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Introducing 1 & 2 Timothy

The two letters to Timothy and the letter to Titus are called the Pastoral Letters. This is because these letters are addressed to two ministers (pastors). Timothy and Titus were serving as ministers. Their task was to “straighten out what was left unfinished” (Titus 1:5). For this reason we find in these letters many instructions concerning the way things are done in the churches. In your discussion you will notice that there are many connections with the Church Order and the Liturgical Forms.

Who was Timothy and what was his relationship to Paul? Paul calls Timothy his true son in the faith. Timothy was a native from Asia Minor. His father was a Gentile and his mother a Jewess (Acts 16:1). We know little about his father. We know that his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois became Christians (2 Tim 1:5). Timothy’s mother and grandmother had instructed Timothy in the Scriptures. Timothy had not been circumcised. On his second missionary journey Paul asks Timothy to come along on his journeys. For many years Timothy accompanied Paul. A special relationship developed between the two. Paul calls Timothy his spiritual son. Timothy received several special tasks from Paul. Later on Paul appointed Timothy to work in Ephesus. At the end of his life he writes once more to Timothy (that is the second letter) and urges him to come to Rome and meet once more. We do not know whether this did happen. We read in Heb 13:23 that Timothy had been imprisoned as well, but had been set free.

Modern scholars question whether Paul indeed wrote these letters. They claim that these letters were written much later. They were ascribed to Paul to give them more clout. They arrive at this theory because these letters speak about the organization and order in the churches. They are of the

1 Timothy 1

Outline

- A. 1 - 2 Greeting
- B. 3 - 11 Paul's charge to Timothy
 - 3 - 7 Warning against false teachers
 - 8 - 11 The purpose of the law
- C. 12 - 17 Christ's charge to Paul
- D. 18 - 20 Instructions to Timothy

A. Greeting (1- 2)

1. What does this beginning of the letter say? Try to summarize it in your own words.

2. Who are the persons mentioned? (Use a Bible encyclopedia.) Discuss their place in the kingdom of God.

3. What is the meaning of "an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Saviour and of Christ Jesus our hope"? What does this say about Paul and his office?

4. Verse 2 mentions the words “grace”, “mercy” and “peace”. We are used to these words, but what do they mean?

5. Compare this beginning with the beginning of other letters in the New Testament. Are there similarities and/or differences? What is the significance of such a beginning?

B. Paul’s charge to Timothy (3 - 11)

Warning against false teachers (3 - 7)

6. What was Timothy’s task in Ephesus?

7. In these verses Paul makes a contrast. Which one?

8. What do we learn from these verses?

9. What do these verses teach us about discipline?
