

INTRODUCTION

The words of faith and of the good doctrine carefully followed and attained are a good diet for the servant of Jesus Christ. Being nourished by such a spiritual diet leads to a person being a good, a useful, a beneficial servant or minister of Jesus Christ.

But there is another kind of diet, or a plan of exercise, to which the devil would entice us. His plan of diet and exercise does not lead to a person being a good, useful, beneficial servant of Jesus Christ. A plan whereby a person nourishes himself on, and exercises himself in profane and old wives' fables, does not make the person a good servant of Jesus.

Therefore, when our Lord's apostles had written Timothy, recommending to him the spiritual diet of the words of faith and of the good doctrine he had been following, the next thing he wrote was a warning to Timothy, and to all the disciples of Jesus Christ, that profane and old wives' fables be refused.

TEXT

GEN But cast away prophane, and olde wives fables

KJV But refuse profane and old wives' fables

NKJV But reject profane and old wives' fables

ESV Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths

CSB But have nothing to do with pointless and silly myths

BODY

Our Lord's disciples, as part of our program of spiritual diet and exercise, must refuse to nourish ourselves with or exercise ourselves in profane and old wives' fables.

- I. Fables or Myths - Those Sayings or Stories Not Known to Be True
- A. As contrasted with the truth 2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; (4) and they will turn their ears away from **the truth**, and be turned aside to **fables [ESV: wander off into myths]**.
 - B. As contrasted with eye-witness apostolic testimony 2 Peter 1:13-18 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, (14) knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. (15) Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. (16) For we did not follow **cunningly devised fables [ESV: cleverly devised myths]** when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were **eyewitnesses** of His majesty. (17) For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (18) And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.
 - C. We are familiar with
 - 1. Aesop's fables
 - 2. Greek mythology
 - D. There also were Jewish myths in their old rabbinical traditions
 - E. Since then many fables have made their way into the Roman Catholic system
 - F. Always, constantly, there are many antichrists trying to get what is false mixed in with what is true, to get the disciples of Jesus Christ to try to nourish themselves and exercise themselves in what is not true
 - G. 1 Timothy 1:4 nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.
 - 1. fables or myths do not supply the nourishment that the servants of Jesus need, to be edified or built up or strengthened in the faith
 - 2. instead, they supply disputes, questions, speculations, by which the servants of Jesus come into conflict with each other

II. Profane Fables

A. The word profane

1. G952 *bebelos*

- a) most literally: what it is okay for everyone to step on
- b) not holy, not hallowed, not sacred

2. “profane” is Latin *profanus* = before the temple i.e. not in the temple, but out in front of it

3. similar to “common” or “vulgar”

B. The concept of profaneness or profanity or vulgarity

1. treating what is holy as if it were common

C. The concept of profane fables

1. talking about something as if it were holy, when actually it is merely common or profane

2. speaking of something as if it were an important point of true religion, essential to worship of God in Jesus Christ, when actually it is just a common thing, a profane thing

D. John 4:23-24 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

1. whatever is not holy, not sacred, not spiritual, the servant of Jesus must not allow into his thinking as if it were holy or sacred and spiritual; he must cast it away, refuse it, reject it, have nothing to do with it
2. whatever is not known to be true, the servant of Jesus must not allow into his thinking as if it were true; he must cast it away, refuse it, reject it, have nothing to do with it

III. Old Wives' Fables

A. Here is a scene with which you probably are familiar:

1. an older woman has her grandchild sitting in her lap; or maybe it is some other child she is taking care of
2. in our society, she has children's books, and she reads to the child about
 - a) Peter Rabbit
 - (1) the rabbits talk
 - (2) the rabbits wear clothes
 - (3) Peter Rabbit's mother tells him not to go into Mr. MacGreggor's garden
 - (4) but Peter goes in anyway, and ends of tearing the buttons off his new coat
 - b) The Cat in the Hat
 - (1) two children are left at home when their mother goes out
 - (2) a talking cat comes in, with two little friends
 - (3) the fish in the fishbowl frowns and tells the children that the cat should not be there while their mother is out
 - (4) the talking cat and his friends make a big mess of the whole house, then quickly clean it all up before the mother gets home
3. in most of human history, and in many places today, the old woman would not have had any books, and so would tell similar stories from memory, which she had heard when she was a girl, or which she made up to entertain little children
4. in the time when Paul was writing to Timothy, Aesop's fables already were hundreds of years old, and well known; so the old wives' fables of the time may well have been
 - a) The Lion and the Mouse - where the mouse chews through the net to set the lion free
 - b) The Fox and the Grapes - where the fox cannot reach the grapes, so he says that they probably were sour grapes anyway
 - c) Town Mouse and Country Mouse - where the two mice visit each other's homes

B. We all know that it is perfectly suitable for grandmas to tell myths and fables to children, in which the animals talk to each other, and by which the grandmas might teach children some useful moral lesson

1. everyone understands that rabbits do not actually speak English; nor do they wear coats with buttons
2. we do not think it wicked in the least for old women to read and tell such stories to children

C. But think how unsuitable it would be for a person to tell myths and fables for the church's sermons or Bible study lessons

D. Yet people try to introduce into the Christian religion stories and sayings not known to be true

CONCLUSION

Profane and Old Wives' Fables - Refuse

cast away

reject

have nothing to do with

Our Lord's disciples, as part of our program of spiritual diet and exercise, must refuse to nourish ourselves with or exercise ourselves in profane and old wives' fables.

Roel - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer: Psalm 84:1-2

Thad - Scripture Reading: John 4:5-26

Dillon - Congregational Prayer

Benediction - Jude 24-25

Allison - Prelude

Allison - Trinity 500 "He Leadeth Me"

Allison - Trinity 302 "Lord of the Worlds Above"

Allison - Trinity 175 "Man of Sorrows"

Aesop's Fables

- The Boy Who Cried Wolf
- The Fox and the Grapes
- The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse
- The Lion and the Mouse

Profane: not holy

- treating the holy as common

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Calvin:

He who wishes to be faithfully employed in the service of God must not only avoid, as Paul says, the lies and superstitions that tend to poison souls; but he must avoid profane fables, that is, subtleties that cannot edify, and that contain no instruction which is good for the salvation of souls.

“fables” ESV “myths” G3454 *muthos*

1 Timothy 1:4 nor give heed to **fables [G3454 *muthos*]** and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.

1 Timothy 4:6-7 If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. (7) But reject profane and old wives' **fables [ESV: irreverent, silly myths]**, and exercise yourself toward godliness.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; (4) and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to **fables [ESV: wander off into myths]**.

Titus 1:13-14 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, (14) not giving heed to **Jewish fables [ESV: myths]** and commandments of men who turn from the truth.

2 Peter 1:13-18 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, (14) knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. (15)

Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. (16) For we did not follow **cunningly devised fables [ESV: cleverly devised myths]** when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. (17) For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (18) And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.