

Unlike some of the other letters of the Pauline corpus, there has been no significant demand for a detailed, Messianic examination of the Pastoral Epistles of 1&2 Timothy and Titus. Many of today's Messianic teachers and leaders think that they already know what these letters mean, and so putting out the effort of analyzing them beyond a cursory reading or survey is thought to probably not be needed. Sadly, today's broad Messianic movement is largely unaware and under-informed of a literal factory of academic proposals and perspectives, from over the past fifty years, regarding 1&2 Timothy and Titus. Much of this scholarship has affected various trends present in evangelical Christianity, the ordination of females as clergy within the contemporary church, and the debate over complimentarianism and egalitarianism. It is time for our faith community to join into these discussions.

What purpose do these three letters serve within the Apostolic Scriptures? Are 1&2 Timothy and Titus to actually be read as a kind of "church manual"? What was the false teaching in Ephesus that caused Paul to issue some restrictive instruction? What is a proper usage of the Torah, versus an improper usage of the Torah as employed by the false teachers? What were the troublemakers on Crete doing? Why is the Apostle Paul so positive toward women in positions of high service in other letters, but perhaps not as much so in the Pastoral Epistles? Is abstinence from eating certain things, like keeping kosher, truly a sign of end-time apostasy? What do the Pastoral Epistles teach us about Yeshua the Messiah, and the Father's plan for the ages? How do we defend genuine Pauline authorship of 1&2 Timothy and Titus? These, and many more critical issues, are examined.

The Pastoral Epistles for the Practical Messianic takes into consideration much of what has been offered by various scholars, not only in terms of the ancient setting of 1&2 Timothy and Titus, but also with how these epistles should be accurately applied in a modern setting. Messianic Apologetics editor J.K. McKee helps to probe these letters for the future development of the Messianic movement, weighing our strengths and weaknesses of them, in an effort to be an assembly that is no longer lacking an adequate understanding. What are the things that we have actually interpreted correctly from the Pastoral Epistles, and what needs to be improved upon? How might some Messianic congregations and fellowships change if we took a good, hard look at 1&2 Timothy and Titus, and implemented some necessary reform? How can we truly be all of the things that we can be in the Lord? This significant commentary asks these, and many more pertinent questions.

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES
FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC

THE PASTORAL
EPISTLES
1&2 TIMOTHY, TITUS
FOR THE PRACTICAL
MESSIANIC

J.K. MCKEE

MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS
messianicapologetics.net

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC

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ABBREVIATION CHART AND SPECIAL TERMS

The following is a chart of abbreviations for reference works and special terms that are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as *TWOT* for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

Special terms that may be used have been provided in this chart:

| | |
|---|--|
| ABD: <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> | Ger: German |
| AMG: <i>Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament</i> | GNT: Greek New Testament |
| ANE: Ancient Near East(ern) | Grk: Greek |
| Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament | <i>halachah</i> : lit. "the way to walk," how the Torah is lived out in an individual's life or faith community |
| Ara: Aramaic | HALOT: <i>Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Koehler and Baumgartner) |
| ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996) | HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004) |
| b. Babylonian Talmud (<i>Talmud Bavli</i>) | Heb: Hebrew |
| B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C. | HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible |
| BDAG: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich) | ICC: <i>International Critical Commentary</i> |
| BDB: <i>Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i> | IDB: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> |
| BECNT: <i>Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament</i> | IDBSup: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement</i> |
| BKCNT: <i>Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament</i> | ISBE: <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i> |
| C.E.: Common Era or A.D. | IVPBBC: <i>IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)</i> |
| CEV: Contemporary English Version (1995) | Jastrow: <i>Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature</i> (Marcus Jastrow) |
| CGEDNT: <i>Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words</i> (Barclay M. Newman) | JBK: New Jerusalem Bible-Koren (2000) |
| CHALOT: <i>Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> | JETS: <i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i> |
| CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998) | KJV: King James Version |
| DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition | Lattimore: <i>The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore</i> (1996) |
| DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls | LITV: <i>Literal Translation of the Holy Bible</i> by Jay P. Green (1986) |
| ECB: <i>Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible</i> | LS: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Liddell & Scott) |
| EDB: <i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i> | LXE: <i>Septuagint with Apocrypha</i> by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851) |
| eisegesis: "reading meaning into," or interjecting a preconceived or foreign meaning into a Biblical text | LXX: Septuagint |
| EJ: <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> | m. Mishnah |
| ESV: English Standard Version (2001) | MT: Masoretic Text |
| exegesis: "drawing meaning out of," or the process of trying to understand what a Biblical text means on its own | NASB: New American Standard Bible (1977) |
| EXP: <i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i> | NASU: New American Standard Update (1995) |
| | NBCR: <i>New Bible Commentary: Revised</i> |

NEB: New English Bible (1970)
Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*
NETS: New English Translation of the Septuagint (2007)
NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*
NIGTC: *New International Greek Testament Commentary*
NICNT: *New International Commentary on the New Testament*
NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*
NIV: New International Version (1984)
NJB: New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic (1985)
NJPS: Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1999)
NKJV: New King James Version (1982)
NRSV: New Revised Standard Version (1989)
NLT: New Living Translation (1996)
NT: New Testament
orthopraxy: lit. "the right action," how the Bible or one's theology is lived out in the world
OT: Old Testament

PreachC: *The Preacher's Commentary*
REB: Revised English Bible (1989)
RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)
t. Tosefta
Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament
Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TEV: Today's English Version (1976)
TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)
TNTC: *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*
TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition
v(s). verse(s)
Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*
Vul: Latin Vulgate
WBC: *Word Biblical Commentary*
Yid: Yiddish
YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)

PROLOGUE

The three letters of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus—frequently referred to as the Pastoral Epistles—are three texts that many people within today’s Messianic movement automatically assume they know what they mean. Unlike some of our previous studies conducted to date (Hebrews, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians-Philemon, Acts 15 and the Jerusalem Council), there has really been no clamor for a detailed Messianic examination of the Pastoral Epistles. The Pastoral Epistles might be some of the least considered of the Pauline corpus among Messianics, as it is sometimes unconsciously thought that there will be very little to gain if we expel the time and effort to analyze and dissect them. So, our level of engagement has often been limited to quoting a few verses here or there—most especially something like “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16)—but there has been no concentrated effort made to consider 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, or Titus as whole letters. Most disturbingly, there has been no concentrated effort among Messianics, at least to my knowledge, to try to join into some contemporary discussions present regarding the Pastoral Epistles’ ancient background, their proper interpretation, and their right application for men and women in the Twenty-First Century.

For quite some time, there has been a deep stirring in my heart to address the Pastoral Epistles. As I have steadily prepared myself for this study for over a year-and-a-half (2008-2010), acquiring different commentaries and resources, what I have read has only confirmed that a thorough Messianic examination of these letters is long overdue. Ben Witherington III indicates in his commentary how, “one could say that scholarship on these documents in the last fifty years has been something of a growth industry.”¹ In consulting some technical commentaries on the Pastorals and scholastic books on related issues, a cursory flip through of their bibliographies and footnotes confirms this! All across the spectrum—from conservative to liberal, and to the Right, Left, and Center—discussions on the Pastoral Epistles have been like a proverbial candy factory that does not stop putting out new confections. One can see trucks lined up delivering tons of sugar, milk, and cocoa to one end of the factory—and then tractor trailers, train cars, and even a few planes all positioned at the other end of the factory, ready to make deliveries to the masses. But, quite contrary to Willy Wonka’s factory where you have to have a golden ticket for entrance, this Pastoral Epistles factory is open to anyone.

¹ Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 50.

It is really hard for me to believe that with all of the information and proposals out there on the Pastoral Epistles, that most of our Messianic faith community—especially in congregational leadership and teaching—has been almost totally unaware of them. *With a huge chocolate factory in the center of town, it is hard to think that many of our leaders and teachers have not smelled the aroma from a distance, or really even noticed one of the delivery trucks.* Much of this has to do with the sad fact that the Pastorals do not get a huge amount of attention in Messianic congregational teaching or general usage. We may rightfully affirm statements about Yeshua the Messiah such as, “He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory” (1 Timothy 3:16). However, are we at all informed of the various First Century social issues portrayed in the Pastoral Epistles? I know from my experience in dialoguing with various Messianic congregational leaders—some of whom are voracious readers—that when frequently referring them to scholarly books and articles on the Pastorals, they have not been too enthusiastic to read or skim through them (even when some of the material is free).

I was convicted about the strong need for a Pastoral Epistles Bible study in July 2008, on the last full day of my vacation to London. My “British excursion” was my personal gift to myself for completing my M.A. from Asbury Theological Seminary, and had been planned for more than a year in advance. Several months or so before leaving, a significant ruckus had erupted in some parts of the independent Messianic community, over the seizure of children from Mormon polygamists in Texas. Why would this be an issue for these people? It was an issue for them because they thought quite strongly that the Torah permitted polygamy, and that today’s Messianic movement needed to be more open to the idea. Many people, quite rightfully, spoke against such claims and pointed out that polygamy was never something God explicitly approved of—and that it was riddled with familial problems for those men who practiced it. I myself wrote a lengthy article in November 2008 entitled “Is Polygamy for Today?” where I answered the question with, “**polygamy was never intended for yesterday**, much less for today!”ⁱⁱ

So what does this have to do with the Pastoral Epistles? During my nine day break in the United Kingdom, while away from the hassles of ministry, touring museums and historical sites—I got to really spend some time thinking. I spent much of the final day resting in my hotel room, and knew that *only* addressing the errors of polygamy would not be enough. The reason why polygamy was being entertained was precisely because of a huge gulf and ignorance in Messianic Biblical Studies and Messianic thinking as it regarded gender roles. Up until this point, some of my specific views of men and women in the Body of Messiah had remained closed to myself. I had certainly hinted at some of my views in piecemeal here and there (cf. Acts 16:14ff). But now with some people out there thinking

ⁱⁱ Also consult Mark Huey’s McHuey Blog post from 29 June, 2008, “Tare-erized! Beware!,” available for access at <<http://mchuey.wordpress.com>>.

that polygamy, at least in principle, was valid—I **could now be open about my own views** which were the exact opposite.

Understandably, when you are walking streets that you know for a fact that some of your ancestors once walked, you not only reflect on your personal past—but also your personal future. *I knew that one day I would have to specify what I believe about gender roles in the Body of Messiah.* Much of this would have to involve a Pastoral Epistles Bible study, not only informing Messianic Believers on a few of the positions presently proposed in Biblical Studies, but also some of the positions *which I myself hold* regarding their interpretation. Within the broad Messianic world, I do have a few “controversial” ideas regarding passages seen in the Pastoral Epistles. Our ministry needs to demonstrate that we hold the Pastoral Epistles in very high regard, but do think that we need not draw any hasty or quick conclusions regarding what they communicate, because we might have failed to remember that these letters were written to some specific ancient circumstances.

After the 2008 polygamy discussions, I felt absolutely no hesitation to be quite open about expressing my egalitarian views of husbands and wives, gender roles, and most specifically women in ministry. If there are Messianics out there who believe that men can take multiple wives—it is only appropriate that Messianics who believe in the full equality of the sexes, of wives as co-leaders of the home (obviously in a monogamous marriage relationship), and of women in general occupying positions of teaching and spiritual leadership *can likewise be assertive.* Being Messianic *and* egalitarian, though, is a controversial position to be certain. It is, however, part of ongoing theological discussions and debates present in many branches of Judaism and evangelical Christianity. Over the past several years (since 2008), I have not hidden the fact that my egalitarian convictions are rooted within my own Wesleyan upbringing, and this is an area of longstanding disagreement that my family has had with the Messianic movement since the late 1990s. It is not an area of disagreement limited to any one segment of the broad Messianic movement, either, as it does stretch across our interactions with leaders and teachers in Messianic Judaism, and both the One Law and Two-House sub-movements.

In our examination of the Pastoral Epistles, we will be considering various proposals and perspectives that I find hard to believe that some of today’s professionally trained Messianic teachers have never heard, especially regarding 1 Timothy 2:8-15. I have a feeling that they have in fact heard about some of them, but have chosen to keep these things to themselves or consigned to their libraries (even when found in a common resource like the *NIV Study Bible*). *In various cases I suspect that some of the discussions have just been dismissed off hand.* Our study will not do this, especially as some of these proposals have been around for over twenty years, but for various reasons have not found their way into many, or most Messianic discussions of these letters (if any at all). Some of these proposals include consideration for ancient historical background, as well as some translation issues.

As you prepare to read through *The Pastoral Epistles for the Practical Messianic*, I want you to know that I fully accept these letters as genuine works of the Apostle Paul, and

consider them to be fully relevant and authoritative for the Body of Messiah today. However, we need to understand what these letters meant to Timothy and Titus, and their unique circumstances in Ephesus and Crete, **before** we try to apply them in a Twenty-First Century context.

I am especially appreciative of William D. Mounce's commentary on the Pastoral Epistles in *WBC*, and I am sorry that so much of it has had to be skipped over, largely due to his significant attention given to Greek language issues and various statistics. His defense of Pauline authorship of the Pastorals is most impressive. Even when disagreeing with him in places, it is hard not to be impressed by the detail. I look forward in my spare time to picking his commentary off of the shelf, and flipping through it as I dissect various verses and issues in greater precision. I am also quite glad that Philip B. Payne's book *Man and Woman: One in Christ* was able to be released in time (2009) for this study, as he summarized many of the issues we will be considering, from an evangelical egalitarian perspective.

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INTRODUCTION

The Pastoral Epistles (sometimes abbreviated as PE)¹ in total make up thirteen chapters of the Apostolic Scriptures. These three letters compose semi-personal correspondence between the Apostle Paul, and two of his closest ministry associates in Timothy and Titus. Those who take the time to read and dig into what these three letters communicate can deduce many positive things about their ministry work together, and how two younger men—at least younger than Paul—have now entered into that season of service to the Lord when they do not need as much direct guidance or oversight as they previously required. The Pastoral Epistles might not be the end-all for the necessary guidelines on how to lead, order, or oversee the inner workings of assemblies of Believers, but they are to doubtlessly be consulted and appreciated. People who serve in full-time ministry should place a very high value on these letters, as they can derive encouragement from them in the diverse circumstances they face in serving the Messiah today.

1&2 Timothy and Titus are commonly called the “Pastoral Epistles” because a major theme witnessed is that they concern the care and order of assemblies of Believers. Referring to these three letters as the Pastoral Epistles is a convenient term that has been employed since the Eighteenth Century. Information about men and women in the assembly (1 Timothy 2), those in positions of authority (1 Timothy 3; 5:17-25; Titus 1:5-16), or other groups within the assembly (1 Timothy 5:1-16; Titus 2) is seen. Instructions about avoiding foolish arguments (i.e., 2 Timothy 2:23; Titus 3:9) clearly have congregational applications. Some warnings on the future are given (2 Timothy 3), and there is a disciplinary tone present in parts of all three letters. Suffice it to say, when the major themes of the Pastoral Epistles are put together, there is much discussion among interpreters as to what should be done with them. Some of what is written is undeniably bound by an ancient context (1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 4:9-21). How do these letters inform us on how the Body of Messiah is supposed to function?

Should 1&2 Timothy and Titus really be considered the “Pastoral Epistles”? These letters do not exclusively have themes of pastoral care in content, even though they are

¹ Please note that in spite of the common reference these three texts as “the Book of 1 Timothy/2 Timothy/Titus,” I am going to purposefully refer to them as the Epistle of 1 Timothy/2 Timothy/Titus, or Paul’s letters to Timothy and letter to Titus, and not use this reference. By failing to forget that these texts are letters written to specific audiences in specific settings, we can make the common error of thinking that they were written *directly to us*. Our goal as responsible interpreters is to try to reconstruct what these letters meant *to their original audiences first*, before applying their message(s) in a modern-day setting.

I will also at times simply refer to the Pastoral Epistles or letters as the Pastorals.