



Letter of Paul to Titus

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Introduction

As discussed in [another entry](#), the Pastoral Epistles ([1 Timothy](#), [2 Timothy](#), and Titus) are letters found in the New Testament which claim the apostle Paul as their author, though they are typically understood in scholarship to be pseudonymous compositions which develop Pauline theology for a new audience. This entry described the relationship between the Pastoral Epistles and Pauline apocalypticism, and four aspects of apocalypticism were identified as important elements for comparison between the apocalypticism found in the undisputed Pauline letters and the Pastoral Epistles. These elements are: the eschatological coming of Christ; divine revelation; presence of divine beings; and a two-age periodisation of history. Rather than compare the undisputed Pauline letters to the Pastoral Epistles as a unified corpus, this entry will focus on apocalypticism in Titus as compared to Pauline apocalypticism in order to allow possible differences between Titus and [1 and 2 Timothy](#) to come to the fore. These letters have their own constellation of apocalyptic elements. Titus will be shown to differ not only from Paul but also from [1 and 2 Timothy](#).

Titus

The eschatological appearing of Christ in Titus is confined to essentially one passage—Titus 2:13. Here, the author mentions the expectation 'of the appearing of our great god and saviour, Jesus Christ' (translation mine. The translation of this verse is highly contested; see Harris 1980, 262–77; Brox 1989, 300). As seen with [1 and 2 Timothy](#), the temporal setting of Titus 2:13 is at an undisclosed point in the future. There is no expectation in this passage that the coming of Christ is imminent.

Regarding the divine disclosure of mysteries, Titus is silent if one insists that the term 'mystery' is necessary. Titus 1:2–3 mentions that God revealed eternal life in 'his word through preaching' with which the authorial Paul 'was entrusted' (see Harding 2017, 268). Here, something previously unknown was revealed to the authorial Paul. Like [1 and 2 Timothy](#), however, Titus does focus upon the handing down of tradition from one generation to the next (1:5–15). These two forms of disclosure—divine revelation and passing on of tradition—stand together in Titus.

Other than God and Jesus Christ (see 2:13), there are no divine beings present in the letter to Titus. This is in contrast to [1 and 2 Timothy](#) which both discuss such beings.

Titus presents a periodisation of history in 2:11–14. This passage mentions two ‘appearings’ of Christ. The passage describes one ‘appearing’ as in the past (2:11) and the second ‘appearing’ as in the future (2:13), placing the reader between the two appearances (Oberlinner 1980, 201; Towner 2006, 750). As Towner says, this is ‘essentially to place brackets around the present age’ (Towner 1989, 69; see also Downs 2005, 656). In this way, the letter creates a period before the first appearing, the present age, and an age after the second appearing. The periodisation of history exists but in a very different form from that found in the undisputed Paulines.

Titus’s apocalypticism emphasises the future ‘appearing’ of Jesus Christ and divine disclosure of eternal life. The future ‘appearing,’ in contrast to the undisputed Paulines, is not imminent. It also has a periodisation of history, but now it is around three ages rather than two. Thus, although there are clear apocalyptic themes in Titus, it is different from the undisputed Paulines.

Conclusion

The Pastoral Epistles evidently contain elements of apocalyptic thought. Not all of the documents, however, contain these elements in the same constellations. Titus has an expectation of a non-imminent ‘appearing’ of Christ, but over a period of three ages instead of two, and a lack of divine beings. In addition, Titus has an element of divine revelation. All three of the Pastoral Epistles differ from Paul in the relative imminence of the future coming of Christ and the relations of the ages ([see entry on 1 and 2 Timothy](#)). Paul sees the future coming as imminent, whereas the Pastoral Epistles do not. Paul divides time into two overlapping ages, but Titus presents three sequential ages. Titus has no divine beings in contrast to Paul. Titus also contains divine revelation as does Paul. The apocalypticism of the Pastoral Epistles, therefore, is markedly different from that of Paul. Further, apocalypticism within the Pastoral Epistles is not the same across all three documents.

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