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The  
BIBLE

Book by Book

Ephesians—Philemon

G. Michael  
Cocoris

# THE BIBLE

Book by Book

Ephesians - Philemon

G. Michael Cocoris

"THE BIBLE: BOOK BY BOOK  
EPHESIANS - PHILEMON"

G. Michael Cocoris

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## INTRODUCTION

In the Sunday evening services at the Church of the Open Door, I preached through the Bible one book per evening. In each message I covered the same 5 points: Author, Recipients, Subject, Structure and Purpose. These messages were later edited for release on our daily broadcast called THE OPEN DOOR. This booklet was prepared to help radio listeners study with us on that program.

This is the 6th volume in a set of 7 and contains notes on the books of Ephesians through Philemon.

The messages, as originally preached at the Church of the Open Door, are available on cassette tapes in convenient albums. Or, you may order individual tapes if you desire. There is an Order Form at the back of this booklet for your convenience which will give you complete information on how to order.

It is my desire that these messages will give you an introduction to the basics of each book of the Bible, and you will then be able to read, study and apply your Bible more intelligently.

— G. Michael Cocoris

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## EPHESIANS

Several books of the Bible have been praised with superlatives. Ephesians is one of them.

Robert Lee says,

"It has been well said that, 'This epistle surpasses all others in sublimity of style, and is pre-eminent, even amongst the apostle's writings, for the sustained majesty of its theme, and for certain spiritual splendour, both in conception and language.' Dr. Pierson has called it: 'Paul's third heaven epistle' for in it he 'soars from the depth of ruin to the heights of redemption.' It has been called 'the Alps of the New Testament, for here we are bidden by God to mount, step by step, until we reach the highest possible point where man can stand, even the presence of God Himself.'"<sup>1</sup>

J. Sidlow Baxter says, "Although not nearly

"Although not nearly the longest of Paul's epistles, Ephesians is generally conceived to be the profoundest. There is a grandeur of conception about it, a majesty, a dignity, a richness and fullness which are particular to it."<sup>2</sup>

"In the depth of its theology," says Dean Farrar, "in the loftiness of its morals, in the way in which the simplest moral truths are based upon the profoundest religious doctrines--the epistle is unparalleled."<sup>3</sup>

## I. Author.

Twice the author of the epistle identifies himself as Paul (1:1; 3:1). The language is clearly Pauline. Tradition is unanimous that Paul wrote Ephesians. Lewis says, "None of the epistles which are ascribed to St. Paul have a stronger chain of evidence to their early and continued use than that which we know as the Epistle to the Ephesians."<sup>4</sup>

## II. Recipients.

### A. Their date.

There is no doubt that Paul was in prison when he wrote Ephesians (4:1). The problem is that he was in and out of prison many times. So during which imprisonment did he pen Ephesians?

It should be pointed out that four of Paul's epistles refer to his imprisonment (Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Phil. 1:7,13,14; Col. 4:3,10,18; Phlm. 9,10,13,23). At least three of the four were no doubt dispatched at the same time (Eph. 6:21-23; Col. 4:7-9; Phlm. 10-12). Thus, these four epistles are commonly referred to as the prison epistles.

But the question remains, which imprisonment? Three theories have been advocated: Roman, Caesarean and Ephesian.

The prevailing view is that all four were written from Rome during Paul's two year imprisonment there as

recorded in Acts 28:30-31. The basic support for this view comes from the fact that Paul says the Gospel had spread to the whole "Praetorian Guard" (Phil. 1:13), and that "the saints" in Caesar's household greet you (Phil. 4:22). Furthermore, he anticipated that his case would soon be settled resulting in his release (Phil. 1:23-24). Onesimus would have been more likely to go to a great city like Rome where he would have had a much better chance to lose himself among the teeming multitudes (even as a runaway today flees to a big city like Los Angeles).

Some commentators, however, have favored the Caesarean imprisonment as the time of composition of these four epistles. But the facts do not fit. For example, Paul indicates that the outcome of the verdict would be either life or death (Phil. 1:20ff). That would not be the case at Caesarea where he could always appeal to Caesar, which he actually did.

A few have held to an Ephesian view. This hypothesis is based on Paul's statement in II Cor. 11:23 written shortly after his ministry in Ephesus which says "in prisons more abundantly." It is a novel theory, but as Hiebert says, "The arguments for Ephesus bristle with difficulties and often raise more questions than they answer."<sup>7</sup>

Assuming, then, that Paul wrote from Rome, the date for Ephesians is

61 A.D.

B. Their description.

The question of date depends on where Paul wrote from, but the issue of the description of the recipients hinges to some degree on to whom he wrote. Ephesians 1:1 says he wrote to the saints "in Ephesus," but that is a problem. The nature of the problem is that the two words "in Ephesus" are not in some Greek manuscripts.

The traditional view contends that these words were in the original. Thiessen summarizes the evidence:

"But was the Epistle written to the Church at Ephesus? The early church seems to believe that it was. The Muratorian Canon, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen speak of it as the Epistle to the Ephesians. In addition to this is the fact that all the manuscripts, both the uncial and minuscule, with the exception of three, have the words en Ephesōi in 1:1. Then, also, all the ancient versions reproduce this phrase in the translations. All this seems to make a very strong case for the traditional view."<sup>6</sup>

To that can be added Hiebert's observations:

"It is scarcely fair to say that the Greek of Ephesians 1:1 is

absolutely incapable of rational explanation without the words en Ephesōi, yet it cannot be denied that there is definite question as to its interpretation without them. It must be admitted that in parallel passages the expression is often used with a place designation (Rom. 1:7; I Cor. 1:2; II Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1). To omit all place designations really makes it a catholic epistle addressed to Gentile Christians in general. Such a view is inconsistent with its contents since 1:15ff and 6:22 show that Paul had a definite group in mind when he wrote the epistle."<sup>7</sup>

The encyclical theory holds that these words were not in the original and therefore the epistle was intended to be a catholic letter which was to be circulated to all the churches. Again, Hiebert says, "While this circular theory has become very popular and seems to account for the facts and clear up the difficulties, some of the arguments used to support it are without much weight. The traditional view that it was sent to Ephesus offers no serious difficulties. Perhaps the most probable solution to the problem is the position that the epistle was written to the Ephesians and addressed to them, but that the Apostle intentionally cast it into a form which would make it suitable to the



Christians in the neighboring churches and intended that it should be communicated to them."<sup>8</sup>

I believe the words "in Ephesus" are genuine and therefore Ephesians was written to the church at Ephesus and all believers elsewhere (cf. 1:1 also II Cor. 1:1 and Col. 4:16).

### III. Subject.

The subject of Ephesians is our calling (1:18; 4:1).

Boa says, "The theme of Ephesians is the believer's responsibility to walk in accordance with his heavenly calling in Christ Jesus (4:1)."<sup>9</sup>

Luck says the theme is, "the heavenly position of the believer as a member of the Body of Christ and the daily life which corresponds to his position."<sup>10</sup>

### IV. Structure.

Like Paul's other epistles, Ephesians follows the format of an ancient letter, yet in this particular book that is tricky.

He begins with a thanksgiving and a prayer (ch. 1). Then, evidently, in the midst of the prayer he gets carried away and develops several other themes. At that

point he prays again (3:1), and again wanders off on another subject finally to come back and pray a second time (3:14). No wonder this has been called Paul's most "labored epistle."

Beyond that, the unique feature of the body of this epistle is that it is divided into two parts: calling and conduct.

Salutation. 1:1-2

Thanksgiving. 1:3-14

Prayer. 1:15-23

- I. The calling of the church. 2:1-3:21
  - A. Our calling individually (regeneration). 2:1-10
  - B. Our calling corporately (reconciliation). 2:11-22
  - C. The revelation of this calling of the church (revelation). 3:1-13
  - D. Prayer for power and perception. (3:14-21)
- II. The conduct of the church. 4:1-6:20
  - A. Walk in unity (in church). 4:1-16
  - B. Walk in righteousness (in flesh). 4:17-32
  - C. Walk in love. 5:1-7
  - D. Walk in light (in the world). 5:8-14
  - E. Walk in wisdom. 5:15-21

- F. Walk in submission (at home).  
5:22-6:9
- G. Walk in strength--stand in the armor of God (warfare).  
6:10-20

Greeting and benediction.  
6:21-24

V. Purpose.

- A. To enlighten believers concerning their calling to the church so that they would walk worthy of that calling.

Paul begins by blessing the Trinity for salvation.

- Chosen by the Father (1:3-6)
- Redeemed by the Son (1:7-12)
- Sealed by the Spirit (1:13-14)

After the blessing, Paul prayed that they would be enlightened (1:18) so that they would know the hope of their calling. Obviously, then, Paul prays and writes to enlighten believers concerning their calling. They are called to fellowship with God and the church which was a mystery, but is now being revealed (cf. esp. 2:16a,18; 3:6,12).

Of course, he not only enlightens them, he exhorts them to walk worthy of their calling to the church.

- B. To encourage them not to lose heart.

It seems to me that Paul also says

that he wrote them that they might be encouraged and not lose heart (cf. Eph. 3:13).

No doubt, the arrest and imprisonment of none other than the apostle Paul discouraged many believers. He had been in prison and had not preached for several years. Thus, he is saying, "Don't feel sorry for me or discouraged by what has happened. God has especially blessed me in revealing to me the mystery of the church."

Conclusion:

Paul wrote to the Ephesians to enlighten them concerning their calling in the church, to exhort them to walk worthy of that calling, and to encourage them not to lose heart.

<sup>1</sup>Robert Lee, The Outlined Bible [London: Pickering & Inglis, N.D.] p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>J.S. Baxter, Explore the Book, vol. 6 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962] p. 163.

<sup>3</sup>W.G. Scroggie, Know Your Bible, vol. 2 [London: Pickering & Inglis, N.D.] p. 216.

<sup>4</sup>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, vol. 11, p. 956.

<sup>5</sup>D.E. Hiebert, An Introduction to the Pauline Epistles [Chicago: Moody, 1954] pp. 208-9.

<sup>6</sup>H.C. Thiessen, Introduction to the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1943] p. 242.

<sup>7</sup>Hiebert, pp. 262-3.

<sup>8</sup>Hiebert, p. 266.

<sup>9</sup>Kenneth Boa, Talk Thru the New Testament [Wheaton: Tyndale, 1981] p. 97.

<sup>10</sup>G.C. Luck, The Bible Book by Book [Chicago: Moody, 1955] p. 200.

## PHILIPPIANS

Philippians is not a theological treatise; it is a little letter from a friend. But while it is obviously not one of the most remarkable or deepest books in the Bible, it contains one of the most profound passages in Scripture on the incarnation of Christ.

Robert Lee quotes the Bishop of Durin on Ephesians who called it, "One of the fairest and deepest regions of the Book of God," and then Lee said, "it is yet one of the sweetest of Paul's writings....This epistle contains less of censure and more of praise than any other."<sup>1</sup>

### I. Author.

Philippians 1:1 identifies the author as Paul and Timothy, but evidently Paul was the sole author. He immediately, and throughout the letter, speaks in the first person. When he does mention Timothy in chapter 2, it is in the third person.

### II. Recipients.

#### A. Their date.

It is evident from the epistle itself that Paul was in prison when he wrote (cf. "my chains" in 1:7,13,14). Furthermore, it seems clear that he was in prison in Rome for he refers to the whole Praetorian Guard (1:13) and Caesar's household (4:22). This was, no doubt, during his first Roman imprisonment which took place about 60 or 61 A.D.

Remember: four epistles were written during the imprisonment, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. All refer to Paul's chains. Of the four, Philippians was probably written last, near the end of of the two year imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:30,31).

So, Philippians was written from Rome to the church at Philippi in 61 or 62 A.D.

#### B. Their description.

Philippians 1:1 says the letter was written "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." In other words, this epistle was written to the church at Philippi ("bishop" is an elder, cf. Titus 1:5).

They were concerned about Paul (1:12) and had sent Epaphroditus to Rome with financial support (2:25; 1:5; 4:10-16). They evidently had a small problem with unity (1:27; 2:2; 3:16; 4:2-3,9), and were at least feeling some pressure from the Judaizers (3:1-16). Thus, they were not only concerned about Paul; Paul was concerned about them (2:19,24).

#### III. Subject.

A number of different subjects have been suggested for Philippians, for example, unity, Christ, the Christian

life and even the furtherance of the Gospel. The subject, however, is joy.

#### IV. Structure.

Philippians follows the format of an ancient letter including all five parts: Salutation, Thanksgiving, Prayer, Body, Greetings and Benediction.

Salutation. 1:1-2

Thanksgiving. 1:3-8

Prayer. 1:9-11

I. Paul's situation. 1:12-26  
(Rejoice in trials, 1:18)

II. A plea for unity. 1:27-30  
(Rejoice in service, 2:17-18)

A. The plea for unity. 1:27-2:4

B. The example of Christ  
(including the example of Paul, 2:17,18). 2:5-18

C. The example of Timothy.  
2:19-24

D. The example of Epaphroditus.  
2:25-30

III. Warning against doctrinal error.  
3:1-4:1  
(Rejoice in the Lord, 3:1)

IV. An exhortation to correct division or dissention. 4:2-9  
(Rejoice in the Lord, 4:4)

V. Thanks for the gift. 4:10-20  
(Rejoice in the Lord, 4:10)

Greetings and benediction. 4:21-23

V. Purpose.

- A. To express his gratitude (joy) for their financial support.

While there were obviously several reasons why Paul wrote this letter, the immediate purpose was to thank them for their financial support. The Philippian church had sent Epaphroditus with money to Rome for Paul (2:25-30, esp. vv. 25,30). Paul wrote them to thank them for their gift (1:5; 4:10-20). Robert Lee says, "Dr. Pierson calls this epistle 'the Disciple's Balance Sheet' for here the apostle shows the rununciations and compensations of a disciple, and the excess in his favour."<sup>2</sup>

- B. To explain his situation.

The Philippians were obviously concerned about Paul; not just his financial need, but the prospects of his release from prison. He writes to explain that he is doing well. The Gospel is being spread, even because of his imprisonment and he expects to be released (1:12-26, esp. 1:19,25; and 2:24).

- C. To exhort them to rejoice in the Lord.

They were concerned about him and he was concerned about them (2:19). There were no major doctrinal or moral problems in the church, like at Corinth or Galatia. But there were two women who seemed to be having

a difficulty getting along, and perhaps this was affecting the unity of the assembly.

So Paul urges them to stand fast in unity (1:27). He anticipates being released and coming to them (2:24). In the meantime, he is sending Timothy (1:19-23) and Epaphroditus, whom he wants to be received with esteem (2:25-30).

He warns them about the Judaizers and urges them to rejoice in the Lord and not boast in the flesh (3:1-4:1).

Then he gets specific, particularly exhorting the two women to settle their differences (4:2-9), and "rejoice in the Lord" (4:4).

Conclusion:

Paul wrote to the Philippians to thank them for their gift, explaining his situation and exhorting them to abound in rejoicing in the Lord.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Lee, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>ibid.

## COLOSSIANS

Colossians has been tagged the antidote to heresy.

Ephesians and Colossians have been called twin epistles: "of these epistles Farrar says, 'They are twin sisters of close resemblance, yet marked individuality, whose faces, alike, yet different, can only be explained by their common parentage.'"<sup>1</sup>

They are similar. Whole sections are parallel (e.g., cf. the Christian family, Eph. 5 & 6; Col. 3 & 4). Many sentences are the same (Eph. 1:7; Col.1:14), and many words occur in each which are not found anywhere else in the New Testament (according to Scroggie, nine words). 78 verses in Colossians out of the 155 in Ephesians have the same phraseology. Someone had said that Colossians is so much like Ephesians, one seems to repeat the other.

Yet each epistle has its own individuality. "There is a controversy in Colossians, but not in Ephesians. A certain danger is in view in Colossians, but not in Ephesians. In Colossians Paul's mind is perturbed, but not in Ephesians."<sup>2</sup>

### I. Author.

The first verse of the first chapter (1:1) identifies Paul and Timothy as the authors of this letter. But evidently, the sole author was Paul for he often refers to himself in the first person (1:25,29; 4:7,8; etc.). Three

times Paul identifies himself as the author (1:1; 1:23; 4:18).

## II. Recipients.

### A. Their date.

In the discussion on Ephesians, it was pointed out that Paul wrote four epistles while imprisoned in Rome: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. In all four he mentions his chains (Eph. 3:1; Phil. 4:14; Col. 4:10; Phlm. 9). Therefore, Colossians was written from Rome by Paul in 61 A.D.

By the way, scholars have tried to figure out which epistle was written first. Frankly, no categorical, dogmatic answer can be given. I have personally concluded that Colossians was probably written first. He wrote it because of the need. Then later, after reflection, penned Ephesians.

### B. Their description.

Paul addresses the epistle to "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossae" (1:2), in other words, the church at Colossae. It was 100 miles east of Ephesians and only 10 miles from Laodicea and 13 miles from Hieropolis (14,13,16).

There is no record in Acts of Paul visiting Colossae. Evidently, he had never met them (2:1). On his third missionary journey he did spend three years in Ephesus. Perhaps during that

time Epaphroditus trusted Christ and carried the Gospel to the Lycus Valley (1:7; 4:12,13).

In the meantime, Paul was arrested and imprisoned in Rome. Then a heresy threatened the church at Colossae. So Epaphroditus journeyed to Rome to report to Paul on the conditions at Colassae. His visit prompted the letter.

Basically, the believers at Colossae were saved, sound and growing (1:3-8; 2:5). The heresy that threatened to sidetrack them was a mixture of Jewish legalism (2:16,17), mysticism (2:18,19) and asceticism (2:20-22).

### III. Subject.

The subject of Colossians is the sufficiency of Christ (for the spiritual life). Paul argues in this epistle that Jesus Christ is the supreme sovereign of the universe and therefore, He, and He alone, is sufficient for our spiritual needs.

Two conclusions come out of that:  
(1) Beware of any teaching that suggests you need something other than Jesus Christ; (2) Christ should have the pre-eminence in everything.

### IV. Structure.

Colossians is a letter and as such follows the format of salutation,

thanksgiving, prayer, body, personal greetings and benediction. It is a perfect example of the pattern of an ancient letter.

Beyond that, the body consists of doctrine, defense and duty.

Salutation. 1:1-2

Thanksgiving. 1:3-8

Prayer. 1:9-14

- I. Doctrinal: Sufficiency of Christ declared. 1:15-2-7
  - A. Christ suffered to bring us to maturity. 1:15-23
  - B. Paul also suffered to bring us to maturity. 1:24-29
  - C. Paul exhorted believers to grow toward maturity. 2:1-7.
- II. Defense: Sufficiency of Christ defended. 2:8-3:4
  - A. Stated positively. 2:8-15
  - B. Stated negatively. 2:16-3:4
- III. Deity: Pre-eminence of Christ displayed. 3:5-4:6
  - A. In personal life. 3:5-14
  - B. In church life. 3:15-17
  - C. In home life. 3:18-21
  - D. In business life. 3:22-4:1

- E. In social life. 4:2-6  
Greetings and benediction.  
4:7-18

V. Purpose.

A. To refute Judaistic mystical astheticism.

The false teaching threatening the Colossians is described in detail in 2:16-3:4. It was a mixture of Jewish legalism, Greek philosophical speculation and Gentile astheticism. Paul's primary purpose in writing is to warn the believers against such (cf. 2:4,8,16,18,20). Christ is sufficient. You don't need rules, revelations and regulations.

B. To encourage believers to give Christ the pre-eminence in everything.

Paul's purpose in Colossians is like a coin--it has two sides. One is positive and the other is negative. The negative side is to refute the false teaching. The positive side is to encourage believers to grow, to go on to maturity, to give Christ the pre-eminence in everything (cf. 2:5-7).

Boa has tied the two together nicely. He says, "Paul's predominant purpose, then, was to refute a threatening heresy which was devaluating Christ as a positive presentation of His true attributes and accomplishments. A proper view of Christ is the antidote for heresy."<sup>3</sup>

Conclusion:

Paul wrote to the Colossians to refute Judaistic mystical astheticism and to encourage believers to give Christ the pre-eminence in everything.

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<sup>1</sup> Scroggie, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Boa, p. 109.



## I THESSALONIANS

Well may Dean Farrar say that we would not consent to part with this Epistle for all the letters written from the time of Cicero to that of Carlyle.<sup>1</sup>

### I. Author.

I Thessalonians 1:1 says the authors were Paul, Silas and Timothy. Several times "we" is used in referring to the authors (1:2; 2:13; 2:17; 3:11; 4:1; 5:12). Yet the main author, if not the author, is Paul. Twice he refers to himself by name (1:1; 2:18). He does not hesitate to use the first person singular, "I" (3:5; 4:13; 5:27). As a matter of fact, some contend that the "we" is a literary plural equivalent to the singular. There is no doubt that Paul sometimes uses the editorial "we," but in I Thessalonians maybe that is not the case.

Hiebert says, in his commentary on I Thessalonians 1:3,

In II Corinthians and Colossians, Paul names Timothy in his salutation, but his opening "we" is soon displaced with "I." In I Corinthians, Philippians, and Philemon, Paul names someone else with him in the salutation but at once proceeds with "I thank." In the Thessalonian epistles his consistent use of "we" is most naturally intended to include Silvanus and Timothy. His occasional use of the singular (2:18; 3:5; 5:27)

can be sufficiently explained from the context as Paul's effort to distinguish himself from his helpers on those occasions."<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, Luck contends that Paul is the author. He says that Paul links Silas and Timothy with himself in the first verse, but this does not mean that the authorship was joint (see 2:18; 3:5; 5:27). "He links their names with his because they had a part with him in founding the church at Thessalonica and shared his interest and concern in the work. When he says "we" (1:2) he doubtless speaks for all three."<sup>3</sup>

There is no doubt that Paul is the author and that Silas and Timothy were "closely linked" with him, if not co-authors.

### II. Recipients.

#### A. Their date.

I Thessalonians 1:1 states that the epistle was written to the church at Thessalonica. When did Paul write and what were the circumstances and conditions?

On his second missionary journey, as a result of "the Macedonian Call," Paul, Silas and Timothy moved into Macedonia. They stopped and established a church at Philippi. It is possible that Paul and Silas left Timothy at Philippi. At any rate, they left and traveled 100 miles down the Egnatian Way

to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-10). They stayed only a short time, probably three weeks (Acts 17:2). When persecution broke out, Paul and Silas left under the cover of darkness. 40 miles later the pair stopped at Berea. Timothy joined them there. When the Jews from Thessalonica came to Berea and began causing trouble, Paul left Silas and Timothy and went to Athens.

Later, Silas and Timothy joined Paul in Athens at which time he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica. If Timothy had remained at Philippi until he met Paul at Berea, that would explain why Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica. He would have been personally unknown to the malicious Jews there (perhaps Silas accompanied Timothy). Paul then moved to Corinth. Timothy caught up with Paul in Corinth and gave him a good report concerning the Thessalonians.

Paul then wrote I Thessalonians from Corinth in 51 A.D. This is the second epistle Paul wrote, Galatians being the first.

Scroggie, who believes that I Thessalonians was written in 52 A.D., says that Paul had been converted 16 years when he wrote this book and was about 46 years old.<sup>4</sup>

#### B. Their description.

Paul earnestly desired to visit Thessalonica again (2:18; 3:10). Since

that was not possible, he sent Timothy from Athens (3:1-12) who brought back a good report to Paul (3:6). This report was the occasion of the letter.

The Thessalonians were doing well spiritually (1:3-8), yet Paul was concerned about their faith (3:2,5,10). Evidently, the Jewish opponents were slandering Paul. If they could discredit him they could discredit his Gospel. They insinuated that his motive, like other wandering teachers, was for money. No doubt they pointed out that on several occasions while in Thessalonica he had received money from people in Philippi. Such slander caused him to reverse the nature of his ministry among them (cf. 2:1-12 and cf. also Morris, etc.)

His enemies also insisted that he was just a sly, unscrupulous fellow who left his followers in the lurch and fled when difficulties arose. If he was what he claimed to be, why did he not come back? They implied that he really did not care about them and that he was afraid of what might happen to him. These charges he met with a review of his relations to them since his forced separation from them (2:17-3:13, p. 44).<sup>5</sup>

Paul writes to express his joy and appreciation that they had remained true to the Gospel under severe testing. It caused him to give thanks and take courage (3:7-9). Although he had forewarned them of coming persecution (3:4), he was still greatly relieved

to know that they had not fallen under the tests (3:6, p. 43).<sup>6</sup>

But along with the good report, Paul had learned that they were not free from temptation. He was concerned about their sanctification, especially their love (4:3,10) and their jobs (4:11,12). There was also a doctrinal question. They seemed to have thought that the dead were going to miss out on the Lord's coming and reign (4:13-18, p. 45).<sup>7</sup>

There also seems to be a difficulty of sorts in the meetings. So Paul concludes by urging them to honor their leaders (5:12), allow the free exercise of spiritual gifts (5:19) and particularly not to despise the gift of prophesying (5:20).

### III. Subject.

Many popular Bible teachers and authors have said that the subject is the Second Coming of Christ pointing out that the Second Coming is mentioned in each chapter (e.g., Luck). But the subject of I Thessalonians that covers all the other subjects is sanctification (4:1-3; 5:23). The phrase in 5:23, "sanctify...completely, preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," seems to capture what the epistle is about. Ellisen says that the theme is the need for holy living in the light of the Second Coming.<sup>8</sup>

## IV. Structure.

### A. The literary structure.

I Thessalonians is a letter. Like any ancient letter, I Thessalonians begins with a salutation (1:1), followed by a thanksgiving (1:2-12). Next, we would expect a prayer, but instead Paul plunges into a defense of his ministry. At the end of that he returns to the thanksgiving (2:13-16). Now we would expect him to pray, but again he returns to a discussion of his relationship to them (2:17-3:10). Then, finally, he prays (3:11-13). Paul did something similar in Ephesians. (In Ephesians he interrupted his prayer. Here, he interrupted his thanksgiving.) After his prayer he says, "finally," and finished the body of the letter which he concludes with personal greetings and a Benediction.

The body of the book has been outlined various ways. One scholar points out that chapters 1-3 are historical and personal, while chapters 4-5 are Hortatory and doctrinal (Milligan). That is accurate, yet to be more precise, especially considering the nature of the subject matter, I would say that the body is divided into four parts: personal (2:1-3:13), practical (4:1-12), prophetic (4:13-5:11) and polity (i.e., church government-- 5:12-24).

It has been pointed out that Paul repeatedly refers to the great

Christian virtues of faith, love and hope (cf. 1:3; 1:9,10; 5:8). It is possible that in his mind that is the outline of the epistle. In 1:2-3:13, he is concerned about their faith (1:3,8; 3:2,5,6,7,10). In 4:1-12, he is concerned about their love (3:12 is a transition to this section. Also cf. 4:9-10). In 4:13-5:11, he is concerned about their hope (4:13; 5:8). If the subject is sanctification and the outline is faith, love and hope, then perhaps we can say that sanctification consists of growing to maturity in faith, love and hope.

Salutation. 1:1

Thanksgiving. 1:2-10

- I. Personal (their faith). 2:1-3:13
  - A. Paul's past character among them. 2:1-12
  - B. Paul's thankfulness for them. 2:13-16
  - C. Paul's present concern for them. 2:17-3:10
  - D. Paul's prayer for them. 3:11-13
- II. Practical (their love). 4:1-12
  - A. General exhortation. 4:1,2
  - B. Specific applications. 4:3-12
- III. Prophetical (their hope). 4:13-5:11
  - A. The Rapture. 4:13-18
  - B. The Day of the Lord. 5:1-11

IV. Polity. 5:12-24

- A. Esteem the elders. 5:12,13
- B. Minister to members. 5:14,15
- C. Walk in God's will. 5:16-18
- D. Discern true doctrine. 5:19-22
- E. Prayer. 5:23,24

Personal greetings and benediction. 5:25-28

V. Purpose.

- A. To encourage them in their faith.

Evidently, the believers at Thessalonica were under attack from Jewish unbelievers. Their charge was primarily directed against Paul who was accused of being like pagan itinerate preachers, speaking out of error and in deception. According to them, he used flattery to cover selfish greed and his primary motive was seeking personal honor. His failure to return seemed to lend support to these incinuations. Paul defends himself against these slanderous attacks in order to encourage the believers in their faith.

- B. To exhort them to grow in love.

While there was not an overt, or perhaps as widespread a moral problem among the Christians at Thessalonica as there was at Corinth, there were apparently some problems in this area. So Paul writes to exhort them to be

sanctified, or more specifically, to grow in love and labor.

C. To establish them in hope.

When Paul was there, he taught them that the Lord could return any time (he was only there three weeks!). After his departure, some died and those remaining wondered what would happen to them at the Rapture. Paul writes them to establish them in hope and comfort. His answer, in essence, is, Don't worry; they will not miss the Rapture. As a matter of fact, they will be raised before the living ascend. We will all go up together.

D. To enlighten them in church matters.

There was also a minor problem with church polity. Again, not as serious as in Corinth later, but serious enough for Paul to speak to it. He tells them to esteem the elders, minister to one another and handle the meetings properly (abstain from all appearance of evil means "abstain from all forms of evil").

Conclusion:

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians to encourage them to be more and more set apart unto the Lord in their personal and assembly life.

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<sup>1</sup>Scroggie, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup>D.E. Hiebert, The Thessalonian Epistles [Chicago: Moody, 1971] p. 43.

<sup>3</sup>Luck, p. 209.

<sup>4</sup>Scroggie, p. 107.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Hiebert, Introduction, p. 44

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Hiebert, Introduction, p. 43.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Hiebert, Introduction, p. 45.

<sup>8</sup>S.A. Ellisen, Bible Workbook, Part IX [Portland: Western Baptist Seminary, 1969] p. 80.

## II Thessalonians

II Thessalonians is the shortest of Paul's nine letters to churches. Scroggie says it is the shortest of Paul's epistles except for the note to Philemon.

### I. Author.

II Thessalonians 1:1 says the epistle, like I Thessalonians, was written by Paul, Silas and Timothy. Again, like I Thessalonians, "we" and "us" are used (cf. 1:3; 2:1; 2:13; 3:1; 3:4; 3:6; 3:14; etc.). It can be argued that these are to be taken at face value to include all three individuals. Or, it can also be argued that they are editorial. After all, the letter ends with Paul speaking in the first person singular (3:17). There is no doubt that Paul is "the" author and that Silas and Timothy are "linked together" with him, if not co-authors.

### II. Recipients.

#### A. Their date.

Paul visited Thessalonica on his second missionary journey. After he left, he eventually ended up in Corinth, where he stayed for 18 months. He wrote I Thessalonians from Corinth in 51 A.D. All indications are that Paul wrote II Thessalonians a short time after I Thessalonians which means he wrote it from Corinth in 51 A.D. Dr. Harold Hoehner, a professor at Dallas Seminary,

says that I Thessalonians was written in the early summer while II Thessalonians was written later the same year.

#### B. Their description.

We have no knowledge as to whom the bearer of the first epistle was. Whoever he was he must have remained in Thessalonica long enough to notice the effects of Paul's letter and get insight into the situation in the church. This messenger, then, evidently brought back a report with favorable and unfavorable news. The immediate occasion for the writing of II Thessalonians was the nature of the further information about the Thessalonians received by Paul.

They were making progress in faith and hope (1:3) and they were remaining steadfast under repeated outbreaks of persecution (1:4). In the first letter, Paul had relieved their distress about the death of their loved ones, but their expectation concerning the Second Coming of Christ had intensified. They concluded that the Day of the Lord had already arrived (2:2) and thus they were expecting the immediate return of Christ. Consequently, some quit working. With leisure time on their hands, they became busy-bodies, interfering with those who wanted to work (3:10-12). It was the report of these conditions which called for this epistle.

### III. Subject.

The theme of II Thessalonians is prophecy. Not only is the heart of the epistle a discussion of prophecy, but the other parts of it relate to that subject one way or another.

### IV. Structure.

II Thessalonians is in the form of a letter including salutation, thanksgiving, prayer, body, personal greetings and benediction.

Salutation. 1:1-2

Thanksgiving. 1:3-10

Prayer. 1:11-12

- I. Instruction: The day of Christ has not come. 2:1-17
  - A. Instruction (do not be soon shaken). 2:1-12
  - B. Thanksgiving (stand fast and hold to the word). 2:13-15
  - C. Prayer. 2:16-17
- II. Injunctions: Pray and withdraw from the disorderly. 3:1-16
  - A. Call to prayer. 3:1-5
  - B. Command to discipline. 3:6-15
  - C. Concluding prayer. 3:16

Personal greetings and benediction.  
3:17-18

### V. Purpose.

- A. To comfort them in their persecution.

These believers were being persecuted. Paul clearly states that (1:4). He, himself, had experienced persecution in Thessalonica at the hands of the unbelieving Jews while he was there, and even after he left. These persecutors also attacked the believers Paul left behind. The believers were doing well in spite of the pressure and persecution put on them. But, no doubt, Paul was writing to encourage them and comfort them in their trials and tribulations. This he does by, among other things, letting them know he thanked God for them and was praying for them.

- B. To correct them in their prophecy.

The major purpose of the epistle was to correct a prophetic misunderstanding. Evidently, someone told them that the Tribulation had already begun (2:2). This was confirmed (supposedly) by a spiritual revelation (cf. "spirit"; 2:2) or a messenger, perhaps even a letter, from Paul (2:2). The fact that they were going through persecution made all of this believable. Paul tells them that the Day of Christ will not be present until two events occur: (1) the apostasy, (2) the apocalypse of the man of sin. So, he tells them, "Do not be disturbed (2:1), but stand fast and hold to the traditions which you have been

taught (2:15).

C. To command them in their practice.

Paul also issues several commands: to pray (3:1-5) and another to withdraw from those who walk disorderly (3:6-15). This second command is related to the misconception of prophecy.

Because they were expecting the Lord to come at any moment, some quit their jobs and became busy-bodies. Paul says to that: "If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat (3:10) and withdraw yourself from him (3:6)".

Conclusion:

Paul wrote a second letter to the Thessalonians to comfort them in their persecution, correct their prophetic misunderstanding, and their practical misconduct.

## I TIMOTHY

I Timothy is the longest of three epistles Paul wrote to men in the ministry.

I. Author.

The opening verse declares that Paul is the author. Post-apostolic authors, like Polycarp and Clement of Rome, elude to these epistles. They are identified as Pauline by Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, etc. Only Romans and I Corinthians have better attestation among the Pauline epistles.

The pastoral epistles, however, have been castrated by modern critics more than any other Pauline epistle. The attack began in 1804 when Schmidt denied the genuineness of I Timothy. Four basic arguments have been leveled against these three books: historical, linguistic, ecclesiastical and doctrinal.

The historical attack is that the geographical, chronological and personal--i.e., historical details--in these letters do not fit Luke's account of Paul's life in Acts. But that assumes that Paul's story ends in Acts 28. Yet tradition testifies that he was released from prison and traveled again, perhaps even to Spain which is what he said in Romans he wanted to do (Rom. 15:24-28).

The linguistic argument contends that differences in vocabulary and style between the pastorals and the uncontested



Pauline epistles points to a different author. For example, Harrison points out that there are 175 hapax legomena's in the pastorals: 96 in I Timothy, 60 in II Timothy, and 43 in Titus. This is about twice as many as in any of the other of Paul's epistles.<sup>1</sup>

Frankly, this is absurd. Different audiences and different topics demand different words. These epistles are addressed to his personal friends and co-workers, not churches. He is dealing with things pertaining to church organization and a different false teaching.

The ecclesiastical objection is that the church government reflected in the pastorals is a later development, yea, even a 2nd Century development. But these letters call for elders and Paul ordained elders in his first missionary journey which took place before 49 A.D.! (Acts 14:23). The church at Philippi had elders and deacons (Phil. 1:1) in 61 A.D. when Paul wrote to them. The facts fit the 1st Century.

The fourth and final assault is doctrinal. The critics claim the omission of certain Pauline doctrines argues against Pauline authorship (e.g., identification/union with Christ). But why must Paul include all of his doctrinal teachings in letters addressed to well-taught and trusted associates?

## II. Recipients.

### A. Their date.

If Paul wrote the pastorals, then he must have been released from prison in Rome where Acts 28 leaves him when it closes. The history of the remainder of his life must be put together from hints in the New Testament and a few statements outside of it.

A possible reconstruction might look something like this. He was released from his first Roman imprisonment (he anticipated that; cf. Phil. 1:19,25,26; 2:24, and the pastorals demand it) perhaps because his Jewish accusers did not appear at his first trial before Caesar, or he was found guilty and banished not to someplace (like John on the isle of Patmos), but from someplace, namely, Palestine.

In fulfillment of his promise to the Philippians, he sent Timothy to relate the good news (Phil. 2:19-23). Paul then went to Ephesus (in spite of his earlier expectation--cf. Acts 20:38), and perhaps to other churches in the area, like Colossae (Phlm. 22). Evidently, Timothy joined Paul in Ephesus. When Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia, he instructed Timothy "to remain" (I Thess. 1:3). Once in Macedonia, he saw he was going to be delayed so he wrote I Timothy, perhaps from Philippi (2:22).

The rest of the reconstruction will be considered under II Timothy. For now, suffice it to say that Paul wrote I Timothy from Macedonia, possibly Philippi, in 63 A.D.

#### B. Description.

I Timothy, as the title suggests, was sent to Timothy at Ephesus.

Evidently, Paul led Timothy to Christ (cf. "my son"--1:2,18). Later, Timothy became Paul's traveling companion being his assistant on Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 16:1-3). On several occasions, he had been sent to places by Paul (e.g., I Thess. 3:1-3; I Cor. 4:17; Acts 19:22). He was with Paul on his third missionary journey (cf. Acts 19:22, II Cor. 1:1,19; Rom. 16:21), and, of course, at Rome (Phil. 1:1; 2:19; Col. 1:1; Phlm. 1:1), and after (I Tim. 1:3).

From I Timothy itself, we can piece together the situation. After Paul was released from prison, he returned to Ephesus to find a storm center of erroneous teaching as he had predicted to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:29,20). Paul personally dealt with the leaders of the trouble (1:18,19), but anticipated further difficulty (1:3). So when he left for Macedonia, he put Timothy in charge (1:3). He expected to return soon (3:14). But knowing that he would be detained longer than he had hoped, he wrote to Timothy to urge him to deal with the situation (1:3).

What exactly were these teachers teaching that was causing so much trouble? All we know is what is said in this epistle combined with what we glean from II Timothy and Titus. Evidently, these teachers were going to the genealogies of the Old Testament (1:7) which suggests they were Jewish, and were constructing fables based on the names they found there (1:4; 4:7; 6:20). From these fables they taught things like, you must abstain from marriage and meats (4:3), and yet that godliness was a means of gain (6:5). This kind of teaching was a departure from the faith which was to produce godliness (1:4); 1:19; 6:21), and produced strife and division (1:4; 6:4,5).

#### III. Subject.

The subject is the charge to Timothy on how to conduct himself at church (cf. 1:4; 1:18; 3:14,15; 6:20; also, 4:11; 6:2b).

#### IV. Structure.

I Timothy is a letter and as such follows, at least to a degree, the ancient format of a letter. It has a salutation at the beginning, somewhat of a thanksgiving, a body and ends with a personal greeting and benediction, but frankly it does not follow the format precisely. For one thing, there is no prayer at all. For another, the thanks-

giving is for what God has done for the author, not for the recipients, as is usually the case.

Salutation: 1:1-2

Introduction. 1:3-20 (Paul's charge, cf. esp. 1:8)

- I. The charge concerning church meetings. 2:1-15
  - A. Concerning men. 2:1-8
  - B. Concerning women. 2:9-15
- II. The charge concerning church officers. 3:1-13
  - A. Concerning elders. 3:1-7
  - B. Concerning deacons. 3:8-13
- III. The charge concerning church doctrine. 3:14-4:16
  - A. Concerning true teaching. 3:14-16
  - B. Concerning false teaching. 4:1-11
  - C. Concerning the teacher. 4:12-16
- IV. The charge concerning church members. 5:1-6:19
  - A. Concerning the old and the young. 5:1,2
  - B. Concerning widows. 5:3-16
  - C. Concerning elders. 5:17-25
  - D. Concerning slaves. 6:1,2
  - E. Concerning false teachers. 6:3-16
  - F. Concerning the rich. 6:17-19

Conclusion. 6:20-21a

Benediction. 6:21b

V. Purpose.

- A. To exhort Timothy to refute error.

In discussing the purpose of I Timothy, Boa concludes, "Negatively, he was to refute error (1:7-11; 6:3-5); positively, he was to teach the truth (4:13-16; 6:2,17,20)."<sup>2</sup>

In my opinion, that just about says it all. Paul was not writing to inform Timothy about those things. Timothy had been with Paul and sent by Paul too many times not to know all of this. Furthermore, Paul had just recently commissioned Timothy for this very assignment (1:3). Timothy did not need enlightenment; he did perhaps need exhortation. Maybe his physical problem with his stomach made him slow and sluggish (5:23).

At any rate, this much is clear. Timothy was to deal with error (1:3; 1:18; 6:20). These teachers had drifted away, yea, departed from the faith (1:6). They were dabbling in genealogies and fables (1:4; 4:7), and in the name of teaching the law (1:7). They were teaching the doctrine of devils, namely that one should abstain from marriage and meats (4:1-5).

These must be charged not to do such (1:4), and if they persist, Timothy was to withdraw from them (6:5).

By the way, note that Paul named people (1:20).

B. To encourage Timothy to teach the truth.

Paul never gives the negative without the positive, and I Timothy is no exception. He wants Timothy to refute error, but also he wants him to teach the truth (cf. 4:6; 4:11; 6:2b; 6:20).

The truth, in this case, is the doctrine spelled out in 3:16 which leads to faith, which leads to a good conscience, which leads to love (cf. 1:5).

N.B.: Truth --faith--conscience--  
Love.

Conclusion:

Paul wrote to Timothy to charge him to refute error and to teach truth which leads to godliness.

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<sup>1</sup>Thiessen, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup>Boa, p. 129.

## II TIMOTHY

II Timothy is Paul's swan song.

I. Author.

If you ask the book itself, "Who penned your pages?" it would answer, "Paul" (1:1). A whole host of ancient authors confirm that. If you ask the critics, "Who wrote II Timothy?" they will say, "We don't know, but it was not Paul." That makes whoever did a forger. In the discussion in I Timothy, all the arguments used against the pastorals were listed and answered.

II. Recipients.

A. Their date.

We know from Acts that Paul was arrested in Jerusalem and ended up in prison in Rome. Under house arrest at Rome, he wrote four letters we call the prison epistles, namely, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. Acts ends with him in Rome.

Evidently, he was released from that imprisonment and then went to Ephesus only to leave there for Macedonia (he probably wrote I Timothy from Philippi in 63 A.D.).

As he anticipated, he no doubt returned to Ephesus (I Tim. 3:14) and Macedonia. He then journeyed to the island of Crete where he left

Titus to continue the work (Titus 1:5).

Apparently, he then traveled to Corinth from where he wrote Titus (Titus 3:13). After meeting Titus in Nacopolis (Titus 3:12), he went to Spain as planned (Rom. 15:24-28). Boa says,

"Paul probably departed with Titus from that western province after his winter in Nicopolis. Early church tradition holds that Paul did go to Spain. Before the end of the first century, Clement of Rome said that Paul 'reached the limits of the West' (I Clement 5:7). Since he was writing from Rome, he evidently had Spain in mind. Paul may have been in Spain from A.D. 64 to 66."<sup>1</sup>

After Spain, he visited Greece and Asia again (Corinth, Miletus, Troas-- II Tim. 4:13-20), and may have been arrested in Troas where he left his cloak and books (II Tim. 4:13-15). Boa explains the circumstances:

"The cruel and unbalanced Nero, emperor of Rome from A.D. 54 to 68, was responsible for the beginning of the Roman persecution of Christians. Half of Rome was destroyed in July A.D. 64 by fire, and mounting suspicion that Nero was responsible for the conflagration caused him to use the unpopular Christians

as his scapegoat. Christianity thus became a religio illicita, and persecution of those who professed Christ became severe. By the time of Paul's return from Spain to Asia in A.D. 66, his enemies were able to use the official Roman position against Christianity to their advantage. Fearing for their own lives, the Asian believers failed to support Paul after his arrest (1:15) and no one supported him at his first defense before the Imperial Court (4:16). Abandoned by almost everyone (4:10,11), the apostle found himself in very different circumstances from those of his first Roman imprisonment in Acts 28:16-31. At that time he was merely under house arrest, people could freely visit him, and he had the hope of release. Now he was in a cold Roman cell (4:13), regarded "as a criminal" (2:9), and without hope of acquittal in spite of the success of his initial defense (4:6-8, 17,18). Under these conditions, Paul wrote this epistle in the fall of A.D. 67, hoping that Timothy would be able to visit him before the approaching winter (4:21). Timothy was evidently in Ephesus at the time of this letter (cf. 1:18 and 4:19), and on his way to Rome he would go through Troas

(4:13) and Macedonia. Priscilla and Aquilla (4:19) probably returned from Rome (Rom. 16:3) to Ephesus after the burning of Rome and the beginning of the persecution. Tychicus may have been the bearer of this letter (4:12).<sup>2</sup>

#### B. Their description.

When Paul wrote I Timothy, Timothy was in Ephesus dealing with some difficult disciples. That situation is the backdrop for much of what is said.

In II Timothy, Timothy is still in Ephesus (cf. 4:19--"Greet the household of Onesiphorus" and 1:18--"He was a resident of Ephesus", plus cf. 2:17 with I Tim. 1:19-20). Some of that old problem is left (2:14-18), but the issue is not so much that as the dark days. For one thing, Paul was facing martyrdom.

#### III. Subject.

The subject of II Timothy is something like, Fulfill your ministry, or, Be faithful to the ministry that God has given you (cf. 4:5b and 1:6). There is another wrinkle that needs to be added to that. Throughout the book there is repeated reference to difficult days, i.e., the persecution from without (1:8, and maybe 3:1-9, 4:14), and the defection from within (cf. 1:15, 2:14, 2:16-18, 2:25). So the theme is, In dark difficult days, make sure

you fulfill your ministry.

#### IV. Structure.

II Timothy is a letter in the ancient sense of the term with one minor exception. It has a salutation, thanksgiving and a body, and ends with a personal greeting and benediction. It does not have the prayer which usually follows the thanksgiving. The body is a series of commands.

Salutation. 1:1,2

Thanksgiving. 1:3-5

Prologue. 1:6-18

I. Commit the word to faithful teachers. 2:1-13

A. Be strong. 2:1

B. Commit the word. 2:2

C. Endure hardness. 2:3-13

II. Correct errorists. 2:14-26

A. Charge them. 2:14,15

B. Avoid empty disputes.  
2:16-21

C. Pursue righteousness.  
2:22-26

III. Continue in the word. 3:4-4:8

A. In personal life. 3:1-17

B. In public ministry. 4:1-8

Epilogue. 4:9-18

Personal greetings and benediction.  
4:19-22

V. Purpose.

A. To strengthen Timothy.

When Paul wrote this book, times were tough. Rome had outlawed Christianity. Surely suffering was ahead. Even the apostle Paul was about to be executed. There was not only persecution from without, there was a defection from within. Some had deserted Paul; the same would certainly happen to Timothy. Though Timothy was an experienced and seasoned veteran, under this pressure, and especially in light of the fact that he was about to lose his spiritual father, he was susceptible to discouragement. Perhaps there is a hint of the fear and shame he felt in chapter 1 (cf. also 6:8). Thus, Paul writes to Timothy to strengthen him.

B. To summon Timothy.

The second purpose was to summon Timothy to Rome as soon as possible (1:4; 4:1,21a). Perhaps Paul was lonely (4:16). He also needed Mark for ministry (4:11), as well as his cloak, books and parchments which he left in Troas (cf. 4:13).

Conclusion:

Paul wrote to Timothy to encourage him to fulfill his ministry in spite of persecution and defection, and to summon him to come to Rome.

<sup>1</sup>Boa, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup>Boa, pp. 133-4.

## TITUS

I Timothy deals with conduct in church;  
Titus delineates church order.

### I. Author.

Titus 1:1 says Paul was the author, and Bible believers believe it. In support of the view they can say, "So did the early church."

The critics do not believe Paul wrote Titus, or for that matter, any of the pastoral epistles. They say the pastorals, including Titus, were written by a forger, "a pious forger, but a forger." Beyond that, two other things can be said. How could a pious forger write anything and claim that someone else was the author? If he were pious, he would not forge someone else's name! If he forged anything, he was not pious. A forgery was a deliberate deception then as it is now. A basic problem of dishonesty flees in the face of high morals of this and the other two epistles (e.g., cf. Titus 2:12).

### II. Recipients.

#### A. Their date.

I & II Timothy and Titus form a group called the pastoral epistles. It is obvious from the content that they were written during the same period in Paul's life, for all three

deal with the same error. It is equally clear that they were written after the book of Acts closes.

After Acts 28 Paul went to Ephesus and then to Macedonia (probably Philippi). Then he journeyed to Crete where he left Timothy to continue to do the work there (Titus 1:5).

Apparently, he next traveled to Corinth where he wrote the book of Titus. From there he went to Spain and, on a return trip, he was arrested, etc.

If that scenario is correct (and frankly, other itineraries are possible, e.g., he left Rome and went to Spain and then went to Crete), then the date of Titus is the same as I Timothy, i.e., 63 A.D. Many have pointed out similarities between I Timothy and Titus, indicating, like Ephesians and Colossians, that they were written about the same time.

#### B. Their description.

The book of Acts never mentions Titus, but from the 13 references to him in the epistles, we know that Paul led him to Christ (Titus 1:4) and he was the traveling companion and assistant to his spiritual father.

The churches on the island of Crete were in need of organization (1:5). There were also other things that needed to be set in order. Jewish teachers needed to be rebuked (1:10,13).



They were going to the genealogies of the Old Testament (3:9) and constructing fables (1:14). From these myths they drew commandments which turned people from the truth of God to the commandments of men. Furthermore, their motives were wrong and the results were not God-honoring. Their motive was money (1:11). Their "ministry" produced disputes, contentions and strivings about the law (3:9), as well as subverting whole households. Beyond all of that, they needed instruction in godliness and good works.

### III. Subject.

The subject of Titus is church order. That is clear from Titus 1:5. Paul left Titus in Crete to set things in order and this tells him how to do just that.

### IV. Structure.

Titus is a letter, an ancient letter, and follows the format of such with an exception or two. It has a salutation, a body and ends with personal greetings and benediction. The exceptions are that there is no thanksgiving or prayer.

The body of the book, unlike II Timothy, is more formal in structure. Basically, he gives three commands, each followed by a reason for it.

- cf. 1:5--"for" (1:10)

- cf. 2:1--"for" (2:11)

- cf. 3:1--"for" (3:3)

### Salutation. 1:1-4

#### I. Ordain elders. 1:5-16

A. Qualification for elders. 1:5-9

B. Reasons for elders. 1:10-12

C. Response to errorists. 1:13-16

#### II. Speak about godliness. 2:1-15

A. To the older. 2:2-5

B. To the younger. 2:6

C. To yourself. 2:7-8

D. To slaves. 2:9-10

E. Reason for speaking. 2:11-15

#### III. Remind about good works. 3:1-7

A. Tell all to do good works. 3:1,2

B. Reason for reminder. 3:3-7

Conclusion. 3:8-11

Personal greetings and benediction. 3:12-15

### V. Purpose.

#### A. To instruct Titus.

The church on the isle of Crete was in a mess. Jewish teachers were teaching things they ought not, and their mouths needed to be shut (1:11). Consequently, the people needed instruction in truth to produce godliness and good works.

Paul wrote Titus to tell him how to put the church in order. He was to ordain elders, rebuke sharply the Jewish teachers, speak about godliness to each age group and remind all to maintain good works.

B. To inform Titus.

The instructions were ministerial, but the epistle is also written to impart personal information to Titus (cf. 3:12,13).

Conclusion:

Paul wrote to Titus to instruct him about how to set things in order in the church and to inform him about a few personal matters.

## PHILEMON

Though it has but 334 words (in the Westcott-Hort Greek text), Franke said of Philemon that it "Far surpasses the wisdom of the world."

Lightfoot says, "The epistle to Philemon stands unrivaled."

Scroggie adds, "This note to a friend has been universally praised and none too much."

I. Author.

The epistle itself not only claims Paul as its author, but that he wrote it with his own hand (vv. 1,19). Three times the author identifies himself as Paul (vv. 1,9,19).

II. Recipients.

A. Their date.

Several things help us pinpoint the date. When Paul wrote, he was in prison. He repeatedly refers to his chains (cf. vv. 1,9,10,13,23). Furthermore, Philemon is closely linked with Colossians. For example, Onesimus is specifically mentioned in Colossians (4:9), as well as all the other people who sent greetings to Philemon (cf. Phlm. 23,24; cf. Col. 4:10,12,14). Thus, Paul wrote Philemon during his first Roman imprisonment which was in 61 A.D. (Philemon, then, is one of

the four prison epistles). It was no written and sent at the same time as Colossians.

#### B. Their description.

Philemon was addressed to Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and the church which met in Philemon's house.

The situation was simple. Philemon was a wealthy believer who had a slave named Onesimus. The slave ran away, was converted by Paul who sent him back to Philemon according to Roman law.

The other people are minor players. It is generally believed that Apphia was Philemon's wife and Archippus was the "pastor" of the church in his house (Col. 4:17). (Some have suggested he was also Philemon's son, but there is no evidence for that.) Then, of course, there was the church which met in Philemon's house.

#### III. The subject.

The subject of Philemon is love. Paul not only thanked God for Philemon's love, but it is a major emphasis of his thanksgiving (cf. vv. 5-7). His appeal is based on love (v. 9). His request was an act of love (cf. "receive him back"--v. 12, "forever"--v. 15, "as a beloved brother"--v. 16). Notice also that in verse 20 he says, "Refresh my heart in the Lord," and in verse 7, "Your love has refreshed the heart of the

saints" (*italics mine*). Luther said, "This epistle shows a right noble lovely example of Christian love."

#### IV. Structure.

Philemon is a letter, an ancient letter, with all the customary parts.

Salutation. vv. 1-3

Thanksgiving. vv. 4,5

Prayer. vv. 8-11

I. The basis of Paul's request. vv. 8-11

A. Not a command. v. 8

B. But love. vv. 9-11

II. The nature of Paul's request. vv. 12-17

A. I wish I could keep him. vv. 13,14

B. But I ask you to receive him. vv. 15-17

III. The payment for Paul's request. vv. 18-22

A. The payment. vv. 18,19

B. The profit. vv. 20-22

Personal greetings. vv. 23-24

Benediction. v. 25

#### V. Purpose.

A. To request that Philemon receive Onesimus, a runaway slave who had since trusted Christ, as a beloved brother.

Onesimus had been a slave of Philemon. Of the 120 million people in the Roman Empire, it has been estimated that there were 60 million slaves. A slave at the time was chattel. He was treated worse than an enemy and was subject to the whims of the owner. Onesimus was of Phrygia, and Phrygian slaves were considered the lowest of all slaves. Onesimus ran away, apparently with the aid of money stolen from his master.

He ran to Rome where he came in contact with Paul. Perhaps he resorted to Paul out of desperation, knowing his kindness. Paul led him to Christ (v. 10) and he became a faithful and beloved brother (Col. 4:9) who ministered to Paul causing him to want to keep this converted slave around (v. 13).

But Paul could not do that. Roman law said that Onesimus was the property of Philemon and must go back. By the way, according to Roman law, a runaway slave merited severe and cruel punishment. Paul wanted to obey the law, and he wanted to reconcile Philemon and Onesimus without humiliating Onesimus; to commend to the wrong-doer without approving the wrong.

So, he requested that the runaway slave who robbed him be received as a beloved brother because he trusted Christ, and if there were any debt that that be put to his account.

- B. To illustrate Christian love and forgiveness, and respect for the law.

But there is more here than just that. Oh, there is the comparatively minor matter of requesting lodging for himself, but there is more. This is not a private letter. It was addressed to others, including the whole church. More than one has suggested that Paul did that to "encourage" Philemon to do what he asked. But it seems to me that if that is the reason Paul addressed the letter to the church, then it amounts to force and is contrary to the whole spirit of the letter. Besides, Paul was confident that Philemon would not only do what he asked, but even do more (cf. v. 21). I believe he wrote to the group, yea, the church, knowing Philemon would do what he asked, and thus intended for Philemon's action to be an illustration of Christian love and forgiveness, and Onesimus' action being a demonstration of compliance to the law.

#### Conclusion:

Paul requested that Philemon forgive and restore Onesimus, his runaway slave, as an illustration of Christian love.

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