a lot to say about inappropriate teaching. This epistle was written sometime after Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment (after the two years described in Acts 28:30-31). Paul and Timothy paid a visit to the church at Ephesus. Even though the Ephesian Church had been in existence for a number of years, and was the church where Paul had given the greatest investment of time to its establishment (almost three years: Acts 18:18-21; 19:1, 8, 10, 21-22; 20:1), he found the church still needed help. For some reason, Paul had to hurry on to Macedonia. So, he left Timothy in Ephesus to take care of the situation. From the content of the epistle, it is apparent that Timothy's major tasks were two: (a) to establish proper church order, including the identification and installation of leaders in the local church; (b) to put down false teaching and to establish correct doctrine. Aside from some personal comments to Timothy, the epistle is fully occupied with these two topics. The exhortations concerning correct doctrine are the concern of our study.

Immediately after the salutation, Paul instructed Timothy,

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

The word translated, "strange doctrines," is *eterodidaskaleo* (**e**terodidaskal**ew**). For smoothness in translation, the NAS renders this as "not to teach strange doctrines," the KJV renders it as, "teach no other doctrine," and the NIV renders the expression as, "not to teach false doctrines any longer." The term is a verb, which literally means, "to teach differently." Paul is exhorting Timothy to put a stop to any teaching that is different from the "sound doctrine" (1:10-11; 4:6; 6:3) that he, Paul, had delivered to the Ephesians.

Later in the epistle, Paul uses the same term, *eterodidaskaleo*, "to teach differently."

I 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,*

Even though not the exact term, Paul addressed the same problem in Chapter Four.

I Timothy 4:1 *But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons...*

From the words that Paul wrote concerning these doctrines, it is clear that they touched both the area of theology and morals (1:3-11; 4:2-7; 6:1-5). Let it be noted that both are important. The present age is one in which theology is de-emphasized in much of the Church. Morals are de-emphasized in other portions of the Church. In some parts of the Church, both theology and morals take a back seat to experience. It is important that theology be taught, for such is the basis of our salvation. It is important that God's moral standards be taught and enforced in the

Church, for such is the expression of personal salvation and the character of the redeemed community.

Another characteristic of this different teaching was that some of it dealt with strange peripheral matters (1:4). Those who were teaching these things didn't even understand the subject that they supposedly represented (1:7). Some years ago, a leader at TCF frequently taught from the Old Testament prophets and from Revelation. He was an exciting teacher. However, he always had some esoteric prophetic, often allegorical, explanation of Scripture. Upon leaving one of his meetings, a brother said to me, "Boy, wasn't that something! It's amazing to see what X sees in Scripture. I never see these things when I read the Bible." I replied, "That's because they aren't there." The man, in an entertaining and inspiring manner, captured people's minds with the product of his own creative mind. He had no understanding of the historical setting of the passages that he presented, and as a result misinterpreted and misused Scripture. There was no measure of truth other than what he "saw" in Scripture. He developed a loyal following and in time caused much trauma in the church and in some people's personal lives. He was not a bad man, just unstable.

Paul's exhortation is to stay with the solid truth; avoid speculative and unprofitable areas that often are presented under the guise of "deeper spiritual truths." So many things are seen, as Paul said, *through a glass darkly* (I Corinthians 13:12). The obsession with trying to make such things clear is more of an expression of fleshly curiosity than spiritual depth. As Paul said, such things lead to fruitless debate (1:4). Paul's words to Timothy echo what a much younger Paul had written years earlier, during his first imprisonment.

Colossians 2:18 *Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind...*

SECTION VI: HERESY AND FALSE TEACHERS

Another term that must be investigated in our study is the term, "heresy." This is the Anglicization of the Greek term, *hairesis* (ai[fe]siv). *Webster's New Practical Dictionary*³⁴ defines heresy, "Religious opinion contrary to the dogmas of a church and tending to division." This is the understanding that most people have concerning the meaning of the term. This, however, is not an accurate understanding, in that the definition focuses on "religious opinion," whereas, the focus in the New Testament is on the "tending to division."

The term in its verb form (*haireomai*[ai[fe]omai]) and *heiretidzo* [ai[fe]tizw]) communicates the idea of making a choice. The verb form occurs used four times in the New Testament:

Matthew 12:18 *behold, my servant whom I have chosen; my beloved in whom my soul is well-pleased; I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall proclaim justice to the gentiles.*

Philippians 1:22 *But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose.*

II Thessalonians 2:13 *But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.*

Hebrews 11:25 *choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin;*

In Acts the term, *hairesis*, refers to a sect within Judaism.

Acts 5:17 *But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy;*

Acts 15:5 *But certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed, stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."*

Acts 24:5 *For we have found this man a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.*

Acts 24:14 *But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law, and that is written in the Prophets;*

Acts 26:5 *since they have known about me for a long time previously, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.*

Acts 28:22 *"But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere."*

The various groups within Judaism were called, "sects." However, the various sects did not separate from Judaism as a whole. They all continued to worship at the same temple, to participate in the same sacrifices, to propagate the same Law, and to use the same priests. So, the term did not have a negative connotation. It merely designated separate parties, even as "Republican," and, "Democrat," designate separate parties in America. If the Greek language were being used, we would call these the Republican *heresis* and the Democrat *heresis*.

The last four passages cited in Acts demonstrate that the Gentile population understood Christianity to be another Jewish *heresis*, like the Sadducees and Pharisees (note that the Jews hired a Roman lawyer, [his name so identifies him] Tertullus, as their spokesman in Roman court Acts 24:1ff).

In the epistles, describing *heresis* in the Church, the term has a definite negative connotation. It occurs three times.

I Corinthians 11:19 *For there must also be factions among you, in order that those who are approved may have become evident among you.*

Galatians 5:20 *idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,*

II Peter 2:1 *But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.*

The NAS correctly translates the term, "factions," in I Corinthians 11:19 and Galatians 5:20. One wonders why it is not so translated in 2 Peter 2:1.

The noun, *hairetikos* (~~ai~~**retikow**), anglicized as "heretic," means one who produces a sect or a faction. The term occurs only once in the New Testament.

Titus 3:10 *Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,*

As seen from this study, the New Testament uses the terms, *hairesis* and *hairetikos* ("heresy" and "heretic") to refer to factions and those who cause them. Paul, in I Corinthians 11:19, states that factions were necessary in the church at Corinth. This is a startling statement. However, the explanation is in the context of the letter. The Corinthian Church had all sorts of problems. Many, in the church obviously were ruled by their flesh, rather than the Holy Spirit and the authority of Christ. The statement concerning the necessity of factions is a part of Paul's discussion concerning the Lord's Table. Some were behaving in a fleshly and worldly manner at the table. Some of the wealthy chose to get together among themselves, shunning the others. Thus, they were *despising the church of God and humiliating those who have nothing*.³⁵ The Corinthian Church was a mixed multitude. In it were true servants of Christ and in it were servants of the flesh. The resulting divisions in the church would delineate the true from the false. We are reminded of the words of Jesus concerning the broad and the narrow way (Matthew 7:13) and those who proclaim that they have served Him, but to Him they were unknown (Matthew 7:21-29).

II Peter 2:1 declares that one of the sources of factions will be the teaching of *pseudodidaskaloi* (*pseudodidaskaloi*), "false teachers." There is a difference between a "false teacher" and one who might commit some error in exegesis. A false teacher either is one who is propagating falsehood or one who is teaching, but has not been called of God to do so. In either case, he becomes a *heretikos* if his false teaching results in a division, the formation of a sect.

We are reminded of Paul's warning to the Ephesian elders.

Acts 20:29-30 *"I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.*

Those who draw away disciples after themselves are *heretikos* committing *heresis*.

SECTION VII: INSTRUCTIONS TO TIMOTHY AND TITUS

Anyone called to the ministry of teaching will find benefit in a regular reading of Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus. Teaching was a major part of the work to which they were called by God and commissioned by Paul. We already have considered most of the pertinent material in these epistles. However, there are some points yet to be made. We will undertake a cursory look at what remains.

I Timothy 4:6 In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.

II Timothy 2:14 Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers.

One of a teacher's responsibilities is to remind people of what they already know. Since the body of teaching that we are obligated to present and to which we are confined is somewhat circumscribed, the same truths will be repeated from time to time. Thus, in the passages quoted above, Paul urged Timothy to remind or point out to the people what they already knew. Here are some passages from other writers of the New Testament who speak of reminding the believer of what he already knows.

II Peter 1:12-15 Therefore, I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. And I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you may be able to call these things to mind.

II Peter 3:1 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,

Jude 1:5 Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.

Some of the "reminding" may be in the form of an exhortation.

II Timothy 4:2b reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

Concluding the section in I Timothy in which Paul urges his young associate to make certain that the people remember what they already know, Paul wrote,

I Timothy 4:11 Prescribe and teach these things.

Another theme that prevails in these letters is the importance of focusing on the ministry of teaching. I Timothy 4:13-16 speaks to this emphasis.

I Timothy 4:13-16 *Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.*

Paul reminded Timothy that the source of his teaching gift was just that, a "spiritual gift." Here, Paul says that the gift was given "with the laying on of hands by the elders (probably referring to the time in Acts 16:1-3, when Timothy left his home town and church in Lystra). Note that the elders did not just install Timothy, recognizing the gifts already present in him. Rather, when the elders laid hands on Timothy, in a ceremony that included prophecy, a spiritual *charisma* (*cařisma*) was imparted. The Greek grammar is very interesting and instructive here. The preposition, *meta* (*meta*) when used with the genitive, as it is here (*of the elders' hands*), means "with." Therefore, it was not through the laying on of hands that the gift was given, but the gift was given, while hands were being laid on him. Equally interesting is the use of the preposition, *dia* (*dia*) tied to *propheteia* (*profhteia*) the word we translate, "prophecy". When used with the genitive, *dia* means, "through." When used with the accusative, *dia* means, "on account of." Here is the kicker: the genitive singular and the accusative plural of the word, *propheteia*, are spelled exactly alike (*propheteias*), which is the form of the word used here! So, grammarians argue over this verse. Does Paul say that "through" a single prophetic word Timothy received a *charisma*, or does he say that "on account of" multiple prophetic words, Timothy received a *charisma*? One can argue until doomsday and not prove it one way or the other. However, an essential truth does come out of this. The laying on of the elders' hands was not the instrument that God used to impart Timothy's *charisma*, it didn't flow through their hands into Timothy's spirit. Instead, God spoke prophecy and sovereignly bestowed the *charisma*.

This leads us to look at II Timothy 1:6 *And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

Here, the term is *dia*, with the genitive. Thus, it was through the laying on of Paul's hands (the hands were the instrument) that a *charisma* was given. We do not know when this happened. It would be unusual to think that this happened at the same time that the event referred to in I Timothy 4:14 took place, since at that time the *charisma* was imparted sovereignly, not through hands. This probably refers to the time that Paul commissioned Timothy to take on the responsibility of being his apostolic delegate. The Holy Spirit imparted to Timothy, through Paul's hands, the *charisma* needed for apostolic work. The earlier event occurred when Timothy was endowed with the *charisma* of teaching.

This understanding fits the biblical symbolism of laying on of hands. In that culture, to lay hands on someone indicated an identity with them. This is missed in our present culture. We view the laying on of hands essentially as some sort of impartation. Not so in biblical times. To lay hands on someone meant that you identified with them. Laying on of hands for healing, means that the minister identifies with the sick, which, incidentally, is a prerequisite for intercession. Laying on of hands for ministry means that the one doing the "laying on" identified with the recipient and vouched for him. Wherever the new minister went, the one who had "laid

hands on" went with him in spirit. This is why Paul warned Timothy, *Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thus share responsibility for the sins of others;*³⁶ Thus, the laying on of Paul's hands, which was also the occasion of Timothy's receiving the *charisma* that would enable him to function as Paul's delegate, was very appropriate.

Another element that stands out in the I Timothy 4:13-16 passage is the exhortation to Timothy to focus on the ministry of the word to which he was called.

I Timothy 4:13 *Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.*

I Timothy 4:15-16 *Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.*

Paul used strong words here, "take pains," "be absorbed," "pay close attention," "be absorbed," in your teaching ministry.

This paints a picture of one who was diligent in preparing, responsible impartation, and a concern for excellence. Paul said that if Timothy did this, *you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.*

The same mood is found in Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy.

II Timothy 2:15 *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.*

Here, the teacher is presented as a workman. The terminology is interesting. *Orthotomeo* (orqotomew), translated, *handling accurately* (NAS), *correctly handling* (NIV), *rightly dividing* (KJV), literally means, "cutting straight." Some have seen this as meaning that the imagery is of cutting a straight path for the feet of God's people. Others have seen in it the imagery of cutting portions of food for the household. Whatever imagery one chooses, the idea is that of responsibly and correctly handling God's Word.

This calls to mind Paul's statements in II Corinthians 2:17 and 4:2.

II Corinthians 2:17 *For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.*

II Corinthians 4:2 *but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

Because peddlers of that day were infamous for "adulterating" their goods (putting water into a jug of wine, for example, so that it would go farther), the term "peddler" became a synonym for

"adulterating." That's why the KJV so renders II Corinthians 2:17. The Greek word that can only mean, "adulterating," is used in II Corinthians 4:2.

Scripture, the Oracles of God, are sacred and holy. A godly teacher will not twist them, distort them, or use them to make a point. The teacher will be in submission to the Word, rather than having the Word in submission to the teacher. This is a hard lesson for some teachers to learn. Some never learn it, and therefore never can be trusted.

Concerning teaching style, Paul has some instruction for Timothy.

II Timothy 2:23-26 But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

The teacher must be kind to all and not a quarreler. Unfortunately, debate and argument has characterized too many teachers.

Patience is necessary. The truth must be presented without compromise, but kindly. When some oppose the truth, let them be prayed for, hoping that God will bring a change of mind (*metanoeo* [metanoew]- the word translated as *repentance* in v 25), and they will come to grasp the truth.

Paul here has described one of the greatest challenges for a teacher. When a teacher hears a speaker expounding the Word, and he expounds error, what is one to do? When should one "refute" (Titus 1:9) and when should one patiently leave it in God's hands? Many factors are involved in answering this question. Such things as the seriousness of the error, is the audience one for which I have responsibility, was the teaching done in such a way that it will be remembered, or did it just fly over people's heads... these and other questions are there, but at the bottom line, one must know God's will in the situation.

CONCLUSIONS

1. A teacher in the New Testament Church is one who has been gifted for this role by the Holy Spirit.
2. A teacher will approach his ministry as an Oracle of God, realizing that he will be judged by Our Lord, concerning the words that he has spoken while teaching.
3. Every elder must be a teacher.
4. Some elders will find their primary ministry to be that of teaching.
5. There are apostolic teachers.
6. Some teachers are neither apostles nor elders.
7. There is a circumscribed body of doctrine that teachers are to teach.
8. Teachers must not go beyond this body of doctrine.
9. Anyone who teaches something other than the body of doctrine should not be welcomed into the church nor into any believer's home.

10. Teachers who draw disciples away after themselves, creating sects and parties, are heretics and are to be avoided.
11. Teachers are to teach the same truths, over and over. They should not strive for some new and innovative revelation.
12. Teachers should not spend time on peripheral matters.
13. Teachers should work hard, seeking excellence in what they do, especially exercising care in the exegesis of Scripture.
14. Teachers should be kind and gentle.
15. Teachers should not love to argue.

Endnotes

¹ Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, translator and editor (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964) Vol. II, p 148

² Kittel, Vol. II p 149

³ Kittel, Vol. II p 154

⁴ This verse is one of those that clearly displays a Trinitarian understanding. Jesus and God the Father are separate beings. The Son was in their presence, "on earth." The Father was in heaven.

⁵ The term in this verse which is translated, "leader" in some versions and "teacher" in others is the term, **καθηγητης**. The primary idea in the term is that of "leader," in the sense of being a "guide." Therefore, the term is translated, "teacher," by some, since teachers guide people into truth. It is similar to the Hindu and New Age term, *guru*.

⁶ Basic traditional Judaism began during the period of 500-400 BC, in the era that surrounded Ezra. When Ezra returned to Jerusalem from Babylon, he assumed responsibility for the preservation of Scripture. He developed a group of men called "scribes" (*sopherim*). The scribes developed the *Targums*, a kind of paraphrased interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures. When the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD, the Rabbis were forced to redefine Judaism. Much of modern day Orthodox Judaism had its beginning at that time. About 500 AD the *Talmud* or "Oral Law" was codified. The Rabbis said that God gave this Oral Law to Moses at Mt. Sinai as the interpretation of the written Law and that it had been passed down by tradition. The *Talmud* contains two sections, the *Mishna*, which is a commentary on Scripture, and the *Gemara*, which is a commentary on the *Mishna*.

⁷ Note, for example Acts 1:12

⁸ John 7:39

⁹ Paul rightly is counted among these because, as Paul stated, he did not receive his gospel from men. It came from direct revelation from Christ (Galatians 1:11-17; I Corinthians 11:23).

¹⁰ Robert Bork, *Slouching Toward Gomorrah* (New York, HarperCollins Publishers, 1996)

¹¹ The apostle, prophet, and evangelist also may be involved in the *katartismos* ministry, but it is the special responsibility of pastor/teachers.

¹² For a more complete discussion, see James W. Garrett, *New Testament Church Leadership* (Tulsa, OK, Doulos Press, 1996) pp 56-60

¹³ The order of these two names, whether Aquila or Priscilla is listed first, has been a matter of much discussion. The order of the names depends upon which manuscripts one chooses to acknowledge as accurate. That family of manuscripts upon which the KJV is based, has Aquila listed first. The family of manuscripts advocated by Wescott & Hort, upon which most modern translations rely, has Priscilla listed first. The point of the argument for some, is that Priscilla would have been the dominate teacher if her name were first and the opposite if Aquila were listed first.

¹⁴ Some have understood Paul's remarks in I Corinthians 3 to state that he and Apollos were rivals. Nothing could be further from the truth. The problem in I Corinthians 3 was not Apollos, but the Corinthians, who sought to create cliques in the local church. The two had worked separately in Ephesus and Corinth, then together in Ephesus. Apollos probably was the bearer of Paul's letter to Titus (Titus 1:3-5).

¹⁵ Matthew 15:2-6; Mark 7:3-13, for example

¹⁶ Peter uses a compound term in this verse, *patroparadotos* (*patroparadotov*), meaning, "handed down from one's ancestors"

¹⁷ Galatians 1:14

¹⁸ For example, all four of the Gospels, I Corinthians 15, and a major portion of Hebrews

¹⁹ For example, I Corinthians 15:24-28; John 14:16-17

²⁰ For example, Hebrews 6:4-8; 10:19-31; I Peter 3:21; Romans 10:9; Mark 16:15-16

²¹ For example, Romans 6; Ephesians 1:7ff

²² For example, Galatians 5:22-25; Romans 8

²³ Note that in I Timothy 3:14-15, Paul wrote, *I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.*

²⁴ For example II Thessalonians 3:6; Romans 12

²⁵ For example, I Corinthians 15:50-58; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 2:9

²⁶ For example, Matthew 25:31-46; Galatians 5:16-21

²⁷ Acts 19:1-5 records Paul's brief teaching to disciples who had not received Christian baptism. All that they knew about was the baptism of John. Paul instructed them in the difference between the baptism of John and Christian baptism.

²⁸ Matthew 28:20

²⁹ Acts 28:30-31

³⁰ Romans 12:7; 15:4; I Timothy 1:10; 4:6; 4:13; 4:16; 5:17; 6:1; 6:3; II Timothy 3:10; 3:16; 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1; 2:7; 2:10. In addition is the use in Ephesians 4: 14, as commented on above.

³¹ Kittel Vol II p 161

³² Kittel Vol II p 163

³³ Acts 2:42; 5:28; 13:12; 17:19; Romans 6:17; I Corinthians 14:6, 26; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9; Hebrews 6:2; II John 9, 10

³⁴ *Webster's New Practical Dictionary* (Cambridge, G & C Mirriam Co. 1951) p 302

³⁵ I Corinthians 11:22

³⁶ I Timothy 5:22