Recent studies of 2 Timothy have considered its theology from a variety of perspectives and views of authorship. Interpretive strategies have varied. One study proceeded by distilling the theological constants within Paul's gospel from especially two theological texts (1:9-10; 2:8-13). A second study considered the role of persons remembered within the text (God, Christ, Paul, Timothy) who, by virtue of the author's faithful remembering of them, guarantee the potency of the teaching. And a third study sought to discern "a pattern" to the theology of 2 Timothy by concentrating on the literary forms employed and the "implied world" of the author (and readers) in the effort to establish the link between the contextual and narrative worlds of 2 Timothy. In addition to these three
specific studies, several broader treatments of the theology of the Pastoral Epistles are accessible.\textsuperscript{4} The degree of success achieved by these diverse approaches is naturally open to debate. But the present study will not go back over the ground they have covered, as far as that is possible. I will consider another perspective on the letter which has not yet been thoroughly explored but which is clearly a dominant factor within the author's message.

2 Timothy takes up the theme of the conclusion of Paul's ministry. It is the final chapter of Paul's story, and a definitive Pauline story lies behind this closing episode. It is hardly to be disputed that the Paul of the earlier letters regarded his apostolate as a decisive element within the story of redemption. Although previously he imagined that plot complications would find their resolution in another way, the death and resurrection of the Messiah extended the story in an unexpected way. In short, he discovered that his mission to the Gentiles was to be instrumental in the fulfillment of God's plan to extend the covenant to the whole world. Recent narratological studies have traced the influence of "formative stories" (beginning with and growing from the OT) upon the theological reflection of Paul. On those terms, what seems inescapable is that Paul's Christian understanding of theology and eschatology required that he consciously write himself into the plot.

One way the reader can determine where Paul places himself in that story is to observe the texts in which he reflects on his mission. Thus when reading Paul's letters (see especially Rom 15:1-13, 15-16, 21-24; Gal 1:15; 2 Cor 6:2, etc.) one gets the impression that Paul took his missiological bearings from the prophets who announced God's plans for the nations.\textsuperscript{5} But when it comes to the letters which conclude Paul's story, numerous scholars have argued for a markedly different presentation of Paul: the Pastoral Epistles reflect a pseudepigraphical canonizing
