2025 HUGH GOLDIE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION HANDOUT

THE BOOK OF JUDGES, I AND II TIMOTHY

HUGH GOLDIE LAY/THEOLOGICAL TRAINING INSTITUTION, AROCHUKWU, ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

DEPARTMENT OF OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

THE OLD TESTAMENT: BOOK OF JUDGES

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Judges is a part of the Old Testament in the Bible. It tells the story of the Israelites after Joshua's death, covering about 300 years before they had kings. During this time, the Israelites often disobeyed God by worshiping other gods. Because of this, God allowed their enemies to defeat them. When the Israelites cried out for help, God chose leaders called judges to save them. These judges were not like courtroom judges today; they were leaders who guided and delivered the people. This cycle of disobedience, defeat, crying out, and deliverance happened repeatedly. The main purpose of the Book of Judges is to show the consequences of turning away from God and the importance of faithful leadership. It highlights the need for a godly leader to guide the people, emphasizing the importance of covenant faithfulness.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES

The Book of Judges takes place after Joshua, the leader of Israel, died. At this time, the Israelites were living in the Promised Land (Canaan), but they had no king to rule over them. Instead, different tribes of Israel lived in different areas and were supposed to follow God's laws. However, they often forgot God and worshiped the false gods of the people around them (Judg. 2:11-13). Because of their disobedience, God allowed other nations, such as the Canaanites, Moabites, and Philistines, to defeat and rule over Israel (Judg. 3:7-8). When the Israelites suffered, they cried out to God, and He sent judges like leaders chosen by God to save them. These judges, like Gideon, Deborah, and Samson, helped fight Israel’s enemies and bring peace for a time. But after each judge died, the people returned to their sinful ways, and the cycle started again (Judg. 2:16-19) (Anderson 47). Judges teaches that when people turn away from God, they face trouble, but when they return to Him, He is willing to help and save them.

AUTHORSHIP AND DATE OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES

The Book of Judges does not name its author, but Jewish tradition and some scholars believe that the prophet Samuel wrote it (Anderson 52). The book was likely written during the early days of Israel’s monarchy, around 1050–1000 BCE. This is because Judges frequently states

that “In those days Israel had no king” (Judg. 17:6, 21:25), suggesting it was written when Israel already had a king, possibly during Saul or David’s reign. The stories in Judges were likely passed down through oral tradition before being written. The book records events that happened over about 300 years, from the death of Joshua to the time before Israel’s first king (Judg. 2:8-10). Some scholars believe that multiple authors contributed to Judges because the book combines different writing styles and perspectives. It is also part of the *Deuteronomistic History*, a group of books (Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings) that share similar themes and language (Anderson 54).

THEMES AND THEOLOGY OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES

1. *The Cycle of Sin, Judgment, and Deliverance in the Book of Judges*

The Book of Judges is a historical and theological account of Israel’s fluctuating faithfulness to God and the divine responses to their repeated apostasy. The book presents a recurring cycle that follows a pattern: Israel falls into sin, suffers divine judgment, cries out for deliverance, and receives a deliverer sent by God. This cycle, which is repeated multiple times, reflects the nation's spiritual instability and God's enduring mercy. Scholars such as Bernhard W. Anderson and other Old Testament commentators provide insight into this recurring motif, highlighting its theological significance and moral implications. Throughout Judges, a cyclical pattern governs Israel’s history. This pattern follows a four-step process:

1. **Sin** – The Israelites turn away from God, often engaging in idolatry and moral corruption (Judg. 2:11-13).
2. **Judgment** – As a consequence of their unfaithfulness, God allows foreign oppressors to subjugate Israel (Judg. 2:14-15).
3. **Repentance** – The Israelites, suffering under oppression, cry out to God for deliverance (Judg. 3:9).
4. **Deliverance** – God rises up a judge to deliver Israel, restoring a period of peace and obedience (Judg. 2:16-18).

However, this peace is short-lived, as Israel soon returns to its sinful ways, beginning the cycle anew. Anderson argues that this pattern underscores Israel’s inability to maintain covenantal faithfulness without divine intervention (Anderson 102).

The recurring cycle in Judges serves as a didactic tool, illustrating both human frailty and divine grace. Anderson notes that Judges portrays Israel as constantly in need of divine correction, mirroring the broader Deuteronomistic history's themes of covenant obedience and divine retribution (Anderson 104). Scholars such as Brevard S. Childs and John Bright emphasize that the cycle of sin and deliverance reflects a theological warning against moral complacency (Childs 88; Bright 217). Moreover, the book's structure suggests a gradual decline in the effectiveness and morality of the judges themselves, culminating in figures such as Samson, whose flawed character embodies Israel's deeper spiritual decay (Judg. 16). This narrative deterioration highlights the necessity of a righteous, divinely anointed king, foreshadowing the later establishment of monarchy in Israel (1 Sam. 8:6-9).

2. *Leadership and the Role of Judges*

The Book of Judges presents the leadership of Israel through a series of individuals known as judges. These leaders were raised by God to deliver Israel from foreign oppression and to restore spiritual and political stability. However, their leadership is often marked by imperfection, highlighting both the strengths and limitations of human leadership in ancient Israel. The leadership of the judges was largely defined by the immediate needs of Israel. In times of crisis, when the people were oppressed due to their idolatry and sin, God raised up leaders to deliver them from their enemies. The leadership of these judges was temporary and context-specific, usually focusing on military victory and spiritual revival but failing to provide long-term solutions to Israel's cycles of sin (Coggin 92). This pattern of recurring oppression and deliverance suggests a more profound issue with Israel's national and spiritual stability, an issue that the judges were unable to fully resolve.

The judges in the Book of Judges display a variety of leadership qualities, yet they all share certain characteristics that reflect God's work through imperfect individuals. Each judge is appointed by God, and their leadership is empowered by the divine Spirit (Judg. 3:10; 6:34).

1. **Divine Appointment**: The judges are divinely chosen to lead Israel, often in times of moral or military crisis. Scholars like Brettler note that the judges' leadership is not the result of personal ambition or societal status but a response to divine calling (Brettler 171).
2. **Military Leadership**: A primary role of the judges was to act as military leaders, delivering Israel from its oppressors. Leaders like Gideon exemplify this role by

rallying the people for battle and trusting in God's direction for victory (Judg. 7). According to Wolff, this military role reflects a broader theme in the Old Testament of God as a warrior who fights on behalf of His people (Wolff 43).

3. **Spiritual Leadership**: In addition to military leadership, the judges also served as spiritual leaders. They called the people back to faithfulness and repentance, functioning as mediators between God and the Israelites (Judg. 2:16-18). As Coggins observes, this dual role both political and spiritual was essential in a theocratic society where religious and national identities were intertwined (100).
4. **Moral Failures**: Despite their divine appointment, many of the judges displayed significant moral flaws. Samson, for example, is a tragic figure whose personal weaknesses, including his lack of self-control, are portrayed as a reflection of Israel's broader spiritual decay. This failure, as scholars like Childs argue, points to the necessity of a perfect leader, which would eventually be fulfilled in the monarchy (Childs 147).

The role of the judges demonstrates the difficulties in leading a people who were spiritually unfaithful and morally unstable. The judges' leadership was not sufficient to permanently resolve Israel's problems. The recurring cycle of sin, judgment, and deliverance (Judg. 2:11-19) reflects the deep-rooted spiritual challenges that even the most capable leaders could not overcome. As Bright notes, this pattern illustrates the inadequacy of human leadership and foreshadows the future establishment of a monarchy (Bright 227). The eventual transition to kingship, beginning with Saul, marks a shift toward a more permanent form of leadership, which was seen as essential to the stability of Israel (1 Sam. 8:5).

3. *The Sovereignty and Justice of God in the Book of Judges*

In the Book of Judges, the sovereignty and justice of God are central themes that run through the narrative, depicting God's absolute authority over Israel and His righteous judgment on their actions. Throughout the cycles of sin, judgment, and deliverance, God's sovereignty is made evident as He raises up leaders (the judges) to execute His will and restore His people. At the same time, His justice is manifested through the consequences Israel faces for their disobedience, as well as through His merciful acts of deliverance when they repent. God's sovereignty refers to His supreme authority and control over all creation. In the Book of Judges, God's sovereignty is evident in the cyclical nature of the narrative, where He orchestrates the rise and fall of Israel's fortunes based on their faithfulness or lack thereof.

God's control over the fate of His people is illustrated in the recurring pattern of the Israelites falling into sin, facing oppression from foreign powers, crying out for deliverance, and being rescued by a judge whom God raises up.

The fact that God uses individuals of varied backgrounds and capabilities to lead Israel further demonstrates His sovereignty. Judges like Deborah, Gideon, and Samson were chosen by God, not based on their qualifications or personal righteousness, but because God's plan for His people required their leadership in a specific context. As Coggins argues, the judges were not chosen for their moral superiority but were vessels through whom God's will was accomplished (75). This pattern highlights that God's choices are not always based on human standards but on divine purpose and sovereignty. In the case of Gideon, for instance, God called a fearful and humble man from a poor family to lead Israel against the Midianites (Judg. 6:11-16). Gideon's reluctance and uncertainty about his abilities underscore the point that God's sovereignty works through human weaknesses, further emphasizing that it is God's power, not human might, that determines the outcome (Judg. 7:2-22). As Wolff observes, God's sovereignty is demonstrated in His ability to accomplish His purposes through seemingly insignificant individuals and circumstances (58).

The justice of God is the other side of the coin that reflects His righteous dealings with Israel. In Judges, God's justice is displayed through the consequences Israel faces as a result of their sinful actions. When the Israelites abandon their covenant with God, turning to idolatry and immorality, they invite divine judgment in the form of oppression by foreign nations. The recurring cycles of sin and judgment reflect the principle that sin leads to suffering, and that justice demands the punishment of wrongdoing. In Judges 2:14-15, the Israelites' disobedience results in them being handed over to their enemies: "In his anger against Israel, the Lord gave them into the hands of raiders who plundered them." This is a direct consequence of their unfaithfulness, and it serves as a reminder that God's justice requires judgment for sin. Anderson highlights that the cycle of judgment in Judges illustrates the divine principle that sin leads to punishment, and Israel's continued rebellion leads to increasing suffering and oppression (93).

However, God's justice is not merely punitive; it is also redemptive. After the Israelites cry out for mercy, God, in His justice, responds by raising up a judge to deliver them, thus showing both the severity of His justice and the depths of His mercy. This duality of justice punishing sin while offering grace is evident in God's actions towards His people throughout

the book. As Childs observes, the deliverance of Israel is a reflection of God's mercy, which is extended even after His justice has been executed (101). Thus, God's justice is never divorced from His mercy, and both are integral to His character as sovereign over all creation.

The themes of sovereignty and justice in Judges are deeply intertwined. God's sovereignty ensures that He is in control of Israel's fate, and His justice dictates the conditions of that fate. When Israel is unfaithful, God, in His sovereignty, allows them to experience the consequences of their sin, but He also retains the power to deliver them when they repent. The balance between these two aspects of God's nature His unyielding sovereignty and His righteous justice manifests in the way He governs Israel. As Wolff points out, God's justice does not lead to complete rejection of Israel but rather to a cycle of punishment and restoration, emphasizing that God's justice is not aimed at destruction but at the moral correction of His people (62). The sovereignty of God ensures that even in times of judgment, He is in control, and His ultimate purpose for Israel restoration and reconciliation is fulfilled through His acts of deliverance.

4. *Covenant Faithfulness and Apostasy in the Book of Judges*

The Book of Judges presents a poignant narrative of Israel's fluctuating relationship with God, oscillating between covenant faithfulness and apostasy. This tension is central to the book's theological framework, as Israel repeatedly enters into and breaks the covenant that God established with them. The cycle of apostasy, oppression, repentance, and deliverance reveals the profound significance of covenant faithfulness, illustrating the consequences of disobedience and the mercy of God's grace. Through the lives of various judges, the book highlights the importance of loyalty to God, the dangers of idolatry, and the consequences of forsaking the covenant. Covenant faithfulness refers to the Israelites' adherence to the promises and stipulations of the covenant that God made with them, especially as outlined in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. In the Book of Judges, faithfulness to the covenant is integral to Israel's well-being, prosperity, and peace. The blessings of God, including military victory and national peace, are directly tied to Israel's faithfulness to the covenant.

The early chapters of Judges reflect an attempt by Israel to remain faithful to God's commands, particularly under the leadership of figures such as Joshua and the initial judges.

However, even in these periods, the Israelites' faithfulness is fragile and often compromised. The book begins with a description of how Israel failed to fully drive out the Canaanites, which eventually led to the introduction of idol worship and cultural assimilation (Judg. 1:21-36). As Wolff observes, Israel's incomplete obedience to God's commands paved the way for the eventual decline into idolatry and apostasy (39). In Judges 2:7, the text notes that the people "served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua," which indicates that there were periods of covenant faithfulness when the people followed God's law and experienced peace. However, even in this time, the seeds of disobedience were sown, as the Israelites did not fully expel the foreign influences from their land. When the next generation arose, "who neither knew the Lord nor what he had done for Israel" (Judg. 2:10), the cycle of apostasy began. This generational decline points to the importance of ensuring that the covenant is passed down and upheld by each successive generation, an idea that is emphasized by Childs (112).

Apostasy in the Book of Judges is marked by Israel's repeated turning away from God and the covenant. Apostasy is often initiated by the Israelites adopting the gods of the surrounding nations, engaging in idolatry, and abandoning the worship of Yahweh. This act of unfaithfulness is accompanied by moral corruption, including injustice, violence, and sexual immorality. The cycle of apostasy is the central motif of the book. After each judge's leadership period ends, the people return to idolatry, leading to their oppression by foreign enemies. This is especially evident in the opening chapters of Judges, where it is noted that "the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord" (Judg. 2:11). The sin of idolatry is repeatedly described as the root cause of Israel's downfall. Anderson argues that the Israelites' adoption of Canaanite religious practices was a direct violation of the covenant stipulations, which prohibited idolatry and unfaithfulness (102). This spiritual adultery is portrayed as the most grievous offense against God in the book, as it disrupts Israel's relationship with their covenant-keeping God.

The recurring phrase "they did evil in the eyes of the Lord" (Judg. 2:11, 3:7, 4:1) highlights the cyclical nature of apostasy in Israel's history. The cycle is initiated by Israel's sin, followed by God's judgment through foreign oppression, and then, as the people cry out in repentance, God's deliverance through a judge. This cycle continues until the final chapters of Judges, which portray a society in moral and spiritual collapse, with no lasting commitment to the covenant (Judg. 21:25). Childs suggests that the breakdown of Israel's

covenant faithfulness in the final chapters of Judges is a theological commentary on the inability of human leaders, including the judges, to fully restore Israel's relationship with God (134). The Book of Judges presents a theological commentary on the nature of Israel's relationship with God, focusing on the importance of covenant faithfulness. The Israelites' apostasy demonstrates the consequences of forsaking the covenant, while the deliverance through the judges highlights God's grace and mercy. The cyclical pattern of sin, judgment, and deliverance reflects the theological truth that sin leads to judgment but that God, in His mercy, is always willing to restore His people when they repent.

Theologically, the book of Judges also reflects Israel's need for a permanent, righteous leader. While the judges were chosen by God to deliver Israel from oppression, their leadership was temporary and often flawed. The failure of the judges points to the necessity of a perfect and unflawed leader one who could establish true and lasting faithfulness to the covenant. This sets the stage for the later establishment of the monarchy in Israel, which will be explored in 1 Samuel. According to Wolff, the book of Judges ultimately reveals that while God's justice demands judgment for sin, His mercy always provides a way for restoration (45). The cyclical nature of the book highlights both the severity of God's judgment and the depth of His mercy, emphasizing that while Israel may forsake the covenant, God remains faithful to His promises.

5. *Structure and Outline of the Book of Judges*

The Book of Judges is a crucial text within the historical books of the Old Testament. It records the struggles of the Israelites between the death of Joshua and the rise of monarchy in Israel. The structure of the book can be divided into three main sections: the prologue, the cyclical history of the judges, and the epilogue. Each section highlights a distinct aspect of Israel's journey its failures, leadership struggles, and moral decline.

Prologue: Israel's Failure to Complete the Conquest (Judges 1–2)

The prologue, found in Judges 1–2, sets the stage for the rest of the book by describing Israel's failure to fully conquer the land of Canaan. While the Israelites had initially gained significant victories under Joshua, the prologue reveals that they did not complete the task of driving out all the Canaanite inhabitants, which led to long-term consequences for the nation. Judges 1 chronicles the various tribes of Israel and their individual efforts to claim their

inheritance, but it underscores their failure to completely defeat the Canaanites. Instead, they allowed the remaining Canaanites to live among them, which eventually led to the introduction of idolatry and moral corruption. This incomplete conquest is portrayed as a major turning point in Israel's history, as it set the stage for the subsequent cycles of apostasy and divine judgment that would follow throughout the book. In Judges 2, the failure to drive out the Canaanites is connected to a larger spiritual issue. God rebukes Israel for their disobedience and apostasy, declaring that they have broken the covenant and turned to worship other gods. This chapter introduces the central theme of the book: the cycle of sin, judgment, repentance, and deliverance. The Israelites' failure to fully conquer the land becomes a symbol of their failure to remain faithful to the covenant, and it foreshadows the moral and spiritual decay that will follow in the rest of the narrative. As Bright explains, this failure in conquest represents the deeper problem of Israel's incomplete commitment to God's commands (227).

The Cyclical History of the Judges (Judges 3–16)

The central portion of the Book of Judges (Judges 3–16) consists of the cyclical history of Israel's leadership under the judges. The pattern of sin, judgment, repentance, and deliverance repeats multiple times throughout this section. Each cycle begins with Israel's disobedience, particularly through idolatry and abandoning God's laws. This is followed by God allowing foreign nations to oppress Israel as a form of judgment. The Israelites, suffering under their oppressors, cry out to God, and in His mercy, He raises up a judge to deliver them. The judge, empowered by the Spirit of God, leads Israel to victory, bringing a period of peace and stability. However, once the judge dies, Israel quickly returns to its sinful ways, restarting the cycle. Key figures such as Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson emerge as leaders during this time. Each judge has a unique story and serves a specific role in the deliverance of Israel. Some, like Deborah, are known for their wisdom and spiritual leadership, while others, like Gideon and Samson, demonstrate military prowess and strength, though often accompanied by personal flaws. As the cycles unfold, the spiritual and moral decline of Israel becomes more pronounced, culminating in the deteriorating leadership seen in the figure of Samson. His personal weaknesses and flawed character underscore the instability and vulnerability of Israel during this period. According to Wolff, the judges' narratives function to illustrate the fluctuating moral and spiritual health of Israel (45).

Epilogue: Moral and Spiritual Decline (Judges 17–21)

The final section of the Book of Judges, found in chapters 17–21, serves as an epilogue that illustrates Israel's moral and spiritual decline. These chapters are not part of the cyclical pattern of judges but rather describe the breakdown of Israelite society after the judgeships. In these chapters, the narrative shifts from focusing on individual judges to the overall state of the nation. Judges 17–18 recount the story of Micah's idolatry and the subsequent theft of his idols by a group of Danites, highlighting the widespread apostasy and lawlessness in Israel. The episode illustrates how deeply entrenched idolatry had become, and how far Israel had drifted from the covenant with God. The final chapters of Judges (19–21) depict a horrific series of events, including the tragic story of the Levite and his concubine, the brutalization of the woman, and the ensuing civil war among the tribes of Israel. These chapters portray the chaotic and violent state of Israel, where there is no king, and "everyone did as they saw fit" (Judg. 21:25). This moral and spiritual decline reflects the ultimate consequences of Israel's failure to remain faithful to God, demonstrating the need for a stable and righteous leadership. The book ends on a note of despair, emphasizing the need for a king to lead the nation, a theme that will be picked up in the opening chapters of 1 Samuel. As Childs notes, these chapters demonstrate the complete disintegration of Israelite society and the need for divine intervention through a central leader (133).

6. ***Key Judges and Their Stories***

The Book of Judges highlights the leadership of various figures who were raised by God to deliver Israel from oppression. Each judge plays a significant role in the unfolding narrative of Israel's spiritual journey, which oscillates between faithfulness and apostasy. The judges are both military leaders and spiritual guides, with their unique stories reflecting the complexities of leadership, human frailty, and divine intervention. Below, we examine the stories of six key judges, exploring their leadership, challenges, and impact on Israel.

Othniel: The First Judge (Judges 3:7–11)

Othniel is the first judge mentioned in the Book of Judges and is raised by God to deliver Israel from the oppression of the King of Aram. His story is relatively straightforward and serves as an introduction to the cycle of sin, judgment, and deliverance that will dominate the book. After Israel's disobedience and idolatry led to their subjugation by the Arameans,

Othniel, the nephew of Caleb, is empowered by the Spirit of God to lead Israel to victory. Under his leadership, Israel enjoys a period of peace for forty years (Judg. 3:11). Othniel's story, while brief, establishes key themes in the Book of Judges, particularly the idea that God raises leaders to deliver His people in times of crisis. According to Wolff, Othniel's leadership demonstrates the connection between Israel's covenant faithfulness and their military success (40). His victory, however, is short-lived, as the pattern of disobedience and deliverance quickly resumes with the following generation.

Ehud: The Left-Handed Deliverer (Judges 3:12–30)

Ehud's story is one of cunning and divine providence. Raised as a deliverer during Israel's oppression by the Moabites, Ehud is a left-handed man from the tribe of Benjamin. His left-handedness plays a crucial role in the defeat of King Eglon of Moab. Ehud crafts a concealed sword and, under the pretence of delivering tribute, enters the palace to assassinate Eglon, a powerful and oppressive king. After Eglon's death, Ehud leads Israel in a successful rebellion, resulting in the liberation of Israel from Moabite rule for eighty years (Judg. 3:30). Ehud's story is significant not only for its military success but also for the way in which God uses unconventional methods to deliver His people. As Anderson notes, Ehud's story highlights God's ability to work through unlikely individuals and situations to accomplish His purposes (98). His victory underscores the idea that God's power is not bound by human limitations.

Deborah and Barak: Victory through Faith (Judges 4–5)

Deborah stands out as one of the most prominent and respected judges in the Book of Judges. A prophetess and leader, she leads Israel at a time when they are oppressed by the Canaanite king Jabin and his general Sisera. Deborah's story is unique because she works in partnership with Barak, a military commander who is initially hesitant to go to battle without her. Deborah, demonstrating both spiritual authority and military wisdom, prophesies that the victory will be won by a woman, which ultimately comes to pass when Jael, a woman, kills Sisera by driving a tent peg through his skull (Judg. 4:21). Deborah's leadership emphasizes faith in God's promises and the importance of obedience to His commands. As Childs observes, her story highlights the role of women in Israel's leadership and the importance of spiritual guidance in military success (115). Deborah's faith and courage stand as a model of leadership, and her victory brings forty years of peace to Israel.

Gideon: Weakness Turned to Strength (Judges 6–8)

Gideon's story is one of personal doubt and divine strength. When the Israelites are oppressed by the Midianites, Gideon is called by God to lead a rebellion. Initially, Gideon is hesitant and unsure of his ability to lead, repeatedly asking for signs from God. Despite his doubts, God empowers him to defeat the Midianites with a small army of only 300 men. Gideon's victory is a clear demonstration of God's power, as it is achieved not through military might but through divine intervention (Judg. 7:7). Gideon's narrative emphasizes the theme that God can work through human weakness to accomplish His purposes. As Brettler explains, Gideon's initial reluctance and subsequent triumph show that God's strength is made perfect in human weakness (178). However, Gideon's later actions, including his creation of an ephod that leads Israel back into idolatry, reveal his own moral failings. His story underscores the importance of staying faithful to God after deliverance.

Jephthah: Rash Vows and Leadership (Judges 10:6–12:7)

Jephthah's story is one of both triumph and tragedy. Born of a prostitute and rejected by his family, Jephthah rises to lead Israel against the Ammonites, who are oppressing the Israelites. Before battle, Jephthah makes a rash vow to God: if God grants him victory, he will sacrifice whatever comes out of his house first upon his return. Tragically, his daughter is the first to greet him, and he fulfils his vow, offering her as a burnt offering (Judg. 11:30-39). Jephthah's story is a sobering reminder of the dangers of making hasty vows and the consequences of not fully understanding God's will. His leadership, while effective in delivering Israel, is tainted by his tragic vow and the devastating consequences it brings. As Wolff points out, Jephthah's story reflects the complexities of leadership in a period of moral and spiritual ambiguity (49).

Samson: Strength and Moral Failure (Judges 13–16)

Samson is perhaps the most famous of the judges, known for his immense physical strength, which he derives from his Nazarite vow to God. Samson's story is marked by his heroic feats, such as killing a lion with his bare hands and defeating the Philistines in single combat. However, his personal flaws, particularly his weakness for women, lead to his downfall. His relationship with Delilah, who betrays him by discovering the secret of his strength, results in his capture by the Philistines. Samson eventually dies while bringing down the Philistine

temple, killing more enemies in his death than in his lifetime (Judg. 16:30). Samson's narrative highlights the tension between divine calling and human failure. While Samson's strength is a gift from God, his moral failings ultimately lead to his destruction. His story, as Anderson notes, emphasizes the dangers of personal sin and the importance of remaining faithful to God's commands (Anderson, 105). Samson's tragic end serves as a warning about the consequences of moral failure, even for a divinely empowered leader.

7. *Moral and Social Issues in Judges*

One of the central issues in the Book of Judges is the decline of Israel's morality, which occurs as the people move away from the teachings of the covenant and embrace sinful behaviors. This moral decline is captured in the recurring cycles of apostasy, where Israel repeatedly turns to idolatry and engages in immoral practices, which leads to God's judgment through foreign oppression. As each judge's leadership ends, the people quickly return to their corrupt ways, signaling a deeper spiritual problem. The moral decline of Israel is first noted in the opening chapters of Judges, where it is stated that after Joshua's death, "another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel" (Judg. 2:10). This generational shift marks the beginning of Israel's moral collapse. As the people abandon the covenant and worship foreign gods, they engage in practices that directly contradict the ethical and spiritual teachings given by God. This is evident in Judges 19–21, where the social and moral fabric of Israel is depicted as disintegrating, culminating in the civil war between the tribes of Israel (Judg. 20). The decline in morality is intertwined with the failure of Israelite leadership, and the text reflects a society where moral and spiritual standards are constantly undermined (Wolff, 62).

8. *The Role of Women in Judges*

Deborah is one of the most prominent female figures in the book, serving as a prophetess and judge. Her leadership is highly respected, and she plays a crucial role in the deliverance of Israel from the oppression of the Canaanites. Deborah's story (Judg. 4–5) highlights the importance of spiritual and political leadership for Israel and demonstrates that women were capable of leading with wisdom and strength. Her partnership with Barak, the military commander, reflects a model of leadership that is cooperative and faith-based. Deborah's leadership challenges traditional gender roles in Israel and illustrates the significant contributions women could make in times of national crisis (Childs 118). However, other

stories in Judges reveal the vulnerability and exploitation of women. The tragic story of the Levite's concubine (Judg. 19) illustrates the brutal treatment of women in Israelite society, where women were often seen as property, and their rights and dignity were disregarded. The Levite's concubine is sexually assaulted and murdered, leading to violent responses that result in civil war among the tribes. This disturbing narrative underscores the social and moral breakdown in Israel, where women's lives were devalued, and the protection of women was not prioritized.

Jael, another female figure, plays a key role in the defeat of Sisera, the commander of the Canaanite army. Jael's action of killing Sisera (Judg. 4:21) is seen as a heroic act, but it also raises questions about the morality of her actions. While Jael's act is celebrated in the context of the war, it also demonstrates the violence and moral ambiguity that characterize the period. As Anderson notes, Jael's story raises complex questions about the nature of female agency in a time of war and violence (Anderson, 110).

9. *Idolatry and Its Consequences*

Idolatry is a recurring and central theme in the Book of Judges. Time and again, Israel turns away from the worship of the one true God and adopts the gods and practices of the surrounding nations. This spiritual infidelity is portrayed as the root cause of Israel's moral and social problems, leading to their oppression and suffering. The cycle of idolatry in Judges begins early in the book, as the Israelites fail to completely remove the Canaanites and their religious influences from the land. Judges 2:11–13 states that "the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord; they served the Baals." The worship of Baal and Asherah, Canaanite gods associated with fertility and agriculture, is depicted as the primary form of idolatry, and it leads Israel into moral and social chaos. Idolatry, particularly the worship of these false gods, is directly linked to Israel's spiritual decline and their failure to uphold the covenant.

The consequences of idolatry are severe and are a key part of the cyclical pattern in Judges. Each time Israel turns to idolatry, they face oppression from foreign nations as a form of divine judgment. For example, when Israel worships the Baals, God allows the Midianites to oppress them for seven years (Judg. 6). The spiritual and moral consequences of idolatry are not limited to national defeat; idolatry also leads to social disorder and a breakdown of ethical behavior, as seen in the lawlessness depicted in Judges 17–21. As Bright explains, idolatry in Judges reflects the broader Deuteronomistic history's concern with covenant loyalty. Idolatry

is not just a religious issue but a fundamental breach of Israel's identity as a people chosen by God (Bright, 234). The consequences of idolatry in Judges are not merely political; they are theological, as Israel's failure to honor God leads to spiritual emptiness and societal collapse.

LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF JUDGES

The Book of Judges, though written in an ancient context, offers timeless lessons that resonate deeply with contemporary issues. Through the cycles of sin, judgment, repentance, and deliverance, the text provides profound insights into the dangers of moral and spiritual decline, the necessity of godly leadership, and the importance of trusting in God's strength rather than human ability. These lessons are not only pertinent for individuals but also for communities and nations grappling with the challenges of faithfulness, leadership, and trust in a turbulent world.

Faithfulness amidst Apostasy

One of the most significant lessons from the Book of Judges is the importance of remaining faithful to God amidst widespread apostasy. The recurring theme of Israel's turning away from God and worshiping foreign gods underscores the fragility of human commitment. Despite the blessings they had received from God, Israel consistently fell into idolatry, leading to oppression and suffering. As each cycle of sin and judgment unfolds, the Israelites cry out to God for deliverance, and God, in His mercy, raises up a judge to restore them. However, once the judge dies, Israel quickly returns to its sinful ways (Judg. 2:19). This pattern serves as a powerful reminder for today's believers about the constant need for vigilance in our spiritual lives. Just as Israel struggled with idolatry, today's world faces similar temptations, whether in the form of materialism, power, or the pursuit of personal desires at the expense of divine principles. The Book of Judges calls for perseverance in faith, even when the surrounding culture is steeped in moral and spiritual compromise. As Bright explains, Israel's cycles of apostasy highlight the ever-present temptation to conform to surrounding values, making it crucial for God's people to continually renew their commitment to Him (239).

The Importance of Godly Leadership

Another crucial lesson from Judges is the importance of godly leadership. The book illustrates that leadership, whether in times of peace or crisis, is essential for guiding a community in faithfulness to God. The judges, though imperfect, were raised up by God to lead Israel in battle, to provide justice, and to restore the people to covenantal obedience. While the judges had varying degrees of moral integrity, the book shows that godly leadership is marked by faithfulness to God's will and reliance on His strength. In the absence of godly leadership, Israel fell into chaos and lawlessness, as demonstrated in the closing chapters of Judges (Judg. 21:25), where "everyone did as they saw fit." This lack of unity and moral direction led to social and political disorder. Today, this serves as a warning about the importance of righteous leadership in all areas of life whether in homes, churches, businesses, or governments. Leaders today must uphold integrity, justice, and godliness, and they must rely on God for guidance, as leadership without God's direction ultimately leads to ruin. Israel's need for a righteous leader points forward to the monarchy, which would seek to establish a more permanent and divinely guided leadership structure (Childs, 124).

Trusting God Rather Than Human Strength

A third key lesson from the Book of Judges is the importance of trusting in God's power rather than human strength. Judges such as Gideon and Samson exemplify the theme that true strength comes from God, not from human ability or military might. Gideon, for instance, was initially hesitant to take on the role of deliverer, doubting his capabilities and asking God for signs. God reassured him that the victory over the Midianites would not come through human strength but by divine intervention. In fact, God reduced Gideon's army to just 300 men to ensure that Israel would recognize that the victory was a result of God's power, not their own (Judg. 7:2-7). Similarly, Samson, despite his extraordinary physical strength, was ultimately undone by his own weakness and reliance on his own abilities rather than trusting in God. His strength, which was a divine gift tied to his Nazarite vow, could not save him when he failed to remain obedient to God's commands. Samson's moral failure, despite his divine empowerment, highlights the danger of relying on one's own strength without a proper relationship with God (Anderson 107).

This lesson is particularly relevant in today's world, where there is often an emphasis on self-reliance and human achievement. The Book of Judges reminds us that, no matter how capable

we are, our true strength comes from God. In the face of challenges, whether personal or societal, trusting in God's power, rather than in human strategies or resources, is essential for enduring success. As the psalmist declares, "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God" (Ps. 20:7). The Book of Judges offers rich, timeless lessons for contemporary readers. It challenges us to remain faithful to God amidst a world of apostasy, to seek godly leadership that leads by God's guidance, and to trust in God's strength rather than our own. Just as Israel struggled with these issues, so too do we face similar challenges today. The stories of the judges, though set in an ancient context, provide profound insights into human nature and divine faithfulness, calling us to rely on God in all things and to uphold His standards in every aspect of life. Ultimately, the book emphasizes that true deliverance, both for Israel and for us today, comes through God's mercy and strength, not through human effort alone.

THE NEW TESTAMENT: 1 AND 2 TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION: First and 2 Timothy, as well as Titus, are known as Paul's "Pastoral Epistles." This simply means that unlike the Apostle's other letters which, except for Philemon, were written to congregations, these letters were written to pastors of local churches concerning their duties in the ministry. Timothy was the pastor of the church at Ephesus when Paul wrote these letters to him. Yet, by the superintendence of the Holy Spirit, Paul also writes to us. These letters are full of encouragement and exhortation to pastors and parishioners alike. Here are three things we should know about 1 and 2 Timothy. In Paul's two letters to Timothy, we have an invaluable resource: We have the privilege of seeing how Paul builds up a younger leader who is going through an overwhelming time in his ministry. Timothy was leading an enormous church in Ephesus, and it was filled with false teachers. Paul writes to Timothy in order to encourage him, coach him, and remind him of God's faithfulness. As you read these letters, try to put yourself in Timothy's shoes. Imagine what he was going through, and consider what he would've been thinking as he read these words from his friend and mentor, Paul.

AUTHORSHIP OF TIMOTHY: Critical scholars deny that Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles (1Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus), even though these letters claim to be written by him, and the early Christians univocally held that these were written by Paul until the 19th century in the wake of Enlightenment thinking and Higher Criticism. Critics usually marshal three central arguments in favor of this denial:

ARGUMENT 1: Paul mentions events in the Pastoral Epistles that are not recorded anywhere in the book of Acts: Critics point to several examples of historical events in the Pastoral Epistles that the book of Acts doesn't contain:

- Paul left Timothy in Ephesus and went to Macedonia (1 Tim. 1:3). In Acts, Paul called Timothy *from* Macedonia *to* Ephesus—not the other way around (Acts 19:22).
- Paul spoke of false teaching in the *future tense* to the elders in Ephesus (Acts 20:28-30), but he spoke of false teaching in the *present tense* to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:3-4).
- Paul left Titus in charge of leading the church in Crete (Titus 1:5). Yet, Acts never mentions Titus, nor does it mention a church plant in Crete.

- An otherwise unknown man named Onesiphorus found Paul in Rome, and he was apparently a mighty servant of God in Ephesus (2 Tim. 1:16-18). Yet, for being such a bigshot, Onesiphorus is nowhere mentioned in Acts.

Since Acts doesn't mention any of these people, places, or events, critics argue that this is a sign of a forgery in Paul's name whereby the forger tried to lace his letter with historical allusions to make it look authentic. In response to this argument, we can make several responses:

First, this is an argument from silence. While Acts tells the story of the expansion of the early Church *truly*, it does not tell it *fully*. No historical account can be absolutely exhaustive. If it was, then all of the books on Earth would not be able to contain the information (Jn. 21:25). It is an unjustifiable expectation to suppose Luke would mention every single historical detail of the early church in a 28-chapter book.

Second, false historical allusions wouldn't boost the credibility of a pseudepigraphical author. If a person was trying to impersonate Paul, why would he invent people and events that never occurred? Surely it would be better to appeal to well-known historical events instead.

Third, Paul mentions Titus in letters that critics hold to be authentic (e.g. Galatians and 2 Corinthians). Even the most strident critical scholars hold that Galatians and 2 Corinthians are authentic letters. Yet, in these undisputed letters, Paul mentions Titus (Gal. 2:1; 2 Cor. 2:13). Therefore, critical scholars are using a double standard: If the Pastorals cannot be authentic because they mention Titus, then neither can Galatians and 2 Corinthians. Yet, virtually all scholars hold these letters to be authentic.

Fourth, Acts never states that Paul dies at the end of his Roman custody. In fact, Paul himself believed that he would beat his charge and get out of Roman imprisonment (Phil. 1:19; 25). Therefore, Paul was probably released from house arrest, and then, continued to preach. Clement of Rome (AD 95) said that Paul went "to the extreme limit of the west" (1 Clement 5). Since Clement wrote from Rome, he is most likely referring to Spain.[1] The Muratorian Canon (AD 180) speaks of "Paul's departure from the city as he was proceeding to Spain."[2] Moreover, Paul himself stated that he intended to preach in Spain, if he had the opportunity (Rom. 15:24). Furthermore, the great church historian Eusebius writes (AD 340):

Paul is said, after having defended himself, to have set forth again upon the ministry of preaching, and to have ***entered the city [Rome] a <u>second time</u>,*** *and to have ended his life by martyrdom.* ***Whilst then a prisoner, he wrote the Second Epistle to Timothy,*** *in which he both mentions his first defence, and his impending death* (Eusebius 7-8).

Acts does *not* end with Paul's martyrdom. In fact, just the opposite: Acts ends with Paul still alive and well under Roman house arrest, and Luke states that he remained there for two years (Acts 28:30). This explains how Paul could leave Trophimus ill in Miletus (2 Tim. 4:19-20), even though Acts states that Trophimus came with Paul to Jerusalem (Acts 21:29-30). This demonstrates that Paul must be referring to another period of time after his first imprisonment in Rome one in which Paul returned to Miletus after being imprisoned.

Moreover, a fourth missionary journey explains mentions of other people and travels. In his undisputed letters, Paul mentions a couple church-plants that weren't recorded in Acts. For instance, Paul mentions a forthcoming trip to Spain (Rom. 15:24), and he mentions Epaphras who helped establish a church in Colossae (Col. 1:7; 4:12; Philemon 23). It should not surprise us to see other church-plants that are not recorded in Acts such as Crete (Titus 1:5), Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20), and Nicopolis (Titus 3:12)? All of these references are best explained by a fourth (unrecorded) missionary journey.

ARGUMENT 2: The Pastoral Epistles mention church leadership, which wasn't developed until the second century: Critics argue that official church leadership (or at least elaborate church polity) didn't evolve until the second century AD. Specifically, Paul mentions "overseers" (or "bishops"), and this office became particularly prominent in the second century. Since the Pastoral Epistles mention bishops (*episkopoi*, 1 Tim. 3:1; Titus 1:7), this suggests a second century date. However, these arguments are highly problematic for several reasons:

First, other NT documents reference "elders." Luke mentions "elders" (*presbuteros*) throughout the early church (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2; 20:17). Likewise, James is one of our earliest NT letters, and he mentions "elders" (Jas. 5:14). This demonstrates that leadership existed in the primitive church, and wasn't a second century invention.

Second, other NT documents refer to "overseers." Paul mentions "overseers (*episkopoi*) and deacons" in the church of Philippi (Phil. 1:1). Of course, even critics accept Philippians as an undisputed letter of Paul.

Third, NT scholars are now generally agreed that the terms "overseer" and "elder" are interchange terms. Paul writes that he left Titus behind to "appoint **elders** in every city" (Titus 1:5), and he quickly goes on to write that "the **overseer** must be above reproach…" (Titus 1:7). We see the same practice in the book of Acts: Paul "sent to Ephesus and called to him the **elders** of the church" (Acts 20:17), but then he tells this same group of people that "the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**, to shepherd the church of God" (Acts 20:28). Put simply, an overseer is an elder, and an elder is an overseer. Donald Guthrie stated that "this fact is now generally accepted among New Testament scholars." (Donald 34).

Fourth, the material regarding leaders is short and simple. Indeed, the material regarding church leadership is only about 10% of the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. 3:1-13; 5:3-22; Titus 1:5-9).–Moreover, Paul's writing on leadership is short, simple, and to the point mostly focusing on character. If these letters reflect a full borne leadership structure (like that found in the second century), then why is so little written in these letters? After all, we are never even told what duties deacons have, and nothing in these letters reflect the idea of a single bishop overseeing a province of churches (i.e. a monarchical episcopate) (Donald 34).

Fifth, we should expect Paul to write about leadership in these letters. Why? Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles to Christian leaders! The fact that Paul wrote about leadership to leaders is about as surprising that he wrote about sex to the Corinthians.

ARGUMENT 3: The Pastoral Epistles contain words and theology not used by Paul in the rest of his letters: Critics charge that the vocabulary and theology of the Pastoral Epistles is far different than Paul's other writings. This, they argue, demonstrates that another author must have written the Pastorals. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1807) was the first person to make this argument, but P.N. Harrison gave a robust statistical analysis that strengthened this argument (1921) (Harrison 20).

The Pastorals use **902 words**. Since 54 are proper names, this leaves us with **848 remaining words** in the Pastoral Epistles.

- Of these 848 words, **306** (over one-third) do not occur in any of Paul's other letters.
- Of these 306, **175** do not occur anywhere else in the NT.

- Of these 306, **211** of them occur in second century writings by the early church fathers. Furthermore, Harrison argued that the original words (i.e. *hapax legomena*) occur in the second century Church Fathers.

Many found Harrison's case to be convincing a century ago. Today, this statistical analysis has fallen under considerable criticism. Indeed, a number of counterpoints can account for this literary argument against Pauline authorship:

First, Paul was older when he wrote these letters. Do you think that you'll write differently a decade from now? If you do, then you should acknowledge that Paul probably did as well. As a young missionary, Paul probably wrote differently than he did as an old, imprisoned man, writing around AD 64-65.

Second, Paul's other epistles were written for a public audience, but these were written to a private audience. With the exception of Philemon (an incredibly short letter), Paul wrote all of his epistles to groups of Christians. However, the Pastoral Epistles were written to individuals either to Timothy or to Titus. Do you think that you would write differently to a *group* than you would to an *individual*? Surely Paul did as well.

Third, the subject matter in Paul's letters was different. When Paul was writing his other epistles, he was addressing specific needs *of the church*. However, when he wrote the Pastoral Epistles, he was addressing the specific needs *of these pastors* (e.g. discipleship, leadership development, proto-Gnosticism, etc.). Since there were unique needs, it shouldn't surprise us to see Paul using unique language.

Fourth, the amount of words in the Pastorals is too small of a sample for a significant statistical analysis. An 848-word sample is simply far too small of a sample size to generate any strong conclusions. Carson and Moo write, "Statisticians object to the brevity of the Epistles and to the lack of statistical controls." Indeed, the statistician G.U. Yule stated that statistical analysis of this sort needs at least 10,000 words, and thus, the sample size for the Pastorals is simply too small (Yule 281)..

Fifth, Paul might have written these letters by HAND, rather than collaborating or using a SCRIBE. Paul normally used an *amanuensis* (pronounced uh-man-you-EN-sis) to write his letters for him (Rom. 16:22; 1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17).

Moreover, Paul wrote six of his letters with Timothy, as a coauthor (2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Philemon). Since Paul usually wrote his letters with others, the difference in the Pastoral Epistles might be accounted for by observing that Paul wrote these letters alone or perhaps with a unique amanuensis. Carson and Moo write,

Michael Prior stands the amanuensis theory on its head: he recognizes that the Pastoral Epistles are somewhat different from the ten Paulines, but suggests that the reason is not because they are pseudonymous but because they 'are private letters in a double sense'—not only were they written to individuals, but ***they were written by Paul himself without an amanuensis.*** *For most of the ten, and perhaps for all of them, Paul used an amanuensis; for six of the ten, Timothy is listed as the coauthor. But in the case of the Pastorals, Prior suggests, Paul wrote everything himself—and this accounts for the differences* (Carson and Moo 560)

Others like Mounce argue that "Luke (was) most likely was Paul's amanuensis for the Pastoral Epistles." (William 46)

Sixth, the original words (*hapax legomena*) occur in Greek writing prior to AD 50. J.N.D. Kelly noted that "almost all of the *hapax legomena* in the Pastorals appear in use by Greek writers prior to AD 50."[11] Specifically, **278** of the **306** words were used prior to AD 50![12] Moreover, a large proportion of these words occur in 1 Corinthians, which is an undisputed letter of Paul (Kelly 24).

External Evidence: Polycarp (AD 110) cites 1 Timothy 6:10 (*Philippians,* 4.1).

Irenaeus (AD 180) cites 1 Timothy 6:20, "Paul well says [of them, that they make use of] 'novelties of words of false knowledge'" (*Against Heresies* 2.14.7; 3.3.3).

The Muratorian Canon (AD 170, Rome) places the Pastoral Epistles "after the church epistles of Paul, together with Philemon." (Guthrie 22). It mentions "the journey of Paul as he journeyed from Rome to Spain." As we have already seen, Paul himself expressed a desire to travel beyond Rome to Spain (Rom. 15:24, 28).

The **second-century Church Fathers** refer to the Pastoral Epistles approximately 450 times. (Mounce 1015). Moreover, by the second century, these letters had already been translated into Latin and Syriac. Consider a few early citations and affirmations of the Pastorals:

- **2 Clement (AD 140).** This contains "three specific allusions to the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 1:17 [2 *Clem*. 20]; 4:10 [2 *Clem*. 7]; 6:14, 19 [2 *Clem*. 8]) (Mounce 1017)

- **Polycarp (AD 117).** He "cites 1 Tim 6:10 and 6:7 as authoritative without identifying their source (*Letter to the Philippians*1)." (Mounce 1017)
- Other allusions or verbal similarities include Ignatius (AD 116), the *Epistle of Barnabas* (AD 120), and Clement of Rome (AD 95).
- The external evidence for Paul's authorship is quite extensive. Hence, Gordon Fee writes, "By the end of the second century they are firmly fixed in every Christian canon in every part of the empire and are never doubted by anyone until the nineteenth century. (Mounce 1017)

Counterarguments considered: Why are the Pastoral Epistles are missing from Marcion's canon (AD 150)? Tertullian writes that Marcion rejected the Pastorals (*Against Marcion* 5.21). However, Marcion's views "may be judged of little or no value."[19] For one, his rejection of these books is backhanded evidence that Marcion was indeed aware of them, implying an early date. Second, because Marcion was a Gnostic heretic, he likely expunged the Pastorals from his canon because of the fact that the Pastorals were antithetical to Marcion's Gnostic and anti-Semitic teachings (e.g. 1 Tim. 1:8; 1 Tim. 4:3; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:4; 1 Tim. 6:20) (Fee 23). Third, Clement of Alexandria (21) stated that Gnostics rejected the Pastorals because 1 Timothy concludes with the statement, "Avoid worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called 'knowledge'" (*gnōsis*, 1 Tim. 6:20). Paul takes such a strong stance against heretical proto-Gnostics in these letters that we can hardly wonder why Marcion removed them from his canon.

Why are the Pastoral Epistles missing from the Chester Beatty Papyri (P^{46}, AD 250)? For one, the P^{46} document also doesn't contain Philemon, which is regarded as authentic by critical scholars. Second, the Chester Beatty Papyri may have excluded letters written to individuals (and only included letters written to churches). Mounce hypothesizes, "The absence of Philemon may suggest that the codex included only Paul's public letters, omitting letters to individuals such as Timothy, Titus, and Philemon." Finally, the copyist may have run out of space. Mounce (23) and Guthrie (24) both argue that that the copyist simply may have run out of room on the papyrus parchment. Indeed, the writing of P^{46} grows smaller and smaller toward the end of the manuscript.

The arguments against Paul's authorship do not weaken our conviction that Paul was indeed the author. In fact, based on the internal and external evidence, we have a strong case for Paul's authorship of the Pastoral Epistles.

LOCATION: Paul most likely wrote 1 Timothy in **Macedonia**. 1 Timothy 1:3 suggests that Paul left Timothy behind in Ephesus, and he travelled to Macedonia from which he wrote this letter. However, Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy from prison in Rome (2 Tim. 1:8; 2:9; 4:13). Of course, Paul wrote to Timothy in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3) and to Titus in Crete (Titus 1:5).

DATE: Paul wrote the Pastorals sometime between AD 62 and AD 68. How do we know this? Since Paul died under the reign of Emperor Nero, this would be the latest that the letters could've been written. Moreover, since Paul was released from Roman house arrest in roughly **AD 62**, this would be the earliest these letters could've been written (Eusebius 32).
Since we need to allow time for Paul to have a fourth missionary journey, our best date for 1 Timothy is around **AD 64-65**. Moreover, since Paul tells Timothy to come before the winter (2 Tim. 4:21), our best date for 2 Timothy would be around **AD 67**.

THE FALSE TEACHING IN EPHESUS: Ephesus was a wealthy and worldly city known for its practice of sorcery and worship of the goddess Artemis. Pagan religion and materialism, however, were not the only threats to the Ephesian church. When Paul penned these epistles, false teaching about Christianity was advancing aggressively in the city.
Paul encouraged Timothy to promote sound doctrine and fight false teaching in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3). Timothy succeeded in this mission, because Jesus told the church in Ephesus that they had defeated the false teachers in their church (Rev. 2:1-3). But, what false teaching was Timothy battling in Ephesus?
To understand the false teaching in Ephesus at this time, we actually need to incorporate Paul's letter to the Colossians, which was a neighboring city. Because of their close proximity, these two cities probably had the same false teaching. When we compare the letters, we see that Timothy must have been battling both (1) **Jewish legalism** and (2) **proto-Gnosticism** in Ephesus:
Historically, full blown Gnosticism had not erupted yet. However, an early version of began to arise in Ephesus what has been called **proto-Gnosticism**.[26] Paul writes, "O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called '*knowledge*'" (1 Tim. 6:20). The word "knowledge" (*gnosis*) is the Greek word from which we get the term Gnosticism. The fact that these false teachers were forbidding marriage (1 Tim. 4:3) suggests Gnostic thinking (i.e. asceticism).

Furthermore, when Paul wrote to the Colossians, he was fighting against angel worship and ungodly philosophy, which would also fit with Gnosticism not Judaism (Col. 2:8; 18-19). Finally, Paul's use of the word "fullness" (*pleroma*, Col. 2:9) was a term that Gnostics used to describe the "fullness" of their deity. Paul must have been turning this Gnostic language on its head.

However, proto-Gnosticism does not fully explain the false teaching in Ephesus or Colossae. **Legalistic Judaism** was in full force as well. In Colossae, Paul argued against circumcision (Col. 2:11-15), kosher laws, Sabbath keeping, and seasonal festivals (Col. 2:16). In Ephesus, Paul spoke about the false teachers as those "wanting to be teachers of the Law" (1 Tim. 1:7; cf. Titus 1:10, 14; 3:9). Surely, there were Jewish false teachers as well.

Some commentators blend these two types of false teaching together into some kind of Jewish mysticism. Perhaps this is the case. However, we are most comfortable stating that there could have been more than one type of false teaching going on at this time (Blomberg 286). After all, in the modern church, a pastor might speak about the problems of postmodernism *and* modernism in the same teaching, or he might speak about the teachings of cult groups *and* New Age mysticism. Likewise, Timothy could have been battling various forms of false teaching.

THE CENTRAL THEME OF I AND II TIMOTHY

The books of 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy emphasize that our strength comes from "the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (English Standard Version, 2 Tim. 2:1; see also 1 Tim. 1:12). They also highlight that "all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12). The central theme of I Timothy is promoting a Christ-centered godliness for the sake of the gospel. Personal godliness is essential not only for perseverance in faithfulness but also for effectively proclaiming the gospel to the world. As noted in the *ESV Global Study Bible*, "The apostle clearly views orthodox doctrine that preserves the gospel to be crucial to the life of the church" (Van Neste 2250).

In 2 Timothy, Paul reminds Timothy that suffering is an inherent part of the Christian journey. He encourages Timothy to endure such hardships faithfully through God's grace and power. The *ESV Global Study Bible* states, "Throughout the letter Paul reminds Timothy that suffering is part of the normal Christian life" (Van Neste 2325). Paul begins by expressing gratitude for Timothy's prior faithfulness and reminds him of his divine calling to ministry.

He then urges Timothy to be courageous and to guard the truth of the gospel message. As highlighted in an article from *Ligonier Ministries*, "Paul found it urgent to remind this young pastor to fan into flame the gift of God" (Reeves). Both letters underscore the importance of relying on Christ's grace, maintaining personal godliness, and enduring suffering for the advancement of the gospel.

KEY WORDS IN 1 AND 2 TIMOTHY: The key words for 1 and 2 Timothy are: commandment/charge, mercy, law, conscience, save, eternal, immortal, invisible, elders, honor, servants, master.

WORKS CITED

Anderson, Bernhard W. *Understanding the Old Testament*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1998.

Brettler, Marc Zvi. *How to Read the Bible*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2005.

Bright, John. *A History of Israel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000.

Childs, Brevard S. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.

Coggins, Richard. *The Theology of the Book of Judges*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

The Holy Bible, *New International Version*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.

Wolff, Hans Walter. *The Prophets of Israel: Their Role in the Life of Israel*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1968.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Younger, K. Lawson. *Judges and Ruth* (NIV Application Commentary). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.

Block, Daniel I. *Judges, Ruth* (New American Commentary). Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999.

Boling, Robert G. *Judges* (Anchor Yale Bible Commentary). New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975.

Exum, J. Cheryl. *The Ethics of Biblical Violence: The Book of Judges* (Bible & Culture Series). Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.

O'Connell, Robert H. *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum). Leiden: Brill, 1996.

Webb, Barry G. *The Book of Judges* (New International Commentary on the Old Testament). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.

Crenshaw, James L. *A Whirlpool of Torment: Israelite Traditions of God as an Oppressive Presence*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.

Niditch, Susan. *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Meyers, Carol. *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Soggin, J. Alberto. *Judges: A Commentary*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981.

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Basic Books, 1981.

Matthews, Victor H. *Social World of Ancient Israel: 1250-587 BCE*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.

INFORMATION

Candidates should study the following information and act accordingly.

1. You are expected to study the two books of the bible as provided in the handout thoroughly
2. Your ability to write a good essay will be examined.
3. You will be examined on general knowledge: Current Affairs and Presbyterianism
4. You are required to build four files with the following documents:
    a. Baptism Certificate
    b. Confirmation Certificate
    c. First School Leaving Certificate
    d. O Level Certificate (WAEC, NECO, NABTEB, GCE) and First-Degree Certificate
    e. Birth Certificate/Age Declaration
    f. Medical Report
    g. Letter from your Sponsor(s)
    h. Letter from your Parish/Recommendation Letter
    i. Admission Form
    j. General Assembly Form (Ministerial candidates)
    k. 2 Copies of Passport (if possible recent) for each file (Red Background)
5. Examination Date is 7TH May 2025
6. Examination time is 11:00 am prompt at Hugh Goldie, New Chapel.
7. It is advisable to be in the school the night before the examination date.
8. Make all your payments to the school account number:

    0032998561
    Union Bank
    Hugh Goldie Institution

9. Cost of the forms: Degree - 10,000, PGD-15,000, MTh-20,000
10. Those leaving far from the venue can come a day earlier.
11. For more information kindly call ICT Officer (08030922266), Registrar (08036905195), and Rector (08037346202).

Note: All candidates (Ministerial and Non-Ministerial) MUST pass through the Session, Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly of the Board of Education before coming to write the entrance examination.