

1 TIMOTHY

Introduction

Author. Early tradition and the greetings in the book itself confirm Paul as the author. Some objections to pauline authorship have been raised in recent years, but usually on the subjective grounds of uncharacteristic vocabulary and style. When compared with other "inconsistencies" in Paul's acknowledged epistles, these seem very minor.

Date. The letter was written after Acts 28 and Paul's Roman imprisonment. A date of 63 or 64 A. D. would be reasonable.

Occasion. During his fourth missionary journey Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus to oversee the work there (1:3). When he realized that he might not return as soon as expected (3:14, 15) he wrote this letter to encourage Timothy in his apostolic charge (1:3-7), to refute false teachings (1:3-5; 4:1-8), to instruct in the administration of the church (2:1-15) and to appoint elders (3:1-13; 5:17-25).

Message Statement. *Instruction concerning the church and encouragement in the ministry are given to Timothy to enable him to continue in his apostolic charge.*

Argument

- 1A INTRODUCTION 1:1-2
According to his custom, Paul identifies both the reader and the writer and includes a greeting in his introduction. The only notable difference here is that the recipient is an individual, ". . . Timothy, my true son in the faith:" rather than a church.
- 1B A WARNING AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS 1:3-20
In his interest to endorse and encourage the young apostolic delegate Paul warns Timothy against false teaching. It was necessary to defend the Church from attacks before instructions could be given about its administration.
- 1B The Perversion of the Gospel 1:3-11
Although the exact nature of this false teaching is impossible to define, it apparently involved a misuse of the law of God. Paul charges that those who fancy themselves as teachers of the law do not know what they are talking about (1:7).
- 2B The Power of the Gospel: Paul's Testimony 1:12-17
Paul's response to these false teachings is a recital of his own testimony. That is, his own experience with the power of God is evidence enough that Paul's gospel is the one through which God transforms an individual. Any other gospel, which is necessarily dependent upon human effort, must be a false one.
- 3B The Preservation of the Gospel 1:18-20
The preservation of the gospel was humanly dependent upon Timothy's adherence to the truths which Paul had taught him. The churches of the book of Revelation (Rev 2-3) were threatened with the loss of their testimony (lampstand) if they strayed from the truth.
- 1C INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CHURCH 2:1--3:16

Before Paul returns to his discussion of false teaching he addresses two areas of the administration of the church, namely, public worship and the qualifications for leadership.

- 1B Public Worship 2:1-15
Paul's concern with public worship revolves around the two points of prayer and women. It appears as though prayer was not receiving the emphasis that it deserved and certain women may have usurped the authority of the male leadership.
- 1C The importance of prayer 2:1-8
Paul's first interest in public worship is the place of prayer. He exhorts that prayers be made for all men, especially prayers for their salvation. After all Paul's purpose in life was the salvation of all men, particularly Gentiles. This responsibility of prayer in public worship belongs especially to the male (2:8).
- 2C The place of women 2:9-15
Paul's concern for women was that they not usurp a place of authority or teaching over men in the church. Rather they ought to learn in quietness. The woman's proper place of nurturing and admonition involves her children, a role which will "save" her from lack of fulfillment.
- 2B Qualifications for leadership 3:1-13
Paul discusses the qualifications for two important positions of leadership in the church. The first office, that of overseer, is alluded to in the singular. The office of deacon, on the other hand, is referred to in the plural. While both offices require blamelessness, the office of overseer has the higher qualification.
- 3B The Purpose of the Instructions 3:14-16
Paul notes that the purpose of his letter is that people will know how to conduct themselves in God's household. Thus, the application of these sections to public worship is not without reason. The church is the means by which God's truth is preserved and presented to the world.
- 1D INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING FALSE TEACHING 4:1-16
Paul's instructions return to the concept of false teaching for a second of a total of three times in this book. Once again he describes a kind of false teaching and then gives the proper method of dealing with it.
- 1B A Description of False Teaching 4:1-5
As before, the exact nature of the false teaching is difficult to determine. It evidently combined asceticism with perhaps some judaizing tendencies. Paul's point is that such teachings have demonic origins.
- 2B Methods for Dealing with False Teaching 4:6-16
Paul's methods for dealing with the error are simple. Rather than combatting demons or becoming involved in exorcisms he simply advocates exposure of the error and teaching correct doctrine. The result of Timothy's efforts will be the rescue of his destiny and that of his congregation.
- 1E INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING DEALING WITH VARIOUS GROUPS 5:1--6:2
These instructions are given to Timothy as he relates with very different groups in the church. Some apply to Timothy as the pastor or apostolic delegate to the Church while others apply to him particularly as a young man.
- 1B Different Age Groups 5:1-2
In dealing with older and younger age groups Paul's advice to Timothy is practical and easy to follow. Respect and restraint with are keys.
- 2B Widows 5:3-16
The main instruction involving widows seems to be for families to care for their own first. Then if a widow is of sufficient age and has had a reputation for caring for those in the church and still has no one to care for her she becomes the responsibility of the Church. Paul's concern for younger widows, very simply, is to marry.
- 3B Elders 5:17-25
Because of their position and the qualifications which each one must have met, Paul's advice is to be very cautious when entertaining an accusation against one of these men. Those who work hard at preaching and teaching are to be given proper remuneration. Paul's final word of counsel involves making sure that a man has proven himself over time before he is chosen for such a high office. Such honor should not be conferred upon a man quickly.

- 4B Slaves 6:1-2
Slaves are instructed heartily as unto the Lord. Those who have believing masters are encouraged to work even harder because of the dearness of the one who benefits from their labor.
- 1F INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING MONEY 6:3-19
This whole section seems to have wealth as its basic concern. The abuse, proper use and warnings against wealth are all covered.
- 1B The Financial Motivation of False Teachers 6:3-5
In Paul's third mention of false teaching he turns to their underlying financial motivation. Although these teachers are conceited and understand little, they do have a common thread of supposing that "*godliness is a means to financial gain*" (6:5).
- 2B The Proper Method of Attaining "Gain" 6:6-10
Paul admonishes that godliness with contentment is actually the proper goal. If a man attains blamelessness and has food and clothes he has achieved great gain. One of the dangers of the love of money is that it may cause one to wander from the faith.
- 3B The Contrasting Focus of the Man of God 6:11-16
Paul's contrast for Timothy is instructive. His words, "But you, man of God, flee from all this . . ." (6:11) no doubt refer to the pastor's temptation to pursue wealth. Like the levite in the Old Testament whose portion was God, Timothy is encouraged to focus upon righteousness and the God whom he serves.
- 4B The Instructions for Wealthy Christians 6:17-19
Paul's final instructions involve those who are both believers and wealthy. He warns them not to put their hope in wealth but rather in God. He also counsels them to use their wealth for spiritual purposes that they might lay up treasures in heaven.
- 1G CONCLUSION 6:20-21
Paul's conclusion involves one last warning against empty chatter (cf. 1:3-6) and a benediction for his young son in the faith.

