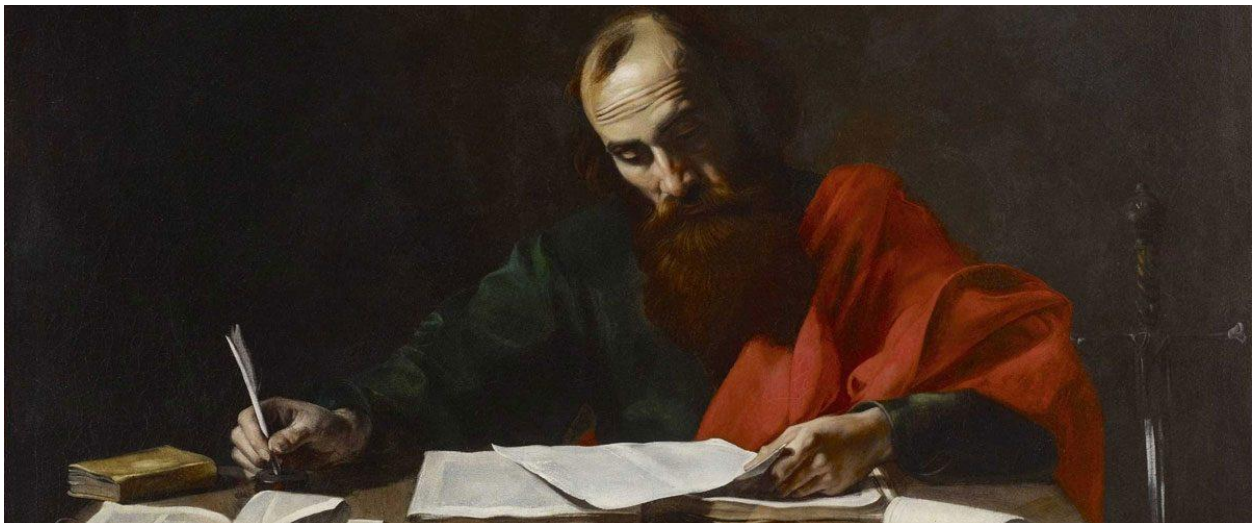


# PAULINE AUTHORSHIP OF THE PASTORAL EPISTLES



**T**he following is an attempt to establish an accurate view regarding the authorship and date of the Pastoral Epistles. There has been a vicious attack on the Bible and particularly with regards to the question of inerrancy and authorship. These questions however can only be properly addressed by viewing the evidence and allowing the evidence to speak for itself.

Evangelicals have long faced opposition from liberal theologians who have questioned the validity and inerrancy of the Bible. By imposing endless questions on the text these theologians have succeeded to create doubt in the hearts of many concerning their own belief in the basic truths of the Bible.

One such area that liberal theologians would challenge is the authorship of the Bible. They would argue that certain portions of Scripture have not truly been written by those who have traditionally been believed to have written it. However, by closer observation

of the facts we are able to arrive at a clear understanding and a proper rebuttal of such assaults.

An answer will be sought by comparing the large pool of contributions to the historical background of the New Testament. The main focus will be to establish whether Paul truly wrote the Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy & Titus) or not, with the additional aim of determining a reliable date of Pauline authorship. The traditional view of the authorship and date of the Pastoral Epistles are deeply doubted by many scholars in history and today. We will have a look at the source for the scepticism expressed in various theories and will aim to disprove these by looking at their feasibility. If Paul is proven to be the author, the issue of date will be settled as will be shown in the conclusion.

## **1. Questioning Pauline Authorship**

According to Marshall, the question of authorship and reception are closely linked together. If the Pastoral Epistles are genuine writings of Paul, then it can be taken for granted that they were directed to the historical Timothy and Titus. If they were written after Paul – although they may depend on some material originally addressed to these historical figures – then they are in fact intended for other recipients. It is unlikely in the latter case “that we can give names to either the author or the recipients. We shall then have to be content to try to say something about the kind of people involved and the areas with which they were associated.”<sup>1</sup>

I.H. Marshall (1999:57) supplies that a significant minority hold that the Pastoral Epistles are the work of Paul, whether directly written by him or by an amanuensis. Nevertheless, most other scholars now do not even question the notion that the Pastoral Epistles have not been compiled by Paul. There are two kinds of conclusions that are typically reached in this regard. First, there are the alleged discrepancies from the acknowledged writings of Paul considering the style and thought of these writings. Pauline authorship is greatly doubted as a result of this. To this, Marshall writes the following:

“These are regarded as sufficiently great to exclude the possibility of Pauline authorship. On the other side, there is the possibility of developing a plausible scenario for a set of pseudonymous compositions and an explanation of their actual content in terms of such a setting. Indeed, for most scholars the only real point left for debate is precise identification of such a setting.”<sup>2</sup>

Lastly, Donald Guthrie agrees that the general tendency is to place the letters well after the time of Paul. This is interpreted as having taken place either towards the end of the first century or even as late as the first half of the second century. These are seen to represent an individual or group’s effort to reclaim Pauline teaching in a Gnostic environment.

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<sup>1</sup> I.H. Marshall, *The International Critical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 57.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## **a. Language and Style**

The language that Paul used is often the point on which many scholars doubt Pauline authorship. Jerome Quin and William Wacker for instance make the comment that the language of these letters is notably different from the rest of Paul's writings.<sup>3</sup>

### **i. Vocabulary**

It can be said that for most English scholars the findings of P.N. Harrison continue to be decisive. He developed three main points as explained by Marshall.<sup>4</sup> Firstly, Harris showed that the Pastoral Epistles have a greater proportion of words per page not found anywhere else, even compared to the other Pauline Epistles. Pivotal to this finding is that the Pastoral Epistles have a vocabulary of 902 words, i.e. 848 ordinary words. The other words (306) are not found in any of the ten Pauline letters.<sup>5</sup>

Secondly, Harrison is said to have argued that the vocabulary was closer to that of second-century writers than to Paul's. He found that of the 93 of the 'hapax legomena' in the Pastoral Epistles, 93 have been used by the Apostolic Fathers and Apologists. Out of 131 other words which are not in the working vocabulary of Paul, 118 occur in the second century authors. Conversely, of 634 words in the ten epistles of Paul which are not found in second-century authors, 595 of them are not found in the Pastoral Epistles.

Thirdly, Marshall points to the fact that Harrison showed that the Pastoral Epistles lack "the connective tissue" found in the original letters. Out of 214 'particles' which occur in the ten Pauline letters, 112 do not occur in the Pastoral Epistles. This is considered to be a large number and reveals the anaemic style of the Pastoral Epistles.

The problem is said to be intensified since many of Paul's most significant words are missing in the Pastorals. They seem to be used with different meanings. Thomas Lea and Hayne Griffin point to a word such as "righteousness" that is presented in the Pastorals as a virtue that is to be sought and not as a gift that ensures right-standing with God. Even "son" is said not to be referring to Christ.<sup>6</sup>

### **ii. Syntax**

As Guthrie has pointed out, those who do not favour Pauline authorship are mostly swayed by linguistic considerations than by any of the traditional objections. Since this is true we find yet another approach closely related to the previous one.<sup>7</sup> This is the

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<sup>3</sup> Jerome D. Quin & William C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 18.

<sup>4</sup> I.H. Marshall, *The International Critical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 59.

<sup>5</sup> Marshall expounds: "This proportion is much higher than for any other Pauline letter. Conversely, there are some 1635 ordinary words and 103 proper names which occur in one or more of the ten Pauline letters and do not appear in the Pastoral Epistles. It is also argued that a number of words which are common to Paul and the Pastoral Epistles are used with different meanings." Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, these Epistles are said to have no references to the cross which is inconsistent with Paul. Thomas D. Lea & Hayne P. Griffin, *New American Commentary: 1, 2 Timothy & Titus* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 25.

<sup>7</sup> C. Michael Moss, *The College Press NIV Commentary: 1,2 Timothy & Titus* (Joplin: College Press, 2003), 16.

attempt to analyse the syntactical style of the letters by looking at factors such as sentence-length, word positioning, and the relative proportions of nouns and verbs and other parts of speech.<sup>8</sup> Initial investigations in this area have proven to be faulty, but have allegedly been supplemented by more detailed methods.

### **b. Literary Dependence**

If it could be shown that the Pastoral Epistles demonstrate literary dependence on the acknowledged letters of Paul, this would make them vulnerable to be discredited for authenticity. Certain scholars believe that a generation of Christian development separates the Pastoral Epistles from the time of Paul.<sup>9</sup> Philip Towner writes that the question arises if there are other literary “antecedents” which could possibly account for the shape of the letters.<sup>10</sup> Critics such as Holtzman, Barnett and Hanson have proposed and developed their case for usage of Pauline writings.<sup>11</sup> Again, Marshall proposes that there is difficulty in “deciding whether an echo of Paul is due to literary dependence (whether direct paraphrase of passages in his letters or the influence of passages remembered consciously or unconsciously) or is due to the same person writing fresh material, or is simply due to a common fund of Christian vocabulary and ideas within the era of Pauline influence.”<sup>12</sup>

### **c. The Author’s Historical Setting**

The historical setting argument can be addressed on two levels. The first is historical, and consists in exploring whether the letters can safely be placed into a possible setting in the writing career of Paul. An alternative to this view is that the so-called pseudonymous letters “contain authentic fragments which can be fitted into a historical framework.”<sup>13</sup> The second issue deals with the literary nature and poses the question of whether an author believed to be pseudonymous had a particular historical setting in mind pertaining to the life of Paul. This setting could have been real or imaginary according to such belief. Marshall offers that the problem is bound up in the apostle’s interaction with pupils such as Timothy and Titus. Accordingly, the difficulty in confirming Pauline authorship “is seen to be bound up with the presentation of Timothy and Titus in their relationship with Paul... [T]he letters do not give a lot of information to enable one to fix them in a specific setting, but there is sufficient material to suggest some possible scenarios which are not directly reflected in other sources of

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<sup>8</sup> I.H Marshall, *The International Critical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 61.

<sup>9</sup> Jerome D. Quin & William C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 19.

<sup>10</sup> Philip H. Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 33.

<sup>11</sup> I.H Marshall, *The International Critical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 61.

<sup>12</sup> I.H Marshall, *The International Critical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 66.

<sup>13</sup> I.H Marshall, *The International Critical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 67.

information.”<sup>14</sup> These problems which are only perceived as such give rise to the exploration of related ideas.

**i. Missions of Paul**

Large scepticism has developed concerning the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles based on the missionary efforts of Paul. Theories supporting Pauline authorship in this regard, and in particular, the Second Imprisonment Theory, are commonly disputed by critics since these are considered unsupported and unhistorical.

Questions that cast doubt on this belief are the following: Could Paul truly have been released from prison? Is the picture represented by this view a realistic one? Why is so much repetition of previous events necessary (ex. visits to Ephesus and Miletus)? Is a scenario that is based on so much speculation at all realistic?<sup>15</sup>

**ii. The Fragmentary Hypothesis**

The Fiction Hypothesis which will be discussed was traditionally abandoned by many scholars and the “Fragmentary Hypothesis” subsequently became adopted as the popular view.<sup>16</sup> According to this hypothesis, the Pastoral Epistles is believed to be artificial compositions that incorporate fragments of Pauline letters. When these fragments are removed from their present setting it becomes possible to see different hypotheses for each of the fragments. The bulk of the three letters is seen as “deuteron-Pauline” containing only a few authentic fragments. These include personal and historical references.

The definition of such a fragmentary theory is that – although the Epistles, as they stand, are the work of a non-Pauline author – the said author has included in his compositions certain genuine fragments.<sup>17</sup>

**iii. The Fiction Hypothesis**

More radical critics have adopted this view when questioning Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles. This view believes that the pseudonymous author of the Pastorals invented historical references to ensure the Epistles’ authenticity. Having been an admirer of Paul, this author created all three letters to address certain concerns in his church.<sup>18</sup> Any discrepancies of detail would then be attributed to the author’s own lack of historical perspective.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> I.H Marshall, *The International Critical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 70-71.

<sup>16</sup> William Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000), 120.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> William Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles* (Nashville: Thomas Nashville Publishers, 2000), 118.

<sup>19</sup> Donald Guthrie, *The Tyndale New Testament Commentary: The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) ,28.

#### **d. The Audience**

The instruction given to colleagues of Paul is proposed as creating difficulty for the case of authorship. The Letters are addressed to those who have worked with him for many years. Thus the elementary instruction that should have been well known to them seems to be repetitious. The almost strict formality and impersonal character is hard to imagine between people who have been by each other's side for so long. The suspicion is caused by the credence that Timothy bears all the marks of a personal letter that is intended for Timothy himself.<sup>20</sup>

## **2. Defending Pauline Authorship**

### **a. Harrison's Theory**

Critics have shown that there are undoubtedly some serious flaws in Harrison's methodology and presentation, says Marshall<sup>21</sup>. In a largely ignored thesis, James Gilchrist has shown that many of Harrison's arguments were "variants of one and the same argument;" Harrison has been said to provide a "stage army" in which he uses the exact same argument many times in different forms.

As John McRay mentions, Hitchcock for instance points out that many of the so called "late" words in the Pastorals occur in the LXX and that Harrison cannot know how much or little Paul knew of the LXX. Paul could certainly have known classical words, and Hitchcock so points out that the fairly new view of "Liddell-Scott has established the respectability of some of the words to which Harrison assigns a late date."<sup>22</sup>

In support, Eta Linnemann has argued that such differences in vocabulary among the Pauline letters are within reason, causing conclusions based on the so-called "peculiarities" of the Pastoral Epistles to be highly doubtful. Bo Reicke, for instance, writes that there is good reason to believe that the Pastoral Epistles were in fact written by Paul. The doubt of scholars based on the language and style of these letters are not justified when looking at the setting in which Paul had found him at the time of compiling them.

Events that may indeed be said to be peculiar can easily be understood by keeping in mind that Paul could have written in a way that was familiar to the residents of Asia Minor who were accustomed to a "heavy baroque" rhetoric style called Asianism.<sup>23</sup> In this regard, Paul may have been ensuring that his audience could truly understand him by "being a Jew among Jews and a Greek among Greeks (1 Cor. 9:20). In this way he

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<sup>20</sup> I.H Marshall, *The International Critical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 74-75.

<sup>21</sup> I.H Marshall, *The International Critical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 60-61.

<sup>22</sup> McRay, John. 1963. The Authorship of the Pastoral Epistles: A Consideration of Certain Adverse Arguments to Pauline Authorship. *Restoration Quarterly*. 7(1-2): 2-18.

<sup>23</sup> Bo Reicke, *Re-examining Paul's Letters* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2001), 52.

could have been very capable of adapting himself to Hellenistic colleagues such as Timothy and Titus as well as to the Hellenistic believers in Colossae and Ephesus.”<sup>24</sup>

## **b. Syntax**

Syntax has been subject to considerable criticism (Kenny; Neuman). Within Paul’s contributions, there is homogeneity with a limited group of seven letters. This is based on the findings of Mealand, who performed a number of tests based on the positioning of particles.

Most of these approaches involve the use of statistical methods, states Marshall.<sup>25</sup> They are said to be “generally open to the criticism that the Pastoral Epistles are too short in length to permit of reliable analysis;” Even the belief that style of writing dictates authorship has been shown to be fallacious regarding Pauline authorship of the Pastorals. Jule proved that stylometric tests have to be considerably lengthy for them to be accurate. Bird, supports these findings.<sup>26</sup> In the same vain most of the existence of stylistic differences can be attributed to Paul’s occasional usage of a secretary/amanuensis.<sup>27</sup>

## **c. Literary Dependence**

There are problems with non-acceptance of Pauline authorship, based on literary dependence. One might pose the question as to how it can be demonstrated that 1 Tim 1:8 is literally dependent on Rom 7:16. Regarding this topic, Lohfink has examined various passages and found only one clear case of literary dependence in 2 Tim. 1:3-12 and how it relates to Rom. 1:8-17.<sup>28</sup> Of the remaining reference is said that “a living Pauline tradition is the source of the influence. The echoes are in fact so faint that the theory of literary dependence cannot be used as an argument for post-Pauline authorship, although it may be plausible as an explanation of the echoes for those who hold this view of the letters.” Certainly this cannot be taken as conclusive evidence as to the existence of literary dependence. Consensus should not be mistaken for empiricism.

## **d. Historical Setting**

### **i. Missions of Paul**

The traditional reconstruction by defenders of Pauline authorship is based on the hypotheses that there was a period of activity by Paul after a release at the end of his

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> I.H. Marshall, *The International Critical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 62.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Walter Liefeld, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1&2 Timothy/Titus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 26.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

two years of imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28). This view has the undoubted advantage over the others by placing the three letters together in one period of time, accounting for their stylistic peculiarities as a group over the other letters. This is related to the classically held "Second Imprisonment" theory which tracks the movements of Paul as recorded by Luke, Acts being the point of departure. Regarding the reliability of this theory, W. Metzger has successfully illustrated how a second and final Roman imprisonment could well be placed within 2 Timothy. Missionary activity on the part of the apostle can be justified within this perspective.<sup>29</sup>

In Acts 28 we find that Paul spent two years in custody in Rome. What is suggested here is the possibility that when Paul's appeal came before the court, it was granted. The case is reported to be supported by the tradition as it is found in Eusebius. Eusebius himself commented on the contents of 2 Timothy and stated that in his view Luke wrote Acts at this time, and that the imprisonment described by Luke was not Paul's martyrdom in Rome.

According to 1 Clement 5, Paul travelled to the limit of the west, which is interpreted as referring to Tartessus in Spain and not Rome. Guthrie supplies that even though Clement's allusion to the apostle preaching to the boundary of the West is rejected as evidence of the Second Imprisonment Theory, the theory does not become affected. Even though Paul supposedly did not reach Spain as the opposition would like to supply, his release is not affected by such thinking. Guthrie offers insight:

"Paul may easily have changed his mind and returned to the East instead of going to the West as he had originally planned. The scanty patristic evidence of a Spanish visit has been alleged to be more than deduction from the notices of Paul's intentions in Romans 15:24, 28. But does this vitiate Paul's further activity in the East? Unless there is positive evidence to the contrary, we cannot be certain that Paul was not released from the imprisonment mentioned at the end of Acts."<sup>30</sup>

Guthrie agrees that it is realistic to ask the question whether one can move forward from possibility to probability in this case. Referring to the book of Acts, he suggests that it would be very strange for Luke to have concluded his story by mentioning Paul's imprisonment without mentioning the fact that he was martyred and executed for his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>31</sup>

This tradition reappears in 'Acts of Peter' and the Muratorian Canon. It very well is in sync with Paul's intention in Romans. If the tradition is accurate, activity by Paul after his imprisonment in Rome is implied. Nothing notable suggests that he travelled west before that point.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> W. Metzger, *Die letzte Reise des Apostels Paulus* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1976), 69-70.

<sup>30</sup> Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 622-623.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> I.H. Marshall, *The International Critical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 62.



The uncertainty expressed in the arguments and questions against this view can be answered. Mark Harding, referring to Prior's defence of a Pauline authorship of 2 Timothy, writes that he is persuaded that Paul never intended this epistle to be his farewell address shortly before his execution. This is based on critics' belief that Paul must have been nearing the time of his death. The release, he says, is a reference to his release from prison in 2 Tim. 4:6. This is not to be understood as a reference to his death. In the time remaining, Paul is believed to have spent time in Spain to which the Muratorian Canon and the Acts of Peter testify.<sup>33</sup>

Recently, Towner supported Pauline authorship of these epistles built on the belief that discrepancies between the Pastorals and the previous letters are due to the fact that Paul wrote these himself while the earlier ones were written by secretaries under the dictation of Paul.<sup>34</sup> The usage of secretaries was not at all uncommon.<sup>35</sup>

## **ii. A Previous Pauline Setting**

Other attempts have been made to fit the Pastoral Epistles into Paul's missionary career as recorded in Acts.

Lestapis argues that Titus and 1 Timothy were written while Paul was at Philippi in AD 58 (Acts 20:30). He arrived in Rome in AD 61 and shortly after wrote 2 Timothy. The unity of style between the letters is due to the fact that in all three cases Paul had the assistance of Luke in the composition. This conclusion rests basically on a study of the personal references in the Pastoral Epistles.

Van Bruggen in essence takes the same position. He argues that 1 Timothy dates from Paul's third missionary campaign before the events described in Acts 20. He does not want to place it later because of the elementary nature of the instruction to the church and Timothy's youth. The letter is really for the church but is addressed to the responsible leader. Titus is dated to the same period. The captivity letters are assigned to Caesarea, except for Ephesians. Second Timothy belongs to the first and only imprisonment in Rome, which was long.

Much the same was adopted by Reicke and Robinson, with the significant difference that they assigned 2 Timothy (along with the other captivity letters of Paul) to his imprisonment in Caesarea; this requires that 2 Tim. 1:16 be interpreted to mean that

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<sup>33</sup> Mark Harding, *What Are They Saying About* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2001), 23.

<sup>34</sup> Philip H. Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 35.

<sup>35</sup> Richards gives helpful insight into the usage of secretaries in the time of Paul. He says: "Evidently, secretaries were used up and down the spectrum of public life, from royal secretaries to the marketplace secretaries. They were a vital part of the administrative structure of the Greco-Roman world, as can be seen by the bureaucracy in Roman Egypt. From the 'central office' in Alexandria, with its hordes of secretaries who kept the main accounting and recordkeeping, there was a hierarchical structure of secretaries that reached all the way down to the local village secretary. Secretaries were critical to the functioning of the Roman government. They were the record keepers for the massive bureaucracy." E. Randolph Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 60.

Onesiphorus sought Paul in Rome (on the basis of mistaken information) and after went to Caesarea and found him there.

The most recent defender of authenticity, Johnson, is content to claim that a good deal of Paul's activity was not recorded in Acts, and therefore have no difficulty in recognising this. The Pastoral Epistles and the activities recorded in them can equally form part of this activity, over which Acts passes in silence.

Similar to theories of the second imprisonment, theories of this kind cannot be refuted by showing that the correlations do not work, since the record in Acts is sufficiently fragmentary to allow for all kinds of reconstructions. They show that the Pastoral Epistles, as they stand, can be fitted into Paul's lifetime.

### **iii. The Fragmentary Hypothesis**

Such a hypothesis does not have much credibility according to Guthrie.<sup>36</sup> He gives us three main reasons for his opposition to this theory:

Firstly, he says that the "disintegrated" character of the so-called fragments belies them, especially the theory of Harrison, explained earlier. This causes it to be nearly impossible to see what process of composition the editor of 2 Timothy used in ensuring that the fragments be preserved. When looking at chapter 4, it becomes evident that such an editor could not have mixed these up more than he did. This would only have been the case if he was completely unaware of the way in which this information should have been organised. However, the reader can be assured that chapter 4 "does not read like a haphazard hotch-potch, and it would be necessary to assume, therefore, on this theory that the editor must have done his work superhumanly well to have belied all suspicion of disjointedness until nineteenth- and twentieth-century criticism tracked down the muddle."

Secondly, Guthrie refers to the preservation of these disjointed fragments as another problem. This is largely so because these fragments are not particularly the kind of fragments that would normally have large appeal. He says the following: "Even if an early Christian with antiquarian interests had accidentally discovered and highly prized these genuine Pauline relics there would still be need to give an adequate motive for their incorporation so unevenly in Titus and 2 Timothy. No satisfactory explanation of this procedure has so far been given."<sup>37</sup> One cannot merely state that a Pauline editor composed the Epistles as a way to preserve these fragments. Although this process might have promoted their authority, there is still no proof if one cannot compare this with other examples that might prove that such practice was normal in the early church.

Thirdly, Guthrie finds the fact that Acts contains the complete history of Paul, problematic. He says "to propose fragments to fit into the existing Acts structure

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<sup>36</sup> Donald Guthrie, *The Tyndale New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 30-31.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

effectively changes the nature of the historical data, but this cannot be said to be sound historical method.”<sup>38</sup>

Lastly he offers that one can be sure that the traditional explanation is historically most sound and least open to criticism. The fragment theory raises too many problems to justify its acceptance.

#### **iv. The Fiction Hypothesis**

Guthrie offers reasons for finding this view problematic. This observation does not account for the “realism” of some of these references: “The request for the cloak left with Carpus requires some explanation. It is not satisfactory to suggest that it was a fictional element after the analogy of the cloak passed from Elijah to Elisha as some have maintained. This together with other sections of a similar realistic character gives the impression of being genuine pieces of Pauline information.”<sup>39</sup>

#### **e. The Audience**

Defenders of the authenticity of 1 & 2 Timothy, and Titus can rest in having a fairly sound case as it pertains to this point. These letters, says Marshall “are really for the third/fourth generation churches and their leaders who are directly addressed under the guise of Timothy and Titus.”<sup>40</sup>

Consistent with the role and heart of the apostle “the letters are cast as indirect instruction as a means of showing how the leaders of the readers have their authorisation and theology handed down to them from Paul.”<sup>41</sup>

There remains the perceived problem: The letters are giving Timothy and Titus instruction that is very well known to them in a very formal way. However, this problem tends to be greatly exaggerated. Parallels to this situation are found in Ignatius’ letter to Polycarp where he advises him in a way that is similar to that found in the Pastoral Epistles.

In support of this view, one can point to the plural form of the final blessings as evident in all three letters.<sup>42</sup> The instruction to Timothy from Paul to other leaders (2 Tim. 2:2) indicates that the contents of the letter were meant to be shared with a larger audience. The information in these letters has the purpose of instructing the congregations of Timothy and Titus. This ensures that they will know what is to be expected from their leaders so that they will be able to hold them accountable.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Donald Guthrie, *The Tyndale New Testament Commentary*, 28.

<sup>40</sup> I.H. Marshall, *The International Critical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 75.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

Paul is seen to have mastered the art of letter writing. The letters to Timothy and Titus along with the letter to Philemon are examples of the great skill that he possessed. Regarding Paul's strategy of politeness in interceding for Onesimus, Wilson writes the following: "We have also seen expressed through these strategies the complex relationship which exists between Paul and Philemon in this social situation. As the apostle of Christ, Paul has the authority to direct the church and its members, but at the same time he shows considerable respect for Philemon's face in front of the church at Colossae."<sup>43</sup> Commenting on this observation, Stirewalt concludes that the letter to Philemon reveals Paul's matured mastery of letter writing as a medium for his ministry. He is said to have "melded a professional authority with expressions of affection, and he does so having mastered the forms, both personal and official, which will enable him to express himself persuasively."<sup>44</sup> We clearly have evidence of Paul's own concerns as has been expressed in his letter to Philemon.

#### **f. Pseudonymity Confronted**

Pseudonymity in large becomes the favourite defence of those who oppose the idea of Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles. The various hypotheses and their theories discussed in the first half of this writing have a communal lynch pin placing them in the camp that believes in a pseudonymous author of these epistles. The following will be addressing this one issue in which all such views are united yet proven to be unreliable.

Firstly, the internal evidence for the reliability of Pauline authorship is rather convincing. The Pastoral Epistles in and of themselves testify to Paul as the author. Knight refers to the accuracy with which they refer to Paul and his circumstances, fellow workers, concerns, and many others challenging pseudonymity in its core.<sup>45</sup> It is no wonder, he says, that theorists such as Harrison, amongst others, view some parts of these epistles as true fragments written by Paul.

Furthermore, pseudonymity as practice seems to be romanticised by some critics of Pauline authorship. The practice is regarded as one that was popular in those days and was a way of ensuring Pauline authority. Could this really be the case if recipients are being deceived, Knight asks. The question cannot be taken lightly taking into consideration the way in which Paul guaranteed authority, as is evident in his second letter to the Thessalonians.<sup>46</sup> It is important to note that Paul ensures his readers that

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<sup>43</sup> Andrew Wilson, "The Pragmatics of Politeness and Pauline Epistolography: A Case Study of the Letter to Philemon," JSNT 48 (1992): 107-19.

<sup>44</sup> M. Luther Stirewalt Jr. *Paul the Letter Writer* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 93.

<sup>45</sup> George W. Knight, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1992), 46.

<sup>46</sup> "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write" (2 Thess. 3:17, ESV).

this is the way he authenticates his writings in all his letters. Similarly, numerous other passages have been written by Paul where he has done exactly the same.<sup>47</sup>

When concluding this matter, it is not unrealistic, as Knight explains, for the early church to have been regulated by such safety measures. Concerning the personal elements in 2 Timothy (1:15-18; 4:9-21), Branick agrees that a pseudonymous writer would hardly have thought about including such detail. The loose train of thought which is typical of some of the apostle's exhortations could very well be interpreted as signs of authenticity.<sup>48</sup> Paul made sure that his own writings were authenticated and in so doing prevented other false letters from creeping in. Therefore "it is not accurate to characterise this perspective as foreign to the early church and imposed on it by those living in a later day. Rather, it is found in the apostle and communicated by him to the early church."<sup>49</sup> By observing the Pastoral Epistles' self-testimony in terms of authorship, recipients, setting and purposes, it becomes rather obvious then that Paul, as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit, crafted them for the edification of the saints.

That Paul had written the Pastoral Epistles also has certain benefits as Myriam Klinker-De Klerck explains. According to her, the current view on Pauline language and theology can be nuanced. Secondly, she believes that new insight could be gained concerning the outlook of Pauline communities in the late fifties of the first century. Thirdly, if all three of the Pastoral Epistles are perceived as letters from Paul, it would clearly be an enrichment for the study of the Pauline literature. In summing up, she states that the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles generally could be of great importance with respect to the ongoing discussion concerning pseudepigraphy within the canon.<sup>50</sup>

## Conclusion

The arguments against Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles seem *unconvincing* in light of its shortcomings. Many of these theories have been shown to possess inherent gaps that cannot lead to the acceptance of them. The classical tradition of Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Letters still stands firm. Since Paul is proven to be the true author of the Pastoral Epistles, the following dates according to the Second Imprisonment Theory can be given: First Timothy and Titus was probably written after Paul's first release (ca. A.D. 61) from his Roman imprisonment. Second Timothy was written more towards the end of his life (ca. A.D. 67), most probably during his second Roman imprisonment.

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<sup>47</sup> Other passages that ensure Paul as the origin of the writings are 1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; Col. 4:18; and Phm. 19. George W. Knight, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The Pastoral Epistles*, 47.

<sup>48</sup> Vincent P. Branick, *Understanding Paul and His Letters* (Mahwah: New Jersey, 2009), 355.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Klinker-De Klerck, Myriam. 2008. The Pastoral Epistles: Authentic Pauline Writings. *European Journal of Theology*. 17, 101-108.

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