

A Survey of the First Letter to Timothy

TEACHER: RAY REYNOLDS

Author:

Paul, the apostle (**I Timothy 1:1**), formerly Saul of Tarsus (**Acts 8-9**) identifies himself as the author of this letter. The early church accepted it as from Paul, but recent scholars will try to debate this fact. There is strong internal and external evidence that it was written by him.

Date:

It is generally accepted that Paul wrote it around 62-65 AD from Macedonia. As the book of Acts concludes it is evident that Paul is headed for prison (62 AD?). The first letter to Timothy would have been written soon after those events. In fact, churches were planted all over Macedonia after the second missionary journey and in Ephesus on the third journey. Paul had apparently left Timothy in this region to serve the congregations (**I Timothy 1:3**), possibly in fear that he would not return from a Roman imprisonment (**Acts 26-28**). After his release, probably in the spring of 63 AD, Paul went east (**Romans 15:22**) and also planned to visit Timothy and Titus (**I Timothy 3:14, 4:13, Titus 3:12**). Since very little of this book deals with a heavy persecution upon the church, I Timothy and Titus were evidently written before Nero blamed the burning of Rome on the Christians (July, 64 AD).

Theme:

This letter is lumped with the “Pastoral Epistles” because of the content and nature of it. It was clearly meant for the preacher, not the congregation. However, there is nothing wrong with the entire congregation learning of its contents (see Philemon). Timothy was a younger colleague, but Paul gives the minister authority to appoint elders, rebuke the false teachers, and nurture the flock. He gives guidance and direction for the spiritual life of a church leader.

Audience:

The letter is personally addressed to young Timothy (**I Timothy 4:12**), whom he regarded as his “true son in the faith” (**I Timothy 1:2**), the minister of the congregation in Ephesus (**I Timothy 1:3**). It should be noted that Paul met Timothy in Lystra. Timothy’s parents were in a mixed marriage. His father was Greek and his mother, Eunice (**Acts 16:1, II Timothy 1:5**) was a Jew. His grandmother Lois was also a very influential person in Timothy’s life (**II Timothy 1:5**).

Paul had a strong influence on this young man and was able to persuade him to do many amazing things. Since racial descent was determined by the mother in this culture, and because it was feared by the churches that his ministry might prove difficult, Paul had Timothy circumcised not long after his conversion and after some serious debate (**Acts 16:3**). It should also be noted that none of Paul’s companions are mentioned as often as Timothy.

Key Verses:

I Timothy 1:5-7, 1:17, 2:1-7, 3:1-13, 3:16, 4:1-5, 4:12, 5:3-16, 5:19-20, 6:6, 6:12, 6:17-19

Outline:

- I. *The Teaching of a Church Leader (1:1-20)*
- II. *The Prayer Life of a Church Leader (2:1-15)*
- III. *The Qualifications of a Church Leader (3:1-16)*

- IV. *The Life of a Church Leader (4:1-16)*
- V. *The Work of a Church Leader (5:1-25)*
- VI. *The Perseverance of a Church Leader (6:1-21)*

A Survey of the Second Letter to Timothy

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Author:

Paul, the apostle (**II Timothy 1:1**), formerly Saul of Tarsus (**Acts 8-9**) identifies himself as the author of this letter. The early church accepted it as from Paul, but recent scholars will try to debate this fact. There is strong internal and external evidence that it was written by him.

Date:

It is generally accepted that Paul wrote it around 64-65 AD in the city of Rome, while in a Roman prison and preparing for his death (**II Timothy 1:8, 16-17**). As mentioned in the notes from I Timothy, the book of Acts has Paul headed for a Roman prison around 60-62 AD. Luke's detailed account of the trip is found in the latter chapters (**Acts 26-28**). Acts leaves the question of Paul's release unanswered, but there is ample evidence that he was released after the two years (**Acts 28:30, I Timothy, Titus**). Upon his release, probably in the spring of 63 AD, Paul went east (**Romans 15:22**) and also planned to visit Timothy and Titus (**I Timothy 3:14, 4:13, Titus 3:12**). However, when Nero blamed the burning of Rome on the Christians (July, 64 AD) and began a harsh persecution, Paul may have had to alter his plans. During this persecution Paul was imprisoned a second time in Rome and died in 66 or 67 A.D. (**II Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18**). Tradition says he was beheaded.

Theme:

Along with the first letter to Timothy and Titus, this book is lumped with the "Pastoral Epistles." It was clearly meant to be a final word of encouragement to the young preacher, protégé, and friend of the apostle. Much like the first letter, Paul identifies things every young preacher should know, believe, and teach. He addresses certain challenges but shows how the eternal benefits far outweigh the present circumstances. It is the opinion of many that the last chapter of this book is the most personal and touching of anything Paul ever wrote. It is his farewell message.

Audience:

The letter is personally addressed to young Timothy, whom he regarded as his "beloved son" (**II Timothy 1:2, 2:1**). He was still ministering in Ephesus (**II Timothy 4:19**). Remember that Paul met Timothy in Lystra, personally knew his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois who apparently taught him the Holy Scriptures from his youth (**Acts 16:1, II Timothy 1:5, 3:15**), and he mentions Timothy more frequently than any other companion. Paul had already faced his first preliminary hearing and was ready for a formal trial. He was abandoned by all of his companions except Luke (**II Timothy 4:10-11**). One witness, Alexander, is mentioned to have testified against him (**II Timothy 4:14**). Paul expected imminent death, therefore, Timothy is seen as the last hope (along with Mark) for some of Paul's final requests (**II Timothy 4:6-9, 11, 13, 21**).

Key Verses:

II Timothy 1:7, 1:12, 13-14, 2:2, 2:10-13, 2:15, 2:22-26, 3:1-5, 3:12, 3:16-17, 4:2, 4:6-8, 4:17

Outline:

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| I. <i>The Ministry of a Church Leader (1:1-18)</i> | III. <i>The Challenges of a Church Leader (3:1-17)</i> |
| II. <i>The Strength of a Church Leader (2:1-26)</i> | IV. <i>The Testimony of a Church Leader (4:1-22)</i> |