

THE PARENTHETIC PERSONAL EPISTLE

INTRODUCTION TO PAUL'S EPISTLES

Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus are concerned with conduct in service. Not only are they given instructions for their own guidance but also rules are laid down for the selection and service of seniors or supervisors and servants. These two classes were officially recognised and appointed and their functions defined. They were necessary to lead the ecclesia until God, through the Holy Spirit had called the five special commissions. "for the building of the body of Christ; apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers". Ephesians 4:11-13.

Besides this, there are exhortations for all the various classes in the ecclesia, old and young, the rich and the dependant, widows and slaves. **Indeed, these epistles contain the constitution of the church.**

The second epistle to Timothy is especially applicable to the last days, showing when and what to avoid, and with whom we may associate.

Philemon makes most gracious provision for those in bondage (workers) to believing masters.

1 TIMOTHY

As a guide in understanding the great contrast between Paul's two epistles to Timothy, it is important to know WHEN the first epistle was penned.

If it was written to Timothy in Ephesus whilst Paul went to Macedonia, we have no situation corresponding to it in the book of Acts, and it is difficult to understand why the instructions should be needed in Ephesus, where Paul had laboured so long and which had the benefit of his personal superintendence for years.

If we reverse the situation and send Timothy to Macedonia to the ecclesias, from which Paul had been driven before he could set them in order, and to which he dare not go in peril of his life. Every precept in the epistle is full of point, and we have no circumstances, which exactly correspond in the book of Acts. Acts 19:21,22.

"Now, as these things were fulfilled Paul pondered in spirit, passing through Macedonia and Achaia, going to Jerusalem, saying that after coming to be there, I must see Rome also."

Now, despatching two of his servants Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia, HE attended, for the time, to the province of Asia.

This places the epistle at the second crisis in the apostle's ministry (Acts 19;21 and Romans 15:19 and 2 Cor 5:16.)

His second epistle was written after the third and final crisis. This places a great gap between them, which accounts for the vast difference in the aspect of affairs. 1 Timothy 3:15.

In the first epistle we have the ecclesia described as God's House, the pillar and base of the truth and the pristine power of faith holds all together. "..... in God's house, which is the ecclesia of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth".

In the second, the ecclesia has become a "great house" with utensils of various kinds, both honourable and base, and the dominant note being apostasy. 2 Timothy 2:20.

"Now in the great house there are not only gold and silver utensils, but wooden and earthen ware also, some indeed to honour, yet some for dishonour"