

Expositional Notes on I and II Timothy

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NT 523

I TIMOTHY

Introduction

The Apostle Paul understood that the Great Commission was the divine command to establish Baptist churches, which he faithfully and consistently practiced (Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 18:1-12). As he went into new geographical areas (Rom. 15:20) he not only planted New Testament (NT) assemblies, but he influenced men for church planting and then trained them. For instance, he recruited Sopater from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy from Lystra, and Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia (Acts 20:4) and Crescens from Galatia, Titus from Dalmatia (II Tim. 4:10). The men Timothy and Titus received individual letters instructing them about the organization and administration of churches, which Scriptures are “the Pastoral Epistles” (I and II Timothy and Titus). The personal charges to Timothy and Titus, as apostolic representatives, are applicable to all pastors of the Lord’s candlesticks.

Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment around AD 60-61 and went to Ephesus (I Tim. 1:3). He left Timothy there and hoped to return but did not. So he wrote I Timothy around AD 62.

The Man Timothy

The Apostle Paul called Timothy (“honoring God”) “*my own son in the faith*” (I Tim. 1:2). Albeit Timothy had a believing mother Eunice and grandmother Lois who taught him the Tanak (II Tim. 1:5; II Tim. 3:15), it was the man from Tarsus who won him to the Lord. This apparently occurred in connection with Paul’s stoning at Timothy’s home town in Lystra (Acts 14:8-21; 16:1-2). Since Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles started first with the Jews in their synagogues, the Apostle thought it wise to have the half-breed Timothy circumcised for the sake of the Jews, since the youth’s father was a Greek (Acts 16:1).¹ Timothy helped the Apostle establish churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth and Ephesus (Acts 16-20). He was with Paul in his first Roman imprisonment (Phil. 1:1; *et al*), and visited Paul in his second.

¹This did not contradict Paul’s position against the heresy of “circumcision-salvation” (Rom. 4:1-5; Gal. 2:16; Acts 15:1-2), since Timothy was already saved. Titus, on the other hand, did not need to receive circumcision since he was a full Greek (Gal. 2:3).

Apparently Timothy was arrested at some point and then freed (Heb. 13:23-24), and eventually was called back to Rome (II Tim. 4:9). Scripture does not reveal the nature of Timothy's gift, but knowledge about it was revealed at his ordination (I Tim. 4:14; II Tim. 1:6). Tradition attests that he died of martyrdom during Domitian's reign.

The Ephesian Church

The ancient city of Ephesus was located on the southwest coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey), the east side of the Aegean Sea, and at the mouth of the Cayster River. It served as a major harbor, connecting Asia with the rest of the Mediterranean world. Its origin goes back to its initial habitation by native Anatolians, ultimately conquered by King Croesus of Lydia in the 6th century BC. Later in the 4th century BC, the temple, dedicated to the matron deity Artemis, burned on the night that Alexander was born (356 BC). Subsequently, the Ephesians rebuilt the temple of Artemis, and Lysimachus, Alexander's general, moved the city to the location that Paul ultimately visited. The Artemision (Diana's temple) was a beautiful and magnificent structure, recognized as one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. Built on a large platform, the temple proper was 340 feet long by 160 feet wide, with one hundred and twenty seven blue-gray granite pillars sixty feet high. Archeological discoveries of statues of Artemis have revealed that the goddess featured a headdress, depictions of animals on her skirt, and three rows of egg-shaped objects, either breasts or eggs, presumably symbolizing her fecundity.

The city of Ephesus was significant because of its strategic geographic location for the dissemination of the gospel as the capital of the Roman province of Asia (Acts 19:10), and for its Artemision cult, in which the gospel penetrated her devotees (Acts 19:23-24). Having been started at the conclusion of Paul's second missionary journey (c. AD 55), the Ephesian church became paramount in the NT Scriptures. He left the work with the church planters, Aquila and Priscilla, who eventually taught Apollos "Pauline theology" (Acts 18:18-28). Paul re-visited the church and remained for about three years (Acts 20:31). With increased persecution, the Apostle moved the assembly meeting place to τῆ σχολῆ ("*the school*") of Tyrannus, and reached all of Asia from this site (Acts 19:1-10; see also I Cor. 16:9). His evangelism hurt the economy of Ephesus and stirred up opposition (Acts 19:13-20:1). He returned later and gave his final exhortation to the pastors of the Ephesian church (Acts 20:17-38). The Ephesian assembly received several NT Scriptures, including Ephesians, I and II Timothy, the Apocalypse, and perhaps John's writings including his Gospel and three Epistles, since tradition attests that he lived in Ephesus before his exile. The assembly had a vibrant forty-year history (c. AD 55-95), with a developing canon of NT Scriptures. In contradistinction to the great Artemision, the Apostle Paul declared that the (house [?]) church at Ephesus was "*the pillar and ground of the truth*" (I Tim. 3:15).

The Authorship and Date of I and II Timothy

The Epistles of I and II Timothy received early attestation as Pauline from prominent patristics such as Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus. The Epistles are also listed in the Muratorian Canon, and for good reason since Paul claimed to be the author (I Tim. 1:1; 2:7; II Tim. 1:1), and he claimed Timothy as his γνησίῳ τέκνῳ ἐν πίστει (I Tim. 1:2, 18; II Tim. 1:2; 2:1). Post Reformation critics have rejected Paul's clear assertion and posited the following arguments for a second century pseudonymous writing:

1) The discrepancies between Acts and I and II Timothy are too many (*contra* built upon assumption of only one Roman incarceration).

2) The local church organization is too advanced for the first century (*contra* the Lord Jesus Christ had a highly organized assembly in His lifetime with officers, ordinances, church discipline, Great Commission, and business meeting).

3) The content of his anti-Gnosticism is obviously second century (*contra* the Gnosticism had Jewish elements as revealed in Colossians [2:7-23]).

4) The style and vocabulary are too different to the Apostle's (*contra* this is argument is always subjective, and does not deal with the many *hapax legomena* that no forger would dare have used as "Pauline"). The declared statements of Paul cannot be overturned with alleged problems put for by anti-supernatural rationalists.

Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment around AD 61 and went to Ephesus (I Tim. 1:3). He left Timothy there and hoped to return but did not. So he wrote I Timothy (and Titus) around AD 62. Later, Paul was betrayed by Alexander and imprisoned for the last time, this time in the Mamertine Prison, awaiting death (II Tim. 4:14-18). He wrote his "swan song" to Timothy from the holding cell for capital offenders probably about AD 64-67.

The Purpose of I Timothy

He wanted to encourage and inform his son in the faith about the Ephesian church and its organization and administration. This included detail structure about public worship, women's responsibilities, qualifications for pastor and deacon, the widows' roll, counsel for elders, biblical wealth, etc. Furthermore, he warned Timothy to oppose the teaching and practice of the Jewish Gnostics.

The Outline of I Timothy

- I. Salutation (1:1-2)
- II. Personal Charge (1:3-20)
 - A. Charge Stated (1:3)
 - 1. False Doctrine (1:4-7)
 - 2. Sound Doctrine (1:8-17)
 - a. Its Truth (1:8-10)
 - b. Its Testimony (1:11-17)
 - B. Charge Restated (1:18-20)
- III. Public Charge (2:1-6:10)
 - A. Organization of the Church (2:1-3:16)
 - 1. For Church Worship (2:1-15)
 - 2. For Church Officers (3:1-13)
 - a. The Pastor (3:1-7)
 - b. The Deacon (3:8-13)
 - 3. For Church Behaviour (3:14-16)
 - B. Administration of the Church (4:1-6:10)
 - 1. Resist Doctrinal Apostasy (4:1-5)
 - 2. Promote Practical Truth (4:6-16)
 - 3. Minister to People Groups (5:1-6:10)
 - a. To Elderly Members (5:1-2)
 - b. To Widows Indeed (5:3-16)
 - c. To Elders (5:17-25)
 - d. To Servants (6:1-2)
 - e. To Heretics (6:3-10)
- IV. Private Charge (6:11-21)
 - A. Defend the Truth (6:11-16)
 - B. Charge the Wealthy (6:17-19)
 - C. Keep the Trust (6:20-21)

The Exposition of I Timothy

Chapter One

After giving his standard salutation to Timothy (vv. 1-2), Paul gave him a personal charge concerning false doctrine. The Apostle had predicted that apostasy would enter the Ephesian church after his departure (Acts 20:29-31), and it had. False teachers perverted the teaching of the law, maintaining that it saved sinners, which indeed it does not. The truth of the matter is that it was given to cause men to realize their sinfulness (vv. 6-10; cf. Gal. 3:24), and to challenge them to turn to Christ in loving obedience to Scripture.² In fact, Paul testified that the law convicted him of sin (the chief of sinners), and his salvation experience (Acts 9:5; Rom. 7:7-9) becomes a pattern (ὑποτύπωσις)³ for all (v. 16). He concluded his Semitic parallelism restating Timothy's charge to follow Paul's example and discipline false teachers from the assembly (vv.18-20).

Chapter Two

Paul gave his public charge to Timothy concerning the organization of the assembly. He started with the need for prayer in the church services for all men including authorities, for the spiritual benefit of both the assembly and sinners who need Christ (vv. 1-8).⁴ Furthermore, women need to embrace the spirit of humility and subjection by not over-dressing (cf. I Pet. 3:3)⁵ and by not usurping male leadership in the church (vv. 9-12). Adam was created first and not deceived in the temptation as was Eve (Gen. 2-3), who nevertheless will be the instrument to bring the Messiah into the world for mankind's redemption (vv. 13-15; cf. Dan. 11:37).

Chapter Three

The assembly is organized around the two offices of bishop (elder = pastor = star = angel)⁶ and deacon (cf. Phil. 1:1); the former for leadership and the latter for servitude. Since both are very important for the church, Paul listed specific qualifications. First, for the pastor the categories included his personal life, moral life, mental life, social life, family life, Christian

²The Lord Jesus stated, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (Jn. 14:23). When the sinner for the first time shows his love to the Lord by obeying Scripture through meeting the conditions of repentance and faith for salvation, he becomes the assured candidate for regeneration.

³Cf. II Tim. 1:13 for this *dis legomena*.

⁴Paul used the passive infinitive "to be saved" (σωθῆναι) requiring responsibility for salvation to fall exclusively on the sinner. Paul did not say "God wills to save all men," since all men will not be saved.

⁵Women should not attempt to draw attention to their physical beauty (cf. Prov. 7:10) but to their spiritual beauty (cf. Isa. 3:16-24).

⁶*Vide* Acts 20:17, 28; Tit. 1:5, 7; I Pet. 5:1-2; Rev. 1:20; 2:1 *et al.*

experience, and public life (vv. 1-7). For the deacon, Paul required a similar list of qualifications including his personal life, spiritual life, Christian experience, moral life, and domestic life (vv. 8-13). Both offices require a mature, godly, family man (with one living wife⁷ and children). Their specific duties listed elsewhere included prayer and preaching the word for the pastor (Acts 6:4), and administering the affairs of widows indeed for the deacon (Acts 6:1, 3, 5; cf. I Tim. 5:3 ff.). Proper understanding of these organizational truths helps perpetuate biblical doctrine about the person and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ Who was God⁸ incarnate (vv. 14-15), and about whom Paul's closing hymn referenced (v. 16).⁹

Chapter Four

The Apostle Paul began dealing with the administration of the church which included Timothy's need to resist doctrinal apostasy (vv. 1-5). This false teaching came from demons and was the re-packaged lies of the Garden (Gen. 3:4-5), focusing on the corollary that "flesh is evil" (marital and animal flesh). Satan tempted Eve with the promise of deathlessness and deification. Namely, man's spirit passes through many worthless bodies of flesh to the ultimate salvation of the spirit. Paul crushed this doctrine with the great theological declaration "*God was manifest in the flesh*" (3:16). He enjoined Timothy to promote practical truth such as avoiding occultic teaching but exercising godliness since believers have the living God as their Saviour. Young Timothy was to be an example (τύπος) in word, conversation (ἐν ἀναστροφῇ),¹⁰ charity, spirit, faith, and purity (ἐν ἀγνείᾳ).¹¹ He was to focus on the word of God in church services, and not forget to use his spiritual gift which was made known before the presbytery (τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου). If he would take care of himself spiritually in the word of God, he would benefit all spiritually.

Chapter Five

The Apostle gave instruction to Timothy on ministering to five different people groups in the assembly. He was to treat elderly men and women with respect. Moreover, he was to honor "*widows indeed*" (τὰς ὄντως χήρας) who met several qualifications such as the following: 1) she needed to be at least sixty years of age; 2) she needed to have had only one living husband now

⁷No requirements are given for the pastor's wife as for the deacon's (v. 11). The pastor's wife is not "Mrs. Pastor;" her singular calling is to her husband under Christ (Eph. 5:22).

⁸The CT omitted the noun for "God" (Θεός) and substituted the relative pronoun "who" (ὃς), eliminating the doctrine of the incarnation of Jesus Christ as God. See textbook, Thomas M. Strouse, *Sound Doctrine: The Theology of I and II Timothy* (Cromwell, CT: Bible Baptist Theological Press, 2014), pp. 182-183.

⁹Notice the pattern of *aorist* passive verbs in this hymn: Θεός ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί, ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι, ὤφθη ἀγγέλοις, ἐκηρύχθη ἐν ἔθνεσιν, ἐπιστεύθη ἐν κόσμῳ, ἀνελήφθη ἐν δόξῃ.

¹⁰The root noun of this prepositional phrase refers to behaviour or deportment, including speaking.

¹¹Cf. I Tim. 5:2 for ἀγνεία which refers to moral propriety.

deceased; 3) she needed to have a testimony of good works “if” (εἰ)¹² any of the following occasions applied to her: “brought up children,” “lodged strangers,” “washed the saints’ feet,” “relieved the afflicted,” and/or “diligently followed every good work.” Furthermore, Timothy was to deal carefully and evenly with elders (concerning remuneration, accusations, and ordination) with personal purity,¹³ avoiding sinful culpability.

Chapter Six

His instructions for handling two other people groups in the assembly continued with servants (vv. 1-2) and heretics (vv. 3-10). Timothy was to enjoin servants to be faithful to their masters whether believers or not. The last group, heretics (motivated by greed), was to be dealt with by separation (“*from such withdraw thyself*”),¹⁴ presumably in the same manner as Paul instructed Titus; “*reject*” (παραιτοῦ) through the means of church discipline (Tit. 3:10). Paul’s concluding remarks to his son in the faith included Timothy’s need to defend the truth (6:11-16), to charge the wealthy (6:17-19),¹⁵ and to keep the deposit of truth, especially from oppositions of falsely-named “*science*” (6:20-21).¹⁶

¹²The five occurrences of εἰ (“if”) denote five possible conditions.

¹³He encouraged Timothy to drink grape juice (οἶνω) for his stomach infirmities since the water supply was impure and therefore impotable.

¹⁴The CT has omitted this clause.

¹⁵His emphasis on the wealth of some believers cannot be missed with four references to the same root πλοῦτος for “riches:” the adjective πλουσίως, the noun πλούτου, the adverb πλουσίως, and the infinitive πλουτεῖν (cf. I Tim. 6:9).

¹⁶The Greek ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως literally reads “the antithesis of falsely-named knowledge.” There is a true “Gnosticism” which refers to the biblical knowledge (γνώσει) of the Lord Jesus Christ (II Pet. 3:18).

II TIMOTHY

Introduction

The aged Paul wrote this Second Epistle to Timothy during his final incarceration in Rome, sometime during the years of AD 64-67. Before his martyrdom, he had final words to pass on to his son, and he apparently also wrote his Epistle to the Hebrews while awaiting death (II Pet. 3:15-16; Heb. 13:22-24). The early patristics attested to his authorship (see notes in I Timothy).

The Purpose of II Timothy

Apparently Timothy was dismayed and disheartened about the Apostle's latest arrest. Paul encouraged him to stir up (ἀναζωπυρεῖν)¹⁷ his spiritual gift serve his church, is Lord, and Paul to the end (1:3 ff.). He warned him about the coming apostates and the division and destruction that they would cause in the Ephesian assembly (2:14 ff.). He gave the great description of the sufficiency of Scripture as the best remedy against error (3:1 ff.). The Apostle instructed him about many practical and logistical detail concerning his soon visit to the Mamertine Prison (4:1 ff.).

The Outline of II Timothy

- I. Salutation (1:1-2)
- II. Be Stirred Up (1:3-4:19)
 - A. With regard to past responsibilities (1:3-18)
 - 1. Testimony of salvation and calling (1:3-7)
 - 2. Participation in suffering (1:8-12)
 - 3. Defense of sound words (1:13-18)
 - B. With regard to present responsibilities (2:1-26)
 - 1. Maintain personal life (2:1-13)
 - 2. Minister public life (2:14-26)
 - C. With regard to potential responsibilities (3:1-17)
 - 1. Awareness of Apostasy (3:1-13)
 - 2. Answer to Apostasy (3:14-17)
 - D. With regard to personal responsibilities (4:1-21)
 - 1. Complete your ministry (4:1-5)
 - 2. Consider Paul's ministry (4:6-8)
 - 3. Culminate final requests (4:9-21)
- III. Conclusion (4:22)

¹⁷This *hapax* means literally to rekindle the embers of a fire.

Exposition of II Timothy

Chapter One

After saluting Timothy, the Apostle attempted to encourage his withered protégé by reminding him of Paul's prayers, of Timothy's godly heritage, and his ordination (1:1-7). Gingerly, Paul used the infinitive (ἀναζωπυρεῖν) and not an imperative, to help awaken Timothy to his pressing responsibilities. His spiritual gift, probably service (Rom. 12:7; cf. also Acts 19:22; I Thes. 3:2), needed to be prodded into action as Paul enjoined this faithful son to continue his Christian service. He employed several imperatives after the initial infinitive to motivate Timothy in serving (1:8-12). The son needed to be not only a partaker¹⁸ in suffering but also a defender of sound words (1:13-13).

Chapter Two

Timothy's responsibilities extended to his personal life (2:1-13) and his public life (2:14-26). Paul organized his directives to son Timothy around several images such as a son, a teacher, a soldier, an athlete, a farmer, a sufferer, a student, a separatist, a vessel of honour, and a servant. The Apostle detailed the ideal ministry for "*the servant* (δοῦλον) *of the Lord*,"¹⁹ reflecting on his demeanor of person and knowledge of Scripture to recover sinners from the snare of the devil (2:24-26).

Chapter Three

The Apostle gave a litany of at least eighteen sinful characteristics looming on the horizon of the last days in which Timothy found himself (3:1-13). Within these last days, which began with the coming of the King Who offered His kingdom (Mt.4:17; 11:14; I Jn. 2:18), would be "*perilous times*"²⁰ or dangerous seasons of apostasy, Paul warned. This apostasy will continue to increase²¹ until the Lord comes back. The only tangible antidote to apostasy is the inspired autographical word of God and its apographical texts and translations, the Apostle declared (3:14-17). All of the canonical word of God "*is given by inspiration of God*"

¹⁸This is the first of a series of imperatives in the Epistle (1:8, 13, 14; 2:1;...4:21): συγκακοπάθησον ("be thou partaker"), ἔχε ("hold fast"), φύλαξον ("keep"), ἐνδυναμοῦ ("be strong"), σπούδασον ("do thy diligence").

¹⁹The expression "*the servant of the LORD*" (עַבְד־יְהוָה) occurs 21x in the OT.

²⁰The noun καιρός is translated "*season*" 13x out of total of 87x in the NT.

²¹The expression "*wax worse and worse*" (προκόψουσιν ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον) refers to the advancement of apostasy until the final Apostasy with the final Antichrist appears (II Thes.2:3-4).

(θεόπνευστος),²² and therefore is profitable as the only sufficient remedy for the words of apostates (cf. Ps. 12:1-8).

Chapter Four

Assuming that Timothy had stirred up his gift, Paul gave him a solemn warning (Διαμαρτύρομαι [15x]) about completing his ministry. With a set of eight imperatives (“*preach, be instant, reprove, rebuke, exhort, endure, make full proof*”), the Apostle enunciated before heaven what Timothy needed to do (4:1-5). Furthermore, he was to consider Paul’s testimony of faithfulness (4:6-8) and culminate his final requests (4:9-21). Paul mentioned sixteen disciples by name, including Demas who forsook him and Trophimus²³ who was left behind sick, and one enemy (Alexander). He observed that of the multitude of Christians he had influence spiritually in Rome, “*no man stood*” with him when he needed their testimony (4:17). However, he did not die in bitterness, because the Lord had stood with him to the end. He wanted Timothy to bring his cloak, because winter was setting in, but also to bring “*the books but especially the parchments*” (τὰ βιβλία, μάλιστα τὰς μεμβράνας).²⁴ He wanted to read Scripture to the end.

²²This *hapax* for “inspiration” has a very technical use and should be applied carefully.

²³Significantly, Paul’s apostolic miracles could not heal Trophimus

²⁴The μεμβράνας was no doubt the original Scriptures of some books written on animal skins.

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