



# 1 Timothy

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**However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.**

1 Timothy 1:16

Paul, after having claimed that he was the chief of sinners, now proceeds to give a reason for his selection despite that unhappy claim to fame. "However" is stated to set the tone of this new thought. "I was the chief of sinners, however..." This is immediately explained by, "for this reason I obtained mercy." He points out that the very fact that he was the chief of sinners is why he was selected! God, infinitely wise, looked at Paul's heart and knew that he would feel as he does, and He knew that Paul would use his state before Christ as an example of comfort and reassurance to any and all who felt as he did.

Never waiving in his assurance of salvation, he continues with, "that in me first Christ Jesus might show all longsuffering." Anyone who thought, "I cannot be saved, my sin is too great," only needs to come to Paul's words here to see that such is not the case. Instead of being too great of a sinner to be forgiven, Paul clearly shows that such a notion is wholly unrealistic. "Look at me, and be assured that Christ will forgive you as well!" is his adamant cry to the one burdened by his past life.

The longsuffering of Christ towards those who would otherwise be objects of His wrath is highlighted in Paul, making him "a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life." This is the reason for Paul's calling, supernatural as it may be. He was the chief of sinners, but God literally manifested Himself to him in order to make him an example, a pattern, for those who would bear the weight of their own sin. Despite their desire to believe, even when it seemed futile, they simply couldn't accept that God would be willing to

forgive them. But because of Paul's calling, they too can be reassured that their own salvation, because of faith in Christ, was not impossible. Instead, it is rather both possible and assured.

The final words, "for everlasting life," are a resounding note of eternal salvation. There is no hint here, or anywhere else in Paul's writing of anything but Once-Saved-Always-Saved. Everlasting life means exactly what it says, and it is based on belief. One leads to the other, and the deal is done. How sad that so many curse this doctrine of assured salvation. They have failed to properly and accurately see that God's grace is a gift. A gift with conditions is no gift at all. Paul, unflinching in his salvation, and unflinching in the eternal nature of it, asks us to likewise be assured of these things. The Lord has set him as the pattern, and we are to look to it with confidence.

Life application: Let us be assured that there is no thing that we have done which will keep us from being saved if we hand it over to Jesus. And, let us then be assured that there is nothing that can keep us from continuing on in that salvation. Faith – it saves you. Have faith in that.

**Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.** 1 Timothy 1:17

After contemplating his calling and position in Christ which was so very undeserved, Paul breaks forth into a doxology, recognizing God's great glory. It is the God who pulled him out of the clutches of Satan, and brought him into His marvelous light, that he now breaks forth in praise to with the words, "Now to the King eternal."

This is from a commonly used Hebrew phrase – *melech ha'olam*, or "King of the ages." Directly translated from the Greek, it also reads, "King of the ages." It signifies the eternal nature of His rule. Time came into existence at His command, and since that moment, ages have come and gone. During these successive generations, God is on the throne. And as the ages continue on, even for all eternity, He will still be there. Whereas all else is created, He is uncreated. His rule has no beginning and no end.

Paul continues with "immortal." The word literally means, "incorruptible." Whereas "King of the ages" defines the scope of the rule of God, this word speaks of His being. He is without beginning and without end. While other rulers come and go, facing their own morality, God is eternal. The position of His rule is without end, and it is He who fills that position endlessly.

Next Paul states, "invisible." The word used is a compound adjective signifying "not seen." It is closely associated with the Greek word for "faith." In other words, He is (figuratively) *spiritual reality* as perceived through God's inbirthings of *faith*" (HELPS Word Studies). The reason this word is highlighted here (and elsewhere) as an attribute, is to continue to demonstrate His

incorruptible nature. Whereas the idols of the nations wear down, are destroyed, are stolen, etc., such is not the case with the invisible God.

After these descriptive words, Paul continues His praise with, "to God who alone is wise." Some manuscripts leave out "wise," thus saying, "the only God." Which is correct is debated, but with or without the descriptor, the intent is that God alone is above all else. Though there are other invisible created things, such as angels, principalities, and powers, God is the sovereign ruler over them. They are not "gods," but are subject to Him.

It is to him that Paul ascribes, "honor and glory." To Him alone all worship, praise, and veneration is to be given. He alone bears the eternal glory as He rules from His position of honor. Thus these things rightly and wholly belong to only Him. And this is, as Paul next says, "forever and ever." This is another Hebrew phrase. It literally states, "to the ages of ages." It is a superlative expression meaning "to all eternity." There will be no time that another may receive His honor and glory. Rather, for as long as eternity lasts, which is forever, this is to be ascribed to Him.

Paul then finishes with "Amen." It is the traditional ending to any such doxology, signifying "So be it." This is how it is, and this is how it ever shall be. There is finality in the expression. God is God, and He was, is, and ever shall be. By faith, such an expression is made, and it confirms in the one making it that what has been said is agreed to in heart and soul.

Life application: God is invisible, and thus our Christian walk is one of faith. Christ has returned to the Father and left us with His unseen Spirit as our Comforter and Helper. During this dispensation, we are to live by faith, not expecting, nor receiving, a physical manifestation of God's presence. This is what the Bible expects of us. Someday our faith will be sight as we stand in the presence of Christ Jesus. Until then, let us be steadfast in our faith, not wavering in conviction, and not waffling in our doctrine.