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The Pastoral Epistles (Overview)



Bible Book Overviews - Steve Gregg

This overview explores the Pastoral Epistles written by Paul, focusing on their distinct vocabulary and their significance in the early church. The term "pastoral epistles" emerged in the early 1700s to refer to letters addressed to leaders like Timothy and Titus who oversaw congregations. While these letters differ in vocabulary from Paul's other writings, they contain important insights on leadership and Christian faith. The speaker examines historical contexts, disputes over authorship, and themes such as faith and knowledge, shedding light on the enduring relevance of the Pastoral Epistles.

Transcript

Now, first of all, why are they called Pastoral Epistles? This name was not given to them until the 1700s, the early 1700s. Some preacher called them that and the name stuck. And that was because he assumed that these are instructions to pastors.

These are epistles addressed to some of Paul's ministry companions, Timothy and Titus, and the assumption was that these were pastors of churches. Now, as we find, we read these, both Timothy and Titus were involved in selecting and ordaining elders in the churches. And the idea that they were pastors, ordained elders, was simply coming from the idea of church governance that existed in the 18th century when they gave it this name.

Of course, through most of church history, after the Apostolic times, churches had pastors, as we call them. And usually in Protestant churches, of course, Catholic churches have priests. I think Episcopal churches have priests and Eastern Orthodox have, I don't know if they call them priests or not, but Protestants don't have priests, but they often have pastors.

And the assumption was that Timothy and Titus were pastors and they were overseeing congregations. That's not really the case. They didn't have in Paul's day what we call pastors.

They had elderships. Each church was governed by a group of men called elders, and these elders were told to do the pastoral work. No church is known in biblical times to

have had a pastor, though many of the churches had what they called elders or overseers.

For example, we saw in Philippians chapter 1 and verse 1, Paul addresses the book of Philippians to the church that is in Philippi with its overseers and deacons. Now overseers is the word episkopoi, also in the Bible sometimes translated bishops, which is not a very fortunate translation because when you think of a bishop, you think of a church officer, a religious officer with a pointy hat and some kind of fancy robes and gold and decorations on them because that's what Catholic bishops became. But actually the word bishop is a very, again, an English translation that resulted from the state of the church at the time the English translation was made.

The Episcopal Church, the Anglican Church, was run by bishops in England when the King James was made, so they translated episkopoi as bishops. The word episkopoi doesn't speak of a church office, at least it doesn't have to. It's simply the word overseer.

Episkopoi, a P means over and skopos, episkopos means to see, like telescope and microscope, to see. Episkopos is an overseer and a person might be an overseer without having any particular title at all. Anyone who oversees something, whether they're appointed to do it, whether they have an office, whether they have a badge or not, it's something that is done.

It's not something that one is, it's something that is done. If you are overseeing something, you're the overseer of that thing. But unfortunately the word episkopos came to be translated bishops in the English Bibles and modern translations I think have gone back to translating the Greek word as overseers.

I think most modern Bibles do and it's a good thing because the idea of a bishop, the way we think of a bishop, didn't really exist in apostolic times. That was a later development and yet the English word bishop was introduced into the English Bible by translators who had bishops in their churches. The word episkopos or overseer is used interchangeably.

In Titus it's very clear. It's also clear in a number of other places, Acts chapter 20, 1st Peter chapter 5, it's clear that the word elders and overseers were used interchangeably. Paul and his companions would often appoint elders in every church.

We first read of this in Acts 14 23 on Paul's first missionary journey with Barnabas after they founded the churches as they returned back toward their home church and he visited again the churches they had founded only months earlier, maybe weeks earlier, and they appointed elders in every church. It says elders plural in every singular church. James tells sick people if you're sick call for the elders plural of the church singular.

There's no case in the Bible where a church is known to have had less than two. We

don't know how many there may have been but there's always plural elders and the elders are commanded in Acts 20 and in 1st Peter 5 to shepherd or pastor the church of God. In Acts 20 Paul called for the elders of the church of Ephesus to meet him in Miletus and not Miletus in elsewhere but maybe it was Miletus, I'm forgetting now where it was, and he told them to oversee the church and to feed the flock and shepherd the flock.

These are the elders. So we have these terms elder and overseer that occur in the pastoral epistles and in the book of Acts and elsewhere and these were the way the early church was governed. As I said Philippians 1.1 Paul addresses the church in Philippi with its overseers plural and deacons.

He doesn't say hello to the pastor as we would think necessary because there wasn't someone in that church called the pastor. The overseers or the elders were the did pastoral work so it's obvious that Timothy was not a pastor and Titus was not a pastor so calling these a pastoral epistles is a little misleading. Timothy and Titus would more properly be called apostolic assistants or apostolic legates.

They were acting as extensions of Paul in the apostolic office. The Apostles Saul and Barthas or appointed elders in their churches but now Paul is telling Timothy and Titus to do that on their behalf and we don't know that Timothy or Titus ever really settled. For example Titus is in Crete at the time the letters written to him.

We don't know if he ever settled there. Paul says for this reason I left you in Crete so you'd set these things in order and appoint elders. He may have done that and then gone somewhere else.

We don't know they ever pastored in Crete and Timothy though traditionally he did end up spending his last years in Ephesus and he was in Ephesus when Paul wrote these letters to him. We don't know that he was seen as a pastor so much as as an apostle, an apostolic agent of Paul's. Anyway so that's why they're called pastoral epistles the assumption it was made by somebody that in the sense that churches are put together today and they have a pastor that that's what these leaders were.

They were again doing apostolic work not so much pastoral work. So calling them pastoral epistles is simply a convention I do it because that's what people call them. Paul's letters divide into various groups that so-called prison epistles there's four of those there's three pastoral epistles and these are among the few epistles of the 13 known epistles that Paul wrote these are three of the four that were written to individuals most of Paul's letters were written to in to churches as a group but these were written in address to individuals as was Philemon.

Now Philemon's not one of the pastoral epistles but it also like epistles to Timothy and Titus was addressed to an individual. Now there's a sense in which I think although he's writing to them as individuals that these epistles are supposed to be quasi public too. In

other words this is not a secret a private letter to Timothy or Titus because he says things in it that you'd think Timothy or Titus might have to make known the contents to the church.

For example in Paul tells Timothy let no one despise your youth. Well if I'm a young man and Paul tells me don't let anyone despise your youth well how am I supposed to make people not despise my youth? I can't control their thoughts but if they are despising my youth look Paul wrote to me and said don't let anyone despise my youth. In other words you know you're not supposed to despise my youth and there are you know just ways that Paul talks to Timothy and Titus that they're very personal but at times there are things that probably were to be shared with the churches that they were that they were sent to minister to.

Now one of the things we have to deal with in the pastoral epistles that we don't have to in most of the epistles is the question of authorship. Now the epistles are very clearly said to be written by Paul. All three of them he calls himself Paul and he gives all kinds of personal information like about his journeys about his persecutions and even some things about them.

For this reason I left you in Crete he said to Titus in Titus 1.5 in 1st Timothy 1.3 he said to Timothy I left you in Ephesus and he even talks in 2nd Timothy about Timothy's mother and grandmother and gives their names and things like that how Timothy had been taught from childhood the scriptures by them. I mean this all this personal information gives the profound impression that this was really written by Paul to these men. However in the 19th century maybe the 18th century it began some critics of the Bible suggested that there are reasons to believe Paul didn't write these epistles.

Now I don't know if you've done much biblical study and to know that there are occasionally books of the Bible which modern scholars have come to say they doubt the original authorship. Obviously the first five books in the Bible you know are written by Moses but modern scholarship often tries to say well there's they're not really written by Moses there are four different traditions woven together. The book of Isaiah was written by Isaiah but many modern scholars say well the the last 27 chapters from verse 42 to verse 66 those were written by someone else not Isaiah.

Of course they tried to late-date the book of Daniel and say Daniel was not written by somebody living under Nebuchadnezzar's reign and so forth. Now the reason they do this I think the real reason they do this is to discredit those books. Obviously if they say well Daniel didn't really live in the time of Nebuchadnezzar these were written in the second century BC long after the alleged Daniel lived then of course you've stripped these books from any credibility.

If Moses didn't write the books that are said to be written by him then they're forgeries and people have said the same thing for various reasons about 2nd Peter and a few

other books of the Bible that the critics are always referring challenging the authorship. Now I don't think there's any book of the Bible that some critic out there has never challenged the authorship but most of the books written by Paul are accepted widely by all scholars or virtually all scholars because there's so many evidences of authenticity in them but it's become almost the consensus of modern Bible scholarship that Paul did not write the pastoral epistles. In other words they're forgeries.

Interestingly some liberal scholars say well Paul didn't write them but they're still canonical. Well how do you figure? You know they still belong in the Bible even though they're forgeries. You know what authority do they have if half the things he's saying to Timothy about Timothy's own personal life are just made up by somebody who never knew Timothy.

I mean how can there be any authority in these at all? And of course liberal scholarship has done all it can to undermine the credibility of the Bible when it can and the pastoral epistles have come under special attack among Paul's epistles. Now some people have raised questions about this or that other epistle of Paul's Ephesians Colossians. There's modern scholars who doubt it but there's no good reason for that.

But they say there are good reasons for doubting that Paul wrote the pastoral epistles and I'd be negligent not to discuss those things because if you're ever going to read anything scholarly on these books and maybe you're not the kind of person who does but a curious Christian who wants to study a book deeply will maybe pull out a commentary or something you're going to encounter the idea that Paul didn't really write these. Again this is a fairly new idea nobody doubted Paul's authorship of the pastorals until about the 18th century anyway and liberal scholarship really took off in the 19th century and has been very dominant in the seminaries and the universities throughout the 20th century and now in the 21st century. So we have to realize that the scholars are not without agendas.

They're often not objective. They typically look at books with through the glasses of skepticism if they're biblical books which they would not bring to books that are not in the Bible frankly. You know if books are secular books ancient books these same scholars would not really go put any effort into saying well that's not authentic but if they're in the Bible they do which suggests a certain prejudice on their part against the scriptures and we cannot just ignore this because they do bring up points.

If you have a friend or a son or a daughter who goes through seminary they're going to encounter these. I mean it's very good chance that person will come home saying well we don't really believe Paul wrote the pastoral epistles because that's the trend in scholarship. It's a fad.

It's a long-standing one now but it doesn't have in my opinion any kind of good reasons. So what reasons do they give? Well there's a few different kinds. One of them is that

they say the the vocabulary in the pastorals differs from Paul's vocabulary in his other recognized letters to a remarkable degree.

Enough so that they doubt that the same man would write them. The vocabulary is quite different. The pastoral epistles have 848 different vocabulary words in them altogether.

848. Of those 360 or 306 excuse me over a third of these words are not found in Paul's other epistles at all. So in other words when you look at Paul's other epistles and see the vocabulary he uses there and you look at the pastoral epistles you find that as many as over a third of the vocabulary words that are used in these pastorals are not found in Paul's other letters and it raises questions.

Was it the same author or someone with a very different vocabulary? This is one of the ways they argue that. They also say that in the pastorals there's an unusually high density of what they call hypax legomena. Hypax legomena is a term that the scholars use for a Greek word that is found only once in the Bible and not just once in Paul's writings but once in the whole Bible.

And in Paul's other letters there's plenty of these hypax legomena. For example in in Paul's other letters that are not the pastorals there's generally 8 to 13 of these kinds of words per page. That's how common they are.

And these are in epistles that no one doubts that Paul wrote or at least very few people doubt that Paul wrote. His general writings typically have 8 to 13 of these unique words found nowhere else in the New Testament per page. Now they say in the pastoral epistles however the average is between 19 and 21 of these per page.

So you know we might say close to twice as many twice as dense with these unusual words that are found anywhere else in his writings or in the whole Bible. So again they suggest that the language of the pastorals is considerably more unique than Paul's other writings are. And so raising questions if he's the same author.

And then they say that over two thirds of these unique words in the pastoral epistles are common in second century Christian writers. The church fathers in the second century used a lot of these words that are in the pastorals but aren't in Paul's other writings. And therefore they're suggesting that the vocabulary of the pastorals is more akin to the vocabulary of the Greek writers in the second century than Paul's writings or frankly the New Testament writers at all.

What they're saying is therefore this difference in vocabulary more or less points to the pastorals being written in the second century using vocabulary that was more common among the Christian writers then than in the first century when Paul actually lived because these epics of the Gomorrah are not found anywhere else in the New Testament. So that's how they argue that particular point. Now these are not hard to

answer.

In the New Testament in all of Paul's epistles there are approximately 2,500 vocabulary words. Distinct words that Paul uses if you take all his epistles about 2,500. Of those about half appear in only one of his letters.

So he's got 2,500 word vocabulary in his letters but like over 1,200 of those words are found only in one place in one letter. So in other words it's not strange even in Paul's unquestioned letters to have rare words in them. Words that are only found in one of his letters which means he might use in a letter words that he doesn't use in other letters.

Just like it's true probably of anyone who writes multiple letters. They say also that when you consider Paul's other letters that are not the pastorals there is as much diversity of the vocabulary there as you find in the pastorals themselves. Which means that this difference in vocabulary in the pastorals is not particularly indicative of anything because the other letters that people do not doubt his authorship of have the very same kind of diversity of vocabulary that you find in the pastorals.

Also they say that you'll find similar diversity between Shakespeare's plays. That is to say you'll find in some of Shakespeare's plays as much difference of vocabulary from other Shakespeare plays as in these epistles from Paul's other epistles. And although we don't know for sure who wrote Shakespeare that's always been disputed.

Most people assume that Shakespeare is a real person who really wrote all those plays or most of them anyway. So if Shakespeare can show that kind of diversity in his vocabulary in different plays Paul can show that diversity in his letters of course. Over 90% of those special words that Paul uses that are found nowhere else have been found in secular writings earlier than 50 AD.

Now Paul wrote these letters after 50 AD but in the secular Greek writings you find 90% of the so-called second century words that are found in the pastoral epistles. Which means it's not specifically language of the second century as the scholars sometimes like you to believe. Now of course all this data doesn't prove anything.

All that it proves is differences in vocabulary proves nothing. And over the years I've heard of tests I wish I had all the details available here but it would take too long to go into but I've heard that now that we have computers computer programs we've done to run the tests on the distinct distinctions in the vocabulary of the pastoral compared to the vocabulary of Paul's other letters and said that you know there's more diversity in many modern writers in their different books from each other than there is between the pastoral and the other Pauline epistles which means of course this argument from vocabulary and style against Paul's authorship is simply it's vacuous it doesn't really mean anything at all. It's used it's brought up a lot but simply is not evidence of any value against him.

Now the other principle argument against Paul is that there the time frame of these epistles does not appear to coincide with what we'd expect in the comparing Paul's life for the rest of the Bible. One of those things is that there are many things that Paul mentions in the pastoral is about his whereabouts and his travels that are not found in Acts. Now in the book of Acts of course we have Paul's conversion in Chapter 9 and all of his travels up to his imprisonment in Chapter 28 at the end of Acts he's in prison in Rome awaiting trial before Caesar and so we have a steady stream of narrative of Paul's life from his conversion largely to his imprisonment at the end of Acts and yet some of the things Paul says in the pastoral does not coincide with anything in Acts and raises questions about this.

For example in 1 Timothy 1:3 Paul says that he left Timothy in Ephesus when he Paul went to Macedonia. Ephesus is in Turkey Macedonia is Greece and Paul spent a long time in Ephesus and so did Timothy. Paul spent three years there.

That's the longest time he spent in any church anywhere and and but he apparently left. He says he left Timothy in Ephesus or Turkey when he Paul went to Macedonia. This is 1 Timothy 1:3 says as I urged you when I went to Macedonia remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine.

Now in Acts we don't read of any time that Paul went to Macedonia and left Timothy in Ephesus. Instead we read in Acts 19:22 that Paul sent Timothy and and a fellow traveler with him to Macedonia. Well Paul stayed in Ephesus just the reverse of what's said here.

So I said that doesn't coincide with what the book of Acts tells us about Paul's travel. Doesn't seem to fit. A second point is that he says in Titus chapter 1 verse 5 that he left Titus in Crete.

But we don't read of Paul ever going to Crete. I mean on his last ship travel to Rome when they had trouble and they did stop in Crete briefly at a port. They stayed overnight but he didn't have a mission there.

He didn't leave Titus there. You know this would be sometime other than that. We don't really read of Paul ever having a mission in Crete at all.

So when did he leave Titus there. There's no space in the book of Acts narrative that would make that a likely place for him to have gone or left Titus. Therefore they say see this is not coinciding with the life of Paul that we have in Acts.

And then the third thing is he says that he was in Nicopolis in Titus 3:12 which is a region that Acts never refers to Paul ever going. So when did he go to Nicopolis. So they say these are these travels or places that Paul speaks of.

They don't they don't fit with what we know about Paul's travels from Acts. Now there's an irony in this because the scholars who are critical of the authorship of Paul of these

also usually don't believe in the book of Acts. They usually say it's not historical.

But when they want to they can use the book of Acts to say well that doesn't agree with this. So this isn't right. Well they don't believe that is right either.

So it's kind of a ridiculous argument. However those of us who believe that both the pastoral and the book of Acts are true don't have any real serious problem with this. It is likely that these travels that Paul alludes to here were written after his release from his first imprisonment in Rome.

There is evidence in the book of Second Timothy in Chapter 4 that after the book of Acts closed. Now remember the book of Acts closes with Paul waiting two years in Rome waiting for his first trial before Nero. But in Acts Chapter 2 Second Timothy Chapter 4 I think his first maybe 13 or 16 right right there.

Paul says at my first defense no one stood with me that all abandoned me. So that the Lord stood with me and I was delivered from the mouth of the lion. The most reasonable way to understand this is that when Paul finally had his day in court before Nero which he was waiting for at the time that the book of Acts closes.

He actually was exonerated and was freed. Now by the time he wrote Second Timothy he was in prison again. But most evangelical scholars conclude there were two Roman imprisonments one that the book of Acts records at the end of the book of Acts and then another one at the end of his life in between those two he had been exonerated and traveled further.

And that's when he would have gone to Titus taking Titus to you know create that's when he would have had some time in Ephesus and and left Timothy there when he went to mess. In other words the travels that he refers to in his letters would be travels that occurred after that book of Acts was closed after the narrative finishes in the book of Acts because the book of Acts doesn't take us all the way up to Paul's death. It just kind of leaves things hanging while he's still waiting for his first trial.

But if Second Timothy 4 tells us that at his first trial he was exonerated and he was let go. Then then we would have to assume that he probably traveled some more and he makes and we learn of these additional travels from these books. The fact that they don't line up with the book of Acts simply as they don't correspond with the time frame of the book of Acts book of Acts tells about earlier journeys of Paul these letters talk about later journeys of Paul not a problem.

There's other reasons to find fault with this criticism because there's quite a few things. In Paul's other letters that are mentioned that he did that aren't found in the book of Acts and these other letters are not considered to be questionable. In Romans chapter 15 verse 19 for example.

Paul says. To the Romans and this was Romans was written before he went to Rome the first time so well within the period of the book of Acts. He says in this verse in.

I guess I better. He's talking about his ministry how that he administered in mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God so that from Jerusalem and roundabout to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Now Illyricum is essentially the ancient name for the region that was later in our lifetime Yugoslavia.

We have no record in the book of Acts of Paul ever going to that region but in Romans he said he had been there and he wrote this during the time frame that the book of Acts was still covered. In other words there were things that happened to Paul during the period of the book of Acts that are not recorded in the book of Acts some of those things are mentioned also in 2nd Corinthians chapter 11. And again there's not any serious reason for anyone to doubt that Paul wrote Romans or 2nd Corinthians and he says there.

In 2nd Corinthians 11 verses 24 25 he's cataloging the sufferings he's been through he says from the Jews five times I received 40 stripes minus one three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned we have record reference to that in the book of Acts three times I was shipwrecked a night of the day have I been in the deep. Now we have no record in the book of Acts of Paul being whipped with 39 lashes on five different occasions by the Jews.

Although he's writing during the time that the book of Acts is covering I mean the book of Acts is still covering this portion of life when he wrote this. It's been beaten 39 lashes with a whip by the Jews five times three times have been beat with rods probably by the Romans and three times he was shipwrecked. You might say well I remember he was shipwrecked in the book of Acts.

Yeah but these three were before that this was written before that time he was in the book of Acts the only shipwreck we read of Paul was as he was on his way to Rome for his final imprisonment. This was written when he was in Ephesus for three years which was years before that and he had already had three shipwrecks which are not mentioned in the book of Acts. In other words there's a lot of things happen to Paul that he tells us about in his indisputed letters which are not mentioned in the book of Acts a couple more are found in Galatians.

Well one more would be worth bringing up there's others in Galatians chapter two there's a fairly important one. And Acts doesn't mention this but Galatians is one of the earliest epistles of Paul and no one doubts that he wrote it. In Acts or excuse me Galatians chapter two verse 11 speaking of Peter he says now when Peter had come to Antioch I withstood him to his face because he was to be blamed.

For before certain men came from James he would eat and drink with the Gentiles but

when they came he withdrew and separated you may know this story we covered at Galatians not too long ago. Well there was a confrontation between Peter and Paul and frankly Paul rebuked Peter and Peter submitted to that review and this was in the church of Antioch which was Paul's home church. And this was written early in Paul's ministry right after his first missionary journey.

So we have to assume this confrontation between Paul and Peter in Antioch happened between the first and second missionary journeys that are recorded in Acts. But Acts doesn't mention this confrontation doesn't even mention at all Peter coming to Antioch. So what we're saying is there are epistles that nobody seriously doubts that Paul wrote them which record biographical or autobiographical information about Paul that is not in Acts.

So why should be surprising that the pastoral would have such as well. In fact interestingly enough the book of Acts doesn't even mention Paul writing letters and we have evidence from his letters that he wrote some. And those are pretty important things his letters book of Acts doesn't mention Paul writing any letters at all.

Yet he wrote all of them except for the pastoral during the time period that's described in the book of Acts. So that actually leave out things is not surprising. In fact Titus is not even mentioned in the book of Acts.

The man now apparently traveled with Paul early on because in Galatians chapter 2 verse 1 says that between the first and second missionary journey of Paul. He and Titus and Barnabas visited Jerusalem and there were people who wanted to see Titus get circumcised but Paul wouldn't allow it. So Titus was a Gentile traveling with Paul as early as perhaps the first missionary journey or at least before the second one.

And yet he's not mentioned by Titus not mentioned by name anywhere in the book of Acts. So I mean we have some significant omissions from the book of Acts that we cannot deny were part of Paul's life. So those historical differences don't really seem to be a serious argument that we could use against Paul's authorship.

Now a couple other arguments are sometimes brought up that are related to the time frame not being right. One of them is that Paul writes that as if the churches have reached a certain stage of development which many scholars say they had not reached in Paul's lifetime. We know that in the second century the churches had become fairly organized with official bishops and leaders and so forth that that had exceeded that which we read about in the New Testament.

And they say that the pastoral epistles the things Paul says about church leadership and such suggest that it is at this later stage. Now what are they using to determine that. Well this is a really silly one.

They say well in Paul's day the churches weren't led by elders and deacons as they were in the second century and beyond. In Paul's day they were they thought Jesus was coming right away so they didn't appoint leaders of the churches and they just had charismatic spiritual gifts operating rather than official you know like political leaders of the churches or whatever. Well it is true that in the second century they did have more of a politicizing of the spiritual leadership.

But we don't read of any such in the pastoral epistles we don't read of any politicization of the office of elder or deacons and Paul mentions elders and deacons in first Timothy and he mentions elders again in Titus. But they're mentioned early in the book of Acts on Paul's first missionary journey says he appointed elders in every city. And in many of the many of the chapters that it mentions with reference to Paul's travels that there were elders he called for the elders of the Church of Ephesus to come down to him and he gave a speech to him in Acts chapter 20 when he came to Jerusalem for the Jerusalem Council it was the apostles and the elders got together for that council it says.

So I don't know why I would say there weren't elders or deacons Paul in Romans refers to Phoebe as a deaconess and there are references to elders and Paul's epistles or at least leaders of the churches. So and I mentioned Philippians 1 1 says he greeted the overseers and deacons which are the elders and the deacons of Philippi so the scholars who come up with these they're just talking out of their wrong end. They're just making stuff up and getting doctorates for writing dissertations saying these kinds of things.

So of course there were elders and deacons Paul's earlier letters mention them the book of Acts mentions them from the earliest stages of Paul's ministry. So how in the world does his mention of these offices in 1 Timothy and Titus testified to some later development the church is an absurd. It's absurd to make an argument like that now they say also though in the pastoral epistles we find the term the faith used differently than Paul used faith in the earlier epistles and his mystery.

They say in Paul's early mystery faith to him was belief in Christ or as the faith in the pastoral epistles refers to a developed and received system of doctrine. There's the faith refers to Christianity as a developed system of beliefs or as faith in the earlier epistles of Paul they say was simply what you do you believe you have faith and you're justified by faith but but that later on the church had the faith. All the accepted doctrines of the Christian religion and also traditions he mentioned he mentions traditions.

We say we'll see that's that sounds like a later development the church when the church had a more systematized set of doctrines and traditions and so forth and that wouldn't be that speaks of the church at a later time than Paul's day. No it does not impose other epistles he uses the term the faith to refer to Christianity the book of Acts frequently uses the term the faith referring to Christianity. It is true that faith is used as a reference to personal believing in Christ but that doesn't change the fact that the expression the

faith issues to speak of the Christian religion of Christian beliefs and that's throughout the book of Acts.

That's not the second century as the first century and Paul also refers to traditions in first Corinthians 11:22. And he also mentions traditions in second Thessalonians one of his earlier epistles he refers to the traditions in second Thessalonians 2:15 and again in second Thessalonians 3:6 so in Paul's earliest epistles and in the book of Acts he refers to Christianity as the faith just like he does in the pastoral he refers to traditions that are pastoral. Just like he did in the pastoral in other words there's no distinctive here that the pastoral have in this respect that wasn't true in the earlier epistles or in the book of Acts so once again these details do not help to make the point that Paul didn't write these letters.

And by the way we have to remember that if he didn't then the person who wrote them is an outright liar. And at one point that author says I speak the truth in Christ I do not lie. But if he is lying about who he was then the whole the whole epistles were lies I mean it's hard to know why anyone would be motivated to write as if he was Paul when they're not and write the kinds of things he writes there's a great deal in these epistles that are like personal notes to Timothy and Titus.

They're like the most personal letters Paul wrote. In most of his epistles he says personal remembrances and personal things to the people in the church Romans being probably the least personal of them all but the pastorals are the most personal and virtually all scholars recognize this that he makes but the liberal scholars think well these are all just artful fictions that he does it whoever wrote it did that to make it seem authentic. Well whoever did it was pretty obsessed with that because there's an awful lot of personal notes and stuff like that which are totally unnecessary and they kind of via an artless coincidence correspond in some cases what we know from other things.

For example in Acts we know that Timothy had a Gentile father and a Jewish mother were told that in Acts chapter 16 when we're first introduced to Timothy in the opening verses. Now Paul mentions to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1 that Timothy's mother and grandmother taught him the scriptures meaning the Jewish scriptures the Torah. There were no other scriptures than the Old Testament scriptures when Paul wrote these letters and therefore Timothy had learned the Torah from his mother and from his grandmother.

Now we know from Acts Timothy had a Jewish mother but not a Jewish father so he didn't learn it from his dad he learned it from his mom. Now this is not something that seems to be calculated to deceive people and correspond with Acts it's just kind of an almost an accidental coincidental confirmation of facts. The kind of thing you'd find if books are true.

Now the one last thing that they bring up as the evidence that these epistles were

written too late namely in the second century rather than in Paul's lifetime is the nature of the heresy. Now when Paul wrote these epistles he's concerned about heretics. Some of them have already arrived some of them he says are coming in the last days and it's very possible that Paul thought of the last days as on the brink of occurring.

And therefore Paul is very concerned about heresies and he said the main thing he's appointing Timothy and Titus to do is to appoint reliable men to be leaders in the church who can combat these heresies and Paul makes reference to the heresies. Now he doesn't say exactly what the heresies are but some scholars the ones who are critical of the idea of Paul's authorship here they say it sounds a lot like Gnosticism and Gnosticism didn't really become a full blown religious system until the second century. There are some nascent or emerging signs of something like Gnosticism for example in first John and second John and there may be something like it in Colossians alluded to but they say that wasn't really Gnosticism might have had some correspondence with Gnosticism but it was a but Gnosticism itself didn't really arise as a problem in the church until the second century.

Paul's references to false doctrine are in fact referring to Gnosticism then that's a dead giveaway. This is written in the second century not the first. So the argument is that the doctrines that Paul refers to though he doesn't identify them he alludes to certain things sound suspiciously like Gnosticism and like something that a Christian would write to combat heresies of the second century not of the first century.

That's the argument. How do they get that well because he refers to myths got to be aware of myths and endless genealogies which sounds like it could refer to the kind of thing that was in Gnosticism. He mentions myths like that in first Timothy one for asceticism teaching people not to marry and not to eat meats and so forth is mentioned in first Timothy chapter four.

Gnostics were sometimes ascetics and then they also mentioned in first Timothy 6:20 something is falsely called knowledge. Beware of those who teach such and such and things that they falsely called knowledge. We're knowledge.

Gnosco or Gnosis. Gnosco is the verb but Gnosis is knowledge and that's the word that Gnosticism comes from knowledge and therefore Gnostics were always claiming to have more knowledge than are false. Beware of those who teach things that are falsely called knowledge.

These things the myths the asceticism and the falsely called knowledge. These are the things in the letters to say I sound like probably Gnosticism there. On the other hand some of the things Paul said do not sound like Gnosticism and there's nothing about myths or asceticism or someone saying that what they have is knowledge and that's not knowledge.

There's nothing that could rule out any other false religion that might have those traits. In the first century even but we do find in Titus chapter 1 in verse 14 a reference to people who are teaching Jewish fables. This is not Gnosticism this is Jewishness in first Timothy 1 7 Paul warns about those who want to be teachers of the law but they don't understand the law.

I mean the Torah. These are not Gnostics these are Jews and he also mentions again even what I mentioned earlier. Oh well in Titus 1 16 they profess to know God.

Gnostics didn't claim that they know God. They claim that they knew mysteries that will advance your spirituality but they didn't claim to know God. They didn't even necessarily believe in God the way that Paul would use that term.

The fact that it says you need to be aware of those who are teaching Jewish fables. Titus 1 14 people want to be the teachers of Torah in first Timothy 1 7 and people who profess knowledge of God but don't know him in Titus 1 16 all suggest that the heresies conservative is more of a variety of Jewish legalism which we know to have been a serious problem to the churches and to Paul himself. He combated it all time in the first century so there's no reason for the nature of the heresy he's concerned about to transport the books to a later century.

Everything in the books. Frankly the vocabulary is no problem. The points that do not overlap with the book of Acts is not a problem.

The state of the development of the church that is found in the books of the pastoralists do not present a problem and the nature of the heresy to preserve. These are the four things that the skeptic choose to say Paul can have written and none of them have any weight at all. But then again the other theories of liberals about other books like Isaiah there being two or three Isaiah's who wrote the book of Isaiah or four traditions woven together in the penitent instead of Mosley.

Their arguments for those are just as vacuous. How do these arguments survive how do they become mainstream in the in the academic New Testament scholar or Bible scholarship world. Well as I said I on the one hand some people just want to discredit the Bible and this is a very good way to do it.

You know all these books are forgeries not written by the people they claim to be written by. Don't the whole thing that I think that motivates a lot of these people. Others just like the idea of sounding like they're knowledgeable.

This is knowledge falsely so-called. They like to be on the cutting edge of whatever the academic trends are a little edgy. You know this is a little edgy.

My conservative parents my conservative church wouldn't agree with this. So I like it. You know kind of thing.

And I think that also there's simply the idea of novelty gets attention. Novel theories get attention. You know if you want to get a Ph.D. you're going to have to write a dissertation.

And if you write a dissertation you can't write defending anything that someone else has previously written a dissertation. You have to come up with something original to defend. And so you know if you're going to get a Ph.D. in biblical studies.

Most of the theories have been taken. Maybe you can make up a new theory and maybe you can defend it. And if you're very clever and you defend it successfully and you become a Bible college professor yourself then your students will be taught that.

And then their students the ones who become professors will be taught it. So it gets perpetuated. But once all we just need to go.

It's like it's like the theory of evolution. I don't know how much you've studied that. I'm sure many of you have.

But you know it's it's the assured findings of secular science so much so that many Christians just accept it to evolution. It's obviously true. How do you know.

Well almost virtually all the scientists say so. Well why do they say so. That's what I want to know.

I've never picked my views at least not consciously chosen my views on any subject on the basis that. You know majority of people say this is the way it is. Now I've sometimes adopted views that were taught by the majority.

But I didn't adopt them because I knew I didn't know I was adopting it for a reason. If I if I found that the Bible seemed to teach something else. I didn't care what the majority thought.

I'm more interested in what the Bible teaches. And I think we all have to have that skepticism. I actually think Christians should be more skeptical than the unbelievers because we should be skeptical of the skeptics.

We should know the unbelievers will just believe whatever the skeptics tell them and say oh they say so. They must be right. They've got a lot of they can outvote us.

There's more of them than there are of us. But I'm I'm considerably more skeptical than they are. I say wait you tell me this is an argument against Paul writing these letters.

You tell me there's that evolution occurred. You tell me that Moses didn't write. I'm a little skeptical.

Prove it. And when I see what they prove I think that's not impressive to me at all. In fact

as I look at the evidence I think the evidence points the other direction.

So I mean some people in the academy are certainly intimidated by the majority rules. If your professor doesn't agree with your position you may not get a good grade. You might get promoted in your church if you're seen as not on top of the modern academic position on things.

But who cares. The evidence I just presented is the evidence that is used to say Paul didn't write these epistles. And it's a big zero.

It's a big zero in terms of any validity. So we have nothing to worry about. You know the authenticity of these letters.