

Introduction to the Pastoral Epistles

Studies in the Pastoral Epistles

Dr Annang Asumang

1

Formative Assessment (60%)

Choose **one (1)** and write a two thousand, five hundred (2,500) words essay

1. Critically evaluate the similarities and differences between the socio-historical and cultural context of First Timothy and your own context and explain their pastoral implications for your ministry.
2. Employ the Pastoral Epistles to write a strategic paper setting out the pastoral theology which should guide your church's leadership team.
3. Using appropriate examples from each of the Pastoral Epistles, demonstrate the various ways in which these letters underline the divine status of Jesus.
4. Use appropriate examples from each of the Pastoral Epistles to explain the strategies for Timothy and Titus to implement in order to restore and maintain orthodoxy in Ephesus and Crete.
5. Evaluate the extent to which Titus 2:11-14 may be considered as a summation of some key elements of Paul's theology.

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Summative Assessment (40%)

Multiple Choice Questions based on lecture during Semester Exams

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Learning Resources

Students' Handouts: Each lecture will be accompanied by students' handouts which will be distributed in advance of each lecture. Each handout starts with a few essay type questions couched as the learning outcomes, followed by some of the details of the lectures.

Online Videos: Student will benefit from watching the fourteen YouTube lectures on the Pastoral Epistles delivered by Dr Robert Yarborough of the Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, USA. These may be accessed [here](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnNXzYjQerJisLJY37QCsSyxQKh6GOqRN): <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnNXzYjQerJisLJY37QCsSyxQKh6GOqRN>

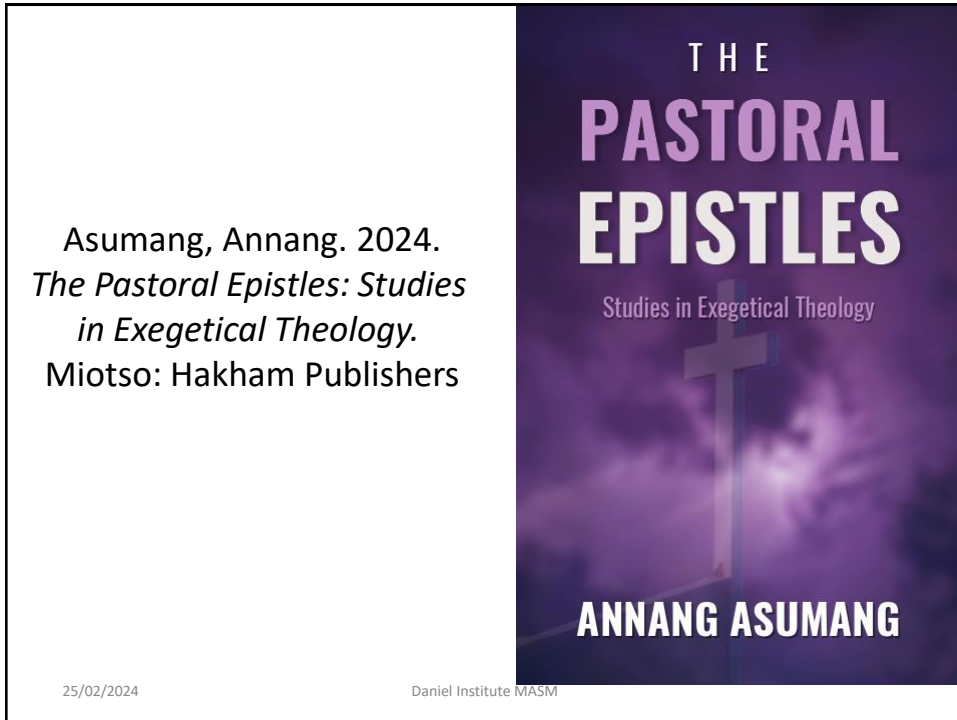
Students should note that this is not a tacit endorsement of everything that is said, and certainly the videos are not pitched anywhere near the level of critical engagement of the text required at the graduate level. Dr Robert Yarborough is nevertheless among the few academics with conservative attitudes to the Pastoral Epistles, and whose 2018 commentary for the Pillar New Testament is to be recommended.

Required Reading: Apart from reading through the text of the Pastoral Epistles, and consultations with standard textbooks, no particular textbooks are currently set for the course.

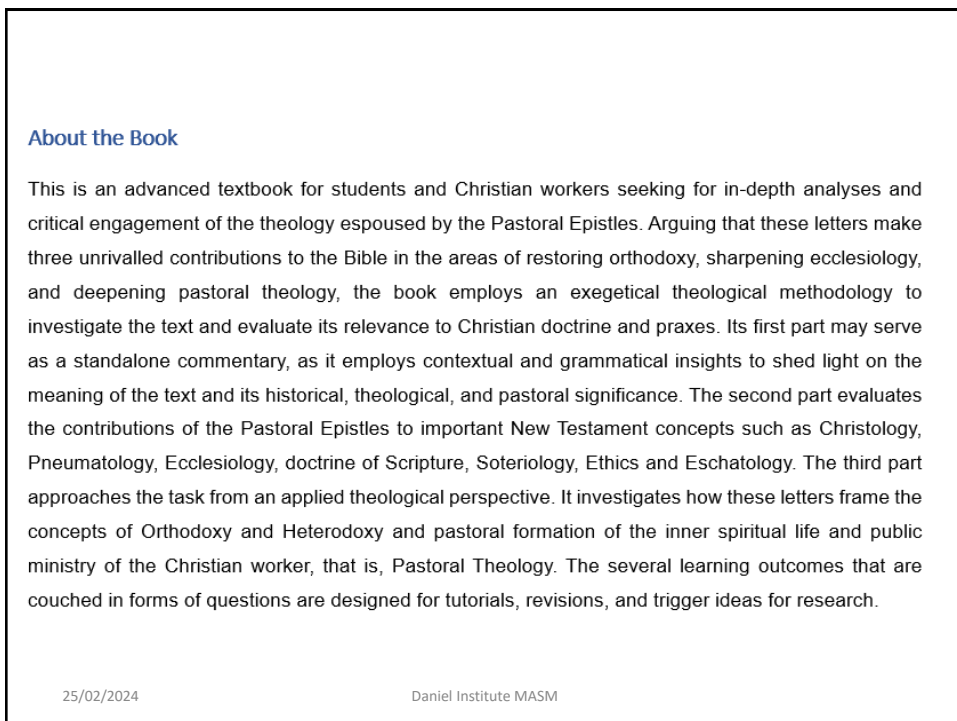
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5



6

Lecture Topics for Course

1. Introduction to Pastoral Epistles
2. Expository Survey of the Pastoral Epistles (Part 1)
3. Expository Survey of the Pastoral Epistles (Part 2)
4. Christology in the Pastoral Epistles
5. Ecclesiology in Pastoral Epistles
6. Restoring & Maintaining Orthodoxy and the Pastoral Epistles
7. Doctrine of Scripture and the Pastoral Epistles
8. Pastoral Theology in the Pastoral Epistles
9. Theological Ethics in the Pastoral Epistles
10. Summary & Revision

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7

Learning Outcomes

1. Use appropriate examples to demonstrate the unique contributions of the Pastoral Epistles to the biblical canon
2. Analyse the factors that have contributed to the varying receptions of the Pastoral Epistles over the centuries
3. Mount a coherent argument defending Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles
4. Explain how the socio-religious and political climate of Ephesus during the middle decades of the first century help interpretation of 1 & 2 Timothy
5. Evaluate similarities and differences between the features of the errors addressed by 1 Timothy and some contemporary Ghanaian Christian errors

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Topics covered today

1. Canonical Function of Pastoral Epistles
2. History of Reception
3. Socio-historical Context
 - Authorship
 - Socio-Religious Context of First Century Ephesus
 - Socio-Religious Context of First Century Crete
 - The Heresies Addressed by the Pastoral Epistles

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9

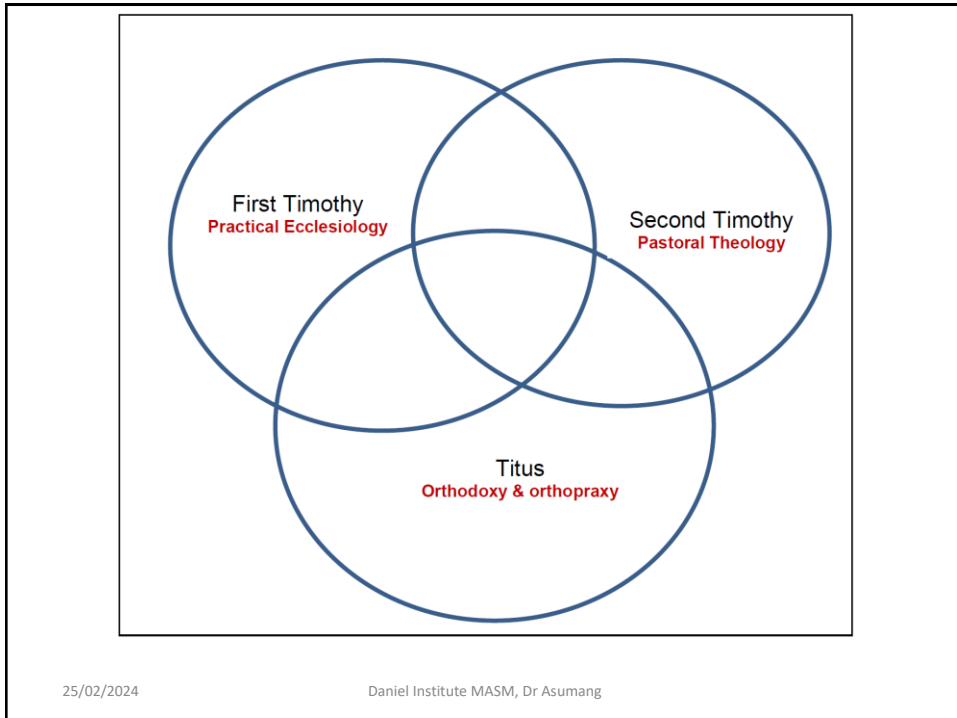
Three Intertwined themes of the Pastorals

1. Christian orthodoxy and orthopraxy
2. Practical Ecclesiology
3. Pastoral theology and formation

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10



11

Canonical Roles of Pastorals in Pauline Corpus

- Summary of Pauline theology and ethics
 - Compare Ephesians with [Titus 2:11-14](#)
 - Titus is “bookend” of Pauline corpus with Philemon as “Epilogue”
- Hermeneutical window for analyzing application of Pauline theology to localized ecclesial problem
 - Compare 1 Corinthians with 1 Timothy
- Intra-team dynamics, mentorship, succession planning and pastoral theology
 - Compare 2 Timothy with Philemon or 3 John

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Canonical Role of Pastorals in New Testament

1. Unique genre(s): Semi-private letters of mandate
2. New Testament Ethics: compare Titus with Sermon on Mount [Gentile/Jewish contexts]
3. Particular theological issues: e.g, Christian asceticism in 1 Timothy compared with 1 Corinthians

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Canonical Role of Pastoral with Old Testament

1. Theology of Scripture
 - Compare 2 Tim 3:16-17 with 2 Peter 1:20-22
2. Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy
 - Compare 1 Tim with Malachi
3. Succession Narratives
 - Compare 2 Tim with Moses' speech Deut 31 or Prov 1-3

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History of Reception of Pastoral Epistles

1. Patristic Period [~90 to 450/750 AD]
2. Medieval Period [500-1500 AD]
3. Early Modern Period [1500-1700 AD]
4. Late Modern Period [1700 – 1970s]
5. Contemporary Period [1970sff]

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Reception of Pastorals in Patristic Period

- **Consistently used as inspired Scripture**
 - Clement of Rome's copious use
 - Earliest canonization in Muratorian canon (~170 AD)
 - Absence in Marcion canon (~144 AD) suggest impact on heresies
- **Employed largely for refuting heresies**
 - Ignatius of Antioch's Letter to Polycarp (~110) echo 1 Tim 1:3 and 6:3
 - Clement of Alexandria (150–215) uses 1 Tim 6:20-21 in *Stromateis* 2.11
 - Augustine (354-430 AD) against Pelegians and Manicheans

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Reception of Pastorals in Medieval Period

1. Defining Church government and polity

- Gregory the Great's (540-604 AD) *Liber regulae pastoralis* (Pastoral Care) based on Pastorals

2. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) – *Summa Theologica*

- Q1-4 - On Church Polity dependent on 1 Tim 3
- Q[11] A[3] - Execution of heretics based on Tit 3:10-11

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Reception of Pastorals in Early Modern Period

1. Influenced by socio-cultural and political factors

- European Renaissance, Scientific breakthroughs, Evangelical Reformation, & the Enlightenment

2. Roman Catholics Used Pastorals for legitimating ecclesial authority

- rigidly hierarchical structure of Christian ministry

3. Expansion of European Empires and Pastoral Epistles

- Church and State in Pastorals [1 Tim 2:1-2 and Tit 3:1]
- Slavery and the Pastorals [1 Tim 1:10, 6:1-2 and Tit 2:9]

4. Reformers used Pastorals for

- Heresiology: Used against the “heretical papist”
- Soteriology: *Sola Gratia* and *Sola Fide* shaped by 1 Tim 1:5, 1:13-16, 3:9; 2 Tim 1:9, 3:15; Tit 2:11; Tit 3:5
- Bibliology: Theology of Scripture

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Reception of Pastorals in Late Modern Period

1. Socio-political and philosophical factors

- Rupture in the relationship between the dominant European (especially Germany) scholars who adopted “scientific worldview” & Church hierarchy
- Widespread adoption of Hegelian philosophy questioned the plausibility of well-defined orthodoxy in first century
- Nazification of German scholarship resulted in distancing Pastorals

2. Rejection of Authenticity of Pastorals

- Schleiermacher 1807 first to reject Pauline authorship
- Dibelius 1913 used six theses to fully reject authenticity of Pastorals
- P N Harrison 1921 used linguistic methods to reject authenticity
- The marginalization of Pastoral Epistles has persisted till now

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Reception of Pastorals in Contemporary times

1. Marginalization is taken for granted in scholarship

- New Perspective on Paul largely does not employ the Pastorals
- Constructs of Paul’s theology are inadequate

2. New Interests in the Pastoral Epistles

- As separate letters and not as group
- Their contribution to Theological Ethics
- Centre of gender and egalitarian cultural debates
- Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy becoming central issues
- New studies on liturgy and ecclesiology based on Pastorals
- Syncretism and heteropraxy

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Evidence of Pauline Authorship of Pastorals

1. All have Paul's trademark self-introduction (1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1; Tit 1:1)
2. All contain historical self-references & names [and health condition] of colleagues
3. Unanimously accepted as Paul's for 1900yrs without a single descent
4. No convincing evidence mounted against Pauline authorship
5. No convincing explanations for why they would have been written pseudonymously in Paul's name
6. All conciliatory proposals lack evidence and certainly inferior to Pauline authorship
 - Fragmentary theory
 - Allonymity theory
 - Pauline school hypothesis

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Arguments Mounted Against Pauline Authorship

1. **Linguistic & Literary:**
 - High proportion of vocabularies and literary style which are less frequent in the other letters
2. **Ecclesiastical**
 - structure and polity of the churches (1 Tim 3:1-7, 4:6, 5:17-21; Tit 1:5-9) appear to be too organized
3. **Historical-contextual**
 - It is difficult to identify the nature of the problems in the context to which Paul addresses with precision. Also difficulty fitting into Acts' chronology
4. **Theological**
 - Emphases of already formed solid theological doctrines, and orthodoxies suggests it wouldn't have been in Paul's time

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Answering Objections to Authenticity of Pastoral Epistles	
Objection	Answer
Vocabulary: Pastorals contain 37% hapaxes and lack common Pauline words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul's vocabulary changed with time • Vocabulary depends on subject matter and situation for writing • Amanuenses influence vocabulary
Style: Long lists of nouns and peculiar adjectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastorals were semi-private letters in genre • Paul was writing to colleagues in ministry
Theology: Some teachings are too advanced, e.g. offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offices existed in synagogues and Phil 1:1 • The theological ideas of the pastorals correlate well with other Pauline letters
Heresy: Gnosticism occurred later after Paul's time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heresies in the Pastorals similar to that in Colossians and 1 Corinthians
Orthodoxy: Trustworthy sayings untypical of Paul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misleading argument. Paul summarizes orthodoxy in letters to colleagues • Fencing off the faith characterize Paul's ministry from the beginning
Historical Situation: Pastorals don't fit into storyline of Acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts does not record everything about Paul • Church tradition suggests that Paul was freed after Acts 28

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24

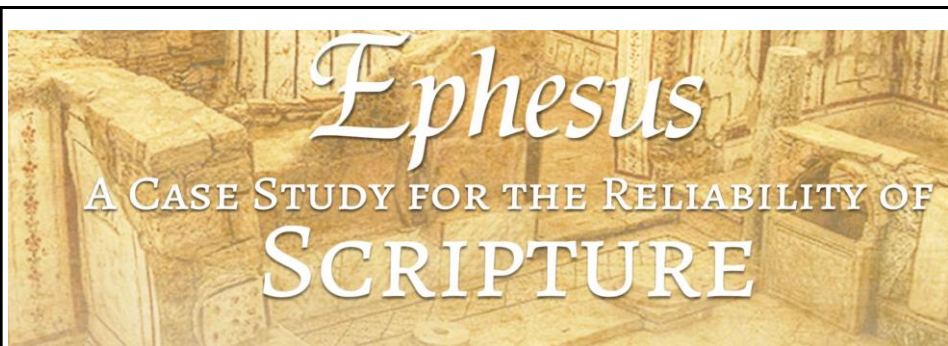
Cultural Ephesus before first century

- Founded by the Amazons a tribe of female warriors
 - city was named after their queen, Ephesia
- Women enjoyed equal rights and privileges to men
 - records exist of female artists, sculptors, painters and teachers
- Romans acquired Ephesus not through war
 - cherished and Romanized the city
- Artemis was multivalent
 - the goddess of the hunt, chastity, childbirth, wild animals and the wilderness
- Progressive city ruled by Greek, Persians and Romans
 - Had its own version of Olympic games

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25



Windle, Bryan. 2018 Ephesus: A Case Study for the Reliability of Scripture. *Bible and Spade*. 2018; Vol 31 (3): 62-68.

“When we compare the Ephesus of Scripture with the Ephesus that is being uncovered, we find that the Bible and archaeology tell the same story.” [page 62]

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26

Acts 19:25-27

“You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshipped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.”

Demetrius, the Coppersmith

How does Demetrius’ speech help you construct the socio-historical setting of mid-century Ephesus?

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Reconstruction of Ephesus

https://youtu.be/IJo9MopCDYE?si=lkylrI9jviah_tXSH

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3D Reconstruction of Temple of Diana in Ancient Ephesus

<https://youtu.be/rFKGimxw3dc?si=lj-f4zgNobUOP8VI>

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Some titles used for Artemis

- “Lady” (*Kyria*)
- Saviour (*Sōteira*)
- Heavenly goddess (*ouranios theos Artemis Ephesia*)
- Queen of the Cosmos (*basilēis kosmou*).
- Greatest (*megistē*)
- Great (*megalē*)
- holiest (*hagiōtatē*)
- Most manifest (*epiphanestatē*)

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Four Distinctives of 1st Century Ephesus

1. Religious:

- Sacred home of goddess Artemis; temple was one of seven wonder of world
- Ephesian version regarded the goddess as a celibate virgin as "saviour" of women during childbirth
- Olympian gods, imperial cults, folk Asiatic religions
- Judaism
- Magic
- Eastern Mysticism

2. Political:

- Roman imperial capital of Asia - fourth city of Roman Empire [Rome, Alexandria, Antioch]
- Massive building projects
- Bi-cameral government with secretary of city, Asiarchs & people's assembly (*ekklesia*) similar to the Roman senate

3. Cultural:

- Multi-cultural, pluralistic and syncretistic environment
- Two major festivals for Artemis per year, each lasting one month

4. Economic:

- Port city
- Religious tourism supported by Artemisian religion
- Priesthood bought by rich
- International investment banking
- Influential guilds for merchants, coppersmiths, silversmiths, clothing sellers, wine tasters, wool dealers, bed builders, carpenters, physicians

25/02/2024 "New York City of Roman Empire" - Rich, money obsessed and money dominated

31

Ephesus at the time of Timothy was
demographically complex, commercially
rich, socially metropolitan, politically
sensitive, and religiously a melting pot.

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Features of the Heresies addressed in 1 Timothy

Element	Explanation
Myths and endless genealogies (1:4)	Speculative interpretations of Scripture which drew on family lineages and origins (e.g., Gen 4-6)
Adopting Jewish ceremonial laws (1:7-11)	Similar to teaching of Judaizers taught, emphasizing fulfilling markers of Jewish identity as evidence of spirituality
Interest in controversies (6:4) and <i>gnōseōs</i> (6:20-21)	Similar to the situation in Corinth and Colossae. Gnosis in 6:20 is not the same as Gnosticism
Spiritism and magic (4:1-2)	Folk religion, occultism, magic and eastern mysticism. Some had over-realized eschatology, believing the resurrection has already occurred
Extreme asceticism (4:3, 8)	Forbidding sex and marriage, and the eating of certain foods as part of piety. This has sometimes been incorrectly labelled as dualism
Greed (6:3-10)	Inordinate crave for wealth and power
Gender issues (5:15)	Women were special targets of false teaching which may well have had a strong attraction to women in the first place
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33

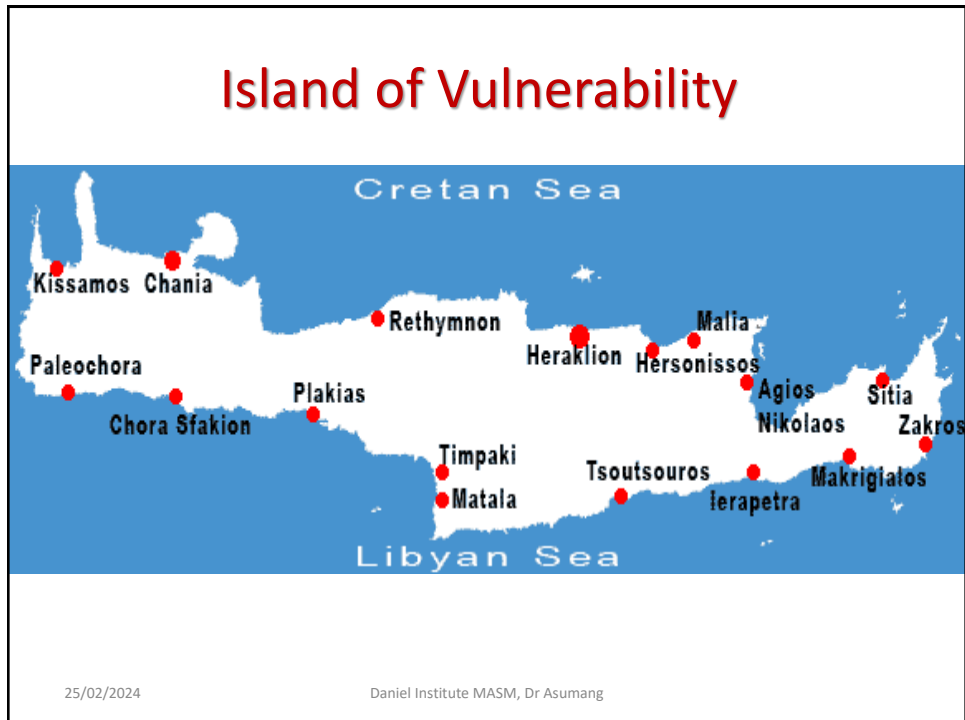
Syncretism in 1 & 2 Timothy

- Definition is disputed by social scientists
- Basically assimilation of elements of other religions, whether in ideas and or practices, into another religion
- Borrowed elements significantly contradict the recipient religion
- Syncretism in 1 Timothy: Judaism + Artemis + Christian

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34



35

Crete by First Century

- **Mythical Origins**
 - Caphtor in the Old Testament (Deut 2:23),
 - Philistines (Amos 9:7)
 - Myth of King Minos
 - donated seven boys and seven girls into a mythological underworld labyrinth
 - Judge of the underworld.
- **Cretan myths of origins of the gods were anthropological**
 - Pragmatic laissez faire, “live and let’s live”
 - Zeus killed and buried in Crete!
- **Thriving Jewish community that goes back many centuries**
 - Christianity from Cretan Jews converted during Pentecost (Acts 2:11)
 - Paul’s brief stop during journey to Rome (Acts 27)

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Crete of first Century: Pragmatic hardnosed existentialism

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37

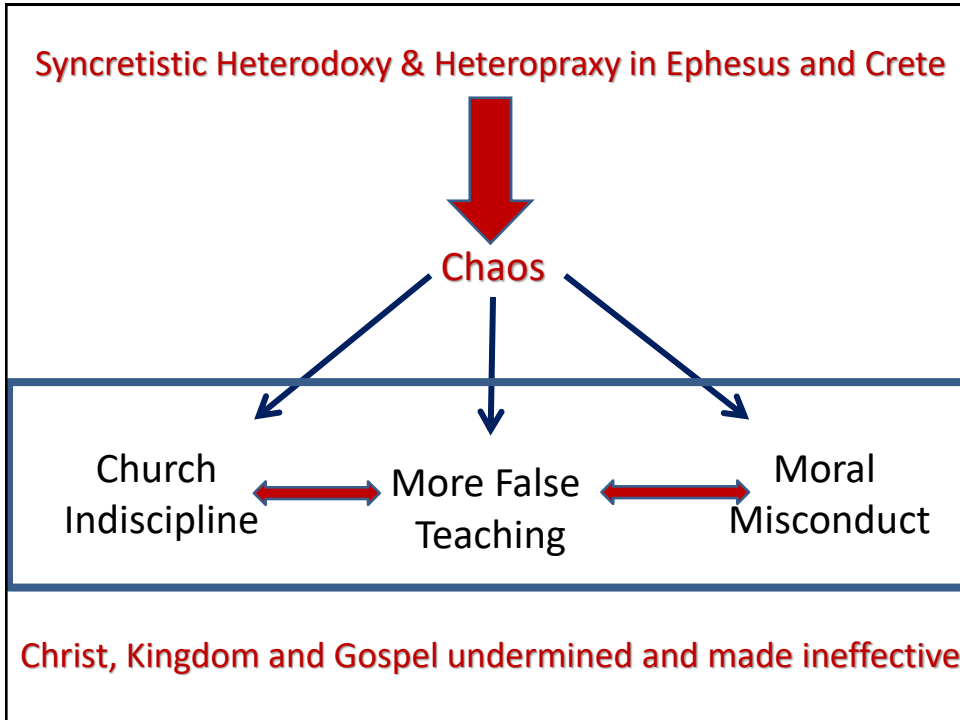
Heresies addressed in Titus

- Similar to that in 1 Timothy its syncretism
- More Prominent Jewish elements:
 - Influenced by the “circumcision party” (1:10)
 - “Jewish myths” (1:14), and “genealogies” (3:9)
 - Follow “the commands” some of the Jewish apostates (1:10)
- Chaotic pragmatism:
 - Disruptive, argumentative and rebellious (2:8; 3:9-10)

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38



39

Formative Assessment Question 1

Critically evaluate the similarities and differences between the socio-historical and cultural context of First Timothy and your own context, and explain their pastoral implications for your ministry.

- Politics
- Economic
- Ostentation
- Social mobility
- Gender issues

- Syncretism
- Heresies
- Money & Religion

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40

Summary: Learning outcomes

1. Use appropriate examples to demonstrate the unique contributions of the Pastoral Epistles to the biblical canon
2. Analyse the factors that have contributed to the varying receptions of the Pastoral Epistles over the centuries
3. Mount a coherent argument defending Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles
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41

Questions

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42