

1 TIMOTHY

The Pastor and His people

Timothy was the aged and experienced apostle Paul's younger protégé.

HISTORICAL SETTING:

Timothy was a young man who joined Paul on his second missionary journey when he was in the city of Lystra in Galatia (Acts 16:1-4). His mother, Eunice, was a Jew and his father a Greek. Paul was probably the person who led Timothy to the Lord (I Tim. 1:2; II Tim. 1:2; I Cor. 4:17), and perhaps on Paul's first trip there (Acts 14:8-20). Paul took Timothy with him and spent three years preaching and teaching in Ephesus and the surrounding area on his third missionary journey (Acts 18:23-21:17). After Paul's trip to Jerusalem for the Passover, Paul was sent to prison in Rome (Acts 21:18-28:31). While in prison in Rome Paul wrote his letter to the church at Ephesus (Eph. 1:15-16). He was present with Paul in Rome when he wrote his four "prison letters." After Paul's release from his "first" imprisonment he and Timothy visited the churches around Ephesus and ministered there for some time. Paul left for Macedonia (I Tim. 1:3) while Timothy stayed on at Ephesus (I Tim. 1:3). Paul hoped to return soon (3:14), but wrote to him encouraging him in the ministry (3:15). According to the letter to Titus, Paul had been to Crete and had left Titus there with similar instructions (Titus 1:5); later on Titus had to come over to Paul at Nicopolis where Paul was wintering (3:12). Paul will then be imprisoned a "second" time (II Tim. 1:8, 16-17; 2:9; 4:10, 16-17, 20). (Timothy is also mentioned in these passages II Cor. 1:19; I Cor. 4:17; 16:10, 11; Acts 20:4-5; I Thess. 1:1; II Thess. 1:1 Heb. 13:23).

First and Second Timothy and Titus are called the "Pastoral Epistles." They were given this designation in the eighteenth century because they give advice on matters of church organization and pastoral responsibilities. First Timothy is a short minister's manual which treats the office, qualifications, and duties of the Christian pastor.

These three "pastoral letters" were composed during a major missionary enterprise of Paul of which the Acts of the Apostles makes no mention. The events are after the events covered in Acts 28, i.e., after Paul's release from imprisonment in Rome following his appeal to Caesar. The journeys and work of Paul mentioned in the Pastoral Epistles cannot be dated in the period covered by Acts, but took place between his "first" and his "second" imprisonment to which II Timothy refers (1:8, 16-17).

A. T. Robertson summarizes:

Paul had been in Ephesus (I Tim. 1:3) after his arrival from Rome, which was certainly before the burning of Rome in A.D. 64. He had left Timothy in charge of the work in Ephesus and has gone on into Macedonia (I Tim. 1:3), possibly to Philippi as he had hoped (Phil. 2:24). He wishes to help Timothy meet the problems of doctrine (against the Gnostics), discipline, and church training which are increasingly urgent. There are personal touches of a natural kind about Timothy's own growth and leadership. There are wise words here from the greatest of all preachers to a young minister whom Paul

leadership. There are wise words here from the greatest of all preachers to a young minister whom Paul loved."

There is almost unanimous patristic testimony and tradition. Clemens Romanus, writing from Rome to Corinth (95 A.D.), asserts that Paul, after instructing the whole Roman empire in righteousness, "had gone to the extremity of the West (was that Spain? compare with Romans 15:28) before his martyrdom." The Canon of Muratori (170 A.D.), alludes to "the journey of Paul from Rome to Spain"; and Eusebius (beginning of the fourth century) clearly formulates the tradition as follows: "After defending himself successfully, it is currently reported that the Apostle again went forth to proclaim the Gospel, and afterwards came to Rome a second time, and was martyred under Nero."

AUTHOR: Internal evidence is Paul the Apostle (1:1; II Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:1). External evidence confirms that Paul was the author. The witness of the early church to Pauline authorship is early, clear and unhesitating. It was not until the nineteenth century that the authenticity was doubted or even questioned.

DATE: Facts seem to indicate that the Pastoral Epistles reflect the historical situation in which they were written as belonging to the period after 62 A.D., and before the Apostle's martyrdom in 66 or 67 A.D. Robertson suggests A.D. 65, C. C. Ryrie and F. F. Bruce suggest 63.

PLACE OF WRITING: Probably from Macedonia.

THEME: Guard that which has been entrusted to you in the ministry. "Fight the good fight" (1:18).

KEY VERSE: 6:20

KEYWORDS: teach, serve, command

PURPOSE: There are three primary goals in this letter: (1) Encourage Timothy in his ministry at Ephesus, (2) to warn Timothy of the false teachers and the methods they use, and (3) to instruct Timothy on the polity of the church.

THREE HYMNS: We could have some evidence of early hymnology in I Timothy.

Hymn #1 "Honor and glory forever!" (1:17)

Hymn #2 "Mystery of godliness" (3:16)

Hymn #3 "King of Kings" (6:15-16)

BISHOP AND ELDER:

Bishops, overseers, elders were terms used interchangeably in the New Testament.

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH:

The conditions in the Gentile world during Paul's day dictated that women remain silent in the church (I Tim. 2:8-15). Christian women in his day took every care not to be misunderstood by taking the leadership in the church. These conditions do not exist among us today. Also in 2:15 Paul is not presenting a special way of salvation for mothers. He is not talking about salvation from the penalty of sin, but salvation (or deliverance) from a wasted life.

from a wasted life.

Title: Introduction to 1 Timothy

Series: A Look at the Book

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