

JOIN THE JOURNEY™

A one-year journey with the early church



Introduction to Dr. Tom Constable and His Bible Study (Expository) Notes

Dr. Constable is one of the most respected and beloved teachers of God's Word at Dallas Theological Seminary, and he has served as a Bible teacher and elder at Plano Bible Chapel for many years. Learn more about him at: www.soniclight.com/constable/index.htm. You can explore the rest of the Sonic Light website by left-clicking in the top lighthouse graphic to return to Sonic Light's homepage, or click on one of the tabs to see other pages:

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NOTES ON

1 TIMOTHY

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INTRODUCTION

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Timothy apparently became a Christian as a result of Paul's missionary work in Lystra (Acts 14:6-23). He joined Paul on the second missionary journey when the apostle's evangelistic team passed through that area where Timothy lived (Acts 16:1-3). On the second journey Timothy helped Paul in Troas, Philippi, Berea, Thessalonica, Athens, and Corinth. During the third journey he was with Paul in Ephesus. From there Paul sent him to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). Later he was with Paul in Macedonia (2 Cor. 1:1, 19) and apparently traveled with the apostle to Corinth (Rom. 16:21). On the return trip to Ephesus, Timothy accompanied Paul through Macedonia as far as Troas (Acts 20:3-6). Still later Timothy was with Paul in Rome (Col. 1:1; Phile. 1; Phil. 1:1), and from there he probably made a trip to Philippi (Phil. 2:19-23).

At the end of the Book of Acts, Paul was under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:30-31). Our knowledge of his activities after that time comes mainly from scanty references in his epistles and conjectures since we have no canonical history of his work.

Following his trial before Caesar and his acquittal, Paul evidently left Rome. He made his way eastward and eventually arrived in Ephesus. While in Ephesus Paul doubtless visited other churches in the area and later set out for Macedonia and probably for other provinces intending to continue his pioneer missionary work (cf. Rom. 15:24, 28). When Paul departed from Ephesus he left Timothy in charge as his special representative to continue the work there (1 Tim. 1:3). Sometime after that Timothy



evidently wrote to Paul probably asking if he could leave Ephesus perhaps to rejoin Paul. Paul responded with this letter in which he instructed Timothy to remain in Ephesus and to continue his needed ministry until Paul would rejoin him there (3:14; 4:13).

“As the first-century churches increased in number, questions of church order, soundness in the faith, and discipline arose. The apostles themselves dealt with these questions, but the approaching end of the apostolic period made necessary authoritative teaching about faith and order for the future guidance of the churches. This teaching is revealed in the Pastoral Epistles.”¹

Timothy’s function in Ephesus was to represent Paul to the church.² He evidently was not an elder in that church. Paul spoke of the Ephesian elders in this epistle as individuals different from Timothy.

When Paul had met with the Ephesian elders toward the end of his third missionary journey, he had warned them about false teachers who would arise in their midst (Acts 20:29-30). This situation had happened (cf. 1:6; 6:21; 2 Tim. 2:18). Evidently Hymenaeus and Alexander were two of those “wolves” (1:20). Paul alluded to others in this epistle as well (1:3-11; 4:1-5; 6:3-10). We shall consider their errors in the exposition to follow.

If Caesar released Paul from prison in Rome in the early A.D. 60s, he may have written this epistle in the middle 60s, perhaps A.D. 63-66. Paul’s reference to his going from

Ephesus to Macedonia (1:3) suggests that he may have been in Macedonia when he wrote 1 Timothy. Nevertheless, since we have no other references to guide us, he could have been in any one of a number of other provinces as well.

The authorship of the Pastorals is a major critical problem in New Testament studies, but I believe the arguments for Pauline authorship are most convincing.³

“The majority of modern scholars maintain that the Pastoral Epistles are pseudepigraphical—that is, written pseudonymously (in Paul’s name) sometime after Paul’s death (so Dibelius and Conzelmann, Brox, Barrett, Hanson, Houlden, Karris, Hultgren). Most today locate these three letters around the turn of the century, suggesting that the author aimed to revive Pauline teaching for his day or to compose a definitive and authoritative Pauline manual for denouncing heresy in the postapostolic church.”⁴

PURPOSE

First and 2 Timothy and Titus are called “Pastoral Epistles” because Paul wrote them to pastors (shepherds) of churches outlining their pastoral duties.⁵ Their main pastoral duties were to defend sound doctrine and to maintain sound discipline.⁶

“The pastoral Epistles are primarily practical rather than theological. The emphasis lies rather on the defense of doctrine than on its explication or elaboration. The distinctively doctrinal passages comprise only a small part of the whole; Timothy and Titus had already been instructed.”⁷

“There are . . . several reasons that Paul wrote the first epistle to Timothy: (a) to encourage Timothy to stay on at Ephesus and deal with the significant and difficult issues that had arisen; (b) to provide authoritative instruction on how the household of God was to conduct itself in case Paul delayed in coming; and (c) to combat directly the opponents and their teaching and to remind Timothy of how he was to conduct himself and what he was to teach. The underlying purpose was then to encourage Timothy in his work but also to transfer Paul’s authority to Timothy in his fight against the opponents.”⁸

Major themes in the Pastorals are faith, savior (salvation), good works, rebuke, personal integrity, the gospel, ethics, eschatology, and church order.⁹

OUTLINE

- I. Salutation 1:1-2
- II. Timothy's mission in Ephesus 1:3-20
 - A. The task Timothy faced 1:3-11
 - B. Exhortations to be faithful 1:12-20
 1. A positive encouragement 1:12-17
 2. A negative warning 1:18-20
- III. Instructions concerning the life of the local church 2:1—4:5
 - A. The priority of prayer for peoples' salvation 2:1-7
 - B. The primary responsibilities of the men and the women in church meetings 2:8-15
 - C. The qualifications for church leaders 3:1-13
 1. Qualifications for elders 3:1-7
 2. Qualifications for deacons 3:8-13
 - D. The nature of the local church 3:14-16
 - E. The problem of apostasy in the church 4:1-5
- IV. Instructions concerning leadership of the local church 4:6—5:25
 - A. The leader's personal life and public ministry 4:6-16
 - B. Basic principles of effective interpersonal relationships 5:1-2
 - C. How to deal with widows and elders 5:3-25
 1. Provisions for widows 5:3-16
 2. The discipline and selection of elders 5:17-25
- V. Instructions for groups within the church 6:1-19
 - A. Slaves 6:1-2
 - B. False teachers 6:3-10
 - C. Those committed to Christ 6:11-16
 - D. The wealthy 6:17-19
- VI. Concluding charge and benediction 6:20-21

FOOTNOTES

- 1 *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1297.
- 2 "The church" in Ephesus at this time would have consisted of a number of house-churches (cf. 1 Cor. 16:19).
- 3 Since the nineteenth century, scholars have attacked the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles more than the Pauline authorship of any of the apostle's other writings. This is an introductory problem that you may study by referring to the good commentaries on the Pastorals and to the good New Testament Introductions. See, for example, William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, pp. lxxxiii-cxxix. A. Duane Litfin, "1 Timothy," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, pp. 727-29; and A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 4:555-57; wrote good short discussions, and Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary*, pp. 15-53, wrote a longer one. Mounce, pp. cxxvii-cxix, argued for Luke being Paul's amanuensis in all three Pastoral Epistles.
- 4 Philip H. Towner, 1-2 Timothy & Titus, p. 15.
- 5 The term "Pastoral Epistles" appeared first in the eighteenth century.
- 6 Ralph Earle, "1 Timothy," in *Ephesians-Philemon*, vol. 11 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, p. 344.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 345.
- 8 Mounce, p. lix.
- 9 *Ibid.*, pp. cxxx-cxxxv; Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, pp. 14-23.