

23. The Epistle to Titus

I. Introduction: Paul, the named author presented in a densely worded exposition of the theology of his apostolate (1:1-3) Titus, the named recipient, "my loyal child in the faith we share" (1:4a) The assumed situation: Titus left on Crete; Paul with the responsibility of getting the church organized (1:5; cf. vv. 12-13) A hint that the text is not really intended for "Titus": In the final salutation, "Grace be with all of you" (3:15), "all of you" (meta panton hymon) is in the plural.

II. Elders and the Bishop (1:5b-9) One and the same individual: "elder" (prebyteros) referring to his status; "bishop" (episkopos) to his function Qualifications of the elder/bishop (vv. 5b-9a) The function of a bishop God's steward (theou oikonomou, v. 7) To teach and refute (v. 9b) A note: This epistle makes no mention of an assistant (diakonos).

III. Out-of-hand dismissal of rebellious people (1:10-16), with attention drawn to their Jewishness (w. 10,14, 16; cf. 3:9) IV. The Manifestation (epiphaneia) of Jesus Christ Key to the christology of the Pastoral Epistles. Titus 2:13 uses the term epiphaneia, "manifestation" or "appearing," to refer to the eschatological appearance of Jesus. The theme is common to all three Pastoral Epistles: 1 Tim 6:14 and 2 Tim (4:1, 8) use the terminology in the same way. For the author(s) of the Pastoral Epistles, "appearing" (epiphaneia) describes what Paul describes as the "coming" (parousia) of Christ in the First Letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23).

The term "manifestation" (epiphaneia) occurs one other time in Second Timothy, in 1:10 where it refers to the incarnate manifestation of Jesus. Titus uses the related verb, "make manifest," "appear" (epiphaino) to speak of the same reality which he describes as the salvific grace of God (2:11) or the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior (3:4). Thus, we are "epiphany" people, living between the two appearances of Jesus Christ. Believers were saved and learned because of the first "epiphany." They await the second "epiphany" for final salvation and judgment, The context of this language

The Greco-Roman world of the late first century, which included not only the traditional gods but also deified emperors, who received the title "Savior" (soter) because of the benefits they conferred upon people. A particularly striking example of the use of salvific and epiphanic language is an inscription found in Ephesus, the "presumed" destination of 1-2 Timothy. The inscription acknowledges Julius Caesar's divinized status and proclaims him to be the "common savior" because of his beneficence to all human beings. It describes Julius as "god made manifest,

[born] of Ares and Aphrodite, the common savior of human life." Not only Titus but also the other two Pastoral Epistles echo a polemic against a growing cult of the emperors, emperor "worship."

Review Questions

1. Have you learned from the author's designation of Paul, the epistle's intitulo, how important Paul is for the life of the church?
2. What does it mean to be an epiphany person?
3. Do you appreciate the manner in which the author(s) of the Pastoral Epistles interact with and criticize the culture of their day?