

## Common Teaching in the Acts of Paul and the Pastoral Epistles

*Annotation:* This article will consider topics related to positions common to the apocrypha "Acts of Paul" and the Pastoral Epistles. This work is a logical continuation of research on the relationship between the canonical books of the New Testament and the Apocrypha. Since it was previously shown that the "Acts of Paul" is most of all connected with the Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul, it was decided to dwell on this problem in more detail. As a result, thanks to a comparative analysis, it became possible to identify six thematic blocks by which you can see the correspondence of data works. The conducted research gives more reason to consider the "Acts of Paul" from the point of view of Orthodox and canonical ideas, to which this apocrypha corresponds to a greater extent than was previously believed. In this regard, common ideas and a common language testify to the time and context in which the apocryphal "Acts" were created.

*Key words:* apocrypha of the Acts of Paul; Pastoral Epistles; apostle Paul; The Roman Empire; persecution; celibacy; false teachers; official church; attitude towards wealth.

For a significant time, The Acts of Paul (hereinafter referred to as D.P.) was considered as a Gnostic work. This point of view was quite widespread<sup>1</sup> until the beginning of the 20th century, until a number of researchers opposed this theory. This number includes svshmch. I. Artobolevsky, who devoted his scientific work to the study of the first journey of St. Paul and singled out as a separate study the question of the authenticity of "Acts" <sup>2</sup>. A significant contribution to the development of this problem was made by the discovery of the Heidelberg papyrus by K. Schmidt. Catholic biblical scholars were inclined to believe that D.P. had a catechetical function among the Syrian Christians<sup>3</sup>.

Even those who belong to the liberal wing of theologians recognize the presence in the content of the apocrypha of the oral traditions of the first generations of Christians<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See: *Barrier JW* A critical introduction and commentary on the Acts of Paul and Thecla: dissertation of D.Ph. fort Worth, 2008. P. 178.

<sup>2</sup> See: *Artobolevsky I., svshmch.* The first journey of the holy apostle Paul with the preaching of the Gospel. Sergiev Posad, 1900. S. 82.

<sup>3</sup> *Meshcherskaya E.N.* Preface to The Tale of Thekla, the Disciple of Paul the Apostle // Apocryphal Acts New apostles. Testament URLs: apocrypha in Syrian literature.  
<http://barnascha.narod.ru/books/mesher01.htm#g10> (accessed 10/23/2021).

<sup>4</sup> *Deko A.* Apostle Paul. Life of wonderful people. M., 2011. S. 144.

In domestic science, in connection with the study of the theology of the apostle to the Gentiles, attention was also paid to D.P. Professor N. N. Glubokovsky drew attention to the fact that the author of the apocrypha was quite well aware of the political processes that took place on the territory of Asia Minor at the turn of the 1st–2nd centuries A.D. S. M. Zarin attributed the apocrypha as "catholic Scriptures" along with Shepherd Hermas, Didascalia and others.<sup>6</sup>

When studying the Apocrypha of D.P. A modern researcher has a lot of questions, which often cannot be answered unambiguously. So, it is unlikely that one will ever be able to find out what sources he used, the so-called. Presbyter, author of "Acts"; whether he knew about the existence of the Acts of the Apostles, and which of the Pastoral Epistles (hereinafter - P.P.) of the Apostle Paul were known to him, or did he use the local oral tradition, etc. Nevertheless, a lot of important and reliable information can be extracted from the text of the Apocrypha, which allows us to put forward various more or less convincing hypotheses.

First of all, in order to understand the choice of objects of comparison, it is important to briefly address the question of the authenticity of P.P. Among Western researchers, the opinion is firmly established that this issue is outdated and does not require any attention, since the letters to Timothy and Titus do not belong to the Apostle of the Gentiles. The stumbling block in this matter is the difference in the style of P.P. from "indisputable". As E. Schnabel convincingly showed in his article<sup>8</sup>: "The degree of difference between the styles of the Pastoral and 'undeniable' Pauline epistles remains a matter of debate." However, for this article, the theological side of the problem is more significant. And in this case, despite the difference in the theological language of P.P. from others, which may indicate their later creation, it is impossible to reject the presence of common ideas and prerequisites that could later appear in P.P. more defined.

So, according to W. Rohrdorf, there are disagreements between the Apocrypha and P.P. These disagreements concern mainly the question of the role of women in the church community and Christian asceticism. He also draws attention to the fact that there is a common factual basis between D.P. and the corpus of his epistles, concerning the mission of the apostle. As for differences and similarities

<sup>5</sup> *Glubokovsky N.N.* The experience of Russian processing of material for the biography of the holy Apostle Paul // Christian reading. 1894. Issue. 1. S. 193.

<sup>6</sup> *Zarin S.M.* Apocryphal books of the New Testament // Theological Encyclopedia. T. 11. St. Petersburg, 1910. S. 28.

<sup>7</sup> See *Merz A.* Die fiktive Selbstausslegung des Paulus. Intertextuelle Studien zur Intention und Rezeption der pastoralbrief. Gottingen, 2004. S. 72.

<sup>8</sup> *Schnabel E.* Apostle Paul, missionary theologian and pastor-theologian: to the understanding of Paul // Bulletin of PSTGU I: Theology, Philosophy. 2013. Issue. 2. P. 13.

- See: There. S. 14.

<sup>10</sup> *Rordorf W.* Lex Orandi-Lex Credendi: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum 60. Geburtstag. Paradosis 36. Freiburg, 1993. S.

then we can see them in eight names used both in D.P. and in his Epistles. Enemies ap. Paul's Demas and Hermogenes, the coppersmiths<sup>11</sup>, are reminiscent of Imenaeus and Philetus (2 Tim. 2:17), who claimed that the resurrection had already taken place. In 2 Tim 1:15 and the Apocrypha, Demas and Hermogenes appear in a negative light. Just like Alexander the coppersmith, in 2 Tim 4:14 he threatened St. Paul, so Alexander the Syrian was a threat to the apostle. Onesiphorus received the apostle in his house,<sup>14</sup> in 2 Tim 1:16 the apostle also mentions Onesiphorus, who helped him in Ephesus and Rome. Further, the apocrypha tells of Priscilla and Achille<sup>15</sup> as inhabitants of Ephesus, they are also mentioned in 2 Tim 4:19. Then, Titus, the predecessor of St. Paul in Iconium and Luke are waiting for a teacher in Rome<sup>16</sup> these characters are mentioned in 2 Tim 4:10.

In this case, the author adheres to the theory that the apocrypha of D.P. somehow connected with the canonical texts of the New Testament, in particular with P.P. The latter were known to the presbyter and actively used by him. The parallels between the two corpora of scriptures will be discussed later.

### **The Christian is a Warrior of Christ**

The first position we will consider in this article regards the Christian as a soldier for Christ. 1 Tim 1:18 contains the following lines: "I give you, my son Timothy, in accordance with the prophecies that were about you, such a testament that you fight according to them, like a good soldier." Also in the Second Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul addresses his disciple: "So endure suffering like a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No soldier binds himself with the affairs of this world to please the captain of the army" (2 Tim 2:3-4). Title "γγγγγγγγγγ"

(commander), which Onasander uses in his work "Strategikos", and the qualities acquired by him correspond to those of a worthy bishop (See: 1 Tim 3:1-2). In D.P. the Christian is also strongly associated with military service. In the episode that tells about the arrival of the Apostle Paul from Corinth to Italy, there is a speech of the latter, which is preserved only in the Berlin papyrus, where the apostle addresses the audience with the words - "Brethren and soldiers of Christ!"<sup>18</sup>. In another place, during a conversation with the servants of the emperor Long and Cestus ap. Paul speaks of himself as a fighting soldier. Approximate

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<sup>11</sup> Meshcherskaya E.N. Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. New Testament Apocrypha in Syriac Literature. M., 1997. S. 415.

<sup>12</sup> There.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. S. 417.

<sup>14</sup> There. S. 415.

<sup>15</sup> Skogorev P.A. Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. Arabic Gospel of the childhood of the Savior. Research. Translations. Comments. SPb., 2000. S. 68. URL: <https://docplayer.com/26548050-Skogorev-ap-apokrificheskie-deyaniya-apostolov-arabskoe-evangelie-detstva-spasitelya-ocr-bychkov-mn.html> (accessed from 10.10. 2021).

<sup>16</sup> There. S. 85.

<sup>17</sup> References to the Holy Scriptures are given in the synodal translation.

<sup>18</sup> Skogorev P.A. Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. Arabic Gospel of the childhood of the Savior. Research. Translations. Comments. S. 78.

<sup>19</sup> There. S. 85.

Emperor Nero, Barnabas, Urion and Fest inform him that they, too, are in the "army of the King of the Ages"<sup>20</sup>. Thus, ~~the apostle is soldiers continue territory~~ the territory of the enemy, that is, Nero, who asks the apostle the following question: "What prompted you, the man of the great king, and now my prisoner, to secretly come to the Roman Empire and within my borders recruit soldiers?"<sup>21</sup>, to which the apostle remarked that he was gathering soldiers not only in Rome, but also "in all the ends of the earth"<sup>22</sup>. In The Martyrdom of Paul, the main reason for the persecution of the apostle was also his "recruitment" activity in the army of Christ.

The use of such a metaphor and warlike imagery contrasts with what we can read in Titus (Titus 2:1-10). Regarding this, W. Rohrdorf noted: "The idea that a Christian is a warrior of Christ is not striking in itself, but is often found in early Christian writings and even in the New Testament. But in the quoted dialogue [of the Apostle Paul and Nero], the class of Christian soldiers becomes an alternative to the political existence of the Roman citizen. Because, being a Christian, a person cannot be a Roman citizen, because the Kingdom of Christ has been declared an enemy of the Roman Empire. This remark reflects a picture in which Martyrdom reflects the realities of active persecution of Christians by the state apparatus of Rome. The latter was already perceived as an enemy, against which the soldiers of Christ were fighting.

As for P.P., one can detect a social aspect in the assimilation of military qualities by a Christian. All followers of Christ are called to experience deprivation, struggle and suffering: "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Victory is the goal of life and the result of a person's spiritual struggle, but in order to achieve it, one must possess the qualities of a warrior. Therefore app. Paul expects Timothy to "endure like a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim 2:3). Thus, suffering, patience, and faithfulness (see: 2 Tim 2:12-13) become the connecting threads that run between the warrior metaphor in D.P. and P.P.

### **Relation to civil power**

The attitude towards official power is also an important subject of consideration of similar ideas between the two considered blocks of works. According to MacDonald, in D.P. you can find negative

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. S. 80.

<sup>21</sup> There.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Rohrdorf W. Lex Orandi-Lex Credendi: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum 60. Geburtstag. Paradosis 36. S. 521.

attitude towards civil power<sup>24</sup> : “Each of our stories involves a conflict between the Roman Empire, convinced of its legitimacy, strength and permanence, and an apocalyptic sect, awaiting the destruction of the world. This expectation of the end gave them an alternative political vision, gave rise to radical social behavior, and promised divine justification for those who were persecuted in the struggle. The Roman Empire in the first centuries of Christianity was really conceived as an eternal establishment of order, which nothing and no one can shake. Roman legions ensured the security of external borders, civil institutions were called upon to keep peace within society. And in this case, Christianity, carrying the apocalyptic message, shook the Pax Romana, made it doubt the perfection of the established order, which made it an enemy of power.

McDonald uses the example of martyr. Thecla, which violates the laws of Iconium. Striving for a chaste life, she rejects her fiancé Alexander, removes from her head a wreath presented to her - a symbol of the Roman Empire, for which she is accused of improper attitude to a sacred object<sup>25</sup> . Unlike the Acts of Paul and Thekla, P.P., on the contrary, contains a call to cooperation with the state, and the portrayal of Christianity as a perfectly permissible civil religion. According to MacDonald, the apostle Paul in P.P. depicted as a "submissive martyr" who accepted his fate and made peace with the Roman Empire: "On the other hand, in 2 Timothy we hear not much criticism of Rome. Of course, the author considers the execution of Paul evil, but he cleverly prevents the execution of Paul from becoming an anti-Roman symbol that could be used to incite political hatred . However, such a statement requires some clarification, since in another place the apostle clarifies his position regarding the “war” with the civil authorities and says about himself: “After all, we are fighting not for an earthly king, as you think, but for a heavenly one”<sup>27</sup>. Thus, app. Paul takes his battlefield to the spiritual dimension. Indeed, in D.P. the conflict that occurs between the Church and the state is inevitable, but Christians are by no means its active initiators. On the contrary, it is the civil power that is the first to aggravate. In the episode when Caesar's butler named Patroclus falls from the window and dies, the apostle appeals to those around him to pray for the resurrection of the young man in order to avoid harm from the authorities<sup>28</sup> . The latter quite fits into the logic of the narrative, since the position of butler meant close status to the ruler. But despite the favorable

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<sup>24</sup> *MacDonald DR* The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon. Philadelphia, 1983. P. 40; Compare: *Tajra HW* The Martyrdom of St. Paul: Historical and Judicial Context, Traditions and Legends. Tübingen, 1994. P. 198.

<sup>25</sup> *MacDonald DR* The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon. P. 41.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* P. 66

<sup>27</sup> *Skogorev P.A.* Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. Arabic Gospel of the childhood of the Savior. Research. Translations. Comments. S. 81.

<sup>28</sup> *There.* S. 80.

outcome, the authorities are deaf to a clear miracle and initiate persecution of Christians.

In 1 Tim 2:1-4 the apostle calls to pray "for kings and for all those in authority." As well as in D.P., here we are talking about the desire of Christians to live "quietly and serenely." It is the prayers of the Roman Christians that lead to the conversion of Patroclus to Christianity. In P.P. the author also wishes salvation for everyone, including civil servants. In the episode with Nero, the apostle does not deny him the possibility of salvation: "If it seems good to you, serve Him, for neither wealth nor the luxury of this life will save you"<sup>29</sup>. Thus, in both collections of studied writings, there is unanimity regarding the possibility of salvation for everyone, including Caesar.

MacDonald adds to this the idea that Nero in this context does not appear as an "archetype of the Antichrist"<sup>30</sup>, but as a person who is capable of repentance. And although Nero, in the end, does not convert to Christianity even after a conversation with the resurrected ap. Paul, however demonstrates remorse by releasing all the prisoners<sup>31</sup>.

As in the case of JP, in 2 Tim 3:12 persecution is inevitable for Christians because of the deep antagonism towards paganism, whose institutions are under threat. So, for example, Thekla's desire for chastity is subjected to unreasonable persecution by the state, since this threatens the institution of legal marriage. Tem

however, when Paul is accused of averting virgins from marriage, he claims to be a messenger of God and calls the people back to reverence and to the truth. Nothing in his defense provokes the wrath of the ruler, who reacts to this self-defence. In this case, on the part of the apostle there is no desire to aggravate the conflict, but, on the contrary, he tries to extinguish it. We meet a similar case in the case of persecution in Ephesus by the manufacturers of statuettes of Artemis, who, because of the preaching of the apostle, could lose their income. Thus, in both D.P. and P.P.

there are no calls to resist the authorities, but the inevitability of such a struggle is noted. All the actors, including Nero, are concerned not with the moral state of Christians, nor with their religious views, but with the quite material and political consequences of their preaching among people.

## Wealth

The author of the Acts of Paul is quite specific about wealth. He warns against wealth and luxury as something that will soon perish in the eschatological fire<sup>32</sup>. On the other hand, the text indicates the dependence on

<sup>29</sup> There.

<sup>30</sup> *MacDonald DR* The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon. P. 66.

<sup>31</sup> *Skogorev P.A.* Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. Arabic Gospel of the childhood of the Savior. Research. Translations. Comments. S. 82.

<sup>32</sup> See: *Ibid.* P. 71.

wealthy Christians. For example, Onesiphorus meets and accepts an. Paul in his own house<sup>33</sup>. Later, Onesiphorus left his business to follow the apostle. As a result, he loses the opportunity to provide for his family, because ap. Paul sends him back to Iconium to return to his old ways. Thus, wealthy Christians play an important role in D.P. They not only provide houses in which Christians hold their meetings, but also support the apostle and other itinerants such as Thekla. We see the same in fragments with Hermias in Myra, Akila and Priscilla in Ephesus, Lemma and Ammiah in Damascus, Stephen

in Corinth and Claudius in Italy.

P.P. on the topic of wealth, we agree with D.P. In 1 Tim 3:3, 8 priests are to avoid covetousness and the love of money. There is no need to care about the present age, that is, earthly existence, since a person came into this world with nothing, and will leave with nothing (1 Tim 6:7). Moreover, in 1 Tim 6:10 the love of money is called "the root of all evil." But those who have wealth should be generous (1 Tim 6:17-19). It is this command that Queen Tryphena embodies in her actions, who did not give up her fortune, but helps Thekla<sup>34</sup>, and then her mother Theoklea. Thekla also demonstrates her disregard for wealth when she parted with her jewelry and silver mirror in order to meet the apostle Paul. All this indicates the absence of disagreement in material matters between the two groups of works. With respect to this, D.P. no more radical than P.P.

### **false teachers**

Attitude towards false teachers in D.P. disclosed in the assessment of satellites ap. Pavel Demas and Hermogenes. The latter are said to be "full of hypocrisy" and tried their best to discredit their teacher. 1 Tim 4:1-3 also points out that the main opponents of the gospel were Christians who distorted the doctrine, thereby "suffering in the faith" (1 Tim 1:19). Moreover, Timothy ap. Paul calls for rebuking elders who should not be doing their ministry (1 Tim 5:20).

Apocryphal Paul appears to be more lenient towards opponents than in P.P. As for Demas and Hermogenes, the apostle, in spite of their hypocrisy, "had mercy on them greatly"<sup>35</sup>. And Onesiphorus invited them to his house, although "he did not see in them the fruits of truth"<sup>36</sup>. However, such an attitude is reflected in 2 Tim 2:24-26, where the shepherd is required to have "patience" and "non-malice", which should help to free people from the "devil's snares". However, such people do not

<sup>33</sup> *Meshcherskaya E.N.* Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. New Testament Apocrypha in Syriac Literature. S. 415.

<sup>34</sup> *Skogorev P.A.* Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. Arabic Gospel of the childhood of the Savior. Research. Translations. Comments. S. 64.

<sup>35</sup> *Meshcherskaya E.N.* Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. New Testament Apocrypha in Syriac Literature. S. 414.

<sup>36</sup> There. S. 415.

peace among themselves and, as a rule, become the instigators of disputes and conflicts, which is shown in 1 Tim 1:6, 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:23; Tit. 3:9-10. The contrast of this model of behavior is the example of pious Christians living in peace and harmony. So, Thekla, who was refused by the apostle in baptism, calmly accepts this decision. MacDonald, on the other hand, believed that the idealized image of the shepherd, which is presented in P.P., has no parallels with how the apostle Paul is presented in D.P.<sup>37</sup>: "This idealization of church leaders contrasts sharply with Paul from the legendary tradition. Nothing in the legends suggests that Paul, or any other Christian, can be characterized as a moderate or majestic person; rather, they appear as transgressors of accepted norms." On the contrary, each episode depicting the local community demonstrates certain characteristics: love, harmony and devotion to ap. Paul and apostolic teaching. Thus, the author D.P. demonstrates that the hallmark of heretics is rebellion and conflict. As for Christian communities, peace and harmony are preserved in them both between members within the church and in relation to the outside world.

In addition to the rebellious spirit, heretics, according to the Presbyter, are prone to money-grubbing<sup>38</sup>. The Apostle of the Gentiles agrees with this in 1 Tim 3:3, 1 Tim 6:5, and 2 Tim 3:2. The theme of the desire for profit is invariably associated with false teachings, which become the fruit of the love of money. Since the desire to please his listeners and receive a reward from them makes him lie, as happens with Demas and Hermogenes, who mislead Famiris about the resurrection of the dead. The same teaching is reproduced in 2 Tim 2:18: "They have departed from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and are destroying the faith of some." Thus, the two false teachers from the apocrypha become typical anti-heroes of the narratives, which embody the characteristic features indicated in P.P. - debauchery, greed, heresy. The Apostle Paul himself and his follower Onesiphorus in relation to the fallen Christians follow in the spirit of the epistle to Timothy, showing condescension and mercy. Thus, perhaps the author D.P. could well take advantage of P.P. for the image of Demas and Hermogenes.

### **clergymen**

MacDonald notes the absence of any authoritative leaders among the Christian communities described in D.P. This is somewhat different from the picture that is depicted in P.P., where there is often a mention of "elders" and other persons who perform their ministry in the church<sup>39</sup>. This is all the more remarkable, since the author of the apocrypha is a certain Presbyter. MacDonald writes about it as follows: "However, in

<sup>37</sup> *MacDonald DR* The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon. P. 71.

<sup>38</sup> *Meshcherskaya E.N.* Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. New Testament Apocrypha in Syriac Literature. S. 418.

<sup>39</sup> *Rordorf W.* Was wissen wir über Plan und Absicht der Paulusakten? // *Oecumenica et Patristica*. 1989. No. 75. S. 77–78.

In the legends, ecclesiastical authority is based on charisma, wandering and relativism, in contrast to the hierarchical strictness of the Pastoral Epistles . However, it is not always clear what MacDonald means by legend when referring to D.P. But it would be wrong to reject the possibility of the Presbyter's unconditional acceptance of the system of church ranks. In 3 Cor. one can find mention of a presbyter and two deacons. And despite such scarce information, such silence can be explained by the presence of the Apostle Paul himself, who directly led the communities and did not need such helpers. Therefore, it is premature to draw a conclusion about the confrontation between the Presbyter and the clergy, especially since some features can be found in the text that make it possible to identify church ministers in D.P.

If we analyze the characterization given to Onesiphorus, then it becomes clear that he fully complies with the requirements for a bishop:

Bishop (1 Tim 3:2–7)	Onesiphorus (Acts of Paul and Thecla)
Husband of one wife	Lectra
Hospitable	Accepts app. Paul, his companions, and Thecla in his home
Not money-loving	"Onesiphorus left all the affairs of this world"
not grumpy	Accepts even those who are unpleasant to him - Demas and Hermogenes
sober	He was abstainer in food and drank only water.
Children raised in obedience	Children unconditionally follow Onesiphorus and apostle
Not a convert	Onesiphorus would already be a Christian before meeting with apostle

Without a doubt, Onesiphorus also meets other requirements from P.P. Moreover, there is some insight in him, which he shows when meeting with Demas and Hermogenes. In this regard, although he is not called a presbyter or any other rank, he is fully consistent with this ministry. In 2 Tim 1:15-16, Onesiphorus is contrasted with the adversaries of St. Pavel Figellus and Hermogenes. Thus, MacDonald's point of view that the presbyter opposed the church hierarchy has no firm basis.

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<sup>40</sup> *MacDonald DR* The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon. P. 69.

<sup>41</sup> *Skogorev P.A.* Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. Arabic Gospel of the childhood of the Savior. Research. Translations. Comments. pp. 74–76.

### Widows and attitudes towards the vow of celibacy

P.P. contain a clear thought about the need for care in relation to widows. In an episode from the World of Lycians, Hermocrates sells his property and distributes it among widows and beggars<sup>42</sup>. And in this act there is nothing remarkable, but it makes one pay attention to the fact that this is not enough to truly honor one of the least protected categories of people in the ancient world - widows. Thus, according to 1 Tim 5:4, if a widow has children and grandchildren, they should take care of her. And in 1 Tim 5:16 it adds that this is required in order not to “burden the Church”, but the latter could show attention to “true widows”, that is, absolutely single women. In this regard, mch. Thekla embodies a similar attitude when she informs her mother, who wanted her dead, that she will stay with her and support her<sup>43</sup>. However, not only the financial side is important, but the participation of children in the life of a widow, even if she is quite well off, like Tryphena in D.P. Therefore, before setting off on her journey, Thekla must take a blessing from her mother so as not to fall under the condemnation of the words from 1 Tim 5: 8: “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” . This attitude towards widows binds together D.P. and P.P.

In the present work, based on the analysis of six positions related to the Christian life, one can find parallels between D.P. and P.P. The latter are to a greater extent normative documents that fix the rules of life for a true Christian. D.P. in practice, they reveal these decrees, demonstrate their implementation through certain examples and characters, both positive and negative. In addition, the conflict, which at first glance may take place between the groups of works under consideration, does not actually exist. Consideration of the above issues shows the deep agreement of D.P. and P.P. on key issues of Christian practice

life.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid. S. 66.

<sup>43</sup> *Meshcherskaya E.N.* Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. New Testament Apocrypha in Syriac Literature. S. 422.

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## Common doctrines in the Acts of Paul and the Pastoral Epistles

*Abstract:* This article will cover topics concerning common positions for the apocrypha "Acts of Paul" and the Pastoral Epistles. This work is a logical continuation of the research on the relationship between the apocrypha and the canonical books of the New Testament. Since it was previously shown that the "Acts of Paul" are most closely related to the Pastoral Epistles of apostle Paul, it was decided to elaborate on this matter in more detail. As a result, due to the comparative analysis, it became possible to identify six thematic blocks, which demonstrate the concurrence of two groups of works. The conducted research gives a greater reason to consider the "Acts of Paul" from the point of view of Orthodox and canonical ideas, to which this apocrypha corresponds to a larger extent than it was previously believed. In this regard, the common ideas and the common language testify to the time and context in which the apocryphal "Deeds" were created.

*Keywords:* apocrypha "Acts of Paul"; Pastoral Epistles; apostle Paul; the Roman Empire; persecution; celebrity; false teachers; the official church; attitude to wealth.

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