1 & 2 Timothy; Titus

Pathways of Discipleship Bible Survey

ELM GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH

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Title, Author, and Date
- 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus form the only group of writings in the NT directed to individuals with pastoral responsibilities
- Since the early 1700s, these three letters have been called the “Pastoral Epistles”
- Paul wrote these letters during the closing years of his ministry
- Chronology:
  - A.D. 61-63: Paul’s first imprisonment. Writing of the prison epistles, including Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon
  - A.D. 63-65/66: Paul freed for additional missionary work. Writing of 1 Timothy and Titus
  - A.D. 65/66: Paul arrested again. Writing of 2 Timothy, a second Roman imprisonment, and martyrdom following this arrest.

Background
- During the period following his release from the first Roman imprisonment, Paul returned to the East for further ministry. On the island of Crete he experienced a successful ministry, then departed, leaving Titus to complete the task of organizing and instructing the infant churches
- Paul traveled with Timothy to Ephesus and learned that the church there was facing great spiritual difficulty. After a period of ministry, Paul departed from Ephesus, leaving Timothy in charge. He then went to Macedonia, where he wrote 1 Timothy.
- As he wrote 1 Timothy, he likely reflected on the needs of Titus in Crete; it is likely that he wrote Titus about the same time, with the intention of clarifying and adding to earlier oral instructions to Titus

Themes/Features/Characteristics of 1 Timothy
- Purpose
  - Paul wrote to urge Timothy to provide firm personal resistance to the false teaching spreading its influence in Ephesus; he identified the false teachers and insisted that the church leaders maintain high standards
  - Paul also wrote to encourage the Ephesian Christians to live as members of God’s family
  - Be careful not to interpret the Pastorals as church organization manuals; Paul wrote not to provide a text on church administration, but to prepare Timothy to deal wisely with false teachers who were threatening the vitality and accomplishments of the Ephesian church
- Contents
  - Prayer
    - Those in the church should pray for all people, especially for governmental authorities
  - Role and conduct of women
    - Women must dress modestly (and must be primarily concerned about good works)
    - They are not to occupy authoritative and corporate teaching positions over men
This is not to mean things like teaching Sunday School, but refers to the public assemblies of the church.
Therefore, the preaching/teaching roles are reserved for men because they address the entire church body in a public assembly.
It is clear, though, that women are honored and needed in the church.
Widows are to be supported first by their families; godly widows 60 and older who are unsupported by a family should receive economic assistance from the church.

- Church leaders
- They must be of impeccable character and spiritual maturity
- Must be the “husband of one wife,” which refers not to their marital status, but to their moral and sexual purity
- “Elders/Bishops” are those who fill the (spiritual) leading/teaching offices of the church; those who are faithful, particularly in preaching and teaching, merit financial support; they are not to be removed but on the basis of two or three witnesses
- “Deacons” are servants and helpers who exist primarily to assist in the ministry to the church body, particularly the distribution of charity

Themes/Features/Characteristics of 2 Timothy

- Purpose
  - Paul’s mood in 2 Timothy was deeply influenced by his personal circumstances; he had apparently been arrested again and expected to die soon; he was alone and continued to hear about the false teaching at Ephesus
  - Paul dealt with the false teaching, but did not dwell on it
  - Instead, he focused on Timothy, reminding him of their friendship, urging him to remain loyal to Paul’s teaching and practice, instructing him to focus his efforts on developing faithful followers of Christ

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  - Paul courageously faced death and provided an example for his contemporaries to follow
    - His words are an encouragement to those facing persecution or even martyrdom for the faith today
  - Paul paints a picture of discipleship that proves there is a cost to being a believer in Jesus, sometimes a very high cost
    - He compared Christian commitment to the dedication of a soldier, an athlete, and a hardworking farmer, and prepared Timothy for the cost of commitment
  - His words should remind us that, although salvation is free, the believer’s response to salvation demands commitment and endurance

Themes/Features/Characteristics of Titus

- Purpose
  - Paul had left Titus behind to appoint elders for a church that was younger and less organized than the church at Ephesus
  - False teaching was everywhere, so Paul outlined for Titus the importance of appointing and training new leaders for the Cretan church
Paul outlined the new lifestyle that should characterize the life of a Christian, whether young or old, male or female, slave or free.

- He showed that the gospel transformed people of reckless, lawless behavior into individuals who put aside self-destructive habits and developed a concern for others.
- He emphasized the relationship between salvation and good works.
- Paul taught that God’s grace produces upright behavior, not careless living.
- Instructions for teaching groups within the church (chapter 2).
  - Titus was to teach the older men to persevere in upright living.
  - He was to instruct the older women to be worthy examples for the younger women.
  - The younger women were to be encouraged to love their husbands and children and to accomplish needed domestic responsibilities.
  - Titus was to teach the younger men to show self-control in every area.
  - Slaves were urged to be obedient and work honestly in order to make the Christian lifestyle attractive to all.
- Factors that inspire committed Christian living:
  - The grace of God; a knowledge of divine grace does not promote carelessness but disciplined, self-controlled living.
  - The blessed hope of Christ’s return; the knowledge of Christ’s return provided an incentive for alert commitment to Christ.
  - The position of Christians as God’s special people; recognition of this special relationship should motivate believers to be eager to obey God.

Resources

John MacArthur: *The MacArthur Bible Handbook*
Zondervan Handbook to the Bible
Lea and Black: *The New Testament: Its Background and Message*
Carson and Moo: *An Introduction to the New Testament*
*Lecture Notes from Liberty Theological Seminary, Dr. Donald Fowler*
*Holman Illustrated Study Bible*
John MacArthur: *The MacArthur Bible Commentary*
Robert H. Gundry: *A Survey of the New Testament*
Elmer Towns: *Theology for Today*