

The exact nature of the false teaching Timothy was to address is not altogether clear. What can you glean from the following verses:

- 1:4 - _____
 - 1:5 - _____
 - 1:6 - _____
 - 1:7,8 - _____
 - 1:10 - _____
 - 4:3,4 - _____
 - 4:7 - _____
 - 6:20,21 - _____
- (see also 2 Tim 4:3,4) _____

Evidently, the false teachers were **among** the Christians at Ephesus, but not the same as the ‘Judaizers’ in Galatia (Gal. 3:1-3) or the ‘circumcision group’ in Crete (Titus 1:10). However, their distortions do seem to come from a Judaistic origin and not the pagan idolatry of Ephesian citizens. Their use of the ‘law’ seems to be directed to the ‘saints’ and not the ‘sinner’. The end result was that their teaching created ‘speculation’, ‘questioning’ or ‘disputes’ (1:4). God’s truth, on the other hand, brings about God’s *oikonomia* (1:4) ie. God’s work or plan, which is embraced by faith.

Discussion Questions

1. What criteria do you use when assessing the Christian teaching you hear? How do you think the Apostle would have you go about it?
2. What are examples of ‘meaningless talk’ and disputes in the church that Paul might have written to Timothy about if he were in your part of the world today?
3. What is the right use of the ‘law’ of God (e.g. the laws given to Moses, including the 10 commandments) for Christians today? (see also Galatians 3:22-29; 5:13-25)



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Small Group Notes

the first letter to timothy

Lessons on Life in the Church

“These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

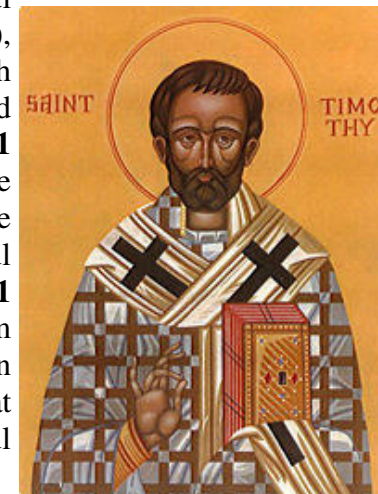
1 Timothy 3:14,15

Study No. 1

Who was Timothy?

Timothy is noted as the Apostle Paul’s “true son in the faith” (1:2,18). In Acts 16:1-3 we learn that his mother was Jewish (also 2 Tim 1:5; 3:14-15) and his father Greek. He has a good reputation at Lystra and Iconium. Paul began a long relationship of working together in the mission of the Gospel (Phil 2:19-24).

Such service included not only travelling with Paul, but remaining with new congregations when Paul had to leave (eg. Acts 17:13-14), going back to encourage such congregations (1 Thess 3:1-3), and serving as Paul’s personal emissary (1 Cor 16:10-11; Phil 2:19-24). Note that he is mentioned in several of the salutations in epistles written by Paul (2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1), and from such we learn that Timothy had been with Paul during his imprisonment at Rome. We can appreciate why Paul



would leave him at Ephesus with a job to do (1:3). Timothy is often unfairly profiled as being young and fragile (see 1 Tim 4:12; 5:23; 2 Tim 1:7,8). Note that Timothy was in his mid-thirties at time of writing, and illnesses were frequent for many. Perhaps we can say Timothy was given responsibilities above his years of experience.

When and Where?

It is thought by most, due to the lack of references in Acts to these events, that Paul wrote this epistle from Macedonia, following his first imprisonment in Rome (see Acts 28:16,30-31). Paul was released and allowed to travel for several years before being arrested again and finally put to death by Nero. Perhaps he went to Philippi (Phil 1:26;

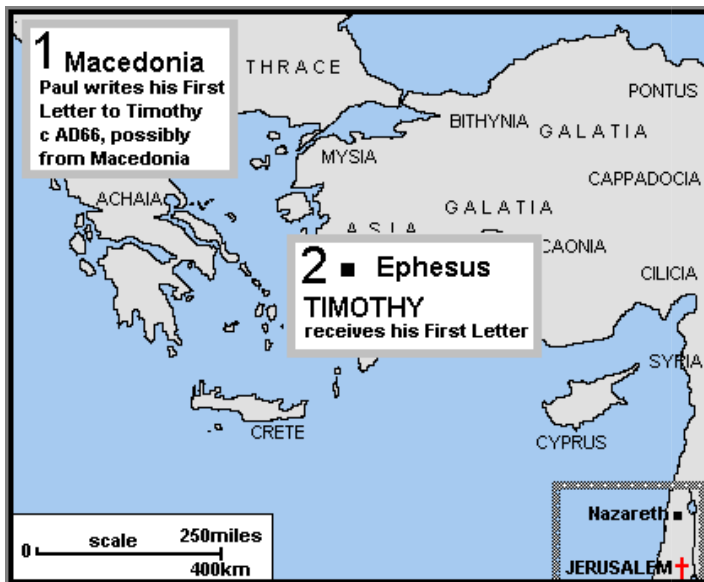
2:24), Colosse (Philemon 22), and even Spain (Rom 15:24,28). With more certainty his destinations included Ephesus (where he left Timothy, 1 Tim 1:3), Macedonia (possibly where he wrote 1 Timothy, 1 Tim 1:3), Crete (where he left Titus, Titus 1:5), Miletus (2 Tim 4:20), Corinth (2 Tim 4:20), and a winter at Nicopolis (2 Tim 4:20). The date them may be around 63-64 A.D. Ephesus was a great centre of the Hellenized world and though Jews and Christians lived there, it epitomized the Roman empires syncretistic spirituality and economic prosperity and power.

Timothy's Task

READ 1 Tim 1:3-5 “...stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer”

What elements of Timothy's job description can you find?:

V.3a _____



V.3b _____

V.4a _____

V.4b _____

V.4c _____

V.6 _____

Q. What was lacking in the context where Timothy was commanded to work?

V.5 _____

Paul had left Timothy behind at Ephesus with an awesome responsibility: to charge some not to teach anything contrary to the “sound doctrine” which was according to the “glorious gospel of the blessed God”. While Paul hoped to come himself, he writes Timothy to guide him in the meantime (1 Tim 3:14-15). Therefore, Paul writes:

- To instruct Timothy on how to conduct himself while administering the affairs of the church (3:14-15)
- To encourage Timothy by providing counsel concerning his own spiritual progress (4:12-16)

Who was Timothy taking to task?

READ 1 Tim 1:6-8; Acts 20:29-30

Paul now associates two terms “false teachers” v.3, with “law teachers” v.7. Although the Law (given to Moses) is good (v.8), there is a way to abuse it for a distorting of God's purposes.



The Temple of Artemis near Ephesus was a 120 year project completed in 550BC and one of & associated in Timothy's time with the Roman god Diana. Today the site is a marshy field in Turkey with just a single column remaining to remind visitors that once there stood one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world.