

## DATING 1ST TIMOTHY

The historical particulars in the letter that can help determine the date are:

- 1:3 Paul, when he was leaving Ephesus for Macedonia, had urged Timothy to remain in Ephesus, and instruct certain people not to teach different doctrine
- 3:14 Paul seeking to get to Ephesus as soon as he could

Three suggested options:

Options A/B = during the Ephesus period of Acts 19 and 20

Option C = during Paul's journey to Jerusalem

Option D = after the first imprisonment, during a 4th missionary journey

### OPTION A - During the 3 years Paul was in Ephesus

Points in favor:

- Timothy, according to 1 Cor. 16:11, was returning to Paul after his visit to Corinth
- Paul appears to leave Ephesus, so conceivable he would have left someone in charge

Points against:

- Paul probably went straight to Corinth, not Macedonia, as in 1 Tim. 1:3
- Paul appears not to be away from Ephesus long enough for the church to fall into the kinds of problems in 1 Timothy

### OPTION B - When Paul leaves for Macedonia (Acts 20:1)

Points in favor:

- Paul went to Macedonia, and 1 Cor. 16:11 shows he was expecting Timothy back in Ephesus

Points against:

- Paul had no intention of returning to Ephesus; he was heading to Jerusalem with the gift (1Tim. 3:14 cf Rom. 15:25)
- Acts 20:3 shows Paul wanted the quickest way to Syria.
- Timothy was with Paul in Acts 20:4 in Achaia. Paul was only there 3 months, and 1 Tim 1:3 seems to suggest a long term stay in Ephesus
- Timothy was with Paul in Macedonia when 2 Cor. was written (2 Cor. 1:1)
- Doctrinal errors mentioned suggest longer absence of Paul (Acts 20:29)

### OPTION C - During journey to Jerusalem (Acts 20:16ff)

Points in favor:

- Paul stopped in Miletus, and met with the elders from Ephesus; could have sent Timothy back to Ephesus with them.

Points against:

- 1 Tim. 3:14 Paul says he hopes to come to Ephesus soon - when Paul met with the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, he knew he would be imprisoned (Acts 20:23), and did not expect to be freed right away. They all wept, because they did not believe they would see him again.

### OPTION D - After the first imprisonment, on a 4th missionary journey

This view is based on the idea that Paul was released from house arrest (Acts 28), and made a 4th missionary journey, which possibly included Spain (Rom 15:23-24) before being martyred by Nero sometime after 64 AD. If this is the case, 1 Timothy can easily be placed during this time period, since we know nothing of Paul's movements.