

Key to I TIMOTHY

1. BACKGROUND:

Writer is Paul; time of writing is A.D. 65 from Macedonia (North Greece).

Letter is written to Timothy, a dear friend of Paul and pastor of the church of Ephesus. Paul had found young Timothy at Lystra (Acts 16:1-3) and had chosen him to be his assistant. Of him Paul had written that, "I have no man likeminded" (Phil. 2:20), for he had become the most intimate and trusted friend Paul possessed.

The occasion: Evidently Paul had been released from his first Roman imprisonment and had revisited Ephesus and had gone to Macedonia, leaving Timothy there. As he went he wrote this book of pastoral instruction about the work Timothy was to do.

2. THEME:

I Timothy is one of three (also II Tim., Titus) "pastoral epistles."

The subject is order, organization, procedure in the churches. At the first, all the problems in the churches were handled by the apostles directly. But as the end of the apostolic era approached, it was necessary that the Spirit of GOD write down a clear revelation for the guidance in future churches.

3. MAIN DIVISIONS:

Unsound doctrine rebuked (1); prayer and the divine order (2); qualifications of elders and deacons (3); walk of a good minister (4); work of a good minister (5-6).

4. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Timothy was a comparatively young man, but one of whom nothing derogatory is written. He was ordained an evangelist (4:14; II Timothy 1:6), was not in best of health (5:23), was Paul's most trusted and beloved companion, and after Paul's death and on the completion of his ministry in the Ephesian church, suffered martyrdom under the Emperor Domitian.

Timothy's work was possibly mostly with pastors. As there were no seminaries in which to teach pastors, it was necessary to develop them out of the converts. This was done in spite of the persecution and lack of facilities of that early day. How Timothy came to be the fine young man he was is somewhat explained by II Timothy 1:5; 3:14, 15. Though his father was a Greek, his mother was a Jewess and evidently carefully and prayerfully instructed her son in the faith, being ably assisted by Timothy's grandmother as well.

It would be remembered that at this time there were no church buildings. Possibly the church at Ephesus met in the homes of the Christians there. These may have numbered in the scores.

Timothy may have acted as general Pastor, teaching other local leaders.

5. OUTLINE:

Introduction (1:1, 2)
False Teachers (1:3-20)
Prayer
Conduct

Church Officers (3)
Minister
Deacon

Church Government (4-6)
Minister
Congregation

Conclusion (6:20, 21)

6. OUTSTANDING TEACHINGS:

I Timothy's greatest problem was false teachers (Acts 20:29, 30).

Their line of falsehood dealt with Jewish legends and endless genealogies.

Paul writes carefully of women's place in the church. While in Heaven there will be no distinction, still in the church there are natural differences which it is best not to override. Clear, definite qualifications are laid down for the officers of the church in all ages. All of this is in direct contrast with the practice of selecting men to rule the church by their worldly achievements or position.

Teaching on slavery: become free if you can, but if not, be the very best slave you possibly can . . . for CHRIST's sake. Riches produce opportunity for corruption. Don't desire them.

7. KEY:

You'll find here GOD's own instruction for pastors, for church leaders, and for every member of the church.

~ end of I Timothy ~

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