2 Timothy 3:10-17: Rereading the 'Scripture' for Christian Discipleship

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Abstract

The scripture, so far as it speaks of the gospel, is the power of God unto salvation. In it lies the power to make disciples who would conquer the world for Jesus if they de-emphasized cultural ambiguities which mistakenly tagged along Western Christianity. Little wonder why Paul advises his protégé Timothy to consider the scripture as the only instrument needed to mold him into an outstanding servant of God. This 'scripture' was not Paul's letters but the Jewish holy writings through which Timothy was tutored from childhood. Even though Paul speaks of a Jewish holy writing, he was known to have used Greek teaching and writing styles to communicate them to his pupils including Timothy. On this same scripture Paul encourages Timothy to make disciples leaving for Timothy's protégés the same legacy that Paul left for him. Therefore, the study finds in the scripture such potency to make disciples especially in mission fields. This is a more effective method than emphasizing cultural distinctions and supremacies.

Keywords: 2 Timothy, Scripture, Discipleship, Pedagogy, Culture

Introduction

Discipleship is an important instrument in Christian mission. It is the life wire through which the Traditions of the historical Jesus are transmitted from generation to generation in order to

perpetuate the salvation history founded on the Christ of faith.[24] Assuming we choose to agree against contrary opinions, that Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles,[25] we also naturally accept Paul's immense contributions to the first century's style of making disciples through direct pedagogy.[26] The instructional materials in the Pastoral Epistles make this acceptance certain. Paul's address in 2 Timothy 2:1-2 is a good example to that effect. "In this tenderly affectionate address we have a very early indication of the beginnings of Christian *tradition* and Christian *schools,* two subjects intimately connected with one another".[27] This pedagogical document was meant to strengthen Timothy in "his own character and for the instruction of others".[28] Here Paul's major theological concern was discipleship.

Being a Roman Jew and having written his literary works within the first century, Paul's writings must have been influenced by Greek literary styles and logic with a background in rabbinic juridical theology. The first century was wholly dominated by

[24]Daniel Scarone, "Understanding and practice of discipleship among the members of the Michigan Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists in light of a biblical model", *a PhD Research submitted to Andrews University* (2014), p.3

[25]Controversies surrounding the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles especially 2nd Timothy sometimes take authorship of these documents away from Paul. Some insist that the author existed at a later period since he "used the writings of Clement and Ignatius", see Donald Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles (England: Inter-Varsity press, 1998), p.19, others see Timothy as the author of 2nd Timothy precisely, see Phillip Carrington "The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles: Dr. Harrison's Theory Reviewed," *ATR* 21(1) (1939): 32-39. However, a large number of scholars believe "that the substance of the Epistles is genuinely Pauline but their present form is the work of an editor who 'arranged' the notes shortly after Paul's death", see Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles and the Mind of Paul.* The Tyndale New Testament Lecture, 1955. (London: The Tyndale Press, 1956), p.3, cf., F. J. Badcock, *The Pauline Epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews in their Historical Setting* (London/New York: SPCK, 1937), pp. 115-133.

[26]See Herman Harrell Horne, "A Selection from *The Pedagogy of St. Paul* by Howard Tillman Kuist", *The Journal of Inductive Biblical Studies* 1(2)(2014):142-181

[27]Alfred Plummer, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London/New York/Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1891), p.331

[28]Plummer, "The Pastoral Epistles", pp. 331-332

the style and manner of the Greco-Roman world both literarily and theologically. The various genres of Greek literature are represented in the New Testament so much so that "in recent years the potential relevance of Greco-Roman literature for the student of the New Testament has become increasingly evident".[29] A careful study of Paul's instructions suggests a borrowing from the Greek's pedagogical system. This is precisely what one would find if he studies the book of 2nd Timothy. Therefore, it is believed in this study that Paul adopted the pedagogical style of Greco-Roman teachers in his Pastoral Epistles to convey teachings with Jewish background. A glaring point to note is that in the studied pericope, (2nd Timothy 3:10-17) Paul established that the Jewish scripture, was the manual of his teaching, not the Jewish culture or Greek culture.[30] Timothy was to use it for reproofing and to be reproved, for correction and to be corrected, for instruction, and to be instructed in order to prove his ministerial proficiency. In corroboration, Inyaregh asserts that the main purpose God inspired the scriptures, in line with these verses, is to equip his people for life and service. The prime emphasis does not centre on the four functions (transitional purposes) of scripture. Timothy is to retain his priorities intact. Preaching the scriptures is not an end in itself; equipping people for every good work is overriding. The word of God is given for the advantage

[29]D.E. Aune, "Introduction", in D.E. Aune (Ed.) *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament*, pp. i-ii, (Atlanta, Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1988); cf., H. Carey Oakley, "The Greek and Roman Background of the New Testament," *Vox Evangelica* 1 (1962): 7-23; Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, "Greco-Roman culture in the history of New Testament interpretation: An introductory essay", in S.E. Porter & A.W. Pitts (Eds.) pp. 1-12, *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013)

[30]It has been noted that cultural values are foundation to religiosity, see I.R. Edara, "Religion: A Subset of Culture and an Expression of Spirituality", *Advances in Anthropology*, 7(4)(2017), pp. 273-288, but Paul's emphasis each time he preached from the Jewish scripture went beyond culture to speak of Christ alone and his redemptive works.

of the man of God[31]. That Paul's intention for Timothy's pedagogy through the 'scripture' goes beyond his contemporaries is well established in his warning that all (πάντες) who wish to live godly (according to the dictates of his catechesis) shall suffer persecution (vs 12). This implies that, so far as one is instructed with the scripture, he shares in the persecutions sufferable by all adherents of the scripture. The study observes that the power in making disciples lie on the dynamism of interpretation and implementation of the scripture as an inspired word of God rather than a cultural literature. In the same line of thought, trajectory to the ultimate nature of the Scriptures Inyaregh upholds "Sometimes one must discard some of the most powerfully accepted morals of his or her own culture, to adhere to the will of God"[32] This stance enables the 21st century church to go beyond using the scripture as a manual for cultural enquiry to "a literature of power"[33] unto sound discipleship.

Understanding the text of 2nd Timothy 3:10-17

2 Timothy 3:10–17 presents a contrast between the activities of false teachers, and the expected conduct of Timothy as exemplified in Paul. These false teachers "are hopeless cases because not only are their hearts infected with the foulest desires, but they twist even the sincerity of faith and evangelical doctrine to fit their own passions".[34] Their major crime was sexual depravity and its teaching.[35] In the Pastoral Epistles, Paul battles against and warns his protégé against heterodoxy

[31] Abel Aor Inyaregh, "Exegetical Study of 2 Timothy 3: 16-17: Invigorating Scriptural Inspiration in the 21st Century Churches" *The NOUN Scholar: Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 2, 2 (2023): 20.

[32] Inyaregh, "Exegetical Study of 2 Timothy 3: 16-17", 21

[33] Horne, "A selection", p. 142

[34] Robert D. Sider (Gen. Ed.) *Collected works of Erasmus, Paraphrases on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Toronto/Buffalo/London: University of Toronto press, 1993), p. 50

[35] Jennifer Wright Knust, *Abandoned to lust, Sexual Slander and Ancient Christianity* New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), pp. 115-116

and heteropraxy. The former seems to be the worse challenge for Paul and represents the operations of these false teachers. Paul goes beyond reminding Timothy that he had witnessed first-hand, Paul's suffering for the sake of Christ; to reminding him that he was expected to take Paul's suffering as a paradigm both for his personal Christian journey and those of his protégés. Paul heightens the sense of this contrast when he seemingly says to Timothy "but you, who are far different from them, will transfer to others with the same unfailing purity the evangelical doctrine which I transmitted in all its purity to you. You are able to be the best witness to the fact that the character of my life has matched the character of my teachings".[36] "Such outstanding admonition makes Paul an epitome of a sound mentor in the study of mentoring relationship".[37]

Regarding the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, a lot of complications arises. Almost all Deutro-Pauline Epistles including the Pastoral Epistles have got their authorship doubted. Though traditional Pauline studies have always attributed them to Paul, relative "to the period immediately subsequent to the Acts record, necessitating the embracing of the second Roman imprisonment theory",[38] there are supposed reasons for modern scholars to disagree that they were written by Paul.[39] However, "it is not difficult to understand how even those who condemn the P.E as the product of a later writer, feel almost obliged to admit that at least some of this touching letter must be genuine".[40] This is sequel to the personal notes of

[36]Sider "Collected works of Erasmus", p.50

[37]E.A., Ituma, P.E., Peters, O.K., Ngele & P.O., Agbo, 'Nigerian youth, politics and the demand for τολμηρήηγεσία: A study on I Timothy 4:11–12', *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 77(4), (2021) a7099. https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.7099

[38]Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles and the Mind of Paul.* The Tyndale New Testament Lecture, 1955. (London: The Tyndale Press, 1956), p.3

[39]For a list of reasons why the Pastoral Epistles are not Paul's work, see F.C., Baur, *Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ: His life and works, his epistles and teachings*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), pp. 98-105

[40]Plummer, "The Pastoral Epistles", p312

emotions (of master-pupil relationship) which the epistles evoke. Such emotionalism usually characterizes St. Paul's writings and sews a garment of uniformity for the Pastoral Epistles and the rest of *Corpus Paulinum*. However, in the face of continued argument and attribution of the Pastoral Epistles especially 2 Timothy to pseudonymous writings, we could then say that "the person who forged [it] in the name of St. Paul must indeed have been a genius".[41] The expertise of this forgery has now cast shadows of falsity on other Pauline Epistles whose authorship has once been declared undisputed. In other words, if the Pastoral Epistles are pseudonymous, other Pauline Epistles stand the risk of being pseudonymous by similarity of history, language, style and theology and if other Pauline Epistles outside the Pastoral Epistles are genuine, then the Pastoral Epistles do not only contain Pauline material, but convey genuine Pauline authorship by similarity of history, language style and theology. For example, when Pastoral Epistles are discredited as original works of Paul due to the mention of false teaching and ecclesiastical organization in them, this casts aspersions to the book of Colossians, where Paul raises the question of Colossian errors[42] and the ecclesiastical organization displayed in the church in Philippi in AD 61.[43]

Klinker-De Klerck[44] has shown how yielding the arguments for the non-authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles are. If for example, the Pastoral Epistles cannot by any means be fitted into the known life of Paul as recorded in Acts,[45] then, we would propose

[41] Plummer, "The Pastoral Epistles", p312

[42]James Vernon Bartlet, "The historic setting of the Pastoral Epistles", *The Expositor* 5(1) (1913), 28-36

[43]William M. Ramsay, "Historical commentary on the first epistle to Timothy", *The Expositor* 8(1), (1909), p.17-18

[44]Myriam Klinker-De Klerck, "The Pastoral Epistles: authentic Pauline Writings", *European Journal of Theology* (2008) 17(2), 101-108

[45]P.N. Harrison, *The problem of the Pastoral Epistles* (London: Oxford University Press), p.6. Bartlet has strongly argued that the three letters could be fitted into the Acts history. See Bartlet, "The historic setting of the Pastoral Epistles"

to place the origin of the Pastoral Epistles during Paul's third missionary journey and during the Caesarean or Roman imprisonment as described in the book of Acts. It goes to show that the book of Acts and the Pastoral Epistles are not incompatible as is often stated. Second, this proposal demands less speculation since it can be checked against the data in Acts.[46] On this premise, the dismissal of Paul's imprisonment as a legend without valid historical basis by some scholars [47] is nullified. On the case of language and style, one also finds the argument of Klinker-De Klerck logical. Minus the fact that Paul sometimes used an amanuensis, given that, in the Greco-Roman world, an amanuensis' liberty in word choices, could cause such distinctions in language registers found between the ten Paulines and Pastoral Epistles, it is equally clear, that, Paul was a co-author on some of the *Corpus Paulinum*. While Timothy was a major co-author of Paul, the possibility that Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles alone is high; and that, has a lot of implications towards the unique language register found in the Pastoral Epistles and explains the differences found between *Corpus Paulinum* and the Pastoral Epistles.[48] There is no doubt that the Pastoral Epistles use two or more (roughly) synonymous words in order to describe an entity for which the other ten Paulines only use one word.[49] Baum gives the following instance:

> Whereas the ten Paulines only know of the word προσευχή (12) to designate prayer, the Pastoral Epistles use not only προσευχή (2) but also the word ἔντευξις (2). This richness of (pragmatic) synonyms is especially striking when it comes to adjectives. In addition to ἅγιος (72/4) the Pastorals also use

[46]Klinker-De Klerck, "The Pastoral Epistles", p.103

[47]Harrison, "The problem of the Pastoral Epistles", p.6

[48]Klinker-De Klerck, "The Pastoral Epistles", p.104

[49]Armin D. Baum, "Semantic variation within the *Corpus Paulinum", Tyndale Bulletin* 59(2): (2008), p.278

> ἱεροπρεπής (0/1) and ὅσιος (0/2). For the semantic domain 'good' the Pastorals are familiar with up to fifteen Greek adjectives. Besides those instances in which the Pastoral Epistles adopt a word also used in the other ten Paulines and supplement it with synonyms, there are other cases in which the Pastoral Epistles use a different word than the one attested in the rest of Paul's letters. Instead of πλάνος (1/0) the Pastorals have φρεναπάτης (0/1). And instead of ἁρπάζω (3/0), κλέπτω (5/0) and συλάω (1/0) they only use the verb νοσφίζομαι (0/1).

Here we realize the truth that "For each basic form of a word in the Pastorals one may find the basic form of another single word as a synonym in the other ten Paulines. Sometimes, however, not just single words, but phrases comprised of several words are synonymous".[50] Such richness in synonyms which is an improvement on vocabularies already in use in the other Paulines, shows that the author of these Pastoral Epistles wrote by himself instead of through an amanuensis. It also shows that these works (Pastoral Epistles) are not from an oral composition but a written material. This point to the fact that whoever wrote the Pastoral Epistles had enough time for deeper reflection and enjoyed such seclusion at the period of his writing than the period of the composition of the rest of the *Corpus Paulinum* because of the details of his description and stylistics. If "Paul was acquitted at the end of his two years' imprisonment in Rome, and resumed his missionary work at the end of 61 or beginning of 62 A.D.", it gives impetus to Paul as the author of the Pastoral Epistles and whoever argues against this date "contemplates the situation from a wrong point of view"[51] due to much historicity it denies.

[50]Baum, "Semantic variation within the Corpus Paulinum", p.279

[51]Ramsay, "Historical commentary on the first epistle to Timothy", p.2

Verses 10-13 of 2 Timothy chapter 3 looks like the prologue to the pericope. In those four verses Paul speaks like a teacher who is about to motivate an exceptional student to accept an arduous task on behalf of the teacher. σὺ παρηκολούθησάς μου τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ, (you have followed my teaching closely) he says to Timothy; a statement to distinguish Timothy from other protégés of Paul. He goes ahead to remind Timothy of his persecutions (διωγμοῖς), and sufferings (παθήμασιν) in several cities, claiming deliverance from all those challenges by ὁ Κύριος. One would view Paul as a proud collector of uncanny medals. Each persecution and each suffering he went through was a plaque given to him by God for a job well done. He insists that all, including Timothy, who would want to live piously in Christ, would also be persecuted. It is interesting that Paul, when speaking of his deliverance did not use the feminine noun, ἄφεσις but rather chose the aorist third person ῥύομαι. By this, he makes it clear to Timothy that his deliverance was not a pardon from a higher human or spiritual authority but a rescue, such as a pullout from the river by one helping a drowning man. Even his choice of word was calculated to provoke great emotions in his protégé making him willing to accept the responsibilities that is soon to follow. Lastly, he calls Timothy's attention to the fact that evil humans (πονηροὶ ἄνθρωποι) and impostors (γόητες) would soon arrive at the scene, deceiving people and being deceived. Paul uses the term γόης exactly as it was used in the first century. An impostor (γόης) in ancient Greek literature is originally, a sorcerer. However, in New Testament times (especially the first century), and in the context of 2 Timothy 3:13, γόης is a fraud who "sounds off" like a whining enchanter. This person uses their verbal spells and incantations to give the (false) *impression* they can do miracles.[52] To withstand these evil humans and impostors, Paul asks Timothy to stay enduringly (μένω) on the things he had learned and had become assured of. This learning of which Timothy had become sure of, was, according to Paul

[52]https://biblehub.com/greek/1114.htm

taught him from τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα (the sacred scriptures) right from his childhood. Without hesitations, it is clear from the context of the text that Paul refers to the Hebrew holy texts of which even children were taught. There is no doubt that the Hebrews had significantly made salient contributions to education[53] especially juvenile pedagogy. Sometimes, this education was given to these children by men who considered these children either as their pupils or as their apprentices.[54] Other times, the parents were their teachers. Parental instruction has been said to be compulsory in the Hebrew world, with the father acting with complete power over his children as teacher, and with the mother sharing in the duty of instruction. The most important task of the parents was to teach their children religion[55] of course as contained in the sacred scriptures. Paul maintains this same tradition in his epistle to Timothy by letting his protégé know that this same scripture is θεόπνευστος. In other words, Timothy should consider it not just a historical document leading to empty cultural boasts but an inspired literary work whose inspiration justifies its potency. By inspiration, we must investigate what Paul means. The literal meaning of θεόπνευστος – God-breathed, whether predicatively or attributively gives a suggestion that each part of speech used in the Hebrew sacred scripture relates directly to God's Holy Spirit. This God's Spirit directly animates the scriptures, and so, could necessarily be the same רוּחַ present in Gen. 1:2, which hovered over the face of the waters in order to animate all that God spoke. But inspiration may be viewed as a quality of the record of revelation, as well as a means of the revelation itself. It is on this premise that we should consider Paul's ascription of θεόπνευστια to the writings themselves.[56]

[53]S Schoeman, "Early Hebrew education and its significance for present-day educational theory and practice", *HTS* 53/1 & 2 (1997), pp.407-427

[54]Schoeman, "Early Hebrew education", p.410

[55]Schoeman, "Early Hebrew education", p.412

[56]See F. F. Bruce, M.A., "What Do We Mean By Biblical Inspiration?" *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* 78 (1946): 120-139, p.123

This does not cancel the fact that Paul and other Bible writers had their various theological concerns and motives which necessitated their various writings. Redaction criticism has made this understanding easier. Regarding our pericope, we can state that the theological concern of Paul was discipleship on the salvific works of Christ and not on empty fables leading to cultural distinctions. His insistence on using the scripture as a paradigm to produce a complete man of God is to make disciples, first, of Timothy and then, Timothy's protégés who must follow in the tradition of Paul's teachings.

Paul's Jewish pedagogy and its Greco-Roman literary mold

The New Testament theology both systematic and juridical has no form and shape without the interpretations and perspectives offered by St. Paul. Unarguably Paul helped to give Christianity what was essential if it was to become a system of thought and a practical working organization as well as the life of God in the soul of man.[57] His rhetorical force especially regarding his use of the οὐκ οἴδατε question in the book of 1 Corinthians have been eulogized as following the footsteps of some 5th and 4th century BC Greek thinkers[58]. It will not also be easily forgotten in the study of Pauline Epistles, that his discourse in 2 Corinthians 5, follows after the Hellenistic-Gnostic dualist anthropology.[59] His mastery of Greek philosophy in these passages has thus made him one of the most versatile Hellenistic authors of the New Testament. One does not need to wonder too far why he showed such mastery of Greek philosophies when he was in fact trained to be a Pharisee. Though he was educated in a strictly Pharisaic environment,

[57]Horne, "A selection", p.143

[58]Benjamin A. Edsall, "Paul's Rhetoric of knowledge: The ουκ οιδατε question in 1 Corinthians", *Novum Testamentum* 55(3), 252-271

[59]Andrew W. Pitts, "Introduction" in Joseph R. Dodson and Andrew W. Pitts (Eds), *Paul and the Greco- Roman Philosophical Tradition*, pp. 1-11 (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2017)

both in Tarsus and in Jerusalem,[60] the language of such teaching was simply Greek. He was said to have possibly recited the Torah as a child through a Septuagint version.[61] If Paul received pedagogy in Greek language, this must have enabled him to read extensively—as was seen in his epistles—in Greek. A clear example to buttress this point would suffice. In today's non-English speaking countries where education is received in English, students from such countries are enabled to read a wide variety of materials published in English and to make an adequate sense of it. A well-trained Nigerian in western education especially someone who has taken some courses in literary studies for example, can excel in English rhetoric. Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian poet who went ahead to win a Nobel Laureate award in literature is a good example. Same goes to Paul. Paul was not only fluent in Greek grammar and syntax for composing literature but also received formal training in the art of Greek rhetoric.[62] In fact studies have also gone on in epistolography in a bid to understand Paul's relationship to the Greco-Roman world of letter writing.[63] Such study is aimed to understand Paul's relationship to the Greco-Roman world of letter writing[64] and its technicalities in order to justify that he was grounded in Greco-Roman literary patterns. By this act, scholars have shown how deep Paul's writing is connected to the literary world of the Greco-Romans of the first century. If Paul displayed such mastery in the literary arts of the civilization of his time, obviously, he was trained to participate

[60]W C van Unnik, *Tarsus or Jerusalem: The city of Paul's youth*, (London: Epworth, 1962), p. 55; W.J. Conybeare and J.S. Howson, *The life and epistles of St. Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1951)

[61]Alain Decaux, *Viața Sfântului Pavel*, trad. și note Theodor Rogin, ed. Humanitas, București, (2007), p.24

[62]Joshua Seth Houston, "Paul within Greco-Romanism: Evaluating Paul's Knowledge of Greek in Conversation, Writing, and Speech", *Stone-Campbell Journal 24* (2021) 231-240, p.231

[63]Sean A. Adams, "Paul's letter opening and Greek epistolography: A matter of relationship" in Stanley E. Porter and Sean A. Adams (Eds.) pp. 33-55, *Paul and the ancient letter form* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2010), p.33

[64]Adams, "Paul's letter opening and Greek epistolography", p.33

in the literary world of such civilization. In Paul's day, there were many forms of letter writing[65] and Paul used many of them.[66] Particularly in the Pastoral Epistles, he employed what Aune called 'philosophical letters', being letters, which were addressed to a community of students.[67] Paul's letters were not in themselves, the scripture he refers to. His letters were merely instruments of reminder to his various communities in order to channel their focus on the scripture which was able to make disciples of them. Therefore, in these instructional letters, (especially 2 Timothy), he reminds his followers of the 'scripture' and its potency in building a healthy man of God. By referring to the power of the scripture in building a holistic servant of God, Paul follows after the pattern of the synagogue school system where people are schooled to study the scripture for discipleship purposes. Even Jesus himself, passed through this synagogue school[68] and Luke refers to it when he speaks in Lk. 6:40; a passage that sits well as a *Sitz im Leben Jesu*.[69]

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[65]Cicero was said to have written his friend Curio "That there are many kinds of letters you are well aware; there one kind, however, about which there can be no mistake, for indeed letter writing was invented just in order that we might inform those at a distance if there were anything which it was important for them or for ourselves that they should know" (Cic. *Ep. Fam.* 2:4.1). see Detlev Dormeyer, "The Hellenistic letter-formula and the Pauline letter-scheme" in Stanley E. Porter (Ed.) pp. 59-93, *The Pauline Canon* (Springer science+business media, 2004), p.59

[66]David E. Aune (ed.) *Greco-Roman literature and the New Testament* (Atlanta Georgia: Scholars press, 1988), pp.96-100

[67]Aune "Greco-Roman literature and the New Testament", p.96

[68]We must dismiss any translation of Jn 7.15 which merely says 'when he has never been to school'. Such translation 'gives quite a wrong impression, for Jesus undoubtedly did attend a local synagogue school where he learned to read and write and studied the Scriptures. What is implied in Jn 7.15 is that Jesus was not the disciple of a particular rabbi nor did he have formal or advanced instruction under a recognized rabbi'. See Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida (Eds.) *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains, vol. 1* (England: United Bible Societies, 1988), p.416

[69]For more on the *Sitz im Leben Jesu* on the book of Luke, see E.A. Ituma, & P.E. Peters, 'The approach of conflict in Luke 12:49–59 through Form

The 'scripture' as instructional manual for discipleship today

It has already been demonstrated that the essence of the Pastoral Epistles is to make disciples amidst cultural diversities. This presupposes that the Pastoral Epistles (including our pericope), "are essentially the missionary's *vade mecum* in all ages and in all lands, and are probably never so fully understood or appreciated as on the foreign mission field"[70] There is little wonder that these Pastoral Epistles come indeed from a man whose missionary enterprise has been discussed as in fact, second to none in the history of Christianity.[71] This emboldens us to apply Paul's instructions not as a handbook of ethics only consulted for direction but to a wider confluence of discipleship which is missions. Discipleship in mission field is a bit tardy unlike discipleship in already established Christian communities. Its slowness is as a result of lack of familiarity the newly converted people face when confronted with the basic teachings which a new convert should engage in, especially if such teachings come with cultural garbs. On their arrival on the African soil for example, the western missionaries recounted the several challenges they had to contend with owing to the assumed incompatibility of the two cultures – the European culture through which their gospel is preached and the African culture which they met. "Unconsciously, many of them could not differentiate their cultures from the gospel".[72] The only mediatorial instrument to the conflicting cultural situations, which was also the only way

Criticism and its application in Nigerian churches', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 42(1), (2021), a2208. https://doi. org/10.4102/ve.v42i1.2208, pp. 2-3

[70]Bartlet, "Historic setting", p.29

[71]See for example, H. Weinel, *St. Paul: The man and his work*, trans. G.A. Bienemann (New York: G.P Putnam, 1906)

[72]Eliazar Daila Baba, "The Challenges Faced by SIM Missionaries in Nigeria in the Quest to Plant Churches between 1893-1950", *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education*, 9(9), (2022), pp. 25-39, p. 31

any kind of meaningful understanding between the two parties was achieved, was when the *Heilsgeschichte* which in fact, began from the Old Testament and actualized in the death and resurrection of Jesus was retold with zest and fervor. In Ohafia, Nigeria for example, it is popularly retold how the indigenes neglected both the missionaries and the scripture owing to the fact that the scripture was taught from a cultural view which canvassed for pacification in the presence of intimidation and harassment. They started by introducing a Jesus, meek and lowly, who was arrested and crucified. Being a warlike people, such gospel did not appeal to the Ohafia people until another version of this Jesus was told. He descended into hell, defeated his greatest adversary, Satan and came out victorious, possessing the keys of life and death, they were told. This story alone drew people to come and witness this Jesus who was all powerful after his execution. It therefore, suggests that the scripture preached without undue cultural interferences—whether Jewish or European—has gone very far to make disciples for Jesus than the reverse. The power of God unto salvation is not contained in mere cultural supremacy which does not contain the power to salvage a people needing of God's intervention; rather it is in the demonstration of God's willingness to see equality in all human race—whether Jew or Greek—as qualified for eternal bliss. Historically Timothy was a Greek being mentored as a protégé by Paul a Jew. Paul's pedagogy was of full concentration on the scripture as an agent of salvation through Christ alone. Any other gospel or the community crumbles. Hence, Paul warns Timothy to avoid γραώδεις μύθους (1 Timothy 4:7).

Conclusion

This paper was an exegetical study aimed at re-reading the 'scripture' in the text of 2 Timothy 3:10-17. In an attempt to understand the studied text through exegesis, the research took it upon itself to understand what Paul means by scripture and to analyze how this scripture was used within the context of the pericope. The study realized that Paul's Jewish pedagogy was

cast in the Greco-Roman literary mold thereby making Paul a distinguished Hellenistic scholar. This finding is in fact beyond the Pastoral Epistles as evidence of Paul's Greek literary style can be seen in the two books to the Corinthians. The study then concludes with the finding that a scripture less encumbered with cultural emendations would be far more effective to make converts and to also make disciples of them.