

**How Pauline are the Pastoral Epistles?  
...and why does it matter?  
Part One — Introduction**

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The so-called Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus) raise acute questions about the legacy of the Apostle Paul. Some scholars consider these letters to be Paul's own applications of his thinking about practical church matters so that leaders of his churches in the next generation will know how to carry on his ministry.<sup>1</sup> Other scholars consider these letters to represent a second generation falling away from Paul's original dynamic vision of "new creation" in Christ.<sup>2</sup>

After surveying these options, this class will propose a reading of the Pastoral Epistles as Paul's own creative contextualization of his prime theological values in terms that reflect the chief religious and ethical aspirations of the world in which the apostle's heirs will have to minister when he is gone.

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### **Titus's Self Presentation<sup>3</sup>**

Written for a "missionary" or "church-planting" situation. Paul's delegate has been left behind in Crete to:

- 1) put in place elders/overseers who can refute false teaching;
- 2) lay down a pattern of teaching that establishes the right fit between lifestyle and truth.

The issue of Christians' relation to "culture" is addressed more forthrightly here than in any other place in Paul's writings (probably in the entire NT): living "sensibly, justly and godly in the present age" (*sophronos, dikaios, eusebos* — 2:12; see also 1:8, with a probable sidelong glance at 1:12). It surfaces in this letter that Paul's teachings contain the seedbed for what French commentator Ceslas Spicq dubbed a "Christian humanism" (ideas latent in Gal 6:10; Rom 12:17b-18; Php 4:8).

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<sup>1</sup> Defenders of authenticity among the introductions: Donald Guthrie (IVP, 1990), Carson, Moo & Morris (Zondervan, 1992, 2005), Luke Timothy Johnson (Fortress, 1986) — among the recent commentators: Ben Witherington (IVP, 2006), Philip Towner (Eerdmans, 2006), Luke Timothy Johnson (Trinity, 1996), Gordon Fee (Hendrickson, 1988)

<sup>2</sup> Defenders of inauthenticity or pseudepigraphy among the recent introductions: Helmut Koester (Fortress, 1982), Werner Kummel (Abingdon, 1973) — among the commentators: James D. G. Dunn (Abingdon, 2000), Jouette Bassler (Abingdon, 1996), Jerome Quinn (Titus: Doubleday, 1990; 1 & 2Tm: Eerdmans, 1999), Dibelius/Conzelmann (Fortress, 1977)

<sup>3</sup> Concerning Titus, you may wish to consult Reggie M. Kidd, "Titus as *Apologia*: Grace for Liars, Beasts, and Bellies," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 21.2, Dec. 1999, pp. 185-209. (Available in .html or .pdf format via [http://www.rts.edu/Site/Staff/rkidd/rkidd\\_writings.aspx](http://www.rts.edu/Site/Staff/rkidd/rkidd_writings.aspx).)

Theme verses: 2:11-14:

*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live in a sensible, just and godly manner in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus: who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.*

## **1 Timothy's Self Presentation**

Written for an established church. Purpose: to give Timothy ammunition in putting down false teaching from (apparently) elders (or aspiring elders) within the church (see Acts 20:30). Note how little of the letter deals with the heresy head on — Paul's interest is in structuring lives within the community in such a way as to create a climate of plausibility for true godliness.

Theme verses: 3:14-16:

*I am writing these things to you...so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth. Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.*

## **2 Timothy's Self-Presentation**

Purpose: simultaneously to call Timothy to Paul's side as he faces probable martyrdom (4:9,13,21) and to call Timothy to courage for ministry in his teacher's absence.

Theme verses: 1:7-8:

*... Hence I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control. Do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel in the power of God....*

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**Shared Concerns with Previous Letters:** a *modus operandi* of working through coworkers; Paul himself as model for imitation; concern for good order in the churches; opposition to what he considers to be false teaching; concern for his churches' reputation with outsiders; affirmation of marriage and creation order; reserve about women's role in worship; the belief that grace both justifies and transforms; and a basic "already/not yet" construct of salvation history.

## **Distinctive Features of the Pastorals:**

- **Individual Letters to Pauline Coworkers** — Compare with Philemon. And not just any coworkers, but two of the most "Greek" (Titus, Gal 2:3; Timothy, Ac 16:1-3)

- **Style & Vocabulary** —

Basic similarities with each other: use of “faithful saying” formula (1Tm 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2Tm 2:11; Tt 3:8); no final greetings; no mention of amanuensis (scribe) or co-author

Smoother Syntax

Noticeable lessening of inferential particles and conjunctions (e.g., “therefore,” “since,” “with the result that,” “but now,” “is it not?”)

Linguistic Distance from the Earlier (especially the Argumentative) Letters:

Paul’s vocabulary is expanded (2,177 different words in 1<sup>st</sup> 10 letters; 902 different words in PE, 596 in common with early letters, and 306 new words — 176 of the latter occur only here in NT, at the rate of about 13 per page as opposed to 4-5 per page in earlier Paulines; about 80 of these also occur in the Greek OT).

Distinctive, and Often More Hellenistic Vocabulary

*eusebeia* (“godliness/piety” — see also Ac 3:12; 10:2; 17:23)

*epiphaneia* (“appearance” [1Tm 6:14; 2Tm 1:10; 4:1, 8; Tt 2:13] instead of Paul’s more characteristic *parousia* = “presence” [1Co 15:23; 1Th 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 2Th 2:1, 8-9 — though note that at 2Th 2:8, Paul uses both terms together])

*hugiainein* (“healthy/sound” teaching, Tt 1:9, 13; 2:1-2, 8; 1Tm 1:10; 6:3; 2Tm 1:13; 4:3 — see the metaphorical use in Lk 5:31; 15:27, alone among the gospel writers)

language of character (esp. in the officer lists — helpful parallels in Dibelius/Conzelmann)

“love of money” (the PE use “love of money” or *philarguria/philarguros* [1Tm 6:10; 2Tm 3:2 — and see also Luke 16:14] rather than the normal Pauline “greed” or *pleonexia/pleonektes* [e.g., 1Co 6:10; 1Th 2:2 — and also Luke 12:15])

Of interest to many (including myself) is how frequently the linguistic movement lies in the direction of Luke (writer of Luke-Acts)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See the studies by C. F. D. Moule (“The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles: A Reappraisal,” in *Bulletin of John Rylands Library* 47 [1965]), and S. G. Wilson, *Luke and the Pastoral Epistles* (London: SPCK, 1979). Witherington treats the PE as coming from the mind of Paul and the hand of Luke. Quinn treats the PE as coming from the same next generation “Luke” who gave us a three-volume account of the origins of Christianity: Luke-Acts-Pastorals.

- **Church Organization** — structure & differential gifting is apparent from the beginning of Paul’s ministry (1Th 5:12; 1Co 12, esp. vv. 28-30; Rm 12; Eph 4), and “overseers/bishops & deacons” are mentioned in Php 1:1, but the PE (at least, 1Tm & Tt) give significantly greater focus to office and to the character required for office.
- **Theology & Ethics**

Approach to Heresy — rather than make his case with the community (see 1Co 15; Gal; Rom; Col) or even praying his case before the communities (Eph), here Paul reminds his coworkers of the basic truths they are to press home, and he does so in fairly condensed creedal statements (1Tm 2:3-7; 3:16; 2Tm 1:8-10; Tt 2:11-14; 3:4-7). He’s not instructing — he’s reminding.

Reaffirmation of, perhaps even further generalization, of Paul’s reserve about women’s public role in worship (compare 1Co 11 & 14 with 1Tm 2)

Expansion of “good works”:

In Gal & Rom “works” (pl.) almost always mean “works of the law” and are almost always bad (Ro 2:6 is controversial); Paul does say “faith working through love” is good (Gal 5:6), and he can use the singular noun “work” in a positive way (e.g., “work of faith”, 1Th 1:3)

In Eph 2:9 Paul reminds readers that salvation is “not by works,” but he turns a corner when he affirms that believers have been (re)created in Christ Jesus “for good works”

In the PE, the “not by works” principle is repeated (Tt 3:5; 2Tm 1:9), but what is most notable is that in Tt & 1Tm “good works” or “noble works” receive strong commendation (Tt 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14; 1Tm 5:10, 25; 6:18)

## The Pastorals in the Early Church

2 Peter 3:15

1Clement

Ignatius

Polycarp

Marcion

Chester Beatty Papyrus 46

Muratorian Canon

Acts of Paul & Thecla (mid 2<sup>nd</sup> cent)

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### **How to account for the differences/similarities?**

- If inauthentic/pseudepigraphical:

A generational shift in perspective: old school pseudonymity maintained this was an innocent, even transparent literary device; new school pseudonymity maintains this was a deliberate fabrication, a “white lie” to win a propaganda war<sup>5</sup>

If early, how did the PE get past the people who would have known better?

If late, then 1 Clement (at least) is difficult — and in general, it’s difficult to imagine documents that are so artless in their imitation getting past the church

- If authentic:

Has Paul lost something of the fire?

Are these the sort of letters might we imagine Paul writing to the kinds of people we know Timothy & Titus to have been from the undisputed letters and Acts?

Might they reflect the concerns of the apostle anticipating the continuation of the gospel ministry: a) on European soil; and b) in his absence?

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<sup>5</sup> Forcefully argued by Donelson, Lewis R. *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles*. (Siebeck 1986).

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Part Two**

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## **The Epistle to Titus: Towards a Christian Humanism<sup>6</sup>**

*How would it be if human nature could be founded upon some secure rock, in order that then the architect might start to build once more, and build, this time, with a conscience void of offense? Such is the Christian ideal, the ideal of a loftier humanism — a humanism as rich and as joyful as the humanism of Greece, but a humanism founded upon the grace of God.<sup>7</sup>*

• J. Gresham Machen

*This is why St. Paul — this is one of the finest accomplishments of his genius for adaptation — presents Christian ethics under the heading of beauty (kalos) defines it by good sense and the golden mean, and preaches order, decency, and deportment. ... His disciple ... is convinced that piety is useful for everything; it possesses promises for the present life as well as for the future. Christ Jesus has illuminated life! The pastoral epistles are the charter of Christian humanism.*

*If the Pastorals state as strongly as the earlier epistles the contrast between Christianity and paganism, they no longer isolate the church from the profane world; to the contrary, they plant within it a remarkable optimism and security. ... Exhortations such as “that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed” (1Tm 6:1), “that the Word of God not be blasphemed” (Tit 2:5; cf. vv. 8,10) can be understood as litotes, and explain how, despite all obstacles and opposition, the world was so swiftly won to Christianity.<sup>8</sup>*

• Ceslas Spicq

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<sup>6</sup> Much of this lecture is adapted from Reggie M. Kidd, “Titus as *Apologia*: Grace for Liars, Beasts, and Bellies,” *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 21.2, Dec. 1999, pp. 185-209. (Available in .html or .pdf format via [http://www.rts.edu/Site/Staff/rkidd/rkidd\\_writings.aspx](http://www.rts.edu/Site/Staff/rkidd/rkidd_writings.aspx).)

<sup>7</sup> J. Gresham Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion* (Eerdmans, 1925), p. 224

<sup>8</sup> Ceslas Spicq, *Les Epistres Pastorales* (Gabalda, 1969), pp. 295-296, and translated at Reggie M. Kidd, *Wealth and Beneficence in the Pastoral Epistles: A “Bourgeois” Form of Early Christianity?* (Scholars Press, 1990), pp. 26-27.

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## The Rosetta Stone of Titus — 1:12 & 2:12

**A. Always liars (1:12),**

**B. vicious beasts (1:12),**

**C. idle bellies (1:12).**

**C1. To live sensibly (2:12)**

**B1. and justly (2:12)**

**A1. and piously (2:12).**

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### The (Sometimes 3-fold, Sometimes 4-fold) Catalog of Virtues in Contemporary Greek Thinking

Xenophon's final sketch of the virtues of Socrates in *Memorabilia* 4.8.11: "so *religious* [*eusebēs*] that he did nothing without counsel from the gods; so *just* [*dikaios*] that he did no injury, however small, to any man ...; *self-controlled* [*egkratēs*] ... *wise* [*phronimos*]"

Philo (early, mid-1<sup>st</sup> cent. Jew), *Prot.* 329c; "Virtue (*hē aretē*) is something that is one (*hen*); and its parts are justice (*dikaiosunē*) and sensibility (*sōphrosunē*) and holiness (*hosiotēs*)."

Dio Chrysostom (late 1<sup>st</sup> & early 2<sup>nd</sup> cent.), *Oration* 23.7: "... to live justly and prudently and sensibly" (*dikaiōs zēn kai phronimōs kai sōphronōs*).

Dio Chrysostom describes the virtuous person using the older fourfold canon: "prudent and just and holy and courageous" (*phronimos kai dikaios kai hosios kai andreios* — *Or.* 23.8). In the same sentence he expresses the converse in threefold form: the evil person is "unjust and unholy and cowardly" (*adikos kai anosios kai deilos*).

**Crete's Vices: Vicious Beasts (Lack of Justice)** — Crete was an island reputed to lack predatory animals.

Pliny (late 1<sup>st</sup> cent. Roman) asserts the absence of "wolves, bears, any noxious animals at all except a poisonous spider, wild boars, and hedgehogs" (*Natural History* 8.83)

Plutarch (early 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. Greek) introduces an address on profiting from one's enemies by contrasting Crete's reputation for being a region without wild animals (*chōran athēron*) with the sad fact that there is no polity anywhere free of the passions that produce enmity: envy, rivalry, and contention (*Moralia* 86C). "Alas," to paraphrase Paul's Cretan prophet, "it is true of Crete

as well: our being known for having no wild animals stands in condemnation of us. We have no need of predatory animals, we have predatory humans!”

**Crete’s Vices: Idle Bellies or Lazy Gluttons (Lack of Self-Mastery)** — the critic indicts his fellow Cretans for uncontrollable appetites that underlie social viciousness. It’s a statement not without irony, because there is nothing “idle” or “lazy” about Crete’s reputation. The island was (in)famous during the Hellenistic period as a supplier of soldiers of fortune and during the early Roman period as a haven for pirates.

Polybius (mid 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. BC Greek historian of the rise of Rome) berates the islanders for a sordid love of gain and lust for wealth; so greedy are they, he maintains, that Cretans are the only people in the world in whose eyes no gain is disgraceful (*hōste para monois Krētaieusi tōn hapantōn anthrōpōn mēden aischron nomizetai kerdos* — *Hist.* 6.46.3).<sup>9</sup> According to classical historian A. M. Eckstein, Polybius portrays Cretan turbulence, injustice, and ignoble behavior as having “at the center of the web of evil” uncontrolled avarice and the lust for gain (*aischrokerdeia kai pleonexia*) — “the besetting Cretan vice (Polybius 6.46.3; 6.46.9; 6.47.4).”<sup>10</sup> In the Cretan prophet’s juxtaposition of viciousness and gluttony, Paul finds a similar assessment: unbridled appetites make for bestial behavior.

### **Crete’s Vices: Inveterate Liars (Religious Dissembling)**

In the Greek speaking world, the verb “to Cretize” (*krētizein*) means “to lie” (*pseudesthai*).<sup>11</sup> But what underlies the characterization is Crete’s infamous religious prevarication, a misstep of first principles.

The late 2<sup>nd</sup>-early 3<sup>rd</sup> century Christian, Clement of Alexandria, maintained that Paul got the saying from the Cretan myth-collector Epimenides (ca. 7<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.). Fact is, though, that Titus 1:12 marks the first appearance of the saying in its entirety in any extant source. Prior to the letter to Titus, the first member of the saying appears for the first time, and that in this precise wording — “Cretans are always liars” — in Callimachus, the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. librarian of Alexandria. Callimachus explains exactly what he finds so offensive about Cretans:

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<sup>9</sup> As backdrop to his censure, Polybius appeals to the Hellenistic canon of virtue: in their private lives people ought to be “pious” (*hosios*) and “self-controlled” (*sōphrōn*), and in their public lives they ought to be “tame” (*hēmeros*) and “just” (*dikaios* — 6.47.2). Though the form is fourfold, the content is threefold, since “tame” and “just” are synonyms.

<sup>10</sup> Arthur M. Eckstein, *Moral Vision in the Histories of Polybius* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) 71-72.

<sup>11</sup> Suetonius, *On the Right Insult*, 13.253, as cited in C. Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 2 vols., 4<sup>th</sup> revised ed. (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1969) 608 (with other references).

“Cretans are always liars. For a tomb, O Lord, Cretans build for you; but you did not die, for you are forever” (*Krētes aei pseustai; kai gar taphon, ō ana, seio Krētes etektēnanto; su d’ ou thanes, essi gar aiei* — *Hymn to Zeus* 8-9).

Though it is used in classical texts, the epithet “unlying” (*apseudēs*) is never applied to deity in either Jewish or Christian scriptures, except at Tt 1:4. And the nuance Paul intends here is dramatically foreshadowed by the term’s use in another saying from the same Callimachus. In a prayer to the god Demeter, Callimachus asserts that it is a matter of “speaking without lying” (*apseudea legōn*) to say that one “knows the Cretan tomb is empty” (*tapho[n to]n K[r]ēta ginōskein kenon* — *Iambus* 12 [Fragment 202] 15-16).

A little background in the history of religion: himself the champion of a transcendent Olympian view of the gods, Callimachus takes as his point of departure an immanentistic Cretan heritage that maintains the gods of the Greek pantheon to have originally been but men and women.<sup>12</sup> In other words, Cretans were the original Mormons — and it is probably no accident that Nikos Kazantzakis, the author of *The Last Temptation of Christ* (a tale of the ascendancy of a human to deity through the route of self-denial) was himself from Crete.

Emblematic of the original humanity of the gods is ancient Crete’s claim to have a tomb for Father Zeus, perhaps on Mt. Juktas (though there are other claimants), a mountainous ridge south of Cnossus, resembling a human face oriented upwards in profile and long thought of as Zeus in repose.<sup>13</sup> Cretans had their own angle of vision: their race had emerged from the earth, and so, of course, they were the original Greeks (Diodorus Siculus 5.64.1). In the face of Olympus’ claim to be the seat of the gods, Crete countered that those very gods were but men and women of Crete elevated to deity by virtue of benefactions bestowed upon the human race (Diodorus 5.64.2). Cretans held their island to be the birthplace of the majority of the gods, and in the case of the preeminent man-become-god, Zeus, the burial place as well. Of course, this also made Crete the launching pad of the worship of the gods (Diodorus 5.77.3).

The Cretologist Stylianos Spyridakis suggests that Callimachus’ bile against Cretans is a result of their complicity in the anthropocentric religious ideas of Callimachus’ contemporary,

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<sup>12</sup> At play here is a longstanding contrast between the transcendent Olympian portrait of the gods and the immanentist Cretan portrait. Cf. the discussion in W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods* (Boston: Beacon Free Press, 1950) 40-42; in the spirit of the Russian-American sociologist Pitirim Sorokin, Reformed theologian H. O. J. Brown contrasts “sensate” early Cretan-Mycenaean culture with the “ideational” culture of Homer’s Greece (*The Sensate Culture* [Dallas: Word Publishing, 1996] 43). Thanks to my colleague Al Mawhinney for calling my attention to this dynamic.

<sup>13</sup> See A. B. Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion*, Vol. 1, *Zeus God of the Bright Sky* (NY: Biblo & Tannen, 1964 reprint) 157-163; and Vol. 2, *Zeus God of the Dark Sky (Thunder & Lightning)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925) 939-940, and photograph of Mt. Juktas at Plate 43; and Lewis Cottrill, *The Bull of Minos: The Discoveries of Schliemann and Evans* (NY: Facts on File, 1953) 112. More reserved about the identification of any of the places designated as the “tomb of Zeus,” and especially about Mt. Juktas, is Martin P. Nilsson, *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and its Survival in Greek Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. (NY: Biblo & Tannen, 1950, 1971) 461-462.

Euhemerus of Messene. Euhemerus co-opts the ancient Cretan notion of deity emerging from humanity in support of a teaching that the gods themselves are nothing but a projection of the human spirit (sort of a proto-Feuerbach, if you will). This, maintains Spyridakis, is as close to blasphemy as pre-Christian Greek religion is capable.<sup>14</sup>

By claiming a tomb for Zeus, Cretans have always walked right up to a line between divinity and humanity that, despite being ever blurry in Greek thinking, had nonetheless always at least in principle been there. But in the Hellenistic age Crete's heritage of maintaining a tomb for Zeus emboldens rationalists, who, in light of his having been thus cut down to human proportions, are prepared to go the rest of the way and claim: "Zeus is dead."<sup>15</sup>

It would be the incorporation of Epimendes' and Euhemerus' views into the writings of the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus (ca. 90-27 B.C.) at the birth of the Roman Republic and about 100 years before the letter to Titus, that would govern the general understanding of Cretan religion at the beginning of Christian era.<sup>16</sup> Though it goes beyond the evidence to argue for direct literary influence of Diodorus on the epistle to Titus, it should be noted that Titus' specific concern to counter Jewish "myths" and "genealogies" finds a counterpoint in the fact that Diodorus' section on Cretan religion is woven together by words from the *mutholog*-root and that it is framed as genealogies of gods and heroes. Diodorus thinks of himself as merely the popularizer of longstanding traditions (the verb *paradidonai* courses through the sections on the early Greeks). The strong likelihood is that Diodorus' *History* contains precisely the sort of "myths" and "genealogies" Paul's rival Jewish teachers seek to accommodate with their own torah-based apologetic "myths" and "genealogies."<sup>17</sup> Titus' Paul wants none of it.

Interestingly, Callimachus' protest against Euhemerus will be renewed by Plutarch (fl. ca. 80-120 CE) not long after the New Testament era. Plutarch will insist that the Euhemeran mythology is predicated upon a lack of faith and is a deliberate fabrication. It amounts to "atheism," to a "degrading of things to the human level," and to an assault on piety and reverence and faith (*Isis et Osiris* 359-360). And Lucian the satirist will play off the popular association of Crete with such deicidic ideas late in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE (*Philopseudes* 3; *Timon* 6).

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<sup>14</sup> Spyridakis, *Cretica*, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Thus the title of Spyridakis' essay: "Zeus is Dead."

<sup>16</sup> Diodorus himself says his section on Crete is dependent in part "upon Epimenides who has written about the gods" (5.80.4). And Diodorus provides the most extensive account we have of Euhemerus' utopian island, Panchaea, to which the human Zeus was supposed to have migrated from Crete to establish his thoroughly humanistic and enlightened worship (5.42-46).

<sup>17</sup> Quinn is probably correct in identifying Titus 1:14's "Jewish myths" as a rival *haggadah* ("...the homiletic, narrative embellishment of the Pentateuchal history ...") and "commandments of truth-bereft humans" as a rival *halakah* ("...the 'oral law' or further explanation of how to carry out the commandments of the Torah ..." [109]). He further lays out suggestive lines of analysis for the rival Jewish teachers' appeal to genealogies (245-247) alongside the mythical interpretation of Scripture, all in order to "to bridge the gap between the Scriptures of Israel and the apostolic faith (109)." I suggest, albeit in passing, that Diodorus' Cretan myths and genealogies may merit study for insight into the religious preunderstanding of those whose beliefs both Titus' Paul and his rival apologetic storytellers seek to mold.

So, let's talk about the challenge facing a Christian community that wants to communicate to a culture with a religious memory like Crete's just what it means for God to have walked among us.

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## Lifestyle as *Apologia*

### Jesus

Jesus counters our “worldly passions” (2:12) and “enslavement to passions and various pleasures” (3:3) with his own disposition of “grace” and “kindness” and “man-lovingness” (Tt 2:11; 3:4). His own mastery of self enables him to “give himself for us”(2:14).

Jesus comes “to redeem us from all lawlessness” (2:14),<sup>18</sup> thus re-establishing a righteous relationship between God and us (3:7) — and places us in a community of people (“a people of God’s possession,” Tt 2:14; see Ex 19:5) who model relationships that “fit sound teaching” and “adorn sound teaching” (2:1, 10).

Jesus, one might say, is the embodiment of godliness (*eusebeia*) — as God’s “grace ... kindness ... and *philanthropia*” he is the divine response to our godlessness (*asebeia*, 2:12)

### Church Leaders & Their Families

1:8b, “sober, just, holy, self-controlled”

Children: “faithful (*pistos*, that is, pious), and neither leave themselves liable to a charge of prodigality (*asōtia*, that is, being “idle bellies,” the converse of being self-controlled) nor are living insubordinately (*anupotaktos*, that is, being “vicious beasts,” the converse of living justly).

**False Teachers** — Cretan Christians are being presented with a mythic recasting of old covenant heroes and an adaptation of torah and kosher that are the moral equivalent of the Cretan legends that cut divinity down to human size.

Thus Paul writes off their “Jewish myths,” their “commandments of human origin,” and their distinctions between “pure & impure.” The false teachers, Paul believes, put forward an eschatologically anachronistic and irrelevant route:

to godliness or *eusebeia* (“Jewish myths” ... “foolish disputes and genealogies, and disputes and battles over the law” — 1:14; 3:9),

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<sup>18</sup> See the “redemption” theme in Lk 1:68; 2:38; 24:21; Ac 7:35 — Paul’s more oblique approach to this theme in his earlier letters takes Rom 3:21-26 as its locus.

to justice or *dikaiosunē* (“commandments of humans bereft of the truth” — 1:14),

and to self-mastery or *sōphrosunē* (via a regimen of kosher that leaves the pollution of mind and conscience unaddressed — 1:15).

**Community as Apologia** — The apologetic thrust of the letter as a whole is evident in that the most characteristic way of relating the virtues is in the order in which they are presented in 2:12: a God-taught right relationship to self enables right relationships with others; these in turn promote a right relationship with God among onlookers. The general portrait is one in which “healthy” teaching (as defined in 2:11-14; 3:4-7) will promote an expression of self-mastery or sensibility as the linchpin of a communitarian ethic (note the fivefold appearance of the *sōphron-* (“self-mastery”) root in chapter 2 [vv. 2,4,5,6,12]). Communal *dikaiosunē* (“justice”) is, in its turn, realized through the right ordering of the church under able leaders, and as members pursue “good and noble deeds,” in service both of one another (presumably 3:14, though not necessarily exclusively so) and the larger community (3:1,8). And in a feedback loop, the communal lifestyle of self-mastery and justice serve piety by commending the “teaching of God our Savior” to the outsider (see the *hina* [“in order that”] clauses of 2:5,8,10).

### **In Sum**

Titus should be interpreted as an antidote to cultural deficiencies its writer would expect contemporary non-Christians themselves to recognize. Paul quotes a Cretan prophet as having critiqued his own culture for its impiety, injustice, and intemperance. Accordingly, by insisting upon the opposite of these qualities among their leaders (1:8b) and by highlighting grace’s education in sobriety, justice, and piety for Christians in general (2:12), the letter to Titus challenges Cretan Christians to live out a kind of community that coheres with the social self-criticism of an important strand of Greek thought.

Israel’s covenant Lord has previously brokered his presence through one historical people, but this God is not a reflection of any people’s corporate ego, and he will not be confined by “Jewish myths or commands of humans” (Titus 1:14). At the same time, the biblical God does not lie (1:2), pretending to be a human so, as in some Zeus legends (Cretan or Olympian), he can get a woman.<sup>19</sup> In times so ancient their days cannot be numbered, the God whom the canonical Paul represents made a covenantal promise of life eternal to humankind (1:2). In recent days this promise has been kept: God’s grace, *philanthrōpia*, and kindness toward all humankind (2:11; 3:4) have been revealed in person, in the self-giving of “our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” And this revealing of the divine brings in its wake not relics — e.g., tombs to visit — but rather lives undergoing transformation and a community under construction.

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<sup>19</sup> Diodorus allows as how the Cretan Zeus’ human name had been Picus; he had been king of Italy for one hundred and twenty years, and had had many sons and daughters because he was a debaucher of comely women (6.5.1). It is because of Picus’ “assuming mysterious aspects” so as to “be looked upon as a god” by the women he was seducing, that this mortal was thought godlike. He was interred on Crete at his own instructions in a temple built by his sons: “This monument exists even to the present day, and it bears the inscription, ‘Here lies Picus whom men also call Zeus’” (6.5.3).

# 1 Timothy — Living and Telling Jesus’s Story

## How Pauline are the Pastoral Epistles? ...and why does it matter? Part Three — 1 & 2 Timothy

### 1:1-2 Salutation

### 1:3-20 Why Paul Is Writing

- 1:3-3-7 Love over Law
- 1:8-11 The Point of the Law
- 1:12-17 Paul as Trophy of Grace
- 1:18-20 What Is at Stake

### 2:1-3:14 Giving Shape to the Household of God (Part One)

- 2:1-15 A House of Prayer
  - 2:1-7 The Prayer of All for All
  - 2:8 Men at Worship
  - 2:9-15 Women at Worship
- 3:1-13 Stewards of the Household
  - 3:1-7 Overseers
  - 3:8-13 Deacons

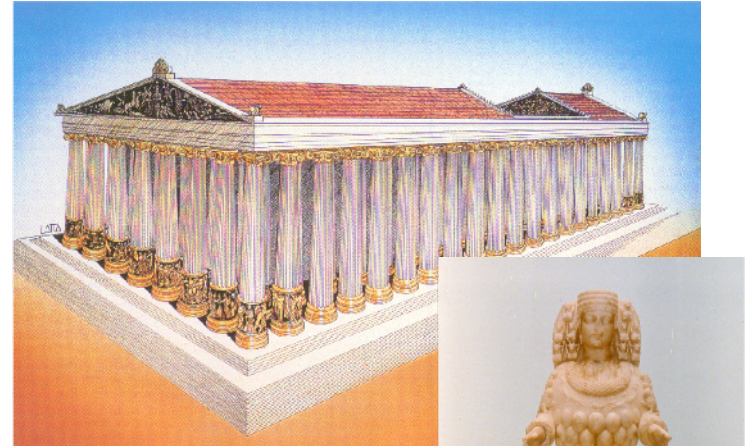
### 3:14-4:16 Two Kinds of Religion

- 3:14-16 True Religion
- 4:1-5 False Religion
- 4:6-16 Timothy’s Responsibility

### 5:1-6:19 Giving Shape to the Household of God (Part Two)

- 5:1-2 Age Groups
- 5:3-16 Widows and Female Benefactors
- 5:25 Elders
- 6:1-2 Slaves and Masters
  - 6:3-19 Wealth’s Threat to Community
  - 6:3-10 The Wealthy and False Teaching
  - 6:11-16 What Makes Timothy Wealthy
- 6:17-19 How the Wealthy Can Invest

### 6:20-21 Final Charge



#### Christ vs. Artemis

“Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” — the silversmiths at Acts 19:34

“Great indeed, we confess is the mystery of godliness ...” — 1Tim 3:16

...

Ephesus = “the nurturer (*he trophos*) of its own goddess of Ephesus” — Inscription at Ephesus (mid-2<sup>nd</sup> cent., *New Docs.* 4.19.B.22-23)

Christ “nurtures (*ektrephein*) and cherishes” the church, his bride (Eph. 5:29)

...

Artemis reciprocates the Ephesians’ care for her by making the city “most glorious” or “most radiant” (*endoxotera*) — same Inscription, line 33)

Christ sanctifies the church so he may present her to himself “glorious” or “radiant” (*endoxos*) — Eph 5:27

## 2 Timothy — Courage for the Gospel

### 1:1-2 Salutation

### 1:3-5 Thanksgiving

— Note the Lack of a Thanksgiving in 1 Tim and Titus (in those letters, Paul is strictly business — not here!)

### 1:6-14 Appeal to Loyalty Despite Hardship

Grounded in the Gospel

Grounded in Paul's Example

### 1:15-18 Examples of Loyalty and Disloyalty

### 2:1-7 The Appeal Renewed

Grounded (Again) in the Gospel

NB: Suffering is Not an Elective Course (2:12b-13)

Grounded (Again) in Paul's Example

### 2:14-26 Exhortation to Resist the False Teachers

NB: 2:18 and the Role of Over-Realized Eschatology in the False Teaching

A Supporting Analogy from Household Vessels: Don't be Surprised by the Presence of Both the Noble and the Ignoble in the Church (2:20-21)

Promoting Peace Peacefully (2:22-26)

### 3:1-4:5 The False Teachers in their "Last Days" Context

NB: The Hint that the False Teachers are Especially Effective Among Women (3:6)

NB: To Repeat, Suffering is Not an Elective Course (3:12)

Timothy has 2 Valuable Resources to See him through:

Paul's Example (Again!) (3:11-12)

Scripture (3:16)

### 4:6-8 Paul's Final Testimony

### 4:9-22 Personalia and Final Greetings

The Luke Connection (4:11)

Loose Ends Tied up with Mark (4:11; remember Acts 15:36-41)



## On Courage

“Child, either [carrying] this, or on it.” — Plutarch “Spartan Sayings” 241.F.5

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous (*andrizou*). Do not be cowardly (*me deiliases*); do not be afraid, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).

And if a man love *righteousness*, her labours are virtues: for she teaches *temperance* and *prudence*, *justice* and *courage*: which are such things, as men can have nothing more profitable in their life. — Wisdom of Solomon 8:7

For reason (*logos*) is necessary to every one as a step to science (*episteme*): and more especially does it embrace the praise of *prudence* (*phronesis*), the highest virtue. If, then, reasoning appears to hold the mastery over the passions which stand in the way of *temperance* (*sophrosune*), such as gluttony and lust, it surely also and manifestly has the rule over the affections which are contrary to *justice* (*dikaiousune*), such as malice; and of those which are hindrances to *courage* (*andreia*), as wrath, and pain, and fear. — 4 Maccabees 1:2-4

Hence I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of timidity (*deilia*), but a spirit of power (*dunamis*) and love (*agape*) and self-control (*soprosune* — 2 Timothy 1:6-7).

See also “wage the noble warfare” (1:18) as “a noble soldier of Jesus Christ” (2:3)

### Courage — What It’s Not

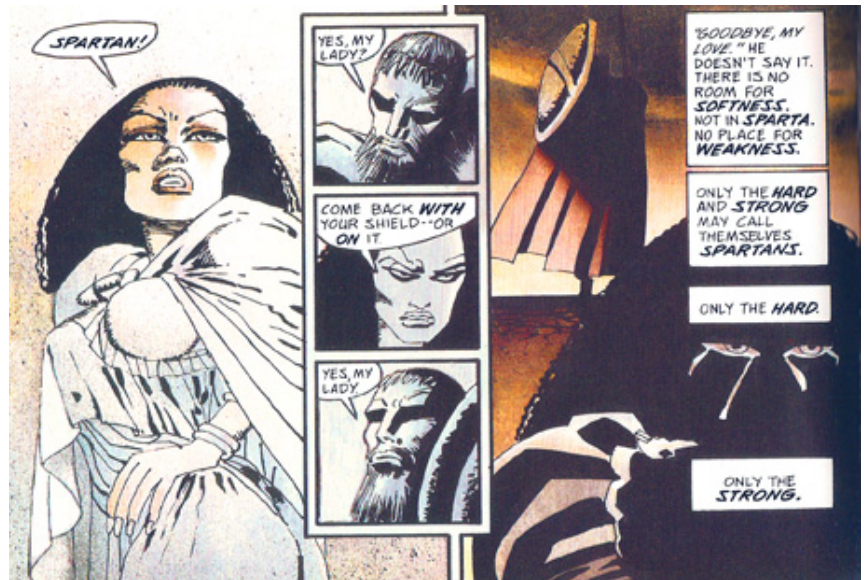
- Being ashamed of the gospel (2Tm 1:8; and see Rom 1:16-17)
- Being surprised at the opposition (3:1-5)
- Whining “I’m too young” in Timothy’s case (1Tm 4:12) ... or whatever ...
- Getting dragged into “stupid, senseless controversies” (2Tm 2:23)
- Over-reacting when one takes a stand (2Tm 2:22-26)

### Courage — What It Is

- Power — of the gospel (Rom 1:16-17), of the returning Lord (4:1 — see also 1Co 16:13), of the God who grants repentance (2Tm 2:25-26)
- Love — “present yourself a workman approved” (2Tm 2:15) ... approved for what? or better, for whom? ... and recall 2Tm 2:25-26: why *not* a pugnacious spirit?
- Self-Control — 2Tm 2:22-26 (again) = a measured response

### Courage — How to Get It

- Understand the normativity of persecution and opposition: “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life will be



- persecuted” (2Tm 3:12)
- Look to Jesus as exemplar — ponder his suffering and glorification: “Remember Christ Jesus, raised from the dead” (2Tm 2:8 — remember the “educating” role of grace’s coming, at Titus 2:11-14
- Look to others as exemplars — e.g., Paul (3:10-11); Lois & Eunice (Timothy’s grandmother & mother, at 1:5); Onesiphorus (1:17-18)
- Look at counter-exemplars — e.g., Phygelus & Hermogenes (1:15); Hymenaeus & Philetus (2:18), and consider their end
- Look to Scripture (3:14-16)

## **Working out from the Pastorals’ Style of Theology**

### **Reckoning with the “religious spirit” of a people (thanks to Allen Bloom)<sup>20</sup>**

#### **Vis-a-vis a Cretan Sensibility**

- Jesus is not a man promoted to deity, but the very grace, kindness, and *philanthropia* of God appearing among us to save and teach
- believers are called not to lie about who God is (problems with pseudonymity and the “noble lie”), nor to reflect their environment’s social viciousness and self indulgence, but to “adorn” the gospel with lives of godliness, justice, and self-control

#### **Vis-a-vis an Ephesian Sensibility**

- Jesus is not a stone that fell to earth, but “the man” who came as mediator between God and man — and to reunify the fractured human race
- God isn’t about a building of marble, but a building of people — worship is not about dressing up an inanimate deity for an annual procession to the theatre, but about a daily telling and exhibiting of his story in life

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<sup>20</sup> Allen Bloom, *The American Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chu Hartley, 2006) — I can’t not mention here Karl Mannheim’s classic *Ideology & Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (Harvest Book, 1936). See also Jacques Ellul’s prescient defense of the Christian West, in *Betrayal of the West* (Seabury, 1978).