

## Who was the author of 1 and 2 Timothy?

Critics began to question Paul's authorship of the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) early in the nineteenth century with the rise of German literary criticism. Because 1 Timothy 2:8-15 places explicit restrictions on a woman's role in ministry, the controversy continues today especially by those who disagree with this perceived inequality. These critics prefer to believe that 1 and 2 Timothy were not authored by the Apostle Paul, were pious forgeries, and therefore, should not be part of the Bible. Is this true?

### How tradition began

With little written record, oral tradition established that Paul authored 1 and 2 Timothy, and this was well known and universally recognized by the Church (Eusebius). Early theologians and writers who lived during and were contemporary with the apostles or contemporary with Timothy (Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp) were familiar with the letters and accepted 1 and 2 Timothy as genuine letters from the apostle Paul. As further evidence that their authorship was never in doubt, the Pastoral Epistles were found in the early Latin and Syriac versions of the New Testament.

Clement, the Bishop of Rome (100 A.D.), wrote a letter to the church of Corinth, which was preserved and can be seen today.

Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch (67-110 A.D.), was the pupil and friend of the Apostle John.

Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna (69-156 A.D.), like Ignatius, was the pupil and friend of the Apostle John.

Of the Church fathers, three were great scholars who wrote and cited the New Testament extensively.

Irenaeus, the Bishop of Lyons (130-200 A.D.), was a pupil of Polycarp and Papias. Of his works in possession, he made 1200 references to the New Testament, including the earliest quotations of 1 and 2 Timothy around 170 A.D. in his apologetic against Gnosticism.

Tertullian (born about 150 A.D.) was the first Christian writer to write in Latin and coin the phrase "New Testament". Trained as a lawyer, he was considered an "Apologetic Father" for his vigorous defense of Christian doctrine against Greek philosophy and Hellenistic culture. Of his known works, he made 2,500 references to the New Testament.

In one of his works, Tertullian acknowledges that the Pastoral Epistles were written by Paul to Timothy and Titus and expresses surprise that the heretic Marcion did not believe that the Pastoral Epistles should be part of the canon. Marcion's version of the canon, which he assembled around 140-150 A.D., only had Luke (which he heavily edited), and only ten of thirteen of Paul's epistles; the heretic omitted all of the Old Testament and 16 books (or 60%) of the New Testament.

Clement, the Bishop of Alexandria (born about 165 A.D.) is considered, after Justin and Irenaeus, to be the founder of Christian literature. Alexandria was renowned in the ancient world for its scholars, university, and library. Clement succeeded his teacher Pantaeus to be the head of the famous Catechetical School of Alexandria, which would produce other great Christian writers such as Origen.

Clement of Alexandria, notable for his expansive knowledge of classical and biblical literature, cited more pagan and Christian authors than the work of any other ancient author. Of the New Testament, he cites all of the books except Philemon, James, 2 Peter, 2 John and 3 John.

## Who was the author of 1 and 2 Timothy? (page 2)

In light of how tradition was established, the claim of pious forgeries of 1 and 2 Timothy would imply that the early church fathers were either at best duped or at worst conspirators of the forgeries, and that the heretic Marcion was correct. What is the basis for the claim of pious forgeries?

The critical arguments can be categorized into 5 areas:

1. Chronology – does the event of 1 Timothy correspond with the chronology of Paul's travels in the book of Acts?
2. Literary Style – does the literary style (vocabulary, logic, structure, etc) match with Paul's style of writing?
3. Ecclesiology – does the church structure found in the letter reflect the early first century Christian church?
4. Theology – does the letter address a form of Gnosticism found only in the second century? Does the soteriology correspond to Pauline thought and concept?

As a side note: What if the Pastoral Epistles were forgeries? Pious Forgeries – Was it possible for a forgery to be accepted in the Canon?

### The Problem of Chronology

Critics charge that the book of Acts does not mention the situation where Paul goes to Macedonia and leaves Timothy at Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3). With the belief that the chronological references of 1 Timothy does not correspond with the book of Acts, critics have assumed that 1 & 2 Timothy were written by a later author.

However critics have misunderstood the reason for Paul's first imprisonment and assumed that he was executed. This would have ended any chance of Paul going east; thus, he could not possibly write 1 Timothy. Biblical and extra-biblical evidence clearly suggest otherwise. 1 Timothy does not fit within the chronology of Acts, because it took place after the end of Acts.

At the conclusion of his third missionary journey, Paul had organized a relief fund among the Gentile churches to help the poorer members of the Jerusalem church. He was returning to Jerusalem with representatives of the Gentile churches carrying their respective donations (Acts 20:17-36, Rom 15:25-32). Shortly after his arrival in Jerusalem, Paul was attacked by a Jewish mob and rescued by Roman soldiers (Acts 21:26-23:10). He was imprisoned at the Roman governor's headquarters in Caesarea for the next 2 years (Acts 23:11-24:27).

In response to God's prompting of "so you must witness at Rome also" (Acts 23:11), Paul exercises his privilege as a Roman citizen and appealed to Caesar, which transferred his case to Rome. Paul was sent to Rome in 59 A.D. where he spent 2 years under house arrest waiting for his case to be heard before the supreme tribunal (Acts 25:1-28:31).

When Luke finished writing the book of Acts, he does not reveal what happened to Paul's case, and there is little information about the rest of Paul's career. But there is implicit evidence that Paul was released.

1. Paul was innocent by all Roman officials up to this point.

Paul was arrested to save him from a Jewish mob not from any legal offense.

The Jews did not bring any charges or testify against Paul during his 2-year imprisonment in Caesarea.

At this time, Christianity was considered a part of Judaism and was not considered an illegal or forbidden religion and therefore not an offense punishable by death.

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## Who was the author of 1 and 2 Timothy? (page 3)

Agrippa and Festus believed that Paul did nothing wrong and would have been freed had he not appealed to Caesar (Acts 26:30-32).

While in captivity, Paul expresses confidence in his release (Phil 1:25, 2:24, Philem 22).

2. Ancient tradition says that Paul did go to Spain as he intended (Rom 15:24).

Clement of Rome wrote that *“Paul...preached in the East and the West, and won noble renown for his faith. He taught righteousness to the whole world and went to the western limit. He bore witness to the rulers, and then passed out of the world...”* (1 Clement 5:6-7)

During the first and second century, a reference to the “western limit” always meant Spain.

In other extra-biblical sources, such as the Muratorian Fragment and Acts of Peter, there are indications that Paul was released from prison.

It is believed that, upon his release, Paul resumed his missionary journeys for at least 3 more years before being arrested, tried, condemned, and executed around 67 A.D. during the persecution of Christians under the Roman emperor Nero. Marking Paul's burial near the Basilica in Rome, a stone inscription says “To Paul, Apostle and Martyr.”

This means that there was enough time for Paul to go on a fourth missionary journey and pen his Pastoral Epistles.

The critics' contention of a problem of chronology is further eroded when evaluating the epistle 2 Corinthians, which is undisputedly a letter from Paul. In 2 Corinthians 11:23-27, Paul mentions his experience of frequent imprisonments, 5 whippings, 3 beatings with a rod, 1 stoning, and 3 shipwrecks; all of which was not mentioned once in the book of Acts.

### The Problem of Literary Style

Critics have contended that the Pastoral Epistles were not authored by Paul, because the letters lacked the typical vocabulary, grammatical phrases, and literary style of Paul's other epistles. For example:

1 Timothy has 356 of 529 words, or 67%, that do not appear in ten of Paul's letters, including 96 hapax legomena (words that appear only once in the New Testament).

Typical Pauline words used in ten of Paul's letters are not found in 1 or 2 Timothy.

1 and 2 Timothy also use different words than Paul's other letters to say the same thing.

1 and 2 Timothy have grammatical forms, such as how definite articles, prepositions, and conjunctions are used, that are unique to the Pastoral Epistles and lack grammatical forms typical of Paul's other ten epistles.

The Pastoral Epistles lack the distinctive writing style of Paul. Many aspects of his literary style, such as his use of prepositions and pronouns are absent; consequently, the tone and character of the Pastoral Epistles are different from Paul's other ten epistles.

## Who was the author of 1 and 2 Timothy? (page 4)

However this evidence is hardly conclusive against Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles. It is less conclusive than the explicit evidence within the Pastoral Epistles themselves, which indicate Paul as the author (1 Tim 1:1, 2 Tim 1:1, Titus 1:1).

Evidence of non-Pauline vocabulary and frequent hapax legomena used to deny Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles does not hold up under closer examination.

The biggest problem for critics is Paul's use of amanuenses (secretaries) to write his letters (i.e. Rom 16:22). Because it is unknown how the epistles were originally produced, the contribution of the amanuenses to the original text is unknown. This makes it impossible to establish what is typical Pauline vocabulary, grammatical structure, and literary style.

During the first century, Greek secretaries functioned in a variety of ways as directed by the author. Some secretaries took dictation from authors while others wrote their own words to convey the thought of the author. In the case of the Pastoral Epistles, it has been postulated that Luke was Paul's amanuenses based two observations: 1) 2 Timothy 4:11 states that "Only Luke is with me..." and 2) there are many similarities in vocabulary with Acts.

In considering the literary evidence against Pauline authorship, most words missing in the Pastoral Epistles are also absent in epistles that have been unquestionably established as Paul's. There is no even distribution of vocabulary throughout all of Paul's epistles. Yet critics never mention the inconsistent use of this type of evidence to condemn the Pastoral Epistles or disqualify those epistles unquestionably Paul's.

The hapax legomena are not evenly distributed and occur in groups; most of the occurrences are found where Paul is discussing a new subject. Almost half of the hapax legomena can be found in the Septuagint, which Paul studied extensively. Roughly one quarter of the hapax legomena have been identified as part of the Greek language of the time. A little over one quarter of the hapax legomena may possibly be new Greek words to describe the new subjects associated with the new religion of Christianity.

When one studies Paul's letters in light of his missionary journeys and experiences, it is very difficult to see how an even distribution of vocabulary can be expected as he discusses a variety of subjects, to Christians of a variety of ethnicities and regions, and with the variety of situations that he writes from.

In contrast to his passionate letters for Christ intended for large audiences, the Pastoral Epistles were written to two very dear individuals. Their quiet meditative tone reflects Paul's love and concern for them and perhaps in context of his age and mortality.

### Who was the author of 1 and 2 Timothy? (page 5)

Examine the following tables of the cities he traveled to and gain a sense of some context that his epistles were written in.

Before Paul's missionary journeys.

Damascus ( <b>Syria</b> )	Acts 9:20
Jerusalem ( <b>Judea</b> )	Galatians 1:18
Tarsus ( <b>Cilicia</b> )	Acts 9:26
Antioch ( <b>Syria</b> )	

Paul's First Missionary Journey (46-48 A.D.): Acts 13:1 – 14:28.

Antioch, Seleucia ( <b>Syria</b> )	Acts 13:1-4
Salamis, Paphos ( <b>Cyprus</b> )	Acts 13:4-12
Perga ( <b>Pamphylia</b> )	Acts 13:13 \
Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe ( <b>Galatia</b> )	Acts 13:13 – 14:21
Attalia ( <b>Pamphylia</b> )	Acts 14:25-28
Antioch ( <b>Syria</b> )	<b>Galatians</b> (approximate date: 48 A.D.) – Believed to be written from Antioch and to the churches of Southern Galatia, Paul's letter to Christians in Galatia was a vehement response to Judaizers who suggested to the Galatians that a) Paul was an inferior apostle, b) his Gospel was not authoritative, and c) the doctrine of justification required works not simply faith in Jesus Christ alone.

**Who was the author of 1 and 2 Timothy?** (page 6)

Paul's Second Missionary Journey (49-52 A.D.): Acts 15:30 – 18:22.

Antioch ( <b>Syria</b> )	Acts 15:30-39
Tarsus ( <b>Cilicia</b> )	Acts 15:41
Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Pisidian Antioch ( <b>Galatia</b> )	Acts 16:1-5
Troas ( <b>Asia</b> )	Acts 16:6-10
Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea ( <b>Macedonia</b> )	Acts 16:11 – 17:15
Athens, Corinth, Cenchreae ( <b>Achaia</b> )	Acts 17:16 – 18:18 <b>1 &amp; 2 Thessalonians</b> (approximate date: 51 A.D.) – Paul's time with the church of Thessalonica was abruptly cut short by accusations by local Jews of treason for his promotion of Jesus as king instead of Caesar. From the safety of Corinth, where he writes these letters, Paul learns of the Thessalonians's stalwart faith despite the efforts of the local Jews who attempt to discredit him as a cult leader scamming for money. In his letter to the Christians of Thessalonica, Paul focuses on a) thanksgiving for their faith, b) encouragement for those being persecuted, and c) exhortation for further work and spiritual growth. Yet Paul also had to defend his apostleship and integrity.
Ephesus ( <b>Asia</b> )	Acts 18:19
Caesarea, Jerusalem ( <b>Judea</b> )	Acts 18:22

**Who was the author of 1 and 2 Timothy?** (page 7)

Paul's Third Missionary Journey (53-57 A.D.): Acts 18:23 - 21:17.

Antioch ( <b>Syria</b> )	Acts 18:23
Tarsus ( <b>Cilicia</b> )	Acts 18:23
Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Pisidian Antioch ( <b>Galatia</b> )	Acts 18:23
Ephesus ( <b>Asia</b> )	Acts 18:24 – 19:41  <b>1 &amp; 2 Corinthians</b> (approximate date: 56 A.D.) - Corinth was a cosmopolitan yet immoral city. It's pagan religious center, the Temple of Aphrodite, promoted promiscuity and legalized prostitution with its 1,000 prostitutes. Against this background of loose moral standards, Paul writes from Ephesus to the Christians in Corinth who were concerned with the challenge of living the Christian life in an amoral society. 1 Corinthians is notable for its emphasis on practical issues such as divisions within a church, incest, marriage, spiritual liberty, public worship, and the resurrection. 2 Corinthians is regarded as one of Paul's most personal letters focused on reconciliation, philosophy of ministry, refuting accusers, and defending his apostleship.
Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea ( <b>Macedonia</b> )	Acts 20:1-6
Athens, Corinth ( <b>Achaia</b> )	Acts 20:1-6  <b>Romans</b> (approximate date 57 A.D.) - Considered Paul's most important epistle for its concise and logical presentation, Romans is described as a legal brief of the doctrine of justification by faith. From Corinth, in contrast to his other epistles, Paul is writing to a church he has never started or visited; it is a letter written to Christians in Rome that presents his Gospel in preparation for his visit there. Paul begins and ends his letter with a reminder that he is a bond servant of Christ. Paul's principle focus: in need of God's grace, all of mankind, including Jew and Gentile, can live free of sin through faith in Jesus Christ' redemptive sacrifice.
Berea, Thessalonica, Philippi ( <b>Macedonia</b> )	Acts 20:1-6
Troas, Asso, ( <b>Asia</b> )	Acts 20:6-14
Mitylene ( <b>Lesbos</b> )	Acts 20:13-14
Miletus ( <b>Asia</b> )	Acts 20:15-16
Tyre ( <b>Phoenicia</b> )	Acts 21:1-3
Caesarea, Jerusalem ( <b>Judea</b> )	Acts 21:7-16

**Who was the author of 1 and 2 Timothy? (page 8)**

Paul's prison journey (57-61 A.D.): Acts 27:1 – 28:16.

Jerusalem, Caesarea ( <b>Judea</b> )	
Sidon ( <b>Phoenicia</b> )	Acts 27:1-3
Myra ( <b>Lycia</b> )	Acts 27:4-6
Fair Havens ( <b>Crete</b> )	Acts 27:7-8
Shipwreck ( <b>Malta</b> )	Acts 27:9-44
Syracuse ( <b>Sicily</b> )	Acts 28:11-12
Rhegium, Puteoli, Rome ( <b>Italy</b> )	<p>Acts 28:13-16</p> <p>From his prison in Rome, Paul writes 4 short letters known as the <b>Prison Epistles</b>:</p> <p><b>Ephesians</b> (approximately 60 A.D.) – Written possibly as a circular letter to be shared among Christian assemblies around Ephesus, Paul wrote about the mystery of Christ. Reminding his readers of his apostolic authority, Paul shares his special revelation from God affirming that both Jew and Gentile form the one body of Christ; Gentile Believers become fellow heirs of salvation and members of the body of Christ.</p> <p><b>Colossians</b> (approximately 60 A.D.) – Written to the Christians around Colossae whom he had not met before, Paul was responding strongly to false doctrinal teaching that was developing in the early church. Some Colossian members were promoting Judaism and an early form of Gnosticism. Paul emphasizes the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ; the Believer is complete in Christ and that Christ is in the Believer.</p> <p><b>Philippians</b> (approximately 60-62 A.D.) – Paul's letter to the Christians of Philippi is one of gratitude for their gift to him and joy in God. His focus is on the joy of a Christ centered life and their partnership in sharing the Gospel. In setting one's mind on the high calling of God in Jesus Christ, differences between Christians can be overcome.</p> <p><b>Philemon</b> (approximately 60 A.D.) – Considered Paul's shortest and most personal letter, the letter to the slave owner Philemon is a lesson in Christian relationships; in contrast to many of his other letters, Paul does not write to correct a theological error or teach doctrine. And while he does not approve or condemn the practice of slavery, Paul crafts his exhortations with references to the Gospel. While slaves should demonstrate Christian obedience and humility to their masters, and Christian masters treat their slaves fairly, both slave and master are ontologically equal before Christ.</p>



## Who was the author of 1 and 2 Timothy? (page 9)

Paul's Fourth Missionary Journey and second imprisonment (63-67 A.D.): Titus 1:5, 1 Timothy 1:3, Philemon 22, Romans 15:24.

<b>(Macedonia)?</b>	<p><b>1 Timothy</b> (approximately 62 A.D.) – Written to his dear disciple, Paul instructs Timothy in how one should conduct themselves in the church. Concerned with the importance of spiritual maturity in the leadership as a guard against false teaching, Paul is intent on teaching Timothy how to recognize and develop spiritual maturity with practical advice.</p> <p><b>Titus</b> (approximately 63 A.D.) – Aware of the prevalence of false teaching, Paul advises Titus, who is a pastor on Crete, on the importance of sound doctrine and warns about false teachers. Paul emphasizes that belief and action are linked; right beliefs lead to right actions. In encouraging sound doctrine, Paul also encourages good works.</p>
<b>Rome (Italy)</b>	<p><b>2 Timothy</b> (approximately 67 A.D.) – An intensely personal letter which he knew was likely his last, Paul writes to Timothy from prison with two purposes in mind: a) to visit him in prison before he dies, and b) to provide his final advice to living the Christian life. Use your spiritual gifts, handle the Word of God carefully, and preach the Word!</p>

### The Problem of Ecclesiology

Critics believe that the structure of church leadership and authority listed in the Pastoral Epistles is more advanced than what existed during the first century church and more accurately reflected a second century church. Critics do not believe that the following existed during the first century church:

“Overseer” (*episcopos*) and “Deacon” (*diakonos*) found in 1 Timothy 3:1-13

“Elder” (*presbuteros*) found in 1 Timothy 5:17-20

“Elders” (*presbuteroi*) found in Titus 1:5-7

However, the argument that the Pastoral Epistles introduced a more advanced form of church hierarchy than could possibly exist for the first century church is incorrect.

Elders were already in existence in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:2).

Elders were appointed in the churches of Galatia (Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe) during Paul's First Missionary Journey (Acts 14:23).

Paul met with the elders of the church of Ephesus (Asia) during his Third Missionary Journey (Acts 20:17).

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul's opening address is directed to the overseers and deacons (Philip 1:1).

## Who was the author of 1 and 2 Timothy? (page 10)

Paul referred to a form of church leadership in his letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 5:12).

Various aspects of church leadership were referred to in discussions about spiritual gifts (Rom 12:6-8, 1 Cor 12:28, and Eph 4:11).

Given that 1 & 2 Timothy was written later than the citations above, the argument of ecclesiology fails to establish an anachronism and as an argument against Pauline authorship of 1 & 2 Timothy. 1 & 2 Timothy were in fact maintaining an ecclesiastical organization that was already established.

### The Problem of Theology

Critics have questioned two issues with regard to theology:

The false teaching that Paul opposed in his Pastoral Epistles is in regards to second century Gnosticism; thus, the Pastoral Epistles were not authored by Paul in the first century.

The Soteriology (doctrine of sin) found in the Pastoral Epistles is different from the theology found in other Pauline letters. The Pastoral Epistles promote some concepts that are different than Pauline thought in other letters. For example:

“Savior” is a title used for God as well as for Jesus Christ (God - 1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Tit 1:3; 2:10; 3:4, Christ - Tit 1:4; 2:13; 3:6).

“Faith” is used to refer more to sound doctrine than a saving relationship with Christ (1 Tim 1:19).

“Righteousness” appears to be faith plus good works instead of being justified for faith before God (Tit 3:5). There is a stronger emphasis on good works (1 Tim 2:10; 5:10; 6:8; 2 Tim 2:21; Tit 2:14).

However, the critics’ charges of a theological problem are not convincing.

Gnosticism, which developed more fully in the latter half of the second century, is a system of false teachings that believed that knowledge is the way to salvation. This Greek religion held that the body and soul of a human being was evil; however the human being’s spirit was not. Salvation was gained by awakening the spirit with knowledge and liberating this inner person by ascending from the confines of the evil matter of earth. Seven cosmic spheres, guarded by “spiritual principalities,” envelop the earth. One may pass through these guardians by recalling knowledge of certain formulas. Salvation is achieved when one passes through all of the spheres and is reunited with god.

It is very possible that the seeds of false belief that developed into Gnosticism were present in the first century church. In contrast to his vigorous writings against misguided Christian teachers such as Judaizers (i.e. Galatians), Paul treatment of these false beliefs were more as passing comments.

“Myths and endless genealogies” (1 Tim 1:4, 4:7; Tit 1:14, 3:9) – “Myths” are in reference to Jewish myths and “genealogies” were used within the context of the Law. This indicates that the false teaching was of a Jewish nature.

“Men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from” (1 Tim 4:3) – Asceticism was an early reaction to the idea that the material world was evil and corrupt.

## Who was the author of 1 and 2 Timothy? (page 11)

“What is falsely called knowledge” (1 Tim 6:20) – The Greek term for “knowledge” is “gnosis.” This may indicate the possible presence of an early form of Gnosticism; however, it is not clear what exactly Paul is referring to. Other forms of false teaching, not necessarily Gnostic, may be what Paul was referring to. It is easier to see that Paul was warning Timothy about false teaching.

“Astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place” (2 Tim 2:18) – Paul is warning Timothy about two men, Hymenaeus and Philetus, who taught that the resurrection of believers had already occurred (1 Tim 1:20).

While later apologists, such as Irenaeus, used the Pastoral Epistles to refute Gnosticism, there is no evidence that Paul wrote his Pastoral Epistles with this in mind. This is an instance where Pauline authorship is being challenged for contents the Pastoral Epistles did not contain.

With regard to aspects of soteriology found in the Pastoral Epistles as being different from other Pauline letters, the conjecture of critical scholars can be dismissed.

One reason is that the Pastoral Epistles illustrate a progression of Paul’s theology as he matures with time. For example, examine how Paul views himself with time:

Date (approximate)	Reference	Paul’s perception of himself
56 A.D.	1 Corinthians 15:9	“I am least of the Apostles”
60 A.D.	Ephesians 3:8	“the very least of all saints”
62 A.D.	1 Timothy 1:15	“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all”

In a similar fashion, there is a progression in thought with Jesus Christ culminating with the explicit identification of Jesus Christ with God:

Date (approximate)	Reference	Statement of Jesus Christ
51 A.D.	1 Thessalonians 5:9	“Lord Jesus Christ”
60 A.D.	Philippians 3:20	“Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ”
62 A.D.	1 Timothy 1:1	“God our Savior”
63 A.D.	Titus 1:3-4; 2:13	“God our Savior, Jesus Christ our Savior” “our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ”

Another reason is the purpose of the Pastoral Epistles, which served in a different manner than the other Pauline Epistles. The other Pauline Epistles (except Romans and Philemon) were letters intended to serve with apostolic authority for churches; they were both doctrinal and practical.

The Pastoral Epistles were intended to guide two close friends, functioning as pastors, who knew Paul’s theology well; they were not intended to serve with a apostolic authority that superceded the pastoral authority of Timothy and Titus. Thus there is a focus on sound doctrine, to guard against false teaching, and the importance of works as a means to discern spiritual maturity and as a basis to qualify sound Christian leaders.

### The Problem of Pious Forgeries

Was it possible to sneak a forgery into the Canon to further an ecclesiastical political agenda? Critics against Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles have presumed that the forgeries were intended to establish an explicit apostolic basis for a male dominated church order at the beginning of the second century.

However, the claim of forgery is nothing but conjecture.

While the premise of political expediency to establish a certain form of church structure can be used to provide motive for a 1 Timothy forgery, it fails to serve as a motive to cause one to forge 2 Timothy and Titus. No motive can be surmised for the forgery of 2 Timothy and Titus. Furthermore, if there were motive to forge one letter, why would there be a need to forge two more?

Critics denying Pauline authorship have not been able to historically reconstruct the reasons for making forgeries of all three Pastoral Epistles.

Paul was ever mindful of distortions and false teachings of the Gospel. In starting his churches, Paul vigilantly oversaw the dissemination of the Gospel, and his epistles reflect his supervision of its explanation and how it should be applied.

Paul was aware of possible forgeries and misrepresentations even in his earliest epistles.

“Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter **as if from us**, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.” (2 Thess 2:1-2)

“It was for this He called you through **our gospel**, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter **from us**.” (2 Thess 2:14-15)

“We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will continue to **do what we command**. May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ. Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received **from us**.” (2 Thess 3:4-6)

“I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and **this is a distinguishing mark in every letter**; this is the way I write.” (2 Thess 3:17)

“And why not say (**as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say**), ‘Let us do evil that good may come’? Their condemnation is just.” (Rom 3:8)

Paul teaches clearly that the Truth is transparent and that God is sovereign; deception and distortion of God’s Word is both unnecessary and condemned.

“Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we receive mercy, we do not lose heart, but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” (2 Cor 4:1-2)

A Christian forger would find no moral motive in anonymously writing the Pastoral Epistles.

## Who was the author of 1 and 2 Timothy? (page 13)

Both the Greeks and Romans took care to maintain the authenticity of their collections of writings from the past. During the period of the first century B.C. and A.D., there was a growing emphasis for an accurate attribution of written works to the original author. Like the Greeks and Romans, the first century church also guarded the works considered authoritative and orthodox.

When a forgery was discovered, it was immediately rejected as an authentic work of that particular author. In both Greek / Roman and Christian communities, regardless of its content, there are no known writings, as religiously and philosophically prescriptive as the New Testament, that has been knowingly accepted as a forgery.

When examining the many examples of ancient forgeries, there are some notable characteristics:

The hero or protagonist of the forgery is portrayed in the very best light.

Yet Paul states "I am the foremost of all sinners" (1 Tim 1:15). Not only is this uncharacteristic of a forgery, but it continues a genuine and perceptible trend of self-appraisal in accordance with his earlier letters (as noted earlier in this article).

Letters falsely ascribed to a great teacher of the past were rarely written close to the author's lifetime.

If the Pastoral Epistles were forged, they were written within 20 – 30 years of Paul's lifetime. This would be highly unusual as forgeries typically have a gap on the order of hundreds of years. For example:

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch – epistle forgeries were written 300 - 400 years later.

Plato – epistle forgeries were written about 200 - 300 years later.

Socrates – epistle forgeries were written about 200 – 400 years later.

Critics will continue to debate the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, yet the evidence and conjecture by destructive scholars so far has not been convincing.

### References:

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3. Miller, Glenn, "Pseudonymity? Pseudepigraphy? Pseudo\*.\*?," The Christian Think-tank ([www.christian-thinktank.com/pseudox2.html](http://www.christian-thinktank.com/pseudox2.html)).