

TTB - 2 Timothy and Titus

1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon are known as the Pastoral Epistles, letters written by Paul to specific individuals under his authority, instructing them in how to live and lead in their communities.

Timing and Authorship

- There are various ideas and opinions across the scholarly world regarding when these letters were written and whether they were actually written by Paul.
 - The modern position, which is explained quite well in Philip Towner's volume of the New International Commentary on the New Testament, essentially points to some differences in the writing style between the Pastoral Epistles and Paul's other writings, and says that Timothy's and Titus' journeys that are described in these letters (which we will get to in a moment) are not attested to in Acts, thus they cannot be substantiated. There's more to the position, but those are some major reasons for many modern scholars to say that these letters were not written by Paul.
- However, I tend toward a more traditional view of biblical authorship, and I think there is ample evidence to support both Pauline authorship and the travels of both Paul and his disciples after Acts 28.
 - Specifically, both Polycarp (110–135 CE) and 1 Clement (95 CE) quote the content of these letters and accept them as legitimate Pauline texts. They were also consistently used in that way afterwards through the early centuries of the church.
 - **[MAP and TIMELINE]** There is also ample evidence in the first few centuries that Paul was not martyred during his first imprisonment in Rome that we see at the end of Acts. Instead, Paul was released from prison under Nero in 62 CE and traveled to Spain (as he had expressed a desire to do in Romans 15:24 and 28). Afterwards, he traveled back toward the East, visiting the churches in Crete, Philippi, and Nicopolis before eventually being captured by the Romans in the later Neronian persecutions and finally being executed around 67 CE.
 - This support is drawn indirectly from *1 Clement* 5:7 which mentions the tradition of Paul's travels to the far west and implies some sort of knowledge about a release of Paul not mentioned by Luke. The tradition of Paul's visit to Spain is also mentioned in the Muratorian Canon and the apocryphal *Acts of Peter* 1:1. Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.22) also indicates unambiguous knowledge of the tradition of Paul's release from a first Roman imprisonment, as well as of Paul's eventual death at the hands of Nero when he came to Rome a second time.
- With this understanding of Paul's journeys, the travel details expressed in these epistles can be completely substantiate. Based on this timeline, Titus was written after Paul's trip to Spain and after he left Titus in Crete, while he was traveling in Philippi and Nicopolis. Meanwhile, 2 Timothy was written after he was arrested by Nero the second time, when he was more certain than ever that he was going to be executed.

2 Timothy Introduction

- If you look carefully at 1&2 Timothy, it's not hard to see that Paul was authorizing Timothy as his delegate, his *shaliach*, in Ephesus, doing work in a context where Timothy's authority might be challenged by the local believers.
- If you remember back to our earlier discussions about Ephesus, it was a pretty difficult town within which to work.
- Location

- western end of Asia Minor
- principal city in the Roman province of Asia
- under Roman control since 133 BCE, but still a free city, not a Roman colony.
- port city - trade from the Aegean (West), Bosphorus and Dardanelles (North), Syria and Israel (East), and Egypt (south)
- Two major roads
- Population 200,000 — third largest city behind Rome and Alexandria
- **[SLIDE] Mythology**
 - Greek mythology associated the origins of the city with the legendary Amazon warriors and a localized version of the Greek goddess Artemis (equated with the Roman goddess Diana).
 - The Amazons were mythological female warriors and hunters described in the Iliad and other ancient Greek texts, known for their physical agility, strength, archery, riding skills, and the arts of combat.
 - Artemis was the goddess of the hunt, the wilderness, nature, and childbirth, among others. She was one of the most popular goddesses in Ancient Greece.
- **[SLIDE] Worship**
 - Artemis was the most widely worshipped and revered goddess in the ancient world.
 - The temple of Artemis in Ephesus was considered to be the greatest of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
 - Her cult followers took vows of chastity, and it was common for young girls to be sent to the temple to serve Artemis for one year before being allowed to marry.
 - At the same time, Artemis was a fertility goddess and was considered to be a “mother goddess,” due to the *interpretatio graeca*, the Hellenistic approach of reinterpreting local gods and goddesses (like the original Ephesian goddess) with the common Greek gods and goddesses.
- Paul lived in Ephesus longer than in any location since his time in Antioch, and he invested heavily in the community of believers there. If you recall, he started a yeshiva, a school, in the teaching hall owned by a man named Tyrranus, and spent 4-6 hours each day teaching the Torah and raising disciples of Jesus. When Paul left Ephesus around the year 55 CE, it was because his teaching had been so effective that the local idol-making guild had it in for him due to a downturn in their sales.
- Meanwhile, the believing community had changed in the 10 or so years since Paul had left.
 - A few of the Gentile leaders had begun to present themselves as rabbinic authorities on matters of Torah—self-proclaimed rabbis. Although they were neither Jewish nor credentialed to teach, they considered themselves authorities on matters of *halachah* (legal rulings) and Jewish teaching. As a result, the congregations under their influence were veering into strange doctrines, fruitless discussions, what Paul calls “myths and endless genealogies.” Paul addressed this in his first letter to Timothy, exclaiming with exasperation, “They want to be called teachers of the Torah, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions!” (1 Timothy 1:6–7).

- Timothy was a young Jewish man who had grown up with his mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois), both of whom were believers (1:5). His father was Gentile, but Paul circumcised Timothy to validate his Jewish status both to Timothy and to those around him (Acts 16:1-3).
 - I find one point that Philip Towner mentions in his commentary to be quite interesting. He says that the language of these later epistles, the ones written to Paul's closest companions and disciples, have an affinity for the language used in later Hellenistic Jewish writings like 4 *Maccabees* and *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* instead of the language of the Septuagint, as we see in the earlier Pauline writings.
 - I wonder if this might be a result of Paul's understanding that his own disciples would be more comfortable with these Jewish writings themselves.
- Paul wrote 2 Timothy letter when he was back in a Roman prison for a second time. However, this imprisonment was very different from his first imprisonment. Nero had become obsessed with persecuting Christians, and had even accused them of starting the fire on July 18, 64 CE, that destroyed much of the city of Rome. During his first imprisonment, Paul was able to stay in his own rented house and have visitors (Acts 28:30), but in 2 Timothy 2:9 he mentions "suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal."
- As a result, the letter strikes a more personal tone, and Paul seems to understand that his time on earth is limited. He wants to impart some needed wisdom to Timothy, while also reflecting on how his own life has taken a downward turn.

Chapter 1

- 1:6 — "kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands."
 - This is a reference to Timothy's *smikha* (ordination), the passing on of authority from a rabbi to his disciple.
 - Note that the leaders in Ephesus who are causing problems don't have this same level of authority.
- 1:7 — "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline."
 - That laying on of hands, the imbuelement of authority, should give Timothy courage to lead well in a difficult environment.
- 1:8-1:12 — Don't be ashamed... I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed
- 1:12 — and I am convinced that He is able to protect what I have entrusted to Him until that day
 - What day? The Day of the Lord, the time of the resurrection and the great judgement.
- 1:15-18 — all who are in Asia turned away from me
 - Paul was feeling very alone

Chapter 2

- 2:2 — The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful people who will be able to teach others also.
- 2:8 — Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David
 - Why this formulation? Some commentators say he's quoting a common saying, but I think he's pointing to the coming Kingship of the Messiah, which is intricately tied to the hope of the resurrection and the life of the world to come.

- 2:10 — “those who are chosen” (elect) == The Jewish people, both here and throughout Paul’s writings.
 - Note he says “so that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus...” — meaning the elect don’t have that salvation yet.
 - Again, Timothy is Jewish, so this would hit home for him, as well.
 - **[READ Romans 9:1-5]**
- A trustworthy statement:
 - Scholars generally think this is a native Pauline teaching, he’s not quoting someone else.
 - Note the parallelism.
 - 2:11 — Paul says this also in Romans 6:8
 - 3:13 — The expectation based on Parallelism is that Paul would say, “If we are faithless, then he will be faithless,” but that’s not how God works. He is always faithful, and he can’t deny himself like we can deny him.
- Contesting false teachers
 - Paul encourages Timothy to teach the Torah faithfully and stand up against false teachers in Ephesus.
 - 2:14 — Don’t get into disputes about words — He says the same thing to Titus (3:9)
 - This doesn’t mean that we should not know the Bible or dig into the text — see what Paul says next. But it does mean that we should not get into *disputes* about the intricacies of words in the text, or *halachah*, or other things that don’t benefit the gospel.
 - In 2:23 Paul says “refuse foolish and ignorant speculation, knowing that they produce quarrels.”
 - 2:15 — What is the definition of “a worker who does not need to be ashamed”?
 - Someone who accurately handles the Biblical text
 - Again, Paul is not saying to stop studying the Bible or not to dig deeply into the Word, just that we have to be careful to avoid disputes and ignorant speculation
 - 2:16 — Avoid worldly ungodly chatter
 - 2:18 — For example, two men in the community have started teaching that the resurrection has already taken place.
 - This is what we now know as Realized Eschatology or Preterist Eschatology
 - CH Dodd was a modern proponent of this idea. He said that the Kingdom of God is not about the future. With the coming of Jesus, the Kingdom arrived and was “realized.” He also said that “Day of the Lord” is future tense in the Old Testament, but present tense in the New Testament.
 - If anyone tells you the Kingdom has already come, just look around you.
- Vessels for honorable use
 - *kedoshim* - holy things, vessels that are used in the temple service

- This is an apt description of the person who has “cleansed” themselves, who “pursues righteousness, faith[fulness], love, and peace”
- 2:24-25 — A list of features of a godly person

Chapter 3

- Paul now lists off a bunch of traits that will be normal in the days leading up to the “last days.”
 - He’s talking about the time of tribulation that comes before the return of the Messiah, before the millennial reign of Messiah from Jerusalem.
- One example he uses here is “Jannes and Jambres”, the magicians who served Pharaoh during the time of Moses.
 - Interestingly, the Torah does not name these magicians
 - However, the Midrash Rabbah passes down the fictional names of Pharaoh's two chief sorcerers: Yochani and Mamre.
 - These names transliterate through Greek into English as Jannes and Jambres.
 - These two were mentioned in a plethora of Jewish sources, including the Talmud, the Targums, the apocrypha, and even in the Roman historian Pliny's book Natural History.
- Follow my example.
 - Paul says to Timothy, “You saw how I lived. You saw my actions. do those same things!”
 - 3:12 — Following God will lead to persecution, but that does not matter.
- 3:15-17 — Also, in addition to watching Paul, Timothy knows the scriptures.
 - What scriptures did Timothy know from his childhood? The Old Testament.
 - These holy writings are able to give us wisdom that leads to salvation
 - These holy writings are inspired by God. They are beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, and for training in righteousness.
 - Remember that the next time you read Leviticus.

Chapter 4

- 4:2 — What’s more, Paul encourages Timothy to “preach the word.” Preach from the Old Testament. Preach the things that he learned himself in Jewish day school. Preach the things that lead to wisdom.
 - Notice the correlation between 4:5 and 3:16
 - Paul uses the same words here, telling Timothy to use the Scriptures, the Torah as the foundation of his teaching.
- 4:5 — more pastoral exhortation
 - Note the “do the work of an evangelist”, not “you are an evangelist”
 - Ties into Ephesians 4, “He called some [of his initial Jewish followers] as... Evangelists.”
- 4:6-8 — Paul understands that his time has come to an end. This is one of Paul’s most emotional teachings.

- However, despite the fact that he is about to be “poured out as a drink offering” (a reference to the temple service), he knows that when the Day of the Lord comes he will receive his reward for the sufferings he has endured in this world.
- This is a direct reference to the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5:11-12
- Paul then ends his letter with a personal appeal to Timothy, that Timothy come visit him in prison in Rome, (4:21) sometime before the close of shipping in the winter.
 - He has lost all of his other followers and friends.
 - Demas left the faith and went to Thessalonica
 - Crescens left Paul to travel to Galatia.
 - Titus has gone to Dalmatia
 - However, Luke is still with him
 - Paul asks that Timothy bring along John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas who had left him on his second journey. That relationship had been repaired.
- 4:14-15 — Who is Alexander the Coppersmith?
 - The one who opposed Paul in Ephesus and started a riot because people were not buying enough Artemis idols.
- 4:16 — Everyone deserted him when he stood for his first defense in Rome.
 - But God had still rescued him and kept the Romans from immediately putting him to death. Why? Paul says that it was so that the Gentiles might hear the good news (Paul’s main focus as the Apostle to the Gentiles).
- 4:18 — Even though things don’t look so good for Paul now, he knows that in the coming Kingdom he will find rescue.

Titus — Introduction

- **[TIMELINE]** Let’s look again at our timeline. As we learned before, this epistle was written to Titus, another of Paul’s disciples, a few years BEFORE 2 Timothy, when Paul was traveling in Macedonia and Achaia.
- Unlike Timothy, Titus was a gentile. He had traveled with Paul for many years, Even joining him on his trip to Jerusalem from Antioch to visit the elders and discuss the question of Gentile conversion.
 - In Galatians 2:3, Paul tells us that the elders did not require Titus to convert (be circumcised) in order to confirm his faith in Jesus, thus confirming his status as a Gentile God-Fearer.
- However, just like Timothy, Titus was a disciple of Paul, and was knowledgeable about the Torah and matters of Jewish religious practice.
 - And Paul does not consider Titus to be anything less than Timothy.
 - 1:4 — He calls Titus, “my true son in the common faith.”
- Paul wrote this letter to Titus when he was traveling in Macedonia. Titus 3:13 indicates that he ran into his old friend and fellow teacher Apollos who was planning to travel through Crete on the way to his home in Alexandria, Egypt.

- Apollos was traveling with a man named Zenas, who Paul describes as a Torah scholar (most translations say “lawyer,” but in Paul’s context that means the Torah).
- Paul quickly composed this letter and asked the two travelers to deliver it to Titus in Crete on their way across the Mediterranean.
- He also requests that Titus come visit him in Nicopolis where he will be staying over the winter.

Why Was Titus in Crete?

- **[MAP - Crete]**
 - First, let’s talk a bit about Crete.
 - It’s an island in the Mediterranean Sea, situated southeast of Greece and southwest of Asia Minor.
 - Its ancient name is Caphtor. Deuteronomy 2:23 and Amos 9:7 say that this is where the Philistines came from. We talked about that a few years ago when we discussed the Bronze Age Collapse and the time of the Conquest and the Judges.
- 1:5 — Paul says he left Titus in Crete to “set in order what remains”
- It appears that the problems in the congregations in Crete were too big for Paul to deal with in the short time he had available, so leaving his trusted disciple Titus behind was the best solution.
- He tasked Titus with contesting the wrong teachings that were spreading through the congregations, and with raising up new leaders who were competent and holy, able to lead these congregations effectively.

Leadership Qualities

- Titus 1:6-9 describes a long list of qualities that Titus needs to look for in the leaders he is choosing for the congregations in Crete. **[READ Titus 1:6-9]**
 - This list, and others like it in the New Testament, have been used as foundational requirements for pastors and other leaders in the church for the last 2000 years.
 - The requirement that a leader be “the husband of one wife” has been interpreted both to mean that the man must only be married to one woman, not in a polygamous relationship, and also that the man can only have been married one time.
 - Both interpretations can be understood from the way the text is written. In the Assemblies of God, the denomination that Venture belongs to, it is taken in both meanings, so a man who has been divorced and remarried outside of the biblical allowances can be barred from pastoral ordination and leadership.
- **[READ 1:10-16]** I want to address a common misunderstanding about Paul’s instructions here.
 - Apparently, there were some proselytes (i.e., the circumcision) on Crete who raised concerns about the purity status of God-fearing Gentiles. The local community had broken with the standard passed down from the apostles in Acts 15, and had instead created some halakhic rulings, legal opinions, that Paul denounces as “commandments of men.” The term “Jewish myths” refers to midrashic and aggadic embellishments on Scripture that Paul’s opponents might have appealed to as a buttress for their contrary opinions.
 - Paul did not intend to censure **all** Jewish legend, midrash, and legal rulings—only those elements that conflicted with apostolic rulings and turned men “away from the truth.” He regarded the legal controversy on Crete as a distraction from the gospel and the weighty matters of the Torah.

- Titus 3:8–9 says that Paul wanted “those who have believed God [to] be careful to engage in good deeds ... but avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Torah, for they are unprofitable and worthless.”
- Daniel Lancaster (The Sent Ones, Lesson 37, pp. 8-9) says:
 - Paul’s criticisms belong to an internal Jewish debate about legal issues within the Jewish community on Crete. Paul was arguing about a matter of Torah within the context of Torah-Judaism. He argued as a Pharisaic Jewish leader within the Jewish community, not as an outsider. When New Testament readers encounter these statements, they generally misunderstand them as a Christian denouncement of Judaism. From that perspective, Jewish midrashic stories and haggadic parables and anecdotes are censured as “Jewish fables.” Rabbinic rulings and traditions are deprecated as “commandments of men.” Torah study and scholarship are dismissed as “unprofitable and worthless.” Legal discussions are assessed as “foolish controversies.” Such a misreading creates the impression of a sweeping condemnation of Judaism.
- In the end, the issues in Crete were all a result of the community not having solid leaders, so that is what Paul left Titus behind to fix.

Instructions for Different Groups

- Paul now does something he does in many of his other letters: He sends instructions about how different people are supposed to live, with specific emphasis on how Titus is supposed to instruct these different people in their walk.
 - 2:2 — Old Men
 - 2:3 — Old women
 - 2:4-5 — Young women
 - 2:6-8 — Young men, including instructions to Titus himself.
 - I read verse 8 as inferring that the proselytes who are causing trouble in the community are young(er) men like Titus
 - 2:9-10 — Slaves
- Why should all these people live according to the instructions Paul is giving?
 - Because the favor of God has appeared....
- What are we looking forward to?
 - The blessed hope of the resurrection and the return of the Messiah in glory
- What did Jesus give himself up for on the cross?
 - 1) to redeem us from lawless deeds — from violations of the Torah,
 - 2) to purify us into a set apart people
 - 3) to make us eager to do good deeds. Good deeds = mitzvot = the commandments of the Torah.
- Paul ends this section of the letter by instructing Titus to take his authority seriously. He is to address the issues in the congregations on Crete in three ways:

- λαλέω (laleō) = speak, talk; in some contexts with the semantic focus on the telling
 - παρακαλέω (parakaleō) = exhort, ask for earnestly, beg, plead
 - ἐλέγχω (elegchō) = rebuke, expose; refute, show one's fault, implying that there is a convincing of that fault
- In other words, Titus is supposed to use every semantic option at his disposal to get the communities in Crete in line with the truth.

General Instructions for Godly Living

- Chapter 3 starts off with Paul continuing his instructions on how the believers are supposed to behave.
 - **[READ Titus 3:1-2]**
- What does Paul think we should focus our attention on?
 - 3:8 — engaging in good deeds. This is just like James 1:27
 - Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.
- What does Paul want the believers in Crete to focus less attention on?
 - Foolish controversies and genealogies and disputes about the Torah.
- He then tells Titus to give those who are causing trouble a few chances to redeem themselves, but then to kick them out of the assembly.
- In Titus 3:14 he comes back once again to his overarching instruction: Focus your energy on doing *tzedaka*, good deeds, and you won't have time for foolish debates that have not practical benefit.
- I think that's still good advice today.