

# 1 Timothy 1

## Introduction

### **What are the divisions of the New Testament?**

- 4 gospels (*Matthew, Mark, Luke, John*)
- 13 letters (or epistles) of Paul (*Romans through Philemon*)
- 8 general letters (*Hebrews through Jude*)
- Revelation of Jesus Christ* (to John)

**How are the letters of Paul arranged?** First to congregations (*Romans through 2 Thessalonians*); then to individuals (*1 Timothy through Philemon*), from the longest to the shortest in each group

### **Special categories:**

- Prison letters (*Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon*)
- "Pastoral" letters (letters to preachers): *1-2 Timothy, Titus*

### **First mention of Timothy in the New Testament? Read Acts 16.1-3**

#### **-What do we learn about Timothy here?**

- He was apparently baptized by Paul on the first missionary journey
- He was the son of a Jewish mother and a Gentile, unbelieving father
- He had an excellent reputation
- He was circumcised, so he could work with Jews in converting them

From *Acts 16* on, Timothy is mentioned many times as helping Paul and being with Paul

### **What do we know about Timothy's mother and grandmother? Read 2 Tim. 1.5**

- Both were faithful Christians
- Think of that influence – they had a much stronger influence on Timothy than his father did

### **What else do we know about Timothy?**

**Read Hebrews 13.23** – Timothy was put into prison for the sake of the gospel

- He preached at Philippi (*Phil. 2.22*)
- He preached at Thessalonica (*1 Thessalonians 3.2*)
- He preached at Corinth (*Acts 18.5, 1 Thess. 3.6*)

Timothy was preaching at Ephesus when Paul wrote this letter to him (*1 Tim. 1.3*)

- Date: probably mid-60's A.D.

### **Themes of this book:**

1. For Timothy to deal swiftly with false teachers (Judaizing teachers and Gnostics)
2. For Timothy to get the work at Ephesus organized with elders and deacons
3. More advice about practical matters at Ephesus

**Where was the letter written from?** "Undetermined location" (*Harper Study Bible*); maybe Macedonia (*1.3*); maybe Corinth

**Why did Timothy need advice?** Because he was a young man working in a hard job (*1 Timothy 4.12* – a young man)

- Many times older people do not want to take advice from a younger person

## 1 Timothy 1.1-2

**V1 – What was Paul's way of beginning his letters?** Sender of the letter (from whom), to whom the letter was written, and a blessing

-Who was this letter from? The Apostle Paul

-Was he bragging in calling himself "Apostle"? No – the false teachers were attacking his apostleship

-By whose authority was Paul made an apostle? God our Savior and Christ Jesus our hope

-Notice an important concept about the Trinity = The 3 parts are used interchangeably

-Example: *Acts 5.3* – Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit/*Acts 5.4* – Ananias lied to God

-How is Jesus our "hope"? Hope of eternal life

**V2 – Timothy was baptized by Paul (no physical kinship)**

-Justification for using the title "Father" today? No – see also *1 Tim. 1.18* – "my son" –

Read **Matt. 23.9** – do not use "Father" as a religious title

-The blessing: Grace, mercy, and peace

## 1 Timothy 1.3-7

**V3 – What had Paul told Timothy to do?** Stop certain men from teaching strange doctrines

-Paul jumped right into the subject of false teachers – no wasting time

-Notice also: The plural form of "doctrines"

-The singular form "doctrine" is always used for the teaching of God in the New Testament

"Doctrines" (plural) is used for false doctrines

-The message? The "doctrine" of Christ is one unit – we cannot pick and choose among the "teachings" of Jesus – it is always singular in number

-Message of Paul? The false teachers had to be stopped – no "let's agree to disagree" or "unity-in-diversity"

**V4 – What were they teaching in error?** "Myths" – the traditions of the Jewish teachers

-Examples of myths today? Evolution leads the list; also, the idea that committing a sin against God will have no consequences

-*"Endless genealogies"* – Examples today? The Mormon Church is obsessed with family trees and genealogies, because they teach that they can have a "proxy" baptism for someone who has already died, and they believe that that person is therefore saved

-Most genealogical societies are run by Mormons, because of this belief

-Why was it dangerous to the New Testament church to concentrate on genealogies?

Because they took people back to the Old Testament

-Is there any value to genealogies under the New Testament? Absolutely none

-It does not matter who our parents or grandparents are – it only matters if we are faithful New Testament Christians

-Paul is saying that we should be teaching only what strengthens people's faith

**V5 – Three goals that Paul had?** Love from a pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith

-The three goals of a faithful congregation

**V 6 – Had the false teachers been faithful at one time?** Yes, but they had "strayed"  
-Another characteristic of false teachers? Fruitless discussion  
-One congregation had a 3-day workshop on psychology to motivate members to do more work for the church – what a waste of time  
-Paul said here: Teach only what strengthens the faith of people

**V 7 – How do we know these were Judaizing teachers?** They wanted respect for being "teachers of law"  
-This sounds like some of the Pharisees that Jesus condemned – **Read Matt. 23.5**  
-Paul's conclusion about these teachers? They didn't know what they were talking about  
-Notice the bluntness of Paul – not "go along to get along"  
-Paul: These false teachers must be stopped!

## **1 Timothy 1.8-11**

**V 8 – Can we use the Old Testament?** Yes, in the right way – **Read Romans 15.4**  
-You can take an entire course at most Christian colleges on how to preach from the Old Testament  
-But only the New Testament contains the doctrine of Christ for his church today

**V 9a** - Not Old Testament law, but the general concept of law  
-Are we made righteous by the law? No, but by our faith in Jesus Christ  
-Purpose of the law? To condemn the guilty  
-In other words, the Old Testament is good for moral lessons

**V 9b-10** – List of sins roughly parallel to the Ten Commandments – notice: those who kill their parents (euthanasia today)

**V 11** – Everything is now to be tested by the gospel of Jesus Christ

## **1 Timothy 1.12-17**

**V 12 – Why did Christ use Paul?** Because of his faithfulness

**V 13 – How did Paul describe his background?** Blasphemer, persecutor, violent aggressor  
-Paul did these things out of ignorance – at least he thought he was serving God  
-God responded by showing him mercy – so the mercy of God depends on us

**V 14 – How much grace did it take for Paul to be forgiven?** An abundant amount  
-In other words, people cannot sin so much that there is no more grace left (a very important point)

**V 15 – What did Paul want to confess?** That Christ came into the world to save sinners  
-Read Mark 2.15-17 – Christ was eating with tax-collectors, prostitutes, etc.  
-Application to Paul? He was the foremost of all sinners

-He had been fierce in trying to stamp out Christianity

**V 16 – How did Christ use Paul as an example?** If Paul could be saved, anyone can be saved

-Notice: the perfect patience of God

-God will be patient with us as long as there is hope of our changing

**V 17 – Almost a prayer from Paul**

**-Why put all of this in Chapter 1 (after discussing the Judaizing teachers)?** Because they could get forgiveness also, if they wanted it, but they would not repent

**-Why did Paul praise God so much in v 17?** Because Paul had been forgiven for the awful sins that he had committed (voting to kill the preacher Stephen, dragging Christians to prison, generally persecuting the New Testament church)

## **1 Timothy 1.18-20**

**V 18 –** There are no references elsewhere in New Testament to the prophecies made about Timothy

**-How might these prophecies have been made?** At Timothy's home congregation in Lystra (by someone with the gift of prophecy) – maybe by Paul or Silas

**-What might the prophecies have been?** That he would be a great preacher, etc.

**-Why did Paul mention this?** To encourage Timothy not to give up

-The author of these notes and his wife visited an congregation in Rockford, Illinois, when our son was about 5 years old – an old gray-haired man there put his hand on our son's head and said to him, "You are going to grow up and be a great gospel preacher"

-It was a stunning prediction to us, and it turned out to be true

**V 19 – How did Paul describe some who had fallen away?** *"Suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith"*

**-What false doctrine does this verse refute?** Once-saved-always-saved

-It also shows the danger of holding to a false doctrine

-You can go to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, and see miles and miles of the wreckage of ships that ran aground there or sank at sea and washed ashore

-But there are many shipwrecks around us today of people who were faithful Christians at one time – now there are just the remains of their lives

**V 20 – Specifically who had suffered shipwreck?** Alexander and Hymenaeus

**-What had Paul done to them?** Withdrawn fellowship from them

**-Read 1 Cor. 5.5 –** Paul had delivered that man over to Satan (the same wording for church discipline)

**-Previous examples of discipline from God:**

-Deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (*Acts 6*)

-Blindness of Elymas (*Acts 13.4*)

-Purpose of church discipline: So that they can learn to be faithful; in other words, for their own good (it worked with the man in *1 Cor. 5*)

### **Summary of 1 Timothy 1:**

- Very practical advice to Timothy about his work at the church in Ephesus, especially advice on dealing with false teachers
- Notice the intense nature of Paul's words – very compact language

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