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The Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council

Father Pat's Pastoral Ponderings

Luke was the Church's first historian, but it is uncanny the things he left out of The Acts of the Apostles. Perhaps most notable among the omissions is any reference to Titus. Luke certainly knew Titus, who visited Macedonia sometime in A.D. 56 (2 Corinthians 7:6), a period when Luke lived there (comparing Acts 16:10 and 20:6).

Perhaps Luke's silence about Titus is not overly surprising, on the other hand, because there were several of Paul's other companions that he did not mention; Epaphras and Demas come to mind, both of whom Luke certainly knew (cf. Colossians 4:12-14). Nor, for that matter, does Luke mention the brothers Tertius and Quartus (Romans 16:22-23), though he does refer to their older sibling, Secundus (Acts 20:4). (So, then, what became of Primus?)

Titus first appears in the New Testament as an associate of Paul during the latter's second post-conversion journey to Jerusalem in 51. The relevant timetable seems to stand as follows: If we date Paul's conversion about 34, his first post-conversion visit to Jerusalem was in 37, three years later (Galatians 1:18; Acts 9:26-30). His second such visit, then, which we know occurred fourteen years after that (Galatians 2:1), was in 51.

This timetable fits perfectly with what we may discern in Acts. From an inscription discovered at Delphi, it is clear that Gallio became proconsul of Greece in June of 51, which gives us our earliest possible date for Paul's appearance before Gallio (Acts 18:12-17). It was after that event that Paul crossed over to Ephesus (18:18-20). He did not stay long in Ephesus. Some manuscripts of Acts 18:21 indicate that he was in a hurry to arrive at Jerusalem for a coming feast, which would have to have been an autumnal feast, perhaps Sukkoth. This was Paul's second such visit, the one documented in Galatians 2:1, which also indicates that Titus was with him. He had evidently joined Paul's company during the previous two years.

The sudden appearance of this Gentile Christian in the Jerusalem church was a bit awkward, "because of false brethren secretly brought in" (Galatians 2:4). These demanded that Titus be circumcised. In spite of some Western manuscripts to the contrary, along with Augustine, Luther, and others, it seems certain that Paul did *not* give in on this point, putting Titus as a "test case" on the matter of Gentile circumcision. James, Peter, and John took his side on the question (2:3-9).

Titus next appears sometime in 56. From Ephesus Paul had previously dispatched him, as his own "partner and fellow worker" (2 Corinthians 8:23), to visit the chronically troubled church at Corinth. Paul himself later headed westward to Troas, having arranged to meet him there, in order to receive a report about the Corinthians. When he arrived at Troas, however, Titus was not there (2:12-13). Perhaps he had been unable to obtain passage. Sometimes cruises from Neapolis to Troas were delayed. After all, because the current through the Dardanelles flowed southwestward (the Black Sea being considerably cooler than the more rapidly evaporating waters of the saltier Aegean), ships going east from Neapolis to Troas sometimes took much longer than ships sailing in the opposite direction. As we may see by comparing Acts 16:11 and 20:6, they could take more than three times as long. In any event, Paul decided to cross over to Macedonia (Acts 20:1), where he happily found Titus (2 Corinthians 7:6). Titus himself was overjoyed by the changes he could report about the Corinthian church, where he had been so well received (7:13-8:6,16).

It seems to have been in late 56 that Paul took Titus to Crete, where he left him to oversee the new missions there (Titus 1:5-9). He himself went back Macedonia and Illyricum (Romans 15:19). From somewhere in that region, Paul wrote an epistle to Titus, instructing him with respect to the ministries on Crete. He asked Titus to return to him, however, when Artemas or Tychicus should arrive in Crete to take his place in the mission. Paul mentioned that he planned to spend that winter of 56-57 at Nicopolis, a city of Epirus, south of Dalmatia (3:12). One suspects that Titus did return, because it would appear that Titus joined Paul and was still with him even during some of his time in Rome (61-62). When we last hear of Titus, Paul had sent him from Rome back to Dalmatia (2 Timothy 4:10). Titus was clearly a loyal man on

whom the Apostle could rely, a minister who would not abuse his position (2 Corinthians 13:17-18).

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