

RBC Bible Study 2023

1 Timothy Bible Study

9/13/23

Timothy and the Ministry in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:1-11)

Introduction: The Pastoral Epistles

The Pastoral Epistles, as they are so-called, are 1-2 Timothy and Titus. They are called Pastoral Epistles, since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, due to the fact that Paul pastors Timothy and Titus through these letters. Paul is constantly giving Pastoral counsel to these mentees concerning the ministries they are set over in Ephesus (Timothy) and Crete (Titus). The title is appropriate in that Paul does give guidance to these individual leaders but the letters are widely different in focus and structure, at least 1-2 Timothy. Titus and 1 Timothy utilize similar language and structure.

Despite their canonical inclusion, many scholars hold these letters to be pseudonymous. In fact, the consensus of biblical scholars in universities and seminaries in America suggest Paul did not write these letters. They argue this based on the differences in grammar, style, and difficulty in placing these letters within Paul's ministry. The problem with this perspective is that it is not based in any real evidence. We are not able to place Galatians firmly within Paul's ministry, and yet it is accepted. 2 Corinthians and Philemon are quite different from many other letters but they are fully embraced. For the most part, the belief that Paul did not write these letters is not rooted in sound evidentiary argumentation.

But these letters are an opportunity for us to better understand how Paul would instruct Pastoral leaders on the ground to lead churches. It gives us a closer look what preachers would be preaching and how churches would be structured. It also shows us the various issues of those times which would be on the forefront of the minds of church members.

1. (v. 1) Paul's own Ministry: Paul often identifies himself as an "apostle" of Jesus Christ as his introduction in letters. The goal is both out of deference to God's call and identification of his authority. As an "apostle," one who is sent, Paul both has to be humble as he did not send himself. He also has authority because he was sent for God's purposes. Though not an original apostle, his apostleship carried the same weight as those like Peter, James, and John, the three Jesus had in his inner-circle.
2. (v. 2) Timothy, Paul's "son in the faith:" Paul sends this missive to Timothy (see Acts 16). He was half Jewish and Greek. Paul left him in Ephesus to oversee the church when he went into Macedonia. It is not certain if this was Paul's initial ministry journey to Macedonia (Acts 16) or some other time not mentioned in his letters. Ephesus was a sprawling city filled with religious devotees from all economic backgrounds. It contained one the largest sites of worship dedicated to the goddess Artemis. In this area, there is a large Jewish presence as well.
3. (vv. 3-11) Instructions:
  - a. Paul tells Timothy to preach against people abiding by myths and speculations about genealogies. Apparently, people were making up things about themselves or doing investigations into their ancestry which affected their understanding of their relationship with Jesus Christ and the church. We are unsure as to what these investigations were. They could have been proto-gnostic, considerations about Jewish ancestry, etc. But people were looking at data or false information to validate themselves.

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- b. People also seemed to be misusing the Jewish Torah to be more restrictive than necessary. The law was to restrict behavior discussed in the verses from 9-11.