

FHS 3: INTRODUCTION TO PAULINE LITERATURE

Handout for Lectures 13 and 14:
Week 8, Michaelmas 2017
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1. Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians

“prison” or “captivity” letters
Issues surrounding pseudepigraphy
Colossians and Philemon
Colossians and Ephesians

2. Colossians

Dating and place of writing (Ephesus – CE 52-55; Rome – CE 60-62; later 60s or 70s)
Colossian earthquake in CE 60/61
Authorship: language & style; theology (Christology, eschatology, ecclesiology); issues with Philemon
Other options for authorship: Timothy? Other close associate?
Paul’s thought as consistent? Developed?
Early contestation: Ephesians (?), Ignatius (?), Marcion, Irenaeus, Clement, Origen, P⁴⁶

2. The Colossian Church

Geography
Laodicea and Hierapolis
Visited by Paul? Founded by Epaphras (1.7; 4.12)

3. Colossian Structure

1.1-2: Opening address with greeting
1.3-23: extensive thanksgiving and prayer
1.24-2.5: statements affirming Paul’s commitment to the gospel and to the Colossians, Laodiceans, and others who have not seen him
2.6-4.6: main themes of the letter
4.7-18: Series of personal greetings, including that “with my own hand” like Paul (recall Galatians...)

4. Colossian Themes/Occasion for the Letter

Is there a Colossian “Heresy”? (2.8: “philosophy and empty deceit”)
If there are opponents, who might they be?
Role of Tychicus and the slave Onesimus
Christology (1.15-20; 2.3, 9...): Soteriological Christology; Preexistence; Incarnation
Domestic Code (*Haustafel*): Stoic and Jewish antecedents; Christ-centred; all of household included

5. Ephesians

Date, location, and recipients (all difficult to determine)
Authorship: language & style; theology (Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology)
Overarching theme: God’s universal plan in Christ for Jews and Gentiles; addressed to Gentiles
How Pauline is Ephesians? Familiar structure; unfamiliar language
Who are the recipients? Few specifics about Paul or Ephesus. Does the author know the readers?
Absence of Pauline problems: Jews vs Gentiles; law; circumcision; idol meat; church order
Altered reference: Christ as body vs head (1.23, 4.16); Kingdom of Christ and God (5.5)
Unfamiliar language: mystery (Gentile inclusion 3.3-4; marriage 6.19); past salvation (2.8-9), law “abolished” (2.15; contrast Col 2.14; Rom 3.31)
“Paul’s best disciple, one whose religious perceptions and theological vision are equal to Paul’s own” (L.T. Johnson)

6. Ephesian Themes and Structure

Summary of the Gospel: All-encompassing vision of: Christ, the Church, the Christian life

Ephesian Theology: 2.1-3.13

Ephesian Ethics: 4.1-6.20

Key themes/images: unity, *ekklesia* (9 times), “the body of Christ” (10 times)

7. Philemon

Overview: Philemon and other addressees (Apphia and Archippus), provenance and dating

Structure:

1-3: Opening verses and greeting

4-7: Thanksgiving and prayer for Philemon

8-22: Paul’s appeal on behalf of Onesimus

23-4: Closing greetings

The figure of Onesimus: 4 options

Purpose of the letter: relationship between Philemon and Onesimus and nature of conversion

The Pauline Canon and the Pastoral Epistles

1. Canonical Paul

Manuscript evidence: P³² (vss of Titus; c 200 CE) and P⁴⁶ (all but 2 Thess, Pastorals, Philem; c 200 CE)

Marcion and the Pauline canon (c mid-2nd century)

Muratorian Canon (eccentric ordering)

Amphilochius of Iconium (4th century: first explicit order of Paul’s letters as in NT now)

2. 1-2 Timothy and Titus

The “Pastoral Epistles”

Timothy and Titus

Date: c 80-140? Possible early attestation (Polycarp?); absent from P⁴⁶ and Marcion

Authorship and Setting/Authenticity

Linguistic

Lack of attestation

Historical framework and Paul’s ‘career’

Church order

Theological concepts and “heresy”

Writing style

Contradictory views re women, hierarchy, faith

Details of Paul’s person

3. 2 Timothy

Situation: Paul imprisoned and near death; emphasis on following Paul’s example and holding fast to tradition, opposing false doctrine. A major focus is also on the person Timothy himself needs to be if he is to be effective in his ministry.

1: Thanksgiving and encouragement to Timothy

2: Faithful preaching of the gospel; true vs false teaching

3: Encouragement to Timothy: Paul’s example

4: Practical charges and conclusion

Notes re: 4.13 (parchments and cloak); 3.16 (inspiration of Scripture)

4. 1 Timothy

Situation: Paul not imprisoned, writing to Timothy at Ephesus with guidance about church order in the face of false teaching.

Setting of 1 Tim: Timothy on assignment in Ephesus? Threat of 'gnosis', asceticism?

1: Introduction: Warning against false teaching

2: Orderly conduct of men and women in the church

3: Bishops and deacons

4: Warning against false teachers

5: Widows and elders/presbyters

6: Concluding warnings for Timothy

Is this the first example of *de novo* pseudepigraphy in the NT?

5. Titus

Situation: Titus is in Crete with a mandate from Paul to oversee various congregations and to give teachings that will undermine the efforts of opponents who are against the Pauline mission.

1: Introduction and church order

2: Christian family life

3: individual exhortations

Questions about what is behind this letter and its relation to Crete

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