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OUR SAVIOR AND KING:  
THEOLOGY PROPER IN 1 TIMOTHY

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

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by  
Charles Oscar Hetzler

December 2008

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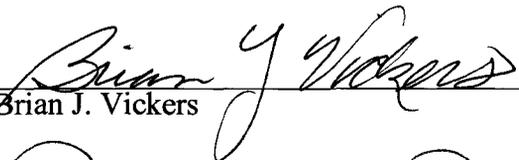
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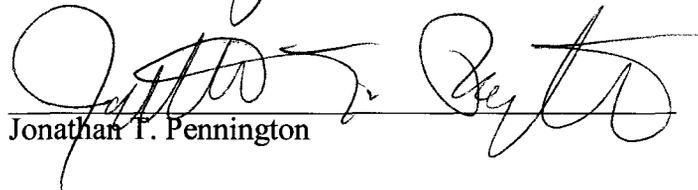
OUR SAVIOR AND KING:  
THEOLOGY PROPER IN 1 TIMOTHY

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	x
PREFACE .....	xi
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Thesis .....	2
History of Research .....	3
Introduction and Early History .....	3
P. Fairbairn .....	7
M. Dibelius .....	8
W. Lock .....	9
D. Guthrie .....	10
Recent, In-Depth Responses .....	10
The Present Contribution .....	17
Method .....	19
Procedure .....	21
2. GOD AS KING: MEANING AND FUNCTION .....	24
Introduction .....	24
Meaning .....	27
God as King .....	27
God as Incorruptible/Immortal .....	46
God as Invisible .....	49

Chapter	Page
Conclusion .....	53
Function .....	54
The Relationship and Function of 1:3-20 and 6:2b-21 in 1 Timothy ..	55
The Function of 1 Timothy 1:17 .....	56
The Function of 1 Timothy 6:15-16 .....	61
Further Evidence for the Proposed Function of the Doxologies .....	64
Conclusion .....	68
3. GOD AS SAVIOR: MEANING AND FUNCTION .....	70
Meaning .....	70
Introduction .....	70
Savior's Range of Meaning in Antiquity .....	72
Savior in 1 Timothy .....	83
Summary .....	95
Function .....	97
The Function of Savior in 1 Timothy 1:1 .....	97
The Function of Savior 1 Timothy 2:3 .....	99
The Function of Savior 1 Timothy 4:10.....	102
Summary: The Function of Savior in 1 Timothy .....	108
Conclusion .....	115
4. OTHER INDICATIONS THAT GOD IS SAVIOR AND KING: REMAINING THEOLOGICAL THEMES IN 1 TIMOTHY.....	117
Introduction .....	117
Other Indications that God Is Savior .....	118
God as Father .....	118
Hope in God .....	120
The One God .....	122

Chapter	Page
Other Indications that God Is King .....	123
The Command of God .....	123
God's Rule over the Church. ....	124
Other Indications that God Is Savior and King .....	128
The Living God .....	128
God as Creator .....	132
Theology in Relation to Christology .....	134
The Presence of Various Hellenistic Terms .....	138
Conclusion .....	140
5. CONCLUSION .....	145
Summary .....	145
Implications .....	150
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	156

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
<i>ABD</i>	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed.
BDF	Blass, F., A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> .
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>DPL</i>	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i>
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
EC	Epworth Commentaries
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
<i>EDNT</i>	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
EKKNT	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GNC	Good News Commentary
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HNTCS	Harper's New Testament Commentary Series

HTKNT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTS	Hamburger Theologische Studien
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBLMS	Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KEKNT	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	Septuagint
MM	J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan. <i>The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament.</i>
MNTC	Moffat New Testament Commentary
MNTS	McMaster New Testament Studies
MT	Masoretic Text
NA <sup>27</sup>	Nestle-Aland. <i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> . 27 <sup>th</sup> ed.
NCB	New Clarendon Bible
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NEB	Neue Echter Bible
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
<i>NIDNTT</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplement Series
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
NTC	New Testament Commentaries

NTD	Neue Testament Deutsch
NTG	New Testament Guides
NTL	New Testament Library
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OTP</i>	<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i>
PE	Pastoral Epistles
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>PR</i>	<i>Presbyterian Review</i>
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
SB	Sources Bibliques
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>SNT(SU)</i>	<i>Studien zum Neuen Testament seiner Umwelt</i>
SP	Sacra pagina
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
THNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
UBS <sup>4</sup>	United Bible Societies. The Greek New Testament. 4 <sup>th</sup> ed.
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WP	Wuppertaler Studienbibel
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

ZNW

*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der  
älteren Kirche*

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. The parallelism of 1 Timothy's doxologies . . . . .	23
2. The structure of 1 Timothy 1:3-20 . . . . .	56
3. I. H. Marshall's display of 1 Timothy 6:2b-21 . . . . .	61
4. R. Van Neste's comparison of 1:3-20, 3:14-4:16, and 6:3-21 . . . . .	64

## PREFACE

It has been a pleasure to research for and write this dissertation. Although completing a dissertation is an expectedly long and difficult process, the joy I have gained from it has outweighed any sacrifice. This joy is a testament to the richness of God's word and to the glorious God who there reveals himself to us. By his grace, I was enabled to complete and benefit from this dissertation. For this outcome, I also owe thanks to my professors in the New Testament department at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Their guidance prepared me for this work and set an example of NT scholarship to be desired. My thanks goes to Drs. Brian J. Vickers and Jonathan T. Pennington for serving on my committee and to Dr. Ray Van Neste (Union University) for being my external reader. I am especially thankful to Dr. Mark A. Seifrid for encouraging me to pursue this topic. In addition, it has been a privilege to have Dr. Thomas R. Schreiner for my supervisor. His comments and corrections have made this dissertation much better than it would have been otherwise. Finally, the support I have received from my family is incalculable. My father and mother, David and Clairice Hetzler, have consistently provided for me and supported me. I have also received much support and encouragement from my wife's parents, Gary and Cheryl Smith, for many years now. Most of all, I cannot envision completing, not to mention enjoying, this process without the presence and help of my wife and family, Karen, Nathanael, and Annalise. Nathanael and Annalise bring me joy each day. Karen's love, encouragement,

and sacrifice have made this achievement possible. I am continually thankful for and inspired by her.

Charles O. Hetzler

Louisville, Kentucky

December 2008

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

First Timothy studies have been defined by authorial debates since the dawn of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> One of the fruits that has come from such debate has been an increased awareness of 1 Timothy's unique theology, specifically pertinent to this dissertation, its theology proper.<sup>2</sup> Almost all commentators on both sides of the authorship issue recognize distinguishing theological features in 1 Timothy. However, this dissertation is not directly concerned with authorship; its focus rests on sorting out the *theological* picture of 1 Timothy.

Recent interpreters have tended to describe the letter's theological uniqueness either in terms of God as loving Savior (1:1; 2:3-4; 4:10) or sovereign King (1:17; 6:15-16). Some scholars have accented the former, while others accent the latter. Still others have sought to understand these characteristics in some sort of coordinate relationship. All of this will be detailed in the following history of research. What is pertinent here is

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<sup>1</sup>The first written attack against Pauline authorship came from F. Schleiermacher, *Über den sogenannten ersten Brief des Paulus an den Timotheus: Ein kritisches Senschreiben an J. C. Gass* (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1807). Schleiermacher doubted only 1 Timothy's authenticity; he did not include 2 Timothy or Titus. Since then, beginning with J. G. Eichhorn, those who argue for pseudonymity include all three letters (J. G. Eichhorn, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, vol. 3 [Leipzig: Weidmanischen Buchhandlung, 1812], but cf. the recent proposal of only accepting 2 Timothy as authentic by J. Murphy-O'Connor, "2 Timothy Contrasted with 1 Timothy and Titus," *RB* 98 [1991]: 403-10).

<sup>2</sup>Please note that wherever possible throughout this dissertation I use theology, theological, etc. in their strictest sense, with reference solely to God, and even more specifically, in Trinitarian terms, to God the Father. However, when it must be distinguished in context, the italicized form (e.g., *theology*) will be used.

to note that little work has attempted to comprehensively understand the theology of 1 Timothy. A handful of monographs and only a few articles have addressed this issue, but not in a way that focuses strictly on the identity of God in 1 Timothy.<sup>3</sup> In like manner, this topic has only received peripheral attention from some modern commentaries and related studies on 1 Timothy. More work is needed to further examine the ideas of God as Savior and King in 1 Timothy, and to provide a holistic theology of the letter.

The topic of this dissertation not only bears upon 1 Timothy studies; it also touches on theology in the NT. N. A. Dahl exposed the lack of theological examination in NT studies in his well-known 1975 article, “The Neglected Factor of New Testament Theology.”<sup>4</sup> Dahl’s call for a more rigorous theology from the NT has been heard and heeded by many NT scholars, but more work remains for 1 Timothy.<sup>5</sup> It is hoped that this dissertation will contribute to the continued need to develop a conscious, exegetical NT theology.

### **Thesis**

In this dissertation I will provide a fresh analysis of God in 1 Timothy. I hope to demonstrate that the author describes God as both Savior and King, in major part, to ground and focus his entire message to Timothy, his primary (implied) recipient. The

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<sup>3</sup>Couser’s thesis has come the closest to this sort of work, but his differs in that he examines the entire PE (G. A. Couser, “God and Christian Existence in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus” [Ph.D. diss., University of Aberdeen, 1992]).

<sup>4</sup>N. A. Dahl, “The Neglected Factor of New Testament Theology,” *Reflection* 73 (1975): 5-8.

<sup>5</sup>This introductory chapter will demonstrate how theology has been addressed in 1 Timothy. See also M. A. Seifrid’s recent appraisal of NT theology in his “The Knowledge of the Creator and the Experience of Exile: the Contours of Paul’s Theo-logy” (paper presented at the Society of New Testament Studies Seminar, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 2-7 August 2005).

author's theology of God as Savior and King reflects an OT background that highlights God's gospel – his merciful reconciliation of sinners who trust in Christ (Savior) – and his unrivaled sovereign rule (King). Even though this theology functions in secondary ways, the author uses it primarily to inform and encourage Timothy, so that he might fulfill his charge of laboring for the gospel.<sup>6</sup>

## History of Research

### Introduction and Early History

The theology of 1 Timothy has not been given considerable attention in the way of articles, dissertations, or monographs. As A. Y. Lau has insightfully observed, theologically oriented investigations of the PE have been overshadowed by concerns of pseudonymity, as well as an emphasis upon their “pastoral” aspects.<sup>7</sup> In more recent years, though, there has been an adjustment in this trend.<sup>8</sup> However, most of the

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<sup>6</sup>The debate of authorship will not affect this dissertation as I will read it according to its implied author and reader(s). My dissertation is concerned with analyzing the literary document of 1 Timothy, not with making conjectures pertaining to occasional situation of the letter. Whether "Timothy" is really Timothy or a congregation or no one in particular, I still believe that the author intended for his theology to inform and encourage "Timothy" to fulfill the author's charge. Again, even if that charge does not really relate to Ephesus and was an analogy for some post-apostolic situation, it was still his stated purpose for writing. Reading according to the implied author and reader keeps me from having to suppose what situation really lies behind the letter and allows me to analyze the document of 1 Timothy.

<sup>7</sup>A. Y. Lau, *Manifest in the Flesh: The Epiphany Christology of the Pastoral Epistles*, WUNT 86 (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1996), 1.

<sup>8</sup>E.g., Lau, *Manifest in the Flesh*; P. H. Towner, *The Goal of Our Instruction*, JSNTSup 34 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989); A. Merz, *Die fiktive Selbstausslegung des Paulus: Intertextuelle Studien zur Intention und Rezeption der Pastoralbriefe*, NTOA 52 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004); M. Harding, *Tradition and Rhetoric in the Pastoral Epistles*, SBL 3 (New York: Peter Lang, 1998); R. Kidd, *Wealth and Beneficence in the Pastoral Epistles*, SBLDS 122 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1990); F. Young, *The Theology of the Pastoral Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); K. Läger, *Die Christologie der Pastoralbriefe*, HTS 12 (Münster: Lit, 1996); R. Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure in the Pastoral Epistles*, JSNTSup 280 (London: T & T Clark International, 2004). In addition to monographs, there has been an increased theological interest in commentaries, e.g., I. H. Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999); P. H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

theological works have focused on the so-called epiphany Christology of the letters. Most of those works only touch on the *theology* of the letter as it relates to Christology and soteriology, and some do so more than others.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, much of the previous work related to my topic is found in commentaries and articles on subjects adjacent to the *theology* of 1 Timothy. There have been, however, a few essays that explore aspects of 1 Timothy's *theology* by itself.<sup>10</sup>

Prior to the nineteenth century, 1 Timothy's theology was virtually unquestioned; rather, it was appreciated.<sup>11</sup> For example, Tertullian pointed to 1 Timothy as evidence for the distinction between God the Father and God the Son, as well as to clarify the Son's nature.<sup>12</sup> Calvin noticed marks of Pauline theology as he discussed the meaning of God's oneness in 2:5 in light of Romans 3:29-30.<sup>13</sup> Before the Enlightenment, 1 Timothy's theology was viewed as Pauline, and thus biblically consistent.

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<sup>9</sup>Notably, Hasler does (V. Hasler, "Epiphanie und Christologie in den Pastoralbriefen," *TZ* 33 [1977]: 193-209).

<sup>10</sup>Ones that will not be thoroughly discussed here include J. A. Fitzmyer, "The Savior God: The Pastoral Epistles," in *The Forgotten God: Perspective in Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Paul J. Achtemeier on the Occasion of his Seventy-fifth Birthday*, ed. A. A. Das and F. J. Matera (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 181-96; J. H. Neyrey, "'First', 'only', 'one of a few', and 'no one else': The rhetoric of uniqueness and the doxologies in 1 Timothy," *Biblica* 86 (2005): 59-87; M. J. Goodwin, "The Pauline Background of the Living God as Interpretative Context for 1 Timothy 4:10," *JSNT* 61 (1996): 65-85.

<sup>11</sup>Marcion appears to be the exception, although some wonder if he actually knew the Pastorals. See L. T. Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, AB, vol. 35A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 2001), 22 n. 23.

<sup>12</sup>Tertullian *Against Praxeas* 15.27, trans. A. Menziels, ANF, American ed., vol. 3 (Buffalo: Christian Literature, 1885; reprint Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 611.

<sup>13</sup>J. Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, in *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 21, trans. W. Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844-56; reprint Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 56.

As was indicated above, the case for pseudonymity served to highlight the theological uniqueness of 1 Timothy. Critics of Pauline authorship saw these distinguishing features as further evidence that 1 Timothy was in fact a pseudonymous document. First Timothy's theology was just a small part of what they deemed unpauline. And when it came to theology proper, it was usually the ideas contained in the doxologies (1:17; 6:15-16), along with the divine appellation Savior, that drew their attention.<sup>14</sup> For example, B. S. Easton succinctly remarked that there is always a sense of remoteness in these letters; even though God is Savior, he is not the typical Pauline Father outside of the greeting (1:1-2).<sup>15</sup>

The issue of 1 Timothy's peculiar theology has been with us for two centuries. The remainder of this history of research will represent the various reactions to this topic since the 1800s, concentrating on those who offered a unique response to the letter's theology. One should note that not all commentators have addressed this issue. Therefore, many commentators may not be listed here, either because this history is representative, or because they may not have spoken to the issue at hand. In addition, many commentators have been more interested in analyzing the possible background of the divine descriptions, rather than attempting to understand their collective meaning and

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<sup>14</sup>Schleiermacher, *Über den sogenannten*, 74, 79-81; F. C. Baur, *Die sogenannten Pastoralbriefe des Apostels Paulus aufs neue kritisch untersucht* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1835), 28-33; H. J. Holtzmann, *Die Pastoralbriefe* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1880), 166.

<sup>15</sup>B. S. Easton, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London: SCM, 1947), 25. J. Fitzmyer believes that the title Savior serves the place of "Father" for God in 1 Timothy ("The Savior God," 185); cf. also D. Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, TNTC, rev. ed. (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1990), 47; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London: Black, 1963; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 16; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 104-05.

function in the author's theology.<sup>16</sup> An important part of this dissertation will engage in this background debate. However, my interest goes beyond backgrounds to determining the meaning and function of the author's theology. Therefore, this history of research will focus on those scholars who have shared this interest.

Finally, it should also be noted that authorial presuppositions continue to sway theological conclusions. Perhaps the majority of PE studies assume a non-Pauline authorship of these letters.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the general theological outlook of the PE encounters more scrutiny and skepticism than it might otherwise. Connected to the identity of the author, commentators have sought to determine what the author of the PE was like as a theologian. Was he a creative theologian<sup>18</sup> or a "purveyor of other men's theology"?<sup>19</sup> Was he coherent<sup>20</sup> or arbitrary?<sup>21</sup> Did he exhibit the theology of so-called pre-Pauline traditions<sup>22</sup> or of Paul himself?<sup>23</sup> Though my dissertation will engage this discussion, I

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<sup>16</sup>E.g., M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 31; M. Davies, *The Pastoral Epistles*, NTG (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 22; Neyrey, "'First', 'only', 'one of a few', and 'no one else'"; O. Knoch, *1. und 2. Timotheusbrief Titusbrief*, NEB (Würzburg: Echter, 1988), 23; Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 404; J. Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, EKKNT, vol. 15 (Zürich: Benziger; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1988), 56-57, 98-99, 357, who does not think that the theology of the doxologies is occasionally prompted at all.

<sup>17</sup>See Towner's argument which makes a case that the pseudepigraphal argument has been handed down with less and less critical investigation (Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 15-26); cf. also Johnson, *First and Second Letters*, 48-50.

<sup>18</sup>E.g., Hasler, "Epiphanie," 193-209.

<sup>19</sup>A. T. Hanson, *Studies in the Pastoral Epistles* (London: SPCK, 1968), 110.

<sup>20</sup>E.g., L. R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles*, HUT 22 (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1986); compositionally Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*.

<sup>21</sup>See Young, *Theology*, 47.

<sup>22</sup>H. Windisch, "Zur Christologie der Pastoralbriefe," *ZNW* 34 (1935): 213-38.

<sup>23</sup>Obviously those who promote Pauline authorship or Pauline tradition, e.g., W. D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC, vol. 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000); Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*.

will not evaluate it here. I only mean to point out the theological atmosphere of 1 Timothy studies, and how such ongoing conversations may affect a scholar's conclusions regarding the theology of 1 Timothy.<sup>24</sup>

## **P. Fairbairn**

In 1874, as a supporter of Pauline authorship, Fairbairn maintained that the theological language both in 1:1 and 1:17 was “peculiar.”<sup>25</sup> He noted that both Savior and King are unusual titles for God in the NT.<sup>26</sup> As for Savior, even though the term does not appear outside the PE, he believed it very well could have, since the idea of God as Savior is Pauline (2 Thess 2:12; 1 Cor 1:21).<sup>27</sup> Fairbairn believed that particular occasions evoked the use of this epithet. For instance, he argued that the term Savior may have been used to offset the pursuit of higher knowledge and lifestyle sought by some (apparently referring to 4:1-5 and 6:20-21).<sup>28</sup> Regarding the exalted theology of the doxology in chapter 6, Fairbairn disagreed with critical readings of the day: “Baur and others would regard [this doxology] as a protest against the semi-polytheism or dualism of the Gnostics – an entirely fanciful and unnatural view.”<sup>29</sup> Instead, Fairbairn proposed

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<sup>24</sup>See p. 3 n. 6 of this dissertation for my handling of the authorship issue.

<sup>25</sup>P. Fairbairn, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1874), 71, 100; cf. C. J. Ellicott, *A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Andover, MA: Warren F. Draper, 1865), 19.

<sup>26</sup>The epithet Savior for God occurs only 8 times in the NT, 3 times in 1 Tim (1:1; 2:3; 4:10), 3 times in Titus (1:3; 2:10; 3:4), and 2 other non-Pauline occurrences (Luke 1:47; Jude 25). God as King occurs again in 1 Tim (6:15), and in Matt 5:35 and Rev 15:3.

<sup>27</sup>Fairbairn, *Pastoral Epistles*, 14.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 245. The idea that the theology of 1 Timothy counteracts Gnosticism can be seen in such works as Baur, *Ueber den sogenannten*, 28-33; Holtzmann, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 166; E. F. Scott, *The*

that the theology of 6:15-16 is for Timothy's encouragement.<sup>30</sup>

### **M. Dibelius**

Dibelius' commentary first appeared in 1913, and has been edited and supplemented by H. Conzelmann through 1972.<sup>31</sup> His commentary asserted pseudonymous authorship and is probably most valuable for suggesting parallels in the Pastorals with relatively contemporaneous, secular and religious writings. At the same time, this commentary lacks theological insight. Dibelius and Conzelmann contributed to the Pastorals' *theology* by exploring the background and meaning of Savior. They suggested three possible backgrounds to the term: Judaism, mystery religions ("giver of life"), and the Imperial cult ("ruler of the time of salvation").<sup>32</sup> However, they do not make much of the object of the title, whether it is used of God or of Christ. Neither do they attempt to understand the author's overall *theology*, or explore the function of the letter's *theology*. Their influence can be seen in later commentators, clearly for example, A. T. Hanson and J. L. Houlden.<sup>33</sup>

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*Pastoral Epistles*, MNTC (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1957), 79; A. Schlatter, *Die Kirche der Griechen im Urteil des Paulus*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1958), 63; R. Karris, *The New Testament Message – The Pastoral Epistles* (Dublin: Veritas, 1979), xv; L. Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, vol. 1, *Kommentar zum ersten Timotheusbriefe*, HTKNT, Band XI/2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1994), 300.

<sup>30</sup>Fairbairn, *Pastoral Epistles*, 245.

<sup>31</sup>M. Dibelius, *Die Briefe des Apostels Paulus an Timotheus und Titus*, HNT 13 (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1913); M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ed. H. Köster, trans. P. Buttolph and A. Yarbro, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972).

<sup>32</sup>Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 100-03.

<sup>33</sup>A. T. Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*; J. L. Houlden, *The Pastoral Epistles*, PNTC (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976; reprint, London: SCM, 1989), 30.

## W. Lock

As a promoter of Pauline authorship, Lock proposed that the theology of 1 Timothy was consistent with the OT, even though it may have been touched by extra-biblical influences. He conceded the Hellenistic parallels that Dibelius and Conzelmann had noted. However, he did not believe that such evidence ruled out a distinctly biblical and Pauline theology. He stated, “The conception of God is mainly that of the OT . . . with more abstract qualities emphasized, perhaps through the influence of Greek philosophy upon Jewish thought.”<sup>34</sup> Lock’s supposition that 1 Timothy’s theology is ultimately biblical, though it is set in Greco-Roman terms, is also taken up by such commentators as C. Spicq, C. K. Barrett, J. N. D. Kelly, and G. Knight.<sup>35</sup> However, Spicq’s influential view differs slightly. While he believed that the author maintains an OT view of God, he argued that Savior was used polemically against the Imperial cult. For, Savior was an epithet regularly used in the Hellenistic world for gods and emperors.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, Spicq used this line of reasoning to make sense of God as both Savior and King.<sup>37</sup> To call God Savior was just as royal as calling him King.

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<sup>34</sup>W. Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1924), xxi; see also 5, 13.

<sup>35</sup>C. Spicq, *Les Épitres Pastorales*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1969), 243-45; C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles in the New English Bible*, NCB (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 25; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London: Black, 1963; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 18, 56; G. W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 61, 105.

<sup>36</sup>For his references, see Spicq, *Les Épitres Pastorales*, 315. See also S. M. Baugh, “‘Savior of All People’: 1 Tim 4:10 in Context,” *WTJ* 54 (1992): 335; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, cxxxiv-cxxxv; chap. 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>37</sup>Spicq, *Les Épitres Pastorales*, 243-45, 315.

### **D. Guthrie**

Spicq's way of joining Savior and King is unusual. Most commentators understand the two epithets and ideas to be somewhat opposing. It is more often thought that Savior suggests God's compassion, love, and immanence, while King and its accompanying doxological attributes conjure up thoughts of remoteness, inaccessibility, and transcendence. Therefore, commentators such as Guthrie, Marshall, and Lau address this seeming polarity by suggesting a biblical balance in these two divine attributes.<sup>38</sup> Any idea of far-off regency is balanced by pointing to the fact that God is also Savior in 1 Timothy. Similarly, Knight and W. Mounce recognize this theological tension in 1 Timothy. For them, it is a purposeful tension that all the more highlights God's incredible condescension to mankind, and coheres with theological ideas of the OT and NT.<sup>39</sup>

### **Recent Responses**

The unique theology of 1 Timothy has drawn more interest in recent years. Authors under this subheading have given more thought specifically to the question at hand of relating the transcendent and immanent theological aspects of the letter. However, all of them, but one, examine the letter's theology only as it relates to some other aspect of 1 Timothy or the PE.

**L. R. Donelson.** In his 1986 monograph *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical*

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<sup>38</sup>Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 47; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 105; Lau, whose explanation will be revisited below, is more complex (*Manifest in the Flesh*, 271).

<sup>39</sup>Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 106-07; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 59.

*Argument in the Pastoral Epistles*, Donelson examines 1 Timothy's theology in light of its ethical teaching. His view of the letter's theology stresses God as Savior while also including God as Creator. Donelson prefers the idea of God as Creator over the language of God's kingship or remoteness.

Donelson's theological perspective first recognizes that one of the most striking idiosyncrasies in the PE is the reference to God as Savior.<sup>40</sup> He notes that Jesus as Savior found common usage in the early church; however, "the primary savior in the Pastorals is God."<sup>41</sup> Yet, since God is also described as Creator in 1 Timothy, Donelson synthesizes the aspects of Creator and Savior. He concludes that the PE paint a peaceable picture of God and of his kindness and love for mankind. As Creator and Savior, his creation is a "friendly place," where one should not live according to ascetic rigor.<sup>42</sup> There is thus a "positive aura" of God both in the world and in these letters.<sup>43</sup>

Donelson's description of the theology of the PE, and where it pertains to 1 Timothy, seems preoccupied with his view of the letter's ethics, which he believes promotes "peaceful," "Graeco-Roman virtues."<sup>44</sup> Donelson should not be frowned upon for his desire to look at the letter's theology in light of its ethics. However, it appears that he has limited the theological picture in the PE to that which supports his concern for their ethical instruction. His evaluation of the theology is not entirely off base; it is only

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<sup>40</sup>Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument*, 135.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 136. He cites Bousset for the former assertion (W. Bousset, *Kurios Christos*, trans. J. E. Steely [Nashville: Abingdon, 1970], 310-17).

<sup>42</sup>Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument*, 140-41.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 153.

partial.

**P. H. Towner.** In addition to his commentaries, Towner contributed to the theology of the PE in his 1989 monograph, *The Goal of Our Instruction: The Structure of Theology and Ethics in the Pastoral Epistles*.<sup>45</sup> He goes further than Donelson in referencing the sovereign characteristics of God in 1 Timothy. For instance, he notes the importance of this aspect in the parallel doxologies that frame the letter.<sup>46</sup> Though Towner believes that some passages focus on God’s sovereignty and transcendence, he maintains that the ultimate emphasis in 1 Timothy is upon God as Savior. He claims that transcendence serves immanence in the following way: “it is by the author’s extension of the idea of God’s sovereignty into the area of God’s will that we encounter God as the author wanted most to portray him—as Savior.”<sup>47</sup> Towner’s perspective of 1 Timothy’s theology is in keeping with his insistence that salvation is the “centerpoint of the message.”<sup>48</sup>

**G. A. Couser.** Couser partially addresses the theology of 1 Timothy in his dissertation that explores both theology and ethics in all three Pastorals.<sup>49</sup> In contrast to Donelson’s work relating ethics and theology, Couser spends more space analyzing the descriptions of God in the letter. He argues for an essentially Septuagintal background

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<sup>45</sup>See p. 3 n. 8 of this dissertation for the full citation of these works.

<sup>46</sup>Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 49.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 75-119.

<sup>49</sup>See p. 2 n. 3 of this dissertation for the full citation of this work.

for the theology of the letter. While he acknowledges the possibility that the language about God in the PE could have been influenced by the imperial and pagan cults, he does not examine this Hellenistic background in great detail. Neither does his thesis narrow in on the seeming polarity of the doxologies and the Savior theology of 1 Timothy.

In his 2000 article “God and Christian Existence in the Pastoral Epistles: Toward *Theological Method and Meaning*,” Couser limits his scope to 1 Timothy.<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, his article, more than his dissertation, speaks to the focus of this dissertation, especially as it confronts the apparent tension between God as Savior and King in 1 Timothy. Broadly speaking, Couser’s theological conclusions resemble Towner’s, in that he sees God’s transcendence serving his immanence as Savior. In addition to his exegesis, Couser forms his argument based on the letter’s structure and on his reconstruction of the historical setting in which the letter was written. Because of his careful work and direct relationship to this topic, his article will be spelled out below in more detail.

First, Couser fuses the contributions of Towner and R. M. Kidd to explain the situation in Ephesus.<sup>51</sup> From Towner, he argues that Paul is writing against an over-realized eschatology in the PE.<sup>52</sup> From Kidd, he claims that the primary problem is that unqualified, immature men have taken church leadership on the basis of secular societal standards rather than spiritual qualifications.<sup>53</sup> Then, Couser turns to key theological

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<sup>50</sup>G. A. Couser, “God and Christian Existence in the Pastoral Epistles: Toward *Theological Method and Meaning*,” *NovT* 42 (2000): 262-83.

<sup>51</sup>Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*; Kidd, *Wealth and Beneficence*.

<sup>52</sup>Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 19-45.

<sup>53</sup>Kidd, *Wealth and Beneficence*, 93-100.

passages and finds common contextual factors between 1:3-20, 3:14-4:16, and 6:2b-21. Each of these pericopes possesses three common features: (1) “key aspects of the defection and pointed response” (1:3-11; 3:14-4:5; 6:2b-10); (2) “personal call/charge from God” (1:12-17; 4:6-10; 6:11-16); (3) “stand strong in your opposition by holding to your call” (1:18-20; 4:11-16; 6:17-21).<sup>54</sup> Next, he takes into account the heavy emphasis on God as Savior in 1 Timothy and concludes that both of the doxologies function as a ground for God’s soteriological work. The transcendent picture of God in 1 Timothy 1:17 and 6:15-16 “becomes the platform from which his saving intervention in Christ on behalf of all men is made possible and effective.”<sup>55</sup> He claims that the transcendence, for example in verse 17, is not one of “aloofness,” but one that “undergirds and reinforces his redemptive governance.”<sup>56</sup> In the end, God’s sovereignty proves that he controls salvation history, which serves the purpose of offsetting the effects of the problems and false teaching noted above. Towner and Couser have each, in their own way, understood the author’s theology in relationship to his Christology or soteriology. As a result, they have also accented 1 Timothy’s soteriological descriptions of God more than the doxological ones. I believe that these interpretations have mistakenly examined the author’s theology with primary reference to Christology and soteriology, and thus, they have limited the scope of the theological intention in this letter.

**V. Hasler.** In addition to a later commentary, Hasler presented an important

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<sup>54</sup>Couser, “God and Christian Existence,” 276.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 267.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 282.

and controversial thesis regarding the relationship of theology and Christology in his 1979 article “Epiphanie und Christologie in den Pastoralbriefen.”<sup>57</sup> Like others, his objective was not primarily to reconcile the apparent theological disparity in the letter. His main interest was to explain the function of the letter’s epiphany Christology.<sup>58</sup> However, in the course of his essay he considers the letter’s peculiar theology. He finds that the epiphany Christology is subsumed under the letter’s theology, so much so that he suggests that Jesus is not divine, but only a manifestation of God’s grace.<sup>59</sup> In his estimation, both aspects of God’s sovereign transcendence and his immanence as Savior are important.<sup>60</sup> These divine attributes correspond to each other because God, as transcendent Creator, makes his saving will manifest to men through the man, Christ Jesus.<sup>61</sup>

**A. Y. Lau.** In Lau’s aforementioned 1996 monograph on the epiphany Christology of the PE, *Manifest in the Flesh*, he interacts with the letters’ theology. One might think that Lau’s topic would lead him to embrace the PE’s immanent theology over its transcendent picture of God. However, Lau underlines the 1 Timothy’s transcendent language as well. He goes so far as to say, “The primary accent of the Pastor, however, appears to be on the transcendent sovereignty and majesty of the eternal, invisible and

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<sup>57</sup>V. Hasler, *Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus* (Zurich: Theologischer, 1978); see p. 4 n. 9 of this dissertation for bibliographic information on the article.

<sup>58</sup>Hasler, “Epiphanie,” 194.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 201-02.

<sup>60</sup>Hasler contends that the author of 1 Timothy is thoroughly influenced by Hellenistic and syncretistic sources (*ibid.*, 193, 195-97).

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 201-02.

incomprehensible God.”<sup>62</sup> He quickly qualifies that statement by arguing that the epiphany motif and the use of σωτήρ balance out the emphasis on God’s transcendence.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, Lau promotes both of the prominent theological senses present in the letter.

Functionally, he believes that the composite perspective of God as Savior and King is important because it gives relief to the people under attack from false teachers. The Pastor is comforting the people by reminding them that the transcendent one is their Savior.<sup>64</sup> He explains: “Although He is the only, holy, majestic and invisible God, *as Savior He genuinely cares for man’s salvation and has sovereignly taken the initiative to intervene and to reveal Himself as well as His salvific plan in the decisive moments of redemptive history, in the Christ-event.*”<sup>65</sup> Lau, then, concludes that the Pastor intends for both theological elements to meet the needs of off-setting false teachings and comforting the church(es).

**Summary.** In the end, Towner, Couser, Hasler, and Lau all share the same understanding of the functional relationship between theology and Christology and/or soteriology, even if they may differ dramatically in other ways.<sup>66</sup> They all believe God’s sovereignty allows him to act as Savior of mankind. There are a couple key overlapping ideas to be observed here. First, they all recognize some theological tension between

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<sup>62</sup>Lau, *Manifest in the Flesh*, 271.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 272.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid. Italics are original.

<sup>66</sup>Cf. also L. Oberlinner, “Die ‘Epiphaneia’ des Heilswillens Gottes in Christus Jesus: Zur Grundstruktur der Christologie der Pastoralbriefe,” *ZNW* 71 (1980): 192-213; idem, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 300.

God as Savior and King that needs to be resolved. Second, they primarily relate 1 Timothy's theology to soteriology and/or Christology, even if their theological conclusions may propose other effects, such as opposing false teaching.

### **The Present Contribution**

This dissertation will, first of all, provide the first book-length analysis of the unique theology of 1 Timothy. The above history of research demonstrates the need for more work directed specifically toward the theology of 1 Timothy. All of the significant works thus far have engaged the letter's theology by addressing theology in light of some other issue in the letter (e.g., soteriology, Christology, ethics, etc.).<sup>67</sup> A work is needed that looks at the letter's theology for its own sake.

Equally important, this dissertation will promote an unnoticed purpose for the letter's theology. My analysis of key passages (1:3-20, 3:14-4:16, and 6:2b-21) will propose that Paul intended his theology to ground his charge to Timothy. In support of this idea, Couser, among others, has already noted the similarity of 1:3-20, 3:14-4:16, and 6:2b-21, including a charge to Timothy, even though he draws different conclusions regarding the theology in these passages.<sup>68</sup> Granted, Timothy's charge relates to the situation of the Ephesian church(es), and the epistle's theology may relate to other

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<sup>67</sup>This is not to mention the theology-specific articles by Couser and others as noted on p. 4 n. 9 in this dissertation.

<sup>68</sup>See also Van Neste (*Cohesion and Structure*, 122-44). In addition, several scholars suggest that 1:3-4 reveals the occasion and purpose of 1 Timothy, namely, that letter is written to charge Timothy to protect the church(es) from the false teachers (e.g., G. D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, GNC [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1994], xx; similarly, Johnson, *First and Second Letters*, 149). P. Fairbairn (*Pastoral Epistles*, 245) and E. K. Simpson (*The Pastoral Epistles* [London: Tyndale, 1954], 89) propose such a purpose for 6:15-16.

doctrines and themes as well, such as soteriology.<sup>69</sup> Accordingly, this dissertation will emphasize the theological grounding for Timothy's charge, as well as explore other ways in which the theology functions in the letter.

My contribution will also provide a fresh examination of the nature and background of 1 Timothy's theology. The dissertation will take into account each theological term and idea, as well as determine how the most prominent divine attributes of Savior and King relate to each other. Many works have examined the background of certain theological epithets thus far, especially discussing the influence of Graeco-Roman, Hellenistic Jewish, and OT ideologies.<sup>70</sup> Still, a more exhaustive study is in order. Furthermore, as previously noted, those who have examined some of the appropriate backgrounds have stopped at that stage, without drawing subsequent theological implications with regard to the letter's entire theology. To rightly understand the function of the author's theology, one must first understand his conception of God. Both objectives will be pursued in this dissertation.

This dissertation will also residually contribute to 1 Timothy, PE, and NT scholarship in other ways. For 1 Timothy, this dissertation may: (1) contribute to the

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<sup>69</sup>It is often proposed that 1 Timothy was written for a greater audience (e.g., the Ephesian church). See, e.g., G. D. Fee, "Reflections on Church Order in the Pastoral Epistles, with Further Reflection on the Hermeneutics of *Ad Hoc* Documents," *JETS* 28 (1985): 141-51. But it is unclear to what degree a greater audience was intended in 1 Timothy. Recently, some have argued that 1 Timothy and Titus belong in the category of mandate letters, which means that the letters were intended for the Ephesian church in order to authorize Timothy in her eyes. While the background of mandate letters seems promising, scholars still do not know the extent to which the greater audience of a mandate letter was to be involved in its reception or if 1 Timothy properly belongs in that genre. See Towner's discussion, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 33-36. This issue retreats in importance somewhat for this dissertation since I am concerned with the implied author and reader of 1 Timothy, the latter being primarily Timothy. Further defense for this proposal will come in chapters 2 – 4 below.

<sup>70</sup>E.g., Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*; J. D. Quinn and W. C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary*, ECC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

exegesis of the letter in general by suggesting an underemphasized theme in 1 Timothy; (2) suggest new ways of thinking about 1:3-20, 3:14-4:16, and 6:2b-21, the letter's structure, and its thematic and programmatic agenda; (3) relate to the ongoing discussion of the Christology of the letter; (4) contribute to the cultural background of the letter, considering whether Hellenistic or Jewish tendencies dominate, and to what extent; (5) add to the discussion of the primary audience of 1 Timothy. For the PE, my work would further the trend that these documents should be interpreted not as a corpus, but as independent letters. For the NT, this dissertation could add to the relatively new move toward a more conscious and exegetical understanding of the theology of the NT. It might also contribute to the ongoing discussion of the background of the NT's theology, for example, the presence of the Imperial cult's influence on early Christian terminology, especially with regard to divine epithets.

### **Method**

This dissertation will be limited to 1 Timothy for several reasons. First of all, scholars are moving away from reading the PE as a sort of corpus, and are now stressing each letter's independence.<sup>71</sup> Like other NT letters, each one is occasional, addressing its own situation that causes the author to engage his audience and situation in a special way. I believe that this move in PE studies is a proper correction, though some overlapping similarities among the three epistles are undeniable. Second, and related to the previous point, the theology of 1 Timothy is unique and therefore unlike that of 2 Timothy or

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<sup>71</sup>E.g., Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 27-31; Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 15, 93-94, 135; Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*; W. A. Richards, *Difference and Distance in Post-Pauline Christianity: An Epistolary Analysis of the Pastorals*, SBL 44 (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).

Titus. Even though Titus shares more likeness to 1 Timothy's theological peculiarity (e.g., the term Savior for God in 1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4; cf. 2:13), Titus does not share the same obvious tension of transcendence and immanence as seen in 1 Timothy.

Presenting the whole theology of 1 Timothy is no small task, as H. Moxnes has rightly observed: "A full understanding of Paul's theology in a letter must consider all statements he made about God, both direct and indirect."<sup>72</sup> Moxnes himself concedes that such a task is almost impossible, as he followed the above statement with this one: "In Romans, however, this would result in a verse-by-verse commentary on the text."<sup>73</sup> I will not attempt a verse-by-verse commentary on the text of 1 Timothy. Instead, the way I hope to succeed at providing a comprehensive theology of 1 Timothy is by first breaking down the task into two categories: meaning and function.

One must first understand what the author means when he uses certain titles or attributes certain characteristics of God. The divine titles and characteristics in 1 Timothy must be understood within their own immediate and larger literary contexts. In addition, discovering the theological meaning will involve background study of the letter's theological terminology and thorough examination of primary sources in Greco-Roman, early Jewish, OT, and early Christian literature, as mentioned above. In comparing 1 Timothy's theological language to divine descriptions in other literature, I will look for both linguistic similarity as well as conceptual similarity. This careful

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<sup>72</sup>H. Moxnes, *Theology in Conflict: Studies in Paul's Understanding of God in Romans*, NovTSup 53 (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 17.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

comparison must take into account the literary, sociological, ideological, and historical contexts of the appropriate texts. These tools used for discovering the letter's theological meaning will be employed in each chapter according to the material covered therein.

Understanding the author's conception of God (meaning) might be sufficient to complete the task of presenting a theology of 1 Timothy. However, one immediately wants to know why such theology was employed in this letter. Therefore, determining the function of the theology will be equally important in the achievement of this dissertation. The means that will be used to discern the theology's function will be primarily exegetical analysis of theologically significant passages. This exegesis will focus especially on the logical relationship between propositions in the pertinent pericopes. Such exegesis will reveal the function of the author's theology. Therefore, a holistic theology of 1 Timothy will be gained through understanding the meaning and function of each theologically important passage, and then combining and synthesizing these parts.

### **Procedure**

The following paragraphs explain in more detail the procedure for employing the method just described, and thus the course of study for this dissertation.

Chapter 2 will present the meaning of the author's theology, beginning with God as King and the accompanying ideas in the doxologies of 1:17 and 6:15-16. With so much speculation about the background influences on the author's theology, one must reexamine these issues in order to correctly understand the character of the author's theology. Thus, chapter 2 will consist of an analysis of the author's theological language and concepts in the two doxologies. I will then determine how the doxologies function in

their immediate and broader literary contexts. Exegetical analyses of these passages will be key to arriving at the purpose of the peculiar theology of 1 Timothy. Again, this exegesis will not merely replicate the work of a commentary. I will seek to understand the purpose of the theology of each passage in its own context. Thus, not every interpretative issue will be dealt with in each passage. Chapter 2 will conclude with a summary of the data considered thus far.

Chapter 3 will continue to investigate the nature of 1 Timothy's theology, with specific regard to the idea of God as Savior. Like the previous chapter, background study will be used to show the intended meaning of the appellation Savior. Chapter 3 will also include exegesis of the stated passages, in order to determine the literary purpose of the author's theology as it regards God as Savior. Finally, I will summarize the findings of chapter 3.

In chapter 4, every other divine description in 1 Timothy, whether explicit or implicit, will be taken into account. Not every term or idea will garner the same amount of attention. Those theological ideas that are most prominent and unique will receive proportionately more consideration. I will explore the background and meaning of terms. More than simple "word studies," these investigations will carefully seek to determine the religious, political, or social influences that may have shaped the author's theology, as it is portrayed in 1 Timothy. The theological terms and ideas in this chapter will also be considered in light of their literary context, even if some of the items under investigation may not occur as propositions or in extended discourse. Chapter 4 will additionally examine non-theological themes that significantly pertain to the author's view or expression of God in 1 Timothy. For example, I will look at the author's theology vis-à-

vis his Christology. The close relationship between God and Christ (e.g., 1:1-2; 2:3-6; etc.) must be factored in for a proper assessment of the letter's theology. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a summary of its material, and explain its relationship to the prominent themes of God as Savior and King.

Finally, chapter 5 will combine the findings of the previous chapters. This synthesis will offer a new and coherent way to understand the seeming theological polarity of 1 Timothy, as well as provide a complete theology of 1 Timothy, thus supporting my thesis and providing a solution to the problem posed at the outset of the dissertation. The final chapter will also recommend any further implications of this dissertation and suggest needed areas of research.

## CHAPTER 2

### GOD AS KING: MEANING AND FUNCTION

#### Introduction

The doxologies of 1:17 and 6:15-16 deserve attention for many reasons. First, they are very closely parallel in substance. This parallelism leads one to believe that the writer wanted to emphasize certain theological matter(s) in this letter. Table 1 displays the similarities of the doxologies.<sup>1</sup>

Table 1: The parallelism of 1 Timothy's doxologies

1:17	Τῷ δὲ βασιλεὶ τῶν αἰώνων	μόνῳ θεῷ	ἀφθάρτῳ	ἀοράτῳ	τιμὴ καὶ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν.
6:15-16	ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων	ὁ μακάριος καὶ μόνος δυνάστης	ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασίαν	φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπρόσιτον, ὃν εἶδεν οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ ἰδεῖν δύναται	ὡς τιμὴ καὶ κράτος αἰώνιον, ἀμήν.

Second, the doxologies' framing positions in the letter also argue for their significance. The fact that these parallel doxologies appear near the beginning and the

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<sup>1</sup>Justification for these parallels will be given below. See similarly, W. D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC, vol. 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 352.

end of the letter gives further credence to the idea that the author's theology was specially designed, and thus, intended to be a major factor in his message. In recent years, some commentators have recognized this important feature. For example, R. Collins notes that the doxologies "form a loose inclusion" and "are the theological bookends that provide a framework for [the letter's] regulations."<sup>2</sup> This point will be developed later in this chapter.

Third, 1:17 and 6:15-16 attribute some apparently transcendent and exclusionary characteristics to God. The author underlines God's absolute sovereignty (βασιλεῖ [1:17]; μόνος δυνάστης, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων [6:15]), and claims that this God is never to be approached, and no one may ever behold him (φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπρόσιτον, ὃν εἶδεν οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ ἰδεῖν δύναται [6:16]; ἀοράτω [1:17]). Apparently, the author views God as the all-powerful king surpassing any earthly likeness, whose presence humanity cannot endure. As noted in chapter one, this exalted theological perspective seems to stand in stark contrast to the rare epithet, God our Savior (1:1; 2:3; 4:10). Therefore, a clear understanding of the theology of the doxologies is necessary in order to properly compare it to other theological themes in 1 Timothy.

Fourth, some of the terms in these doxologies have provoked disagreement regarding their background (e.g., ἀφθάρτω, ἀοράτω [1:17]; μακάριος, δυνάστης [6:15]; ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασίαν [6:16]). Due to such Hellenistic vocabulary, many scholars

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<sup>2</sup>R. Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 45. So also P. H. Towner, *The Goal of Our Instruction: The Structure of Theology and Ethics in the Pastoral Epistles*, JSNTSup 34 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989), 49; F. Young, *The Theology of the Pastoral Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 48.

believe that the writer is substantially influenced by Greco-Roman and/or early Jewish thought in his idea of God.<sup>3</sup> Contrarily, others believe that the ideas behind such words remain thoroughly influenced by OT thought, even if the terms themselves reflect Hellenistic language.<sup>4</sup> These terms deserve a careful and thorough study.

Thus, the doxologies in 1 Timothy deserve special attention. I will attend to them by first examining the meaning of the titles and phrases within the doxologies. The doxologies of 1:17 and 6:15-16 will largely be explored alongside each other, so that thematically overlapping words and phrases will be covered together, while yet remaining sensitive to each one's own context. Additionally, other verses or ideas in 1 Timothy may be considered in this chapter, as necessary. For instance, the occurrence of μακάριος in 6:15 will bring 1:11 into play as well. In the second major division of this chapter, I will explain the function(s) of the doxologies in the letter of 1 Timothy. The doxologies will be considered in their immediate and broader literary contexts.

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<sup>3</sup>E.g., M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 31; B. S. Easton, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London: SCM, 1947), 115-16; A. T. Hanson, *Studies in the Pastoral Epistles* (London: SPCK, 1968), 26, 29; V. Hasler, *Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus* (Zurich: Theologischer, 1978), 17, 51; O. Knoch, *1. und 2. Timotheusbrief Titusbrief*, NEB (Würzburg: Echter, 1988), 23; J. Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, EKKNT, vol. 15 (Zürich: Benziger; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1988), 80, 98, 356; J. H. Neyrey, "'First', 'only', 'one of a few', and 'no one else': The rhetoric of uniqueness and the doxologies in 1 Timothy," *Biblica* 86 (2005): 59-87.

<sup>4</sup>E.g., C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles in the New English Bible*, NCB (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 88; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London: Black, 1963; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 56; D. Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, TNTC, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity and Eerdmans, 1990), 66-67; G. W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 104-05; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 47, 60-61; W. Hendriksen, *Thessalonians, Timothy and Titus*, NTC (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 83, 206; G. A. Couser, "God and Christian Existence in the Pastoral Epistles: Toward Theological Method and Meaning," *NovT* 42 (2000): 267.

## Meaning

### God as King

In this section, each epithet in 1:17 and 6:15-16 that relates to the notion of God as King will be investigated separately: [ὁ] βασιλε[ύς] τῶν αἰώνων, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων, ὁ μακάριος καὶ μόνος δυνάστης, and μόν[ος] θε[ός].

It is worth noting, first, that King (βασιλεύς) as a divine appellation does not occur anywhere else in the Pauline corpus outside of 1 Timothy 1:17 and 6:15. However, the apostle's references to God's kingdom (βασιλεία) imply this idea.<sup>5</sup> Outside Paul's letters, God is rarely called King in the biblical literature.<sup>6</sup> However, its associated ideas commonly show up in OT, Jewish, and NT writings. Beyond Judaism and Christianity, other ancient cultures used this term to refer to human leaders and cultural gods.<sup>7</sup> Still, OT and Judeo-Christian backgrounds stand out as most important for discerning the meaning of King in 1 Timothy, as will be shown below.

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<sup>5</sup>Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9-10; 15:24, 50; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5 (of Christ also); 4:11; 1 Thess 4:1; 2 Thess 1:5. Col 1:13 refers exclusively to the "beloved Son," and the infinitive is used of Christ in 1 Cor 15:25.

<sup>6</sup>Deut 33:5; 1 Sam 8:7; 12:12; Pss 5:2; 10:16; 24:7-10; 29:10; 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; Isa 6:5; Jer 10:10; Matt 5:35; 21:5; 25:34, 40; Mark 1:15; John 1:49; Acts 17:7; Rev 15:3.

<sup>7</sup>E.g., Dio Chrysostom *De regno ii* 2:75 (LCL 257 [1932]: 98-99) refers to Zeus as a king and "protector of men and gods." Plutarch *De Iside et Osiride (Moralia 5)* 78 (LCL 306 [1936]: 182-83), writes that the Egyptian god in Heliopolis is "Lord and King." See also H. Kleinknecht and G. von Rad, "βασιλεύς," in *TDNT*, 1:564-65.

ὁ βασιλεύς τῶν αἰώνων. The epithet ὁ βασιλεύς τῶν αἰώνων has a few close parallels in OT, early Jewish, and Christian writings that should be considered in determining its meaning. No regular usage of this particular term is noted in other cultural or religious writings.

One close equivalent to the phrase ὁ βασιλεύς τῶν αἰώνων occurs in Jeremiah 10:10. Although the Greek translation of Jeremiah 10:10 is lacking in the LXX, the Hebrew וַיִּמְלֶךְ עוֹלָם, provides an intriguing parallel. In Jeremiah 10, the prophet calls the people to faithfulness to the God of Israel. He pleads that they would not fear the nations or conform to their ways (10:2-5). Jeremiah makes his appeal on the basis of theology, that is, the identity of Israel’s God (10:6). Her God is named the “King of the nations” in 10:7 (מֶלֶךְ הַגּוֹיִם). He is the one whom they should fear, since he rules over the nations. This argument is furthered and comes to its height in verse 10, “But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King (וַיִּמְלֶךְ עוֹלָם) (NRSV).”

Several points appear in this passage, many of which relate to and inform the epithet “everlasting King.”<sup>8</sup> First, verse 6 heads the theological argument of chapter 10: “There is none like you, O LORD; you are great, and your name is great in might (NRSV).” Therefore, the title “everlasting King” underscores his uniqueness. Second, this appellation carries an obvious temporal element. The epithet “everlasting King” (v. 10) builds on the previous one, “King of the nations” (v. 7). The Lord is King over the nations forever, not just for a limited period of time. Third, this epithet includes the idea of God’s sovereign rule over all of creation (10:10b-13, 16, 23). Thus, both time and

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<sup>8</sup>Cf. Ps 144:13 (LXX).

matter are eternally subject to him. In summary, the clear idea of “everlasting King” in Jeremiah 10:10 is that God alone enjoys sovereign rule over all things without beginning or end. This phrase functions in Jeremiah 10:10 as part of an overall exhortation to trust the one, true God instead of the nations and their gods.

Psalm 10:16 also relates to the epithet ὁ βασιλεύς τῶν αἰώνων in 1 Timothy 1:17. In Psalm 10:16, מִלְּמַעַל עַל כָּל הָאֱלֹהִים is rendered in verbal form in the LXX, βασιλεύσει κύριος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (Ps 9:37, LXX). Here, the psalmist laments the apparent lack of justice in the world. Wickedness seems to prosper, and righteousness goes unrewarded. As he nears the end of the psalm, he calls to mind that God truly is the King of all time (מִלְּמַעַל עַל כָּל הָאֱלֹהִים), and thus, he has hope that justice will be administered ultimately. The idea then, of this title, if it may be called that in this psalm, is that against all appearances, God is the one and only King eternally. His sovereign rule can never be thwarted, even if at times the wickedness of the nations seems dominant.

ὁ βασιλεύς τῶν αἰώνων, and close parallels (ὁ βασιλεύς τῶν αἰώνων, ὁ πάτερ τῶν αἰώνων, ὁ θεὸς τῶν αἰώνων, etc.), occurred more frequently in later Jewish and Christian literature.<sup>9</sup> As these epithets grew in frequency, they also expanded in meaning in Judeo-Christian writings.<sup>10</sup> The overall idea of the title is affected by the precise referent of the genitive modifier τῶν αἰώνων. Sasse argued that the appellation ὁ βασιλεύς τῶν αἰώνων originally (i.e., in the OT) referred simply to God’s eternal rule. In

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<sup>9</sup>Dibelius and Conzelmann note that the epithet is still common among Jews today (*Pastoral Epistles*, 30 n. 18). The appearance of divine epithets increased in general throughout Second Temple Judaism and post-apostolic times, although the reason for their increase is debatable. (See, e.g., K. L. Schmidt, “βασιλεύς,” in *TDNT*, 1:579.)

<sup>10</sup>H. Sasse, “αἰών,” in *TDNT*, 1:200-07.

later developments, αἰών could be used temporally with reference to specified periods of time, physically with reference to worlds, and possibly personally with reference to beings. Αἰών often refers to specific ages in the NT, particularly with regard to the present age and the age to come (e.g., Mark 10:30; Eph 1:21; 1 Tim 6:17). In Hebrews 1:2 (δι’ οὗ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας) and 11:3 (Πίστει νοοῦμεν κατηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας ῥήματι θεοῦ), the uses of αἰών more likely refer to “worlds” physically, rather than periods of time.<sup>11</sup> Αἰών is never clearly used in a personal way in the NT or in patristic writings.<sup>12</sup>

As for 1 Timothy 1:17, Ellicott, for instance, argues for a distinction in meaning by insisting that τῶν αἰώνων should be rendered as “ages” and not as “worlds” as Chrysostom has done, nor as “eternal” like Luther and the AV.<sup>13</sup> However, neither of the opposing translations completely distorts the meaning of this term. Though “worlds” comes up short because it too narrowly focuses on the physical, it succeeds in capturing the idea that ὁ βασιλεύς τῶν αἰώνων also likely implies that God rules over all created matter. Some of the examples given below will further demonstrate this notion. “Eternal” may be more accurate than “worlds,” for the boundless dominion of God is most important to this epithet. However, “ages” is preferred to the adjectival sense of

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<sup>11</sup>See also, Mark 4:19 cf. Matt 13:22 and 1 Cor 7:33; 1 Cor 1:20 cf. 1 Cor 2:6 and 1 Cor 3:19.

<sup>12</sup>Its personal use in Hellenistic, Persian, and later Gnostic religious writings is plain, but such a use in Jewish and post-apostolic Christian writings remains questionable. Some point to 2 *Enoch* 25:3 and Ignatius *Letter to the Ephesians* 19:2 (LCL 24: [1912] 192-93), and others want to see this use in the NT in Col 1:26 and Eph 2:7; 3:9. See further Sasse, “αἰών,” in *TDNT*, 1:198, 200, 207-08; BDAG, s.v. “αἰών.”

<sup>13</sup>C. J. Ellicott, *A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Andover, MA: Warren F. Draper, 1865), 37.

“eternal” (αἰώνιος) because of the subtleties that may accompany it, such as the idea of God’s design and reign over the distinct progressions of salvation history.

A few choice examples found in early Jewish and Christian literature will provide a fuller sense of this epithet’s use and range of meaning: *Joseph and Aseneth* 16:16 (cf. 12:1); *Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers* 3:1; Josephus’ *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1:272; Tobit 13:7, 11 (LXX); and *1 Clement* 61:2.<sup>14</sup> These examples illustrate this epithet’s use in various contexts. They also demonstrate that the epithet essentially portrays God as the King over all time and all creation.

In Jewish and Christian writings, the idea of God as the King of the ages often stands alongside his role as Creator. In such cases, the epithet retains a general sense of God’s eternal reign. In *Joseph and Aseneth* 12:1, the Lord is called the “God of the ages, who created all (things) and gave life (to them).” God’s reign over all history includes his status as Creator of all things. The title here communicates God’s rule over time and over things, with no clear regard to specific ages. Likewise, in the *Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers*, God is called “King of the ages, who through Christ made everything, and through him in the beginning ordered that which was unprepared” (3:1, the words underlined by the translator signify Christian interpolation). Again, the appellation implies God’s everlasting sovereignty especially with respect to creating all things. The same coordination of ideas occurs in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1:272 and in the later *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* 7.2.34. The former does so with another variation on our epithet: “O Lord of every age and Creator of universal being” (δέσποτα . . . παντός

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<sup>14</sup>Cf. also *The Apocalypse of the Holy Mother of God Concerning the Chastisements* 29-30, trans. A. Menziels, ANF, American ed., vol. 9 (Buffalo: Christian Literature, 1885; reprint Grand Rapids:

αἰῶνος καὶ δημιουργὲ τῆς ὅλης οὐσίας). The latter reads as follows: “Thou art blessed, O Lord, the King of ages, who by Christ hast made the whole world.” Both of these examples further demonstrate that the designation King of the ages regularly accompanied thoughts of God as Creator. It could be suggested that in these cases αἰών means “world,” but nothing definitively points to such a translation. Hence, translators have rightly retained the more normal sense of the term. The connection between this term and God as Creator implies that “King of ages” carried a strong sense of God’s rule over all things, and not only over all time.

Though there is a connection between God’s rule over the ages of time and his role as Creator, they are not always combined. For example, the book of Tobit has two occurrences of this title with no stated relationship to God as Creator. In Tobit 13:7, 11 (LXX), the phrase is combined with other epithets and exalted language to express praise and thanksgiving for the power and majesty of God.

Praise the Lord of righteousness, and exalt the King of the ages (τὸν βασιλέα τῶν αἰώνων). I give him thanks in the land of my captivity, and I show his power and majesty to a nation of sinners . . . . I exalt my God; my soul exalts the King of heaven, and will rejoice in his majesty . . . . Give thanks worthily to the Lord, and praise the King of the ages (τὸν βασιλέα τῶν αἰώνων). (Tob 13:7-11 RSV)

This example demonstrates that ὁ βασιλεύς τῶν αἰώνων need not be read with limited reference to God as Creator. In this case, it functions as one of a few epithets that highlights the majesty of God in a solemn prayer of thanksgiving. Again, αἰών seems to denote simply God’s kingship throughout all time.

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Eerdmans, 1975), 174; 1QapGen 2:4, 7, 14; 21:2.

One final example displays yet another use of this epithet. This example counters the idea that “King of ages” had polemical ramifications in 1 Timothy. In the following passage, the author uses βασιλεῦ τῶν αἰώνων in a civic and plainly non-polemical way. This example does not dismiss the possibility that the theology of 1 Timothy was partially crafted as a reaction to the imperial cult.<sup>15</sup> However, it does demonstrate that this particular phrase could be used in a decidedly non-polemical manner. The following passage from *1 Clement* contains the epithet “King of ages” in the context of a prayer that God would help governmental leaders bring peace to the earth.

Give concord and peace to us and to all that dwell on the earth . . . and grant that we may be obedient to thy almighty and glorious name, and to our rulers and governors upon the earth. Thou, Master, hast given the power of sovereignty to them through thy excellent and inexpressible might, that we may know the glory and honour given to them by thee, and be subject to them, in nothing resisting thy will . . . . For thou, heavenly Master, King of eternity (βασιλεῦ τῶν αἰώνων), hast given to the sons of men glory and honour and power over the things which are on the earth.<sup>16</sup>

This pericope from *1 Clement* illustrates a plainly non-polemical use of βασιλεῦ τῶν αἰώνων. Additionally, the author combines this term with the notion that God rules over all things. Here too “King of ages” connotes God’s never ending sovereignty over all his creation.

In Jewish and Christian traditions, the title King of ages consistently identifies God as the one who reigns over all time, and thus over all things. These examples refer to God’s eternal rule with this designation, without an obvious distinction in the meaning

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<sup>15</sup>This argument was most popularly advanced by C. Spicq, *Les Épitres Pastorales*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1969), 346.

<sup>16</sup>*1 Clem.* 60:4-61:2, trans. K. Lake (LCL 24: 114-15).

of αἰών as either “eternal King” or “King of ages.” Still, the latter option translates the phrase in a grammatically proper way. In these examples, one cannot clearly determine a material difference in their meaning. Generally, the epithet communicates God’s timeless rule over all things. Additionally, this title and its close counterparts sometimes accompany ideas of God’s role as Creator. However, God as King of ages does not always evoke his role as Creator.

The context of 1 Timothy 1:17 suggests the basic strand of thought continued from the OT through early Judaism. It has been suggested that it relates to ζῶην αἰώνιον in verse 16.<sup>17</sup> However, the referent of ζῶην αἰώνιον is eternal life in the future, and τῶν αἰώνων in verse 17 should not be restricted to God’s future reign. The impact of the entire doxology in verse 17 suggests that ὁ βασιλεύς τῶν αἰώνων be taken in its broadest, OT sense of God’s sovereignty over all time and over all things.

ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων. Different forms and combinations of this phrase (e.g., “God of gods”) appear in the OT, beginning with Deuteronomy 10:17. In biblical literature, the title can stand for God in the OT and NT (Ps 136:2-3; 1 Tim 6:15), earthly kings in the OT (Ezra 7:12; Ezek 26:7; Dan 2:37), and Christ in the NT (Rev 17:14; 19:16). In addition to the Persian and Babylonian uses of this phrase mentioned in the OT, the title “king of kings” was also employed by other ancient cultures, including the Egyptian, Parthian, and Armenian peoples.<sup>18</sup> In Second

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<sup>17</sup>E.g., Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 347; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 55.

<sup>18</sup>Plutarch *Lucullus* 14.5 (LCL 47 [1914]: 512-13); idem, *Pompeius* 38.2; 67.2 (LCL 87 [1917]: 214-15; 290-91); R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John: With Introduction, Notes, and Indices, also the Greek Text and English Translation*, ICC 44

Temple Jewish literature, writers limit the referent of any such phrase to God alone.<sup>19</sup>

C. Spicq notably argued that this divine title, among others in 1 Timothy, is a direct response to and critique of the imperial cult.<sup>20</sup> Many Roman emperors made claims to divinity and lordship over the whole earth or were deified after their death.<sup>21</sup> Of course, these kinds of imperial claims were incompatible with convictions held by followers of Christ. Spicq's point seems undeniable on the surface, for there is an inherent comparison in the titles ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων. The natural implication of the titles asserts lordship to one person or deity exclusively. No doubt, the Roman emperors, some of whom were worshiped, would have been among the contemporary rivals to God's claim of kingship and lordship. However, this fact alone does not demand that these epithets were polemically charged. As has already been noted, OT writers referred to earthly kings with such titles at no expense to their monotheistic faith (Ezra 7:12; Ezek 26:7; Dan 2:37). They apparently assumed a bifurcation between earthly kings and the King of heaven and earth. So, even though this particular epithet seems quite polemical in nature, its OT background may speak otherwise.

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(Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1920), 2:99; K. L. Tallqvist, *Akkadische Götterepitheta* (Helsingforsiae: Societas Orientalis Fennica, 1938; reprint, Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1974), 42, 237.

<sup>19</sup>2 Macc 13:4; 3 Macc 5:35; *I Enoch* 9:4; Philo *De cherubim* 99 (LCL 227 [1929]: 68-69); *De specialibus legibus* 1:18 (LCL 320 [1937]: 108-09); *De decalogo* 41 (LCL 320: 26-27); 1QM 14:16.

<sup>20</sup>*Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 573-74.

<sup>21</sup>For several examples, see further D. Jones, "Roman Imperial Cult," in *ABD*, 5:806-09. E.g., Augustus, see *MM*, 350; of Nero, see *MM*, 350; W. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1915), 31, 49, 814; of Domitian, see Suetonius *Domitianus* 13:2 (LCL 38 [1914]: 366-67).

In Jewish writings, such titles were sometimes strung together with other divine attributes to produce awe at God's transcendence. One such example occurs in a passage of *De decalogo*, where Philo writes of the kind condescension of God in giving the law. He contrasts the loftiness of God and the lowliness of man by referring to God as "the uncreated, and immortal, and everlasting God, who is in need of nothing and who is the maker of the universe, and the benefactor and King of kings, and God of gods."<sup>22</sup> Philo's point is clearly theological and not political, though one could infer such implications. He intends to leave an overall impression of God's holiness with this collection of exalted attributes, some of which overlap with 1 Timothy's doxologies.

Similarly, these titles occur in *1 Enoch* 9:4-5 to display God's limitless power, without having other human rulers or gods in view. In this passage, angels plead for God's intervention in the world. Before their request is made, they record this collection of divine attributes.

For he is the Lord of lords, and God of gods, and the King of kings, and the seat of his glory (stands) throughout all the generations of the world. Your name is holy, and blessed, and glorious throughout the whole world. You have made everything and with you is the authority for everything. Everything is naked and open before your sight, and you see everything; and there is nothing which can hide itself from you.<sup>23</sup>

The string of comparative epithets ("Lord of lords," etc.) serves as the basis for requesting God's intervention in the world, and it contributes to the overall sense of awe at God's matchless power and glory. Furthermore, both of the foregoing examples

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<sup>22</sup>Philo *Dec.* 41 (LCL 320: 108-09); see also *Spec.* 1:18 (LCL 38: 26-27).

<sup>23</sup>*1 Enoch* 9:4-5 (ed. J. H. Charlesworth, trans. E. Isaac, *OTP*, 17).

demonstrate that comparative epithets are not always polemically motivated, having a particular rival king in view.

It seems clear that the primary impact of the phrase ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριεύοντων, is to paint an overall picture of the sovereignty and majesty of God, along with the other predicates in 1 Timothy's doxologies. However, it is unclear if the author designed these inherently comparative epithets to combat emperor worship specifically. Certainly the author would have denied worship of a human king, but it is unclear if that was his stated agenda in scripting ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριεύοντων. These designations easily apply to the imperial cult, but again, that fact alone does not pass judgment on the writer's intent. If one looks for explicit attacks against the imperial cult elsewhere in 1 Timothy, he cannot find any.<sup>24</sup> On the contrary, the writer has regard for the state as he requests prayer for kings and officials in authority (2:1-2).

Finally, then, the import of this appellation is clear: God is the ultimate ruler of the world's affairs. He possesses more power than all and governs those who are in positions of authority. Though the author could have intended to undermine the emperor with these epithets, nothing in the epistle points to an anti-imperial agenda. Rather, he probably wished for these admittedly comparative titles to further strengthen his awe-inspiring description of God.

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<sup>24</sup>Cf. the blatant reference to the Roman Emperor in *Acts of Scillitan Martyrs* 3.6 (ANF 9:285).

ὁ μακάριος και μόνος δυνάστης. Since one article governs both μακάριος and μόνος δυνάστης, they will be investigated under one subheading separately and then jointly.

First Timothy 1:11 and 6:15 are the only biblical occurrences where μακάριος is used of God.<sup>25</sup> Similar descriptions of God in the OT and NT usually employ the word εὐλογητὸς, whereas μακάριος is commonly used in proverbial fashion to express the joy experienced by individuals who walk in the way of the Lord.<sup>26</sup> However, μακάριος appears to have been used regularly in Hellenistic philosophy and ethics to describe the gods, as well as man's attempt to attain their happiness.<sup>27</sup> Though this adjective can sometimes describe an individual as "fortunate," when used for deity, the following examples will demonstrate that it generally describes the deity's immutable happiness.<sup>28</sup>

μακάριος was used by both Greek philosophy and early Jewish theology to affirm the deity's happiness as independent, and therefore, his distinction from humanity.<sup>29</sup> However, this shared terminology does not indicate a shared theology at

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<sup>25</sup>Cf. the Septuagint's reading of Isa 31:9.

<sup>26</sup>E.g., Gen 9:26; Ps 17:47 (LXX); Luke 1:68; Rom 1:25; 1 Pet 1:3; cf. Ps 1:1; Prov 3:13; Matt 5:3-11; Jas 1:12; Rev 1:3.

<sup>27</sup>Aristotle *Ethica nichomachea* 10.8.7-8 (LCL 73 [1926]: 622-25); Diogenes Laertius *Vita et moribus philosophorum* 10:121-24 (LCL 185 [1925]: 648-51); and a passing reference in Homer *Ilias* 1.339 (LCL 170 [1924]: 18-19).

<sup>28</sup>Contra L. Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, vol. 1, *Kommentar zum ersten Timotheusbriefe*, HTKNT, Band XI/2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1994), 30, 299; I. H. Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC 38 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 383, 666.

<sup>29</sup>Philo, *Spec.* 1:209; 2:53; 3:1 (LCL 320: 218-19; 340-41; 474-75); idem, *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* 26 (LCL 247 [1930]: 22-23); idem, *Cher.* 86 (LCL 227: 60-61); idem, *De Abrahamo* 202 (LCL 289 [1935]: 98-99); idem, *Legatio ad Gaium* 5 (LCL 379 [1962]: 4-5); Josephus *Contra Apionem* 2.190 (LCL 186 [1926]: 368-69); idem, *Ant.* 10.278 (LCL 326 [1937]: 310-13); Diogenes Laertius *Vita* 10:121 (LCL 185: 648-49). So also, W. Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons,

every level. For example, both Epicurus and Josephus used almost identical phrases to describe the divine essence, including this term and another one of the terms found in 1 Timothy's doxologies: μακάριος and ἄφθαρτος.<sup>30</sup> Despite their common terminology, their views of God differed drastically from one another. In the following quotation, Josephus decried the Epicurean impudent view of providence, and thus, of God.

Those who read [his prophecies] and observe how they have come to pass, must wonder at Daniel's having been so honoured by God, and learn from these facts how mistaken are the Epicureans, who exclude Providence from human life and refuse to believe that God governs its affairs or that the universe is directed by that blessed and immortal Being (τῆς μακαρίας καὶ ἀφθάρτου) to the end that the whole of it may endure, but say that the world runs by its own movement without knowing a guide or another's care.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, Hellenistic and Jewish authors both use μακάριος, though not in full agreement with each other. Greek and Jewish thinkers may agree in regard to the divine's independent satisfaction, but the full measure of its import varies according to each writer's wider conception of deity.

The accompanying epithets in 6:15-16 point to a use of μακάριος that mirrors Josephus's. As I have already shown, God is described as the unrivaled sovereign. It is in keeping with an OT idea that in his sovereignty, he has pleasure, as for instance in Psalm 115:3, "Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases."

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1924), 13, 72; F. Hauck and G. Betram, "μακάριος," in *TDNT*, 4:362-70; U. Becker "Blessing, μακάριος," in *NIDNTT*, 1:217.

<sup>30</sup>Diogenes Laertius *Vita* 10.123 (LCL 185: 648-49); Josephus *Ant.* 10:278 (LCL 326: 310-13). It may be that Josephus' is quoting Epicurus' phrase "blessed and immortal one," τῆς μακαρίας καὶ ἀφθάρτου.

<sup>31</sup>Josephus, *Ant.* 10:277-278 (trans. R. Marcus LCL 326: 311, 313).

Paul attributes μακάριος to God in 1 Timothy 1:11 also. The context in 1:11 gives us little clue about what the author has in mind when he refers to God in this way. The foregoing explanation of μακάριος in 6:15 is then neither confirmed nor denied by the usage in 1:11.

δυνάστης was used in a number of ways, having reference to divine or human figures with meanings ranging from “supreme ruler” to “governor” to “court official.”<sup>32</sup> In the LXX, δυνάστης occurs as a translation with reference to God with more frequency in later books.<sup>33</sup> Later Jewish writers also use the title for God and Greek authors do the same for Zeus.<sup>34</sup> In the context of 1 Timothy 6:15 and with the modifier μόνος, this term obviously carries its strongest meaning of Sovereign or Ruler.

The combination of these terms in this phrase ὁ μακάριος καὶ μόνος δυνάστης, displays God as the ruler of all things who enjoys happiness in himself. Coupled with μόνος δυνάστης, μακάριος should be understood as a statement of his independent happiness and self-satisfaction, in addition to the considerations previously given. This combined epithet asserts that nothing is able to thwart either his contentedness or his authority. Therefore, he transcends all else and is removed from his creation in this respect, that nothing can impinge on his rule or affect his self-pleasure.

μόνω θεῷ. Although the epithet μόνω θεῷ does not contain an explicit statement of kingship, it is included here because of its similarity to ὁ μακάριος καὶ

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<sup>32</sup>Respectively, Gen 49:24; Josephus *Ant.* 14:36 (LCL 489 [1943]: 30-31); Acts 8:27.

<sup>33</sup>Gen 49:24; cf. Job 13:15; 36:22; 2 Macc 3:24; 12:15; 15:4; 3 Macc 2:3; Sir 46:5.

<sup>34</sup>Josephus *Ant.* 14:36 (LCL 489: 30-31); Sophocles *Antigone* 610 (LCL 21 [1981]: 362-63).

μόνος δυνάστης.<sup>35</sup> As stated above, the parallelism of 1:17 and 6:15-16 leads one to believe that each divine description has a matching counterpart. It may be argued that μόνω θεῷ has no exact parallel in 6:15-16, but is generally echoed throughout the doxology in such phrases as ὁ μακάριος καὶ μόνος δυνάστης and ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασίαν. However, one must keep in mind that θεός, here, is intended as a general title pertaining to deity and sovereignty, and not as a proper name for the Christian God. Therefore, θεός and δυνάστης cover similar semantic ground. With both of these titles, the author makes it known that if there are any other claims to deity or sovereignty, there is only one who properly deserves such acclamation. Admittedly, μόνος δυνάστης has added meaning because of μακάριος. However, this is not a problem, since many of the epithets in 1:17 are expanded in 6:15-16 (e.g., ἀφθάρτω = ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασίαν; ἀοράτω = φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπρόσιτον, ὃν εἶδεν οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ ἰδεῖν δύναται). Furthermore, the altered order in 1:17 and 6:15-16 is not significant, for there seems to be no particular reason for the order of the predicates.

The OT *Shema* (Deut 6:4) likely informs this epithet to some degree.<sup>36</sup> The early church maintained the beloved *Shema* as an affirmation of biblical monotheism.<sup>37</sup> The monotheistic confession took on more meaning than solely a claim to God's singular

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<sup>35</sup>Some manuscripts insert σοφῷ after μόνω, but the shorter reading is preferred. It is probable that σοφῷ was added with Rom 16:27 in mind, especially considering that three original manuscripts agree before later correctors (N, D, H). The only other NT occurrence of this epithet comes from Jude 25.

<sup>36</sup>So, e.g., Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 17; A. Schlatter, *Die Kirche der Griechen im Urteil des Paulus*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1958), 64; Spicq, *Les Épitres Pastorales*, 348; Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 77; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 105.

<sup>37</sup>E.g., Mark 12:29; 1 Cor 8:4.

identity.<sup>38</sup> Paul occasionally drew on the *Shema* for its universal implications, showing that God is the one Creator and Judge of all men, not just the God of the Jews.<sup>39</sup> Such an idea is probably in view in 1 Timothy 2:5 (εἷς γὰρ θεός).<sup>40</sup> However, the phrase used in 1:17 (μόνω θεῶ, not εἷς) contains different wording as well as a different emphasis, as a shift in argument begins in 2:1. The emphasis of μόνω θεῶ in 1:17 falls on God's matchlessness. This meaning is evident both from the usage of this phrase elsewhere (below) and from the surrounding epithets and descriptions within the doxologies. No doubt, the phrase μόνω θεῶ is both derived from monotheism and implies monotheism. But it secondarily affirms monotheism through its primary claim that God enjoys an unrivaled status as the only God.<sup>41</sup>

One sees this set of terms (μόνος θεός) conveying God's unrivaled greatness in the LXX, especially because of his salvific acts. Hezekiah uses this phrase twice in his prayer that Yahweh would demonstrate that he is the one true and living God by intervening on behalf of his people (2 Kgs 19:15, 19; cf. Isa 37:16, 20). In Psalm 85:10 (LXX), God's great and wondrous works signify that he is the only God. In these passages, μόνος θεός primarily communicates God's matchlessness, without immediate concern for defending his singular essence.

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<sup>38</sup>For example, Neyrey, "“First,”" 59-87. Some commentators stop short with this emphasis of monotheism, e.g., Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 405; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 105.

<sup>39</sup>1 Tim 2:5 (e.g., Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 87); Rom 3:29-30 (e.g., Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998]), 205-06).

<sup>40</sup>So, e.g., J. Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, in *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 21, trans. W. Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844-56; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 56.

<sup>41</sup>Some Greek writers speak of God's unity, but not in the same sense and measure as those in

Early Judaism carried on this emphasis with its usages of *μόνος θεός*. In the Prayer of Azariah, Azariah prays that God would deliver them because of his great mercy and for the glory of his name. At the climax of his prayer in 1:22 (Dan 3:45 [LXX]), his hope is that God would save them so that it would be known “that you alone are the Lord God (*σὺ εἶ μόνος κύριος ὁ θεός*), glorious over the whole world” (NRSV). Many other examples in Second Temple literature affirm God’s uniqueness and his sole possession of divinity with the use of *μόνος*, with an accent on the former.<sup>42</sup>

J. H. Neyrey explored the special use of *μόνος* with *θεός* in Hellenistic literature.<sup>43</sup> He argued that there was a clear rhetoric of uniqueness used in epideictic speech, evident from Aristotle to Quintilian, which strategically used a few choice words, such as *μόνος*. Neyrey averred that this rhetoric of uniqueness was adopted as an important way of praising gods and God in the Greco-Roman world. He suggested that this Greco-Roman rhetoric of uniqueness stands behind 1 Timothy’s doxologies, at least in part.

Neyrey rightly discerns that divine uniqueness is a major theme of 1 Timothy’s doxologies. However, Neyrey’s argument is not entirely convincing for a few reasons. First, he distorts Aristotle’s rhetoric of uniqueness. Neyrey makes it seem as if this rhetoric of uniqueness was the primary way that Aristotle suggested honoring individuals.

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the Hebrew tradition (e.g., Sophocles, as cited by Clement of Alexandria [OTP, 2:825]).

<sup>42</sup>E.g., *Hel. Syn. Pr.* 4:27-28 (OTP 2:681); *Orphica* (J and C<sup>1</sup>) 16 (OTP 2:800); 2 *Enoch* 33:8 (OTP 1:156-57); *Sibylline Oracles* 8:377 (OTP 1:426); see also, e.g., Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles* 56; Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 47.

<sup>43</sup>Neyrey, ““First,”” 59-87.

On the contrary, Aristotle suggests several ways of praising someone.<sup>44</sup> Highlighting one's uniqueness was only one way of underlining their nobility. Second, Neyrey makes too much of the possible connection between uniqueness in epideictic rhetoric and 1 Timothy's doxologies. It is not clear that 1 Timothy's doxologies derive from this rhetorical category, even though there may be some similarities between the two.

Third, Neyrey's suggested Greco-Roman background for 1 Timothy's doxology is not convincing because he too tightly confines the expression of language. Language only goes so far in allowing one to communicate God's praiseworthiness. Biblical writers believe that there is only one true God, and language offers only a limited number of ways to articulate that conviction.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, as Neyrey recognizes, the OT already set a precedent of declaring God's uniqueness with such phrases as "there is none like you" and "who is like you."<sup>46</sup> Therefore, it should be expected that the Greek rhetoric of uniqueness overlaps somewhat with biblical expressions of God's praise. In my view, Neyrey has not demonstrated that 1 Timothy bears a clearer resemblance to Greco-Roman rhetorical categories than to OT precedents. However, I agree with Neyrey's assessment that the doxologies of 1 Timothy underscore God's uniqueness.

Μόνος θεός, finally, primarily indicates God's uniqueness. The early church's

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<sup>44</sup>*Rhetorica*, see all of chap. 9 in book 1 (LCL 193 [1982]: 90-105).

<sup>45</sup>Of course, some may argue that even Hebrew expressions about God were not unique, but were borrowed from surrounding cultures (Neyrey, "'First,'" 67-70; M. Smith, "The Common Theology of the Ancient Near East," *JBL* 71 [1952] 135-47; C. J. Labuschagne, *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament* [Leiden: Brill, 1966], 33-63). It is impossible to comprehensively trace the movements of divine language throughout history and attain a definitive answer regarding its origin. But it is the theology of God that is important here, not its expression in human terms. Clearly, the theology (not the terminology) of biblical authors is nowhere exactly matched in any culture.

<sup>46</sup>2 Sam 7:22; Ps 35:10; etc. Cf. Neyrey, "'First,'" 70-71.

monotheism certainly influenced their claim that God was the only one worthy of that title. Still, monotheism in 1:17 is more assumed than asserted. It is God's inimitability and his sovereignty that the author primarily conveys.

**Summary.** Though Jewish and Greco-Roman literature inform the meaning of the foregoing epithets, 1 Timothy most clearly draws on the OT for its idea of God as King. In addition to the background already noticed, the assertion of God's reign over all things appears at the very beginning of the OT writings, as he is Creator in Genesis 1-2. Yet, the first explicit OT appearance of this idea, even if not the epithet, comes from the end of Moses' song in Exodus 15:18, "the Lord will reign forever and ever" (לְעֹלָם וָעֶד יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ [MT]; κύριος βασιλεύων τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ἐπ' αἰῶνα καὶ ἔτι [LXX]). This song underscores the uniqueness of Israel's God.<sup>47</sup> The Lord has demonstrated his power over Egypt and Pharaoh, hence the surrounding regions fear the Lord (Exod 15:4-16). In the context of Exodus 15, the assertion of God's kingly rule is used polemically, at least in part. Some subsequent biblical reflections on God as King carry this polemical intent and some do not.<sup>48</sup> A polemical design cannot be explicitly detected in 1 Timothy's insistence that God is the one, true King. Some may argue that any statement of kingship at such a time as the first century should be considered an assault on the governmental authorities, given the cultural climate of the day.<sup>49</sup> However, this matter is still debated.

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<sup>47</sup>So also, W. H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 545.

<sup>48</sup>E.g., Jer 10:10; Dan 4:34; Ps 2:1-12; cf. n. 6 in this chapter.

<sup>49</sup>E.g., R. A. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Empire* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 1997).

Therefore, given the lack of explicit defiance of Roman rule in the letter and the positive statement of 1 Timothy 2:2, I am not convinced that God's kingship in 1 Timothy is polemically driven. Throughout the OT and in 1 Timothy, God as King paints a consistent picture of God's sovereign control, which belongs to him alone.

### God as Incorruptible/Immortal

**ἀφθάρτῳ and ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασίαν.** J. Scott has correctly observed that ἀφθαρτος and ἀθανασία (and its cognates) convey “a similar if not identical concept.”<sup>50</sup> These words are used interchangeably here in the parallel doxologies of 1 Timothy, as well as in such passages as 1 Corinthians 15:53, Wisdom of Solomon 1:15; 6:18, and Josephus' *Bellum judaicum* 7:347-48.<sup>51</sup> Still, they rarely appear in the biblical tradition. Besides Paul's usage in Romans 1:23, they never occur in the OT and NT as a description of God. Apart from modifying God, the noun and adjective forms appear twelve times in the NT, with seven of those occurring in 1 Corinthians.<sup>52</sup> The words only appear in three books from the LXX: Wisdom of Solomon, 4 Maccabees, and Sirach, thus suggesting their Hellenistic origin.

These terms were used widely in Hellenistic literature.<sup>53</sup> Ἀφθαρτος and φθαρτός were first used philosophically to distinguish between that which abides and that

<sup>50</sup>J. J. Scott Jr., “Immortality,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 431.

<sup>51</sup>Cf. also Josephus *B. J.* 2:154 (LCL 203 [1976]: 380-83) and Rom 1:23; 2:7.

<sup>52</sup>ἀφθαρτος – 1 Cor 9:25; 15:52; 1 Pet 1:4, 23; 3:4; cf. also the short ending of Mark (16:8). ἀφθαρσία – Rom 2:7; 1 Cor 15:42, 50, 53-54; Eph 6:24; 2 Tim 1:10.

<sup>53</sup>G. Harder, “φθείρω κτλ.,” in *TDNT*, 9:93-106; T. Holtz, “φθείρω κτλ.,” in *EDNT*, 3:422-23; BDAG, s.v. “ἀφθαρτος.”

which changes and perishes.<sup>54</sup> In later Hellenism the ideas took on a more specifically religious overtone.<sup>55</sup> As such, these words were commonly used to distinguish the essential difference between deity and humanity.<sup>56</sup> For example, Epicurus believed that immortality was one of the most essential elements to what it means to be divine, as is reflected in his advice to Menoeceus. Epicurus' first order of advice in Menoeceus' pursuit of wisdom is this:

First believe that God is a living being immortal (ἄφθαρτον) and blessed, according to the notion of a god indicated by the common sense of mankind; and so believing, thou shalt not affirm of him aught that is foreign to his immortality (ἄφθαρσίας) or that agrees not with blessedness, but shalt believe about him whatever may uphold both his blessedness and his immortality (ἄφθαρσίας).<sup>57</sup>

Epicurus and other ancient philosophers believed that the essence of God subsists in his immortality and blessedness. These two attributes belong to the realm of deity and elude the realm of humanity.

The Jewish authors of Wisdom of Solomon and 4 Maccabees, where these words occur with some frequency, refrain from applying the terms directly to God's nature.<sup>58</sup> Later Jewish and Christian writers, however, altered this pattern by employing these words in order to describe God.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Harder, "φθείρω κτλ.," in *TDNT*, 9:94-95.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>56</sup>Homer *Il.* 5.882 (LCL 170: 258-59); Plutarch *Aristides* 6:2 (LCL 47 [1985]: 228-29); Diogenes Laertius *Vita* 10:123, citing Epicurus (LCL 185:648-49). See also J. H. Neyrey, "'Without Beginning of Days or End of Life' (Hebrews 7:3): Topos for a True Deity," *CBQ* 53 (1991): 441-44.

<sup>57</sup>Diogenes Laertius *Vita* 10:123 (trans. R. D. Hicks, LCL 185:649).

<sup>58</sup>12:1 may be the exception; cf. Wis 2:23; 4:1; 6:19; 8:13, 17; 15:3; 4 Macc 9:22; 14:5; 16:13; 17:12; cf. also Sir 17:30.

<sup>59</sup>Philo *Deus* 26 (LCL 247: 22-23); *idem*, *De aeternitate mundi* 44 (LCL 363 [1985]: 214-15);

When ἀφθαρτος or ἀθανασία describe God in early Jewish literature, they can point to God's eternity. Wisdom of Solomon poses that "God created us for incorruption (ἐπ' ἀφθαρσίᾳ)." There is an obvious distinction between the incorruptibility of the creature and Creator. God's incorruptibility has an infinite beginning and end, which is clear as the verse continues, "and made us in the image of his own eternity" (2:23). This verse demonstrates that God's incorruptibility and his eternity are intertwined; they both inseparably compose, in part, the essence of God's being.

Such early Jewish descriptions of God are also used to emphasize that God alone should receive obedience and worship. In *De vita Mosis*, Philo describes Moses' comparison between the false idols made by the Hebrews and the God of Israel: "[those] who have left the true God, and wrought gods, falsely so called, from corruptible and created matter, and given them a title which belongs to the Incorruptible (ἀφθάρτου) and Uncreated."<sup>60</sup> God's incorruptibility argues for his sole claim to deity, and thus, to worship and obedience.

**Summary.** The use of Hellenistic language does not necessitate an adoption of Hellenistic theology.<sup>61</sup> Though Hellenistic terminology was used by Jewish writers to communicate God's nature with these terms, their theology largely remains in line with

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idem, *De vita Mosis* 2:171 (LCL 289 [1984]: 532-33); idem, *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 101 (LCL 227: 168-71); Josephus *Ant.* 3.88 (LCL 242 [1978]: 358-59); 10:278 (LCL 326: 310-313); idem, *B. J.* 2:163 (LCL 203: 384-87); 7:346-47 (LCL 210 [1979]: 602-03); *Jos. As.* 12:12; 15:4 (*OTP* 222; 226); *Odes of Solomon* 11:12 (*OTP* 745); *Sib. Or.* 3:10, 276 (*OTP* 362; 368); *1 Clem.* 35:2 (LCL 24: 66-67); Ignatius *To the Ephesians* 20:2 (LCL 24: 194-95).

<sup>60</sup>Philo *De vita Mosis* 2:171 (LCL 289: 532-33).

<sup>61</sup>So, e.g., P. H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 423.

the OT's idea of God. Concepts like those contained in the words "immortal" and "incorruptible" are found in the OT. In the OT God is known as the one who lives forever (Dan 4:34), never wearies (Isa 40:28), and is the source of all life (Ps 36:9).<sup>62</sup> Therefore, one can see that this Hellenistic terminology is consistent with the way that Hebrew OT writers described God. In the same way, NT authors can also use Hellenistic words to communicate biblical theology. In Romans 1:23, Paul contrasts the false worship of "images resembling mortal (φθαρτοῦ) man and birds and animals and reptiles," with the "immortal (ἀφθάρτου) God." First Corinthians 15:42, 50, and 52-54, describes the incorruptible or immortal realm as the eternal one that God inhabits, where death and decay are non-factors.

In the end, it seems that early Jewish and Christian writers used these non-biblical terms to their advantage, in order to emphasize the eternal and divine nature of God, and hence his uniqueness and supremacy over all other gods and over his creation, who is thus alone worthy of worship. Their specifically biblical perspective colored the meaning of these words.

### **God as Invisible**

ἀοράτω and φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπρόσιτον, ὃν εἶδεν οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ ἰδεῖν δύναται. These terms provide another, perhaps clearer example of biblical theology set in Hellenistic language. Ἄόρατος never occurs in the LXX as a description of God. But the

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<sup>62</sup>Also, Ps 102:26-27; Isa 41:4; 48:12; Mal 3:6; Rom 1:23; Heb 1:11-12; Jas 1:17.

notion that God cannot be seen by men is a standard feature of the OT.<sup>63</sup> The lengthier, more biblical sounding description of 6:16 confirms that ἀόρατος follows OT lines, even though the term itself is Hellenistic.

In the OT God's invisibility demonstrated more than his incorporeal existence; it asserted his holiness.<sup>64</sup> Also in the Christian Scriptures, descriptions of light are used to represent the magisterial and holy presence of God.<sup>65</sup> Additionally, this attribute was meant to ward off idolatry, since God's uncontainable glory cannot be captured in the likeness of any created thing.<sup>66</sup>

Ἀόρατος also gained popularity in and beyond the Second Temple period for the Jews. Early Judaism sometimes mentioned this divine feature in a passing way, as an assumed trait of God's nature. Such an example appears in Josephus' *Bellum judaicum* 7:346: "[The soul] remain[s], like God Himself, invisible (ἀόρατος) to human eyes." Yet, God's invisibility more often communicated his holiness and transcendence, as Philo conjectures:

. . . the world is not the primal God but a work of the primal God and Father of all Who, though invisible, yet brings all things to light, revealing the natures of great and small. For He did not deem it right to be apprehended by the eyes of the body,

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<sup>63</sup>E.g., Exod 33:20; Deut 4:12, cf. Rom 1:23; Col 1:15; John 1:18; 14:9. For this reason, it seems strange to think that this feature of the doxology in 1:17 is directed to Christ, rather than to God, the Father (contra John Chrysostom *Homilies on Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, ed. and trans P. Schaff, NPNF, American ed., vol. 13 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1956], 421; C. C. Oke, "Doxology not to God but Christ," *ExpTimes* 67 [1956]: 367-68; R. E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, ABRL [New York: Doubleday, 1997], 662). John Chrysostom says that no one has seen the Son's divine nature (*Homilies on Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* [NPNF 13:421]); cf. *Acts of Peter* 17, 20 (cf. the translations of M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1924]; and G. C. Stead, in *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 2, ed. W. Schneemelcher, trans. R. M. Wilson [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965]).

<sup>64</sup>Exod 33:20.

<sup>65</sup>Ps 104:2; Ezek 1:28; Dan 2:22; 1 John 1:5; Jas 1:17.

<sup>66</sup>Deut 4:15.

perhaps because it was contrary to holiness that the mortal should touch the eternal, perhaps too because of the weakness of our sight. For our sight could not have borne the rays that pour from Him that is, since it is not even able to look upon the beams of the sun.<sup>67</sup>

In Philo's estimation, God is invisible to human eyes because of his surpassing holiness.

This important attribute was often combined with other superlative attributes to create a sense of God's holiness and transcendence. In the *Sibylline Oracles* 3:12, the writer mentions God's invisibility as he argues for God's worth over idol worship. A portion of this extended pericope reads: "There is one God, sole ruler, ineffable, who lives in the sky, self-begotten, invisible, who himself sees all things" (3:11-12).<sup>68</sup> Similar examples of God's invisibility are also noted in *Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers*. The following excerpt comes from a lengthy prayer of praise detailing God's incomparable nature and goodness.

For there is no god beside you alone, there is no Holy one beside you; Lord God of knowledge, God of holy ones, Holy one above all holy ones. For those who have been made holy are under your hands. (You are) honored and exalted exceedingly: invisible by nature, unsearchable in judgments, whose life is in want of nothing. Unchangeable and unceasing is (your) continuance. Untiring is (your) activity. (Parenthetical clarifications were added by the translator.)<sup>69</sup>

The theme of this section of the prayer is God's holiness, his uniqueness. What makes him holy is his invisibility, along with his knowledge, self-sufficiency, unchangeableness, and incorruptibility. Other such instances can be seen in *Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers* 9:3 and 13:5. Interestingly, the latter verse combines the same two divine descriptions in

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<sup>67</sup>*Abr.* 75-76 (trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL 289: 42-43). Philo used this word over 100 times; cf. Aristotle *De mundo* 399b.19-23 (LCL 400 [1955]: 396-99).

<sup>68</sup>Cf. also fgm 1:8; *Orphica* (J and C<sup>1</sup>) 12 (OTP 2:800).

<sup>69</sup>4:27-32 (trans. D. A. Darnell, OTP 2:681-82); cf. 9:3 (OTP 2:687).

1 Timothy 1:17 and 6:16: “*the one who dwells in unapproachable light, the one who is by nature invisible*” (13:5, emphasis mine).<sup>70</sup> This theologically laden prayer lists several divine attributes and epithets in order to emphasize God’s greatness.

It seems clear that early Jewish writers took up a non-biblical term (ἀοράτος) to apply the biblical idea that no one can see God. These writings consistently place God’s invisibility alongside other distinctly biblical and majestic attributes, which demonstrate his holiness and his unique identity among gods and men.

**Summary.** The description of God’s invisibility in 1 Timothy is derived from a standard conviction of the biblical tradition. For writers in this tradition, divine invisibility carried more significance, however, than just a confession of God’s spiritual nature. It was used to evoke grand thoughts of God’s divine identity and authority. It was one of many attributes that could be called upon to remind mankind of the one, true God and what that God is like. As unseen, he is unlike anything one might conjecture, and so, he is to be feared and obeyed and worshiped.

God’s invisibility and inapproachability may seem to be the most transcendent and remote conceptions of the theology in 1 Timothy.<sup>71</sup> However to the biblical author, man’s inability to approach God conveys the same fundamental idea as the foregoing predicates. At the core, these divine descriptions demonstrate the distinctions between God and man. For example, God’s kingship and man’s subjugation, or God’s

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<sup>70</sup>Cf. Plutarch *Pericles* 39:2-3 (LCL 65[1914]: 112-13); Homer *Odyssea* 6:42-45 (LCL 104 [1946]: 208-09).

<sup>71</sup>E.g., Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 300.

incorruptibility and man's frailty also accentuate the essential difference between a perfect God and a fallen humanity. As C. K. Barrett suggested, the point of God's inapproachability in 1 Timothy is as much about mankind as it is about God: we are too sinful for his presence.<sup>72</sup> When compared with corrupt humanity, God's presence is so brilliant in glorious perfection that man cannot behold it or come near it. The statement of inapproachability should lead the reader, along with the entire collection of predicates, to obtain a greater sense of the transcendent divinity and sovereignty of God. This observation also says something about the thrust of the other epithets and descriptions in the doxologies. Their individual parts make up the whole meaning that God is unlike any other being. He is uniquely and truly God, *sui generis*.

### Conclusion

Determining the meaning of the doxologies has been largely dependent upon discerning the appropriate backgrounds and influences on the epithets and phrases.<sup>73</sup> As seen in the examples above, the author of 1 Timothy retained biblical ideas in the epithets and descriptions of 1:17 and 6:15-16, even though some of those terms do not find exact parallels in the OT. Examples from early Jewish literature also demonstrated the same flexibility to transpose, at times, the theological language of the OT into that which was more culturally relevant.

As was observed, each title or phrase maintains its own meaning, but the

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<sup>72</sup>Barrett, *Pastoral Epistles*, 88.

<sup>73</sup>The varied wording of the final phrase of the doxologies (τιμὴ καὶ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων, ἀμήν and τιμὴ καὶ κράτος αἰῶνιον, ἀμήν) does not seem to affect the meaning of the doxologies. There seems to be no material difference between the two if one compares them to other doxologies (e.g., 1

meaning of each part contributes to the overall sense of the doxologies. The epithets and phrases work together to create a unified, theological picture. It is difficult, and perhaps too venturesome, to put the meaning of the doxologies into one word, nonetheless a good attempt would be to say that God is King. However, this word comes up short because one may imagine an earthly king that is corrupt and unhappy. One may also attempt to assert that the doxologies chiefly describe God's uniqueness. For each of the predicates somehow add to the notion that God has no rival. However, uniqueness fails because it loses the sense of power in the doxologies. Thus also, Creator, as Donelson suggested, falls short.<sup>74</sup> If one is not limited to a word, the doxologies together declare that God is the eternal, self-sufficient, sovereign ruler over all times and all things, who is perfect and glorious beyond humanity's capacity to understand, in every respect. However, the doxologies are not only crafted to describe God's various attributes, but as a collective force, these depictions display his incomparable and awe-inspiring existence.

### **Function**

Thus far, I have suggested that the author intended for the doxologies to (re)assert a magisterial picture of God. There is no other that can claim his status and no other like him. He is over all things and all people. What did the author want this emphasis on God's majesty to do in the letter? This is now the question at hand.

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Pet 5:11; Jude 25; Rev 1:6; 5:13; 7:12; see also R. Deichgräber, *Gotteshymnus und Christushymnus in der frühen Christenheit* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967], 28).

<sup>74</sup>See pp. 10-11 of this dissertation, and L. R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles*, HUT 22 (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1986), 135-36, 140-41.

### **The Relationship and Function of 1:3-20 and 6:2b-21 in 1 Timothy**

In order to rightly discern the function of the doxologies, one must first understand how their broader contexts (1:3-20 and 6:2b-21) relate to one another with regard to their position in the letter.<sup>75</sup> First Timothy 1:3-20 and 6:2b-21 play a crucial part in the letter as parallel and thematic pericopes.

Some interpreters have recently made a convincing case for reading 1:3-20 and 6:2b-21 as an *inclusio* to the entire letter.<sup>76</sup> An abbreviated argument for this case will be included here.<sup>77</sup> On a broad scale, both 1:3-20 and 6:2b-21 open and close with discussion of the opponents (1:3-7, 19-20; 6:3-5, 20-21). In the midst of these discussions, there are exhortations for Timothy to fulfill his duties (1:3-5, 18; 6:2b, 11-14, 20). More specifically, these passages share many linguistic and thematic features. In addition to the language of the doxologies discussed above, these sections both contain forms of *παραγγέλλω* and *παραγγελία* (1:3, 5, 18; 6:13), *ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω* (1:3; 6:3), *ἐκζήτησις* and *ζήτησις* (1:4; 6:4), *ἄστοχέω* (1:6; 6:21), and *παρατίθημι* and *παραθήκη* (1:18; 6:20). Thematically, both pericopes overlap with forms of the phrase “fight the good fight” (1:18; 6:12), warnings about straying from the faith (1:6-7, 19-20; 6:20-21),

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<sup>75</sup>The integrity of these passages will also be addressed below.

<sup>76</sup>Several contributions have been made, with Van Neste’s as the most recent and most thorough. R. Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure in the Pastoral Epistles*, JSNTSup 280 (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 136-41; G. A. Couser, “God and Christian Existence in the Pastoral Epistles: Toward Theological Method and Meaning,” *NovT* 42 (2000): 271-83; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 83; J. Thurén, “Die Struktur der Schlußparänese 1. Tim. 6,3-21,” *TZ* 26 (1970): 241-53; Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, 327; P. G. Bush, “A Note on the Structure of 1 Timothy,” *NTS* 36 (1990): 153; Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 270; Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 390-91. See the much earlier work regarding 1:3-20, B. Warfield, “Some Exegetical Notes on 1 Timothy,” *PR* 8 (1887): 500-02.

<sup>77</sup>Van Neste discusses these parallels in more detail, with specific references to previous works as well (*Cohesion and Structure*, 136-41).

the sinful product of false teaching (1:9-10; 6:4-5), vocative addresses (1:18; 6:11, 20), reminders of Timothy's initiation into the faith (1:18; 6:12), and charges to protect a vested message (1:18; 6:20). These similarities demonstrate at least two important points. First, these observations demonstrate the integrity and purpose of the pericopes individually. Each passage independently holds together around the themes of Timothy's charge for faithfulness in light of threatening circumstances. Thus, one can discern that the primary function of 1:3-20 and 6:2b-21 is to urge Timothy to carry out Paul's commands. Second, the parallelism between 1:3-20 and 6:2b-21 demonstrates their programmatic function in the letter. The *inclusio* displays the primary purpose of the letter, which is to urge Timothy to fulfill Paul's charge.

This proposition does not rule out the likelihood that the author had other, secondary purposes in mind for writing his letter. Such purposes may relate to his theology, which will be tested in due course. However, the effort at hand is to recognize the primary purpose behind the author's theological construct in the doxologies, which just so happens to suggest his primary purpose for the entire letter as well.<sup>78</sup>

### **The Function of 1 Timothy 1:17**

Since it is important to read 1 Timothy 1:17 in its context of 1:3-20, it is

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<sup>78</sup>Several scholars suggest that 1:3-4 reveals the occasion and purpose of 1 Timothy, namely, that letter is written to charge Timothy to protect the church(es) from the false teachers (e.g., G. D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, GNC [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984], xx; similarly, L. T. Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, AB, vol. 35A [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 2001], 149). P. Fairbairn and E. K. Simpson propose such a purpose for 6:15-16 (*The Pastoral Epistles* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1874], 245; *The Pastoral Epistles* [London: Tyndale, 1954], 89).

equally important to establish the solidarity of this pericope.<sup>79</sup> This pericope is composed with an inclusio formed by verses 3-7 and verses 18-20.<sup>80</sup> Verse 18 returns to the directives of verse 3. In verse 18 Timothy is addressed with the vocative and second person singular pronouns. Furthermore, 1:18 reflects 1:3-7 by the referent ταύτην τήν παραγγελίαν, recalling the charge of verse 3 (παραγγείλης) and 5 (παραγγελίας). Finally, verse 19 repeats two elements of the threefold goal of the charge mentioned in verse 5, faith and a good conscience (πίστιν καὶ ἀγαθὴν συνείδησιν). These specific textual elements demonstrate that verses 3-7 and 18-20 form an inclusio that maintains the integrity of 1:3-20 as a unit. The structure of the unit may be illustrated as follows in Table 2:

Table 2: The structure of 1 Timothy 1:3-20

1:3-5	Charge to Timothy in the context of false teaching
1:6-11	Description of false teaching
1:12-17	Response to false teaching
1:18-20	Charge to Timothy in the context of false teaching

Unfortunately, verse 17 has often been analyzed apart from the entirety of 1:3-20. Some interpreters have disconnected 1:17 entirely from the literary context.<sup>81</sup> Such

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<sup>79</sup>The cohesion of 1:3-20 has already been suggested in the above discussion. See also the following works. Warfield, "Some Exegetical Notes," 500-02; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 27; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 14; J. D. Quinn and W. C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary*, ECC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 47; Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, 48-49. See especially Van Neste for more discussion (*Cohesion and Structure*, 77-82, 123-25).

<sup>80</sup>See especially Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, 123.

<sup>81</sup>This argument usually holds that the doxology was adapted from or taken directly from a

commentators believe that the doxology is a liturgical flourish that possesses no significant epistolary function. Although it is possible that the doxology might not be original to the author of 1 Timothy, this interpretation should be dismissed. The parallel doxology in 6:15-16 argues for the compositional significance of both doxologies in the letter, especially considering their framing positions. Even if they were adapted from existing liturgies, the author placed them strategically in the correspondence for some purpose.

Others have removed 1:17 slightly from the immediate context in favor of its function in the letter's broader context, whether that is perceived of as the false teaching of Gnosticism, the threat of the Imperial Cult, misunderstood eschatology, and so on.<sup>82</sup> Assessing the doxology of 1:17 in light of the entire letter is a fitting interpretative approach, and one or more of the above backdrops may be in play. However, this approach fails, at least in part, because it bypasses the function that 1:17 may have in its immediate context (1:3-20), as well as the function it may have together with its pair in 6:15-16 as a thematic element.

More commonly, 1:17 is thought to be connected primarily to verses 12-16, rather than to the entirety of verses 3-20.<sup>83</sup> In this case, it is argued that verse 17

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liturgical setting (e.g., Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 17; P. Dornier, *Les Épitres Pastorales*, SB [Paris: J. Gabalda, 1969], 45; N. Brox, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, RNT [Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1963], 116, 218).

<sup>82</sup>E.g., F. C. Baur, *Die sogenannten Pastoralbriefe des Apostels Paulus aufs neue kritisch untersucht* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1835), 28; Schlatter, *Die Kirche der Griechen*, 63; Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 152; idem, *Goal*, 30-32; Young, *Theology of the Pastoral Letters*, 48; R. Kidd, *Wealth and Beneficence in the Pastoral Epistles*, SBLDS 122 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1990); 91-100; Couser, "God and Christian Existence," 267-71.

<sup>83</sup>Calvin, *Epistles of Paul to Timothy*, 41-42 (however, God's wisdom [μὲν σοφῶ θεῶ] in salvation leads much of Calvin's discussion); Fairbairn, *Pastoral Epistles*, 102; Schlatter, *Die Kirche der*

functions as a climactic peak to Paul's conversion and calling, recounted in verses 12-16. It completes the thanks begun in verse 12, and renders due praise to God for his saving grace. Indeed, such an interpretation likely perceives one of the functions of the doxology. This explanation also commendably takes into account the immediate literary context. However, it fails to see the significance that the doxology has for the larger unit of 1:3-20, and also its relationship to the entire letter (6:15-16). Neither is this interpretation able to explain adequately the differentiation between the theological emphases of 1:12-16 and 1:17. The doxology seems out of line with the material under discussion in 1:12-16. Paul describes God's gracious salvation, and then ends not with an expected thanksgiving for divine mercy and grace, but with a declaration of his majesty and exaltation.

Some have sought to solve this apparent theological disconnect by asserting that verse 17 highlights God's grace all the more.<sup>84</sup> Verse 17 depicts the loftiness of God, so that his condescension in the gospel (vv. 12-16) appears that much more incredible. This explanation coheres with a biblical perspective of God's grace toward sinners (e.g., Isa 57:15; John 1:14), but it does not seem to account for all of the data in 1 Timothy. This understanding of the doxology in verse 17 is not transferable to 6:15-16. Thus, a different function must be attributed to each of the doxologies even though they are obviously parallel. Since 1:17 and 6:15-16 mirror one another in meaning and hold

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*Griechen*, 63; Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 346; H. Roux, *Les Épîtres pastorales: Commentaire de I et II Timothée et Tite* (Geneva: Librairie protestante, 1959), 29; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 55; Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, 98; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 107; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 404; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 59; Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 47-48, who also emphasizes its importance for the letter's christology; similarly, Couser, "God and Christian Existence in the Pastoral Epistles," 262-83.

<sup>84</sup>E.g., Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 107; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 59.

framing positions in the letter, one would expect that they possess a common function in the letter. Thus, one ought to seek an interpretation that suggests a shared function for 1:17 and 6:15-16, which best accounts for their similarities and their positions in the epistle.

I propose that 1:17 functions primarily as a theological motivation for Timothy to carry out his charge within 1:3-20 and for the letter as a whole. One must first concede that any interpretation of 1:17 based solely on its immediate context is difficult to defend because of its asyndetic relationship to the preceding and succeeding verses and because of its apparently disjunctive theological emphasis. Therefore, this argument stands on the basis that it best fits all the necessary elements that come into play with the parallel doxologies and the structure of the letter. It has already been argued that the purpose of 1:3-20 is Paul's exhortation to Timothy. Even though 1:17 is several verses removed from Timothy's initial charge (vv. 3-5), it immediately precedes the recapitulation of that charge in verse 18. Moreover, verse 18's restatement of that opening command could be considered more solemn than the first one.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, the doxology of 1:17 functions, primarily, as the weighty setup to Paul's final appeal to Timothy in this opening section. It encourages Timothy to work hard at his calling because he labors as a servant of the everlasting, all-powerful King.

This proposal has several advantages. First, it interprets 1:17 within its full and proper context of 1:3-20. Second, it allows for the parallel doxologies 1:17 and 6:15-16 to have the same meaning and function (the latter will be discussed below). Third, it

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<sup>85</sup>One could point to the use of the vocative (τέκνον Τιμόθεε) and reference to Timothy's initial calling to ministry by prophetic utterances (κατὰ τὰς προαγούσας ἐπὶ σέ προφητείας).

accords with the author's intent in the letter, evident in the compositional structure of 1:3-20 and 6:2b-21 (and 3:14-4:16, below).

In summary, the doxology of 1:17 has at least two functions, a secondary one and a primary one. Secondly, it functions as an appropriate response to God's saving grace and a rounding out of the thanksgiving begun in verse 12. But verses 12-16 and the doxology in verse 17 serve the main topic of Timothy's charge in the larger concern of 1:3-20. Primarily then, 1:17 motivates Timothy to fulfill his charge because he is working in the sight of the incomparable King of kings. Since the author chiefly intended 1:3-20 to charge Timothy, it follows that the material in 1:3-20, including 1:17, should support that primary purpose. This interpretation also coheres with the overall purpose of the letter, as demonstrated above. The strategic positioning of the doxologies imply that they should contribute to the main purpose of the letter. The following section will further put this theory to the test.

### **The Function of 1 Timothy 6:15-16**

The doxology of 6:15-16 fits into the larger framing unit of 6:2b-21, as described above. This section is one of contrasts between Timothy's charge and the agenda of false teachers, or between exhortation and warning.<sup>86</sup> Recent works have

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<sup>86</sup>The former is Marshall's explanation (*Pastoral Epistles*, 635), and the latter is Thurén's ("Die Struktur," 244).

persuasively demonstrated the cohesion of the unit.<sup>87</sup> Marshall has laid out the structure of the final pericope in a helpful way, displayed below in Table 3.

The topic of this final section maintains the theme of exhorting Timothy to proper godliness in spite of wayward teachings and behavior. Again, it mirrors the opening unit (1:3-20) in manner and in its general thrust, even if the content of the false teaching differs.<sup>88</sup>

Table 3: I. H. Marshall's display of 1 Timothy 6:2b-2<sup>89</sup>

Verse	Faithful Teaching	False Teaching
2b	Timothy's own task of faithful teaching.	
3-5		The character of the false teachers, culminating in their desire for wealth.
6-8	Comment on the right attitude to wealth,	
9-10		contrasted with the disastrous results of greed.
11-12	The way of life that the man of God should follow	
13-16	reinforced by a powerful adjuration.	
17-19		What the faithful teacher should say to wealthy believers.
20-21a	Final injunction to Timothy to be faithful and to beware of false teaching.	

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<sup>87</sup>J. Thurén, "Die Struktur," 241-53, Bush, "Note on the Structure," 152-56; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 635; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 334; Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, 127-28.

<sup>88</sup>This is also true of 3:14-4:16, which will be seen below.

<sup>89</sup>Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 635.

In its more immediate context, the doxology of 6:15-16 is clearly connected to yet another charge to Timothy in 6:13 (παραγγέλλω, 1:3; 4:11; 5:7; 6:17; cf. 1:5, 18). In verse 13, Paul urges Timothy to faithfulness in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus (ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ . . . καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ).<sup>90</sup> The author has already made reference to God and Christ Jesus in verse 13, each with its own attributive participial clause.<sup>91</sup> As Paul fills out the charge in verse 14, he is not done giving eschatological and theological motivation to Timothy (vv. 15-16).<sup>92</sup> Timothy's charge lasts until the Lord Jesus returns (6:14). The following doxology functions partially to assure the reader that God is sovereignly controlling the future and that great eschatological event.<sup>93</sup> But more so, these verses center on the solemn commission of Timothy. The doxology completes the theological foundation for Timothy's charge begun in verse 13.<sup>94</sup> Paul urges Timothy to fulfill this task because he does it before the incomparable God and for the sake of his church (cf. 3:15).

This suggested interpretation of 6:15-16 properly takes into account the immediate context of 6:13-16 and 6:2b-21. Granted, one should not dismiss the idea that

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<sup>90</sup>Whether 6:11-16 may be adopted from a baptismal liturgy does not affect this discussion. The intentional structure of the final unit and the entire letter that has been discussed thus far proves that the author carefully composed his epistle. For more on this discussion, see Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, 344; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 358.

<sup>91</sup>παραγγέλλω [σοι] ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῳογονούντος τὰ πάντα καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ μαρτυρήσαντος ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου τὴν καλὴν ὁμολογίαν.

<sup>92</sup>Towner notes that 6:13-16 progresses from past to future with respect to Timothy, just as 1:11-16 did with regard to Paul (*Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 406).

<sup>93</sup>B. Weiss, *A Commentary on the New Testament*, trans. G. H. Schodde and E. Wilson (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1906), 4:82

<sup>94</sup>So Fairbairn, *Pastoral Epistles*, 245; M. Davies, *The Pastoral Epistles*, EC (London: Epworth, 1996), 53.

the doxology of 6:15-16 may function on different levels. I have already noted that this doxology functions secondarily to confirm that God controls the timing of Christ's Parousia (6:14-16). However, the author chiefly purposed this closing pericope (6:2b-21) and 6:13-16 as a final appeal to Timothy. Thus also, this doxology functions primarily to support this main purpose. This proposal also gains appeal because it presents a congruent meaning and function for both doxologies. The doxologies in 1:17 and 6:15-16 obviously share content and meaning. This interpretation explains that they share a primary function. Both doxologies function as theological encouragement for Timothy in their immediate and larger literary contexts. Hence, this solution also makes sense of the programmatic positioning of the doxologies within 1 Timothy. Therefore, considered in light of their meaning, their immediate context, and their larger epistolary setting and purpose, the doxologies function primarily as a theological support for Timothy's charge.

### **Further Evidence for the Proposed Function of the Doxologies**

The present proposal for the function of the doxologies may be further supported by a couple of evidences from elsewhere in the letter. These evidences have been alluded to already, but further explanation is needed.<sup>95</sup>

The proposed function of 1:3-20 and 6:2b-21 is also supported by 3:14-4:16. Again Van Neste, among others, persuasively argues that 3:14-4:16 is in fact parallel to 1:3-20 and 6:2b-21.<sup>96</sup> His own table gives one an overview of the likenesses among the

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<sup>95</sup>Some of the material here will be examined again in following chapters.

<sup>96</sup>See his extended argument with comparisons to other commentators (Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, 131-44; also Couser, "God and Christian Existence in the Pastoral Epistles," 275-83).

three passages, which is displayed below in Table 4.<sup>97</sup>

Table 4: R. Van Neste's comparison of 1:3-20, 3:14-4:16, and 6:3-21

1.3-20	3.14-4.16	6.3-21
3 – Timothy's proper corrective teaching	3.14 – for Tim to know right behavior	2b – Tim's faithful teaching
Summary of previous instruction to Timothy	Summary of previous instruction on church (ταῦτά)	Summary of previous instruction on church (ταῦτά)
3-11 – FT & Law with rebuttal	4.1-5 – FT & asceticism with rebuttal	3-10 – FT & greed with rebuttal
18-20 – exhortation to Timothy (no real shifting contrast)	4.6 – shift to contrasting exhortation to Timothy	11-16 – shift to contrasting exhortation to Timothy
	4.16 – a closing call to faithfulness	20 – a closing call to faithfulness

A few more specific comparisons should also be noted. The passages share reference to Timothy's prophetic calling to ministry (1:18; 4:14), and similarly, his call to eternal life (6:12). In all three extracts, the opponents devote themselves to wayward pursuits, but Timothy must vigorously strive for godliness, commanding proper teaching in light of the Christian's blessed hope. In addition to the similarity in the themes and flow of thought, there are also many lexical similarities: προσέχω (1:4; 4:1), μῦθος (1:4; 4:7), εὐσέβεια (4:7-8; 6:3, 5-6, 11), ἀγωνίζομαι (4:10; 6:12; cf. 1:18 [στρατεύη ἐν αὐταῖς τὴν καλὴν στρατείαν]), παραγγέλλω (4:11; 6:17), and μέλλω (relating to eternal life – 1:16; 4:8; 6:19). These lexical repetitions are not mere coincidences of language, but they carry substantial thematic topics concurrent in each passage.

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<sup>97</sup>Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, 142.

Recognizing the overlap that 3:14-4:16 shares with 1:3-20 and 6:2b-21 further supports the idea that the letter's primary goal is to exhort Timothy to fulfill what is needed in Ephesus.<sup>98</sup> To clarify, this objective does not merely suggest that the author intended to *communicate* what Timothy was to do, though that has its place. Rather, the author crafted the letter in such a way as to *motivate* Timothy to the task at hand.

Moreover, 3:14-4:16 provides another proving ground for an important part of the thesis of this chapter, namely, that the Paul's theology grounds the charge to Timothy. The same theological footing for Timothy's charge occurs in 4:10 as is present in the doxologies in 1:17 and 6:15-16. Paul concludes 3:14-4:16 by urging Timothy to faithfulness, just as he did in the closing sections of the previous pericopes (1:18-20; 6:11-16; 20). In this context, verse 10 gives a theological basis for Timothy to persevere; and in this case, a conjunction makes that logical relationship clear: "For to this end we labor and fight, *because* (ὅτι) we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe." The summation of Paul's injunction to Timothy emerges in the first clause of 4:10 (εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ κοπιῶμεν καὶ ἀγωνιζόμεθα, cf. 1:18; 6:12). That charge is grounded by the following statement, ὅτι ἠλπικαμεν ἐπὶ θεῷ ζῶντι. Timothy must carry out his hard labor because of decidedly theological convictions. The epithet "the Living God" will be discussed in detail in chapter four, and the epithet in the relative clause will have to wait until chapter three (ὅς ἐστιν σωτὴρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων μάλιστα πιστῶν). For now, one should recognize the pattern of grounding Timothy's work with reminders of the God they serve.

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<sup>98</sup>See also Van Neste's simple structure for the epistle (*Cohesion and Structure*, 143).

This proposed function of the doxologies rests on a textual, structural understanding of the author's main objective in the letter. Therefore, I believe that this function prevails over the function proposed by most writers on this subject, such as Hasler, Towner, Lau, and Couser.<sup>99</sup> They ultimately suggest that the theology of the doxologies primarily functions as a buttress for the Christology and soteriology of the letter.<sup>100</sup> Their interpretation of the doxologies' function is based on the belief that soteriology is the primary focus of the letter. I agree that the doxologies support the primary purpose of the letter. I disagree as to the identity of that primary purpose. They arrive at their understanding of the epistolary purpose through thematic analysis of the text.<sup>101</sup> They trace the theme of soteriology throughout the letter. Granted, soteriology holds a prominent place in the letter, and their insights into 1 Timothy's soteriology prove helpful. However, the present interpretation understands the epistolary purpose based on a textual, structural analysis. As has been shown, the structure of 1 Timothy seems to suggest a clear, primary purpose of charging Timothy. Therefore, the function of the doxologies presented here seems more likely because it rests on a more objective

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<sup>99</sup>See pp 11-16 of this dissertation. V. Hasler, "Epiphanie und Christologie in den Pastoralbriefen," *TZ* 33 (1977): 193-209; Towner, *The Goal*, 49-50, 75-119; A. Y. Lau, *Manifest in the Flesh: The Epiphany Christology of the Pastoral Epistles*, WUNT 86 (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1996), 271-72; G. A. Couser, "God and Christian Existence in the Pastoral Epistles," 262-83.

<sup>100</sup>Hasler and Lau concern themselves more with the letter's epiphany christology, but their final explanation of the relationship between the letter's theology and soteriology comes very near Towner and Couser. See pp. 11-16 of this dissertation.

<sup>101</sup>Couser analyzes the structure, but with a different result. He divides the letter along the lines suggested here. However he does not emphasize the purpose of the pericopes and the letter. He tries to see how the doxologies relate to the thematic material in the pericopes. He wants to explain the relationship of the theology and the backdrop of false teaching that was plaguing the church. Thus, he understands that the main purpose of the letter was to confront false teaching and the theology of the letter supports that cause. See pp. 12-13 of this dissertation, and Couser, "God and Christian Existence in the Pastoral Epistles," 267-83.

and perspicuous means of determining the letter's primary message.

Lastly, this argument of the doxologies' function can also be supported by the recurrent phrase "in the presence of God," ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ (2:3; 5:4, 21; 6:13). This formula was persuasive because it called on a witness for the performance of an activity or behavior, and more importantly, God was that witness.<sup>102</sup> In addition, this formula suggested that God was not only watching his own people, but that there was an expected manner of behavior.<sup>103</sup> Even though this phrase was only directed two of the four times specifically to Timothy, it still shows the author's perspective that the work of the church takes place in the presence of God. This perspective reflects the same one seen in the doxologies. Timothy must perform his duties because he does so under the watchful eye of the King.

### **Conclusion**

The doxologies of 1:17 and 6:15-16 are important for 1 Timothy. The author used them as a powerful motivating force to achieve his purpose for writing. Their meaning communicates a single theme of God's peerless and perfect rule as King. Therefore, the parts of the doxologies contribute to this overall theological idea, rather than standing as individual, independent theological statements. This singular message functions as an important support for the main purpose of the letter, which is to encourage Timothy. The doxologies motivate Timothy by reminding him that he works

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<sup>102</sup>G. A. Couser, "God and Christian Existence in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus" (Ph.D. diss., University of Aberdeen, 1992), 48-75.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

in the sight of the King of kings. He is not only a delegate of the apostle, but a servant of the King. Because of this theological emphasis, Timothy dare not take Paul's charge casually. These doxologies bid him to fulfill his calling with all diligence and uprightness. This thesis does not necessarily dismiss the possibility that the doxologies may function in other, secondary ways. However, it does purport that this function remains the primary one of the doxologies. This proposal of meaning and function has been suggested on the basis of (1) the parallelism of the doxologies; (2) the study of epithets and phrases within the doxologies; (3) the programmatic positions of the doxologies; (4) the context of the doxologies within their immediate pericopes; (5) the context of the doxologies within letter, recognizing the theme-setting inclusio of 1:3-20 and 6:2b-21; and in corroboration with (6) the comparison of 3:14-4:16; and (7) the ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ motif throughout 1 Timothy.

## CHAPTER 3

### GOD AS SAVIOR: MEANING AND FUNCTION

#### Meaning

##### Introduction

NT scholars have yet to agree on the meaning of Savior in 1 Timothy, and in the NT.<sup>1</sup> There are many issues involved in interpreting this term, which will be shown below. One of those issues concerns the occurrence of σωτήρ in the NT. Specifically, both its frequency and distribution in the NT draw speculation about its meaning. Therefore, I will begin by presenting an overview of the term's occurrence in the NT.

Forms of the epithet σωτήρ occur 24 times in the NT, with reference to Jesus 16 times and to God eight times. The title's frequency can be compared to 106 usages of various forms of the verb σώζω and 46 forms of the noun σωτηρία. This ratio measures up well to the LXX. There, the term occurs 39 times, while verbal forms appear 365

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<sup>1</sup>See P. Wendland, "Σωτήρ," *ZNW* 5 (1904): 335-53; A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, trans. L. R. M. Strachan, rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1927), 363-65; MM 621-22; W. Foerster, "σωτήρ," in *TNDT*, 7:1003-12; A. D. Nock, "Soter and Euergetes," in *The Joy of Study: Papers on New Testament and Related Subjects Presented to Honor Frederick Clifton Grant*, ed. S. E. Johnson (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951), 127-48; O. Cullmann, *Christology of the NT*, trans. S. C. Guthrie and C. A. M. Hall (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), 238-45; F. F. Bruce, "Our God and Saviour: A Recurring Biblical Pattern," in *The Saviour God: Comparative Studies in the Concept of Salvation Presented to Edwin Oliver James by Colleagues and Friends to Commemorate His Seventy-fifth Birthday*, ed. S. G. F. Brandon (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963), 51-66; A. B. Luter, Jr., "Savior," in *DPL*, 867-69; S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 47, 245-48; in 1 Timothy specifically, besides the commentaries, see S. M. Baugh, "'Savior of All People': 1 Tim 4:10 in Context," *WTJ* 54 (1992): 331-340; K. Lager, *Die Christologie der*

times and forms of σωτηρία occur 158 times. This comparison should take into account the fact that the LXX's use of Savior refers to human subjects (though only 4 times) as well as to God. In addition, some uses of σώζω and σωτηρία in both testaments refer to concepts other than God's deliverance for his people. Nonetheless, this data should give one pause in suggesting that σωτήρ appears too rarely in the NT.<sup>2</sup>

The distribution of the word in the NT also draws attention to itself. A significant increase in usage occurs in "later" NT documents. The occurrences break down as follows: four times in Luke/Acts, twice in Johannine literature, once in Philippians, once in Ephesians, three times in 1 Timothy, once in 2 Timothy, six times in Titus, five times in 2 Peter, and once in Jude. Scholars have suggested various reasons for the seemingly strange distribution of σωτήρ in the NT, but I will only enter that debate partially as it affects 1 Timothy.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the frequency and distribution of the term, cultural backgrounds affect the meaning of Savior in the NT and in 1 Timothy. Therefore, the following sections will demonstrate σωτήρ's range of meaning in Judaism and Hellenism. Having paid careful attention to literary and historical contexts, I will then be able to compare the meaning of σωτήρ in its various ancient usages to its occurrences and contexts in 1 Timothy.

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*Pastoralbriefe*, HTS 12 (Münster: Lit, 1996), 123-26; H. Stettler, *Die Christologie der Pastoralbriefe*, WUNT 105 (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1998), 28-33.

<sup>2</sup>Kelly, for example, refers to NT appearances as rare and OT as abundant (J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London: Black, 1963; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981); cf. Foerster, "σωτήρ," in *TNDT*, 7:1015).

<sup>3</sup>See n. 1 of this chapter.

### Savior's Range of Meaning in Antiquity

Ancients used σωτήρ in various contexts with markedly different connotations. Both biblical and non-biblical authors used the term for gods and men. The degree of honor intended by the term depended on its context. I will first explicate the range of occurrences found in the Greco-Roman world, and then turn to OT and early Jewish writings.

**Savior in the Greco-Roman world.** As has been well-documented, σωτήρ could refer to almost anyone in the Greco-Roman world, from gods to national rulers to citizens.<sup>4</sup> Still, the use of Savior in religious contexts has led some to emphasize divine connotations to this epithet. However, the title could ascribe honor to any individual who had provided deliverance or aid of some sort.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, immortals and mortals alike might well receive such adulation. Examples of the latter group include physicians, philosophers, wealthy benefactors, priests and priestesses, Roman generals, and public officials.<sup>6</sup> Hence, the title σωτήρ did not inherently carry religious connotations, but honored anyone deemed worthy of thanksgiving. A. D. Nock rightly cautions that any attempt to understand the use of Savior in antiquity must answer these questions: who was the deliverer and what was the deliverance?<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>See e.g., Foerster, "σωτήρ," in *TNDT*, 7:1004-12.

<sup>5</sup>The title often appeared in tandem with another title, εὐεργέτης, "benefactor."

<sup>6</sup>Foerster, "σωτήρ," in *TNDT*, 7:1006-08; C. Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1969), 352; Nock, "Soter and Euergetes," 127-48; *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, vol. 9, ed. S. R. Llewelyn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 4-5, 30-31; cf. Price, *Rituals and Power*, 47-52.

<sup>7</sup>Nock, "Soter and Euergetes," 127.

As will be shown below, many of 1 Timothy's interpreters make comparisons of God as Savior with the imperial cult. Therefore, it is important to sort out the epithet's use in the Hellenistic ruler cults and the Roman imperial cults. Beginning at least with the Ptolemies, some Hellenist and Roman monarchs received divine honors in addition to appellations such as epithets as Savior.<sup>8</sup> For example, one inscription of Julius Caesar lauds him as "the manifest god of Ares and Aphrodite and the universal savior of human life."<sup>9</sup> In the cults, the lines between mortal and immortal honors begin to blur. It becomes difficult to discern if Savior always conveyed more than just an honorific title of praise, and took on religious overtones.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, scholars are still seeking to understand the nature of these cults and Hellenistic religious expression in general.<sup>11</sup> S. R. F. Price has argued that one should avoid viewing Hellenistic religion through a Judeo-Christian perspective with strict lines distinguishing between the divine and the human. He suggested that Hellenistic religion was quite flexible and thus allowed for divinizing of emperors. Therefore, he claims that the cults were not purely or truly religious, but political.<sup>12</sup> As for the term Savior in these cults, he concludes that it "straddles the divide between human and divine."<sup>13</sup> Thus, it remains unclear as to the precise implication of

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<sup>8</sup>See *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, ed. C. Börker and R. Merkelbach (Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1979), 2:49.251; *New Documents*, 9:30-31; Foerster, "σωτήρ," in *TNDT*, 7:1009-12; D. Jones, "Roman Imperial Cult," in *ABD*, 5:806-09; Price, *Rituals and Power*, 23-47.

<sup>9</sup>*Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, 2:49.251; the translation is mine.

<sup>10</sup>See Price (*Rituals and Power*, 47-52) regarding public cults to Greek citizens in the first century B. C.

<sup>11</sup>See Price's reappraisal in *Rituals and Power*.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, especially 23-25.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 47.

Savior's usage in the Hellenistic ruler cults and the Roman imperial cults.

In one way, the meaning of Savior remained unchanged in the Hellenistic ruler cults and the Roman imperial cults: it continued to convey honor to one who had provided help or deliverance. While it may have entered into the realm of divine accolades, one cannot be sure. A couple of facts caution against attaching religious connotations to Savior in the Greco-Roman world. First, people continued to use σωτήρ in a clearly non-religious sense through the third century A.D.<sup>14</sup> Nock even points out that σωτήρ was used as a personal name throughout this time period.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the epithet did not take on an entirely new, religious meaning even though it was used in the cults. This fact does not refute the idea that the term may have had religious significance in the cults. Again, the full implications of the title in cult settings remain unclear. Still, this example demonstrates that one should not automatically read too many connotations into the term Savior based on its appearance in the imperial cult. Second, Philo noted that some first century Jews held Caligula as “savior and benefactor,” but would not worship him.<sup>16</sup> Here σωτήρ occurs within the context of the imperial cult and is not perceived as a religious title. Furthermore, Philo identifies “savior and benefactor” generally as one who provides benefits of happiness and prosperity.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the

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<sup>14</sup>See n. 4 in this dissertation; also e.g., Josephus *Antiquitates judaicae* 2.94 (LCL 242 [1937]: 208-09); idem, *Vita* 1:244, 259 (LCL 186 [1926]: 90-93; 96-97).

<sup>15</sup>Nock, “*Soter and Euergetes*,” 147.

<sup>16</sup>Philo *Legatio ad Gaium* 22, 75-114, 349-67 (LCL 379 [1962]: 12-15; 38-57; 174-183); Price, *Rituals and Power*, 184, 209; Jones, “Roman Imperial Cult,” in *ABD*, 5:806. See also Nock’s comments about officials under Christian emperors taking the title σωτήρ (“*Soter and Euergetes*,” 144-48).

<sup>17</sup>Philo *Legatio* 22 (LCL 379: 12-15).

term did not especially communicate royalty. Rather, it continued as a title of honor to one who brought the hope or the reality of deliverance or provisions.

In conclusion, the primary and consistent meaning of Savior in the Greco-Roman world expressed thanks and honor to individuals for significant acts of deliverance and benevolence. The term occurred in various contexts over hundreds of years. The term's controversial usage in the Hellenistic ruler cults and Roman imperial cults may have expanded its implications. For some ancients, the title may have taken on specifically religious and kingly overtones when used in cultic settings. However, for others, at least, it remained a mortal, honorific title bestowed on individuals of significant patronage.

**Savior in the LXX and early Judaism.** Similar to Greco-Roman usage, σωτήρ could refer to humans or to God in the LXX and early Jewish writings.<sup>18</sup> However, the title only refers to human deliverers 5 times.<sup>19</sup> In those contexts, the title Savior appears because of a specific saving act that a person performed. In these contexts, σωτήρ is more descriptive than honorific. The epithet simply tells of the work accomplished by the individual, without intending to heap praise upon him.

The same sort of descriptive, functional usage recurs in most of the remaining

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<sup>18</sup>In the LXX, σωτήρ never translates any other word group except the stem *נשׁ*. However, it does not consistently render any particular form of this stem. For example in Psalm 61 (LXX), σωτήρ translates *נַשׁוּׁתִי* in vv. 3 and 6, but not in v. 2 (σωτήριόν). In addition, various Greek roots may stand for the participle *נַשׁוּׁתִי*, including *σφζω*, *ρύομαι*, and *βοηθέω*. Therefore, it appears that σωτήρ was not a technical term in the OT's Greek translation. (G. Fohrer notes that in post-Christian Judaism σωτήρ translates *לְשׁוּׁתִי* [G. Fohrer, "σωτήρ," in *TNDT*, 7:1012]).

<sup>19</sup>Judg 3:9, 15; 12:3; Neh 9:27; Esth 8:12 (LXX addition)

references to God. This can be observed in a couple of ways. First, σωτήρ usually appears with a personal pronoun in the LXX.<sup>20</sup> In these cases, Savior relates to the things God has done for an individual or a group. One might also add four instances where the epithet Savior is tied to Israel.<sup>21</sup> Thus, God as Savior primarily recalled his personal, recognizable deliverance for his people individually or corporately. Second, apart from σωτήρ's appearance with a personal pronoun, virtually every context reveals a specific act of deliverance, which is tied to the description of God as Savior. For instance, the deliverance of the Jews in 3 Maccabees 6:16-41 causes them to exult in their God and Savior (6:29, 32). Even when the title expands to "the Savior of all" in the Wisdom of Solomon, it retains its connection to a specific act of God's saving: "For the one who turned toward it was saved, not by the thing that was beheld, but by you, the Savior of all" (16:7 NRSV). The author refers to the serpent lifted up in the wilderness, whereby God saved the Israelites from the fiery serpents (Num 21:4-9). Thus, such examples also demonstrate that the epithet Savior was invoked as a response and description of the things God had done.<sup>22</sup>

In a few instances, the title went beyond a mere reference of God's saving actions. In this case, the power and fulfillment of God's saving actions substantiated his divinity. One observes this use in the book of Isaiah. In the LXX, Isaiah contains a

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<sup>20</sup>26 out of 34 times (αὐτοῦ – Deut 32:15; Ps 23:5; Ode 2:15; PssSol 16:4; ὑμῶν – 1 Sam 10:19; Bar 4:22; σου – Isa 17:10; αὐτῶν – 3 Macc 6:29; PssSol 3:6; μου – Pss 23:5; 24:5; 26:1, 9; 61:3, 7; Ode 4:18; 9:47; Sir 51:1; Mic 7:7; Hab 3:18; Isa 12:2; ἡμῶν – Ps 64:6; 78:9; 94:1; PssSol 8:33; 17:3).

<sup>21</sup>Isa 45:15; 1 Macc 4:30; 3 Macc 6:32 (πατριον); 7:16.

<sup>22</sup>See also Jdt 9:11.

relatively high concentration of the epithet (5 occurrences), along with similar occasions of the substantive participle σωζων.<sup>23</sup> The epithet Savior and the theme of salvation appear regularly in Isaiah's latter chapters. Each of these later pericopes where the term occurs, including the participle, proclaims the coming salvation promised by God. As in previous LXX examples, Isaiah maintains the habit of linking Savior with the actual saving work of God. However, Isaiah's declarations of God as the Savior also correlate to God's divinity. In these passages, God's assured work of future salvation proves that Yahweh is the only God. Take Isaiah 45:14-25 for example.<sup>24</sup> The prophet tells of the future age when the nations will follow Israel (v. 14). As a result, those who follow idols will be confounded, but Israel will be saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation (v. 16). Yet, some among Israel have not sought God truly despite his pleading with them to do so (vv. 18-19). Isaiah's prophecy addresses this situation in verses 20-21:

Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, you survivors of the nations! They have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idols, and keep on praying to a god that cannot save. Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me." (ESV)

In these verses, the prophet argues that God predicted his coming salvation, and peering into the future, he accomplished it. Thus, those who witness the fulfillment of God's saving promise realize the final assertion of verse 21: there is no other god besides the God of Israel. Since he has predicted and performed his salvation, he has proven that he alone is God.

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<sup>23</sup>σωτήρ – Isa 12:2; 17:10; 45:15, 21; 62:11; σωζων – Isa 43:3, 11; 60:16.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. Isa 43:3, 11-12; 60:16; 62:8-11.

Isaiah's use of the term Savior distinctly relates to his particular message of God's future salvation. God's role as Savior demonstrated his unrivaled wisdom and power to control the events of history, establishing further that Israel's God is the only true God. Therefore, the epithet in Isaiah carried an authoritative, divine sense, while it remained vitally connected to actual redeeming works of God.

In Second Temple Jewish literature Savior acts in some of the same ways as in the OT. The epithet could refer to God or to men. This range of usage varies depending on the author. Josephus uses the title fairly often, always with reference to men and sometimes combined with εὐεργέτης.<sup>25</sup> Apocryphal occurrences reference God with the epithet all but once.<sup>26</sup> In Philo's occasional employment of the term, he preferred the title for God, but occasionally used it for men.<sup>27</sup>

Jewish writers also expanded the OT's range of meaning for Savior. Philo, for example, used the title with greater freedom. Sometimes the term included beneficence as broad as God's creative and sustaining care for the world, and at other times, only loose associations with God's saving and provisionary works were in view.<sup>28</sup> These

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<sup>25</sup>Josephus *Ant.* 2:94 (LCL 242: 208-09); 11:278 (LCL 326 [1937]: 448-49); 12:3, 261; 14:444 (LCL 365 [1933]: 2-3; 134-35; 678-79); 16:105 (substantive participle) (LCL 410 [1963]: 248-49); *idem*, *Bellum judaicum* 1:530; 3:459 (LCL 203 [1927]: 250-53; 704-05); 4:575; 7:71 (LCL 210 [1928]: 170-71; 526-27); *idem*, *Vita* 1:244, 259 (LCL 186: 90-93; 96-97).

<sup>26</sup>Esth 5:1(LXX addition); Jdt 9:11; 1 Macc 4:30; 3 Macc 6:29, 32; 7:16; *Odes Sol.* 2:15; 4:18; 9:47; Wis 16:7; Sir 51:1; *Pss. Sol.* 3:6; 8:33; 16:4; 17:3; Bar 4:22; the exception is Esth 8:12 (LXX addition).

<sup>27</sup>Philo *De opificio mundi* 169 (LCL 226 [1929]: 134-35); *idem*, *De specialibus legibus* 1:252; 1.272; 2:134 (LCL 320 [1937]: 244-45; 256-57; 386-87); *idem*, *De Abrahamo* 137; 176 (LCL 289 [1935]: 70-71; 86-87); *idem*, *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* 137 (LCL 247 [1930]: 78-79); cf. *Legatio*, 22, 196 (LCL 379: 12-15; 100-01).

<sup>28</sup>For the former, see Philo *Opif.* 169 (LCL 226: 134-35); *idem*, *Abr.* 137 (LCL 289: 70-71); and the latter, *idem*, *Spec.* 2:134 (LCL 320: 386-87); *idem*, *Deus* 137 (LCL 247: 78-79).

instances depart from OT style and reflect σωτήρ's use in the Greco-Roman world. Savior no longer described God's covenantal saving work alone, but sometimes included notions of God's benefaction toward mankind in general.

This broadening trend also appears in the *Sibylline Oracles*. There, the epithet occurs a few times as a general title, without recognizable reference to God's saving work.<sup>29</sup> In those instances where Savior does not reflect God's saving work, the poet interestingly uses the embellished epithet "immortal savior."<sup>30</sup> To further demonstrate this surprising use, not only is the title severed from God's saving activity, in 1.166 the "immortal savior" releases his wrath upon the unrepentant. This occurrence takes place in a pericope that characterizes the preaching of Noah: "Suddenly you will find the air in confusion and the wrath of the great God will come upon you from heaven. It will truly come to pass that the immortal savior will cast forth upon men...unless you propitiate God and repent as from now."<sup>31</sup> Granted, the use of "immortal savior" occurs in a message calling for repentance. But this consideration does not entirely offset the force of verses 166-67, where the epithet "immortal savior" was chosen to accompany the action of judgment rather than deliverance. Thus, it appears that Savior in the *Sibylline Oracles*, specifically "immortal savior," could be used without its usual connection to God's saving graces.

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<sup>29</sup>See *Sib. Or.* 1:73 (*OTP*, 1:336), 152 (*OTP*, 1:338), 166 (*OTP*, 1:338); 3:35 (*OTP*, 1:362); however, not with 2:28 (*OTP*, 1:345), 344 (*OTP*, 1:347). The last two verses are clearly connected with acts of divine deliverance.

<sup>30</sup>*Sib. Or.* 1:73 (*OTP*, 1:336), 152 (*OTP*, 1:338), 166 (*OTP*, 1:338); 3:35(*OTP*, 1:362).

<sup>31</sup>*Sib. Or.* 1:164-68 (*OTP*, 1:338-39, trans. J. J. Collins).

It is not entirely clear why the author chose this particular epithet in association with judgment. Perhaps he wanted to counter an imperial usage of the epithet. The accompanying adjective “immortal” might be used to support such a conjecture.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, some anti-Roman sentiments are detected elsewhere in the *Sibylline Oracles*.<sup>33</sup> This epithet also emphasizes God’s sovereignty and power. The “immortal savior” is king (1.73), knower and overseer of all things (1.51-52), dispenser of judgment (1.64-69), and creator of the heaven and earth (3.35). Whatever connotations may have been intended, this peculiar use of Savior in the *Sibylline Oracles* departs from OT and some early Jewish trends.

To summarize, σωτήρ in the LXX was primarily a descriptive title. It described the work of God, delivering his people on corporate and individuals levels in present trials and in the age to come. Saving work was such a regular feature of God’s activity that it fittingly became a title for him, though not a technical one. The divine title saw some mutations in the Second Temple period. Most strands of early Jewish writings maintained an OT meaning of the epithet σωτήρ, but some did not. For the latter, the title crept away from clear connection to God’s deliverance of his people. One cannot be sure why some Jews departed from OT style, but it is likely that Greco-Roman usage had some impact on their formulations.

Greco-Roman, OT, and Jewish uses of Savior share commonalities, as well as differences. First, Savior acts a functional title in each of the three settings. It derives

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<sup>32</sup>Cf. M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 100 n. 19.

<sup>33</sup>E.g., *Sib. Or.* 5:414-433 (*OTP*, 1:403); J. J. Collins, *OTP*, 1:391-92.

from an act of deliverance or provision. The OT and some Jewish writers differ from Greco-Roman style at this point. The former connect Savior to God's covenantal deliverances and promises of salvation for Israel. Greco-Roman and some Jewish uses include a broader range of worldly provisions that could be considered salvific. As noted above, the help of physicians, politicians, and philosophers came under the banner of saving intervention. Therefore, any number of good deeds could attain salvific status in some ancient settings. Second, σωτήρ could stand as a marker of honor, in addition to merely describing the saving work of a person in each of these three cultures. However, this usage occurs rarely in the OT outside of Isaiah, where the title functioned as a description of God's saving work and as a marker of his deity. Finally, OT and Jewish writers clearly distinguished between mortal men and the immortal God when using the epithet σωτήρ. Though they could ascribe men such titles as Savior, they were unwilling to worship them. On the other hand, the lines between humanity and divinity seemed to blur in the cults of the Greco-Roman world.

**Savior in the NT and post-apostolic writings.** I will only make a few brief comments about σωτήρ in the NT and post-apostolic writings, because many of the issues intrude on the territory yet to be covered in 1 Timothy below. Many NT occurrences show that the epithet remained a functional title. In the NT, σωτήρ only refers to God or Jesus and usually in reference to salvation from sins.<sup>34</sup> Since the title so often related to salvation from sin, one can see why it became more prominent for Jesus. Though

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<sup>34</sup>Cf. Foerster, "σωτήρ," in *TNDT*, 7:1002-03.

salvation was also attributed to the Father,<sup>35</sup> the title especially suited the Son. For example, Christ as Savior can allude to his past sacrificial death for the church (Eph 5:23) or his future return in power (Phil 3:20). As in these examples, when σωτήρ describes Jesus, the context includes some specific aspect of his saving work.<sup>36</sup> However, in the other NT and post-apostolic writings, the title may appear without any immediate referent to his salvific deeds.<sup>37</sup> However, these occurrences do not show likeness to secular usages, where σωτήρ regularly means Preserver, Benefactor, or Patron. One cannot doubt that God's eschatologically saving deeds still fill the epithet with meaning, even if they do so implicitly. For, they maintain a wider context of Christianity and lack similarity to secular usage.<sup>38</sup> Other NT passages that do not relate to salvation from sin still resonate with OT style. Mary's song of joy in God as Savior echoes Habakkuk 3:18, as well as OT themes of God saving the humble.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, this passage reflects the OT norm of relating Savior to a particular deed of gracious intervention by God: "my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant" (Luke 1:47-48 ESV). Mary exulted in God as Savior because his faithful work of delivering his people brought about her miraculous pregnancy. These affinities demonstrate that the NT and

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<sup>35</sup>1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4; Jude 1:25.

<sup>36</sup>Also Luke 2:11; Acts 5:31; 13:23; Eph 5:23; Phil 3:20; 1 Tim 2:3; 4:10; 2 Tim 1:10; Titus 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6; Jude 1:25.

<sup>37</sup>2 Pet 1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:2, 18; Ignatius *To the Ephesians* 1:1 (LCL 24 [1912]: 172-73); *To the Magnesians* 1:1 (LCL 24: 196-97); *2 Clement* 20:5 (LCL 24: 162-63); *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 19.2 (LCL 25 [1913]: 338-39).

<sup>38</sup>See further Foerster, "σωτήρ," in *TNDT*, 7:1018-19, 1020-21.

<sup>39</sup>Pss 25:5; 27:1, 9; 62:2, 6; Jdt 9:11.

the early church used Savior in much the same way as did OT authors. Savior usually remained explicitly connected to the redeeming work of God in Christ. The few exceptions still mirror OT style rather than Greco-Roman usage. Further objections to this suggestion will be handled below.

### **Savior in 1 Timothy**

The epithet σωτήρ only refers to God in 1 Timothy (1:1; 2:3; 4:10). Even though the epithet only describes the Father, the author did not neglect Jesus' saving work. For example, he holds that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save (σῶσαι) sinners" (1:15). The following sections will investigate the use of Savior in 1 Timothy. Most importantly, the investigation will focus on the literary context wherein the epithet occurs. Careful attention to the context of 1 Timothy will reveal the author's style of employing the title, which can then be compared to other backgrounds. Both literary context and background influence will determine the epithet's meaning. The most difficult passage to assess is 1:1. Because of its limited context, one must rely largely on the broader epistolary context of God as Savior and the letter's soteriology in general. Therefore, I will address 1:1 last of all.

Finally, areas of meaning and function overlap somewhat in this chapter. The meaning of Savior depends partially on the literary contexts of the passages. Sometimes such exegesis requires discussion of the epithet's function in a passage. I will try to keep the sections distinguished as much as possible, yet some merging between the two cannot be avoided.

**Savior in 1 Timothy 2:3.** The context of 2:1-7 limits the possible meanings of Savior in 2:3. Some have suggested that the mention of kings and those in authority in verse 2 sets up an imperial contrast for verse 3.<sup>40</sup> They claim that Paul references God as Savior in this context in order to remind his readers who the true king is. This interpretation cannot be ruled out. It is certainly possible that the author wished for the reader to infer this subtle counter-expression. However, verses 1-2 communicate no hostility toward human rulers. Nothing in the text suggests that Paul sought to undermine those in authority. On the contrary, he ordered that prayers be offered on their behalf for the good of believers and for their own salvation.<sup>41</sup> The mere appearance of the epithet does not mean that it must relate to the imperial cult, since the title could be used with various meanings. The context demonstrates that Paul's inclusion of the title Savior has a much clearer purpose, illumining its meaning. Its meaning comes to light by understanding that Savior in verse 3 adds an important element to the argument of 2:1-7.

Before delving into the argument of 2:1-7, one must first understand how verses 4-6 clarify the meaning of Savior in verse 3. Many interpreters recognize that σωτήρ in 2:3 is not simply a title, as some have suggested of the appellation, for example, in 1:1.<sup>42</sup> Rather, σωτήρ appears as a functional designation, which the relative clause of verse 4 makes clear. In addition, the author follows the epithet with a verbal form of the

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<sup>40</sup>B. Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 1:213; P. H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 176, who includes gods such as Artemis along with the emperors.

<sup>41</sup>See pp. 98-100 of this dissertation.

<sup>42</sup>E.g., Läger, *Die Christologie*, 123-24.

root σωθῆναι in verse 4, which should shed light on the meaning of the title in verse 3.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, the meaning of the epithet comes to light through the relative clause of verse 4 and the meaning of the verb σωθῆναι as it is described in the verses 4-6.

The relative clause of verse 4 describes Savior (ὃς πάντας ἀνθρώπους θέλει σωθῆναι καὶ εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας ἐλθεῖν), thereby providing insight into its meaning and the meaning of salvation in these verses. The finite verb (θέλει) has two complementary infinitives (σωθῆναι, ἐλθεῖν) describing the Savior God. He wills that all men be saved (σωθῆναι), and that all men come (ἐλθεῖν) to a knowledge of the truth. In this case, καὶ functions epexegetically, so that the latter idea explains the former.<sup>44</sup> Coming to the knowledge of the truth is a necessary ingredient to salvation. The phrase ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας recurs four times in exactly this form in the PE, which leads some to suggest that it is a technical term in the PE.<sup>45</sup> The phrase only appears one other time in the NT, in Hebrews 10:26. In each of the instances, “the knowledge of the truth” correlates to believing the gospel and so being counted among God’s chosen ones. In the PE, the phrase especially relates to the entry point of salvation for individuals.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, salvation, in part, consists of believing the apostolic gospel.

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<sup>43</sup>Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 41; J. Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, EKKNT, vol. 15 (Zürich: Benziger; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1988), 119; I. H. Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC 38 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 425; Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 176; Läger, *Die Christologie*, 123-24.

<sup>44</sup>BDF §442.9; BDAG s.v. “καὶ” 1.δ; C. J. Ellicott, *A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Andover, MA: Warren F. Draper, 1865), 28; W. D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC, vol. 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 85; Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 178.

<sup>45</sup>E.g., Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 428.

<sup>46</sup>As I acknowledged in the first chapter, the PE share distinctly common ideas and terminology, though the letters should stand on their own. Therefore, where similarities exist, they may

Verses 5-6 give further explanation of salvation and the apostolic gospel. These verses ground (γὰρ) the claim that God actually wills for all mankind to inherit salvation. Verses 5-6 describe two divided parties: one God and the whole of fallen humanity. Every ethnicity of mankind fits into the latter category. There is also one mediator between these parties. Paul simplifies the relationship among God, humanity, and Christ so that he may demonstrate that the entire human race relates to one God. In addition, the one mediator emphasizes the sole means of salvation and reconciled relationship for mankind. The salvation offered by God is described in its most fundamental terms: he will save anyone from the race of men who draws near to him through the one mediator. The same type of argument appears in Romans 3:29-30.<sup>47</sup> In Romans, Paul argued for justification by faith by asserting that there is but one God, who has created and rules over all men, Jews and Gentiles. Therefore, since God is the one Lord of all, he saves all people indiscriminately by faith in the Mediator, Christ Jesus. Thus, verses 5-6 shed light on the sort of salvation that Paul has in mind. According to these verses, salvation concerns a relationship between mankind and God. Mankind stands separated from God, and this broken relationship requires the mediatory intervention of Christ. When one “comes to the knowledge of the truth” by believing this message, the work of the Mediator takes effect. Mankind then acquires salvation, resulting in a reconciled relationship with the one God. Thus, God is the Savior in that he

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shed light across the letters. See p. 18 of this dissertation.

<sup>47</sup>Cf. e.g., J. Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, in *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 21, trans. W. Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844-56; reprint Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 56.

wills that such reconciliation takes place, and that he made provision for salvation.<sup>48</sup> Paul maintains the emphasis on God as Savior, even though the work of the Mediator is the only means of affecting salvation. God does not save apart from Christ's mediation. While Christ receives recognition for salvation (1:15), the emphasis in 1 Timothy rests on God as Savior. God's saving action presumably consists of his conception and implementation of the plan of salvation as King and his application of salvation to everyone who believes.<sup>49</sup>

Some have sought to further define salvation and Savior in these verses. Because of the universal thrust in this passage (παῖς in 2:1, 2, 4, 6), they claim that the author conceives of salvation in strongly societal terms.<sup>50</sup> Salvation concerns more than an individual's relationship with God; it has to do with God forming a new community from all peoples. This interpretation rightly understands the strong universal emphasis of the pericope. It also properly interprets 2:3-7 within the larger context of 2:1-3:16, which emphasizes proper conduct for the household of God.<sup>51</sup> Truly the author cares deeply about the community of believers, not just an individual's relationship to God. Still,

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<sup>48</sup>C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles in the New English Bible*, NCB (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 21; P. Dornier, *Les Épitres Pastorales*, SB (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1969), 33; N. Brox, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, RNT (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1963), 233; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 40; D. Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, TNTC, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity and Eerdmans, 1990), 65; G. D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, GNC (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 2; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 355; Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 60. Cf. 1 Tim 1:4.

<sup>49</sup>See pp. 134-38 of this dissertation on the relationship of 1 Timothy's theology and Christology.

<sup>50</sup>L. T. Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, AB, vol. 35A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 2001), 191; Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 178.

<sup>51</sup>I take 3:14-16 as a transitional passage between 2:1-3:13 and 4:1-16 (cf. Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 60; R. Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure in the Pastoral Epistles*, JSNTSup 280 [London: T & T Clark International, 2004], 131).

considering all of this data, it seems inappropriate to define salvation socially as God's creation of a new, all-inclusive community. Certainly salvation has its implication in the realization of a new society, but the formation a new people of God is the consequence and not the essence of salvation in 1 Timothy. The entire letter demonstrates that the author cares about the conduct of those in God's household (2:1-3:15; 5:1-6:2; 6:17-19). However, he does not describe salvation itself in social terms. When speaking of salvation in 1 Timothy, one should not confuse its meaning and its consequences. Therefore, it would more closely reflect 1 Timothy to say that a new community results from the company of the saved.

The context of 2:1-7 confirms that Savior is a functional title. This passage will receive more attention in the following section on the function of Savior in 2:3. At this point, it suffices to say that 2:3 establishes Paul's injunction to pray for all men in 2:1-2. The church should pray for all because it is both good before God and fitting with his universal saving plan. Verses 4-6 explicate the latter justification for prayer. To sum up, the logic of the passage demands that prayer should be made for all men because God wills to save all. The epithet Savior occurs with thoughtful purpose in this passage, supporting Paul's insistence on universal prayer. This passage, then, demonstrates that Paul employed σωτήρ in keeping with OT style.

In conclusion, Savior in 1 Timothy 2:3 appears as a functional title. It occurs because God's universal, salvific will supports Paul's injunction in 2:1. Therefore, it matches biblical style with emphases on spiritual realities and as a description of his activity. In addition, Savior means that he reconciles Jews and Gentiles to himself through the Mediator, Christ Jesus. The author implies that God initiated the plan of

salvation and claims that he wills its realization for all people. God as Savior rescues mankind from enmity with God. The consequences of such an alienated state include various miseries in this life and ultimately the eschatological judgment of God (1:19-20; 5:24; 6:9). Accordingly, this salvation concerns both present and future realities.<sup>52</sup>

**Savior in 1 Timothy 4:10.** Some interpreters argue that σωτήρ exhibits a more imperial sense as Preserver in this context.<sup>53</sup> This interpretation avoids difficulty in understanding how God is actually Savior of all men (πάντων ἀνθρώπων) by denying that Paul intended a purely soteriological sense with the epithet. In this case, the epithet counters imperial claims and affirms God's provisional care for his entire creation. However, soteriology enters the picture when σωτήρ applies especially to believers (μάλιστα πιστῶν). In fairness, the argument avers that God is Preserver to both groups, but God's preservation for believers extends beyond this life into eternity. One advantage of this interpretation lies in its determination to take the phrase plainly as an actuality: God *is* Savior of all men. However, one disadvantage of this interpretation is that the appellation Savior never clearly means Preserver anywhere else in the OT and

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<sup>52</sup>Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 355; contra Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 191; P. H. Towner, *The Goal of Our Instruction: The Structure of Theology and Ethics in the Pastoral Epistles*, JSNTSup 34 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989), 86; who stress the present aspect; V. Hasler, *Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus* (Zurich: Theologischer, 1978), 11, who stresses the future aspect. See also the following section on 4:10 (pp. 89-92 of this dissertation).

<sup>53</sup>John Chrysostom *Homilies on Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, ed. and trans P. Schaff, NPNF, American ed., vol. 13 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1956), 446; Calvin, *Epistles of Paul to Timothy*, 112; C. Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1969), 509; Baugh, "Savior of All People"; Barrett, *Pastoral Epistles*, 70; Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 108; and E. K. Simpson, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1874), 69 suggest a double sense of Savior and Preserver.

NT when referring to God.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, 2:3 could appear as a precedent for σωτήρ's meaning, where Savior clearly denotes the eternal, personal salvation that God offers through faith in Christ Jesus.<sup>55</sup> Still more, some would argue that the letter's central theme is soteriological and so σωτήρ ought to be understood within the epistle's soteriological concept.<sup>56</sup> If Savior in 4:10 follows the meaning in 2:3, then it implies only the potentiality of God's salvation to all mankind, as in 2:3-4 (θέλει).<sup>57</sup> For this reason, the clarifying phrase (μάλιστα πιστῶν) follows the universal statement.<sup>58</sup> In this way, the theological declaration of God as Savior in 4:10 echoes the one made in 2:3. Both statements reflect the interests of God and the nature of his salvation. He wills all people be saved through faith in Jesus' ransoming work, resulting in their eschatological deliverance.

The immediate context of 4:10 also alludes to salvation consisting of eternal life for each believing person. The relationship of verses 8-10 are complex and a fuller exegesis will follow below. Still, it can be maintained that verse 10 grounds the claim of

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<sup>54</sup>See pp. 75-81 of this dissertation.

<sup>55</sup>See pp. 83-89 of this dissertation.

<sup>56</sup>This also depends upon one's understanding of salvation in the letter (Towner, *Goal*, 75-120; F. Young, *The Theology of the Pastoral Letters* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994], 50-55; B. Fiore, *The Pastoral Epistles: First Timothy, Second Timothy, Titus*, SP 12 [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007], 59; cf. also Donelson's perspective L. R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles*, HUT 22 [Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1986]).

<sup>57</sup>The author certainly does not mean that all people will eschatologically be saved, for individuals must first come to a knowledge of the truth in faith (1:13-14; 2:4, 7; 4:16). Negative examples in 1 Timothy also rule out universal eschatological salvation (1:19-20; 5:24; 6:9).

<sup>58</sup>The meaning of μάλιστα remains debated. My point does not suffer whether one takes it as "especially" or "namely." See T. C. Skeat, "Especially the Parchments: A Note on 2 Timothy 4:13," *JTS* 30 (1979): 173-77; R. A. Campbell, "καὶ μάλιστα οἰκείων: A New Look at 1 Tim. 5:8," *NTS* 41 (1995):

verse 8 to some extent, as most commentators agree.<sup>59</sup> In verse 8, the author asserts that godliness has promise for the present life and eternal life (ζωῆς τῆς νῦν καὶ τῆς μελλούσης). This assertion receives backing on the basis of Paul and Timothy's gospel endeavors (κοπιῶμεν καὶ ἀγωνιζόμεθα).<sup>60</sup> Their sacrificial missionary efforts demonstrate that the pursuit of godliness is valuable in every way. Verse 8's promise of worthwhile and eternal life comprises the goal of the apostolic labors (εἰς τοῦτο). Therefore, they struggle in verse 10 for the purpose of spreading the message of life in verse 8. This gospel work is further motivated by the succeeding grounding clause (ὅτι ἠλπικαμεν ἐπὶ θεῷ ζῶντι). Hope in God, namely, the only God who lives and can give true and eternal life (θεῷ ζῶντι),<sup>61</sup> encourages their endurance of missionary labors. The final relative clause continues the thought of hope in the God who gives the eternal life promised in verse 8 (ὅς ἐστιν σωτὴρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων μάλιστα πιστῶν). So, in 4:10 God as Savior corresponds to his promise to give life to those who walk in faith. The same correspondence between eternal life and divine salvation occurs in 1:15-16.<sup>62</sup>

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157-60; V. S. Poythress, "The Meaning of μάλιστα in 2 Timothy 4:13 and Related Verses," *JTS* 53 (2002): 523-32.

<sup>59</sup>Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 309-10; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 555; L. Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, vol. 1, *Kommentar zum ersten Timotheusbriefe*, HTKNT, Band XI/2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1994), 196-97; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 67; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 101; Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 509; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 68.

<sup>60</sup>Again, the following "Function" section will give further defense for Paul and Timothy as "we" (κοπιῶμεν καὶ ἀγωνιζόμεθα).

<sup>61</sup>See further comments in chap. 4. So also, R. Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 127; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 69; Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 509; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 67; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 556; Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 251. Cf. also M. J. Goodwin, "The Pauline Background of the Living God as Interpretive Context for 1 Timothy 4:10," *JSNT* 61 (1996): 65-85.

<sup>62</sup>Dibelius and Conzelmann's comparison to mystery religions on this point has been refuted

Therefore, in the context of 4:8-10, God as Savior describes the eternal life that God gives to believers.<sup>63</sup>

The character and meaning of Savior in 4:10 concur with its meaning in 2:3. Both epithets occur as functional titles, describing God's saving plan and activity.<sup>64</sup> They describe God as one who desires to save all men, even though he only actually saves those who trust in the ransoming work of Christ. Although 4:10 does not specify the object of the believer's faith, one can infer from 2:3-7 (cf. 1:16) that the object is the person (μεσίτης . . . ἄνθρωπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς) and work (ὁ δοὺς ἑαυτὸν ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων) of Jesus Christ. The saving God in 4:10 gives life to believers beginning now and continuing into the life to come (4:8). Thus, the present and future elements of salvation show up clearer in 4:10 than in the immediate context of 2:3.

**Savior in 1 Timothy 1:1.** The terseness of the greeting in 1 Timothy 1:1-2 makes it difficult to determine the meaning of σωτήρ in 1:1. Consequently, this occurrence seems more like the secular style, where the title was more honorific than descriptive. For example, K. Läger has suggested that the epithet's occurrence in 2:3 and 4:10 are filled with meaning, while the occasion in 1:1 is simply a title.<sup>65</sup> If one limits her interpretive boundaries to immediate literary contexts, then it might be impossible to defend any significance behind the epithet. However, if one takes into account the

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based on its post-NT development (*Pastoral Epistles*, 101; cf. e.g., Towner, *Goal*, 76-77).

<sup>63</sup>This section only concerns meaning, not function. More comment will follow below.

<sup>64</sup>Läger, *Die Christologie*, 123-24.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

epistolary context, especially 2:3 and 4:10, then one may venture a likely meaning for the epithet in 1:1. The introductory mention of Savior forecasts what is to come.

References to salvation in the letter support the meaning already proposed for Savior in 2:3 and 4:10. The meaning of σωθήσεται in 2:15 continues to be debated.<sup>66</sup> Even if one argues for a physical rather than a spiritual sense in this passage, its volatility keeps it from forming a strong foundation for the meaning of Savior in 1:1. Furthermore, no other forms of σώζω indicate a physical sense in 1 Timothy.<sup>67</sup> Beyond verbal cognates, ideas such as faith, hope, eternal life, and the gospel relate to God's salvation in 1 Timothy.<sup>68</sup> Still, the uses of σωτήρ in 2:3 and 4:10 provide the clearest comparison to Savior in 1:1.

Therefore, in light of the epistolary context and the lack of immediate literary context in 1:1, Savior in 1:1 should be read along the same lines as the combined meaning of σωτήρ in 2:3 and 4:10. This suggestion also gains viability because of the proximity of the ideas of salvation and hope in 1:1 (θεοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τῆς ἐλπίδος ἡμῶν) and 4:10 (ἠλπικαμεν ἐπὶ θεῷ ζῶντι, ὃς ἐστιν σωτήρ).

**Summary.** First Timothy 1:1, 2:3, and 4:10 portray a consistent meaning for the divine epithet σωτήρ. God as Savior in 1 Timothy depicts the divine character and his

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<sup>66</sup>The literature here is expansive. See Mounce's many references for the contemporary debate, (*Pastoral Epistles*, 143-47).

<sup>67</sup>Cf. 1:15; 2:4; 4:16. The spiritual sense clearly predominates in the PE and the NT. See I. H. Marshall, "Faith and Works in the Pastoral Epistles," *SNT (SU)* 9 (1984): 203-18; Foerster, "σωτήρ," in *TNDT*, 7:965-1025.

<sup>68</sup>2:4-7, 15; 4:10, 12-16; 5:5-6; 6:11-12, 17-19.

merciful dealings with mankind. The compassion of the Savior shines forth in his will to save all humanity, even though only those of faith will realize his salvation. He is the one God as well as the one Savior for all people. The Savior promises the benefits of valuable life now and eternal life in the future. He enacts this promise for those who trust in the intervention of Christ on their behalf. Thus, God saves through Christ those who believe in the Mediator and his sacrifice. Faith in the Mediator's ransoming work restores the estranged party, sinful mankind, to God, resulting in the promised life. While salvation may have multiple effects, such as the formation of a new community and the ordering of God's church, these important consequences of salvation should not be confused with the essence of salvation in the letter.

The title σωτήρ reflects a largely OT background, in that it acts as a functional title describing the covenantal, redeeming work of God. The epithet was common both in OT and Jewish writings and in the Greco-Roman world. But two of the three uses of σωτήρ in 1 Timothy show greatest affinity to biblical backgrounds because of the context's accompanying descriptions of salvation. God as Savior in 1 Timothy specifically tells of his spiritual, eschatological deliverance. This interest in σωτήρ differs from Greco-Roman currencies, which focused on physical benefits and peaceful provisions. Instead, it reverberates with OT and NT notions of Savior as a divine epithet, granting present and final deliverance for his people. And God's salvation experienced in the present often consisted in spiritual benefits rather than physical ones (4:8-10). One must grant that it is ultimately impossible to determine the exact background to σωτήρ in 1 Timothy. Furthermore, I do not want to maintain that the author and recipients of 1 Timothy were unaware of the epithet and its usages in secular culture. However, it does

seem that the nature of salvation and thus the epithet Savior differ fundamentally from the tendencies of the secular culture. In addition, the conceptual background for σωτήρ in 1 Timothy reflects the author and reader's religious heritage consisting primarily in the Hebrew Bible and the teachings of the early church.

### **Summary**

Savior in 1 Timothy means that God mercifully and impartially wills for all people to gain eternal life now through his Son, and he ratifies that will for those who believe in Christ. Although the author does not look into the past, he probably viewed God the Savior as the deviser of salvation on the basis of his sovereignty over all things. This salvation encompasses personal reconciliation with the one God, which men need because of sin's separating effect. The Savior grants the reconciled believer the promise of valuable life now and extending into eternity. The Savior grants these saving benefits by means of the individual's faith in the Mediator and his self-giving ransom.

Some have described this theological outlook as immanent, and as a sort of substitute for the more common Pauline title Father.<sup>69</sup> God's involvement with the world is clearly depicted in 1 Timothy as one who cares for the world and wills to save all people. Yet, one needs to allow this letter to speak for itself and listen to the theological tones sounded here, rather than trying to make it fit some other prefigured category. If one allows this letter to speak for itself and create its own definition of the Savior God, he finds that the author emphasizes a God who is merciful, long-suffering, and gracious. He

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<sup>69</sup>See, e.g., J. A. Fitzmyer, "The Savior God: The Pastoral Epistles," in *The Forgotten God: Perspective in Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Paul J. Achtemeier on the Occasion of his Seventy-*

continually extends salvation to all sinners at the cost of Christ Jesus' sacrifice, and endows them with eternal benefits by their simple expression of faith. These characterizations may also suit God as Father. However, I contend that the author wanted to set aside descriptions of God's paternal relationship to Christ and to Christians in order to lay special emphasis on the divine heart and activity of redeeming mankind. Therefore, the epithet Savior should be appreciated as a unique description of God's compassionate work through Christ for all people.

At the outset, this dissertation intended to address the seeming polarity of God's immanence as Savior and his transcendence as King, among other issues.<sup>70</sup> Having explored the meaning of both of these terms, I can now speak to their compatibility, without regard to their function yet.

First, the foregoing investigations on the meaning of the doxologies and σωτήρ passages have suggested that there indeed exists some polarity between the ideas of King and Savior. The doxologies and Savior passages have revealed distinctly different theological perspectives. The former extol the majesty and uniqueness of God, while the latter emphasize his merciful welcome to sinners. Thus, there exists a material difference between God as King and Savior, yet both ideas resonate with OT conceptions of God's person. This suggestion contradicts those who interpret Savior in 1 Timothy as a polemic against Rome, thus claiming that Savior represents God's royalty and divinity.<sup>71</sup>

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*fifth Birthday*, ed. A. A. Das and F. J. Matera (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 185, and chap. 1 of this dissertation, pp. 10-15.

<sup>70</sup>See chap. 1 of this dissertation.

<sup>71</sup>E.g., Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 509; H. Burki, *Die erste Brief des Paulus an Timotheus*, WP (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 1974), 47.

Second, one can affirm the author's consistency of theological thought, despite the surprising juxtaposition of Savior and King. The themes of King and Savior cohabit the letter without conflict. For example, in 2:3-6, precisely where God is Savior he is also the one and only God, separated from sinful humanity, requiring mediation in order to receive sinners. And in 1:12-17, God's salvation comes through Christ, and praise adorns the only Sovereign, not the merciful Savior. Therefore, 1 Timothy exhibits a range of theological formulations that reside together peacefully and coherently.

In conclusion, the author holds these distinct theological perspectives as one perspective. His God is Savior and King. Even though he employs some Hellenistic vocabulary, the content of his wide-ranging theology remains thoroughly biblical. I still need to explain his reasoning for accenting these attributes and propose a way for understanding their relationship to one another.

### **Function**

Having arrived at the meaning of σωτήρ in 1 Timothy, the question now is: what is the purpose of the author's emphasis on God as Savior? What did he hope to accomplish by employing the epithet these three times?

#### **The Function of Savior in 1 Timothy 1:1**

The brevity of 1 Timothy's introduction makes it more difficult to determine the function of σωτήρ in 1:1. Because the term appears as a title without clear explanation, many commentators suppose that it stands as a polemic against the cultic

uses in the Greco-Roman world, both those of the pagan deities and emperors.<sup>72</sup> They believe that Paul used this predicate to demonstrate that there was but one true Savior, who is worthy of worship. This suggestion is certainly possible, especially if one sees this function for Savior in 2:3 and 4:10. In fact, almost any proposal for the function of 1:1 depends upon one's interpretation of σωτήρ's function elsewhere in the letter. Thus, the broader landscape of the letter will shed more light on the function of Savior in 1:1, just as in the above section on meaning.

However, a couple of functions may already be identifiable from the immediate context. First, the placement of Savior in 1:1 itself functions as a thematic overture for the letter.<sup>73</sup> It looks forward to the epithet's two other appearances in 2:3 and 4:10. Paul's letter openings often foreshadow important matters in the body of the letter. P. T. O'Brien has argued for a theme-setting function in Pauline thanksgivings.<sup>74</sup> Since 1 Timothy has no thanksgiving, the greeting may very well point forward to main themes in the letter.<sup>75</sup> Second, σωτήρ also defines the calling and ministry of the apostle (ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν θεοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν). Paul sees himself under the sovereign direction of the God who saves.<sup>76</sup> As I will argue, this function carries over

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<sup>72</sup>W. Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), 5; Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 315-16; Simpson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 25; A. T. Hanson, *Studies in the Pastoral Epistles* (London: SPCK, 1968), 21; Burki, *Die erste Brief*, 47; J. L. Houlden, *The Pastoral Epistles*, PNTC (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976; reprint, London: SCM, 1989), 30; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 6; Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 22; Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, 103-05.

<sup>73</sup>Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 96; Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 157.

<sup>74</sup>P. T. O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul*, NovTSupp 49 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977).

<sup>75</sup>The greetings of Romans (Rom 1:1-7) and Galatians (Gal 1:1-5) also exhibit this function.

<sup>76</sup>See chap. 4 for more on the likely significance of ἐπιταγή. See also P. Fairbairn, *The*

into the rest of the letter as well. Therefore, the material that precedes the body of the letter has a characteristically important function for Paul's letters. Further consideration of 1:1's function may resurface after the discussions of 2:3 and 4:10.

### **The Function of Savior in 1 Timothy 2:3**

In the course of determining the meaning of σωτήρ in 2:3, I already alluded to one of the functions performed by Savior in 2:1-7, namely, it's support of verse 1.<sup>77</sup> A fuller defense for that suggestion will now follow. Chapter 2:1 begins a new section giving orders for various groups within the church.<sup>78</sup> The section opens with a mandate to pray for all people. The initially stated purpose of this prayer occurs in verse 2, "so that (ἵνα) we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity" (NRSV). However, the argument of verses 3-5 shows that the believers' prayers for all people has a second, implied purpose, in addition to the one explicitly mentioned in 2:2b (ἵνα ἡρεμον καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον διάγωμεν ἐν πάσῃ εὐσεβείᾳ καὶ σεμνότητι).<sup>79</sup> Since God wills to save all mankind (vv. 3-5), prayer for all people must include petition for their salvation. Therefore, Paul's reference to God as Savior in verse 3 establishes an assumed command to pray for the salvation of all people. Verse 3 forms the connection between verses 1-2 and verses 3-5. In verse 3, Paul explains the reasoning for his

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*Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1874), 71, 100; Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 5; Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 2; H. Roux, *Les Épîtres Pastorales: Commentaire de I et II Timothée et Tite* (Geneva: Librairie Protestante, 1959), 2; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 8.

<sup>77</sup>See pp. 84-89 of this dissertation.

<sup>78</sup>See especially Van Neste, *Cohesion*, 125, 142-44.

<sup>79</sup>See pp. 84-89 of this dissertation for the argument of vv. 3-5.

command to pray for all people: “This (τοῦτο) is good and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior.”<sup>80</sup> The neuter demonstrative pronoun probably relates to the entirety of verses 1-2, and not just the resultant peaceful life of verse 2.<sup>81</sup> Regardless, the succeeding context clarifies that verse 3 has to do with God’s universal saving will, which surely relates to the universality of the prayers mentioned in verse 1.

The immediate literary function of Savior in 2:3 is to support the implied command to pray for the salvation of all people. Most commentators have not stopped at this function, however. Questions persist as to what else may have caused Paul to emphasize the universality of God’s salvation. It is commonly suggested that Paul sought to combat some restrictive theology taught by the opponents, whether Jewish or Gnostic.<sup>82</sup> But it is difficult to know if Paul intended God as Savior to counter this false teaching, since he nowhere explicitly mentions the false teachers’ exclusionary soteriology. This lack of overt description is not due to Paul’s desire to avoid direct

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<sup>80</sup>Modern eclectic texts do not include γὰρ in v. 3, even though the reading has wide support. Even if the conjunction is not original, v. 3 still conceptually grounds vv. 1-2. The reading suggested by NA<sup>27</sup> and UBS<sup>4</sup> is an essentially Alexandrian, though it is also an earlier reading. The reading that maintains the conjunction includes the majority text, Alexandrian (e.g.,  $\aleph^2$ , H), and Western (e.g., D, F) witnesses.

<sup>81</sup>One might expect a feminine pronoun if the purpose clause was in view (ἵνα ἤρεμον καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον διάγωμεν ἐν πάσῃ εὐσεβείᾳ καὶ σεμνότητι), although it would not be grammatically necessary.

<sup>82</sup>Against Jewish exclusivism (J. Jeremias, *Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus*, NTD [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1954], 20; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 425; Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 195); against gnostic tendencies (Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 364; Brox, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 126; Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, 119); against both (Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 63, 102; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 85); against unnamed exclusivist teaching (Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 62; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 2; Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 197). In addition, Fairbairn wondered if the term Savior may have been used to offset the heightened pursuit of knowledge and lifestyle sought by some (71-72, cf. also Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 198; J. M. Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, ANTC [Nashville: Abingdon, 1996], 52; Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 59). Some would link this with incipient gnosticism, but Fairbairn does not. Similarly, Towner suggests that this universal soteriological emphasis counters Jewish exclusivism and an over-realized eschatology that encouraged withdrawal from the world

criticism of the disrupters' faults (e.g., 1:4-7; 4:1-3; 6:3-10). Yet, it is possible that such exclusivism existed in Ephesus or was just around the bend in Paul's mind. For example, one could imagine that an undue focus on the law (1:3-11) could lead to excluding some people from the possibility of salvation. In addition, devotion to genealogies may limit salvation based on one's ancestry (1:4). Paul responded directly to this problem by asserting that the law is not for the just (1:9) and that his view of the law accords with the gospel, which he then elucidates (1:11-16). In recounting his conversion, Paul stresses his seeming disqualification for salvation prior to receiving mercy, though not for the reasons just mentioned. His autobiographical illustration climaxes in the faithful saying and example of his conversion, both of which testify to the limitlessness of God's saving power. Nothing can exclude a person from receiving mercy if God wills to save him.

Therefore, one can imagine that God as Savior may have played a role in confronting a restrictive salvation. There is some difficulty with this proposed function, namely, that there is not a strong literary connection between Savior and this possible exclusive soteriology. One may ask: if the important theme of God as Savior primarily functions to ward off exclusivism, would I not expect more explicit descriptions of the problem and how God as Savior is the solution? Perhaps the readers already knew the situation and could easily see the connection. From our vantage point, one cannot say for sure if the author's Savior theology in 2:3 addressed exclusivism. Though this proposal will receive more attention below, it should remain a possible function at this point.

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*(Letters to Timothy and Titus, 177; Towner, Goal, 22-24).*

### The Function of Savior in 1 Timothy 4:10

God as σωτήρ also functions in an immediately supportive way in 4:10. As noted above, the relationship of 4:8-10 is complex, so I will offer a fuller exegesis here.<sup>83</sup>

Verses 6-10 form a section intended to encourage Timothy to soundness in his teaching. This brief pericope contributes to a larger segment within the letter (3:14-4:16) that focuses on Timothy's conduct and his tasks in Ephesus.<sup>84</sup> Specific directives address the apostle's coworker beginning in 4:6. The author encourages Timothy to adhere to good teaching himself and to set this teaching before the church. Verse 7 expands the idea of verse 6 by contrasting negative and positive statements. The positive expansion of verse 6 urges Timothy to train for godliness. With this connection to verse 6, Timothy's training for godliness should probably be understood broadly, having to do with his public ministry and his private piety.<sup>85</sup> Timothy's public ministry and private piety need not be segregated (4:16), but the public aspect holds sway in this context. The next proposition grounds (v. 8, γὰρ) the appeal to train in godliness. Verse 8 claims that godliness should be sought for many benefits (πρὸς πάντα ὠφέλιμός), especially because of its promise in this life and in the one to come. Then, verse 9 probably looks back to verse 8 as the faithful saying.<sup>86</sup> The faithful saying emphasizes the truth that godliness issues in life with this gnomic statement.

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<sup>83</sup>See pp. 90-93 above.

<sup>84</sup>See pp. 64-66 in chap. 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>85</sup>So also, e.g., Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 107-08.

<sup>86</sup>Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 51; Barrett, *Pastoral Epistles*, 70; Brox, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 177; G. W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 198; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 101; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 104-05; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 554; Towner, *Letters to Timothy*

The idea of verse 10 needs clarifying before one can identify the relationship between verses 8-9 and verse 10. To what do the verbs of verse 10a refer (κοπιῶμεν καὶ ἀγωνιζόμεθα)?<sup>87</sup> Roloff has argued that Colossians 1:29 influences this text (εἰς ὃ καὶ κοπιῶ ἀγωνιζόμενος), and so he suggests that 1 Timothy 4:10 concerns missionary efforts.<sup>88</sup> In addition to the lexical similarities of these two passages, he avers that they both share the idea of struggling to spread the gospel. While the Colossians passage definitely shows some similarities to 1 Timothy 4:10, its influence only remains a possibility. For, as Oberlinner contested, differences in their contexts limit their similarities.<sup>89</sup> Still, Roloff's suggestion that these verbs in 4:10 have to do with the gospel mission holds true. In addition to Colossians 1:29, these words commonly refer to gospel work,<sup>90</sup> and given the remainder of verse 10 and the immediate context encouraging Timothy's sound teaching, a missionary idea seems most likely.<sup>91</sup> The subject of the verbs also suggests that gospel labors are in view. "We" probably refers only to Paul and Timothy, especially in light of the continual focus on Timothy in the

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*and Titus*, 308-09. Those who favor v. 10 as the faithful saying include Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 126-27; Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 107; Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, 240; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 247, 254.

<sup>87</sup>As has been noted, athletic imagery of vv. 7-8 continues in v. 10 (Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 102; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 67). This point also argues for ἀγωνιζόμεθα instead of the variant ὀνειδιζόμεθα, which does not enjoy as much textual support as the former.

<sup>88</sup>Roloff, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 247-48; cf. G. Holtz, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, THNT (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1972), 106.

<sup>89</sup>Roloff, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 197. He argues that the Christ's strength is Paul's basis in Col 1:29, whereas hope in God is the ground in 1 Tim 4:10.

<sup>90</sup>1 Tim 5:17; Col 1:29; 1 Thess 5:12; Gal 4:11; Phil 2:16; perhaps 1 Tim 6:12.

<sup>91</sup>So Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, 247-48; Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 84; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 67; M. Davies, *The Pastoral Epistles*, EC (London: Epworth, 1996), 35; Kelly,

context. There are thirteen second person singular verbs from 4:6-16. Therefore, verse 10 has to do exclusively with Paul and Timothy's work of spreading the gospel.

The goal for which they labor (εἰς τοῦτο) probably refers to the antecedent idea of godliness' promise of life in verses 8-9.<sup>92</sup> More specifically, the referent of τοῦτο is likely the promise of life in its broadest application via verse 9, that godliness' promise holds true for all men, not just Timothy.<sup>93</sup> Therefore, the purpose of their labor resides in the truth that godliness avails universally. They strive with the gospel knowing that the fruit of their message is eternal life. Therefore, verse 10a exhorts Timothy to continue his shared labors with Paul so that others might have life.

Enduring the difficulties of gospel labors finds support (ὅτι) in verse 10b on the basis of hope in the Living God, who is Savior of all. Thus, Paul's appeal to Timothy rests on theological grounds. They believe in their work and endure in it because of who God is. He is the true God, who is able to give the life promised in verse 8, thus he is the one who saves mankind.<sup>94</sup> This connection between life and salvation has already been noted.<sup>95</sup> In addition, the universal emphasis on God as Savior fittingly grounds their indiscriminate work, as they offer life to all peoples.

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*Pastoral Epistles*, 102; contra Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 250; Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 126-27, who claim that the verbs relate to training for virtue in the Christian life (cf. 1 Tim 6:12).

<sup>92</sup>Even if τοῦτο has its referent in v. 10b, my interpretation of the argument in these verses remains essentially intact. The labors are still in hopes of God the Savior granting life to people. Cf. Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 557.

<sup>93</sup>Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 68-69; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 101; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 67; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 555.

<sup>94</sup>Also Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 68-69; Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, 247-48. On "the Living God," see chap. 4 for further comments; also p. 90 above.

<sup>95</sup>See pp. 89-92 above.

Having understood the meaning of verse 10, the relationship between verse 10 and verses 8-9 can be discussed. Verse 10 grounds (γὰρ) the proposition of verses 8-9, that godliness leads to life. Paul and Timothy's labors (v. 10) prove that the promise of life is true (vv. 8-9). Godliness' promise is validated by the fact that the apostle and his co-worker endure all things for this purpose. Their spent lives testify to the claim that godliness holds great value.

In conclusion, 4:6-10 exhorts Timothy to godliness in his service to the church and in his own life. This important exhortation contributes to the overall purpose of 3:14-4:16, urging Timothy to faithful ministry in Ephesus. This pericope reminds Timothy of the universal scope of the task, which also requires considerable effort. An appropriate theological foundation in 4:10 establishes Paul's charge for Timothy to accept the mandate given him.

Therefore, Savior in 4:10 functions as one important reason for Timothy to carry out the task given to him. This theological statement clarifies and motivates the missionary gospel. It clarifies their ministry by reminding Timothy of God's will to give life to all mankind. It also motivates Timothy by compelling him to work hard spreading the gospel because he works on God's behalf. Paul and Timothy serve a God who freely offers salvation even to the fringes of mankind (cf. 1:12-16; 2:3), and so they are constrained to spread the divine gospel with all their energy.

As with 2:3, many commentators have supposed that this characteristically Pauline gospel faced opposition in Ephesus, and for this reason Paul forwards it again

here.<sup>96</sup> Yet, Paul still does not make this connection in the immediate context. One might suppose that the ascetic practices in 4:1-4 could lead to excluding some people from salvation.<sup>97</sup> However, it is not clear that these rigors related to requirements for salvation. Furthermore, Paul answers those false teachings directly in 4:3-5. The lack of connection between exclusivism and God as Savior in chapter 4 does not rule out the possibility that Savior functioned in that way. However, it limits this supposed function to a possibility, and leads one to consider other reasons for Paul's stress on God as Savior. This interpretation also misses the more obvious fact that the theological grounding of 4:10 is directed specifically at Timothy. In 3:14-4:16, Paul has returned to his main concern in this letter of encouraging Timothy to carry out the ministry in Ephesus.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, the theological grounding in 4:10 ought to be read with Timothy in mind, not just the opponents.

Several commentators have forwarded a markedly different interpretation of verse 10, especially with regard to the meaning and function of God as Savior.<sup>99</sup> This reading understands Savior in a broader sense as Preserver or Patron. Thus, they suggest that Paul does not call God Savior in the sense that he gives eternal life, but that he makes the sun to shine on the evil and the good. However, Savior carries its fullest sense "especially for believers," for to believers he grants eternal life as well as earthly

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<sup>96</sup>Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 102; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 256; Bassler, *1 Timothy*, 2 *Timothy*, *Titus*, 85. See also p. 99 n. 82 of this dissertation.

<sup>97</sup>E.g., Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy*, 140-41.

<sup>98</sup>See pp. 64-67 in chap. 2 of this dissertation for the place of 3:14-4:16 in the letter's structure.

<sup>99</sup>Calvin, *Epistles of Paul to Timothy*, 112; Barrett, *Pastoral Epistles*, 70; Baugh, "Savior of All People"; Simpson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 69; Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 108; and perhaps John Chrysostom

provisions. Baugh has argued for this interpretation. He believes that the context of the imperial cult in Ephesus points to this interpretation. He argues that just as emperors were called Savior and received divine honors, so Paul asserts the same for God.<sup>100</sup> However, God is Savior par excellence and thus he is the only Living God. Therefore, Savior in 4:10 chiefly functions as a polemic against the cultural claims of the cults in Ephesus.

In addition to the cultural context, Baugh also argues that a proper exegesis of 4:8-10 supports his interpretation. He believes that God as Preserver or Benefactor for all men corresponds to verse 8's claim that bodily training has some value in this life.<sup>101</sup> He claims that Paul maintains the balance between earthly benefits and eternal ones through verses 8-10. But as I argued above, only the promise of life remains in view in verse 10, and not the benefits of physical exercise as well. Would Paul and Timothy have labored and striven to promote physical training (εἰς τοῦτο)? If not, it seems that the only abiding concern in verse 10 is spiritual, eternal salvation. Moreover, all other references to salvation throughout the letter have to do with eternal salvation, not God's universal care for men in this life.<sup>102</sup> Since salvation always refers to God's eternal deliverance, it seems unlikely that Savior would have a different meaning in 4:10. One would also expect that Savior would have a unified sense and primary function because of its

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*Homilies on Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (NPNF 13:446).

<sup>100</sup>Baugh, "Savior of All People," 337.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, 338.

<sup>102</sup>Baugh acknowledges this fact, at least with regard to Savior in 2:3 ("Savior of All People," 338-40). It could be argued that 1 Tim 2:15 is an exception to this suggestion. See pp. 93-94 above.

programmatic presence in 1:1. Therefore, the only support left for reading Savior as Benefactor in 4:10, and therefore as a critique of the cult, is the possibility of cultural influence.

The immediate literary context of 4:6-10 shows that God as Savior supports Timothy's gospel mission in Ephesus. It reminds him that he bears God's message of eternal life for all humanity and inspires him to work with all his might to bear the message indiscriminately.

### **Summary: The Function of Savior in 1 Timothy**

To this point I have argued for the immediate functions that Savior plays within each context. The first occasion (1:1) functions as a thematic lead-in to the occurrences in 2:3 and 4:10, and as definition and support for Paul's apostleship. The second (2:3) establishes the mandate to pray for all. The third (4:10) grounds Timothy's endeavor to offer life to all people in his ministry. However, it seems likely that God as Savior also serves an over-arching function in the letter. The position of the epithet in the greeting and its recurrence in the letter suggests that a more expansive function is likely.

Identifying the over-arching purpose of God as Savior can be difficult because of its different uses in 1 Timothy. However, among the three uses of Savior in 1 Timothy, a notable commonality stands forth that has yet to be drawn out, and that is its relationship to Paul's gospel ministry. Individually, Savior stands behind Paul's apostleship (1:1), prayer for all (2:3), and the gospel mission (4:10). The first and third instances easily relate to Paul's ministry, but the second needs some explanation.

Chapter 2:3 might share more similarities to 1:1 and 4:10 than is generally thought, for 2:1-7 does not consist only in the call for prayer. A significant portion of 2:1-7 has to do with Paul's ministry (2:4-7). His Gentile mission comes to the surface in this pericope because of its relationship to God as the Savior of all people through Christ Jesus. He claims that it is "for this (εἰς ὃ) that I was appointed a preacher and an apostle" (v. 7). The relative pronoun relates to the entirety of the testimony (τὸ μαρτύριον, v. 6) about reconciliation through Christ, which has its beginning in God as Savior in verse 3. Therefore, Paul again identifies the essence of his apostleship in the reality that God is Savior in Christ Jesus (cf. 1:1).

It remains true that the support for universal prayer comes from knowing the will of the Savior God (2:3). However, equally important, the theological conviction that God is Savior is a trademark of Paul's gospel (2:4-7). Both of these statements are true then: (1) prayer can be made for all people because God is the Savior of all men; and (2) prayer can be made for all people because it accords with Paul's gospel. Therefore, God as Savior in 2:3 connects to Paul's message and calling in 2:4-7 as well as to the mandate for prayer in 2:1-2. Thus, each of the three occurrences of God as Savior in 1 Timothy relates to and gives definition to Paul's apostolic ministry.

What does this connection mean for the function of Savior in 1 Timothy? At first, it simply means that Paul wanted to express his gospel, in part, in theological terms in this correspondence. However, God as Savior does not occur in any of Paul's other epistles in relation to his ministry or his gospel, except for Titus (1:3; 2:10, 14; 3:4, 6). Therefore, one must go a step further in this line of questioning: why did Paul use this language in 1 Timothy?

For most commentators, two answers stand forth. One perspective says that Paul sought to contend against the imperial cult with this divine appellation. I have already criticized the interpretation that Savior occurred as a polemic against the cultic language of the day.<sup>103</sup> I have no doubt that Christians viewed their theological and Christological claims as incompatible with the divine claims of pagan worship. It is also undeniable that both Christian and Hellenistic religious groups employed the same type of language in reference to their deities. However, this overlap does not necessitate that Savior in 1 Timothy was intentionally and primarily employed in order to counter the cults. On the contrary, the epithet has an OT heritage in addition to its currency in the Greco-Roman world. As noted above, Paul's usage of Savior in 1 Timothy shows greater affinity to the OT than to secular inscriptions and documents. The title appears appropriately in 1 Timothy due to the needs of the passages in 2:3 and 4:10. It does not occur foremost as an appellation of honor and praise, though it has that effect. Furthermore, these passages do not betray any hint of explicit criticism of cultic practices or imperial rule. Rather, Savior functions as an important theological principle that arises from the course of the author's argument. Still more, some have argued that the title σωτήρ appeared later in the NT in order to avoid confusion because of its associations with imperial usage.<sup>104</sup> However, the appellations θεός and especially κύριος had ties to the imperial cult as well.<sup>105</sup> Thus, NT authors and the early church did not avoid cultic

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<sup>103</sup>See pp. 107-08 above.

<sup>104</sup>Foerster, "σωτήρ," in *TDNT*, 7:1019.

<sup>105</sup>Cullmann, *Christology*, 238.

terminology from its inception. The Savior terminology does not seem to appear in 1 Timothy because of imperial or cultural influences.

On the other hand, some suggest that Paul intended to counter the false teachers' soteriological exclusivism in terming God Savior. This view is more likely since it makes sense of the repeated idea that God desires the salvation of all people (2:3; 4:10). I have already recognized this possible function, with the qualification that the author never explicitly links God as Savior and the supposed false teaching of exclusivism. Furthermore, Paul argued against exclusionary ideas elsewhere without recourse to the language he uses in 1 Timothy.<sup>106</sup> Additionally, the shorter title, "our Savior," used in 1:1 may not entirely support the universal idea of Savior of all in 2:3 and 4:10. Still, it is arguable that exclusive soteriology prompted Paul to clarify the nature of salvation. He did so foremost by emphasizing the identity of God as Savior, who saves believers and also desires to save all.

Additionally, the σωτήρ language of 1 Timothy may have reflected OT terminology and ideology.<sup>107</sup> A few OT passages mirror the pattern in 1 Timothy of combining the term σωτήρ and the idea of God's universal salvation. This combination appears twice in Isaiah (45:21-22; 62:11), and in Psalm 64 (LXX). Interestingly, Psalm 64 overlaps with many themes in 1 Timothy,<sup>108</sup> especially with regard to God's far-

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<sup>106</sup>Rom 2-3; Gal 2:11-3:29; 5:1-6; Eph 3:1-6.

<sup>107</sup>See also A. B. Luter, Jr., "Savior," in *DPL*, 868; less so Bruce, "Our God and Saviour," 52; Cullman, *Christology*, 241.

<sup>108</sup>The Psalm shares the following themes in common with 1 Timothy: (1) an emphasis on universal prayer (v. 3); (2) a universal emphasis throughout (vv. 3, 6, 9); (3) the idea that God has provided every good thing for enjoyment (vv. 10-14); (4) maybe even the thought of God's house (v. 5). These

reaching salvation in verses 5-6: “By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness, O God our Savior, the hope (ὁ θεὸς ὁ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν ἡ ἐλπίς cf. esp. 1 Tim 1:1; 4:10) of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.” This OT excerpt echoes the collocation of God as Savior, his will to save all people, and hope in his salvation, which are also present in 1 Timothy. I am not suggesting that the author of 1 Timothy strictly followed any of these three passages in his composition. However, OT passages such as these may have influenced his decision to refer to God as Savior in 1 Timothy. If the Savior verbiage stems from the OT, then it may be less polemically driven, though it could still relate to the opponents’ restrictive soteriology. It may simply be another way for Paul to express his gospel, to which each Savior passage relates, as argued above.

Still more, the author may have used this relatively uncommon language in order to coincide with the theological emphasis of this letter. As noted in chapter 2, the doxologies and the recurring theme of ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ argue for a specifically God-centered program in the letter.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, the next chapter of this dissertation will bolster the notion that 1 Timothy carries a decidedly theological focus. As I will show, even where Christology is in focus, God remains central throughout the storyline (1:12-17; 2:3-7; 3:14-16). It seems, then, that the author wanted to highlight God in particular in this correspondence, and possibly for the same reason as I suggested in the doxologies, namely, to inform and motivate Timothy.

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similarities may not warrant the conclusion that the author of 1 Timothy depended on the Psalm in composing the letter. But, the likenesses between the two are worth noting.

<sup>109</sup>See pp. 67-68 in chap. 2 of this dissertation for the ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ theme and pp. 121-23 in chap. 4 of this dissertation for the hope in God motif.

Paul may have chosen to call God Savior for the sake of his primary audience, Timothy. One should think of Paul's primary reader, Timothy, at this point, not just the possible opponents that were in view, especially considering the letter's structure and intent, as noted in chapter 2 above. In addition to the awe-inspiring doxologies grounding his charge, Paul often brings God into view to remind Timothy of his calling and responsibilities to the church(es). He calls Timothy a "man of God" (6:11) and "servant of Christ Jesus" (4:6), whose work with "God's church" (3:5, 15) takes place "in the sight of God" (2:3; 5:4, 21; 6:13). It is possible that this theological focus and grounding carries over into the description of the Savior God. In keeping with Paul's desire to impress upon Timothy a theocentric outlook and his obligation before the King, the author encapsulated his perennial message of salvation in the person of God. In addition to portraying God as overseer and ruler, he wanted to display him as the Savior who earnestly desires that men and women believe the gospel, so that Timothy might strive to proclaim God's saving message.

God as Savior, then, may represent the positive message that must be maintained by Timothy. Naturally, a proper theology and soteriology would silence many false doctrines, and a restrictive problem may well have existed in Ephesus. Still, one need not suppose that every aspect of 1 Timothy directly relates to the false teachings that were current in Ephesus. Rather, one should keep in mind the letter's primary recipient and the author's overall goal to charge Timothy to faithfulness and courage. Sometimes the author gave particular instructions for countering wrong ideas that were present in Ephesus (1:3-16; 4:1-5; 6:5-10, 17-19). At other times he urged on Timothy with general, timeless principles (4:6-16; 6:11-16). God as Savior is the theological

expression of such a fundamental principle that Timothy must promote as he ministered in the apostle's stead.

One final question concerning the formulation of God as Savior needs addressing, and I have already alluded to its answer. Why did the author refer only to God as Savior and not Christ? In Titus, the only other epistle in the Pauline corpus where Savior appears more than once, the epithet stands for both God and Christ. In 1 Timothy, the heavy theological emphasis of the letter probably led the author to stress that God is Savior. I have already briefly made note of the importance of God in 1 Timothy, and the following chapter of this dissertation will demonstrate this point further. Conversely, coming from a largely Christological perspective, Towner avers that the author refers exclusively to God as Savior in 1 Timothy partially because he wished to emphasize other Christological elements in the letter.<sup>110</sup> This solution is possible. However, the author does not avoid relating Christ with saving in 1 Timothy 1:15. Further, no strong, consistent Christology figures prominently in 1 Timothy (see 1:12-16; 2:5; 3:16; 6:13-14). Typically, scholars have analyzed the Christology of the PE as a whole, with particular regard to its ἐπιφάνεια language. Yet that language only occurs once in 1 Timothy (6:14). It seems more likely that the author wanted to maintain a heavy theological emphasis throughout the letter, and therefore, he chose to emphasize that God is Savior.

In conclusion, the Savior theology of the letter may have applied to situations narrow and broad in Ephesus. Narrowly, God as Savior establishes Paul's apostleship

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<sup>110</sup>Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 60.

(1:1), prayer for all people (2:3), and the labor of spreading the gospel (4:10). Broadly, the σωτήρ terminology may have combated false teachings and practices within the church(es) that led to a restrictive soteriology. The author uproots that problem by conveying a proper understanding of God's identity and saving purposes. God as Savior comprised the message of Paul's gospel. Accordingly, it may have served to instill in Timothy the core of that message. By emphasizing the theological fountainhead of his gospel, Paul sought to motivate his co-worker to gospel fidelity and missionary zeal. Adhering to the gospel would not only put down particular false teachings, but it would also maintain the foundation and well-being of the church(es), regardless of the form of false teaching. God as Savior may juxtapose the theology of the doxologies in support of the author's epistolary purpose.

### **Conclusion**

God as Savior forms an important part of Paul's theological perspective—a perspective that is bound up with his deepest convictions about monotheism, Christology and salvation (e.g., 2:4-6). This epithet represents a theological axiom that defines his apostleship and his gospel, which have come from God. Its style and meaning reflect the OT more than Hellenistic usages. This title reveals belief in a God who mercifully gives eternal life to all people who trust in Christ, no matter their prior status or transgression. It forms the essence of his message, propels him to missionary service, and guides his practices in the churches. The Savior theology of 1 Timothy also likely addresses false teaching that restricts salvation to only some, and encourages Timothy to endure gospel labors in service of the Savior God.

God as Savior peacefully coexists with the author's idea of God as King (the doxologies). The author sees no conflict in believing that God is the inapproachably holy Sovereign and the merciful, life-giving Savior. Furthermore, the two major, peculiar theological themes in 1 Timothy function similarly, in that they both correspond to the epistolary purpose of exhorting Timothy to faithful ministry in Ephesus. However, they support this cause in slightly different ways. The awesome depiction of God in the doxologies motivates Timothy by reminding him that he ministers in the sight of the King of kings. God as Savior instills in Timothy the heart of the Pauline gospel by recalling its source in the will and character of God. Both should inform and encourage him to fulfill his service to the church(es), even though the Savior theology probably relates to other issues in addition to Timothy himself. In seeking to accomplish his purpose for writing, the author called on these theological themes to make the most compelling case for Timothy to heed his charge. It was hoped that God's sovereign authority and saving purpose would animate Timothy's ministry.

CHAPTER 4  
OTHER INDICATIONS THAT GOD IS SAVIOR  
AND KING: REMAINING THEOLOGICAL  
THEMES IN 1 TIMOTHY

**Introduction**

This chapter will address the remaining theological ideas in 1 Timothy. It will take into account direct and indirect statements about God in the epistle. In addition, this chapter will address any topics significantly related to the letter's theology that may inform the author's view of God. One of the purposes of this chapter is to allow the whole of 1 Timothy's theological expression to receive attention, instead of only focusing on those prominent themes of Savior and King. Yet, as I hope to show below, the entirety of the theology in 1 Timothy supports the theological picture that I have already set forth in this dissertation. Therefore, this material will add to the thesis of this dissertation by relating secondary theological themes to the primary ones discussed in chapters 2 and 3, and by gaining a holistic theological picture of the epistle.

I will seek to interpret the remaining ideas on their own terms and in their own contexts. However, I have chosen to structure most of the contents of this chapter along the existing lines of God as King and Savior. I will relate each minor theological term or idea to one or both of the primary theological themes. Admittedly, this structure could lead one to suppose that I have prematurely read the remaining theological themes in light of my own categories instead of letting the text speak for itself. However, my own

study has led me to see that many of the minor theological expressions in the letter relate to the primary ones. Not only do they relate to one another, but the minor ones often confirm the divine qualities found in the letter's doxologies and Savior theology. After all, one should not be surprised to see the writer supporting his major themes throughout the letter. The question that remains is whether I have correctly detected the author's major theological and epistolary purposes; that will be left for the reader to decide. Finally, I will continue to examine the following subjects with respect to their meaning and function, seeking both to understand the author's view of God and to discern his purpose for the theology in 1 Timothy.

### **Other Indications that God Is Savior**

#### **God as Father**

God as Father forms an important aspect of both NT and Pauline theology. However in 1 Timothy, the appellation only appears once. That sole appearance occurs in the greeting of 1:2, which sounds typically Pauline, with a couple minor exceptions.<sup>1</sup> Since the author does not expand upon God as Father in the letter, one can assume that it was not an important theme for the purposes of this correspondence. At the same time, the title still deserves some attention, despite its limited impact on the letter's theology. For, it may shed light on his theological perspective, even though this particular idea was not at the forefront theologically in his composition of 1 Timothy.

Due to the thin context typical of most greetings, one cannot easily determine the meaning and significance of God as Father in 1:2. However, Roux takes the

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<sup>1</sup>See Knight for a thorough examination and comparison with other greetings (G. W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992], 65-69).

immediate context into account, by reading Father in light of Timothy as child in this verse (Τιμοθέω γνησίω τέκνω ἐν πίστει).<sup>2</sup> He claims that Paul wants to elevate God before Timothy as his true Father. Others have looked more broadly to the whole epistle for help in discerning the epithet's use in 1:2. Of course, this effort largely depends upon one's interpretation of the letter's theology. Therefore, for instance, as already noted Spicq believes that the theology of 1 Timothy counters imperialistic claims to deity. Accordingly, he understands Father in light of Matthew 5:45, where God is mankind's universal donor.<sup>3</sup> He claims that this predicate stresses God's power and love for all humanity. Some interpreters, therefore, argue that Father shares common ground with God as universal Savior in the letter.<sup>4</sup> Still others read this epithet within the confines of the Christian community, where God is Father to the household of believers.<sup>5</sup> Finally, given this regular feature within Pauline literature, it seems fair to compare this theological title to his other letters. O. Hofius has rightly observed that God as Father almost always occurs within the contexts of Christology and soteriology.<sup>6</sup> He proposes

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<sup>2</sup>H. Roux, *Les Épîtres pastorales: Commentaire de I et II Timothée et Tite* (Geneva: Librairie protestante, 1959), 20; see also J. Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, in *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 21, trans. W. Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844-56; reprint Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 21.

<sup>3</sup>C. Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1969), 319. See also J. M. Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 36.

<sup>4</sup>So also J. A. Fitzmyer, "The Savior God: The Pastoral Epistles," in *The Forgotten God: Perspective in Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Paul J. Achtemeier on the Occasion of his Seventy-fifth Birthday*, ed. A. A. Das and F. J. Matera (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 185-88; cf. I. H. Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC 38 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 105.

<sup>5</sup>M. Davies, *The Pastoral Epistles*, EC (London: Epworth, 1996), 4; John Chrysostom *Homilies on Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, ed. and trans P. Schaff, NPNF, American ed., vol. 13 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1956), 409; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 68; especially P. H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 104.

<sup>6</sup>O. Hofius, "Father," in *NIDNTT*, 1:621.

that there are only 3 times in the NT (1 time in Paul's letters) where God's fatherhood is disconnected from its Christological anchor.<sup>7</sup> Here in 1 Timothy 1:2, Father is tied to Christ Jesus the Lord, and by extension, his saving work as Mediator, and thus has some soteriological meaning in the letter. God is Father not by "a fact of nature, but an eschatological miracle."<sup>8</sup> Therefore, Father may be read in harmony with God as Savior in 1 Timothy, though the former appellation does not seem to bear much importance for the latter, more prominent notion.

### **Hope in God**

The idea of hope in God presents itself as a theme in 1 Timothy with its three occurrences (4:10; 5:5; 6:17) and its foreshadowing position in the letter's greeting (1:1). These three instances scattered throughout the letter apply to different situations, namely, Timothy, widows, and the rich. Their hope in God or their encouragement to do so depicts both the proper Christian disposition, as well as the author's understanding of God, especially in view of his involvement with his people.

The believer's hope in God causes him to depend upon God for provisions in this life and the life to come. In 1 Timothy 4:10, a passage already examined, Paul and Timothy labor for the gospel because they have hoped in the Living God.<sup>9</sup> That is, they have believed that God will fulfill his word to grant life presently and eternally for

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid. Eph 3:14; Heb 12:9; Jas 1:17.

<sup>8</sup>Hofius, "Father," in *NIDNTT*, 1:620.

<sup>9</sup>See pp. 101-08 of this dissertation.

themselves and for all who believe. In 1 Timothy 5:5, the true widow has hoped in God. Hope in God in this scenario means that the widow casts herself on God to sustain her in this life, not primarily with reference to eternal life (cf. 5:8, 16). Her hope is evident by her inability to depend on anyone else and by her constancy of looking to God in prayer. From a theological perspective, this hope depicts a God who cares for his people's needs on earth. Hope in God in 1 Timothy 6:17 reveals a God who is presently involved in his creation and eternally redeeming believers. The rich should hope not in their wealth, but in God. Hoping in God properly orients their outlook on life, so that they trust God for earthly goods (v. 17), while also laying a good foundation for the future (v. 19).

Hope occurs in 1 Timothy 1:1 as a description of Christ Jesus alongside God as Savior. I have already argued for the importance of 1:1 for the letter with regard to its Savior theology. If God as Savior does indeed forecast an important theme for the letter, then one would expect that Christ as our hope would equally follow that pattern. Surprisingly, as just observed, the letter's remaining references to hope have their object in God, not Christ. This discrepancy is not problematic, however, since the author consistently pairs the two and sometimes attributes identical works to both God and Christ.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, hope in 1:1 tells us, as do the other references, of the merciful and charitable character of God and Christ. Since Christians trust the life-giving Savior God, they have every reason to hope in him for this life and the next. This pairing of Savior and hope in God appears somewhat regularly in the LXX.<sup>11</sup> This observation strengthens

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<sup>10</sup>The two occur in tandem in 1:1, 2, 12-17; 2:3-5; 5:21; 6:13-16. To both God and Christ Jesus, the apostle attributes his calling (1:1); salvation (1:1; 1:15; 2:3-5; 4:10); hope (1:1; 4:10; 5:5; 6:17); grace, mercy, and peace (1:2; 1:13-14, 16); and Timothy's servitude (4:6; 6:11).

<sup>11</sup>Pss 14:6-7; 43:5; 62:7-8; 65:6; Jer 14:8; 27:13; Sir 34:13. Cf. Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*,

the possibility that the theological language in 1 Timothy, especially in the case of Savior, has its roots in the OT.

The theme of hope in God in 1 Timothy primarily admonishes believers to depend on God, but it also portrays a God who is trustworthy because of his sure care for all who trust in him. It coordinates with the Savior theology by emphasizing God's granting of life in this age and the next. Even though the idea can appropriately apply to Jesus, the author typically refers to hope in God. This tendency again highlights the theological focus of the letter. The theme of hope alongside the term Savior also adds plausibility to the OT background of the Savior language in 1 Timothy.

### **The One God**

First Timothy 2:1-7 has already received attention in chapter 3 of this dissertation.<sup>12</sup> Still, the phrase the One God (εἷς θεός) ought to receive a focused comment here. The author demonstrates his theological heritage in the OT and Jewish traditions of monotheism with the use of this phrase. Faith in Christ has not dampened the writer's commitment to this confession.<sup>13</sup> The same monotheistic sentiment finds a voice in the doxologies of 1:17 and 6:15-16, but the purposes differ between the doxologies and 2:5. The doxologies' monotheistic statements convey God's matchless power (μόνῳ θεῷ, 1:17; μόνος δυνάστης, 6:15), whereas the One God in 2:5 contributes to the author's accent on God as universal Savior. Monotheism itself was not a theological

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316; P. Dornier, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, SB (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1969), 3.

<sup>12</sup>See pp. 84-89, 99-102 of this dissertation.

<sup>13</sup>See more below on Christology, pp. 132-36.

point to be argued in 1 Timothy. Rather, the author brings monotheism into play in 2:5 because it demonstrates the universal nature of God's salvation. God's oneness proves that there is only one God over all mankind. Therefore, God's way of salvation applies to every person whom he has created. The oneness of God confirms the author's OT and Jewish theological background and forms an important basis for his Savior theology.

### **Other Indications that God Is King**

#### **The Command of God**

Some commentators have suggested that the phrase κατ' ἐπιταγήν in Paul's identification of his apostleship in 1:1 specially reflects a kingly decree from God.<sup>14</sup> If ἐπιταγή in 1:1 is in fact programmatically used in the greeting, then it could also support one of the larger arguments of this dissertation, that the main divine attributes of concern for 1 Timothy are king and savior: Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ κατ' ἐπιταγήν θεοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν.

It is true that ἐπιταγή is often used with reference to the decree of God or a human king. Of its fourteen uses in the LXX, five refer explicitly to a royal declaration.<sup>15</sup> It is possible that Paul purposely chose the word ἐπιταγή, instead of the more common

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<sup>14</sup>P. Fairbairn, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1874), 71, 100; W. Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), 5; Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 2; Roux, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 2; W. D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC, vol. 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 8; G. A. Couser, "God and Christian Existence in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus" (Ph.D. diss., University of Aberdeen, 1992), 17-18.

<sup>15</sup>1 Esdr 1:16; 3 Macc 7:20; Wis 14:17; 18:15; Dan 3:16; cf. also the verbal cognate in Esth 1:8. Implicit royal reference may be present in Wis 19:6; Ps 18:12; Rom 16:26; and is least likely in 1 Cor 7:25; Titus 1:3.

θέλημα, as an indicator and reflection of one of his primary theological concerns.<sup>16</sup>

However, Paul uses the same wording in the greeting of Titus. And Titus does not share the special emphasis on God's sovereign rule as we see throughout 1 Timothy. Still, there may be some particular reason for Paul's use of ἐπιταγή in 1 Timothy and Titus apart from theological concerns. It is likely that this unique and strong expression of Paul's calling emphasizes both the divine origin and the divine mandate of his apostolic gospel. In distinction from θέλημα, it may call attention to the delegates' need to follow orders just as Paul has.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, in light of the comparison with Titus, it seems too suggestive to argue that ἐπιταγή carries an especially theological meaning and function here in 1 Timothy 1:1.

### **God's Rule over the Church**

The author of 1 Timothy occasionally speaks of God in relationship to the church, specifically with God as its owner and master. The community of the saved is called "the church of God" (3:5), "the house(hold) of God," and again "the church of the Living God" (3:15). These genitival phrases express God's possession of the church, and thus imply his control over the church. God also exercises his authority over the church by appointing the church's authoritative teachers (1:1) and establishing its message (1:11).

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<sup>16</sup>Cf. 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1.

<sup>17</sup>Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 60-61; cf. Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 131. The usage of ἐπιταγή instead of Paul's more usual θέλημα does not necessarily support a pseudepigraphal composition for 1 Timothy and Titus (M. Wolter, *Die Pastoralbriefe als Paulustradition*, FRLANT 146 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1988], 149-52). To the contrary, it seems surprising that someone trying to mimic Paul's hand would stray from the apostle's typical style and language.

God's rule over the church demands that Timothy and the church(es) at Ephesus must submit to his divine will for his people. They must teach and practice what he ordains. Emphasizing God's leadership over the church should strike awe and fear in the readers, so that they will conform their ways to their Lord's precepts (3:5, 14-16). In addition to his lordship over the church, God's relationship to the church may also sound another theological theme, namely, God's presence in their midst, dwelling in them as the new temple.

First Timothy 3:15 may allude to the church as the temple of God, a fulfillment of the physical structure built by the Israelites, where the divine presence promised to rest. In this verse, Paul first describes God's new community as the house of God (οἶκος θεοῦ). In the LXX, οἶκος could refer to the temple of God (e.g., 1 Kgs 6:2). Furthermore, the following phrases of 1 Timothy 3:15 continue the metaphor in physical, structural terms (στῦλος καὶ ἑδραίωμα).<sup>18</sup> The Living God epithet that appears appositionally with ἐκκλησία may also point to God's dwelling with his people.<sup>19</sup> The closeness of 2 Corinthians 6:16 to 1 Timothy 3:15 supports this reading: "we are the temple of the living God (ναὸς θεοῦ ἔσμεν ζῶντος); as God said, 'I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people'" (NRSV).<sup>20</sup> Second Corinthians 6:16 clearly places the term "the Living God" in relationship to his abiding presence with

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<sup>18</sup>Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 220.

<sup>19</sup>Num 14:28; Josh 3:10; Matt 16:16; 2 Cor 6:16; Heb 3:12; 6:14; 10:31; 12:2. Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 274; G. D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, GNC (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1994), 54; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 509; L. Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, vol. 1, *Kommentar zum ersten Timotheusbriefe*, HTKNT, Band XI/2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1994), 157; Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 465-66. See pp. 129-33 below for more on this epithet.

<sup>20</sup>Roloff has suggested that this verse lies behind 1 Tim 3:15 (J. Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, EKKNT, vol. 15 [Zürich: Benziger; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1988], 198 n. 441).

his people (e.g., “I will live in them and walk among them”).<sup>21</sup> For these reasons, οἶκος θεοῦ might convey the idea that God’s people are now the replacement temple where he manifestly dwells.

On the other hand, besides referring metaphorically to the prior temple of God, οἶκος could refer to the family of God as a household. The letter contains household codes (2:1-15), concern for children (3:4), widows (5:3-16), slaves (6:1-2), and church leaders (3:4-5, 12).<sup>22</sup> In addition, οἰκονομίαν θεοῦ in 1:4 may also reflect a household theme for the church.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, immediate and extended literary contexts could be mustered to support the idea of οἶκος as the household of God.

It could also very well be that both senses of temple and household are appropriate in this context.<sup>24</sup> In addition to the arguments pertaining specifically to 1 Timothy made above, both ideas are present elsewhere in Pauline literature, even though Paul usually prefers ναὸς when referring to God’s new temple.<sup>25</sup> In my judgment it is too

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<sup>21</sup>See more on “The Living God” below (pp. 129-33).

<sup>22</sup>Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 274.

<sup>23</sup>D. C. Verner, *The Household of God: The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles*, SBLDS 71 (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1983); 186; Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 155; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 367; Johnson, *First and Second Letters*, 164; Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 113; R. Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 102-04; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 221. Mounce rightly criticizes the position that the household metaphor is predominant in 1 Timothy. Towner, for example, goes too far in saying that the two main theological ideas in 1 Timothy are “savior” and “householder” (*Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 104). Related, Collins suggests that the theme of God’s household recurs in 6:16, where God dwells (οἰκῶν) in unapproachable light (*1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 102-04). While observant, this suggestion seems to be a stretch. The usage of οἰκέω in 6:16 is of a different kind given its doxological context.

<sup>24</sup>So L. T. Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, AB, vol. 35A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 2001), 231; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 508; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 220; cf. J. Calvin, *Epistles of Paul to Timothy*, 89-91.

<sup>25</sup>1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16-18; Eph 2:19-21.

difficult, and perhaps even wrong, to separate these two ideas from the phrase οἶκος θεοῦ. This metaphor has multiple layers built into it that should not be parceled out. Yet, one of these inherent ideas may present itself more than another, depending on the context and intent of the author. Given the purpose statement of 3:14-15, οἶκος θεοῦ seems to refer foremost to the household of God. Paul wants to be sure that the people properly fulfill their respective roles as a family under God. The body of the letter shows that Paul is concerned that the men, women, elders, deacons, widows, slaves, and rich act in accordance with godliness.

The metaphorical language in the rest of 3:15 may still subtly evoke the idea of God's presence with his people as the new temple. But more so, the expansion of οἶκος θεοῦ with ἐκκλησία θεοῦ ζῶντος, στῦλος καὶ ἐδραίωμα τῆς ἀληθείας heightens the seriousness of Paul's demand that the church behaves properly. The church must heed the apostle's instruction because they are God's special possession, and he has appointed them to bear his truth in this world.

In the end, from a theological standpoint, the house of God in 1 Timothy 3:15 primarily communicates God's lordship over the people of faith. His people must conduct themselves in godliness, because God demands such of them as Master of the house.

Finally, God's rule over the church creates a similar impetus as the doxological passages and the letter's ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ theme. They each partially remind the reader(s) that the work in Ephesus is performed under their watchful and mighty Master. Timothy, specifically, must heed his mandate not merely out of obedience to Paul's

commands, but also because he is charged and held accountable before the Lord of the church, who is also the King of all.

### **Other Indications that God Is Savior and King**

#### **The Living God**

The divine title “the Living God” has significant background in the OT and NT.<sup>26</sup> It is an appellation with many implications. It regularly asserts that the God of Israel and of the church has life and lives forever, which distinguishes him from the dead gods worshiped by others.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the epithet conveys that God is the true God, who is thus fearsome and awesome.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the Living God implies God’s power to give life (Acts 14:15) and his abiding presence (2 Cor 6:16). Even though each of these connotations may not accompany every usage of the title in biblical literature, many of them appear in 1 Timothy, as I hope to show.

In 1 Timothy 3:15, the epithet plays a part in the phrase “church of the Living God” (ἐκκλησία θεοῦ ζῶντος), which received some comment above. This phrase comes as part of a relative clause, giving further explanation to Paul’s mention of the “house(hold) of God” (οἶκῳ θεοῦ). It appears that the Living God colors this verse in two ways. First, as mentioned above, it may subtly remind his reader(s) of God’s abiding presence with his people, as in 2 Corinthians 6:16-18.<sup>29</sup> Second, and more importantly,

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<sup>26</sup>Deut 5:26; Josh 3:10; 1 Sam 17:26, 36; 2 Kgs 19:4, 16; Pss 42:2; 84:2; Isa 37:4, 17; Jer 10:10; 23:36; Dan 6:20, 26; Hos 1:10; Matt 16:16; 26:63; Acts 14:15; Rom 9:26; 2 Cor 3:3; 6:16; 1 Thess 1:9; 1 Tim 3:15; 4:10; Heb 3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:22; Rev 7:2.

<sup>27</sup>Jer 10:10; Dan 6:20, 26; Acts 14:15; 2 Cor 6:16; 1 Thess 1:9.

<sup>28</sup>Jer 10:10; Heb 3:12; 10:31; 12:22.

<sup>29</sup>See pp. 124-28 above in this dissertation.

the term establishes the solemnity of Paul's call to proper conduct in the church, by emphasizing that God is the one true God. Although the writer does not explicitly contrast the Living God with dead idols, the term itself and its history in biblical literature warrant this suggestion. Moreover, this solemn and climactic point in 3:14-16 supports the argument that the Living God connotes God's authority as the one and only God. Therefore, the meaning of this divine predicate correlates well to the doxologies in 1:17 and 6:15-16. Functionally, this theological idea encourages Timothy to take special care in serving the church and motivate the believers to walk in appropriate fear and dignity as the people of God.<sup>30</sup>

In 1 Timothy 4:10, hope in the Living God sustains the gospel toils of Paul and Timothy, as observed in chapter 3 of this dissertation.<sup>31</sup> In this context, the phrase primarily conveys God's ability to give life to all men through the gospel. It may also impel Paul and Timothy to persevere in their labors because they fulfill the highest calling of serving on behalf of the one and only true God.

In 1 Timothy 6:13, the Living God may overlap in meaning with the rare divine description τοῦ ζῳογονοῦντος τὰ πάντα. The term ζῳογονέω can denote either giving life or preserving life, with the latter meaning appearing more regularly in biblical literature.<sup>32</sup> Bultmann differentiates between these two senses by claiming that the former reflects the term's Greek meaning and the latter sense occurs in non-Greek LXX

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<sup>30</sup>Cf. Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 181; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 220.

<sup>31</sup>See pp. 101-08 of this dissertation.

<sup>32</sup>Respectively, 1 Sam 2:6 and Luke 17:33; Acts 7:19; Exod 1:17-18; 1 Kgs 21:31; cf. BDAG, s.v. "ζῳογονέω"; R. Bultmann, "ζῳογονέω," in *TDNT*, 2:873-74.

usage.<sup>33</sup> Even though the latter is more common in biblical literature, this distinction does not always hold.<sup>34</sup> This word only occurs one other time in conjunction with God and his activity in the OT and NT in 1 Samuel 2:6 (cf. *Odes Sol.* 3:6; Deut 32:39). In 1 Samuel, the term is translated by most English versions as “makes alive” or “brings to life.”<sup>35</sup> In the context of Hannah’s prayer, it probably refers to God’s creative power in giving new life to the barren one.<sup>36</sup> Comparatively, the similar word ζωοποιέω occurs more often with God as its subject. It also denotes God’s work of giving and preserving life, with the former occurring more frequently in the NT with a soteriological sense.<sup>37</sup>

The occurrence of ζωογονούντος in 1 Timothy 6:13 appears in the context of Paul’s final, dramatic appeal to Timothy. Paul solemnly charges Timothy before God and Christ Jesus. In order to heighten this charge, Paul expands on each divine person with a compelling relative clause. The clause that describes God may have been chosen for several reasons. Not surprisingly, Spicq has suggested that this divine description represents another polemic against the imperial cult.<sup>38</sup> Yet, I have already argued against an anti-imperial theology within 1 Timothy. Others have proposed that this language

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<sup>33</sup>Bultmann, “ζωογονέω,” in *TDNT*, 2:873-74.

<sup>34</sup>Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 1.23.4 (LCL 279 [1989]: 71-72); cf. BDAG, s.v. “ζωογονέω.”

<sup>35</sup>E.g., KJV; RSV; NRSV; NIV; ESV.

<sup>36</sup>It could also refer more broadly to God’s authority to command the rise and fall of people (cf. 1 Sam 2:7-10). R. W. Klein goes even further and interprets 1 Sam 2:6 in light of Deut 32:39, suggesting that the phrase means that the Lord heals (*1 Samuel* WBC, vol. 10 [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983], 17). This reading suffers from over-reading the parallelism in Deut 32:39.

<sup>37</sup>2 Kgs 5:7; Neh 9:6; Ps 70:20; Eccl 7:12; Job 36:6; John 5:21; 6:63; Rom 4:17; 8:11; 1 Cor 15:22; 2 Cor 3:6; 1 Pet 3:18.

<sup>38</sup>Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 570.

reflects an ecclesiastical liturgy.<sup>39</sup> Depending on one's perspective, the words of the liturgy could still have particular significance in the context of 1 Timothy 6:11-16. In my view, even if this passage has a formulaic background, it should be examined as part of the author's communicative intent. For, in short, the letter's composition demonstrates a thoughtful, coherent author.<sup>40</sup> Some commentators have suggested that Paul wanted to assure Timothy that God could preserve his own life, because Timothy's steadfastness to his calling could lead to suffering and even martyrdom.<sup>41</sup> This interpretation keenly observes the situation at hand, and therefore deserves consideration as a likely intention of this relative clause. Finally, others have alleged that τοῦ ζωογονοῦντος τὰ πάντα in 6:13 might contain the Pauline idea of God's power over the world.<sup>42</sup> This divine description avers more than just that God has the capacity to give and preserve life, in this case, Timothy's own. It asserts his rule over all things material and immaterial, temporal and eternal. This interpretation fits well within the context of the high theology of the charge and the doxology in 6:11-16. Therefore, "the one who gives life to all" shares meaning with the Living God, as both divine descriptions depict God as the source of life and the one who sovereignly gives life. But the former phrase goes further by

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<sup>39</sup>Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 71-72; E. K. Simpson, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1874), 88; Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, 344-45, 350; E. Käsemann, "Das Formular einer neutestamentlichen Ordinationsparänese," in *Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann*, ed. W. Eltester (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1954), 261-68.

<sup>40</sup>See R. Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure in the Pastoral Epistles*, JSNTSup 280 (London: T & T Clark International, 2004).

<sup>41</sup>John Chrysostom *Homilies on Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (NPNF 13:471); Calvin, *Epistles of Paul to Timothy*, 163-64; cf. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 110.

<sup>42</sup>Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, 350; Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 294. 1 Cor 12:6; Eph 1:11, 23; 3:9; Col 1:16.

emphasizing the power that God possesses as the one who commands the existence of all things.

The Living God is an important divine title in 1 Timothy that can carry various implications depending on its use. However, it always stands for God's true and only claim to deity in some measure, which is more than a confession of monotheism. This implication of the Living God should elicit fear and awe, especially for the church (1 Tim 3:15). In 1 Timothy 4:10, the epithet primarily displays God as the one who can give life to those who heed the apostolic message. The similar description τοῦ ζωογονοῦντος τὰ πάντα in 6:13 shares this theological perspective that God is the only Sovereign who has the ability to give and sustain life. Thus, these theological portrayals in 1 Timothy 3:15, 4:10, and 6:13 resemble aspects of God as both the life-giving Savior and creation's only King.

### **God as Creator**

Although God is never specifically called Creator in 1 Timothy, the author speaks of his creative activity in 4:3-4 and in the attributive participle ζωογονοῦντος in 6:13.

In 1 Timothy 4:3-4, the author presents the theology of God as Creator as an assumption, rather than a point to be argued. In this section, Paul contends against the wayward teachings and practices of asceticism (4:1-3). He negates their erroneous behavior by basing his arguments in the Genesis account of creation.<sup>43</sup> Obviously, appeal

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<sup>43</sup>See especially Towner's lengthy discussion. He helpfully notes that the use of κτίζω instead of the LXX's ποιέω was in keeping with the style of Jewish literature and the NT (e.g., Wis 9:2; 13:5; 14:11; Sir 39:16, 25-27, 33-34; Matt 19:4; Mark 13:19; Rom 1:25; 1 Cor 11:9; Rev 4:11) (*Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 296-301).

to the biblical story of creation will include identifying God as Creator. While the opponents did not deny that God is the Creator, Paul argues that the false teachers oppose God's creative purposes when they forbid the things he made for our consumption (v. 3). More specifically, with clear reference to Genesis 1, the author asserts that God's entire creation is good (4:4, ὅτι πᾶν κτίσμα θεοῦ καλόν). Therefore, the things that God has made and called good, we should not label evil and thus reject them. This pericope is instructive in that it reveals another OT theological tenet that the author holds, namely, God is Creator.

This same theological idea occurs in the reference to God as the one who gives life to all things (τοῦ ζωογονούντος τὰ πάντα) in 6:13. This phrase was considered in comparison to the Living God above. Following Roloff's suggestion, this divine description asserts God's power over all things, which comports with his identity as Creator.<sup>44</sup> The verb ζωογονέω reflects the biblical idea of God as the source of all life, although one should recognize that this verb is never actually used in the Scriptures to describe God's creative activity. Also in favor of τοῦ ζωογονούντος τὰ πάντα with reference to God as Creator, the near context of 6:17 refers to God's good provisions for humanity on this earth (cf. 4:3-5). The phrase in 6:13 τοῦ ζωογονούντος τὰ πάντα may not be directly affected by the proximity of the reference of 6:17 (τῷ παρέχοντι ἡμῖν πάντα). Nonetheless, each of these passages reveals the biblical view of the author. He esteemed God as the sole author and sustainer of life, not only controlling life, but providing in every way for his creation.

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<sup>44</sup>Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, 350. See also p. 131 above.

God as Creator supports the OT background of the author's theology that I have argued for in this dissertation. This theological concept confirms the author's view of God as the King of all. As the source of life, this idea can also stand in favor of God as Savior. Granted, Paul does not clearly draw a line between God as the Creator and God as the Savior. But one might safely infer that God's power to beget life as Creator transfers to his ability to grant eternal life as Savior. God as Creator functions in the background in 4:1-5. But in 6:13, this idea brings into full view the power and authority of God, functioning in concert with the doxology of 6:15-16 in Paul's final appeal to Timothy (6:11-16). In this final context it may also sound a note of hope in God's capacity and willingness to give life to the faithful.

### **Theology in Relation to Christology**

The Christology of the PE has received much attention over the last few decades.<sup>45</sup> Several factors have driven scholars to focus on this topic in 1 Timothy, including its unique Christological terminology (e.g., ἐπιφάνεια, σωτήρ) and its often supposed late, pseudepigraphic authorship. On this topic, scholars typically discuss issues such as Christ's preexistence, his deity, the author's background, and his

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<sup>45</sup>H. Windisch, "Zur Christologie der Pastoralbriefe," *ZNW* 34 (1935): 213-38; E. Pax, *EPIFANEIA: Ein religionsgeschichtliche Beitrag zur biblischen Theologie* (Münich: K. Zink, 1955); D. Lührmann, "Epiphania: Zur Bedeutungsgeschichte eines griechischen Wortes," in *Tradition und Glaube*, ed. G. Jeremias, H. Kuhn, and H. Stegemann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 185-99; V. Hasler, "Epiphanie und Christologie in den Pastoralbriefen," *TZ* 33 (1977): 193-209; L. Oberlinner, "Die 'Epiphaneia' des Heilswillens Gottes in Christus Jesus: Zur Grundstruktur der Christologie der Pastoralbriefe," *ZNW* 71 (1980): 192-213; I. H. Marshall, "The Christology of the Pastoral Epistles," *SNT (SU)* 13 (1988): 157-77; A. Y. Lau, *Manifest in the Flesh: The Epiphany Christology of the Pastoral Epistles*, WUNT 86 (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1996); P. H. Towner, *The Goal of Our Instruction*, JSNTSup 34 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989), 49-56, 75-119; idem, "Christology in the Letters to Timothy and Titus," in *Contours of Christology in the New Testament*, ed. R. N. Longenecker, MNTS 7 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 219-44; K. Läger, *Die Christologie der Pastoralbriefe*, HTS 12 (Münster: Lit, 1996); H. Stettler, *Die Christologie der Pastoralbriefe*, WUNT 105 (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1998).

Christological creativity or lack thereof. Given the topic of this dissertation, I need not engage in a full explanation of the Christology of 1 Timothy. However, I want to consider the theology of 1 Timothy in light of its Christology. This aside into Christology will not allow me to give sufficient arguments for Christological propositions that I will make. Therefore, wherever necessary, footnotes will lead the reader to more in-depth discussions of issues that cannot be treated fully here.

The similarities between the author's theology and Christology deserve first attention. The writer often pairs God and Christ in shared activity, as seen in the following examples from 1 Timothy. Paul attributes his apostolic calling to both God and Christ (1:1, 11, 12-17). Both figures grant the gift of salvation to mankind (1:1, 15; 2:3-6; 4:10). Divine bestowments of grace, mercy, and peace also flow from the Father and the Lord Jesus (1:2, 14, 16). The Christian's hope abides in both persons (1:1; 4:10; 5:5; 6:17). Paul charges Timothy with utmost solemnity in the presence of both God and Christ, who dwell together with the elect angels (5:21; 6:13-14). Along with Paul, Timothy serves God's church under the authority of Christ Jesus and God (4:6; 6:11). All of these examples demonstrate that the identity of God and Christ overlap significantly in the letter, implying that Christ too is divine.<sup>46</sup> This suggestion rules out the unlikely position of V. Hasler that 1 Timothy presents Christ as a mere manifestation

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<sup>46</sup>On the argument based on identity, see R. Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). Of course, this field of discussion is yet very broad. See further, L. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); T. Holtz, "Theo-logie und Christologie bei Paulus," in *Glaube und Eschatologie: Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. E. Gräßer and O. Merk (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1985), 105-21; J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 27-50; J. Bassler, "God in the NT," in *ABD*, 2:1049-55; U. Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology*, trans. M. E. Boring (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 392-409.

of God himself, rather than an individual possessing personal deity along with God.<sup>47</sup> I will make further comments below on the relationship between God and Christ, but for now it is sufficient to acknowledge their unity of essential activity, and thus, their common divine identity.

In addition to their shared activity, the author consistently conceives of God in terms of Christ and the gospel.<sup>48</sup> At the same time, Paul has retained his OT theology. God's essential character and activity remain unchanged from the God of his fathers. However, his God now reveals himself and acts in strict relationship to the person and message of Jesus. Several examples in 1 Timothy make this point. God has commanded Paul to be an apostle of Christ Jesus (1:1). Paul proclaims God's gospel about the Lord Jesus (1:11-17). God is Savior through Christ the Mediator (2:3-6). God's church is the pillar of truth, founded on faith in the great confession about Christ (3:14-16). God will consummate his work in the world by means of Jesus' eschatological appearing (6:14-15). In addition, 1 Timothy 6:1 demonstrates the unbreakable connection between God and the gospel. His reputation on the earth directly relates to nonbelievers' perception of the teaching about Christ (6:1; cf. 6:3; 1:10-11).<sup>49</sup> Paul's description of God as Creator is the only theological idea that occurs in 1 Timothy without explicit Christological ties (4:3-4). Thus, Paul's theological perspective is old and new. It preserves continuity with God's character and activity in the OT, and it finds new qualification in the gospel of Christ.

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<sup>47</sup>V. Hasler. "Epiphanie und Christologie in den Pastoralbriefen," *TZ* 33 (1977): 193-209.

<sup>48</sup>1 Tim 1:1-2, 11, 12-17; 2:3-6; 3:14-16; 4:10; 5:21; 6:1, 11-16.

<sup>49</sup>Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 630; Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 283;

Although the author views Christ and God very often in concert, he retains some important distinctions between the two. For example, both God and Christ save those who believe but they play different parts in this salvation. God appears to oversee the process of salvation, while Christ secures the means that accomplish salvation.<sup>50</sup> Though God involves himself in his creation, in comparison to Christ, he remains comparatively removed from the world of humanity. First Timothy 2:3-6 paints the picture that God saves people, but he does not relinquish his justice or perform the deeds himself that make the way for reconciliation with mankind. Only through manifesting Christ to the world (3:16; cf. 2:6) and through his mediation (2:5) will God bestow salvation. In contrast, Christ achieves salvation by giving himself for all (2:6), entering the sinful world in human flesh (3:16). One can also observe the author's role distinctions between God and Christ in his brief depiction of the end times in 1 Timothy 6:14-15. Here too, God maintains a governing role in eschatological salvation (e.g., *καίροισι ἰδίοις*, 6:15), while Christ will be the one to appear again on the earth. God will triumph in the end by sending the Lord Jesus to accomplish the work (6:14-15). These examples do not provide significant details about the relationship between God and Christ; neither can we detect a divine hierarchy.<sup>51</sup> But the descriptions of each one suggest some real and typical differences between the two. As for the author's theology, the differences resonate with the high theology of the doxologies. Though God and

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Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 327; Rom 2:24.

<sup>50</sup>Cf. C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles in the New English Bible*, NCB (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 21; Dornier, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 33; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London: Black, 1963; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 40; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 2; Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 97.

<sup>51</sup>Cf. Lau, *Manifest in the Flesh*, 269-72; Stettler, *Die Christologie*, 332-34.

Christ dwell together, save together, and dispense grace together, God primarily fills the role as the ruler and king of all things, and Christ primarily plays the part of executing the divine will. This theological perspective explains how God can be both the unapproachable King and the Savior of all. In both instances he is the ruler. Through Christ, he royally decrees to welcome all people to himself as Savior. This role distinction does not devalue Christ's deity or God's immanence but displays the particular actions and characteristics of each person. Furthermore, these differences do not threaten divine Christology or monotheistic theology for the author. Rather, these concepts coexist in 1 Timothy especially by virtue of God and Christ's common divine identity and their shared will and ability to save all people.

### **The Presence of Various Hellenistic Terms**

Many interpreters have pointed out that the author of 1 Timothy uses a variety of typically Hellenistic terms such as εὐσέβεια, σώφρων, σωτήρ, μεσίτης, παιδεύω, and ἐπιφάνεια.<sup>52</sup> The collective force of this allegedly unusual language could suggest that the author has swayed from a theology rooted in the OT, having been influenced by the surrounding Greco-Roman culture instead. However, as many have argued, the occurrence of these Hellenistic terms cannot themselves argue for a Hellenistic religious outlook.<sup>53</sup> As I have argued in this dissertation, the unexpected vocabulary in the letter does not demand that the author holds a compromised biblical theological perspective. In

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<sup>52</sup>Cf., e.g., P. N. Harrison, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* (London: Oxford University Press, 1921); J. M. Gilchrist, "The Authorship and Date of the Pastoral Epistles" (Ph.D. diss., University of Manchester, 1967).

<sup>53</sup>E.g., on εὐσέβεια, see J. D. Quinn, *The Letter to Titus*, AB, vol. 35 (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 287-88; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 135-44; Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 171-74; on

some cases, Judaism had already put Hellenistic language to use in expressing their religious convictions.<sup>54</sup> For example, the Jews redefined the Greek virtue of εὐσέβεια in terms of their view of God and the law.<sup>55</sup> For another example, one could recall my discussion of the Hellenistic words ἄφθαρτος, ἀθανασία, and ἀόρατος that were used as divine descriptions in the doxologies of 1 Timothy and yet conveyed a biblical description of God.<sup>56</sup> Thus, the early church may have used Hellenistic terms that had previously been filled with OT content. And even if some intertestamental expressions sometimes veered from OT ideas, the existence of Hellenistic terminology did not necessarily change the content of their message.

The presence of Hellenistic vocabulary does not contend against the largely biblical theology argued for here. The content of the theological expression must determine the author's view of God, not the mode of communication. Though this dissertation is not specifically concerned with the author's status as a theologian, this point stands in favor of his sophistication and creativity.<sup>57</sup> He fashioned his biblical theology from terms and ideas outside of the common currency of most other NT documents. That is not to say that his expressions were unknown to the early church, but

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σώφρων, see Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 182-91; on ἐπιφάνεια, see Lau, *Manifest in the Flesh*, 179-259; Stettler, *Die Christologie*, 314-27.

<sup>54</sup>See the works mentioned above in n. 53 above.

<sup>55</sup>See 4 Maccabees, where the noun occurs 54 times and the adjective 10 times (notably 5:16-28, esp. vv. 18, 24). See also W. Foerster, "εὐσεβής κτλ." in *TDNT*, 7:175-85; Quinn, *Titus*, 287-88.

<sup>56</sup>See pp. 46-53 of this dissertation.

<sup>57</sup>Many have addressed the question of the author's theological prowess, e.g., A. T. Hanson, *Studies in the Pastoral Epistles* (London: SPCK, 1968), 110; F. Young, *The Theology of the Pastoral Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 47.

they were not those most commonly used to convey the new faith of the Christian community.

### **Conclusion**

Observing the remaining theological statements and related ideas throughout 1 Timothy sheds further light on the author's view of God. This material has revealed some of the author's fundamental assumptions about God. He believes that God is One, the Creator and Begetter of life, and the Living God. All of these convictions confirm the writer's background in the OT tradition. He apparently sees his theology as congruent with the faith of his forefathers. Yet, the gospel has added new qualification to his theology; God operates with respect to Christ. His divine acts all incorporate Jesus—saving sinners, giving of grace, and consummating the kingdom. Furthermore, Christology illumines the letter's theology by clarifying the author's view of God as ruler and controller of salvation and world history. Still more, this chapter has further highlighted the theological emphasis of the entire letter. The author inclines more toward expressions of theology than Christology, as was seen with the theme of hope in God, for example. Therefore, this chapter's theological reflections allow every description or related idea about God to have its voice heard, so that the author's view of God in 1 Timothy might become clearer.

These remaining divine descriptions in 1 Timothy have not sounded a dissident note, contrasting the theology already laid out thus far. Rather, these theological concepts resonate with the theology of the doxologies and God as Savior. For instance, this chapter has demonstrated that the writer of 1 Timothy was primarily operating from an OT theological background. For another example, hope in (the Living) God also

concord with the theme of Savior, which also stems from the OT. Furthermore, God's ownership of the church and power over all life echo the magisterial divine portraits in 1:17 and 6:15-16. So, this chapter's effort to let all of 1 Timothy color the author's theology has agreed with the basic theological perspective that I have advanced thus far.

However, the material considered in this chapter does more than simply cohere with the major theological themes, it supports them. Each of these lesser motifs arguably supports one or both of the two dominant theological categories proposed in this dissertation.

Let us first review the ways that some of the minor theological themes in 1 Timothy support the view of God in the doxologies of 1:17 and 6:15-16. First, Paul's unusual description of his apostolic calling in 1 Timothy 1:1 may contribute to his epistolary accent on God's kingly rule (Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν θεοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν). Similarly, Timothy's responsibility before God and Christ emphasize the divine mandate and authority of the doxologies (4:6; 6:11). Second, the epithet the Living God partially evokes OT passages declaring God's sole claim to deity (3:15; 4:10; cf. 6:17). Like the doxologies, the Living God asserts that God is the only God, and thus he alone has all authority. Third, Paul's handling of monotheism vis-à-vis Christology favors God's distinction as overseer and ruler of all things (1:1, 11-17; 2:3-6; 6:13-15). The author identifies both God and Christ as divine, yet their actions are not altogether identical. In comparison to some of Christ's activity, God seems personally removed from tangible human affairs and appears in a supervisory role. Fourth, God as Creator partially supports the sovereign description of the letter's doxologies (4:3-5; cf. 6:13, 17). This essential Judeo-Christian belief carries implications of God's sovereignty

and dominion over his creation. Finally, God's rule over the church accords with his supremacy highlighted in the doxologies (3:5, 15). These various theological aspects cohere and contribute to the broader thematic view of God purported by the doxologies of 1:17 and 6:15-16. They emphasize God's rule in all creation and in the church.

Considered in light of the programmatic doxologies, these theological perspectives function as a call to Timothy and the church to conduct themselves according to God's will with all faithfulness. Granted, each of these divine depictions contains more than one function according to their immediate context, as indicated above. Still, this proposed over-arching function not only follows logically, but it agrees with the letter's stated purpose for writing. As already argued, Paul wrote to challenge Timothy to fight for the gospel in Ephesus. Paul also wrote with the community of faith in mind, most pointedly evinced by the purpose statement of 3:14-15: "I hope to come to you (σοι) soon, but I am writing these things to you (σέ) so that, if I delay, you may know (εἰδῆς) how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth" (ESV). One should note that each of the second person addresses in these verses are singular. Paul still writes primarily to charge Timothy, but the health of the church and the propagation of God's truth among the Ephesian Christians are of ultimate concern. Furthermore, as the congregation apparently hears the letter (6:21), they should also gain a sense of the high theology exhibited throughout and respond accordingly.

Some of the theological voices discussed in this chapter also support the letter's important Savior theology. First Timothy 1:1 immediately links hope and salvation together in the divine persons of God and Christ. The three remaining

occurrences of hope in the letter maintain a theological focus (4:10; 5:5; 6:17). This hope does not always carry a strong eschatological message. But then again, the letter's Savior theology is not always futuristic either.<sup>58</sup> Hope in God expresses confidence in the Savior's care for believers in this life and the next. Therefore, as with the term Savior, this theologically related idea depicts a God who extends mercy and grace for all who trust in him. The epithet the Living God also supports the Savior theology in 1 Timothy (3:14; 4:10; cf. 6:13). As explained above, this term probably implies more than one sense. With regard to the Savior theology, the Living God confirms that God has life and is able to give life to those who trust in Christ. An important connection between salvation and life runs throughout the letter (1:15-16; 4:8-10; 6:17-19; cf. 6:12-13). In addition, God as Father maintains the affirmation that God saves sinners through Jesus Christ (1:2). The Pauline idea of God's fatherhood relates to the saving gospel of Christ. It not only reveals the relationship of God and Jesus, it expresses the divine adoption that believers experience by means of faith in Christ. Finally, the moniker the One God helps to establish Paul's Savior theology (2:5). God's oneness affirms that he is the God of the entire human race, and therefore, his saving will extends to all people. In conclusion, then, many of the less significant theological ideas in 1 Timothy coordinate with and uphold the letter's Savior theology.

These sundry theological convictions function in the same ways as the Savior theology, even though they can also function in other ways, as previously mentioned. In support of the sweeping Savior theme, they tell of a God who mercifully gives life to all people. He is the One God of hope for all people, who discriminates only against those

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<sup>58</sup>See chap. 3 of this dissertation.

who refuse his gospel. Although there is a proper fear in response to the theology of the doxologies, the Savior theology balances that perspective with emphasis on God's compassionate will to save those who hold to the truth of Christ. Furthermore, many of these minor motifs echo OT language, such as Savior, hope in God, the One God, and the Living God. Thus, we hear the author communicating the ever timely gospel in OT theological terms that were less common in other NT documents.

This chapter has allowed us to gain insight into the author's theological understanding by letting the entire letter speak and by unpacking some of his assumed convictions about God. No doubt, he held other convictions about God that informed his theology in 1 Timothy that do not rise to this surface in this brief correspondence. Nonetheless, the minor divine descriptions and ideas that do appear enlighten his theological framework, which in turn helps us to understand his pronounced statements about God as Savior and King in this letter. I have found that his consistent theological expression throughout 1 Timothy coheres with and usually supports his chief theological idea(s) of God as Savior and King.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

#### **Summary**

Instead of simply rehearsing the contents of the three previous chapters, I would like to summarize their material in a way that addresses key questions regarding my thesis. There were a few central questions about the theology of 1 Timothy that I hoped to answer in this dissertation. First and most basic, I wanted to know what the author thought about God, primarily because of 1 Timothy's unique theological descriptions in the doxologies and the epithet Savior. In addition, I observed that scholars often based their theological conclusions in 1 Timothy on their understanding of the author's identity and the influence of Hellenism, Judaism, or the OT. Moreover, interpreters typically make claims about the author's theology with little supporting comparisons from such literature. Therefore, it seemed necessary to take a fresh look at 1 Timothy's view of God. This task called for more in-depth comparisons between the theological language in 1 Timothy and contemporaneous writings, so as to know if the author's theology was biblical, Hellenistic, or syncretistic. This quest was the quest to discern the meaning of the theology of 1 Timothy.

What I found in the quest for meaning was a thoroughly biblical theology, though sometimes expressed in non-biblical language. In the doxologies, the author clearly interweaved Hellenistic terminology with that of the OT. By comparing the

theology of the doxologies to other religious writings, it became apparent that the content of the divine descriptions conveyed theological tenets consistent with the OT, much of which was also transmitted through Second Temple Judaism. For example, the author of 1 Timothy depicts God as the only God, who sovereignly reigns over all people and things. He is holy and pure, and thus cannot be seen or approached by corrupt mankind; nothing can frustrate his will or dampen his self-satisfaction. Even though some of these words or concepts might appear in Greco-Roman writings, the whole picture of God in 1 Timothy was incompatible with anything except a Judeo-Christian outlook. Also with the appellation Savior, the author demonstrated his heritage in the OT theological tradition, especially by consistently portraying God's salvation as an eschatological and spiritual deliverance. This portrayal clearly differed from the popular Greco-Roman notion of gods, kings, leaders, and civic patrons as saviors and benefactors. Finally, the less prominent theological descriptions in the letter also confirmed a biblical perspective. Ideas and predicates such as Father, the Living God, the One God, and God as Creator verified my previous findings that the theology of 1 Timothy has an essentially biblical character.

Next, I wanted to discern the epistolary importance of the peculiar theological themes found in the doxologies and the title Savior. I wanted to know if each of these two themes maintained equal importance in the letter, or if one was more prominent than the other. In my initial study of 1 Timothy, it seemed that the doxologies were being underplayed by most interpreters. Usually, the idea of God as Savior received most of the theological attention from commentators. The work of this dissertation has led me to believe that both theological themes in the doxologies and the title Savior hold equal

significance in the letter. The doxologies deserve distinction because of their position in the letter and their parallelism. The Savior theology warrants prominence because of its place in the greeting and its recurrence throughout the epistle. The remaining theological themes scattered throughout the letter affirm that both of these strains are equally important for 1 Timothy.

Having ascertained their shared importance, I wanted to see how the motifs of God as Savior and King (doxologies) fit together within 1 Timothy. For, many commentators who addressed this question accented either the Savior theology or the doxologies at the expense of the other; usually the latter was made subservient to the former. But from my perspective, it seemed that interpreters made this formulation based on a soteriological emphasis they saw in the letter, without giving careful exegetical consideration to the doxologies. Therefore, the quest for the function of the theology in the letter became important.

In order to discern the function(s) of God as Savior and King, I wanted to give special attention to how these theological expressions played out in their immediate context, and if possible, how they related to the entire letter. As for the doxologies, it was crucial to recognize the letter's structure. Once the similarities among 1:3-20, 3:14-4:16, and 6:2b-21 clarified the letter's structure and purpose, the importance of the doxologies in their immediate contexts and within the letter became evident. The doxologies primarily serve to strengthen and motivate Timothy to carry out the charge that Paul was laying before him. This purpose holds true for the immediate contexts as well as for the letter as a whole, since the purpose of the immediate contexts (1:3-20; 6:2b-21) coincides with the purpose for the letter.

The function of the Savior theology was more difficult to determine, because the term does not occur uniformly in 1 Timothy. It appears twice with a universal emphasis (2:3; 4:10), but not in 1:1. Furthermore, it functions differently according to its context, occurring as a support for universal prayer (2:3) and for missionary labors (4:10). Despite these varying nuances, one commonality stands forth among each of the Savior references, namely, its relationship to Paul's gospel ministry (1:1; 2:3; 4:10). I countered the claim that Savior was chosen primarily as a way of undercutting Imperial claims to power and deity. Rather, all things considered, it seems that God as Savior functions in a couple of key, over-arching ways. First, it reminds his reader(s) of the extent of God's saving will in Christ, which may have been diminished by opponents at Ephesus. The latter half of this suggestion remains somewhat unsteady, since the author does not clearly portray God as Savior in light of this supposed false teaching of the opponents. Furthermore, NT authors commonly dealt with this restrictive soteriology and did not solve the problem by calling God Savior. While I maintain this view, it is one that must be held circumspectly. Second, in light of the theological emphasis throughout the letter and Timothy as Paul's primary reader, God as Savior theologically motivates Timothy. I have suggested that the author chose the word Savior to describe his gospel theologically. Drawing from his OT background, this appellation could have been just another way of emphasizing two important themes in the epistle, namely, his apostolic message and God. This less common OT divine predicate fit the theological makeup and purpose of 1 Timothy. The idea of God as Savior counterbalances and cooperates with the theme of God as King. In the doxologies, and elsewhere, Paul sought to encourage Timothy to faithfulness because he works in the sight of God the matchless

King. Timothy must also labor in ministry because he serves God the Savior, who desires to give life to all through the apostolic gospel that Timothy must guard and proclaim.

My study of the function of Savior and King led me to conclude that both major themes cohabit the letter in both an individual and complementary way. My understanding of the letter's structure and purpose, and my exegesis of the pertinent passages demonstrated that these concepts operate distinctly as theological grounds for 1 Timothy. Although they have individual functions, both ideas were designed to play an epistolary role in support of the author's purpose and parenthesis. Therefore, while these two theological themes act independently of one another, they also complement one another by contributing to the overall theological emphasis in the letter. Their prominence in the letter adds to the author's overall focus on God. Furthermore, the themes do not relate directly to one another, and neither theme should be subjugated to another. These two ideas contribute independently to the theological focus of 1 Timothy.

Another important question should be recalled here regarding the Savior theology: why did the author refer to God, and not Christ, as Savior? This question is rarely asked, and for those who do address it, the answer usually focuses on why it was not used for Christ, instead of answering why it is used for God. The evidence of this dissertation suggests that Paul named God Savior because of his theological emphasis in the letter. The doxologies, the ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ motif, the development of the hope in God theme, and the many other divine descriptions, create a theocentric focus throughout 1 Timothy. Therefore, it is likely that the author's decidedly God-focused agenda led him to refer exclusively to God as Savior in the epistle.

Answering these important questions has resulted in the statement and defense of this dissertation's thesis: the author's emphasis to convey God as both Savior and King reflects an OT background that highlights God's redemption and rule, which primarily grounds and focuses the entire message to Timothy, the primary (implied) recipient.

### **Implications**

If this dissertation accurately depicts the theology of 1 Timothy, it may yield several implications. These implications relate to areas of study in 1 Timothy, the PE, and the NT.

My examination of the doxologies in 1 Timothy 1:17 and 6:15-16 has tested and verified a view of the letter's structure that has been most clearly and cogently presented by R. Van Neste.<sup>1</sup> Partially on the basis of this structure, I have argued for the letter's purpose and the thoughtfulness of its author. It might seem that this purpose suffers in light of the debate over authorship. However, I tried to bypass this difficulty by interpreting the epistle according to its implied author and reader(s). Whatever interpretative approach one favors, the structure and purpose of the letter confirmed by this dissertation deserves attention in 1 Timothy studies, even if all of the occasional contents of the letter are deemed fictional.

Additionally, the coherent structure of the letter and the consistency of theological thought displayed here suggest that the author was a capable theologian.

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<sup>1</sup>R. Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure in the Pastoral Epistles*, JSNTSup 280 (London: T & T Clark International, 2004).

Thus, for example, I have proposed that the writer was creative in communicating the gospel in theological terms. He went outside the usual range of terminology for the NT to express his gospel, in part, by referring to God as Savior. Accordingly, when assessing 1 Timothy, due consideration should be given to the author's understanding of and contribution to the early Christian faith, despite one's position regarding the origin of 1 Timothy.

The structure and purpose of 1 Timothy also relates to the literary character of the epistle. Even for those commentators who accept the authenticity of the document, there are still questions concerning what kind of letter it is. Typically, such scholars imagine that the letter was addressed to Timothy, but also intended for the entire congregation. It is supposed that Paul addressed it specifically to Timothy in order to authorize him before the Ephesian church. Recently, the idea that 1 Timothy reflects an ancient letter-form called a mandate letter basically reiterates this view, and deserves further research.<sup>2</sup> Granted, this dissertation has avoided this issue by reading the letter according to its implied author and reader(s). However, the structure and purpose advocated here reissues the question of the nature of this letter and its proper reader(s) for those who favor its authenticity, and perhaps for some who do not.

The research and findings of this dissertation also confirm the instinct of recent commentators to study the PE separately from one another. The theological expression of 1 Timothy is definitely unique among these three letters, and indeed, the entire NT. Even though the PE share some peculiar terminology, their usage among the three

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<sup>2</sup>See e.g., P. H. Towner's discussion, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids:

epistles vary. For example, Savior occurs frequently in 1 Timothy and Titus, but the former is theologically-focused and the latter is Christologically-focused. Furthermore, reading these letters too quickly in light of the others can dilute the meaning and function that they might display on their own. At the same time, we can benefit from comparing the letters with one another. Of course, this principle holds true when 1 Timothy is compared with any other appropriate literature, especially the Pauline corpus. Even though it is legitimate to read them together, this dissertation has strengthened the notion that each Pastoral Epistle also deserves study that begins and ends with itself.

This dissertation has also revealed the theological emphasis of 1 Timothy. The author maintains a Godward focus throughout the letter. Even though Christ plays an important role in the document, preference is given to theological expression. This fact ought to stand as a correction to the modern trend that pays more attention to the epistle's Christology than to theology. As noted in chapter 1 of this dissertation, the theology of 1 Timothy typically gets discussed only when it comes into contact with other themes such as Christology or soteriology. Hopefully, this dissertation will stem that tendency by causing commentators to listen equally well to the author's theology. In addition, I would hope to see the theology of the letter influence the broader interpretation of the letter. If the theology of the letter is as pervasive as I have argued, and if the themes of Savior and King are truly programmatic, then their impact should be felt throughout 1 Timothy studies. The message of God ought to color commentary on the letter's main purpose(s) and themes, such as salvation and church order. I have already drawn

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Eerdmans, 2006), 33-36.

attention to some of the major ways that theology touches on other important matters in the letter. It would be interesting to see a full-fledged commentary read the letter in light of this theological emphasis, not as the only controlling element, but as one of the guiding lights in 1 Timothy.

This dissertation also contributes to the broader effort of developing a conscious theology from the NT. While some contributions from the PE have been made already, this work is the first one on this scale to focus specifically on 1 Timothy. The theology of 1 Timothy adds to this ongoing discussion in several ways.

First, the author maintains an expansive perspective of God's character and actions. He asserts that God is one, sovereign, happy, holy, dwelling in unapproachable light, and immortal. Furthermore, the author describes God's merciful character and his saving will for all people. The writer holds these transcendent and immanent characteristics together without friction. Moreover, he intentionally uses them both in different ways to impel Timothy to faithful action in Ephesus. These characteristics have seemed at odds with each other to some interpreters.<sup>3</sup> In addition, 1 Timothy's portrayal of God's universal saving will has typically been compared with other NT depictions of God's predestining will. Such comparison and synthesizing, if possible, should be sought. Yet at the same time, the author has a capacious understanding of God that modern interpreters must be careful not to reduce.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>See pp. 10-16 of this dissertation.

<sup>4</sup>Some find the "hiddenness of God" as the solution, not the problem, to God's saving and condemning acts. See, e.g., M. A. Seifrid, "The Knowledge of the Creator and the Experience of Exile: The Contours of Paul's Theology" (paper presented at the Society of New Testament Studies Seminar Seminar,

First Timothy may also contribute to the topics of divine subordinationism and Christological monotheism. Since the epistle describes and implies God's action chiefly as overseer of all time and all things, it would be interesting to see further development of the epistle's theology and Christology. Although 1 Timothy does not speak plainly to these issues, more work could be done toward sorting out the relationship between God and Christ in the letter.

This dissertation also reasserts the importance of the OT for assessing the theology of 1 Timothy and NT theology. Laying aside the debated doxologies and Savior title, the remaining theological expressions discussed in chapter 4 of this dissertation strongly suggest an OT influence on the author's understanding of God. Therefore, instead of first giving thought to the contemporary secular backdrop, one should more thoroughly evaluate the theology of the letter from the writer's predominant religious heritage in the Scriptures of Israel. OT backgrounds may get overlooked because they are assumed. But uncovering the oft unstated theology of the NT is precisely what this effort in (re)discovering God in the NT is all about.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, this dissertation reminds us that Paul's view of God impacted his mission as well as informed his broader theology.<sup>6</sup> The author's understanding of God

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Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 2-7 August 2005).

<sup>5</sup>See also J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 27-50.

<sup>6</sup>See also Moxnes who relates Rom 4:17 (the God "who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist") to the gospel mission (H. Moxnes, *Theology in Conflict: Studies in Paul's Understanding of God in Romans*, NovTSup 53 [Leiden: Brill, 1980], 231-82). So also Thüsing who ties in mission with Rom 15:13 ("the God of hope") (W. Thüsing, *Studien zur neutestamentlichen Theologie* WUNT 82 [Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1995], 87-99).

formed the basis for his gospel and all of its implications, but the apostle also maintained a dynamic and personal theology that animated his own calling, and which he in turn used to motivate Timothy's ministry.<sup>7</sup> His view of God as Savior and King possessed ramifications wide enough to affect the world and eternity, and narrow enough to inspire each individual to labor for the gospel.

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<sup>7</sup>Cf. J. Plevnik's decision to use of the word "basis" in relating Paul's view of God to his wider theology ("The Understanding of God as the Basis of Pauline Theology," *CBQ* 65[2003]: 554-67).

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## ABSTRACT

### OUR SAVIOR AND KING: THEOLOGY PROPER IN 1 TIMOTHY

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In this dissertation the author seeks to present a holistic theology proper (hereafter, simply “theology”) for the first epistle to Timothy, with special regard to the letter’s doxologies (King) and divine title, Savior. Chapter 1 identifies the problem, includes a history of research, and describes the method and procedure of the dissertation. The method of inquiry consists of determining the meaning and function of the letter’s theology. Thus, the author seeks to understand the background and character of 1 Timothy’s theology, while also wishing to discern why the author of 1 Timothy chose to emphasize these peculiar theological themes.

Chapter 2 explores the meaning and function of the theological descriptions found in the doxologies of 1 Timothy 1:17 and 6:15-16. By thorough comparison to Greco-Roman, early Jewish, and OT literature, the author suggests a basically OT-informed view of God. The doxologies depict God as the only Sovereign who rules over all. The writer then determines that the doxologies function as a support and encouragement for Timothy to heed Paul’s charge. This conclusion is largely based on the positioning of the doxologies and the macrostructure of the letter.

Chapter 3 examines the meaning and function of the divine epithet Savior. After comparing this term to its occurrences in Greco-Roman, early Jewish, and OT literature, the author again favors an OT background for Savior. This term depicts God as one who mercifully and indiscriminately reconciles sinners who trust in Christ. While also recognizing other functions, the author suggests that God as Savior may have been aimed at the primary reader, Timothy, as well. Accordingly, the idea of Savior informs and strengthens Timothy, so that he might continue to labor in presenting the life-giving gospel of God.

Chapter 4 considers every remaining theological description in 1 Timothy, as well as themes that significantly relate to the letter's theology, such as Christology. The author suggests that the entire theology of 1 Timothy either coheres with or supports the predominant ideas of God as King and Savior.

Chapter 5 summarizes the dissertation's findings and concludes with suggested implications for NT studies.

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