

1 Timothy 5:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

Analysis

I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels (Διαμαρτύρομαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν ἀγγέλων, Diamartyromai enōpion tou theou kai Christou Iēsou kai tōn eklektōn angelōn)—'I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels.' Diamartyromai is an intensive oath—'I solemnly charge, testify, adjure.' The threefold witness (Father, Son, angels) underscores the seriousness.

That thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality (ἵνα ταῦτα φυλάξης χωρὶς προκρίματος, μηδὲν ποιῶν κατὰ πρόσκλησιν, hina tauta phylaxēs chōris prokrimatos, mēden poiōn kata prosklisin)—'keep these principles without prejudice, doing nothing from partiality.' Prokrima means prejudgment, bias. Prosklisis means inclination, favoritism.

Timothy must apply discipline impartially—no favoritism toward influential elders, no prejudice against unpopular ones. The solemn oath before God, Christ, and elect angels emphasizes accountability. Biased discipline destroys justice and credibility. Leaders must be held to the same standards regardless of status, wealth, or popularity.

Historical Context

The Ephesian church likely had elders of varying social status—some wealthy patrons, some poor. Human nature tempts us to overlook sin in the influential and harshly judge the powerless. Paul charges Timothy to administer discipline with perfect impartiality, aware that God, Christ, and angels observe his justice. The elect angels may be those who didn't rebel (unlike demons) and now witness church affairs (1 Corinthians 4:9).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Why does Paul invoke God, Christ, and the elect angels to reinforce this charge?
2. How does partiality in church discipline undermine justice and credibility?
3. What practical safeguards help leaders avoid favoritism when addressing sin?

Interlinear Text

Διαμαρτύρομαι	ἐνώπιον	τοῦ	θεοῦ	καὶ	Κυρίου	Ἰησοῦ
I charge G1263	thee before G1799	G3588	God G2316	and G2532	the Lord G2962	Jesus G2424
Χριστοῦ	καὶ	τῶν	ἐκλεκτῶν	ἀγγέλων	ἵνα	ταῦτα
Christ G5547	and G2532	G3588	the elect G1588	angels G32	that G2443	these things G5023
φυλάξης	χωρὶς	προκρίματος	μηδὲν	ποιῶν	κατὰ	
thou observe G5442	without G5565	preferring one before another G4299	nothing G3367	doing G4160	by G2596	
πρόσκλησιν						
partiality G4346						

Additional Cross-References

2 Peter 2:4 (References God): For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

1 Timothy 6:13 (References Jesus): I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

2 Timothy 4:1 (References Jesus): I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2 Corinthians 5:16 (References Christ): Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

Jude 1:6 (Parallel theme): And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

2 Timothy 2:14 (References Lord): Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

Matthew 25:41 (Parallel theme): Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

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