

# Abounding Grace Christian Church

## A Study of Paul's First Letter to Timothy – Part 1

**I. Introduction:** Today we begin a new study through the first letter Paul writes to Timothy. This letter is the first of what are called **“The Pastoral Epistles”** which includes Second Timothy and Titus. The reason they are called this is summed up in the following excerpt:

**“First, all three letters show pastoral concern for their recipients, Timothy and Titus. Second, all three deal with pastoral matters involving the care of souls and the orderly conduct of God’s people in the church as well as in the world.”<sup>1</sup>**

Unlike the letters to the Thessalonians, which were some of the earliest letters of Paul, all three of these letters are believed to have been written near the end of Paul’s life. This first epistle was probably written around A.D. 65.

### II. Who is Timothy?

- A. He is usually considered a convert of Paul, along with his mother and grandmother, during Paul’s first missionary journey (**Acts 13:49-14:25 and II Timothy 1:5; 3:11**).
- B. Timothy was from Lystra in the Roman province of Galatia and during Paul’s second visit to this area, he decided to take Timothy along on his travels. But because Timothy had a Greek father and Jewish mother, he had never been circumcised, and in order to not hinder his ministry to the Jews, he circumcised Timothy (**cf. Acts 16:1-5**).
- C. Paul called Timothy his **“beloved and faithful son in the Lord”** (**I Corinthians 4:17; cf. Philippians 2:22; I Timothy 1:2; II Timothy 1:2**) and his **“fellow worker”** in the gospel (**Romans 16:21; cf. I Thessalonians 3:2; I Corinthians 16:10; Philippians 2:22**). He became a very close friend of Paul’s. Dr. Gordon Fee writes: **“As his son, he became Paul’s most intimate and enduring companion, who followed him closely (1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 3:10–11; cf. 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:2), shared his point of view (Phil. 2:20) and could articulate his ways to the churches (1 Thess. 3:2–3; 1 Cor. 4:17)... He also collaborated in six of Paul’s extant letters (1 and 2 Thessalonians, 2 Corinthians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians; cf. Rom. 16:21). In the present letters he is on yet another assignment, this time a most difficult one. He has been left in Ephesus to stop some false teachers who were in the process of undoing the church as a viable Christian alternative for that city.”<sup>2</sup>**
- D. At this time, Timothy was pastoring the church in the city of Ephesus.

### III. Purpose of the Letter.

- A. To combat against false teachers who were infiltrating the church.
- B. To encourage Timothy pertaining to his life and ministry.
- C. To address other issues and problems in Ephesus.

### IV. Basic Outline.

- A. Greeting – **1:1-2**.
- B. Warnings concerning false doctrine **1:3–20**.
- C. Exhortation to pray for Authorities - **2:1-7**.
- D. Instructions pertaining to Men and Women in the Church - **2:8-15**.
- E. Qualifications for Leadership in the Church - **3:1–16**.
- F. Warning about Apostasy and Personal Instruction to Timothy - **4:1–16**.
- G. Responsibilities to various groups in the church - **5:1–25**.
- H. Final instructions to Timothy - **6:1–21**.

### V. Exposition of Chapter One.

- A. **Verse 1 – “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,”**
  - 1. **“...apostle of Jesus Christ...”** – The word **“apostle”** – **“broadly refers to a ‘messenger, delegate,’ or ‘sent one.’ In classical Greek, apostolos referred to a person of merit sent as an envoy or on behalf of**

<sup>1</sup> Walter A. Elwell & Robert W. Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*. Third Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 317.

<sup>2</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1988)

a master in an administrative role.”<sup>3</sup> Here Paul is making it clear that he was a messenger, delegate and a representative of Jesus Christ.

2. “...by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ...” – Paul seems to be saying this in order to make it clear that this isn’t something he initiated but it was something commanded of him by “...God our Savior...” and by “...the Lord Jesus Christ”. Duane Litfin writes:

“Paul’s apostleship was not something he had sought; it had come to him through a heavenly command (Gal. 1:11–2:2; cf. 1 Tim. 2:7). In several of his other epistles Paul commonly made a similar point by stressing his apostolic ‘calling’ according to ‘the will of God’ (1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1).”<sup>4</sup>

3. “...Lord Jesus Christ, our hope.” – The word “hope” is defined as: “to look forward with confidence to that which is good and beneficial”<sup>5</sup> Note the following Scripture:

“Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,” - Titus 2:13.

Dr. Robert Utley comments concerning this:

“Often it is associated with the consummation of the believer’s faith (cf. 1 Tim. 1:1). This can be expressed as glory, eternal life, ultimate salvation, Second Coming, etc.”<sup>6</sup>

B. Verse 2 – “To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.” – This is a common salutation for the apostle Paul to give. Regarding these three pronouncements of Paul, George W. Knight writes:

“With these three terms, then, Paul greets Timothy and the church: charis [grace]—God’s ongoing forgiveness and enabling, eleos [mercy]—God’s sympathy and concern, Eirene [peace]—God’s tranquility and stability within and among them as individuals and as a Christian community.”<sup>7</sup>

C. Verses 3-4 – “As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.”

1. Now Paul urges Timothy to remain in Ephesus in order that he might:

- a. “...charge some that they teach no other doctrine...” – The word “charge” means; : “to announce what must be done—‘to order, to command.’”<sup>8</sup> Obviously, there were those present within the church who were teaching different doctrine. In other words, error.

“When I left for Macedonia, I urged you to stay there in Ephesus and stop those whose teaching is contrary to the truth.” – I Timothy 1:3 – New Living Translation

- b. “...nor give heed to fables...” – The Greek word for “fables” is *mythos*. So, the word means; “myth”. It could also be defined as: “a legendary story or account, normally about supernatural beings, events, or cultural heroes,”<sup>9</sup>

- c. “...nor give heed...to endless genealogies...” – “Genealogies” means; “a list of direct descendants or ascendants”<sup>10</sup>

“Nor to give importance to or occupy themselves with legends (fables, myths) and endless genealogies, which foster and promote useless speculations and questionings rather than acceptance in faith of God’s administration and the divine training that is in faith (in that leaning of the entire human personality on God in absolute trust and confidence)”

I Timothy 1:4 – Amplified Bible

<sup>3</sup> Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, William D. Mounce, Gen. ed. (Zondervan Publishers, Grand Rapids, 2006.)

<sup>4</sup> A. Duane Litfin, “1 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 731.

<sup>5</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 295.

<sup>6</sup> Robert James Utley, *Paul’s Fourth Missionary Journey: I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy*, vol. Volume 9, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 9.

<sup>7</sup> George W. Knight III, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 67.

<sup>8</sup> Louw and Nida, 425.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 389.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 114.