

# The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy

## Introduction

### I. THE AUTHORSHIP OF FIRST TIMOTHY

#### A. The Proof of Pauline Authorship

##### 1. Paul's salutation

###### a. The common thought

- (1) Paul's salutation confirms his writing (2 Thessalonians 3:17).
- (2) A salutation, by definition, is thought to be the greeting at the beginning of a letter (see Scofield's Bible Outlines).
- (3) Paul's salutation always included his name and was found at the beginning of each epistle.
- (4) Epistles not opening with Paul's name were not his.

###### b. The truth

- (1) Paul did not personally pen most of his epistles (see Romans 16:22; compare with Galatians 6:11; and see postscripts of first and second Corinthians).
- (2) This allowed a letter to be written to the Thessalonians falsely claiming to be written by Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2).
- (3) Due to this, Paul hand-wrote the salutation (2 Thessalonians 3:17-18; 1 Corinthians 16:21-24; Colossians 4:18).
- (4) However, his salutation was not at the beginning, but at the end of his epistles. It was like us signing a letter that has been typed for us by someone else. The final signature gives authenticity to the letter. This is proven by the fact that all references in the epistles of Paul to the words *salute*, *saluteth* or *salutation* occur in the last chapter.
  - a) Salute (i.e., Romans 16:5, 7, 9-16, 21-22)
  - b) Saluteth (i.e., Romans 16:23)
  - c) Salutation (i.e., 1 Corinthians 16:21)
- (5) Paul's salutation included a blessing of *grace* (see Romans 16:24; 1 Corinthians 16:23; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 6:18; Ephesians 6:24; Philippians 4:23; Colossians 4:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:18; 1 Timothy 6:21; 2 Timothy 4:22; Titus 3:15; Philemon 25; Hebrews 13:25).

##### 2. Paul's name

- a. Even though Paul's name was not part of his salutation, its inclusion in the epistle was of great import.
- b. The opening verse of the book introduces Paul as the author (1 Timothy 1:1) and every time thereafter where we read pronouns like my or I we are reminded that the man who opened the letter by introducing himself is still the man setting forth the letter.



## B. The Timing of Its Writing

1. Paul's letters have hints revealing the timing and location of authorship.
  - a. Externally—in the postscript
  - b. Internally—in the text of the epistle
2. External hints
  - a. One means by which the timing of an epistle's authorship is gleaned involves the *postscripts*.
  - b. Each *postscript* provides pertinent information, such as the location from where the epistle was sent. This noteworthy external information, along with the epistle's actual contents, helps to understand the general circumstances prevalent at the time of the writing of the epistles.
  - c. According to the postscript, First Timothy was written from Laodicea (the chiefest city of Phrygia Pacatiana).
    - (1) Paul met Timotheus on his second missionary journey during his time in Derbe or Lystra (Acts 16:1-2).
    - (2) Timothy was circumcised and joined Paul's journeys (Acts 16:3).
    - (3) They immediately went through Phrygia, but no indication is given that they were near Laodicea (Acts 16:6).
    - (4) At the start of Paul's third missionary journey, he again went through Phrygia, but, like the previous time, the scripture does not spell out that Paul was near Laodicea (Acts 18:23). It also seems likely that Timothy was with Paul (Acts 18:5).
    - (5) All this being said, there is no other indication of Paul being in this area prior to his imprisonment at the end of the book of Acts when he came to Rome as a prisoner.
    - (6) This would seem to indicate that Paul's visit to this location took place after his initial Roman imprisonment.
3. Internal hints
  - a. The involvement of Timothy—Paul's address of and association with Timothy (1 Timothy 1:2, 18; 1 Timothy 6:20) clearly indicates that the epistle was written after Acts 16:1-3 when Paul first met Timothy.
  - b. The reference to Alexander (1 Timothy 1:20)—If this Alexander is the Alexander of Acts 19:33, this would obviously push First Timothy after Acts chapter 19.
  - c. The charge to abide at Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3)
    - (1) Some have assumed that the charge Paul gave to Timothy fell in the time period of Acts 20:1.
    - (2) However, a careful reading of the context would show that, instead of asking Timotheus to abide at Ephesus, Paul sent Timotheus to Macedonia ahead of himself (Acts 19:21-22).
    - (3) That being said, this would have to be later and undeclared in the book of Acts.
  - d. The absence of any mention of imprisonment suggests that this epistle was post-imprisonment and the expectation of seeing Timothy soon validates this truth (1 Timothy 3:14).



## II. THE RECIPIENT OF FIRST TIMOTHY

### A. His Hometown

1. When Paul travelled to Lystra and Derbe, he found a disciple there named Timotheus (Acts 16:1).
2. The book of Acts seems to indicate, in a later passage, that Timothy was specifically from Derbe (Acts 20:4).
3. According to the book of Acts, and contrary to what is commonly seen on Bible maps, both Lystra and Derbe appear to have been cities of Lycaonia.

### B. His Heritage

1. His father (Acts 16:1, 3)
  - a. His name is unknown to us.
  - b. He was a Greek.
2. His mother
  - a. Her name was Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5).
  - b. She was a Jewess (Acts 16:1).
  - c. She was a believer (Acts 16:1; 2 Timothy 1:5).
3. His grandmother (on his mother's side)
  - a. Her name was Lois (2 Timothy 1:5).
  - b. She was most likely a Jewess seeing as how her daughter was identified as one (Acts 16:1).
  - c. She was a believer and likely the first in her family (2 Timothy 1:5).
4. His childhood
  - a. From a child, he knew and was taught the holy scriptures (2 Timothy 3:15).
  - b. He was already a believer and disciple of the Lord when Paul met him in Acts 16:1.
5. His circumcision (Acts 16:3)
  - a. It seems odd to some that Paul had Timothy circumcised after his contention that circumcision was unnecessary (see Acts 15).
  - b. It also seems contradictory to some that Paul would have encouraged Timothy to be circumcised (Acts 16:3), but did not do the same with Titus (Galatians 2:3).
    - (1) Both were obviously ministering alongside the apostle Paul.
    - (2) The difference was in the following:
      - a) Titus was a Greek (Galatians 2:3). The indication is that both father and mother were Greek.
      - b) Timothy would have been considered a Jew. Although his father was a Greek, his mother was a Jew and he, therefore, would have been accepted as such.
    - (3) Not being circumcised would have hindered Timothy's ministry among the Jews, but to ask Titus to be circumcised would have hindered his ministry among the Gentiles.



### C. His Service

1. Paul's second missionary journey
  - a. He was met by Paul and started travelling with him at the beginning of Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 16:1-3).
  - b. When Paul was sent ahead to Athens for his own safety, he sent and requested that Timothy rejoin him (Acts 17:14-15; Acts 18:5).
  - c. Timothy was present and involved in the writing of Paul's earliest epistles (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 Corinthians Postscript; 2 Corinthians 1:1) and was used by Paul to check on the believers in these locations (1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 16:10; 1 Thessalonians 3:2, 6).
2. Paul's third missionary journey—On Paul's third missionary journey, Paul sent Timothy ahead of himself to Macedonia (Acts 19:22).
3. Paul's imprisonment
  - a. Timothy was involved with Paul in some of the epistles written during Paul's initial imprisonment (Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; Philemon 1:1).
  - b. Timothy was used of Paul during this time to go back and forth to minister on behalf of the apostle Paul (Philippians 2:19).
4. Later works
  - a. Paul asked Timothy to be at Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3-4; 1 Timothy 4:6-16).
    - (1) To charge the saints concerning doctrine (1 Timothy 1:3)
    - (2) To charge the saints concerning fables and endless genealogies (1 Timothy 1:4)
  - b. Timothy was involved with Paul in the writing of Hebrews (Hebrews 13:23 and Postscript).
  - c. Timothy was ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians (see 2 Timothy Postscript).

### D. His Superiority (Philippians 2:20-22)

1. The extent of his superiority—"no man" (Philippians 2:20)
  - a. Note: There were many good men and women that served with the apostle Paul, but none were quite like Timothy. There are many in Christianity like Judas—"not that he cared for the poor" (John 12:6), but few like Timothy—"who...naturally care for your state" (Philippians 2:20).
  - b. What set Timothy apart?
    - (1) He was Paul's son in the faith (2 Timothy 1:2).
    - (2) He was a man of "unfeigned faith" (2 Timothy 1:5). Note: Feigned means false, fake, or pretend (see 1 Samuel 21:13; 2 Samuel 14:2; 1 Kings 14:5-6; Nehemiah 6:8; Jeremiah 3:10; 1 Timothy 1:5).
  - c. He would naturally care for the state of the believers.



- (1) The initial admonition was given in Philippians 2:1-4. This is the admonition of which Timothy is given as an example.
  - (2) His natural care for the believers was evidence that he . . .
    - a) Was likeminded with the apostle Paul (Philippians 2:2)
    - b) Had the same love as the apostle Paul (Philippians 2:2)
    - c) Did not serve through strife (Philippians 2:3)
    - d) Did not serve for vainglory (Philippians 2:3)
    - e) Esteemed others better than himself (Philippians 2:3)
    - f) Looked more to the things of others than on his own things (Philippians 2:4)
    - g) Note: These things were very much in line with the heart demonstrated by the apostle Paul (see Romans 9:3; 2 Corinthians 12:15)
2. The nature of man (Philippians 2:21)
    - a. All seek their own.
      - (1) Witnessed by Paul
        - a) By John Mark (Acts 13:13; Acts 15:37-40)
        - b) By Phygellus and Hermogenes (2 Timothy 1:15)
        - c) By Demas, and perhaps others (2 Timothy 4:10)
        - d) By others (2 Timothy 4:14-18)
      - (2) Testifying of a lack of charity (1 Corinthians 13:4-5)
      - (3) Demonstrating an inability to be followers of Christ (Matthew 16:24; Luke 9:57-62; Luke 14:26-27)
    - b. All seek not the things which are Jesus Christ's.
  3. The proof of Timothy's life (Philippians 2:22)
    - a. The knowledge of Timothy's life
      - (1) The believer's at Philippi—"ye know the proof of him"
      - (2) Paul—"as a son with the father, he hath served with me"
        - a) As a son (1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Timothy 1:2, 18; 2 Timothy 1:2)
        - b) As a servant (Philippians 1:1)
        - c) As a co-labourer (Romans 16:21; 1 Thessalonians 3:2)
    - b. The purpose of Timothy's life—"the gospel"

### III. THE BREAKDOWN OF FIRST TIMOTHY

#### A. The Basic Statistics

1. Chapters = Six
2. Verses = 113
3. Sentences
  - a. One asking sentence (1 Timothy 3:5)
  - b. Eighty-five telling sentences
4. Words = 2,244
  - a. Key words



- (1) Good—twenty-three times (1 Timothy 1:5, 8, 18, 19; 1 Timothy 2:3, 10; 1 Timothy 3:1, 2, 7, 13; 1 Timothy 4:4, 6 (x2); 1 Timothy 5:4, 10 (x2), 25; 1 Timothy 6:12 (x2), 13, 18 (x2), 19)
  - (2) Faith—nineteen times (1 Timothy 1:2, 4, 5, 14, 19 (x2); 1 Timothy 2:7, 15; 1 Timothy 3:9, 13; 1 Timothy 4:1, 6, 12; 1 Timothy 5:8, 12; 1 Timothy 6:10, 11, 12, 21)
  - (3) Godliness—nine times (1 Timothy 2:2, 10; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Timothy 4:7, 8; 1 Timothy 6:3, 5, 6, 11)
  - (4) Doctrine(s)—nine times (1 Timothy 1:3, 10; 1 Timothy 4:1, 6, 13, 16; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Timothy 6:1, 3)
  - (5) Charge(d)—seven times (1 Timothy 1:3, 18; 1 Timothy 5:7, 16, 21; 1 Timothy 6:13, 17)
- b. Unique words
- (1) Purity—two times (1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Timothy 5:2)
  - (2) Sobriety—two times (1 Timothy 2:9, 15)
  - (3) Contentment—one time (1 Timothy 6:6)
  - (4) Honesty—one time (1 Timothy 2:2)
  - (5) Immortal—one time (1 Timothy 1:17)
  - (6) Modest—one time (1 Timothy 2:9)
  - (7) Presbytery—one time (1 Timothy 4:14)
- c. Key phrases
- (1) Good work(s)—six times (1 Timothy 2:10; 1 Timothy 3:1; 1 Timothy 5:10 (x2), 25; 1 Timothy 6:18)
  - (2) The faith—seven times (1 Timothy 1:2; 1 Timothy 3:9, 13; 1 Timothy 4:1; 1 Timothy 5:8; 1 Timothy 6:10, 21)
  - (3) These things—eight times (1 Timothy 3:14; 1 Timothy 4:6, 11, 15; 1 Timothy 5:7, 21; 1 Timothy 6:2, 11)
- B. The Theme/Purpose of the Book (1 Timothy 1:3-4; 1 Timothy 4:16)
1. Thyself—Part of Timothy's charge involved his own personal walk (1 Timothy 1:18-20; 1 Timothy 3:14-14; 1 Timothy 4:12-16; 1 Timothy 6:11-16, 20-21).
  2. Them that hear thee—Paul's charge to Timothy also involved instructions to be passed to others (1 Timothy 2:1, 8, 9; 1 Timothy 3:1, 8; 1 Timothy 4:6, 11; 1 Timothy 5:1, 3; 1 Timothy 6:17-19).
- C. The Outline of the Book
1. Paul's opening remarks (1 Timothy 1:1-2)
  2. Paul's instruction and discipline (1 Timothy 1:3—1 Timothy 3:13)
  3. Paul's intended visit (1 Timothy 3:14-15)
  4. The mystery of godliness (1 Timothy 3:16)
  5. The onslaught of iniquity (1 Timothy 4:1-12)
  6. Paul's intended visit (1 Timothy 4:13-16)
  7. Paul's instruction and discipline (1 Timothy 5:1—1 Timothy 6:21)
  8. Paul's salutation (1 Timothy 6:21)