



“Three Leaders and Their Three Letters”

Overview

Lesson 1

In A Nutshell

Lesson 1 will introduce you to the Pastoral Epistles, 1 Timothy, Titus, and 2 Timothy, all letters of the apostle Paul. Although not called the “Pastoral Epistles” until the 18th century, these three books of the Bible have been guiding local churches in regard to their leadership since the days Paul authored them under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In Lesson 1 you will learn who Timothy and Titus were and the key themes of the letters Paul wrote to them.

To The Testimony!

Who was Timothy?

- Acts 16:1-3
1. Our first introduction to Timothy, the recipient of two of the Pastoral Epistles, is found in Acts 16 at the start of Paul’s second missionary journey. In this introduction, Luke gives us Timothy’s name and two details regarding his background in verses 1-2. What are those two details? How did they contribute to Paul’s desire to make Timothy a part of his mission team?

- 1 Thess. 3:1-8
2. You may remember from Acts 17:1-10 that God had given fruit in Thessalonica. Yet jealous Jews ran Paul out of town before he had much of a chance to disciple this young church. He worried about them in Athens, and so he sends Timothy back to Thessalonica. What was Timothy’s assignment this time? What character traits would the assignment have required of young Timothy?

1 Cor
4:14-21
16:10-11

3. Ancient Europe was the ground-breaking focus of the second missionary journey of Paul. We learn about the backbone of Timothy as he worked with some of these challenging churches. One example was Timothy's assignment to follow up on the letter of 1 Corinthians to the troubled Corinthian church. What do we learn about Timothy from this assignment?

Phil
2:19-24

4. Whereas the Corinthian assignment displayed Timothy's backbone, the Philippian assignment shows us his heart. What set Timothy apart in the mind of the apostle Paul according to these verses?

Interesting Insight!

Compare 2 Timothy 4:9-13 with Hebrews 13:23.

“Thus A. Nairne hazards ‘the guess that both the author [of Hebrews] and Timothy may have been brought to Italy by the peril of their master S. Paul—that S. Paul has perished in Nero’s persecution, that Timothy has been imprisoned, and that the freedom of both Timothy and the author is now assured’ (*The Epistle of Priesthood* [Edinburgh, 1913], p. 432). W. F. Howard similarly suggests that Timothy, having been summoned to Rome by Paul (2 Tim. 4:9ff.), was compromised by his association with the apostle and imprisoned. . . .(‘The Epistle to the Hebrews’, *Interpretation* v [1951], pp. 80ff.)” [F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), p. 414, fn. 128.]

Who was Titus?

- Gal. 2:1-5
5. The book of Acts does not refer to Titus by name, but we learn about him in the letters of Paul. We know from Galatians 2 that Paul knew Titus before the second missionary journey of Acts 16, because he accompanied Paul to the Jerusalem Council narrated in Acts 15. What other significant fact do we learn about Titus which created a stir at the Jerusalem Council?

- 2 Cor. 8:1-6, 16-17
6. In addition to his ministry on the island of Crete, Titus was given an important assignment at the church at Corinth, the undesirable task of fund-raising. For obvious reasons, this responsibility is sometimes not a popular one among godly leaders. What virtue did Titus demonstrate in carrying out this responsibility?

What is the Purpose of the Pastoral Epistles?

- 1 Tim 3:14-15
7. The key passage regarding the purpose of 1 Timothy is 3:14-15. Here Paul states plainly his purpose for writing. What is that purpose?

Titus 1:5 8. Titus' assignment on Crete discloses another key purpose of the Pastoral Epistles. He was to set in order things which had gotten out of order on that island. How was he to accomplish this task? What does this say about the purpose of the Pastoral Epistles?

2 Tim. 1:6 9. 2 Timothy is more personal and less official than the other Pastoral Epistles. Here leadership lives in the heart-to-heart context of Paul's relationship to Timothy. Look up the verses listed, one from each chapter. What is their common theme? 3:12 What does Paul want Timothy to understand in regard to his 4:5 leadership responsibility?

Interesting Insight!

“I love the Word of God. I esteem it above all. I find my heart so inclined. I desire it as the food of my soul. I greatly delight in it, both in reading and hearing of it . . . I love the ministers and the messengers of the Word.”

—Matthew Henry, age 11.

[Quoted in Kevin T. Bauder et al., *A Conservative Christian Declaration* (Middletown, DE: Religious Affections Ministries, 2014), 77.]