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### Disputed & Undisputed Epistles of Paul:

#### UNDISPUTED

Galatians • Romans • 1 & 2 Corinthians  
1 Thessalonians • Philemon • Philippians

#### SEMI-DISPUTED

2 Thessalonians • Colossians

#### HEAVILY DISPUTED

Ephesians • 1 & 2 Timothy • Titus

## I. Introduction to Pastoral Epistles

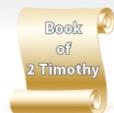
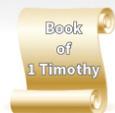
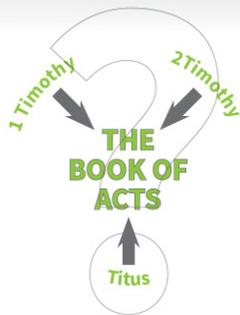
Finally we come to the last three epistles in the New Testament that are attributed to the apostle Paul. Just as we looked at the Prison Epistles as a group in the last lesson, so now we want to look at these remaining three letters, often called the Pastoral Epistles, as a group. They are so called because Paul is writing two letters to Timothy and one to Titus, each of whom is functioning as a pastor in his local setting, Timothy pastoring the church that Paul had founded years earlier in Ephesus and Titus pastoring the church on the island of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea.

### A. Authorship of Pastoral Epistles

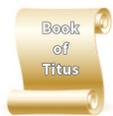
As we noted with Ephesians, and to a certain degree with some scholars with Colossians as well, there have been significant questions in many scholars' minds about the authenticity of these three letters. Did Paul really write them, notwithstanding the appearance of his name in the opening verse of each of the three epistles? There are three particular concerns that have led to these questions. First of all, the language and literary style of the Pastoral Epistles, very much like itself as one compares 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, is on the other hand quite distinct from the language, vocabulary, and style of the remaining epistles attributed to Paul in the New Testament.

Secondly, there seems to be a different doctrinal focus and different milieu in which these letters are written. Repeatedly, the writer enjoins his audience to fight the good fight, to cling to sound doctrine, to be faithful to the truths, to the deposit of faith, that they have already been instructed in against a variety of forms of false teaching. Here is an atmosphere that has developed institutional





## PSEUDEPIGRAPHAL?



offices—bishops, overseers, specific addresses to deacons, to widows who are to be enrolled in a church registry for financial support, commands to older and younger people—that suggest a more institutionalized form of Christianity that one naturally associates with a later generation, after the younger, more charismatic, origins of the church have begun to solidify.

Thirdly, and perhaps most significantly, there is no natural place in the narrative of Acts to place these three letters. Clearly, 1 and 2 Timothy, addressed to Timothy in Ephesus, take place after the foundation of that church, after Paul's ministry there. But 1 Timothy reflects Paul traveling as a free person, whereas in the book of Acts after Paul leaves Ephesus he sails directly for Jerusalem and does never again appear in the pages of Acts as a free man.

Titus, who is leading the church at Crete in the letter addressed to him, obviously is there after some period of time leading to the establishment of a Christian congregation, but there is no evidence from the book of Acts that a Christian church ever existed—even in Acts 27 on those brief stops as part of Paul's shipwreck voyage to Rome—in that particular island. So it would seem that we would have to date these three letters to some period after the narrative of the book of Acts. Understandably then, a majority of critical scholars believe these letters are pseudonymous; that is, written under Paul's name—not out of any intent to deceive, but perhaps acknowledging Paul as the master or authority figure from the writer's past Christian experience, but written to a new generation, applying Pauline truths into new contexts. There is, however, no clear evidence that the early church ever accepted the practice of pseudonymity, common though it was in other Jewish and Greco-Roman documents, as something that was permitted in books which they accepted as canonical.

We may have to turn to different kinds of explanations to account for these differences in the Pastoral Epistles. As we mentioned with the letter to the Ephesians, Paul may have been using a different scribe or amanuensis. He may have given that scribe greater literary freedom. The fact that he is addressing private individuals, rather than churches and the distinctive nature of the false teachings that he has to

## PAUL FREED:

The Writing of 1 Timothy and Titus

## PAUL REIMPRISONED:

The Writing of 2 Timothy

Titus 1:4

*To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.*

address, may account for other differences in vocabulary and content.

### B. Date of Pastoral Epistles

As for the question of date, conservative scholars have usually appealed to early church tradition as old as the testimony of Clement, which claims that Paul did in fact receive release from his Roman imprisonment, with which the book of Acts ends, and proceed to carry on further ministry, during which time he could very easily have penned both 1 Timothy and Titus. 2 Timothy, which finds Paul in prison again, then may actually reflect a second imprisonment in Rome distinct from those from that period that led to the writing of the so-called Prison Epistles that we surveyed in the last lesson. This would still have had to have taken place sometime before the death of Nero in 68 and the end of that first persecution of Christians in and around Rome. So while we cannot be any more specific, 1 Timothy and Titus probably issue from sometime during the years 62 to 64, or perhaps slightly later, after the onset of the Neronian persecution, and 2 Timothy from sometime slightly later in that period, but before A.D. 68.

## II. Titus

We have no way of determining which order Paul wrote Titus and 1 Timothy in, during this period of new-found, though short-lived release from imprisonment. So we will begin with the briefer of the two letters, Titus, and then proceed to some comments on 1 Timothy.

### A. Introduction

As we have mentioned, while Paul is free he is writing to Titus, who is pastoring the church in Crete. And the implications we get is that this is a relatively new and not yet very mature congregation, dealing with some kind of heresy, perhaps not too different from the false teaching Paul has had to combat at Colosse or nearby Ephesus. The analysis of his letter is quite simple; in the three short chapters he begins with greetings in 1:1-4—omits the thanksgiving (only the second time, following the book of Galatians, which was the first time that we have seen Paul

omit this thanksgiving—again to stress the severity of the problem that he has to address).

## B. Instructions

The body of the letter, from 1:5-2:15 then, can be outlined as instructions for various groups in the church. First of all, he begins by addressing elders, also called overseers, especially in 1 Timothy. His criteria for this head position of church leadership are amplified in 1 Timothy, and we shall make some comments about them there. Verses 10-16 then combat the issue of the false teachers that Titus and his church have to face, and apparently there is a significant ascetic or world-denying tendency to this false teaching, as we have seen elsewhere. Paul's main rebuttal, in 1:15, is that the Cretan church shun such asceticism. Simply denying the body normal bodily appetites may, at times, promote a certain kind of spirituality, or at least the perception of such, but is not in and of itself anything foundational or crucial to the Christian faith, and can actually lead people astray from true spiritual behavior.

Chapter 2:1-8 turn to instructions for men and women of various ages. As in Ephesians and Colossians, it is clear that there is a certain patriarchal or hierarchical nature to these commands, although it is perhaps important to note that in the passage in verse 5, in which women are commended to be good “home-workers,” the word that is used is not a similar Greek word that simply meant to stay at home, but a word in which the emphasis was on work. Even up to as recently as a couple of hundred years ago in contemporary civilization, the home was often much more an integrated workplace where either husband or wife or both could do their respective occupations.

Verses 9-10 of chapter 2 very briefly address slaves, much as we have seen in the domestic codes of Ephesians and Colossians; and verses 11-15 then enunciate the particular rationale, for these conclusions. Although verses 5, 8, and 10 have all pointed out how fitting in with certain cultural conventions of the day actually promotes the spread of the Gospel and avoids putting unnecessary obstacles in front of the preaching of Christ and His message, this is not simply cultural accommodation that Paul is describing here. Verses 11-15 sum up an even more fundamental reason for

Titus 1:15

*To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted.*

Titus 2:5

*...to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.*

## Remind the people...

Submit to one another



following proper role relationships: These things are good in and of themselves, and what God requires.

### C. Concluding Exhortations

Chapter 3 comprises the concluding exhortations of Paul's epistle. They include in verse 5 an important reference to the deity of Christ, and in verses 9-11 an interesting reminder that factiousness, much as we saw at Corinth, can be an extremely problematic issue for Christian congregations. Ironically, factiousness itself is one of the few clearly defined, scripturally excommunicable offenses. If someone simply refuses to cooperate with the majority of church members, it may be better for that person to leave and go elsewhere.

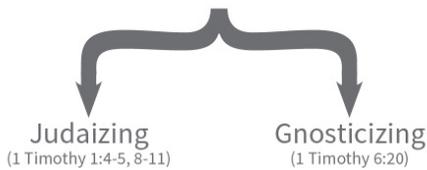
### D. Application

Today there are, of course, many debates over the roles of men and women and older people and younger people. Slavery, for the most part, has been overthrown. And undoubtedly, Titus, like Ephesians and Colossians, will raise many difficult questions in contemporary readers' minds about the specifics of application. What is clear, and very significant for applying a short letter like Titus today, however, is its call on all Christians to submit to one another—to God's will and God's plan for their lives. We, particularly in the West, who have a legacy of radical individualism and a focus on human rights, often have a particularly hard time coming to grips with this fundamental component of the Gospel that in Christ we relinquish our rights for the sake of others.

## III. First Timothy

First Timothy, which is extremely similar in many respects—both style and content—to Titus, is nevertheless longer and expands on several of the same themes raised there as Paul writes Timothy in Ephesus. Again, there clearly is false teaching that has to be addressed, and perhaps even more clearly than in Titus we can see elements very similar to what we identified at Colosse—elements of both a Judaizing and a Gnosticizing tendency.

## Twofold Heresy in Ephesus



### A. False Teachers

After the introduction, Paul goes on to elaborate the reason for this letter throughout chapter 1, and encourages Timothy to stand fast against the false teaching in Ephesus. The hints that we pick up from this opening chapter demonstrate the twofold theological tendencies of the heresy in Ephesus. The reference to the misuse of the law in verses 8-11 almost certainly is a reference to Judaizing, as probably are the references to the myths and genealogies of verses 4-5. Nevertheless, later in the letter, 4:1-5 will talk about those who are forbidding marriage, something very few if any Jews have ever done, given their high respect for that institution. And 6:20 at the close of the letter will talk about those who follow what is falsely called “knowledge”—the Greek word *gnosis*, from which we derive “Gnosticism.” Whether or not this is full-blown Gnosticism, it at least seems to be pointing in that direction, with its more ascetic and world-denying tendencies. Verses 18-20, then, succinctly state the purpose of the epistle: to fight the good fight and not be like those who fell into the heresy and are having to be disciplined.

### B. Control over Worship

The rest of 1 Timothy may be seen as a series of methods by which Paul encourages Timothy to counter this particular false teaching. The first method, which occupies 2:1-3:16, is to exercise careful control over church worship and leadership. Chapters 2 and 3 contain undoubtedly the most disputed, but also the most interesting passages, in all of the Pastoral Epistles. Towards the end of chapter 2, we read about proper role relationships for men and women in the church. Men are to pray—decently, and not quarreling—as apparently some have been. But more significant and lengthy comments are addressed to the women. After comments about their appearance and dress, the most problematic and talked about verses begin in 2:11, through the end of that chapter.

### C. Women Learners

Women are to learn in silence and with all submission. It is important here to recognize that the only command—that is, the only verb in the imperative mood in this

## Proper Role Relationships of Men and Women in the Church



(1 Timothy 2:11-15)

passage—is the statement that women are to learn: They must learn. That in itself was countercultural enough, even in the Greco-Roman world, although more wealthy women often had access to education. But they comprised a very tiny percentage of the society. In the Jewish world, it was extremely uncommon for a young girl to be given any chance to be educated in the way that boys were. We’re reminded of Jesus’ behavior with Mary and Martha when he praises Mary’s desire to be a learner. The words for “silence” and “submission” are those that are used elsewhere in 1 Timothy (compare, for example, 2:2) to refer to a respectful and cooperative demeanor, not to absolute silence and never talking.

#### D. Women Teachers

Verse 12, however, becomes even more problematic and controversial, as Paul says that he does not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over men. The word here translated “exercise authority” is found nowhere else in Scripture, and in some other Greek contexts may carry the more negative sense of “to domineer,” or “to exercise authority improperly”—in which case, then, this does not become a timeless prohibition of women teaching men. If, in fact, it does refer to the more neutral and more general sense of exercising authority, there is also the interesting phenomenon that throughout 1 Timothy 2 in almost every verse Paul uses a pair of words to refer to one particular function. In other words, two terms mutually define one another, leading to one concept. This is a well-known ancient rhetorical device called hendiadys, from the Greek words for one through two. If this is what is going on in 1 Timothy 2:12, then teaching and exercising authority are not two separate functions, but help to explain one another.

Women, on this interpretation, in the church at Ephesus may teach—presumably in a variety of contexts, including over men—but are not to teach in the role that is recognized as the authoritative teaching role. The attraction of this interpretation is that, in chapter 3, the very next passage that Paul deals with, discusses the criteria for the overseers or elders, those who among the criteria for that office, had to have the ability to teach; whereas in 5:17 elders are given a supervisory function, and although a different

1 Tim. 2:12

*I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.*

**“hendiadys”**  
from the Greek word  
for one through two

**Elders and overseers have a twin function of teaching in an authoritative fashion.**



## Two Primary Offices Distinguished in the New Testament



word is used than in chapter 2, it refers again to their exercise of authority. It would appear that what set the elders or overseers off from the deacons, or indeed from the church as a whole, is this twin function of teaching in an authoritative fashion.

Paraphrasing, then, perhaps what Paul is saying in 2:12 is that he does not permit women to be elders, or to be overseers. That does seem to be the fairest view in light of the entire data from Acts in the Pauline corpus about what women did or did not do elsewhere in the first Christian churches. It still leaves, however, entirely open the question of whether this is a timeless mandate or not. Some today, for example, would argue that women were involved in the teaching of the heresy, which Paul is clearly combating at Ephesus; and, therefore, the timeless application of 1 Timothy 2:12 is that women, and presumably men, should never be allowed to teach heresy. Others, particularly appealing to the immediate context of verses 13 and 14 that seem to refer back to the way God made things—a creation ordinance—and the way things took place at the time of the Fall—who sinned first—believe that Paul is giving more timeless teaching here, prohibiting women from at least the highest offices of Christian ministry.

### E. Leadership Criteria

Whichever view one takes, chapter 3 certainly does proceed to deal with the criteria for offices under the headings of the “elder” and “overseer,” also translated as “bishop,” and secondly, “deacon.” Although in the history of the church many different terms have been applied to a variety of offices of leadership, a plausible case can be made that at least throughout the New Testament no more than these two primary offices are distinguished, going back all the way to the precedent set in Acts 6 of the apostles who are concerned primarily with the spiritual leadership of the church and those ad hoc leaders of the Christian Hellenistic Jewish community there who were called upon “to serve,” using the verb of the same root that would later create the noun “deacon,” or “servant.”

It is interesting that in this context of 1 Timothy 3 there is reference to women. Some translations call these women “deacons’ wives,” but the Greek word is simply the word

for “women,” and it may equally plausibly be translated as “deaconesses.” We do know from church history that for the first several centuries after the first century women were regularly in the office of deaconess, not always with the identical role of male deacons, and at times with privileges that were excluded to men—privileges that involved ministering to, counseling, and aiding in the baptism of women. It’s at least arguable that men in leadership in the church today might fall into temptation a little bit less if we cultivated the role of women’s ministry with other women a bit more zealously.

The other major controversy surrounding the criteria for office holders in 1 Timothy 3 involves the criteria that both overseer and deacon be “husbands of one wife.” Does this mean that they can never have been married twice, excluding a widower who has remarried? This was the dominant interpretation in the early centuries of church history, and yet very quickly Christianity was corrupted, particularly in the area of sexual ethics, by an unbiblical Hellenism, and even Gnosticism, that denied the legitimacy of sexual relations in their appropriate spheres. The minority view in the ancient church and the other one which should probably be seriously considered today is that these expressions mean that the individual in question was very loyal and committed to his or her family, if married. It does not rule out the possibility of a second marriage, not even on grounds of divorce. It makes no sense to say that “the husband of one wife” can mean someone who has remarried because they have lost a spouse to death, but not if they had lost a spouse to divorce. Whether or not it is appropriate for someone who has been divorced not on biblically legitimate grounds is, however, another matter of greater controversy.

## F. Godliness, Proper Respect, and Warnings

Chapter 4 then proceeds to the second method that Timothy is called upon to use to combat the false teaching in Ephesus: namely, to enjoin true godliness rather than asceticism. Chapter 5:1-6:2 introduces a third method: proper respect and rules for various other categories of people in the church. And 6:3-21 conclude the letter with warnings, particularly against the influence of wealth. Here we are reminded that the impoverishment of the

1 Tim. 3:2,12

*Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.*

1 Timothy 3:2

*A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well.*

1 Timothy 3:12

1 Tim. 6:10

*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.*

early Christian church, particularly in Judea, did not uniformly carry over to other wings of the church. Indeed, even the lavish dress with which some of the erring women of chapter 2 are described would have been something possible only for the very well-to-do of that particular culture. Riches are a temptation, and 1 Timothy 6:10 has frequently been quoted and also misquoted. The correct translation is “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.” Note that Paul does not say money is the root of all evil, nor even that the love of money is the root of all evil, but is a root of all kinds of evil. Notwithstanding these cautions against mistranslating the verse, it is clear that Paul again has to enjoin contentment with whatever God grants one, recognizing the lures to move away from God and dependence on Him that wealth often brings.

## IV. Second Timothy

### A. Introduction

The final Pastoral Epistle, 2 Timothy, is presumably the last epistle that Paul ever wrote. He has now been reimprisoned, he realizes that his death is very near (see especially 4:6), and he is writing his last will and testament of sorts, his final charge to his young son in the faith, Timothy, encouraging him to pass it on, to carry the torch of Christian faith after Paul has passed from this scene.

### B. Analysis

Chapter 1:1-18 give greetings, give the conventional thanksgiving, and are a memorial to Timothy’s faithfulness—and indeed the faith, both Christian and Jewish, that lived in his mother and grandmother, Lois and Eunice, preceding him. Chapter 2:1-26 forms the heart of the body of the letter, speaking of the commitment which faith requires. And if we had to summarize the lesson of 2 Timothy in one verse, we would probably want to turn to chapter 2:2: “These things that you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses commit, or entrust, to faithful people who will be able to teach others also.” In other words, keep the chain of Christian leadership unbroken. What Paul has taught Timothy, he must teach others and prepare them to teach others. It is a reminder

2 Tim. 2:2

*And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.*

2 Tim. 4:7

*I have fought the good fight,  
I have finished the race,  
I have kept the faith.*

that Christianity in any given location is never more than one generation away from extinction.

Chapter 3:1-17 describes the godlessness that has arisen, and will continue to arise, that Timothy must stand firm against. In this context appear the famous verses, 3:16-17, about both the divine inspiration and relevance of Scripture in this battle. And 4:1-22 give Paul's final charge to Timothy, just as he commanded him in a previous letter to fight the good fight, Paul now reminds him that he has, in fact, fought the good fight, the noble contest. His life is being poured out as a drink offering, but he is prepared to meet Christ with confidence and to leave Timothy in charge of the church at Ephesus, believing that it is in good hands there.