

**THIRTEEN LESSONS ON  
I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS**

# The Bible Study Textbook Series

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Bible Student Study Guide

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**THIRTEEN LESSONS ON  
I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS**

A Student Book

by

John D. Pommert

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On the cover: An arch leading into the forum in Rome, Italy. Courtesy  
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## Introduction

In 1274, Thomas Aquinas called I & II Timothy and Titus the "Pastoral Epistles" since they dealt with the work of the pastors (which means "shepherd" and refers to the work of the elders, not that of the evangelist). The name has stuck although a better title might be "The Practical Epistles" as each chapter deals in a practical way with church administration and oversight. Many of Paul's epistles wrestle with important theological or doctrinal themes. But as his life draws to an end, the apostle is concerned with the on-going of the church and wishes to guide his two young sons-in-the-faith into a more effective ministry. These are personal letters with much personal exhortation and advice and a minimum of "theological" emphasis.

Paul had been imprisoned for two years (Acts 28:20, A.D. 60-62), and according to early church writers was given his freedom. Paul returned to Ephesus with Timothy and Titus and soon left Timothy there to minister (I Tim. 1:3) while going on to the island of Crete to drop off Titus (Tit. 1:5). He himself, according to tradition, traveled on to Spain to accomplish an age-old dream (Rom. 15:24, 28). While in Crete, he writes the first letter to Timothy (A.D. 62). In Spain, he writes Titus to meet

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him in Nicopolis, a mid-way point between them (Tit. 3:12, A.D. 63). The great four-day fire that devastated Rome in July, 64 A.D., was blamed on the Christians by Nero who had started the blaze to burn down the slum area in a first century "urban renewal" project. But the wind shifted, and a scapegoat had to be found to blame. Thus began the terrible persecutions that plagued the church for years. Paul journeyed to Rome to strengthen the church there, was arrested and imprisoned a second time (A.D. 64-68). During the more severe second prison term, Paul writes his final letter to Timothy noting that the time of his death was near at hand (II Tim. 4:6, A.D. 67 or 68). Paul's death came soon after, probably by beheading since he was a Roman citizen. Thus, II Timothy stands as the last writing from Paul even though these two letters have been placed side by side in our assembled Bible. For those who wish to study further this second imprisonment and Paul's travels, read the concise but quite complete discussion in DeWelt, *Paul's Letters to Timothy and Titus*, College Press, Joplin, Mo. Another helpful commentary is that of Wm. Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary, Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. As noted in their discussion, a number of things Paul mentions in these epistles cannot be fitted into the Acts account and can only be explained by travels of which we have no record. Almost every conservative scholar accepts this position whereas the unbelieving critics have chosen to denounce the epistles as forgeries done by an incompetent unfamiliar with the book of Acts. But most forgers are extremely careful about such details and this theory is easily refuted.

### TIMOTHY

A brief background of Timothy should prove helpful. (Titus' background is given in the first lesson on that epistle.) This young man had been raised by his mother Eunice in the Jewish faith (II Tim. 1:5; 3:15) and converted to Christianity by Paul on his first missionary journey through Lystra when Timothy was about ten years old (Acts 14:6-18). When Paul returned six years later (A.D. 49), he needed a young man to take the place of John Mark who had deserted the evangelistic team (Acts 13:13; 15:36-40), and he chose the sixteen year old Timothy (Acts 16:1-3). He was probably "ordained" by the elders at this time (I Tim. 4:14) and given a gift by Paul (II Tim. 1:6). He is circumcised by Paul as his father was a Greek and had not performed this function and Paul feared lest this hinder his ministry with the Jews (Acts 16:3). Paul had already settled the issue that circumcision was "a matter of opinion and not of faith" in the case of Titus (Gal. 2:3; Acts 15:1-35).



## INTRODUCTION

Timothy received the highest praise ever given by Paul to a fellow worker (Phil. 2:19-23) and, with Titus, is called "son" suggesting Paul's warm feeling for these young men. He is Paul's most constant companion being mentioned twenty-two times in the N.T. His health is somewhat poor (I Tim. 5:23) and he appears to be of a quiet or somewhat shy nature (I Cor. 16:10; I Tim. 4:4, 12; II Tim. 2:1-3; 4:1). As Paul writes his final letter, he calls Timothy a "youth," a word not used of those over age forty. Timothy is probably in his mid-thirties at this time.

According to tradition, Timothy stayed on in Ephesus to minister and met martyrdom during the reign of Domitian when he tried to stop an indecent heathen procession during the festival of Diana and was beaten to death.

## EPHESUS

This large city was famous for the temple of the "Ephesian Diana" (not the chaste virgin goddess of purity), a fertility goddess which brought much revenue into the city (Acts 19:21-41). Paul stopped here briefly on his second journey (18:18-21), and on his third journey stayed three years, his longest sojourn anywhere (19:1 — 20:1, 31). This long stay shows how important he felt the conversion of Ephesus was for the furtherance of the Gospel. At the end of his third journey, Paul stops briefly at Miletus and sends for the Ephesian elders that he might encourage them (20:17-38). The final mention of the church is in Revelation 2:1-7.

This Grecian city was permeated with the worship of Diana and all the pagan myths of that day. Paul makes reference to them in these epistles. A difficult ministry for anyone — especially a young man. No wonder Paul wrote to give advice.

## ABBREVIATIONS

In the following notes, I Timothy is usually referred to as I and II Timothy as II. The printed text is the Revised Standard Version (RSV); other versions referred to are the King James Version (KJV) and the American Standard Version (ASV). Often following the word under discussion is a word in quotes; this is the literal meaning of the Greek word. Please look up the Bible references as these often are the best commentary on the text or refer to related ideas or material.