

## Chapter 8

### DEUTERONOMY IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

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#### *Introduction*

Before analysing the role of Deuteronomy in the Pastoral Epistles, it is necessary to clarify a number of assumptions concerning the literary character of the Pastorals and the distinctive features of scriptural references in these letters. I regard both letters to Timothy and the one to Titus as pseudepigraphic writings, written after the death of Paul<sup>1</sup> and written as a literary corpus. The three letters are intended to be read (or heard) as three pieces which belong together, beginning with 1 Timothy and ending with 2 Timothy. All the letters are connected by particular linguistic features and the polemic against false teachers,<sup>2</sup> two of them in addition by the question of church order (1 Timothy, Titus)<sup>3</sup> and two by the same addressee. There is no specific situation that could be detected for each of the letters – one of the great differences (among others<sup>4</sup>) between the Pastorals and the undisputed Pauline writings.<sup>5</sup> But as this problem is not the topic of this study, space does

1. Generally the Pastorals are dated at the turn of the first century, if pseudepigraphic character is assumed, e.g. A. T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles* (NCB; Grand Rapids/London: Eerdmans/Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1982), p. 13, but H. Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament. II. History and Literature of Early Christianity* (New York/Berlin: de Gruyter, 2nd edn, 2000), p. 307, regards 120–160 CE as most likely.

2. The battle against false teachers is to be found in 1 Tim. 1.3-10, 19-20; 4.1-10; 6.3-5, 20-1; 2 Tim. 2.14-4.5; Tit. 1.10-16; 3.9-11. Examples of distinctive linguistic features of the three Pastorals in the New Testament are the use of ‘to be/to become sound’ (ὕψις/ἰσως) in a figurative sense and the formula ‘the saying is true’ (πιστὸς ὁ λόγος).

3. See e.g. 1 Tim. 2.1-3.16; Tit. 1.5-9 and 2.1-15 with the focus on ‘Gemeindeparänese’; but see also the concern for community leadership in 2 Tim. 2.2.

4. In my view, differences concerning the language, the situation of the communities, and the church order are decisive for the pseudepigraphic character of the Pastorals, see e.g. L. Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe, 3 Vol.* (HTKNT, XI,2/1-3; Freiburg: Herder, 1994–96), I, pp. xxxiii–xlv; R. F. Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: A Commentary* (NTL; Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), p. 7.

5. This is, admittedly, a controversial issue. Those who regard the Pastorals as authentic letters associate them with different historical situations, while other scholars deny the existence of any letter corpus. See W. A. Richards, *Difference and Distance in Post-Pauline Christianity: An Epistolary Analysis of the Pastorals* (Studies in Biblical Literature, 44; New York: Lang, 2002); J. Herzer, ‘Abschied vom Konsens?’, *TLZ* 129 (2004), pp. 1267–82 (he regards 1 Timothy as a pseudepigraphic

not allow further discussion. The following considerations treat the Pastorals as a unit: the *corpus* is the object of the interpretation, hence it is not necessary to treat each letter separately.<sup>6</sup>

Explicit scriptural references are only rarely attested in the Pastorals and it seems clear that the author of these letters is no expert in Scripture-based reasoning, though that does not mean that he is uninterested in Scripture. In 2 Tim. 3.14-17 he provides a proposition about the 'Holy Scriptures' (ἱερά γραμμάτα) and 'each Scripture' (πᾶσα γραφή) respectively. Three issues can be discerned in this programmatic passage: (a) Scripture is useful for the functions of the church leader – the focus is not on the relevance of Scripture for all believers; (b) it is a suitable instrument for battling against the false teachers and their adherents (see esp. 2 Tim. 3.16-17); (c) Scripture is embedded in the tradition of the Church without considering its origins in Israel.

Why does an author obviously interested in emphasizing the importance of Scripture resort to this authority so rarely? Or put another way: Why does an author, obviously reticent to quote from Scripture explicitly, provide a programmatic passage about the practical significance of Scripture?<sup>7</sup> The puzzle can be solved in two steps. First, the programme of 2 Tim. 3.14-17 harmonizes with the concrete usage of Scripture in the Pastorals inasmuch as there are no contradictions between the two. The three issues noted above can be combined with the actual recourse to Scripture in the Pastorals. (a) Paul and the addressees Timothy and Titus are not identified with the church leaders of the time of the Pastorals, but these church leaders should consider Paul, Timothy and Titus as examples.<sup>8</sup> Thus the usage of Scripture in the letters can be considered as the standard for those who exercise authority in the church. (b) The context of combat against the false teachers is apparent in 1 Tim. 4.3-4; 2 Tim. 2.19; 2 Tim. 3.8-9. It is less evident but nevertheless present in 1 Tim. 2.13-14<sup>9</sup> and even the quotation of Deut. 25.4

letter); L. T. Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (AB, 35A; New York: Doubleday, 2001), pp. 63-4, 78-90.

6. There are good reasons for a pseudepigraphic author to create a corpus of three letters. The second addressee, Titus, is linked with a differing topographical setting (Crete: Tit. 1.5), thus asserting the author's claims of a broader validity of his admonitions: they are not limited to the situation in Ephesus, the community connected with Timothy (1 Tim. 1.3; also 2 Tim. 1.18). The second letter to Timothy is characterized by elements of a testament, see A. Weiser, *Der zweite Brief an Timotheus* (EKKNT, XVI,1; Düsseldorf, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger, Neukirchener, 2003), pp. 38-9. As a letter of farewell it underlines the weight of the instructions given in all three writings. Hence, the fact that there are three letters does not militate against their pseudepigraphic character, *pace* G. D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (NICNT; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1984), p. 6; W. D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC, 46; Nashville: Nelson, 2000), p. cxx.

7. The emphasis is not on the inspiration. This view does not depend on a decision in the debated syntactical structure of 2 Tim. 3.16: 'All Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching' or 'every inspired Scripture is also useful for teaching'? We need not decide this issue here.

8. See esp. 2 Tim. 2.2: 'and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well'. Teaching is one of the tasks of the church officer (see 1 Tim. 3.2; 5.17; Tit. 1.9).

9. See my 'Nützlich zur Belehrung' (2 Tim 3,16): *Die Rolle der Schrift in den Pastoralbriefen im Rahmen der Paulusrezeption* (Herders Biblische Studien, 25; Freiburg: Herder, 2000), p. 157-9.

in 1 Tim. 5.18 (considered in detail below) is linked to this theme inasmuch as the function of teaching (see 1 Tim. 5.17) has an anti-heretical bias. (c) The connection to the tradition of the church is manifested primarily by the role which traditions of interpretations play for the understanding of Scripture passages and by the fact that the material quoted from the Old Testament in the Pastorals is in some way already shaped by the Pauline tradition.

Secondly, it is probably the conflict with his opponents which explains the strategy of the author. Because of the Jewish elements in the characterization of the false teachers<sup>10</sup> it seems manifest that for them, Scripture played a decisive role. Facing this situation the author of the Pastorals could not leave Scripture to the opponents, he had to make clear that Scripture belongs to his own (the 'orthodox') side. Judging from the marginal role of explicit scriptural references in the Pastoral Epistles, he probably did not know how to realize such a statement as 2 Tim. 3.16. But this is the very reason for this statement: Because our author did not have detailed knowledge of Scripture, the fundamental declaration took the place of detailed reasoning based on the writings we now call the 'Old Testament'.<sup>11</sup>

What are the implications of these preliminary considerations for our topic? (1) We cannot expect the book of Deuteronomy to play a major role in the message of the Pastorals. If Scripture is sparsely cited, then that applies of course to any part of it. (2) On the other hand, if there are only a few explicit references to Scripture, those which are realized are all the more striking. As we shall see, the only Scripture reference in the Pastorals which is introduced by the term γραφή (Scripture) is taken from the book of Deuteronomy (at least the first part of the quotation). (3) We must consider possible indirect influences of Deuteronomy. If Scripture is perceived as part of the church tradition, it is not surprising that we can detect its traces in what we can call 'biblical language'. This label marks those cases in which a phrasing has discernible roots in the Old Testament but is so common and general that an intended reference to a specific text is out of the question. As a rule, we come across this category when a phrase is found repeatedly, without any clues to determine a particular context.<sup>12</sup>

### Quotation

#### *Deut. 25.4 in 1 Tim. 5.18*

1 Tim. 5.18 is the only instance in the Pastorals in which an Old Testament quotation is formally introduced as part of the Scripture (λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή). The quotation is a composite one with Deut. 25.4 being the first part. For our purposes,

10. See 1 Tim. 1.7 (teachers of the Law); Tit. 3.9 (quarrels about the Law); see also the 'myths and genealogies' in 1 Tim. 1.4; 4.7; 2 Tim. 4.4; Tit. 3.9.

11. The considerations just presented are explained more closely in my *Belehrung*, see esp. pp. 255–73.

12. W. L. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter* (WUNT, 2/30; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), calls this type of scriptural references 'biblecisms' (pp. 36, 41).

the problems of the second part can be left aside for now.<sup>13</sup> The wording of the citation is almost identical to the LXX, as can be seen by the following:

<i>Deut. 25.4</i>	<i>1 Tim. 5.18</i>
You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain (οὐ φιμώσεις βούην ἀλοῶντα)	For the scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain (βούην ἀλοῶντα οὐ φιμώσεις)

The only difference lies in the word order: in 1 Tim. 5.18 the direct object is at the beginning of the clause. This word order is peculiar to the Pastorals and no extant version of the Greek or Hebrew text of Deut. 25.4 begins with the direct object. It is unlikely that the author of the Pastoral Epistles has himself translated from the Hebrew text. He uses exactly the same words as the Septuagint, which is not inevitable, at least in the case of the predicate. Instead of φιμῶ the author could have used κημῶ, as Paul did in his quotation of Deut. 25.4 in 1 Cor. 9.9.<sup>14</sup>

The fact that Paul cites the same verse of Deuteronomy is of vital importance for our survey of the role of this Old Testament book in the Pastorals, for it raises the question of whether the author of these letters is citing from the Old Testament on the basis of the tradition available to him.

To answer this question we have to take a closer look at the Pauline quotation of Deut. 25.4. Paul does not simply adduce the verse in question, he also tries to give reasons for the relevance of this statement to the issue treated in 1 Cor. 9.1-18, namely, the apostles' right to be maintained by their communities. It is not easy to read this out of Deut. 25.4, a fact taken into consideration by Paul when he asks: 'Is it for oxen that God is concerned?' This question is followed by a second one which points to the alternative: 'Or does he (God) not speak entirely for our sake? It was indeed written for our sake, for whoever ploughs should plough in hope and whoever threshes should thresh in hope of a share in the crop' (1 Cor. 9.10-11).

This statement contains some exegetical problems which cannot be discussed in detail here.<sup>15</sup> For our purposes, it is sufficient to concentrate on the shift of meaning that can be detected in the Pauline exegesis. Whether Paul denies the literal sense is a debated issue. The confrontation of the two rhetorical questions in 9.9 and 9.10 suggests that Paul wishes to exclude the view that God could be concerned for oxen.<sup>16</sup> He is not arguing from the 'lesser to the greater' (if

13. The wording of the second quotation agrees with Luke 10.7. It is, however, improbable that the Gospel of Luke (or the Q source or some other collection of sayings of Jesus) is cited as Scripture. For details see my *Belehrung*, pp. 192, 201-3.

14. The manuscripts are, admittedly, divided in the case of 1 Cor. 9.9, but generally κημῶσεις is regarded as the original reading (see below).

15. E.g. the interpretation of the first person plural; the meaning of πάντως (translated above as 'entirely'); the reference of the rhetorical question in v. 10: Deut. 25.4 (cited in v. 9) or the speaking of God altogether.

16. A. C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids/Carlisle: Eerdmans/Paternoster Press, 2000), p. 686, regards 9.9 rather as 'a

God is concerned for oxen, then *a fortiori* for his servants), as Gordon Fee rightly observes.<sup>17</sup> But the statement that Paul's eschatological view of the Old Testament 'is not so much a denial of concern for animals as it is a recognition that even the Law's concern for oxen was a way of teaching Israel of God's mercy toward all'<sup>18</sup> does not find sufficient support in the text.

It could be maintained that Paul retains a fundamental theme of Deut. 25.4 (those who labour shall partake in the fruits of their work), but he is not interested in keeping the original 'addressees' of the Old Testament text, not even in the sense of 'not so much a denial of concern for animals'. Richard Hays notes that the 'surrounding laws in Deut. 24 and 25 (especially Deut. 24.6-7, 10-22; 25.1-3) almost all serve to promote dignity and justice for human beings ... It is not surprising that Paul would have read this verse also as suggesting something about justice in human economic affairs.'<sup>19</sup> But even if this shows that Paul's exegesis is not 'an example of arbitrary prooftexting',<sup>20</sup> it is not justified to conclude from this contextual setting that Deut. 25.4 cannot be read as a pure rule for the protection of animals.<sup>21</sup> This rule is associated with the context by the idea of sensitivity and compassion which is not restricted to human relationships but extends to (threshing) animals. This can clearly be seen by the recourse to this passage in Philo and Josephus.

Philo is an expert in allegorizing Old Testament passages but does not allegorize Deut. 25.4. He praises the Law for the mercy against the labouring animal, not only with regard to threshing (*Virt.* 145), but also to ploughing (*Virt.* 146, referring to Deut. 22.10). Philo highlights the concern for the animal on the part of the lawgiver: to yoke together the ox and the ass is forbidden not only because of the difference of nature between the two animals (the ass being unclean), but also because of 'their disparity of strength'. The lawgiver 'takes thought for the weaker, and would not have them suffer discomfort or oppression from superior force'. Philo draws a conclusion of these instructions for human relationships,<sup>22</sup>

hesitant question' than as a rhetorical question demanding a negative answer. But the continuation in 9.10 does not support this view: Paul juxtaposes two possibilities of which only one is valid.

17. G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), p. 407-8. I. H. Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), p. 616, and Collins, *1&2 Timothy*, p. 145, recognize the kind of inference mentioned above in 1 Tim. 5.18, but the text gives no hint for this.

18. Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 408.

19. R. B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox 1997), p. 151.

20. Hays, *First Corinthians*, p. 151.

21. See for example C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC; London: A. & C. Black, 1968), p. 205; W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (EKKNT, VII, 2; Zürich, Neukirchen: Benziger, Neukirchener, 1995), II, pp. 298-9. According to R. D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), p. 297. Deut. 25.4 could have been originally part of a 'farmer's code of conduct' (together with Deut. 22.9-10 and 24.19-21).

22. 'Those whose souls have ears can almost hear it speaking plainly in a voice loud and insistent that we should do no wrongs to men of other nations, if we can accuse them of nothing save difference of race, which is no matter for accusation' (*Virt.* 147). The translation of the Philo quotations is

but he does this on the basis of a literal understanding of the Deuteronomy passages which are not interpreted allegorically.

Josephus refers to Deut. 25.4 in a passage that deals with the generosity demanded from those who possess fields, vineyards or olives, a generosity towards the poor, towards those who pass by the field (be they Israelite or strangers) – and towards the oxen, ‘for it is not just to exclude from the fruit your fellow-labourers who have toiled to produce it’ (*Ant.* IV.233).

Furthermore, the argument from the lesser to the greater is attested solely in the Rabbinic tradition in which the rule of Deut. 25.4 is expanded to the harvester (see *b. B. Mes.* 88b). The rural context, and thus the ‘literal meaning’, is still present. It follows from all this that the Pauline application of the Deuteronomy verse in question could hardly tie in with early Jewish traditions. The nearest parallel to the repudiation of the thought that God could be concerned for oxen is found in the *Letter of Aristeas*, where, however, Deut. 25.4 plays no role.<sup>23</sup>

This result has consequences for the interpretation of 1 Tim. 5.18. When referring to Deut. 25.4, the Pastorals presuppose the hermeneutical work done by Paul. The context in which the quotation is embedded is comparable in both cases. Paul is treating the issue of the rights of an apostle, especially his right to be maintained by the community (1 Cor. 9.4, 6-7). In the Pastorals the quotation follows a statement about the ‘double honour’ (διπλή τιμή) which should be given to the elders. The exact meaning of this term is disputed, but possibly it includes some sort of payment or material benefit. The quotation of Deut. 25.4 acts as justification for this support: in both cases the Scripture reference is introduced by the conjunction ‘for’ (γάρ). It is, therefore, ‘part of God’s design that Christian workers be paid for their work’.<sup>24</sup> That Deut. 25.4 can serve as justification for this is by no means obvious and, as shown above, the Jewish tradition gave no clue for such an understanding of the verse. Whereas Paul felt the necessity to give reasons for his Scripture-based reasoning, and rightly did so, the Pastorals seem to take it for granted that Deut. 25.4 is an argument for the ‘double honour’ the elders are worthy of. In other words: Deuteronomy is cited ‘via Paul’.

This conclusion does not mean that the Scripture reference is weakened in favour of a reference to Pauline tradition.<sup>25</sup> The intent to cite Scripture is made explicit by the introductory formula followed by an identifiable Old Testament

taken from the *Loeb Classical Library* (F. H. Colson) as is the case for the quotation of Flavius Josephus below (H. St. J. Thackeray).

23. *Let. Aris.* 144 runs like this: ‘Do not take the contemptible view that Moses enacted this legislation because of an excessive preoccupation with mice and weasels and suchlike creatures. The fact is that everything has been solemnly set in order for unblemished investigation and amendment of life for the sake of righteousness’ (cited according to R. J. H. Shutt, ‘Letter of Aristeas’, in J. H. Charlesworth [ed.], *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* [New York: Doubleday 1985], II, p. 22). The thought refers to the respective character of clean and unclean birds, the unclean being wild and carnivorous, tyrannizing over the others by their own strength, obtaining food by preying on other birds and by seizing lambs and kids (see *Let. Aris.* 146-47).

24. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 310.

25. Pace J. Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus* (EKKNT, XV; Zürich: Benziger; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1988), p. 309.

passage (Deut. 25.4). There is no reason to qualify this statement, the more so as the second part of the quotation gives no hint to *specific* Pauline tradition.

Differences between 1 Cor. 9.9 and 1 Tim. 5.18 in the wording of the quotation do not militate against the ‘Pauline transmission’ discussed above. Paul uses another Greek verb for ‘to muzzle’ (κημόω instead of φιμόω<sup>26</sup>) but follows the word order of the Septuagint (direct object at the end of the sentence). This is, however, the very reason why the Pastorals have not referred to the Septuagint directly. If the intent of the author of these letters had been to adapt the Pauline quotation of Deut. 25.4 to the exact wording of the LXX,<sup>27</sup> the position of the object could not be accounted for. No extant version of the verse has the word order of 1 Tim. 5.18. That this order could be due to the wish to emphasize the object<sup>28</sup> is an unconvincing assumption: the sentence is so short that such a reordering can hardly have that effect.

‘Pauline transmission’ does not necessarily mean that the Pastorals used the passage of the first epistle to the Corinthians as immediate source. The main objection to be raised against this view is the difference in the second part of the quotation. ‘The labourer is worthy of his wages’ as attested in the Scripture – no clue could be found for this thought in 1 Corinthians 9. Indeed, Paul refers to this saying, but as a saying of the *Lord*: ‘The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel’ (1 Cor. 9.14). It is hard to see how the misunderstanding of 1 Tim. 5.18b that this saying is taken from the Scripture<sup>29</sup> could have been derived directly from 1 Corinthians 9. Probably the author of the Pastorals is dependent on a principle known in Pauline tradition and tracing back to the first epistle to the Corinthians, but not on this letter as a literary source. Be that as it may, there is no evidence that the Pastorals resort to the Septuagint directly. There are no observations which could counter the fact that the author draws on two sayings also attested in a Pauline letter within a comparable context.

What is the relevance of the quotation in the context of the Pastorals? The preceding verse is an appeal concerning the attitude towards elders. The πρεσβύτεροι

26. Both readings are attested in the manuscripts, the use of φιμόω generally being seen as a literary improvement and as an adaptation to the wording of the Septuagint. See B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart/New York: Bibelgesellschaft, United Bible Societies, 2nd edn, 1994), p. 492. This is, indeed, far from sure (C. D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* [SNTSMS, 74; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], pp. 195–6), but we need not discuss this issue here.

27. See for example, P. Trummer, *Die Paulustradition der Pastoralbriefe* (BBET, 8; Frankfurt: Lang, 1978), p. 155.

28. See Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, p. 305 (with footnote 408).

29. There are no hints that the author of our letters would have accepted the Gospels (or that of Luke) as ‘Scripture’. Probably he supposed (with sayings such as Lev. 19.13; Deut. 24.14–15; Mal. 3.5 in mind) the saying to be attested in the Old Testament; for details see my *Belehrung* 201–3; see also the similar statement of Collins, *1&2 Timothy*, p. 146. An opposite point of view is held by P. Trummer, ‘Corpus Paulinum – Corpus Pastorale: Zur Ortung der Paulustradition in den Pastoralbriefen’ in K. Kertelge (ed.), *Paulus in den neutestamentlichen Spätschriften* (QD, 89; Freiburg: Herder, 1981), pp. 122–45 (139).

are not ‘elderly men’ (as in 1 Tim. 5.1) but church leaders, as is plain from the designation as ‘well ruling elders’ and from the addition ‘especially those who labour in preaching and teaching’.<sup>30</sup> These persons should be considered worthy of ‘double honour’. The Greek word τιμῆ has a wide range of meaning: it denotes not only ‘honour’, but also ‘value, price’ and ‘compensation’.<sup>31</sup> The exact meaning in 1 Tim. 5.17 is disputed. It seems unlikely, for lexicographical and historical reasons, that τιμῆ is to be understood as a regular paid salary: τιμῆ does not mean ‘regular salary’ but ‘honour’, and the early church was hardly able to give such regular payments to leaders who were permanently present in their communities.<sup>32</sup> It does not follow from this that the meaning of ‘remuneration’ is to be excluded, but the primary accent is on the *respect* that should be demonstrated for the elders. This respect can be expressed in an honorarium; what is decisive is that the elders are highly esteemed by the community. For this interpretation the quantity ‘double’ is not redundant, but refers in all likelihood to the state of widows discussed in the preceding paragraph (1 Tim. 5.3-16).<sup>33</sup> The elders should be held in considerably higher esteem. The quantity ‘double’ does not need to be defined exactly,<sup>34</sup> as the author is concerned with the appropriate relationship between the state of widows and of elders – appropriate in *his* eyes: the author shows a tendency to downgrade the state of the widows<sup>35</sup> in favour of a strong leadership exercised by elders and the bishop respectively. To strengthen the church office is one of the major concerns of the Pastorals,<sup>36</sup> thus the passage 1 Tim. 5.17-18 is not an aside but a central expression of the message of these letters. A strong leadership is regarded as the best means for rejecting the false

30. For a recent discussion of μάλιστα (translated above as ‘especially’) see H. B. Kim, ‘The Interpretation of ΜΑΛΙΣΤΑ in 1 Timothy 5.17’, *NovT* 46 (2004), pp. 360–8.

31. See H. G. Liddell/R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), pp. 1793–4.

32. See J. A. Kirk, ‘Did ‘Officials’ in the New Testament Church receive a Salary’, *ExpT* 84 (1972/73), pp. 105–8. It is therefore not justified to conclude from the wording of the quotations in 1 Tim. 5.18 that ‘honour’ must mean ‘compensation/payment’, as does Johnson, *Letters*, pp. 277–8, without taking into consideration a figurative meaning of the quotations. According to Collins, *1&2 Timothy*, p. 144, the ‘double honour’ refers to esteem and sustenance. That the communities were able to provide an elder with his sustenance is, however, improbable.

33. Hence, the quantity ‘double’ has its reference point not in elders who do not rule well, *pace* C. Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales* (Etudes Bibliques; Paris: Cerf, 4th edn, 1969), p. 542, or in elders who do not rule at all, *pace* J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary in the Pastoral Epistles* (BNTC; London: A. & C. Black, 1963), p. 125. The first suggestion raises the question of who could have decided which of the presbyters have been ruling well. In the second case the function of those ‘second-class elders’ remains unclear.

34. See also Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 309: ‘διπλή, “double” does not necessarily mean double the sum and can be used “without any definite numerical reference”’ (citing the commentary of J. H. Bernard).

35. See for this tendency U. Wager, *Die Ordnung des ‘Hauses Gottes’: Der Ort der Frauen in der Ekklesiologie und Ethik der Pastoralbriefe* (WUNT, 2/62; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), pp. 231–3.

36. See e.g. Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, pp. 23–4.

teachers.<sup>37</sup> To reach this aim it is necessary that the teaching elders be respected by the community. The figurative sense of Deut. 25.4 is increased when compared to 1 Cor. 9.9. There is not only a shift from a rule for the protection of animals to the maintenance of the apostle by the endtime community, but also from this question of maintenance to that of respect due to church officers (the nuance of material support being at best secondary).

### *A Possible Allusion*

#### *Deut. 19.15 in 1 Tim. 5.19*

Never accept any accusation against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

It is beyond doubt that we find in this verse an Old Testament principle attested twice in Deuteronomy (19.15; 17.6) and once in Numbers (35.30). According to that principle it is forbidden to convict an accused person on the evidence of a single witness. In Deut. 17.6 and Num. 35.30, the rule relates to the execution of the death sentence, whereas Deut. 19.15 is about 'any crime or wrongdoing'. Consequently, the respective contexts are quite different: in the Pastorals the cited norm is not connected to a lawsuit but to a critique directed against elders.

This shift of context is by no means peculiar to 1 Tim. 5.19 within early Christian tradition. The nearest parallel is to be found in Mt. 18.16 which is part of a passage dedicated to the procedure for admonishing a brother who has sinned (18.15-18). As 1 Tim. 5.20 is concerned with sinning elders, the contexts are indeed comparable. That the focus in the Pastorals is on the church officer and not on the believer in general ('brother') is a characteristic feature for these letters and constitutes no essential difference regarding the problem to which the 'witness rule' is applied. Both cases are about church discipline. This is, in a sense, even true for a third passage drawing on Deut. 19.15, namely 2 Cor. 13.1. Here, Paul is announcing his third visit to the community of Corinth, and then he cites the rule under discussion. In the face of opponents who had success in Corinth, Paul is writing a sort of apology<sup>38</sup> thus preserving the forensic context of Deut. 19.15,<sup>39</sup> but this is true only in a metaphoric sense: we do not leave the context of 'church discipline', which does refer here to the relationship between the apostle and the community founded by him. So again, as in 1 Tim. 5.19-20 and in

37. See Oberlinner, *Pastoralbriefe*, Vol. 3, pp. 83, 91.

38. See H.-G. Sundermann, *Der schwache Apostel und die Kraft der Rede: Eine rhetorische Analyse von 2 Kor 10-13* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1996), pp. 39-45.

39. Presumably he regards the visits themselves as the witnesses in the 'trial' against the community (see M. E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* [ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000], II, pp. 874-5), but for our purposes we can leave aside the details of the exegesis of 2 Cor. 13.1.

Mt. 18.15-18, we hear of sinning members of the community (13.2). As a result, the horizon of the deuteronomic rule has been enlarged in each of these cases.

Such changes do not *per se* cast doubt on the scriptural reference. This is true in a general sense<sup>40</sup> but is also confirmed in view of the fourth passage in the New Testament which refers to Deut. 19.15.<sup>41</sup> Only in Jn 8.17 is the reference explicitly indicated, namely by the formula ‘it is written’ (γέγραπται). The context is totally different from the one detected so far. John is concerned with Christology not with church discipline. There are traces indicating the situation of a trial,<sup>42</sup> but the assumption that the evangelist is particularly interested in the exact reproduction of the Old Testament reference text would be misleading. On the contrary, in spite of signaling a citation (γέγραπται) John does not quote but adduces the content of Deut. 19.15 ‘in his own free phrasing’.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, any other rendering of this verse in the New Testament shows greater verbal similarity than the alleged quotation.<sup>44</sup> We learn from this that the intended role of Scripture in New Testament writings is not necessarily dependent on literal agreement with the reference text. But without signals such as ‘it is written’ the matter becomes more complicated. This is especially true if other ways of transmission of Bible traditions, besides the direct recourse to Scripture, cannot be excluded.

In these instances the verbal similarity is of vital importance. In 1 Tim. 5.19 there is no explicit mention of Scripture as the source of the ‘witness rule’. The quotation in the preceding verse is finished, ‘Paul’ appeals to ‘Timothy’ at the beginning of v. 19 (‘never accept any accusation against an elder’) without marking any further Scripture reference.<sup>45</sup> None of the three Old Testament texts is reproduced verbally.<sup>46</sup>

40. ‘Anyone familiar with the exegetical methods used in the Dead Sea Scrolls or the Talmud knows well enough that original context scarcely determined later application’ (W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *The Gospel according to Matthew* [ICC; London, New York: T&T Clark, 2004], II, p. 784).

41. A fifth recourse on the ‘witness rule’ can be left aside. Heb. 10.28 is clearly citing Deut. 17.6, but the number of witnesses is of no importance in the context of the quotation.

42. In Jn 8.12-20 ‘testimony’ (μαρτυρία) and ‘to bear witness’ (μαρτυρεῖν) are central expressions repeated several times, as is the case for ‘to judge’ (κρίνειν) and judgement (κρίσις).

43. M. J. J. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel* (CBET, 15; Kampen: Kok, 1996), p. 16.

44. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, p. 16, points out that the agreement is ‘limited to the numeral δύο and the root μαρτυρ-’. Johannine language has taken the place of the original wording.

45. Therefore, it seems unjustified to take the introduction of the quotation in 5.18 as evidence for an intended Scripture reference (pace A. Merz, *Die fiktive Selbstausslegung des Paulus: Intertextuelle Studien zur Intention und Rezeption der Pastoralbriefe* [NTOA, 52; Göttingen/Fribourg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004], p. 110).

46. In the following synopsis the translation of the cited Greek text is marked by italics. The translation is that of the NRSV, except in the case of Deut. 19.15: Here, the King’s James Version is cited, because its greater fidelity to the original text facilitates following the reasoning of the subsequent paragraph.

<i>1 Tim. 5.19</i>	<i>Num. 35.30</i>	<i>Deut. 17.6</i>	<i>Deut. 19.15</i>
Never accept any accusation against an elder <i>except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.</i>	If anyone kills another, the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses; <i>but no one shall be put to death on the testimony of a single witness.</i>	<i>On the evidence of two or three witnesses the death sentence shall be executed;</i> a person must not be put to death on the evidence of only one witness.	One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: <i>at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.</i>
ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ ἐπὶ δύο ἢ τριῶν μαρτύρων.	καὶ μάρτυς εἷς οὐ μαρτυρήσει ἐπὶ ψυχὴν ἀποθανεῖν.	ἐπὶ δυσὶν μάρτυσιν ἢ ἐπὶ τρισὶν μάρτυσιν ἀποθανεῖται ὁ ἀποθνήσκων ...	ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων καὶ ἐπὶ στόματος τριῶν μαρτύρων σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα.

The synopsis shows that only Deuteronomy has the characteristic feature of the numbers two and three. Consequently we can exclude Num. 35.30 from the following discussion. The two remaining passages seem to be both in the background of 1 Tim. 5.19.<sup>47</sup> The phrasing in the Pastorals agrees with Deut. 17.6 in the omission of ‘the mouth’ – a clear hint that the Hebrew text has had no influence whatsoever on 1 Tim. 5.19.<sup>48</sup> The preposition ἐπί, however, does not govern the dative, as in Deut. 17.6, but the genitive as in Deut. 19.15. On the other hand, all that is characteristic of the last named verse is missing in 1 Tim 5.19: not only the phrase ἐπὶ στόματος (‘at the mouth’), but also the subject and the predicate by which the statement is characterized as a basic principle (‘shall all matter be established’, σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα). Hence, it is extremely difficult to identify a precise reference point in Scripture. This can be highlighted by a comparison with Mt. 18.16:

But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, *that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every matter may be established* (ἵνα ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων ἢ τριῶν σταθῆ πᾶν ῥῆμα).

In spite of some differences,<sup>49</sup> there is no doubt that Deut. 19.15 is the reference text of this Matthean statement.<sup>50</sup> This can be seen not only by the extent of verbal

47. See Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 617.

48. In none of the three Old Testament versions of the ‘witness rule’ the phrase עַל־פִּי (at the mouth) is absent. In the Septuagint, however, only Deut. 19.15 has an equivalent for this prepositional expression (ἐπὶ στόματος). The end of this verse shows, in contrast, a slight difference between LXX and Hebrew text: *every matter/ πᾶν ῥῆμα* is attested only in the Greek version. For our discussion of 1 Tim. 5.19 these variations are of no relevance.

49. The conjunctive mood (σταθῆ) instead of the future (σταθήσεται) is dependent on the conjunction ἵνα; the καί (‘and’) between the two numbers of witnesses is substituted by ἢ (‘or’); and, finally, Matthew (or the tradition on which he is dependent) has slightly abbreviated the text (without effect on the content).

50. J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids/

agreement but also by the syntactical structure: the ‘witness rule’ is embedded in a final clause and this indicates that the rule is perceived as something to be observed, as a given commandment. It can be assumed, then, that the author is aware of the source of the saying.

Both indicators are missing in 1 Tim 5. 19. The verbal agreement is, as shown, very limited, and there is no syntactical evidence for the existence of a quotation. So we cannot be sure that the Old Testament background is of any importance for the author of the Pastorals. Maybe he is simply adducing a ‘church rule’, a principle of church discipline, and applies it to the behaviour against elders.<sup>51</sup> He shows no effort to trace that principle back to Scripture. Consequently, readers who do not know the Deuteronomy passages have no chance to perceive the Scripture reference.<sup>52</sup> *It cannot be excluded* that the author is informed about the Old Testament and deuteronomic origin of the ‘witness rule’. But positive evidence for this is not available. Hence, I speak of a possible allusion to Deut. 19.15.

### *Deuteronomy in the Biblical Language of the Pastorals*

In 1 Tim. 2.3 we read a comment on the preceding instruction for worship, namely, that prayers should be offered for everyone, including kings and all those in authority, aiming at a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity (2.1-2): ‘This is right (καλόν) and is acceptable (ἀπόδεκτον) in the sight of (ἐνώπιον) God our Saviour.’ This wording is reminiscent of several passages in Deuteronomy but no exact parallel is to be found. Observing the commandments of God can be rendered by ‘doing what is right (καλόν) and pleasing (ἀρεστόν) in the eyes of (ἐναντίον) the LORD your God’.

The structure of the sayings is identical: a certain behaviour is denoted by using two adjectives followed by a prepositional phrase. The content is very similar: the meaning of the two adjectives does not differ (and in one case we find the same word); the same is true for the respective preposition and the following expression which in both cases relates to God (as Saviour or as Lord). But the frequency of the sentence (Deut. 12.25, 28; 13.19; 21.9)<sup>53</sup> renders it impossible to

Bletchley: Eerdmans/Paternoster Press, 2005), p. 747, sees, obviously by mistake, the Matthean language as ‘very close to the LXX of *Dt. 17.6*’ (italics mine).

51. It is, however, improbable that the rule is borrowed from Matthew (regarded as possible by A. Lindemann, *Paulus im ältesten Christentum: Das Bild des Apostels und die Rezeption der paulinischen Theologie in der frühchristlichen Literatur bis Marcion* [BHT, 58; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1979], p. 137). The preceding verse cites a synoptic saying – without Matthean features (Lk. 10.7: ‘the labourer deserves to be paid’; Mt. 10.10: the labourer deserves his *food*). And the same is true for the wording of 1 Tim. 5.19 compared to Mt. 18.16 (see, in addition to the omissions, the position of μαρτύρων in the Greek text). It seems, then, preferable to assume that Deut. 19.15 was part of an early collection of rules concerning the church order, see M. Albl, ‘*And scripture cannot be broken*’: *The Form and the Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections* (NovTSup, 96; Leiden: Brill, 1999), p. 170.

52. See Merz, *Selbstausslegung*, p. 68.

53. See also Deut. 6.18 (with slight differences in the order of the adjectives).

identify a single passage as source or reference point of 1 Tim. 2.3.<sup>54</sup> None of the contexts has left any trace: neither the interdiction of eating blood (12.25) nor the commandments concerning the sacrifices (12.28) or apostasy (13.19) or an expiation ritual (21.9). In addition, a shorter, but similar phrase is attested not only in Deuteronomy but also elsewhere in the Septuagint.<sup>55</sup> So it seems justified to think of a formulaic expression which has its *Sitz im Leben* in the cultic-liturgical sphere.<sup>56</sup>

Although 'biblical language' cannot be reduced to a specific reference point in the Old Testament, it is not irrelevant for the topic of this chapter if the instances of a given expression are characteristically frequent in one biblical book. This is the case in the preceding example: most references are to be found in Deuteronomy. The same is true for the term 'people of his own' in Tit. 2.14 (λαὸς περιούσιος). Three times we read this title for Israel in Deuteronomy (7.6; 14.2; 26.18), one time in Exodus (19.5) or two times if we take the Septuagint into account (LXX Exod. 23.22, the Hebrew equivalent is not attested in the Hebrew text). But apart from the fact that Israel's title is claimed for the church, thus retaining the reference to a people of God, the Old Testament passages have left no traces in the New Testament text. Again, the relationship is very selective and this is corroborated by the fact that Ezek. 37.23 LXX is also discussed as background text of Tit 2.14. Actually, there are some similarities, particularly the connection between redemption, purification and the establishing of a relationship between God and his people. But we deal with an almost inextricable tangle of textual contacts, not with identifiable quotations or even allusions. In this network Deuteronomy plays a certain role but is not dominant: despite the verbal agreement in the phrase under discussion we cannot find a specific concern for 'Deuteronomy themes'. And the concept of the 'people of God' is not prominent in the ecclesiology of the Pastorals. There is only the one hint in Tit 2.14; otherwise the ecclesiology is marked by the metaphor of 'the house'.<sup>57</sup>

Several phrases can be found in the Pastorals which are widely attested in Old Testament writings including Deuteronomy, but only as one among others. This is true for 'the living God' (1 Tim. 3.15; 4.10; cf. Deut. 4.33; 5.26<sup>58</sup>) and for the

54. See Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 67, who also considers a reference to Mal. 1.11 but concludes: 'if there is an echo of Deuteronomy or Malachi here, the references are unconsciously inherited by the author in the material he is using'.

55. '... what is right (ἀρεστόν) in his (=God's) eyes (ἐνώπιον)': Deut. 12.8; 2 Esra 10.11; Tob. 4.21; 14.9 (Sinaiticus).

56. See Oberlinner, *Pastoralbriefe, Vol. 1*, p. 71. Cult (bound to a holy place, with various forms of sacrifices) and prayer are indeed different phenomena. But the mentioned *Sitz im Leben* with the two components (cult, liturgy) is appropriate inasmuch as both cases are about an action directed to God. It is, however, impossible to construct a link to a specific passage in Deuteronomy.

57. See 1 Tim. 3.15; 2 Tim. 2.19-21; also 1 Tim. 3.4-5 and the passages in which the author inculcates the roles of the ancient household (Tit. 2.1-10; 1 Tim. 2.11-5; 6.1-2; for this see e.g. D. C. Verner, *The Household of God: the Social World of the Pastoral Epistles* [SBLDS, 71; Chico: Scholars Press, 1983], pp. 127-86).

58. But see also in the LXX: Jos. 3.10; 1 Kgs 17.36; 4 Kgs 19.4, 16; Ps. 41.3; Isa. 37.4, 17; Dan. 5.23 *et al.*

designation of a minister of God as ‘man of God’ (1 Tim. 6.11; 2 Tim. 3.17; cf. Deut. 33.1<sup>59</sup>). The phrase ‘to pursue righteousness’ (1 Tim. 6.11) is to be found in Deut. 16.20<sup>60</sup> and in many other instances as well.<sup>61</sup> The designation of God as ‘Lord of the Lords’ (1 Tim. 6.15) likewise is not restricted to Deuteronomy (10.17)<sup>62</sup> as is the case for ‘the great God’ (Tit. 2.13).<sup>63</sup>

Perhaps there is another example for an indirect influence of Deuteronomy on the Pastorals. According to 2 Tim. 3.15 the holy Scriptures are able to make wise (σοφίσαι). This wording does not allude to a specific text, the Old Testament rather provides a broader background for the idea of Torah as source of wisdom.<sup>64</sup> God’s commandment (ἐντολή) ‘makes me wiser than my enemies’ (Ps. 118.98 LXX; also v. 130), his Law (νόμος) makes infants wise (Ps. 18.8 LXX). Possibly these psalms are a reflection of Deut. 4.5-6 where it is said that the wisdom of Israel is rooted in the statutes and ordinances given by God. Thus Deuteronomy could have played a part in the development of that tradition, but there is no evidence for an allusion to that book in 2 Tim. 3.15.

Finally, there is the phrase ‘works done in righteousness’ in Tit. 3.5. Salvation is not founded in such works but in the grace of God. A similar exclusion, it seems, is found in Deut. 9.5: the gift of the land is not attributed to Israel’s righteousness, but to the activity of God. A specification, however, needs to be added: this activity is motivated by the wickedness of the nations living in Canaan and by the promise given to the fathers. This constitutes a remarkable difference between the two texts, as in Tit. 3.5 motives for God’s mercy are totally absent. In addition, the verbal agreement is not too impressive: ‘works done *in* righteousness’ is peculiar to Tit. 3.5. What we find in both texts is the opposition of human righteousness and the saving act of God. Lastly, in a letter belonging to the Pauline tradition, it is no surprise to find a repudiation of salvation by works of righteousness, even if there is no exact parallel. Paul, in his undisputed letters, never speaks of ‘works (done) in righteousness’, but of ‘works of the Law’ which cannot lead

59. And 1 Chron. 23.14 (Moses); Judg. 13.6, 8 (an angel of God); 1 Sam. 9.6 (Samuel); 1 Kgs 12.22 (Shemaiah); 1 Kgs 17.18 (Elijah); 2 Kgs 4.7 (Elisha) *et al.*

60. With slight variations, which are, however, in the Greek text less distinct than in English versions which mostly use the term ‘just’ or ‘justice’ in rendering Deut. 16.20, as does the NRSV: ‘Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue’ (LXX: δικαίως τὸ δίκαιον διώχῃ).

61. See Prov. 15.9; Sir. 27.8; Isa. 51.1; see also Rom. 9.30 and other cases in the Pauline letters in which a virtue is object of the verb ‘to pursue’ (as e.g. peace and love; see Rom. 12.13; 14.19; 1 Cor. 14.1; 1 Thess. 5.15; also Heb. 12.14; 1 Pet. 3.11).

62. Again there are differences in the precise wording not easily rendered in English. In 1 Tim. 6.15 we find the connection of κύριος and κυριεύειν (to reign, to rule, hence ‘Lord of the ruling’ in a verbal translation). This is nowhere attested in the Septuagint, in which the phrase ‘Lord of the Lords’ appears (κύριος κυρίων, see Dan. 4.37; Ps. 135.3, 26 LXX).

63. See in the LXX: Deut. 10.17; 2 Chron. 2.4; 2 Esra 5.8; 18.6; Ps. 85.10; Isa. 26.4; Jer. 39.18; Dan. 2.45.

64. See Spicq, *Épîtres Pastorales*, p. 786: there was a traditional bond between Torah and ‘making wise’.

to righteousness. The difference is not insignificant but for our purposes,<sup>65</sup> a reference to Deut. 9.5 can be excluded: The phrase under discussion is not an example of 'biblical' but of 'Pauline language'.

### Conclusion

As far as explicit Scripture references in general are concerned, Deuteronomy does not play a major role for the Pastorals. The author of these letters is not inclined (and presumably not able) to refer extensively to Scripture passages in his reasoning. But nevertheless the testimony of Scripture is of vital importance for these letters (see 2 Tim. 3.14-17), in all probability because of the role Scripture played for the opponents: Scripture could not be left to them. Within this narrow range, Deuteronomy is not irrelevant for the Pastorals. There is one explicit quotation which is introduced as Scripture (γραφῆ), at least partially taken from Deuteronomy, and applied to an issue of vital importance for these letters: church order and community leadership. There is a possible allusion in the reference to the rule of two or three witnesses. And some of the 'biblical language' could stem from Deuteronomy, though it also occurs elsewhere.

A distinctive feature of these letters in general is also true for the Scripture references, and accordingly for the role of Deuteronomy: the attachment to tradition ('Traditionsgebundenheit'), not only to Pauline tradition but also, in a broader sense, to that of the Hellenistic world and particularly to Hellenistic Judaism.<sup>66</sup> With regard to biblical language, this characteristic is obvious, but it counts also for the identifiable Scripture references. In the case of the Deuteronomy passages cited or alluded to in the Pastorals, that attachment to tradition becomes apparent in the fact that the possible allusion is probably a principle of church discipline and that the quotation and application of Deut. 25.4 is based on Pauline tradition.

At first glance, these results might be disappointing for those interested in the role of the Scripture in the New Testament, but they should not be seen as wholly negative. The importance and the effect of Scripture is not limited to those cases in which Scripture is cited expressly and intentionally. There is also a more subtle presence of the Old Testament in the New thus corroborating the fact that the New Testament cannot be understood adequately without the Old. This is true even if the Pastoral Epistles do not reflect the fact that the Scripture is a heritage

65. It is easy to imagine that those who regard the Pastorals as authentic writings stress the common features between Tit. 3.5 and the undisputed letters of Paul. They refer to the theological idea of justification by grace, 'a totally Pauline thought', see Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 448. But why this rather un-Pauline phrasing? As Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 191, puts it: 'Paul would never use *dikaioounē* (righteousness) in this way', and this means: as a virtue. 'Works done in righteousness' are 'righteous works'.

66. This is a broadly held view, see for example Hanson, *Studies in the Pastoral Epistles*, p. 60: 'The Pastorals belong to second generation Christianity, still in contact with Hellenistic Judaism'.

taken over from Israel. Without further ado, the Scripture is read as addressed to the Christian church. For us today, because of our theological sensibility that God's covenant was with Israel and has never been abrogated by God, we cannot ignore the fact that the Scriptures were originally given to Israel. But even these letters, despite their limitations, testify to the fundamental role Scripture plays for the understanding of the early Christian tradition.