

attention focused especially on I Timothy and raised four questions still used today to deny Pauline authorship of these epistles.

The first question is historical: these letters do not belong to the period of the Acts because I Timothy and Titus were not written from prison. In order to explain this, a release from prison must be postulated. Some critics reject Pauline authorship rather than accept such a postulate, claiming that the personal references (e.g. "I Paul...") are either inventions of the later author or quotations from a genuinely Pauline source. The second question is ecclesiastical: these letters, it is said, reflect a structured church hierarchy which must at least be in the early second century. The third question is doctrinal: Gnosticism is obviously the heresy being combated in I Timothy; Gnosticism was influential only after the middle of the second century. Paul uses the expression "the faith" which implies an established body of doctrine--obviously true only at a later date. In addition, Paul does not discuss, beyond cursory references, any of his usual doctrinal concerns. The fourth question is linguistic: many words not found elsewhere in the New Testament are used in these letters as well as words used in the Gospels and Acts but not in any other of Paul's epistles.

Each of these questions can be answered however. There is no intrinsic reason to deny a release from prison followed by a second arrest--indeed, an early tradition says that this was precisely what happened. The alleged structured hierarchy is loose in the extreme, and careful study shows little if any difference between "presbyters" and "overseers" in the churches. Any reference to Gnosticism in these epistles is tenuous. It is now widely recognized that "protognostic" tendencies were present early in the first century AD although Gnosticism itself did not appear until the mid or late second century. The expression "the faith" and "sound doctrine" need only refer to the teaching which they (Timothy and Titus) received from Paul during their time with him. These are personal letters, not epistles addressed to entire churches. It is not surprising, therefore, that Paul does not develop his usual doctrinal discussions which often deal with issues concerning individual churches. Statistics prove only that Paul is here discussing material unlike that in his other epistles. Different content demands different vocabulary, especially when technical subjects are being discussed (such as, the selection of church leaders or "true widows").

If, as seems probable, Paul wrote I Timothy and Titus between imprisonments, this must have occurred before AD 67, the traditional date of Paul's martyrdom. Second Timothy, generally seen