

## Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle to Timothy

### Introduction

#### Historical Evidence

The Pauline authorship of our Epistle was never doubted by the writers of the early Church. Marcion was to be the only commentator to exclude it, and since its failure to be admitted had never been mooted before, Tertullian (c160 – c 220) expressed his surprise at the exclusion. The Epistle was listed in the Muratorian Canon ( c170) and was generally known by the Apostolic Fathers described in the introductions to the other Epistles. The objections concerning its not fitting into Paul's travels according to Luke, various vocabulary and stylistic objections have been completely answered since they were first noted in modern times (1830s) by German theologians.<sup>1</sup> It is a great sadness that they are still being peddled. These hypotheses, by their very nature, are unprovable, and since they are entirely negative do nothing but undermine belief, introduce doubt and damage the faith. In his 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle to Timothy perhaps Paul left a message to the Church – to paraphrase 6:20,21 - *'O Church guard what has been entrusted to you, turn away from worldly prattle and contradictory teachings, these having been falsely called 'scholarship', which certain have professed, and so have strayed from the path of faith'*.

#### Reason For Writing

Paul in the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> verses of chapter 1 explains why he had pressed Timothy to stay in Ephesus -  
*'3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,*  
*4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.'*

Ephesus was a multicultural city of, perhaps, 250,000 inhabitants much given to *'fables and endless genealogies'*. 'Ephesian Letters' became famous ( or infamous ) tracts which provided many charlatans with a steady income. Paul had experience of Ephesus and this letter was to advise and encourage Timothy in his responsibilities as superintendent of the church in Ephesus. Advice is given on the church and its leaders and personal instructions to Timothy.

#### Date and Place of Writing

The Epistle was written after Paul's release from prison in Rome and so some time after 64, perhaps between 65 and 67. Paul may have undertaken a 4<sup>th</sup> journey and the place of writing could be somewhere in Macedonia.



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<sup>1</sup> I will offer some thoughts concerning the 'hapax legomena' in the introduction to 2 Timothy.