

# I TIMOTHY

## INTRODUCTION

### I. The nature of the Pastoral Epistles.

These three epistles -- 1-2 Timothy and Titus -- were not known as pastorals until the eighteenth century when they were given this title by D.N. Berdot in 1703. The name was popularized by Paul Anton in 1726.

The epistles are not precisely pastoral but are more like church administrative handbooks. Furthermore, in the strictest sense Timothy and Titus were not serving as pastors but as official missionary delegates of Paul to assist the churches in policies, polity and practice.

Although the letters are written to individuals they are not only personal but official in character. They were clearly intended to be read by a wider audience.

### II. The ministry of Paul following his first Roman imprisonment.

#### 1. Evidence for Paul's release.

- a. Important evidence is Acts 28:30. If Paul were put to death at the conclusion of this bondage, Luke would be guilty of an incredible omission in history.
- b. In Paul's prison epistles he seems to anticipate his release. Philippians 1:23-25; 2:24; Philemon 22.

#### 2. Paul's desire to minister in Spain.

In Romans 15:22-24, 28 the Apostle reveals his plans to preach in Spain. There is some evidence from the Church Fathers that such a visit to Spain occurred.

Clement of Rome, writing about A.D. 95 in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, states, “After preaching both in the east and west, he [Paul] gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects.”

Clement wrote this only thirty years after the pastorals were written. Furthermore, he wrote it from Rome. He would hardly consider himself to be at the extreme western point of the Roman Empire when he was at Rome. The Romans considered Rome to be the proud center of the empire. Spain was seen as the western terminus of the empire.

The Muratorian Canon (A.D. 170) in commenting on Luke’s writings affirms Luke “...omits the journey of St. Paul to Spain.”

### 3. Historical and geographical data in the Pastorals

This information cannot be fitted into the three missionary journeys of Paul in Acts. The data must be discussed in the context of Paul’s post-Roman imprisonment ministry.

- a. 1 Timothy 1:3. Paul departs for Macedonia with instructions for Timothy’s work at Ephesus.
- b. 1 Timothy 3:14-15. While Paul hopes to come to Ephesus soon, he probably will be delayed.
- c. Titus 1:5. Paul here refers to a recent trip to Crete.
- d. Titus 3:12. Paul intends to spend the winter in Nicopolis which is probably located in the province of Achaia.
- e. 2 Timothy 4:13-20. Paul had recently visited Troas, Miletus and probably Corinth,
- f. 2 Timothy 1:16-17; 2:9. When Paul wrote 2 Timothy he was imprisoned in Rome.

4. A suggested sequence.

- a. After his release from the first Roman imprisonment Paul returned to the East at least as far as Asia Minor.

While in the East he may have written 1 Timothy and Titus. This means he first would have visited Crete, Ephesus, Colosse, and Macedonia. It is possible 1 Timothy was written from Macedonia. Paul later would have returned to Ephesus. Possibly Titus was written from here.

- b. Paul next may have ministered in Spain.

On his way to the West Paul could have spent the winter at Nicopolis.

- c. Paul would have returned to the East before his final imprisonment. Here he visited Miletus, Troas, and Corinth. Finally he was imprisoned in Rome where he wrote 2 Timothy just before his death.

III. The occasion of 1 Timothy.

Paul wrote 1 Timothy because of a possible delay in his arrival at Ephesus (3:14). Certain matters needed to be addressed such as false doctrine in the church and leadership and administrative policies and practices.

IV. The heresy confronted in the pastorals.

Evidently it was a system taught by Judaizing teachers who were influenced by pagan philosophical ideas. These extra-Biblical doctrines seem to be a form of incipient gnosticism.

1 Timothy 1:7 discusses those who desire to be teachers of the law and Titus 1:4 refers to Jewish myths. The philosophical paganism is seen in such passages as 1 Timothy 1:4; 4:3; 6:20.

## V. Recipient

1. Timothy was a much younger colleague of Paul's who has become his frequent traveling companion and close friend. Timothy was from Lystra (Acts 16:1-3), and he probably met Paul during the apostle's first missionary journey. It is likely that Timothy, his mother, and grandmother became converts at this time. Timothy accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 16).
2. During Paul's missionary journeys, he entrusted Timothy with assignments to the churches at Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3:1-10); to Corinth (1 Cor. 4:16-17); and to Philippi (Phil. 2:19-24). He also assisted in six of Paul's extant letters (1 and 2 Thess., 2 Cor., Col., Phil., Philemon). Timothy was a highly-trusted associate of Paul.

## VI. Outline

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