

First Timothy

Background and Introduction to the Book of First Timothy

Background: The Life of Paul

1. The Persecuting Pharisee
 - A. Paul was in the city of Tarsus in the province of Cilicia (Acts 22:3).
 - B. By birth, he was a “free born” Roman (Acts 22:27-28).
 - C. By birth, he was a Jew (Acts 22:3).
 - D. He was brought up as a Pharisee (Acts 23:6; 26:5; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-6).
 - E. As a youth, he was educated by Gamaliel (Acts 22:3; 26:4; cf. 5:34-40).
 - F. As an adult, he persecuted the church (Acts 7:58; 8:1, 4; 9:1-2; 22:4-5; 23:1; 26:10-11; 1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 1:13).
2. The Changed Convert
 - A. On the road to Damascus to arrest disciples of Jesus, Paul was given a vision of the resurrected Christ (Acts 9:1-8; 22:4-11; 26:12-20).
 - B. Upon hearing the Gospel from Ananias, Paul obeyed and became a disciple of Jesus (Acts 9:9-19; 22:12-21; 26:19-20).
 - C. He immediately began to preach the Gospel in Damascus (Acts 9:20-22).
 - D. At some point, he journeyed into Arabia before returning to Damascus (Gal. 1:17).
 - E. Again, he preached in Damascus but was forced to flee due to a threat from the Jews (Acts 9:23-25; Gal. 1:18).
 - F. He then traveled to Jerusalem for 15 days where he met Peter and began to preach until his life was threatened again (Acts 9:26-30; cf. Gal. 1:19).
 - G. Paul returned to his hometown – Tarsus in Cilicia – from whence Barnabas brought him to Antioch (Gal. 1:21; Acts 11:25).
3. The Eager Evangelist

A.	1 st Missionary Journey	(Acts 13 – 14)	AD 46 – 48
B.	2 nd Missionary Journey	(Acts 15:36 – 18:22)	AD 49 – 52
	1.	From Corinth he wrote 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians.	
	2.	Some suggest that Galatians was written earlier, but this is unlikely.	
C.	3 rd Missionary Journey	(Acts 18:23 – 21:14)	AD 53 – 57
	1.	From Ephesus he wrote 1 Corinthians.	
	2.	From Macedonia (possibly Philippi) he wrote 2 Corinthians.	
	3.	From Macedonia or Greece he wrote Galatians.	
	4.	From Corinth he wrote Romans.	
4. The Penman Prisoner
 - A. Upon returning to Jerusalem following his third evangelistic trip, Paul was arrested due to riotous attacks from the Jews (Acts 21 – 22).
 - B. Due to threats upon his life, Paul was transferred to Caesarea where he remained imprisoned for two years (Acts 23 – 24).
 - C. When Festus sought to send him to Jerusalem for a mock trial by the Jews, Paul appealed to Caesar – seeking a fair Roman trial (Acts 25 – 26).
 - D. Thus, Paul was transferred to Rome where he remained imprisoned for two more years (Acts 27 – 28).
 1. While in Roman prison he wrote Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians.
 2. Later during his imprisonment, he wrote Philippians.

5. The Mysterious Martyr
 - A. Paul himself was not a mystery, but the events leading up to his final days are largely unknown.
 - B. It seems likely probable – almost certain – that Paul was released from his Roman imprisonment after 2 years.
 - I. Acts 28:30-31 – The book ends with no mention of his death.
 - II. Philemon 22 – Paul expected to be released and to visit Philemon.
 - III. Philippians 1:25-26 – Paul was confident in his release (cf. 2:24).
 - IV. Romans 15:24, 28 – Paul planned to journey to Spain and to preach there.
 - C. Upon being freed, Paul likely made those visits to Philemon near Colossae and to Philippi.
 - D. It is also possible that Paul made a trip to Spain.
 - I. The book of Acts ends around AD 62, giving Paul 5 or 6 years before his death in AD 68.
 - II. In AD 97, Clement of Rome wrote to the Corinthians the following statement about Paul: “*After preaching both in the east and west, he 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.*”
 - III. The Muratorian Fragment (AD 180 – 190) speaks of Paul departing for Spain.
 - IV. Both Eusebius (AD 260 – 340) and Jerome (AD 492) write of Paul’s release from Roman imprisonment and a second prison term in that same city.
 - E. Sometime between his first and second imprisonments in Rome, Paul wrote 1 Timothy and Titus.
 - F. After his second imprisonment had begun, he wrote 2 Timothy just before he was put to death.
 - G. Paul seems to have been executed due to orders from Nero just before the Emperor’s death on June 8, AD 68.

Introduction:

- I. Author
 - A. The book claims to have been written by Paul (1:1).
 - B. Some argue for another author, claiming that Paul was killed in his first imprisonment at Rome.
 - C. Others argue that the organization of the church described in this letter did not arise until long after Paul had died.
 - D. Neither of these arguments stand up to scrutiny.
- II. Occasion and Purpose
 - A. Timothy was laboring with the church at Ephesus (1:3).
 - B. Though they had been warned by Paul, error had begun to arise in this congregation (1:3-7, 18-20; 4:1-3; cf. Acts 20:28-30).
 - C. Paul wrote to encourage Timothy until he could visit with him (3:14; 4:13).
 - D. He wrote to charge Timothy to strengthen the church and to oppose false teachers by preaching the Truth (3:15; 4:6, 13, 16).
- III. Date AD 64-65

IV. "Pastoral Epistles"

- A. The epistles of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are often referred to as the "pastoral epistles."
- B. In the modern religious world, this term is used because of their belief that Timothy was "the pastor" of the church at Ephesus and Titus was "the pastor" of the church at Crete.
- C. Of course, the Bible never uses this language to describe these epistles nor the work of Timothy or Titus.
- D. The "pastor system" of the modern denominational world cannot be found in the New Testament!
- E. In fact, the word 'pastor' is only found one time (Eph. 4:11) and it is plural.
- F. The Greek word for 'pastor' is used 18 times and translated as 'shepherd' or 'shepherds.'
- G. In relation to the church, it refers to elders (1 Peter 5:1-4).
- H. The pastors referred to in Timothy and Titus are the elders of the church, not the preacher!

V. The Bible Record about Timothy

- A. Timothy was the son of a Gentile father and a Jewish mother (Acts 16:1).
 - 1. His mother's name was Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5).
 - 2. He had a Jewish grandmother who was named Lois (2 Timothy 1:5).
 - 3. Together, they had reared Timothy with a knowledge of the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:15).
- B. Timothy and his family lived in either Derbe or Lystra (Acts 16:1).
- C. It seems that he, his mother, and his grandmother were converted to Christ by Paul on his first evangelistic journey to that region (Acts 14:6-23).
 - 1. Paul refers to Timothy as his "own son in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2).
 - 2. This indicates that Paul had converted him (cf. 1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 1:2; 2:1).
- D. When Paul returned to this area on his second missionary journey, Timothy had matured in the faith and had developed a good reputation (Acts 16:2).
 - 1. Timothy was still a young man when Paul wrote to him (1 Timothy 4:12).
 - 2. Obviously, he was several years younger when he began working with Paul.
- E. Paul decided to have Timothy join him in his evangelistic work (Acts 16:3).
- F. From that time forward, he worked diligently alongside the apostle.
 - 1. From Athens, Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica (1 Thes. 3:2-6).
 - 2. On the 3rd missionary journey, he was sent from Ephesus through Macedonia to Corinth (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10ff; Acts 19:22).
 - 3. He traveled with Paul part of the way on his return to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4).
 - 4. He was with Paul during the apostle's imprisonment in Rome (Phil. 1:1; 2:19; Col. 1:1; Phm. 1).
 - 5. He is mentioned in 6 different epistles as a co-worker of Paul (1 and 2 Thessalonians, 2 Corinthians, Colossians, Philemon., and Philippians).
- G. In 1 Timothy, he is at Ephesus seeking to ground the church in standing for the Truth.