

## Which are the implicit texts?

### IDENTIFYING IMPLICIT TEXTS

‘iv. **Passages on which a teaching is based should not be incidental - i.e. passages that are non-essential to the main teaching of a book or that do not constitute a teaching statement.**

For example, Romans, the one book of the N.T. that systematically explains how sin and death entered the world, what sin is and how the life, sacrifice and resurrection of Christ overcome sin and death, contains only one reference to Satan at the end of 16 chapters of detailed exposition.

This one incidental reference cannot be used to alter the Apostle’s argument in the rest of the book by suggesting that a fallen-angel Satan had a role to play in how sin entered the world, what causes sin etc.’<sup>1</sup>

**‘We must avoid basing doctrine on passages that only infer** e.g. Thomas’ statement ‘*My Lord and my God*’ to a believer in the Trinity, teaches that Jesus is part of a triune Godhead but this view of the statement is based on inference. It is not a statement on the nature of the Godhead but an outburst from a now undoubting Thomas.

The expression ‘my Lord’ is used in the same chapter by Mary Magdalene in a context that proves she did not believe that Jesus was God while ‘God’ is a term used in the O.T. to describe the coming Messiah without any notion that Messiah would be God. In the risen Jesus, Thomas now saw the final proof of Jesus’ Messianic claims.’<sup>2</sup>

Implicit texts are those which speak indirectly about a particular topic. Such texts may present teaching or an example to follow, which indicates what we should think and do with regard to a topic.

However, it is wrong to draw inferred arguments from passages which do not speak directly to the subject, and then use these to interpret passages which do speak directly and explicitly.<sup>3</sup>

### IMPLICIT TEXTS

The following are implicit New Testament texts speaking of women and their teaching role indirectly. Commentary on each passage is provided from complementarians, egalitarians, and unaligned sources.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>3</sup> Ian and Averil acknowledge they actually do this; commenting on a number of texts they use to argue their case, they acknowledge **‘We don’t claim that these “passages ... contain explicit teaching on the role of women in the ecclesia, as far as leadership and teaching is concerned”**. They do, however, present explicit information about Jesus and his attitudes to women and form the background to the explicit teaching in the rest of the New Testament.’, ‘Reply 2’, pp. 112-113 (April 2009).

### ● Acts 2: 4-15:

‘But Peter stood up **with the eleven**, raised his voice, and addressed them: “You men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, know this and listen carefully to what I say. In spite of what you think, **these men** are not drunk, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning.”<sup>4</sup>

### ● Acts 18:26:

‘He began to speak out fearlessly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, **they took him aside and explained the way of God to him more accurately.**’<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Peter’s phrase ‘these men’ (Greek *outoi*, nominative masculine plural, referring to males), indicates that he is referring only to ‘the eleven’, the other apostles who are with him; this is acknowledged by Bruce (egalitarian), ‘The Book of the Acts’, New International Commentary on the New Testament, pp. 59-60 (1988), Kistemaker writes ‘Then Peter stood up with the eleven... For **these men** are not drunk’, ‘Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles’, Baker New Testament Commentary, p. 88 (1990), Newman & Nida write ‘**These men** may be either the eleven (Peter does not seem to include himself among those who are thought to be drunk) or the larger group of the one hundred and twenty.’, ‘A Handbook on the Acts of the Apostles’, UBS Handbook Series, p. 42 (1993), Gaertner, ‘Acts’, College Press NIV Commentary (1993), Williams, ‘Acts’, New International Biblical Commentary, p. 55 (1990), Mare writes ‘**These men** are not drunk. **The masculine form is used for the word “these”**’, ‘New Testament Background Commentary: A New Dictionary of Words, Phrases and Situations in Bible Order’, p. 149 (2004).

<sup>5</sup> This verse describes Priscilla participating with her husband Aquila in the instruction of Apollos; Bruce (egalitarian), writes ‘how much better it is to give **such private help** to a teacher whose understanding of his subject is deficient than to correct or denounce him publicly!’, ‘The Book of the Acts’, New International Commentary on the New Testament, p. 360 (1988), Kistemaker writes ‘Next, Apollos demonstrated remarkable restraint when he consented to **come to the home** of a tentmaker and his wife and to receive instruction not only from a humble craftsman but also from a woman.’, ‘Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles’, Baker New Testament Commentary, pp. 668-669 (1990), Newman & Nida write ‘**Took him home** (so many translations: NAB, Twentieth Century, Goodspeed, Moffatt) **is a meaning well supported by the use**

<sup>1</sup> Byrnes, ‘God Christ Man Woman’, p. 12 (2010).

- **2 Timothy 2:2:**

‘And entrust what you heard me say in the presence of many others as witnesses to **faithful people who will be competent to teach others as well.**’<sup>6</sup>

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of this verb elsewhere in the New Testament (see 28:2; Romans 14:1; 15:7a). However it may mean simply “**take aside**” (Phps).’, ‘A Handbook on the Acts of the Apostles’, UBS Handbook Series, p. 358 (1993), Gaertner writes ‘At any rate, Priscilla and Aquila came into contact with Apollos and “**invited him to their home**” (προσλαμβάνομαι, *proslambanomai*). The Greek term means “to take someone to oneself,” and thus is interpreted by the NIV to mean a private meeting in the home (and justly so). **Evidently the fact that Priscilla was a woman did not prohibit her from being involved in this instruction of Apollos.**’, ‘Acts’, College Press NIV Commentary (1993), Williams writes ‘Afterwards they **took him home** and made good what was lacking in his instruction.’, ‘Acts’, New International Biblical Commentary, p. 325 (1990), Mare writes ‘Priscilla and Aquila **invited Apollos to their home** for further training’, ‘New Testament Background Commentary: A New Dictionary of Words, Phrases and Situations in Bible Order’, p. 202 (2004).

<sup>6</sup> The NET footnote says ‘Grk “faithful men”; but here ἄνθρωποι (*anthrōpōis*) is generic, referring to both men and women.’, which is the translation with the most support, even though standard commentaries are divided on the issue of whether or not the word is generic here (the passage is only implicit for the purpose of the subject under discussion because although it indicates both brothers and sisters are to teach, which is not in dispute, it does not describe who they are to teach or in what circumstances); Towner (egalitarian), writes ‘The command itself, “entrust [*parathou*] [these things] to **reliable people**,”<sup>9</sup> which comes in the next phrase, picks up and echoes the language of “deposit” and “guarantor” (*parathēkē*) introduced in 1:12–14 and earlier in 1 Tim 1:18; 6:20 to describe the succession of Paul’s ministry to his follower.’, ‘The Letters to Timothy and Titus’, New International Commentary on the New Testament, p. 490 (2006), Kistemaker writes ‘The deposit which was entrusted to Timothy (I Tim. 6:20; II Tim. 1:14) must be deposited with **trustworthy men. They must be men**, moreover, who will be qualified to teach others (cf. I Tim. 3:2), so that these others as well as their teachers will have been instructed in God’s redemptive truth.’, ‘Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles’, Baker New Testament Commentary, p. 246 (1990), Arichea (egalitarian), & Hatton, write ‘An alternative translation model for this verse is: You have heard me proclaim the teachings (or, Christian doctrine) in front of many other people. You must

- **2 Timothy 3:15:**

‘**and how from infancy you have known the holy writings**, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.’<sup>7</sup>

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take these same teachings and give (or, tell) them to **other competent people** (teachers) who will then tell others about them.’, ‘A Handbook on Paul’s letters to Timothy and to Titus’, UBS handbook series, p. 192 (1995), Mounce (complementarian), writes ‘In order to continue the work that Timothy began, it is essential that **men of character** continue to teach the true gospel, the same gospel Timothy learned from Paul. Timothy is to identify **these men** and entrust the gospel to them before he leaves, helping to ensure the integrity of the gospel message (Spicq, 2:738). Because teaching is the responsibility of elders (cf. 1 Tim 3:2), **the faithful men are probably elders.**’, ‘Pastoral Epistles’, Word Biblical Commentary, volume 46, p. 504 (2002), Knight (complementarian), writes ‘Paul combines with the need for personal spiritual strength (v. 1) the need to handle rightly and communicate faithfully the apostolic message (cf. 1:6–8, 13–14; 1 Tim. 4:6–16, especially v. 16, where this combination is succinctly stated). Timothy is to “entrust” to “**faithful men**” what he has “heard” from Paul, ὃ ἤκουσας παρ’ ἐμοῦ (cf. 1:13).’, ‘The Pastoral Epistles’, New International Greek Testament Commentary, p. 389 (1992), Moss (complementarian), writes ‘It should be noted that the word “men” (ἄνθρωποι, *anthrōpoi*) **primarily indicates not “male persons” but “human beings” or “people.”** Knight argues that the word is here to be understood **as adult males in contrast to women**, primarily on the basis of Paul’s prohibition in 1 Tim 2:12 (cf. 1 Cor 14:34). He suggests that Timothy would have understood Paul’s admonition as directed toward the instruction of elders/overseers.<sup>3</sup> While Knight’s argument needs to be considered, **he has pressed his conclusions further than the data allows.** Paul’s real concern here is that Timothy seek out “faithful” people who are able to share the gospel with others.<sup>4</sup> **The setting here is not the public assembly. Paul would himself argue that older women need to be able teachers of the gospel and its implications for younger women** (Titus 2:4–5). **Priscilla had a part in the teaching of Apollos** (Acts 18:24–26).’, ‘1, 2 Timothy & Titus’, College Press NIV Commentary (1994), Fee (egalitarian), writes ‘Those to whom he entrusts those teachings are to be **reliable or trustworthy people** (cf. 1 Tim. 1:12).’, ‘1 and 2 Timothy, Titus’, New International Biblical Commentary, p. 240 (1988)  
<sup>7</sup> This verse shows that Timothy had received instruction in the Scriptures from a young age, and since his father was a Greek and his mother was a Jew (Acts 16:1), it is likely that he was

## INDIRECT EVIDENCE

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We can also draw inferences from indirect evidence, though this can never be allowed to take precedence over explicit evidence. I agree with Ian and Averil that ‘we should look at practices approved by the inspired writers as well as direct teaching’.<sup>8</sup>

Ian and Averil acknowledge that sisters were not explicitly included in aspects of leadership,<sup>9</sup> were not appointed to all the same positions of leadership and teaching as men,<sup>10</sup> were not appointed as elders,<sup>11 12 13</sup> and that teaching and praying were performed by brothers to a larger extent than by sisters. These are the practices approved by the inspired writers.

(Jonathan Burke, 2010)

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instructed by his mother; Arichea (egalitarian), & Hatton write ‘What the statement wants to emphasize is that at a very early age Timothy was introduced to the Scriptures, although we cannot be sure as to how old Timothy was when this started. However, there is information to the effect that at the age of five a Jewish boy received instruction in the Torah and memorized from it. This practice may be reflected in this verse, and if so, then **Timothy was taught the Scriptures by his mother, since his father was not a Jew.**’, ‘A Handbook on Paul’s letters to Timothy and to Titus’, UBS Handbook Series, p. 234 (1995), Fee (egalitarian), writes ‘There are two reasons for Timothy to stay by what he has learned: First, you know those from whom you learned it. This curious plural, changed to the singular in the majority of later manuscripts, may reflect the plural of 2:2 (“through many witnesses”). **More likely it refers both to Paul (vv. 10–11) and to Timothy’s mother and grandmother (1:5), who had taught him from infancy ... the Holy Scriptures.**’, ‘1 and 2 Timothy, Titus’, New International Biblical Commentary, p. 278 (1988).

<sup>8</sup> ‘All One’, p. 6 (March 2009).

<sup>9</sup> ‘Reply 1’, p. 20 (February 2008).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>11</sup> ‘All One’, p. 100 (March 2009).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 102–103.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 115.