

PAUL'S LETTERS
TO TIMOTHY
AND TITUS

The "practical" epistles

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Lesson 1

1 Timothy 1:1-20

Introduction to First and Second Timothy and Titus

- A. In 1274, Thomas Aquinas called first and second Timothy and Titus *Pastoral Epistles*, and the name has stuck. They may better be called the *Practical Epistles* because they deal with the work of elders and preachers in local churches.
- B. Background on Timothy:
1. He was raised by his mother, Eunice, in the Jewish faith, though his father was a Gentile, 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14, 15.
 2. He obeyed the gospel when Paul went to Lystra on the first journey (1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; 2:2), and had a good reputation among the churches before Paul’s return on the second journey, Acts 16:2.
 3. He was Paul’s companion on the second journey (Acts 16:1-3), was with him in Ephesus on the third journey, and was sent to Macedonia, but soon met again on this same journey, Acts 19:22; 20:4, 5. He evidently was a prisoner with Paul in Rome (Hebrews 13:23), and went again to Ephesus after Paul’s release from prison, 1 Timothy 1:3.
 4. Tradition says that Timothy was killed in Ephesus in 97 A.D. *Fox’s Book of Martyrs* says: “At this point, as the pagans were about to celebrate a feast called Catagogion, Timothy, meeting the procession, severely reproved them for their ridiculous idolatry, which so exasperated the people that they fell upon him with clubs, and beat him in so dreadful a manner that he expired of bruises two days after,” page 7.
- C. Time of writing:
1. Events described in Acts 20:30, 31 compared with 2 Timothy 1:16, 17; 2:9 and 4:6 indicate there were two separate imprisonments in Rome.
 2. Evidently 1 Timothy and Titus were written between these imprisonments (c. 62-63 A.D.), and 2 Timothy after his second arrest (c. 67 A.D.).

Paul's Letters to Timothy & Titus

D. Purposes of the epistles:

1. The mystery of lawlessness was already at work, 2 Thessalonians 2:7. Paul had predicted that even among the elders in Ephesus some false teachers would arise, Acts 20:28-30.
2. These letters were written to encourage Timothy and Titus in the distasteful job of correcting error, but also to give them practical advice on their responsibilities.

* * *

A. Salutation to Timothy, 1:1, 2:

1. The word apostle means one sent. Some were designated *apostles* because they were sent by a church, Philippians 2:25; 2 Corinthians 8:23. Paul was sent by Christ, 1 Corinthians 9:1, 2; 15:9; 2 Corinthians 12:12.
2. God is our Savior in the sense that He designed the plan and sent His Son, 1 Timothy 2:3; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4.
3. Jesus Christ is our hope - without His sacrifice there would be no hope, 1 Corinthians 15:19.

B. Danger to sound doctrine, 1:3-11:

1. Paul's charge (or urging) was twofold:
 - a. Teach no other doctrine, cp. Galatians 1:6-9. In these three epistles there are thirty-two references to doctrine and teaching. Timothy was to guard the faith (2 Timothy 1:14) and pass it along to others, 2 Timothy 2:2.
 - b. Do not waste time on fables (called Jewish fables in Titus 1:14) and endless genealogies (which were important under the Old Law, but no longer).
2. The purpose of the commandment, 1:5-7:
 - a. Barclay notes five characteristics of false teachers:
 - 1) They desired novelty.
 - 2) They preferred argument to action.
 - 3) They substituted head knowledge for Christian action.
 - 4) They were arrogant rather than humble.
 - 5) They were dogmatic without knowledge.
 - b. The true teacher has his thinking:
 - 1) Based on faith.
 - 2) Motivated by love.
 - 3) From a pure conscience.
 - 4) Without hypocrisy.

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- c. This section contrasts true faith and love to arrogance and intellectual speculation.
3. Proper use of law, 1:8-11:
 - a. These false teachers prided themselves in being law-teachers, but were not law-keepers. The Law revealed man’s need for a Savior (Romans 3:20), and brought men to Christ, Galatians 3:24.
 - b. Those who act out of love for God do not feel restricted by law.
- C. Example of sound doctrine, 1:12-20:
 1. Timothy can use Paul as an example of the results of the right use of the Law and the Gospel.
 2. For Paul’s life under the Law, without Christ, read Acts 9:4, 5; 22:4; 26:9-11; Philippians 3:3-7.
 3. Paul’s actions were sincere, but in ignorance. See Leviticus 5:15-19; Numbers 15:22-31. Christ prayed for those who acted in ignorance, Luke 23:34. Neither their ignorance nor His prayer saved them, but the combination postponed God’s judgment, allowing them opportunity to be saved.
 4. Verse 15 is the first of five faithful sayings in these epistles, see 3:1; 4:8, 9; 2 Timothy 2:11-13; Titus 3:4-8.
 5. Faith and a good conscience can be rejected, verses 19, 20; 2 Timothy 2:17; 4:14; 1 Corinthians 5:4, 5.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Paul have Timothy circumcised?
2. From whom had Timothy received his training?
What does this suggest about his family?
3. Where was Timothy converted?

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4. How does tradition say he died?

5. How could Paul be qualified to be an apostle?

6. Why was the discussion of genealogies unprofitable?

7. Why did Paul leave Timothy in Ephesus?

8. What was the purpose of the commandment given to Timothy?

9. Why did Paul receive mercy?
What is the lesson for us?

10. For whom is law designed?

Does this mean that we do not have a law?

11. What two things are called faithful in this chapter?

12. What happens to those who make shipwreck of the faith?