

Dr. Robert Yarbrough, Pastoral Epistles, Session 1, Introduction

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Yarbrough, Pastoral Epistles, Session 1, Introduction, Biblicalearning.org, BeL

This lecture introduces Dr. Robert Yarbrough's course on the Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus). **Yarbrough establishes the Pauline authorship** of these letters, arguing against the dominant academic view. He then **outlines his approach to biblical interpretation**, emphasizing the centrality of the gospel message. **The historical and cultural context of Ephesus** is discussed, highlighting its significance as a site of both intense spiritual conflict and missionary success. Finally, he introduces **key themes and vocabulary** within the Pastoral Epistles, focusing on God, faith, good works, and the role of pastors as teachers and shepherds.

2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Yarbrough, Session 1 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → Pastoral Epistles).



**Yarbrough_PastEpis
tles_Session01.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Yarbrough, Pastoral Epistles, Session 1, Introduction

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Yarbrough_Pastorals_EN_Session01.pdf":

Briefing Document: Dr. Robert Yarbrough on the Pastoral Epistles - Session 1 Introduction

Document Overview:

This document summarizes the introductory lecture on the Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus) by Dr. Robert Yarbrough, a New Testament professor at Covenant Theological Seminary. The lecture focuses on establishing the context, authorship, and purpose of these letters while highlighting their relevance to both church leaders and followers.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Global Church & the Word:

- Dr. Yarbrough emphasizes the interconnectedness of the global church, facilitated by technology. He highlights the universal need for the Word of God, stating, "The church is one all around the world...the Word of God is needed."
- He notes that the Word of God is "running" and doing its work throughout the world.

1. The Pastoral Epistles: Apostolic Instruction:

- These letters are addressed to Timothy and Titus, whom Yarbrough calls "pastors, although they were also church planters...missionaries...overseers."
- While addressed to leaders, the content is applicable to all believers. The graces required of leaders, "are not things that are foreign to call them normal believers." For example, the character qualities listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 2 are expected of all Christians. This emphasizes that "it's really counsel that applies both to leaders and to their followers."
- The lectures are subtitled, "Apostolic Instruction for Pastoral Leaders and Their Followers," underlining their practical nature for all believers.

1. **Biblical Context: P-M-E-E-C Acronym:**

- Yarbrough uses the acronym "P-M-E-E-C" to summarize the Bible's structure:
- **Preparation (Old Testament)** - The Old Testament lays the groundwork for the gospel.
- **Manifestation (Gospels)** - The arrival, life, death, and resurrection of Christ.
- **Expansion (Acts)** - The spread of the gospel and the establishment of the early church.
- **Explanation (Epistles)** - How to live out the gospel, addressing specific situations and theological concepts.
- **Consummation (Revelation)** - The final victory of Christ and the establishment of God's kingdom.
- The pastoral epistles fall within the "Explanation" category, providing guidance on how the gospel should be lived out within the church context, and specifically how leaders need to be alert to opportunities and dangers.
- He highlights that the Bible's "central focus... is redemption."

1. **Authorship of the Pastoral Epistles:**

- **Traditional View (Yarbrough's Stance):** Yarbrough argues strongly for Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, asserting, "The first word of all three of the pastoral epistles is Paulos in Greek...we start out with the claim that Paul wrote it."
- **Modern Skepticism:** He acknowledges the dominant theory in Western academia, which questions Pauline authorship due to:
 - Different writing styles compared to Paul's other letters.
 - Lack of a clear historical/social setting in the Book of Acts.
 - Content that allegedly contradicts Paul's other writings.
- **Yarbrough's Rebuttals: Historical Argument:** He notes the epistles claim authorship by Paul, and that they should be taken at face value unless there is compelling evidence of forgery. He finds no such evidence. Additionally, 2 Timothy contains many personal details which wouldn't make sense without Pauline authorship.

- **Ecclesial Argument:** The early church consistently attributed these epistles to Paul for the first 1800 years of the church. The first to question it was Friedrich Schleiermacher, beginning in 1805. "When there's a consensus in the church...and then suddenly there's a theory he couldn't write them, then I think we need very strong arguments for why everybody missed this until Friedrich Schleiermacher came along."
- **Doctrinal Argument:** Yarbrough argues that there is significant agreement between the pastorals and Paul's other letters.
- **Bibliological Argument:** He affirms the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture, citing Isaiah 55 and 2 Timothy 3:16 as support. He believes that questioning the authorship has had negative consequences for the church and fueled skepticism toward the Bible. "If Paul didn't write this, then isn't that kind of shady? Isn't it kind of dishonest? And how much more of the Bible maybe should we suspect as not being true?"

1. **Dating of the Pastoral Epistles:**

- The exact dates of writing are uncertain, but they are likely from the latter part of Paul's life.
- Possible time periods include:
- During Paul's travels in Acts (55-60 AD).
- After his release from Roman imprisonment (post Acts 28), when many believe he wrote 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. He would be re-arrested, and write 2 Timothy shortly before his martyrdom.
- Yarbrough leans toward the latter view, that the writings happened after the end of Acts.

1. **Purpose of 1 Timothy:**

- Paul's primary motivation is to encourage Timothy to remain in Ephesus to counteract false teaching: "As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus, so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer." (1 Timothy 1:3).
- Paul also wants to exhort Timothy to "weather pastoral difficulties," to preserve the gospel presence, and to extend it as "the nature of Christ's Lordship is to expand and to redeem, and to perfect."

1. **Word Frequency Analysis:**

- Yarbrough analyzed the frequency of significant words in the Pastoral Epistles, noting that the prevalence of particular words indicates focus.
- **God-centered:** "God" appears 22 times, with "Christ" and "Jesus" also being prominent, indicating the centrality of God in these letters. "Lord" occurs an additional six times.
- **Faith:** The second most frequent word, highlighting the importance of trusting God.
- **Good:** Words like "good", "beautiful", and "noble" appear 16 times, emphasizing good works.
- **People:** Words like "man," "woman," "husband," are frequent, indicating the human element and importance of relationships.
- **Teaching:** "Didascalía" (teaching) is a prominent theme, underlining the pastor's role as a teacher and shepherd.
- **Godliness:** "Eusebia" (godliness) is a distinctive word, emphasizing the importance of integrity and piety.
- **Logos:** Frequently refers to the Christian message.
- **Love, Truth and Work:** Round out the top words, revealing core ideas in the pastoral epistles.
- This analysis emphasizes that the focus isn't on social setting but on God and the Christian life.

1. **The City of Ephesus:**

- Ephesus was a large and important city with a Jewish synagogue.
- It was a center of the occult and magic and home to the Temple of Artemis. Yarbrough calls it "the Disney World of the Roman Empire."
- Acts 19 provides a detailed account of Paul's ministry and the spiritual challenges in Ephesus.
- The book of Acts reveals the intense spiritual battle going on there, with the presence of Jewish exorcists, and later the rise of opposition from silversmiths who made idols for the temple.

- The church faced spiritual opposition from demonic activity and resistance from the existing culture.

1. **The Person of Timothy:**

- Timothy's mother was Jewish, and his father was Greek.
- He was raised faithfully in the scriptures by his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy).
- He joined Paul in his second missionary journey (Acts 16), becoming a vital companion and co-laborer.
- He was Paul's "right-hand man" and was sent on various assignments.
- Timothy's name appears in eight of Paul's letters, underscoring his deep connection with Paul and the ministry.
- He shared the hardships of the gospel ministry with Paul and understood the need to not be ashamed of suffering for Christ.

1. **"Faithful is the Word" (Logos Pistos):**

- This is a distinctive phrase in the Pastoral Epistles, meaning that what Paul is saying is trustworthy and deserves full support. It appears throughout the letters.
- Yarbrough considers this a kind of motto or saying common at the time, used to emphasize the truth of what was about to be said.
- Examples of its use include: 1 Timothy 1:15, 3:1, 4:8; 2 Timothy 2:11; Titus 3:7-8.

Conclusion:

Dr. Yarbrough's introductory lecture lays the groundwork for understanding the Pastoral Epistles by emphasizing their apostolic origin, practical application for all believers, and the historical and spiritual context in which they were written. He highlights the importance of understanding the historical and theological setting of these letters and strongly defends Pauline authorship, a point that has been vigorously questioned by some modern scholars. The themes of sound doctrine, good leadership, the importance of the gospel, and a lifestyle of godliness permeate the letters.

This briefing document provides a comprehensive overview of the key points covered in the first session.

4. Study Guide: Yarbrough, Pastoral Epistles, Session 1, Introduction

Pastoral Epistles Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the significance of the acronym P-M-E-E-C, as explained by Dr. Yarbrough?
2. What are the Pastoral Epistles, and to whom were they primarily addressed?
3. What are the main arguments that have led some scholars to question Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles?
4. What are Dr. Yarbrough's main arguments for maintaining that Paul did author the Pastoral Epistles?
5. What are the two possible time periods for the writing of the Pastoral Epistles?
6. What was the main purpose behind Paul's writing of 1 Timothy to Timothy?
7. According to Dr. Yarbrough, what does the frequency of certain words in 1 Timothy reveal about the focus of the epistle?
8. What was the significance of the city of Ephesus in the context of 1 Timothy?
9. What are some of the details regarding Timothy's background and relationship with Paul?
10. What is the meaning and importance of the phrase "logos pistos" in the Pastoral Epistles?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The acronym P-M-E-E-C summarizes the substance of the Bible, representing Preparation (Old Testament), Manifestation (Gospels), Expansion (Acts), Explanation (Epistles), and Consummation (Revelation). This framework provides a structure for understanding the overarching narrative of the Bible and where the Pastoral Epistles fit in.
2. The Pastoral Epistles are 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. These letters were written by the Apostle Paul to two individuals, Timothy and Titus, who were leaders (pastors) in the early church.

3. Some scholars question Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles due to perceived differences in writing style compared to other Pauline letters, and a lack of clear historical or social settings for the letters within the Book of Acts. They also point to specific themes within the Pastorals that they argue don't align with Paul's other writings.
4. Dr. Yarbrough argues for Pauline authorship based on the historical claim that the epistles themselves name Paul as the author, the consensus in the early church that these were Pauline letters, a lack of compelling evidence to suggest forgery, and also a bibliological argument based on his view of the inerrancy of Scripture.
5. There are two main views regarding the time of writing; some believe they were written during Paul's movements recorded in Acts, between 55-60 AD, while others place them after Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment in Acts 28, before his second arrest and martyrdom.
6. Paul wrote 1 Timothy primarily to exhort Timothy to stand firm against false teachings and pastoral difficulties in Ephesus. He encourages Timothy to preserve and extend the gospel's presence despite the challenges and opposition he faces.
7. According to Dr. Yarbrough, the frequency of words such as "God," "Christ/Jesus," and "faith" reveals the central focus of 1 Timothy, emphasizing God's role in their work. Also, the frequency of words like "good," "faithful," "man"/"woman," and "teaching" demonstrate the importance of people living a godly life.
8. Ephesus was a major city and center of occult practices and demonic influence, and also had a very large Jewish population; this made it a challenging environment for the early church. The city is significant because it serves as the backdrop for Timothy's pastoral ministry and the challenges he faced as documented in 1 Timothy.
9. Timothy was of Jewish descent through his mother and had a pagan father. Raised in the scriptures from childhood by his mother and grandmother, he joined Paul on his second missionary journey and became Paul's close companion and assistant in ministry, often acting as a representative.
10. "Logos pistos" means "faithful is the word" or "trustworthy is the saying." This idiom emphasizes the reliability and importance of certain statements that Paul makes in his letters, highlighting that the specific teachings he refers to can be relied upon by his readers.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Answer the following questions in essay format.

1. Discuss the arguments for and against Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles. Evaluate these arguments and explain which side you find most convincing.
2. Analyze the significance of the city of Ephesus in the context of 1 Timothy. How did the social, religious, and cultural climate of Ephesus influence the challenges and opportunities faced by Timothy in his pastoral role?
3. Explore the relationship between Paul and Timothy as revealed in the Pastoral Epistles. What does this relationship tell us about discipleship and pastoral leadership in the early church?
4. Discuss the main themes and concerns addressed in 1 Timothy. How do these themes apply to contemporary church life and pastoral leadership?
5. How does Dr. Yarbrough's methodology of using word frequency contribute to our understanding of the focus of the Pastoral Epistles? How does this method impact our overall understanding of these books?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Pastoral Epistles:** The New Testament letters of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus, written by the Apostle Paul to these individuals who were serving as leaders in the early church.
- **Apostolic Instruction:** Teachings given by an apostle of Jesus Christ, meant to guide and direct the church and its leaders.
- **Canonical Order:** The traditional order of books in the Bible, which may not always reflect the chronological order in which the books were written.
- **P-M-E-E-C:** Acronym for the main sections of the Bible: Preparation (Old Testament), Manifestation (Gospels), Expansion (Acts), Explanation (Epistles), and Consummation (Revelation).
- **Historical-Critical Method:** A method of biblical interpretation that focuses on the historical context, authorship, and sources of biblical texts, often with a skeptical approach to traditional views.

- **Ecclesia:** The Greek word for "church," often used to describe the community of believers.
- **Bibliology:** The study of the doctrine of the Bible, including its inspiration, inerrancy, and authority.
- **Inerrancy:** The belief that the Bible is without error in its original manuscripts.
- **Infallible:** The belief that the Bible is incapable of error in its teachings.
- **Didascalia:** The Greek word for "teaching" or "instruction." It refers to the formal act of imparting knowledge and doctrine in the Christian context.
- **Eusebia:** The Greek word for "godliness" or "piety," reflecting a life of devotion to God and moral integrity.
- **Logos:** The Greek word for "word," "message," or "reason," often referring to the Christian message or the Word of God.
- **Ergon:** The Greek word for "work," "labor," or "deed," often used to describe actions of service and faith.
- **Agape:** The Greek word for sacrificial, unconditional love, often used in the Christian context to describe God's love for humanity.
- **Logos Pistos:** A phrase meaning "faithful is the word" or "trustworthy is the saying," used to emphasize the reliability and truthfulness of specific statements.
- **Occult:** Hidden or secret practices, often related to magic, sorcery, or the demonic.
- **Exorcism:** The act of driving out evil spirits from a person or place.
- **Under-Shepherd:** A term for pastors and church leaders, emphasizing their role as shepherding God's people under the authority of Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd.

5. FAQs on Yarbrough, Pastoral Epistles, Session 1, Introduction, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on the Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus)

1. **What are the Pastoral Epistles, and why are they called that?** The Pastoral Epistles are three letters within the New Testament: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. They are called "pastoral" because they are addressed to two individuals, Timothy and Titus, who were leaders (often considered pastors) in the early church. These letters provide apostolic instruction for these leaders and their followers regarding church life, doctrine, and leadership responsibilities. However, it's emphasized that the qualities and instruction are applicable to all Christians, not just leaders.
2. **What is the main focus or purpose of these letters according to Yarbrough?** According to Yarbrough, the main purpose of these letters is to provide apostolic instruction for both pastoral leaders and their followers, emphasizing that the principles in them are applicable to all believers, not just church leaders. He focuses on the letters as a guide for navigating challenges, preserving the gospel, and living out the Christian faith with godliness. He also highlights their role as an explanation of how the gospel is lived out, connecting it to the preparation in the Old Testament and the manifestation in the Gospels. A major theme for 1 Timothy is that Timothy is urged to weather pastoral difficulties.
3. **What is the "P-M-E-E-C" acronym, and how does it relate to the Pastoral Epistles?** The acronym "P-M-E-E-C" is a framework for understanding the entire Bible. It stands for:
 - **Preparation:** The Old Testament, which prepares for the gospel.
 - **Manifestation:** The four Gospels, where the Messiah is revealed.
 - **Expansion:** The book of Acts, which shows the growth of the church.
 - **Explanation:** The Epistles, which explain how to live out the gospel.
 - **Consummation:** The book of Revelation, which focuses on Christ's return and final victory.

1. The Pastoral Epistles fall under the category of "Explanation," showing how the gospel applies practically to the lives of individuals and churches, particularly focusing on how pastors should guide their churches.
2. **What is the controversy surrounding the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, and what is Yarbrough's stance on it?** The controversy centers around whether the Apostle Paul actually wrote 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. Some scholars, primarily from the 19th century onwards, have argued that the writing style, lack of clear historical setting in Acts, and certain theological themes indicate they were written by someone else. Yarbrough firmly rejects this skepticism, arguing for Paul's authorship based on:
 - **Historical Argument:** The letters themselves claim to be written by Paul, which should be taken at face value unless there is clear evidence of forgery.
 - **Ecclesiastical Argument:** The early church consensus was that Paul wrote these letters, not questioning that fact for centuries until modern skepticism.
 - **Doctrinal Argument:** Yarbrough does not see a conflict between the teachings of these letters and the rest of Paul's writings.
 - **Bibliological Argument:** The belief that the Bible is inspired and inerrant supports the assertion that these books are accurately representing the author as Paul. Yarbrough believes these are the most compelling reasons to accept traditional authorship.
1. **What is the significance of the word "God" and related terms in 1 Timothy based on word frequency analysis?** Yarbrough's analysis of word frequency in 1 Timothy reveals a strong emphasis on God, Christ and the Lord with over 40 occurrences combined. This points to the centrality of God in the challenges that Timothy faces. The prominence of these words suggests that reliance on God and Christ, not personal strength or worldly wisdom, is essential for Timothy's ministry. He states that the other most frequent words are faith and works, pointing to the need to both trust in God and to live out that trust through action.

2. **What was the situation in Ephesus when Timothy was there, and how did that impact his ministry?** Ephesus was a very large, influential and diverse city. Theologically, it was a hotbed of occult practices and demonic influence, which were deeply woven into the culture. It also had a large Jewish population and a history of the Holy Spirit's activity. This created a complex and challenging environment for Timothy, as he had to combat false teachings, withstand demonic opposition and navigate both Jewish and pagan resistance to the gospel. This is why Yarbrough points out that the letter is often concerned with the need for godliness (eusebia), and also that leaders should be teachers of the gospel. He needed both spiritual power and wisdom.
3. **Who was Timothy, and why was his relationship with Paul significant?** Timothy was a young man from Lystra who had a Jewish mother and a Greek father. He was likely introduced to Christianity through Paul's ministry and he became Paul's close companion and co-laborer throughout many of his missionary journeys. He was seen as Paul's right-hand man, a trusted associate, and a pastor leader himself. Their bond was one of shared commitment to the gospel, shared struggles and suffering. This strong bond and his deep understanding of the gospel are why Paul entrusted Timothy with such responsibilities.
4. **What does the phrase "logos pistos" (faithful is the word) mean, and why is it significant in the Pastoral Epistles?** "Logos pistos" literally means "faithful is the word" or "trustworthy is the saying." It is a distinctive phrase that appears in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus). It serves as an idiom or an affirmation of the importance and reliability of what Paul is communicating, essentially conveying a "take this to the bank" level of confidence in the truth being stated. It signals that the following statement is crucial and deserving of full acceptance.