

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT

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The Pauline Epistles IV

1-2 Timothy

- a. **Author and Audience:** The authorship of both 1 & 2 Timothy are accredited to the apostle Paul. The one to whom he wrote was a young man in the ministry named Timothy. From what can be gathered in the New Testament, Timothy was born and raised in the ancient city of Lystra. He was raised in the faith by his mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois, who both became followers of Jesus (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). However, his father was Greek, and there is no evidence that he was a believer. After years of learning from the Old Testament, Timothy came to faith in Christ through Paul's preaching while visiting Lystra on his first missionary journey (Acts. 14:6-7). After seeing Timothy's faith and growth and observing his spiritual gifts, Paul chose him to become a partner in the gospel ministry. Timothy would accompany Paul on his second missionary journey, helping him establish churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea (Acts 16:1-17:14). Throughout the years, Paul would continue using him to minister in established churches, often checking on them and bringing back a report. Much of Paul's writing was in response to Timothy's ministry reports. Toward the end of Paul's life, he sent Timothy to care for the church in Ephesus. While Timothy was there, Paul asked him to visit him in Rome during his second imprisonment, but there is no evidence that Timothy made it before Paul was executed. According to Tradition, Timothy was later martyred himself during the reign of Emperors Domitian or Nerva.

Since Timothy came from a mixed family (Jew and Greek), he was a unique missionary like Paul, being able to navigate through Roman culture while also knowing the language and customs of the Jews. However, while Timothy had the faith and gifts to be an effective missionary and pastor, Paul was very aware of his weaknesses. Based on Paul's writings, Timothy was very young and shy, and easily intimidated by his opponents and their teachings. Therefore, Paul sensed the need to write and bring him encouragement and instruction for ministry.

- b. **Date:** The conclusion of Acts details that Paul spent two years under Roman imprisonment around the year AD 62. According to 1-2 Timothy and Titus, Paul would have been released and continued on in ministry for a few more years before being imprisoned again and finally executed. During that time he went to Crete (Titus 1:5), Ephesus and Macedonia (1 Tim. 1:3), Nicopolis (Titus 3:12), Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20), Troas (2 Tim. 4:13), and Corinth (2 Tim. 4:20). The absence of these details at the end of Acts doesn't mean they aren't true. For whatever reason, Luke merely stops recording the church's history in Acts 28, while Paul was in prison. However, there is evidence that Paul's ministry eventually reached Spain (Rom. 15:28). The early church father Clement records that Paul "reached the farthest limits of the west" before he was executed (1 Clement 5:7), which probably refers to Spain (Beale,

348). If this history is accurate, Paul would have written his letters to Timothy and Titus around AD 63-65. It's likely that Paul was beheaded in Rome in AD 67.

c. **Occasion: 1 Timothy** – After Paul and Timothy arrived in Ephesus, it came to their attention that some within the church had made a *“shipwreck of their faith, among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander”* (1 Tim. 1:20). Apparently, these men and others had succumbed to false teachers and were spreading such teaching throughout the church. However, after Paul excommunicates some of these troublesome members, he leaves for Macedonia, leaving Timothy behind to minister to the people and reorganize the church. Paul had planned to visit Timothy at some point to give him specific instructions, but his visit was delayed. Therefore, Paul wrote Timothy a letter to communicate what he needed to do. Paul states, *“I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth”* (1 Tim. 3:14-15). His main goal was *“to encourage and instruct Timothy about the organization of a local church and to help him deal with false doctrine”* (Barton, 6).

d. **Contents: 1 Timothy**

- **Sound Doctrine:** After learning that false teachers had infiltrated the church, Paul knew that he needed to remind Timothy to teach the truth with accuracy. Therefore, Paul warned Timothy three times about the false teachers, and after each warning he called him to stand for the truth and live rightly (1:18-19; 4:9-16; 6:11-21). *“Command and teach these things. Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress”* (4:11-14).
- **Orderly Worship:** Based on Paul's writing, it seems that there was disorder in the public gatherings of the church for worship. When the church met for worship, Paul emphasized the importance of praying for all people, even for *“kings and all who are in high positions”* (2:2). Perhaps the church had taken such political stances against government leaders that worship services were filled with criticisms and complaints. Paul wanted them to pray for the salvation of all people, even those who persecuted them. In addition, it seems that some of the women had become disruptive during worship. Even though the gospel is for men and women, Paul teaches that the roles of pastor and preacher are exclusively given to men. He writes, *“I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet”* (2:12). While some might argue that this teaching was based on first century culture, Paul dismisses such thinking by reasoning that this order was established in the beginning with Adam and Eve, where Eve submitted to Adam's headship (2:13). Therefore, when it comes to ministry roles in the church, such teaching applies to all generations.
- **Church Leadership:** In order to lead the church in the right direction, Paul knew how important it was to establish the right pastors and deacons. Therefore, he outlines specific qualifications for

each in chapter three. A common theme among these qualifications is holiness. Paul doesn't say much about what a pastor or deacon should do, but rather who he should be.

- **Church Ministry:** Finally, Paul concludes the letter by discussing the need to be a caring church. He specially mentions the relationships between younger and older men and older and younger women (5:1-2). He discusses how widows should be served, depending on their ages and family relationships (5:3-16). He describes how pastors should be cared for and compensated for their ministry (5:17-21).
- e. **Occasion: 2 Timothy** – A few years after writing 1 Timothy, Paul found himself deserted and alone in prison (2 Tim. 1:15). It was a dark and damp setting, and Paul was suffering from the cold conditions. In the midst of this, Paul wrote Timothy a second letter. He asked him to visit and bring a cloak, the scrolls and parchments, and also Mark. On top of this, Paul knew his remaining days on earth were few. Therefore, he wanted to pass the baton to Timothy and encourage him to fulfill the ministry had he been given.
- f. **Contents: 2 Timothy**
- **Boldness:** After leaving young Timothy in a challenging situation, Paul knew that he needed to be encouraged to be bold and strong in the face of opposition. He wanted Timothy to *"fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control"* (1:6-7). In other words, Timothy needed to follow God's calling by serving the church and opposing the false teachers.
 - **Faithfulness:** One of the ways that Timothy would be filled with a spirit of boldness was to live a life of faithfulness to God. Paul reminds him, *"If anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work...so flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart"* (2:21-22).
 - **Endurance:** Being bold and faithful isn't just for a short season, but for the duration of one's life. Therefore, Paul calls Timothy to endure in preaching and teaching and leading, to never give up the battle against the false teachers, and to always stand for Jesus. Paul describes his own desire to endure as he looks to the end of his life. He writes, *"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing"* (4:6-8).

Titus

- a. **Author and Audience:** The letter is addressed by the apostle Paul, indicating that he is the author. He is writing to another young pastor named Titus. Not much is known about Titus because he isn't mentioned by name in Acts. However, we learn in Galatians 2:3 that Titus was a Greek convert who had come to faith under Paul's preaching. Much like Timothy, he probably heard Paul declare the

gospel on one of his early missionary journeys in Asia Minor. Some scholars have reasoned that Titus was Luke's brother, which is why he was not included in Acts. However, Paul called Titus "*my true son*" (1:4) and "*my partner and fellow worker in the ministry*" (2 Cor. 2:13). Based on what's presented in the New Testament, Titus appears to have a strong faith. Paul presented him to the church leaders in Jerusalem as a prime example of how God had saved people in Asia Minor (Gal. 2:1-5). It's been noted that Titus was Paul's "troubleshooter" (Barton, 242). Paul would send him to struggling churches to restore order and minister to the people. An example was his efforts to make peace between Paul and the church at Corinth, who had turned on him (2 Cor. 7:6-16; 12:18). Finally, there's evidence that Titus visited Paul in Rome during his second imprisonment. Tradition states that Titus returned to Crete in his last years and died at the age of 94. Titus' legacy is one of teaching truth, resolving conflicts, collecting money, and organizing churches.

- b. **Date:** Like 1-2 Timothy, Paul wrote to Titus during his second imprisonment in Rome around AD 65.
- c. **Occasion:** Paul had been made aware of the threat of false teachers in the churches, specially the church in Crete. Therefore, Paul sent Titus to Crete to teach the gospel, reorganize the church, and strengthen the people. Paul wrote to help him deal with specific problems and false doctrine. He states, "*This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you...*" (1:5).
- d. **Contents**
- **Leadership:** Paul first addresses the role of elders in the churches. He gives a list of qualifications that relate more to character than duty (1:5-9). Paul contrasts faithful leaders with the wayward, ungodly people in Crete. He notes, "*For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party*" (1:10). He continues, "*One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.' This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth.*"
 - **Godly Mentoring:** A part of maintaining sound doctrine and teaching in the church is for the older believers to mentor those who are younger. Paul gives an example of how "*older women...are to train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled*" (2:2-5).