

PAULINE LETTERS & THEOLOGY



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Chapter 1

Paul: Person and Profile

Paul is the most prominent personality of the New Testament, apart from Jesus himself. Thirteen of the 27 books of the New Testament bear his name. All of them are letters. Much of what we know about Paul comes from these remarkable written sources, supplemented by stories from the Acts of the Apostles, in which Paul figures prominently in the second half (chapters 9–28). These are the only two sources for Paul’s life; however, they differ at times in details. Lacking any formal biography, biblical scholars have been able to piece together the basic outline of Paul’s life. They use Paul’s letters as the primary source of information, since they are first-person accounts. Acts is used to complement and supplement that information. The following are the letters of Paul in the canonical order of the NT.

Name	Greek	Latin	Abbreviations
Romans	Ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους	Epistula ad Romanos	Rom
First Corinthians	Ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς Κορινθίους Α΄	Epistula I ad Corinthios	1 Cor
Second Corinthians	Ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς Κορινθίους Β΄	Epistula II ad Corinthios	2 Cor
Galatians	Ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς Γαλάτας	Epistula ad Galatas	Gal

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Ephesians	Ἐπιτοὺν Ἀποστόλων	Epistula ad Ephesios	Eph
Philippians	Ἐπιτοὺν Ὀρέων Ὀδοῦ	Epistula ad Philippenses	Phil
Colossians	Ἐπιτοὺν Ἐπιπέων Ἀποστόλων	Epistula ad Colossenses	Col
First Thessalonians	Ἐπιτοὺν Ἐπιπέων Ἐπιπέων Ἀποστόλων	Epistula I ad Thessalonicenses	1 Thess
Second Thessalonians	Ἐπιτοὺν Ἐπιπέων Ἐπιπέων Ἀποστόλων	Epistula II ad Thessalonicenses	2 Thess
First Timothy	Ἐπιτοὺν Ὀρέων Ἀποστόλων	Epistula I ad Timotheum	1 Tim
Second Timothy	Ἐπιτοὺν Ὀρέων Ἀποστόλων	Epistula II ad Timotheum	2 Tim
Titus	Ἐπιτοὺν Ὀρέων	Epistula ad Titum	Tit
Philemon	Ἐπιτοὺν Ὀρέων	Epistula ad Philemonem	Philem

Paul, also known by his Jewish name, Saul (see Acts 13:9), was born in Tarsus, Cilicia, in Asia Minor (now modern-day Turkey) probably between 1 and 10 A.D. He was a diaspora Jew, that is, a Jew living outside the homeland of Palestine. Tarsus was a large, prosperous city in the Roman Empire, so it is quite fair to call Paul an urbanite. He was likely well-educated, apparently a student of the great rabbi Gamaliel I in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3). In the last decade or more of his life, Paul not only continued his missionary activity but also wrote letters (from about the years 50 to 60). The letters that survive in our New Testament, in their canonical order, are: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon. Letters afforded him an excellent means to stay in touch with the communities that he founded on his various missions.

1. The *Corpus Paulinum* in the New Testament

- 14 of the 27 books of the NT were at some point in the past counted among the *corpus Paulinum*. The ones that are by Paul are probably the earliest documents of the entire NT corpus. Divided into 2 categories: public (9) and private (4)

- Paul’s letters provide a theology that shapes our view of the whole NT
- Because of the liturgical renewal that has led to preaching almost exclusively on the Gospel, the letters of Paul are less well-known now than they have ever been, even though their theology continues to shape Christian theology
- 13 letters in the canon are listed according to size within each category, from largest (e.g., Romans and 1 Timothy) to smallest (e.g., 2 Thessalonians and Philemon)

After the four gospels and Acts we find the Letters of Paul which are ordered according to size:

book	abbreviation used	number of words
Gospel according to Matthew	Mt	18,363
Gospel according to Mark	Mk	11,313
Gospel according to Luke	Lk	19,496
Gospel according to John	John	15,675
Acts of the Apostles	Acts	18,468
Letter to the Romans	Rom	7,114
First Letter to the Corinthians	1 Cor	6,841
Second Letter to the Corinthians	2 Cor	4,488
Letter to the Galatians	Gal	2,232
Letter to the Ephesians	Eph	2,423
Letter to the Philippians	Phil	1,631
Letter to the Colossians	Col	1,582
First Letter to the Thessalonians	1 Thess	1,482
Second Letter to the Thessalonians	2 Thess	823
First Letter to Timothy	1 Tim	1,591
Second Letter to Timothy	2 Tim	1,239
Letter to Titus	Tit	659
Letter to Philemon	Phlm	335
Letter to the Hebrews	Heb	4,956
7 Catholic Epistles		
Book of Revelation	Rev	9,856

The 13 letters from Romans to Philemon all begin with “Paul” (Greek: *Paulos*) as the sender of the letter. The letter to the Hebrews as the 14th letter does not claim to be written by Paul. On the basis of this and of its theology it is no longer considered to be part of the *corpus Paulinum*.

Mnemonic aid to help us remember the sequence of the 14 letters in the canon (i.e., in our Bible): RoCoCo, GalEphPhi, CoTheThe, TiTiTi, PhilHe

2. Absolute Chronology of Paul’s Life

[Literature: J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AncB, 31), New York et al.: Doubleday, 1998; K. Haacker, *Die Gallio-Episode und die paulinische Chronologie*, in *BZ* 16 (1972) 252-275; H.M. Schenke & K.M. Fischer, *Einleitung in die Schriften des Neuen Testaments. Vol. 1: Die Briefe des Paulus und Schriften des Paulinismus*, Berlin, 1978].

According to Acts 18:11 Paul stayed in Corinth, the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, for one year and six months. Roman provinces which were under the authority of the Senate were administered by a proconsul. When Paul was in Corinth. Junius Gallio Annaeus, the brother of Seneca, was proconsul. According to Acts 18:12, Paul was arraigned before Gallio: “But when Gal’lio was proconsul of Acha’ia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal”. We also have an extra-Biblical source telling us about Gallio, the so-called Gallio inscription. The Gallio inscription is a copy of a letter. The sender of the letter was the Roman Emperor Claudius, the addressees are the people of the city of Delphi in Greece. This inscription was found in 1905/10 in a temple of Apollo in Delphi and published in 1970. In this letter Claudius mentions his friend, the proconsul Gallio. The letter also mentions information which allows us to date it.

Claudius mentions his 26th acclamation as “imperator”.

1. We know from other sources that the 27th acclamation happened before 1 August 52, that the 26th acclamation happened during the 12th year in office of Claudius and that his 12th year in office began on 25 January 52. The 26th acclamation and thus the writing of Claudius’ letter to Delphi happened between 25 January and 1 August 52. At some point during this period Gallio was in Corinth.

2. The term of office of proconsuls was one year, usually from spring to spring. Thus Gallio must have been proconsul of Achaia from spring 51 until spring 52 or from spring 52 until spring 53. Claudius' letter seems to assume that at the moment of the composition of the letter, Gallio had already been in Achaia for some time. Therefore it is more likely that spring 51 until spring 52 is the correct time.
3. An additional question which needs to be discussed is at which moment of Gallio's term of office Paul was arraigned before Gallio's tribunal. If Paul was brought before Gallio at the beginning of Gallio's term of office and because the meeting obviously happened at the end of Paul's stay in Corinth, the usual dating of Paul's stay in Corinth is December 49 until May/June 51.
4. Another issue is whether Paul left Corinth immediately after having been arraigned before Gallio. For this we need to read Acts 18:18, *hêmeras hikanas* (literally: sufficient days)
RSV: "After this Paul stayed **many days longer**"
NRSV: "After staying there for **a considerable time**"
NIV: "Paul stayed on in Corinth **for some time**"

Because of the uncertainties in the above-mentioned historical information Paul's stay at Corinth could also be dated one, two or even three years later. This is one of the most important sources of the differences in dating various events in Paul's life which are found in Pauline chronologies and in exegetical literature.

Paul of Tarsus

How do we know about Paul's life?

- Letters of Paul
- Acts of the Apostles
- Paul may have been born in Tarsus (that he was a citizen of Tarsus from some point in his life is affirmed in (Acts 22:3).
- Paul was born into a Benjaminite tribal family (cf. Philippians 2:11 "of the tribe of Benjamin", and Acts: "Saul", a name associated only with Benjaminite families) and was likely part of Judahite / Benjaminite royal lineage and expectation.

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- Paul's original (Hebrew) name was "Saul"; "Paul", which is a Latin name, may have been his Roman family name (e.g., Sergius Paulus, Acts 13:7) since we learn that Paul was a Roman citizen or a "nickname" (the third of the three Roman names: e.g., Gaius Iulius Caesar)
- Paul was brought up in Jerusalem and educated by Rabbi Gamaliel the Elder (AD 20-50), a significant Pharisaic leader (Acts 22:3)
- Paul was a young man when Stephen was stoned (shortly after Jesus' resurrection, *perhaps around AD 33*) in Jerusalem: Acts 7:58
- During his persecution of the church, specifically on the way to Damascus, Paul had a "vision" of Jesus: Acts 9
- Paul was baptized, fled Damascus and went to Jerusalem where, through Barnabas' introduction, he was instructed by the apostles: Acts 9:26-29
- After being instructed by the apostles, Paul went to his own town of Tarsus (in Cilicia)
- Barnabas invites Paul to Antioch, which becomes the base of operations for the mission to the Gentiles (Acts 11:25 ff.)
- First Missionary Journey: Paul evangelizes Cyprus and the areas of southern and central Galatia, finding acceptance primarily among Gentiles of those regions
- Jerusalem conference: Acts 15
- Second Missionary Journey: Paul returns to the same areas of southern and central Galatia and may have gone into northern Galatia, then on to Phrygia (avoiding Asia), Macedonia, central Greece, and then back to Caesarea and Jerusalem (*NB: the mention of Paul's encounter with Gallio, proconsul of Asia (12th year of Claudius [41-54], which began on January 25, AD 52), in Corinth (Acts 18:12) suggests that Paul's stay in Corinth can be dated to around AD 51 or 52.*)
- Third Missionary Journey: From Antioch, through Galatia, Phrygia, to Ephesus (for 3 years), Macedonia, central Greece, back to Macedonia, to Miletus (just past Ephesus), Tyre, Caesarea, and Jerusalem

- Paul meets with James (head of the Jerusalem church), goes to the Temple to pay his vow, is arrested and remains a prisoner under Roman care first in Jerusalem, then in Caesarea (for 2 years), and finally is transported by ship under Roman guard to Rome.
- *We do not know anymore about Paul. Traditionally Paul was understood to have been executed in Rome sometime in the mid-60s.*

Conclusions

- Paul was raised in a Pharisaic milieu (cf. Philippians 2 and Paul's own assertions in Acts) and was likely influenced by Pharisaic theology
- Paul engaged in persecution of the early Christian movement
- At some point, Paul "experienced" the risen Lord Jesus and began to preach him as the Messiah, the Lord of Glory
- Paul the Christian appears to have acted at "arm's length" from a more "Jewish-centered" following of the Messiah Jesus and to have had more to do with Gentiles than with Jews over the course of his ministry. His base of operations appears to have been in cities of Syria outside of Jerusalem.

The main places that Paul visited are clear: major urban centres (major cities of coastal and southern Asia Minor, Macedonia, and central Greece).

Chapter 2

Vorlage of **Corpus Paulinum**

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Paul was born a Jew and lived his entire life as a Jew. He was quite proud of his Jewish heritage. In Philippians, he summarizes his background thus: “circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless” (Phil 3:5-6). Despite his call to follow Jesus, which we often characterize as his “conversion,” he never claims to have abandoned Judaism.

We also need to remember the complexity of the first-century Judaism that Paul knew. It was not a uniform, monolithic faith. There were multiple divisions within Judaism. Four types of Jewish perspective are especially prominent. The dominant stances in the first century Judaism played a pivotal role in shaping the theology of Paul. Therefore a critical evaluation of those dominant stances are essential for evaluating the Pauline letters.

Dominant First Century Trends That Shaped Paul

1. Palestinian Judaism: This term is used to refer to the Jews present in Palestine. Some of its characteristics in the first century included worship centered around the Temple in Jerusalem and its priesthood, and the various cultic rituals that were a part of the routine regimen of piety. Even this type of Judaism was not uniform. Some, who thought the purity of their faith was being threatened by the compromises of their religious leaders, fled to the Dead Sea and established a kind of ascetical, or hermitage, community at Qumran. Their desire was to escape the bad influence of the secular world and thus preserve authentic faith.

2. Hellenistic Judaism: This Greek-influenced world was, in fact, Paul's primary background, since he was born and raised outside of Palestine. Greek culture was the primary cultural influence in Paul's day, dating from the time of Alexander the Great (333 BC). Once the Jews were dispersed throughout the world after the first destruction of Jerusalem (by the Babylonians in 587 BC), they settled in many foreign lands. They adapted so much to their new surroundings that many of them eventually lost command of their native Aramaic and Hebrew languages. They gradually translated their holy writings, which eventually became the Hebrew Bible (what Christians know as the Old Testament), into Greek, the language of the ruling empire. This translation is called the *Septuagint*, a Greek term. This text enabled the Jews in the diaspora to preserve, but also to adapt, their faith. Paul no doubt used the Septuagint, as his letters show familiarity with it when quoting from or alluding to the Old Testament.

3. Rabbinic Judaism: This form of Judaism's roots is obscure but goes back to some 200 years before Paul. Its name derives from the "rabbis," the Jewish leaders who rose to prominence after the second destruction of Jerusalem (by the Romans in 70 A.D.). In the wake of this traumatic destruction, Judaism was adapted by certain Jewish leaders of Pharisaic background. They collected and preserved their sacred writings, and finally incorporated them into a permanent sacred canon, the Hebrew Bible. The rabbis' timeless interpretation and adaptation of the Old Testament, in particular, influenced Paul's own approach to these sacred texts. Paul shows himself to be adept at

rabbinic interpretation of texts in new circumstances. In fact, we could well consider Paul a “rabbi” in the sense of his teaching and preaching style.

4. Apocalyptic Judaism: Just as Christians later wrote down the Book of Revelation, the Jews before them had a type of literature found in the Old Testament called apocalyptic. The word literally means “unveiling.” It refers to an outlook that envisions the revelation of God’s victory over evil at the end of time. The Book of Daniel is a prime example of this kind of literature. Apocalyptic literature springs from the experience of dire persecution. It expresses a two-sided outlook of a cosmic battle between good and evil, God and the devil, light and darkness, and so on. This perspective developed several hundred years before Jesus and Paul, but it continued to exercise considerable influence in their times. Ultimately, its message is a hopeful one: Despite appearances in the world around us, God and the forces of good will win the final battle. There will be a judgment day, and all wrongs will be righted. The good will be rewarded and the bad properly punished.

Paul inherited aspects of this worldview that is also found in certain teachings of Jesus in the Gospels (see, for example, the sayings in Mk 13:1-37). Sometimes, Paul seems quite taken with this perspective and urges people to prepare for an imminent end of the world (see 1 Thes 4:13-5:11). Now, some 2,000 years removed from Paul’s teaching, we realize that we do not know God’s timetable for bringing this world to its judgment day. The end does not seem as imminent as it was for Paul. We do not have the apocalyptic urgency that Paul sometimes expresses in his letters. It is one of those Jewish influences that were part of Paul’s world and that carried over into later Christian teaching.

5. Hellenism’s influence: Hellenism, the Greek cultural influence, was wide-ranging. It might be compared with the tremendous influence of English and American capitalism in our own day. For example, almost anywhere you go in the world today, someone there can usually speak English (Along with that goes the influence of McDonald’s, Coca-Cola and Hollywood movies seem to be everywhere!). In Paul’s day Koine Greek (common Greek) was the main language. He was

obviously conversant in it—he wrote all his letters in this language. Along with language came the impact of Greek culture on daily life. Social and political institutions had their roots in Greece. Examples abound. For instance, the notion of the city-state and the importance of being a citizen of such a community likely influenced Paul’s language regarding the “body of Christ.”

The gymnasium as a center for athletic contests and social interchange was another prominent Hellenistic institution. Paul was, no doubt, a sports fan. He uses considerable sports imagery in his letters (boxing, running the race, wrestling) to illustrate his message. Yet another influence was in the religious sphere. The Hellenistic world fostered an attraction to many different cults dedicated to pagan gods and goddesses. Paul clearly opposed such influences by emphasizing belief in one God, a characteristic of Jewish faith. It was this one God who, in the person of Jesus Christ, had come to save the world. Paul’s message focused much on the oneness of God in reaction to Greek polytheism. In short, Hellenistic language and culture had a huge impact on life in Paul’s day, whether for good or for ill, and his letters often reflect this background.

6. Citizen of Rome: Finally, we cannot ignore the influence of the Roman Empire in Paul’s world. Rome was the ruling world power in the West. (Remember that inhabitants of Paul’s world were less aware at the time of such tremendous cultures as India and China in the East.) Paul himself was a Roman citizen. Rome’s power was felt in numerous ways. Most important, the world was basically at peace. *The Pax Romana* (Latin for, “Roman Peace”) meant that travel on the extensive Roman road system and in sleek ships was fairly safe from threat of criminal attack, though still always hazardous. Paul took advantage of this relative calm, utilizing this Roman transportation system when he went on his extensive apostolic journeys to preach the gospel. He went all over the eastern Mediterranean world, and journeyed to Rome itself. He planned to go to Spain, to the far western reaches of the empire, but was martyred in Rome.

Paul also uses his Roman citizenship to ensure a fair legal proceeding (Acts 22:25-27). Rome retained the ultimate political authority over life and death. Rome, then, was always in the background, a power that could not be ignored.

The Literary Genre of Epistles

The term “genre” has been used in various ways in biblical studies. In one sense it refers to larger types of literature that can be recognized by certain general features, such as gospel, apocalyptic, prophecy, wisdom, etc. In another more technical usage, it refers to smaller literary units, such as miracle stories, proverbs, salvation oracles, etc., that could supposedly be traced into pre-written oral tradition. In that sense, early “form criticism” aimed to reconstruct that historical setting (German: *Sitz im Leben*, “setting in life”) from which the oral tradition arose in order to understand the particular genre that it produced. For beginning students reading scholarly writing it is sometimes a challenge to distinguish which usage a given author has in mind.

While genre refers to the general type of literature, such as an epistle, the term “form” refers to the structure or shared features that can be used to identify that type of literature. The idea of genre within biblical traditions begins with the observation that material that is repeated at regular times and places within a community tends to take on common structure. For example, public prayers tend to have identifiable parts that mark certain aspects of the prayers. This common structure, or form, is shared to varying degrees among various groups and times. Certain features of the prayer do not have as much meaning in the actual words that are spoken as they do in framing the structure so that it can be recognized as a certain genre. In other words, the communication is in the form more than the words. We know from listening to hundreds of such prayers what the formulaic elements are that will be more or less the same, and what is the actual content of the prayer to which we need to give attention. The same thing is true of other activities that are regularly repeated, such as public worship. No matter how much some churches want to deny that they have any structure to worship, if worship is repeated at regular intervals within a community, it will take on certain structures or forms.

Letter writing is another activity that has taken on certain forms even to distinguish between different kinds of correspondences. We learn these forms and their functions through use, so that when we receive a letter that begins “dear sir or madam” we immediately respond differently than a letter we receive that begins “my dearest.” The form, the structure and features of the writing or speech, serve

to identify the genre, and that identification of the genre helps us to know how to respond appropriately to the letter. In biblical studies, a lot of miscommunication can occur when we have not properly identified the genre of literature that we are reading.

Letters in the ancient world

We have discovered through preserved ancient documents that Greco-Roman and Jewish letter writing followed very regular conventions. In other words, ancient letters had a certain form. It was not that there was a template that everyone followed. It was that, like modern letter writing or even other forms of communication like talking on the telephone, there were certain features that people adopted through repeated usage that aided communication. They could be altered in various ways, but followed a general pattern or form.

Rhetorical categories:

- Judicial (forensic - courtroom)
- Deliberative (advising - assembly or council)
- Epideictic (praise or blame - celebrations, weddings, funerals)

Kinds of letters:

- ❖ Private or documentary (not intended to be preserved, papyrus)
- ❖ Official (archival, formal communications; see Trajan/Pliny)
- ❖ Literary (for reading and publication, e.g., Cicero)

Functional categories:

- Letters of friendship
- Family letters
- Hortatory letters (advice, admonition, rebuke, consolation)
- Recommending or mediating letters
- Accusing, apologetic or accounting letters.

[For further informations see David Aune, *The NT in its Literary Environment*, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1987; Stanley Stowers, *Letter-Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1986].

Epistolary Character of Corpinum Paulus

The Canon (accepted list of authentic and authoritative writings)

- Determined finally in 397 CE at the Council of Carthage
- Determined provisionally in 367 CE by Bp. Athenagoras

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- From an early stage the letters of Paul were considered central to the early Christian documents
- Collected, likely, sometime late in 1st cent CE
- Marcion (mid-2d cent. CE) considered them fundamental, as many others also did, but he did not accept all of them or all of the ones that he did accept
- Since the letters were written on papyrus, by the time they came to be collected some may have been in fragmentary condition

We cannot, therefore, be confident (a) that we have them in their original form, (b) that we have all of them, (c) that the ones attributed to Paul are really by Paul. (a) Most agree that 2 Corinthians is not in its original form but that the present composition contains fragments of several separate letters. (b) It is clear from reading both 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians that there are other letters than the “two” we have. (c) Despite attribution to Paul, it is quite certain that the letters known as 3 Corinthians and Laodiceans are not by Paul (they are later “forgeries”); likewise, Hebrews is certainly not by Paul, though in this case it is not attributed to Paul; and similarly, it may be that Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles are by a follower of Paul’s, not by Paul himself.

- The letters have not been transmitted in a pristine form.
- Letters are occasional and reflect only one side of a conversation.
- Letters in the ancient world have a formal structure.
- A letter as a whole and in its original form is the proper interpretive unit.

Form criticism of Paul’s letters

Epistolary form criticism should be appreciated against the background of the form criticism of the gospels (cf. Bultmann, Schubert, Funk, White, Dahl, Kim, Betz, Murphy O’Connor)

Most of the New Testament letters follow this convention, for example, Philippians:

- **opening salutation**
 - name of the writer
 - 1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,
 - the name of the recipient

- To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:
- the greeting
- 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **prayer, blessing, or thanksgiving**
 - thanksgiving
 - 1:3-11 I thank my God every time I remember you, 1:4 constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you. . .
 - report of circumstances
 - 1:12-27 I want you to know, beloved that what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel...
- **the body of the letter (what the sender wanted to say that occasioned the letter)**
 - occasion of the letter
 - the report of Paul's circumstances serves as the occasion of the letter
 - request
 - 1:27-28 Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ . . .
 - content
 - 2:1-4:20 If then there is any encouragement in Christ ...
- **final greeting and farewell**
 - well wishes, greetings to others
 - 4:21-22 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The friends who are with me greet you. 4:22 All the saints greet you, especially those of the emperor's household.
 - final farewell
 - 4:23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

As noted, letters did not have to follow the form exactly. There can be various modifications of the elements according to the purposes of the writer. However, if there is a significant movement away from the common structure, we might need to ask the significance of the alteration. It is possible that the alteration of a form may be a significant clue to the message. For example, in Paul's letter to the churches in Galatia, he totally omits the Thanksgiving section. Note how quickly he moves to the body of the letter.

Gal 1:1 Paul an apostle-sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead- 1:2 and all the members of God's family who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 1:4 who gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 1:5 to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. 1:6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel

In just six verses he has launched into a defense of his ministry and begins calling the Galatians to accountability for their failure to live up to the preaching of the Gospel. It is obvious that Paul is upset with them, evidenced not just in the language and content, but by the fact that he begins with no prayer for them, no thanksgiving for God's work among them, and no blessing. The modification of the form helps communicate his distress over their actions.

In other cases the omission of features of the letter may be a clue that the writing is not an actual letter but is a treatise, a sermon, or some other type of writing cast in the literary structure of a letter. This is especially true if it lacks the salutation and the final greetings, those personal elements that we would expect in a true letter. Note that the Book of Hebrews, while in some ways cast in the form of a letter, contains none of these features that one would normally expect in a letter. It is usually identified as a homily or a sermon written with some features of a letter. James, 2 Peter, and 1 John are similar in that they also lack the personal elements that mark a letter. These writings especially are more truly epistles, pastoral letters that are intended for a larger community. Actually, most of Paul's letters, even those that follow the letter form closely, are epistles written for a larger community. Only Philemon among the New Testament letters is obviously written to a single individual as a personal letter.

There is one aspect that we should always keep in mind in dealing with New Testament letters and epistles. They were written for specific people in specific circumstances to address specific topics. That is part of the function of the form of a letter. Since they are now

contained within Scripture, it is easy to yield to our modern temptation to universalize these letters and make them absolute. But we must always take seriously the occasional nature of the letters. That is, they must be heard within the context in which they were written and within the occasions that they were addressing. To take occasional writings intended to address specific historical circumstance, such as Paul's admonitions to the factions and immature Christians at Corinth, and assume that they are universal law for all circumstances and all times is to radically misunderstand the nature of New Testament letters even as Scripture.

That does not mean that the New Testament letters and epistles have no value for us today. Quite the opposite is true. As Scripture, they have been preserved by the community of Faith for 2,000 years precisely because they have enduring value for the Church as the word of God. But that value must be understood within the occasional nature and limited scope of the issues that the letters themselves were addressing. We must resist the temptation to abstract them into generic and universal truths that ignore that specific context. Keeping in mind the genre of letters/epistles and the forms that help identify them as letters will help us keep their occasional nature in view. That provides us some guidelines and boundaries for how to read and apply them in contemporary contexts.

Traditions and units in Paul's Letters

1. Pre-Pauline Christian traditions (examples in brackets)

- Oral gospel traditions (1 Cor. 15:1-8)
- Jesus-sayings
 - direct (1 Cor. 7:10; 1 Cor. 9:14; 1 Thess 4:15?)
 - indirect (various: see Roetzel's table, chap 3)
- Liturgical traditions
 - Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:23-25)
 - baptism (Gal. 3:27-29; Rom 6:4-5; 1 Cor 6:11)
 - hymn (Phil 2:6-11; Col 1:12-20; 1 Tim 3:16; Eph 5:14)
 - confession (Rom 1:3-4; 3:30; 10:9; 1 Cor 12:3; Gal3:20)
- Prayer (Rom 7:25; Gal 1:5; Phil 4:20)with amen (Gal 6:18; 1 Cor 14:16)
 - with maranatha (1 Cor 16:22)
 - with abba (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15)

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- blessings and doxologies (Rom 1:25; 11:36; 16:25-27; 2 Cor 11:31)
- 2. Other traditions
 - Wisdom sayings (Gal 6:3; 2 Cor 9:6; 1 Cor 15:33 [from Menander])
 - Vice and virtue lists (1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5)
 - Household codes (Haustafeln; 1 Timothy)
- 3. Scripture
 - Use of Jewish Bible
 - Greek (= Septuagint = LXX)
 - Affinities with Qumran (Dead Sea Scrolls) and Philo
- 4. Paul's own preaching
 - Oral traditions (1 Cor 15:8; 1 Thess 4:2)
 - Disclosure formulae (1 Thess 2:1; 4:13; 5:1)
 - The diatribe
 - Synagogue homilies (Rom 4)
 - Exegetical tours de force (Gal 3)
- 5. Other units
 - Response topics (1 Thess 4:9; 4:13; 5:1; 1 Cor 7:1, etc.) Other topoi (e.g., health, business, domestic events)

Various distinctions in the *corpus Paulinum* of the 13 letters

1. The earliest letter: 1 Thess (criterion: time)
2. The four main letters: Rom, 1 and 2 Cor, Gal (criterion: content: theology)
3. The prison letters: Phil, Eph, Col, Phlm (criterion: situation: imprisonment)
4. The pastoral letters: 1 and 2 Tim, Tit (criterion: intention: exhortation)

Literary criticism distinguishes three groups within the 13 letters

- ❖ Proto-Pauline letters or *homologoumena* (*homologoumen-ênôs*, undeniable, certain): seven letters which were undeniably written by Paul himself: Rom, 1 en 2 Cor, Gal, Phil, 1 Thess, Phlm. These seven letters are also called authentic Pauline letters. A writing is considered authentic, if it is believed that it is written by the person by whom it is claimed to be written. The concept of authenticity needs to be distinguished from the concept of integrity. Integrity means that a certain passage within a writing was composed by

the author of the writing, but was later moved to a different place in the writing or to a different writing of the same author. Texts the integrity of which is questioned are authentic. Examples: Rom 16:1-23 is usually considered to be authentic (i.e., written by Paul), but some scholars question its integrity. They hypothesize that it was originally part of a lost letter of Paul to the Ephesians (not the one in our Bible!). 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 is considered by some scholars to be inauthentic, others accept Pauline authorship, but question its integrity, i.e., they assume that this passage originally belonged to 1 Corinthians or one of the letters out of which 1 Corinthians was created by a redactor.

- ❖ Deutero-Pauline letters: three letters which are rather close to the Proto-Pauline letters, but which are not accepted by all scholars as having been authored by Paul himself: 2 Thess, Eph and Col. Scholars assume that these letters were written by someone close to Paul (some speak of a Pauline School).
- ❖ Trito-Pauline letters: three letters which claim to be by Paul, but which are not accepted as having been written by Paul. They are different from the Deutero-Pauline letters in so far as Pauline authorship is considered even less likely: 1 and 2 Tim, Tit.

Deutero- and Trito-Pauline letters together can be called *antilegomena* (*antilegô* reject), i.e., they are letters for which Pauline authorship is rejected by some scholars. All the *antilegomena* claim to be written by Paul. If they are not authentic, they are pseudepigrapha, writings that were wrongly attributed to a certain (mostly famous) author. Since the letter to the Hebrews does not claim to be by Paul, saying that it was not written by Paul does not make it a pseudepigraphon.

Criteria for the Distinction Between Proto-, Deutero- and Trito-Pauline Letters

- ✓ Variations in the form (anatomy) of a letter (e.g., Eph does not contain any greetings).
- ✓ Style and vocabulary (solemn liturgical style, many *hapaxlegomena*)
- ✓ Theological content: e.g., in Eph and Col Christ is the head and the church is the body of Christ (excluding the head); in 1 Cor and Rom the church is the body of Christ (including the head).

- ✓ Historical situation: e.g. the church structure (ministries of *diakonoi* and *episcopoi* is more developed in the Trito-Pauline letters than in the Proto-Pauline letters.

Damascus Event as the Hermeneutical Key in Pauline Letters

Paul himself admits that he persecuted the Church out of zeal for his Jewish background. However, around the year 34 A.D. he had a remarkable experience. On the road to Damascus, the risen Lord, Jesus, appeared to him and called him to be “the apostle to the Gentiles” (Ac 9:1-19). Paul never describes this event in detail. Rather, he speaks of a “revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gl 1:12) that leaves the impression of a supernatural appearance of the resurrected Jesus, or perhaps what we might call a mystical experience.

Damascus event plays a significant role in understanding the Pauline letters. In fact it functions as the hermeneutical key in opening the Pauline literary world. Paul would not characterize his experience as a “conversion” in the sense of a change of religion, but more likely as a “call” or “commission.” Acts portrays the event in terms reminiscent of the call of Old Testament prophets, and this is consistent with Paul’s own description found in Acts. Paul considers himself an “apostle,” one who has been called and sent by the Lord Jesus himself for a special mission. He was to bring the Gentiles into the fold of those who accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the long-awaited messiah, the Savior of the world.

In Paul’s own references to the Damascus event we can identify several models:

1. Resurrection Appearance:

1 Cor 9:1 (NRSV) Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not **seen** Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?
1 Cor 15:8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he **appeared** also to me.

2. Revelation (*apocalypsis*)

Gal 1:12 for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a **revelation** of Jesus Christ

Gal 1:16 to **reveal** his Son to me, {Gk [in me]} so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, ...

3. (Prophetic) Call

Rom 1:1 **called** to be an apostle,

1 Cor 1:1 **called** to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God

Gal 1:15 But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and **called** me through his grace, was pleased ...

4. Separation

Rom 1:1-2 **set apart** for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures,

Gal 1:15 But when God, who had **set me apart** before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased ...

5. Appointment for Proclamation

Rom 1:1-2 set apart **for the gospel of God**, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, Gal 1:16 to reveal his Son to me, {Gk [in me]} **so that I might proclaim him** among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being

The idea of conversion is only present in 1 Thess 1:9 where Paul reminds his (non-Jewish) addressees “how you **turned to** God from idols, to serve a living and true God” (cf. Gal 4:9 “how can you **turn back again**”)

The Call of Paul and the Call of the Prophets

	Rom 1:1	Gal 1:15-16	Jer 1:5	Is 49:1.6
Mother's womb		15 But when God, who had set me apart before I was born	Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born	The LORD called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb
setting apart		set me apart	I consecrated you;	
call	called to be an apostle	and called me through his grace, was pleased ...		The LORD called me he named me (called my name)

revelation		16 to reveal his Son to me, {Gk [in me]}		
purpose	for the gospel of God	so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles	I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”.	6 I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salva-tion may reach to the end of the earth

Theses With Regard to the Damascus Event

[**Select Bibliography:** Betz, Hans Dieter, *Art. Paul*, in *ABD* 5 (1992) 186-201; Everts, J.M., *Art. Conversion and Call of Paul*, in G.F. Hawthorne & R.P. Martin (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, Downers Grove IL - Leicester, InterVarsity Press, 1993, pp. 156-163; Kim, Seyoon, *The Origin of Paul’s Gospel* (WUNT, II/4), Tübingen, Mohr, 1981, 1984; Longenecker, Richard N. (ed.), *The Road from Damascus, The Impact of Paul’s Conversion on His Life, Thought, and Ministry*, Grand Rapids Mi - Cambridge, Eerdmans, 1997; Segal, Alan F., *Paul the Convert, The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee*, New Haven CT, Yale University Press, 1990; Stendahl, Krister, *Paul Among the Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays*, Philadelphia PA, Fortress, 1976].

1. In his letters Paul presents the Damascus event as a call. In Acts Luke describes it as a conversion. This is consistent with the fact that Acts 9:18 tells us about Paul’s baptism, whereas Paul himself never mentions that he was baptized. Many exegetes consider Paul’s perspective as historically more reliable: the Damascus event was a call, Paul was not baptized. Paul’s call (probably about 32/33 C.E.) preceded the development of Christian baptism. The “parting of the ways” had not yet begun, i.e., Judaism and Christianity had not yet developed into separate religions. “In reality: then: Paul changed brands of Judaism: switching from Pharisaic to Christian Judaism”. In this perspective Luke’s presentation of the Damascus event as a conversion with succeeding baptism is anachronistic, projecting the situation of his own time into Paul’s time.

2. Paul understands his call at the same time as an appointment for the service of preaching the gospel to the nations.

3. Paul sees his Damascus experience as the last resurrection appearance and considers his call and apostolic ministry as being part of the founding events. In Acts, Luke seems to present Paul as a second generation Christian (who become Christians by being baptized). For Luke the resurrection appearances ended with the ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:9) and his apostolic ministry limited to the twelve. Luke avoids calling Paul an apostle (except in Acts 14:4-14 where apostle might be used in a secondary, derived sense).

4. The call was a fundamental turn around in the life of Paul from persecutor to proclaimer of the faith in Christ). The Damascus event separates his life into two parts, one “before” and one “after”. This experience relativized much of his life before the Damascus event. See, e.g., Phil 3:7-8: “Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. 8 More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ”.

5. Despite his negative statements about his past as a Pharisee, from the perspective of his call, this past was for Paul in no way characterized by unhappiness or by a sense of being oppressed by the law. Paul was proud of being a Jew and when he persecuted Christians he was certain that he was doing the right thing.

6. The three texts in Acts which refer to the Damascus event agree with regard to the basics, but each narrative has context-bound particularities.

7. The theological core of what happened at Damascus is the insight that the crucified Jesus was not a criminal cursed by God, but the risen Son of God. The experience of his call was for Paul at the same time an experience of grace which determined his later position with regard to the law. The specific implications of all this, e.g., what concerns circumcision and food laws, only became clear to Paul in the course of time in specific situations.

Chapter 3

The Letter to the Romans

In Romans, the only explicit traces of the addresser - addressee relationship are found in what could be called the framing sections 1:8-15 and 15:17-16:23. It is immediately obvious that Paul neither founded nor visited the Christian community in Rome. The basis of their relationship is the faith in Jesus Christ which they share (1:12). As Paul is called (*klêtos*) to be an apostle, the Romans are called (*klêtos*) to belong to Jesus Christ (1:1-6; cf. 1:7).

Paul seems to be fairly well informed about the Roman community and has a very positive attitude toward them. The apostle acknowledges that their “faith is proclaimed throughout the world” (1:8), that their “obedience [presumably: of faith] is known to all” (16:19a). Though he is aware that they are a famous Christian community with a good reputation, he seems to know their weak spots and focusses on them in his letter. In summarizing fashion he says, “I want you to be wise in what is good and guileless in what is evil” (16:19b; cf. 15:14 -15). Paul has had a longing for many years to visit the Romans (15:23, cf. 1:11) and has only

been kept from realizing his dream by his work of evangelization (15:20-22). It is only now, “with no further place for me in these regions” (15:23), that he gets the chance to pay them a visit on his way to Spain.

The seeming contradiction of Paul’s surprising knowledge about the situation in the far-away Roman community and above all his almost familiar tone and his joyful expectation of his visit there could perhaps be solved if Rom 16:1-23 could be accepted as the original ending of Romans. This chapter contains Paul’s greetings and commendations to no less than 25 individuals whom he mentions by name. If these are people whom Paul had encountered and known during his missionary journeys in Asia Minor and Greece and who had subsequently moved to Rome for one reason or another, they could be the ones Paul has in mind when writing in very personal ways and when anticipating a joyful and blessed visit. They could also have been the ones through whom Paul had received fairly good insights into the Roman community.

Thus there are only very few aspects of the phase of the relationship between Paul and the Romans which preceded the letter. It consists of what is general knowledge about the community in Rome, of the contacts and relationships with individuals who are known to Paul and now live in Rome and of Paul’s longstanding longing to visit them.

What does Rom reflect about the relationship at the time of the composition of the letter? Paul is thanking God that their faith is known throughout the world (1,8), and he rejoices that their obedience is known to all (16:19). Three times (1:10-11; 15:23) he stresses how much he longs to see them. He is eager to proclaim the gospel to them (1:15). Ten times he calls them *adelphoi* («brothers and sisters») and once *agapêtoi* («beloved»). He feels comfortable enough to ask their prayers in something that he knows could turn out to be a matter of life and death for him, namely that he may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that his ministry to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints (15:30-31).

In addition to these positive, unproblematic aspects Paul sees a need to clarify some things. First, the apostle wants to correct the image the Romans might have of him as a result of hearsay. In 3:8 he, therefore, points out: “And why not say (as some people slander us

by saying that we say), Let us do evil so that good may come” (cf. 6:15). Second, he reminds the Roman community who is famous for their faith what it entails to live out that faith. In this context he addresses (along with many others) some rather harsh-sounding exhortations to them. In 6:13 he says, “no longer present your members to sin.” 13:11-12 contains a reminder that “it is the moment for you to wake from sleep ... Let us then lay aside the works of darkness”. At the end he seems to have realized himself how harsh some of his appeals may sound when he says, “on some points I have written to you rather boldly” (15:15). But he tries to balance it by saying that he is confident about their moral life (15:14) (an obvious *captatio benevolentiae*) and by qualifying his exhortations as “reminders” (15:15).

The serious and at times harsh exhortations of Rom do not keep Paul from expecting to “come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ” (15:29), to be refreshed in the company of the Romans (15:32; cf. 15:24b) and that they will give him a good send off to Spain (15:24a). In a somewhat more cryptic statement in 1:13 Paul expresses his expectations for his visit to Rome as follows: “that I may reap some harvest among you as I have among the rest of the Gentiles.” He also wants to share with them “some spiritual gift” to strengthen them (1:11). But realizing that he should not talk to the Romans the way he is accustomed to talk to his own foundations, he immediately corrects himself by adding, “or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine” (1:12). In his letter Paul quickly forgets about this intention of treating the addressees according to the model of reciprocity (except perhaps in his request for prayer), and slips back into his accustomed role of a “pastor” who is concerned about the community and exhorts them accordingly. It would be interesting to know whether during his visit Paul actually succeeded in treating the Roman community in a reciprocal way as was his good intention, but there is no information available.

We conclude that Romans reflects considerable respect, surprising closeness and astonishing harshness in Paul’s relationship with the Christians at Rome which is based on a shared call to faith in Jesus Christ. As could be expected on the basis of the lack of previous contact, Paul does not request any changes in the community’s behavior toward him.

I. Critical issues in the study of Romans

Authenticity

- The authenticity of Romans is not in doubt (except by the most radical among the Dutch school of the early 1800s).
- Nevertheless, perhaps someone should ask: if this is the least like any of other of Paul's letters that we think Paul wrote, could this be a pseudonymous letter, too?
 - The reason that no one ever dares to ask this question is because so much of Western theology is "riding on" Romans: if it is not Paul's, then it doesn't really matter if the other letters are!

Unity

The unity of Romans is not in doubt, with the exception of Rom 15-16.

Given the confused state of the transmission of Romans 15:1 - 16:27, what can we conclude:

- It is likely that Marcion, or followers, circulated an abridged form of Romans (rather than a presumably short, original form of Romans, e.g., 1:1 - 15:33)
- Paul may have actually composed two different forms of ending If Romans is a circular letter ("encyclical") rather than a letter addressed just to Rome
- The doxology may not be Paul's (given the extraordinary diversity of placement)

[For further study see Metzger, B. 1971. *A textual commentary on the Greek New testament*. United Bible Societies, 533-536]

II. Paul's dialogue with the Romans

Paul's engagement with Roman Christians according to Acts

- During his "Second Missionary Journey", and while Paul was in Corinth, he encountered a couple, Priscilla and Aquila, (both Jews) who had been expelled from Rome as a result of the edict issued by Claudius (AD 49) (Acts 18:1-3)
 - Jews were allowed to return to Rome under Nero (AD 54-68)
- Paul apparently stays with them about 18 months before his arrest by Gallio (AD 51/52) and he stays there "a considerable time" more after his arrest

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- They appear to be tent-makers like him
- By Acts 18:26, Priscilla and Aquila have moved to Ephesus (without Paul) (in 1 Cor 16:19, probably written from Ephesus, Paul mentions to the Corinthians that the “churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisc(ill)a, together with the church in their house, greet you warmly in the Lord”; cf. Hebrews 13:24)
- Paul reaches Rome as a result of his imprisonment and his desire to present his case to Caesar (Acts 28:16)
- While in Rome, Paul preaches to Jews who come to hear him (Acts 28:17-28)
- Paul in prison in Rome preaching (from his house-arrest) to all who come to see him (Acts 28:30-31).

Tentative Conclusions:

- Acts does not evidence the existence of any Paul-friendly Christian church in Rome by the end of the story
Paul has no contact with any Christians in Rome by the end of Acts, which is surely surprising IF there was already a Christian assembly in Rome when Paul arrived
- Paul does have contacts with Romans elsewhere (namely, Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth, then in Ephesus) who at some point have become Christians

Paul's engagement with Roman Christians according to Paul's letters

On the basis of Paul's authentic letters and those portions of Romans that we believe are his, we can suggest the following:

- Paul suggests that he has only ever left the eastern Mediterranean by getting as far West as Illyricum (the Dalmatian Coast, directly east of Italia on the map above; see also 15:19)
 - Paul himself may not have been this far West, but rather may have sent emissaries there
 - Paul never mentions any contacts (e.g., via letter) with western churches
- Paul's mention of his impending visit to Jerusalem with the collection suggests that Romans is written after Paul has traveled from Macedonia (and possibly to Corinth) to complete the collection (15:25-27)
 - Paul's plan is to deliver the collection in Jerusalem and then head West once again, but this time to go as far as Rome (15:28)

- Paul asks for specific prayer to be delivered from the “disobedient in Judaea” (15:31)
 - Jews or Jewish Christians?
 - If we associate Romans with this later time period in Paul’s ministry, this would help account for the echoes (if not explicit mention) of controversies with alternative Christian missions at this time (cf. 2 Cor, Gal, Phil) and suggest that the people Paul is speaking about are disobedient Jewish Christians
- Paul does not intend to go **only** as far as Rome but intends to make Rome a point of transit (and possible headquarters) for a mission in the West (specifically, to Spain = the westernmost part of the known world)
 - in this way, he will make Rome to be a centre for his mission to the West in the same way that Antioch had been the centre for the mission in the East
 - according to Robert Jewett, Paul may be thinking not of two circular missions (an Eastern one that is now complete, based in Antioch - and to which Acts attests -, and now a Western one, based in Rome) but rather one large circular mission that covers the whole Mediterranean: from Jerusalem, through the East (as far as Illyricum), then to Rome, on to Spain, across northern Africa, and then back eastwards to Jerusalem (which Paul may have seen as the place of the Parousia or coming of Jesus, cf. Rom 15:19, 23-24)

But is Romans (or parts of it) addressed to Romans?

Rom 1-15:

- appears to be written to a Roman assembly of Christians (cf. Rom 1:7, 15; 15:22-29), but one that Paul had never met. Rom 16 may or may not be part of Romans. If it is, then those greeted in Rom 16 should be considered to be in Rome; if not, then there may be reasons for arguing that Rom 16 (at least) is directed elsewhere than to Rome:
- Phoebe (from Cenchreae, south of Corinth) apparently is the one who delivers the letter
- The congregation includes Priscilla and Aquila: we know of them either in Corinth or in Ephesus (not in Rome, though they were in Rome during the reign of Claudius). The congregation to which Paul writes Rom 16 does NOT appear to know that Priscilla and

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Aquila risked their lives for Paul (which may have been during his Ephesian imprisonment)

- Epäenetüs: “first convert in Asia” (again a reference to Asia, probably Ephesus)
- Andronicus and Junia: relatives who “were in prison” with Paul (again a reference to Ephesus?)
- Those mentioned as being with Paul:
 - Gaius: same as member of Corinthian congregation (1 Cor 1:14)?
 - Erastus: same as one left in Corinth (2 Tim 4:20)? mentioned in Acts 19:22 as known to Ephesian community but traveling with Timothy in Macedonia

Tentative conclusion:

- Rom 16 (at least) appears addressed to Ephesus or to people associated with Ephesus
- Rom 16 (at least) appears to be written from Corinth or by Paul in the midst of people associated with ministry in Corinth (or less likely Macedonia)
- Manuscript p46 (option e above), one of the oldest manuscripts we have (ca 200 AD) has probably the original form of Romans (1:1 - 15:33) with the doxology and 16:1-23 as an appendix, not necessarily an original part of the letter
 - 15:33 is the letter closing (no extended letter closing, as in other letters, since he does not know the community)

In what follows, we will consider 1:1 - 15:33 to be the original form of a letter by Paul to the Romans (with 16:1-23, 24, 25-27 as material by Paul included here for reasons unknown to us)

III. Structure of the Romans

Letter opening	1:1-7
Thanksgiving	1:8-12
Body opening	1:13-15
Body middle Part 1	1:16 - 8:39
Body middle Part 2	9:1 - 11:36
Body Middle Part 3	12:1 - 15:13
Body closing	15:14-32
Letter Closing	15:33

IV. An overview of Romans

Letter opening (1:1-7): Paul's introduction of himself:

- One of the reasons for the extensive letter opening in Romans is Paul's need to establish who he is to a community that only knows of him (though we are not told how)
- Paul also wants to establish who they are in relation to him, since he is not their "father" (i.e., their apostle), as say the Corinthians or Philippians were (1:6-7a)

Thanksgiving (1:8-12) and Body opening (1:13-15): The point of the letter and Paul's thankfulness:

- The point of the letter is expressed in "telegraphic" form in the thanksgiving
- This point is picked up on the body opening
- In the thanksgiving, as well as in the body opening, Paul expresses his thankfulness for this community he has not met in terms of unique characteristics
 - "Faith" = the means whereby men and women are found in the world in a new way because they are "in Christ" rather than members of "this age" that is perishing

Body middle I (1:16 - 8:39): The development of Paul's point:

- The body opening leads Paul to develop in a sustained, logical fashion the main point of his address to "the Romans":
 - what is the relation between Jews as the chosen, holy people of God and Gentiles (which from a Jewish perspective are essentially unholy and unchosen)? Both are guilty before God and thus both stand in need of God's mercy
 - 1:16-32: The essential sinfulness of Gentiles (depicted according to the pattern of Gentile sinfulness described in the Wisdom of Solomon).
 - 2:1- 3:8: The Jews disobey the Law and cause themselves to fall under the wrath of God contrary to their original calling by God into fellowship with God
 - 3:1-8: in spite of having the "oracles of God", they sin
 - 3:9-20 : THEREFORE, all are sinners and stand in need of God's grace: Both are DEAD
 - 3:21-31 : The grace of God is expressed in Jesus: Both can LIVE

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- When saved by God's grace, Jews and Gentiles will also be equal, but no longer under sin
- Grace = righteousness (i.e., being made alive though dead, or escaping the inevitable course that leads from judgment to condemnation)
- Righteousness = being found guilty and acquitted (NOT being found not guilty)
- Law does not make Abraham's heirs right before God (even though they have the Law), IF they are first of all heirs of Abraham (whose seed came about through faith and flourished in faith)
- "Faith" (introduced in Thanksgiving and Body opening) is the means whereby God brings into being what cannot otherwise exist (unborn to birth, the dead to life: resurrection)
- 5:1 - 6:23 : What makes Jesus' action "work" is Jesus' obedience, as opposed to Adam's disobedience (Jesus is faithful where Adam was unfaithful)
- Adam's disobedience (unfaithfulness) led to death (though he was alive) and life under the law (which condemns)
- Christ's obedience (faithfulness) leads to life (through his death) and freedom from the law (which condemns)
- Christ suffered the condemnation that all - BOTH Gentiles and Jews - deserved
- A new kind of life for us comes about through Christ's death (represented symbolically by baptism)
- The baptized are dead to sin; dead to judgment; dead to condemnation: *i.e. dead to death!*
- THE KEY: Because they are "dead" to death, they can now live truly in a way that they could not while death reigned (through the Law)
- A new ethical dimension to life is now possible
- Pre-baptism: the body was used for purposes of death because it was ruled by sin and shown to be so by the Law: diagnosis of failure (ethics of death)
- Post-baptism: the body can be used for purposes of life because it has been freed from the rule by sin and death: prescription for life (ethics of life)

7:1-25: The law and the Spirit

- In the case of those who are not “in Christ”: the Law can only point to causes of death
- In the case of those who are “in Christ”: the Law still points to causes of death from which “Christians” have been freed by Christ in whom there is no condemnation
 - The Law has no enduring validity in the lives of those who can no longer be condemned (i.e., those who have died with Christ)
 - For those in Christ, the Spirit “replaces” Law as the “guiding light”
- 8:1-39: No condemnation
- In Christ, death has died; condemnation has been condemned
- In Christ, the Spirit has taken over

Body middle II (9:1 - 11:36): An important corollary to Paul’s point:

- Scholarship has sometimes dealt with Rom 9-11 as if it were a separate portion of Paul’s letter, while in fact it is a continuation (in corollary form) of the point that Paul has been making
- Addressed primarily to a Gentile audience: explanation to Gentiles of Israel’s role in Christ
 - Paul reiterates: all have been judged disobedient in order that God may have mercy on all through Christ (though not all will receive that mercy, seeking other means of pleasing God)

Body middle III (12:1 - 15:13): Ethical implications of the points made in Rom 1:11:

- Rom 12-15 show Paul thinking ethically in light of the theological landscape presented in 1:11:
 - Unity (12:1 - 13:14)
 - through service and appropriate ministry
 - through “communion” of emotion-fused action
 - through “love” (= service)
 - Weak and strong (14:1 - 15:13)
 - posed in dietary terms:
 - probably: weak = those with dietary scruples (e.g., Jewish dietary legislation) vs. strong = those who will eat anything (either pagans or Christians who, like Peter in Acts 10, have learned that dietary matters no longer count)

Body closing (15:14-32): Items of fundamental interest to Paul at this point in his ministry

- The body closing shows us the two fundamental items of interest to Paul at this point in his ministry:
 - his mission in the East is accomplished (15:19, 23-24)
 - Spain will be his next goal, with Rome as his transit point (15:28-29)
 - This appears to conflict with the thanksgiving and body opening in which he insisted that he wanted to come to Rome for their sakes (and did not mention Spain)
 - Perhaps the “their sakes” means that they will be able to participate with him in his ministry in this way
 - Paul’s desire to complete the collection before this happens (15:25-27, 31-32)
 - Paul’s concern about “enemies” (15:30-31): see above

V. Tentative Conclusions

- The trajectory of Paul’s letters has led us to see an overarching concern at the end of his ministry that was not there at the beginning of his ministry (or at least was not in the Macedonian correspondence)
- In this letter, Paul answers the Jew (or Jewish Christian missionary!) who says that the Law leads to life
- What Paul offers is a freedom from that chain of causality and a true transformation of the person (sins may continue but the power of sin is broken)

Chapter 4

Justification by Faith

Today, a common teaching exists among various Protestant denominations. It is the teaching that man is justified before God by faith alone. Protestants claim that man must simply believe that Christ has done all that is required for justification. Once man believes in Christ, he is saved forever. Consequently, Protestants understand good works merely as the fruit of one's justified state, but not meritorious for justification. Likewise, bad works do not threaten one's justified state. They have already been forgiven.

The Catholic Church teaches that although faith is critically important, it only begins the process of justification, a process which also has a middle and an end. Justification is not a single event of faith alone, nor are works merely the fruit of such faith, but a process whereby the individual grows in justification by his faith and good works, a growth which can be retarded, or even terminated, by faithlessness and bad works, ending in damnation.

For both sides, let's first clarify what we mean by the word justification. Most people think of "justification," "salvation," etc., as if they were *states of being*,

referring to what you *are* (or are not). Similarly, they often talk about “faith” as if it were an *object*, something that you *have* or *possess* (or not). In the New Testament, however, these terms all refer to *processes*, things that you *do*, or even more importantly, what God and Jesus have *done for you*:

- **“Justification”** - the *process* of being “justified” (accepted by other people or by God)
- **“Salvation”** - the *process* of being “saved” (rescued from any type of danger or catastrophe)
- **“Redemption”** - the *process* of being “redeemed” (getting something back by repaying a loan)
- **“Sanctification”** - the *process* of being “sanctified” (set apart, made holy, dedicated to God)
- **“Righteousness”**- the *process* of being “made right” (put back into “right relationship” with God)
- **“Faith”** - the *action* of “trusting” someone (relying on them or “entrusting” yourself to them)

All of these terms originally come from secular (non-religious) language, although today they are usually used in religious contexts.

Basically, justification is the theological term used to denote the basis upon which man can go to heaven. It is the means by which a sinner is “justified” or “made right with God.” Because God is perfect, transcendent and holy, but man is imperfect, mortal and sinful, there must be a “justifiable” reason why God would allow such a lowly creature to live with him forever. Because God must preserve his honor and holiness, he cannot just accept men into heaven without a good and justifiable reason for doing so, otherwise he would be compromising his own divine character. In order to justify our entrance into heaven, God must also remain just, honorable and holy (Rom. 3:26).

Justification: Catholic and Protestant Differences

Justification is a biblical-ecclesiastical term; which denotes the transforming of the sinner from the state of unrighteousness to the state of holiness. and sonship of God. Considered as an act (*actus*

justificationis), justification is the work of God alone, presupposing, however, on the part of the adult the process of justification and the cooperation of his free will with God's preventing (from doing sin) and helping (for doing good) grace (*gratia praeveniens et cooperans*). Considered as a state or habit (*habitus justificationis*), it denotes the continued possession of a quality inherent in the soul, which the traditional theologians call sanctifying grace. Since the sixteenth century great differences have existed between Protestants and Catholics regarding the nature of justification.

The theology on which the protestants built their system of justification, except perhaps fiduciary faith, were by no means really original. They had been conceived long before either by heretics of the earlier centuries. It was especially the representatives of Antinomianism during the Apostolic times who welcomed the idea that faith alone suffices for justification, and that consequently the observance of the moral law is not necessary either as a prerequisite for obtaining justification or as a means for preserving it. For this reason St. Augustine (*De fide et operibus*, *xiv*) was of the opinion that the Apostles James, Peter, John, and Jude had directed their Epistles against the Antinomians of that time, who claimed to have taken their doctrines - so dangerous to morality - from the writings of St. Paul. Until quite recently, it was almost universally accepted that the epistle of St. James was written against the unwarranted conclusions drawn from the writings of St. Paul. Of late, however, Catholic scholars have become more and more convinced that the Epistle in question, so remarkable for its insisting on the necessity of good works, neither aimed at correcting the misinterpretations of Pauline theology, nor had any relation to his teachings. On the contrary, they believe that St. James had no other object than to emphasize the fact - already emphasized by Paul - that only such faith that is active in charity (*fides formata*) possesses any power to justify man (cf. Gl 5:6; 1 Co 13:2). Faith devoid of charity and good works (*fides informis*) is a dead faith and in the eyes of God insufficient for justification (Js 2:17-18).

The Council of Trent decreed that the essence of justification comprises not only forgiveness of sin, but also "sanctification and renovation of the interior man by means of the of sanctifying grace and other super natural gifts (Trent, l. c., cap. vii). In order to exclude the Protestant idea of a merely forensic absolution and exterior declaration

of righteousness, special stress is laid on the fact that we are justified by God's justice, not that whereby He himself is just but that whereby He makes us just, in so far as He bestows on us the gift of His grace which renovates the soul to be holy (Trent, l. c., cap. Vii). The council had the following vocabulary in explaining the concept of justification:

- Exemplory Cause (*causa exemplaris*) - God's infinite goodness
- Final cause (*causa finalis*) - the glory of God and of Christ
- Efficient cause (*causa efficiens*) - the mercy of God
- Meritorious cause (*causa meritoria*) - the Passion of Christ
- Formal cause" (*unica causa formalis*) - Sanctifying grace
- Instrumental cause (*causa instrumentalis*) - reception of
the Sacraments

The effects of justification according to the catholic doctrine are forgiveness of sin and freedom from sin. They are correlated events. Just as light dispels darkness, the sanctifying grace forgives the sins and makes us holy.

“Faith” and “Alone”?

Next, let's start this discussion by raising an important question: Did the apostle Paul teach justification by faith alone? If so, why didn't Paul use the specific phrase “faith alone” anywhere in his New Testament writings?

- St. Paul used the word faith over two hundred times in the New Testament, but not once did he couple it with the words “alone” or “only.” What would have stopped him from such an important addition if the solitude of faith in regard to justification was at the forefront of his mind?
- Paul used the word “alone” very frequently. Many of these instances appear right alongside the very contexts that contain teachings on faith and justification (Rm 3:29; 4:12; 16:23; Gal 2:10; 3:2; 4:18; 5:13). Thus even while Paul was teaching about the nature of justification he was keenly aware of the word “alone” and its qualifying properties. Coupling it with “faith” would have made his point indisputable.
- Although the Holy Spirit prohibited Paul from using the phrase “faith alone,” He allowed St. James to make a clear and forceful point to the contrary, declaring that “man is justified by works and not by faith alone” (Jam 2:24). This negation comes at the precise

point in the epistle where St. James questions whether faith, by itself, is sufficient for justification. We can only conclude that the Holy Spirit's inspiration of the equally important phrase "not by," clearly shows God was concerned that some would misinterpret Scripture's stress on faith versus works to be equal to "faith alone." But didn't St. Paul say faith was "apart from" works?

If Paul did not intend to teach faith alone, then how do we explain his statement in Rom 3:28, "that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law"? Could one not argue that the phrase "apart from" is very similar to the word "alone," and thus conclude that St. Paul really did teach that faith is alone in justification? To answer this, we must realize that "justified by faith alone" does not mean the same thing as "justified by faith apart from works of the law." Grammatically, the phrase "faith alone" means that faith is the only instrument for justification, while the statement "faith apart from works of the law" merely means that "works of the law"- whatever St. Paul means by them - are the only thing that cannot be coupled with faith for justification. In other words, "faith alone" excludes everything from being added to faith, while "faith apart from works of the law" excludes only "works of the law" from being added to faith. This leaves open the possibility that perhaps something may be added to faith that is not considered "works of the law," or, that we could understand "faith" as being associated with other virtues that are not technically related to "works of the law." [See Council of Trent, Session 6, Chapter 7].

Hence, although we must give due justice to Paul's dictum that faith must be apart from works of the law, this does not necessarily mean that faith is completely alone, especially from other virtues like love and obedience (Gal 5:6; Rom 1:5; 16:26). According to certain Scriptures, there is something about "works of law" which forces Paul to separate it from his concept of faith, yet dissimilar Scriptures allow, or even require, the addition of other virtuous works, which are not necessarily associated with works of the law, in order to procure justification.

God is not Obligated

To begin to uncover the true relationship between faith and works, we need to understand one of the most fundamental principles in the theology of Paul - the principle of legal obligation or debt. We see this

principle established in that most famous of passages, Rom 4:4: “To the one working, the wage is not reckoned according to grace but according to obligation.”

To help us understand this principle, Paul uses the example of the employer who is obligated to pay his employee for his work. “Obligation” refers to a measured compensation which is legally owed by the employer to the employee. Since we understand work as something requiring the strenuous use of one’s faculties, the worker is someone who must be remunerated, in some manner, equal to his efforts. Commonly speaking, for an hour’s work, he must be paid an hour’s wage. Unless the employer wants to break the law, he is legally required to pay the worker what is due him. It does not matter whether the employer loves or hates, likes or dislikes, the employee. He is under legal obligation to pay him. Establishing this principle of legal obligation, Paul introduces the foundational rule regarding anyone who attempts to “work” his way to God. If the appeal to God is based on obligation, then the relationship between God and man becomes one in which the party who works (man) is legally obligating the party for whom the work is done (God) to pay for the work performed.

Hence, in regard to justification, a man who approaches God expecting legal remuneration for his efforts thus puts God in a position of being “obligated” to deem him righteous and acceptable, worthy of living with God and being blessed by Him for eternity. Since in this situation God would be forced to owe a legal debt to the man who works, then the relationship is one based on law, i.e., a legal contract. If it is based on law, then it cannot be based on God’s personal benevolence, otherwise known as grace. This is precisely why Paul, in Rom 3:28, says, “a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law.” In the larger picture, “works of law” refers to “works done solely under legal contract” which demand payment for performance, regardless of whether or not the person doing the work believes in and loves his benefactor.

Conversely, if man appeals to God’s graciousness, God would repay out of benevolence, but he is not legally obligated to do so. This is the primary distinction between grace and works. St. Paul reiterates this principle in Rom 11:6 by saying: “And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace [Council of Trent, Session 6, Chapter 8, Cannon 1].

Faith: The Beginning of Salvation

In contrast to works performed in an attempt to obligate God, Paul speaks of justification by God's grace through our faith (Rom 3:22-24). God is a personal being who wants man to relate to him on a personal level. God is not an impersonal employer whom we go to for our spiritual paycheck but then forget about Him the rest of the day. Hence, because faith is intrinsically personal, it is the ideal word to describe one who recognizes God's true identity; one who takes a sincere interest in God's purposes and plans; one who trusts that God is good and looking out for everyone's best interests (Rom 4:18-22; Heb 11:1-40).

Conversely, St. Paul often uses "works" or "works of law" as contractual terms connoting an impersonal employer/employee kind of relationship: someone who is under contract to do a job but has no interest in a personal relationship with his employer. He works for the sole purpose of remuneration but has no genuine regard for the goals and aspirations of his payer. He boasts of his accomplishments and expects to be paid handsomely for his work. Such attempts are an insult to God. To St. Paul, the Jews of his day were the perfect example of his thesis. The Jews continually forced their ceremonial works in God's face and claimed that for such meticulous observance to the legal covenant God established with Abraham, God then owed them salvation, regardless of their life-style (Rom 2-4). St. Paul's answer to them is clear: "Who has ever given to God that God should repay him?" (Rom 11:35).

But Do Works Justify?

Although in many Scriptures Paul takes great pains to make the sharpest distinction possible between faith and works, in other Scriptures he creates the most intimate connection between faith and obedience to God's law. This connection is so strong that it is quite biblical to state that without obedience to the law it is impossible to be justified and enter the kingdom of heaven. St. Paul says it himself in Rom 2:13, "For it is not the hearers of the law, but the doers of the law who will be justified [See Catholic Catechism, Para. 1963, and Council of Trent, Canon 20].

Some may find this conclusion contradictory, since we seem to be saying that law is both condemnatory and salvific. Nevertheless, once one understands the basis for Paul's distinction between works done

merely for legal remuneration as opposed to works performed under the auspices of God's grace, the apparent contradiction disappears [See Council of Trent, Session 6, Ch. 5].

To help understand the principle of works performed under grace, or what we may now introduce as "gracious merit," we can borrow from St. Paul's analogy of the employer/employee relationship in Rom. 4:4. We have already learned that if the employee contracts with the employer to be paid for his work, this arrangement is formalized in a written agreement and is made binding by law, i.e., it is a legal contract.

If, on the other hand, the employer asks the employee to do some personal work for him outside of the legal contract - work that is "not on company time" or is "off the clock," as it were - and promises to reward the employee, such an arrangement is not under a legal contract and thus the employer is not contractually obligated to pay the employee.

Yet because of the employer's personal integrity, and perhaps because of a personal relationship he has cultivated with the employee, he may gladly pay what he feels the extra work is worth even though he is not legally required to do so. The employer could very easily renege on his promise to pay for work performed "off the clock," yet because he is honest and just he will not stoop to such underhanded behavior.

God's relationship to man is very similar. Although man cannot put God in a position of being legally obligated to pay him for his work, God can reward man for his work outside of law. Because of his personal integrity, and because he has cultivated a personal relationship with the individual through faith, God will repay out of his graciousness. For God, who is fair, just and compassionate, graciously rewarding man's good works is the proper thing to do.

This principle of God's dealing with man is stated no better than in Heb 6:10, "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him..."

Once we commit ourselves to view our works before God from the proper perspective, we must conclude that Paul does not teach that works of law, understood in the proper sense, is always antithetical to justification. We must maintain that St. Paul is condemning justification by works only with respect to contractual obligation, that is, when one attempts to demand payment from God for his works,

but who really doesn't care about God personally. Outside the realm of contractual obligation, obedience to God's laws, as expressed and practiced in virtue, fully cooperates with grace in justification.

Romans 2:5-10: The Reward of Good Works is Eternal Life

Let us observe how St. Paul views the distinction between works performed under grace as opposed to works performed under legal obligation. He elaborates on this distinction in the way he describes God's blessing for good works and God's judgment for bad works. One of the first expressions of Paul's positive view of works in regard to salvation occurs in Rom 2:6-8:

... of the righteous judgment of God, who will give to each man according to his works. On the one hand, to those who persist in good work, seeking glory, honor and incorruption, [he will give] eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

St. Paul is clear that God saves or condemns based on the works performed by the individual. Consequently, it is also true that "wrath and anger" refers to the opposite of eternal life, namely eternal damnation. This is the same context he uses in Rom 6:23 saying, "for the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In saying this, let it be clear to the reader we are not saying St. Paul teaches in Rom 2 that a man can "earn," (in the strict, legal sense of the word), the reward of eternal life. To reiterate, Rom 4:4 makes it unquestionably clear that when one attempts to "earn" his salvation based on works he is obligating God to "pay" him with eternal life, which is anathema.

Hence we must conclude that the works Paul requires in Rom 2:5-10 are not those he considers as putting God in a position of obligation to pay the individual with eternal life. Rather, it is presumed that those who "persist in doing good" and who "seek glory, honor, and incorruption" are doing so under the advocacy of God's grace and mercy.

God's grace is introduced just one verse prior in Romans 2:4 where Paul says: "Or do you despise the riches of his kindness and his forbearance and longsuffering, not realizing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?" The divine qualities of "kindness,"

“forbearance,” and “longsuffering” are virtues of God that flow from his grace (Eph 2:7; Tit 3:4; Rom 11:22). If God were not exhibiting grace, his response would be to show no mercy to men and thus destroy them at the first sign of disobedience. Moreover, God is not obligated to “lead them to repentance,” or tolerate their sin. It is God’s grace that gives men the opportunity to and leads them to repent and do good works.

Since Paul speaks of “repentance” in Rom 2:4, and follows with God giving “eternal life” to the ones who have repented and “persist in doing good,” but “wrath and anger” to the ones who have not repented, all the elements of the New Testament gospel are present in this passage.

In light of this, the good works of Romans 2:6-8, being done in the context of repentance from sin, are works which presuppose faith in God, as well as an acknowledgment of personal sin. One cannot repent to God and do good works (i.e., works that are done for the purpose of “honoring God and seeking immortality”), without truly believing in God. Hence, the works of Rom 2:6-8, accompanied by faith and repentance, are NOT works done under the principle of debt or obligation that Paul repudiates in Rom. 4:4, but works done with a godly attitude and which seek recognition and reward from within God’s grace.

If Paul lifts the doing of works for obtaining eternal life to such a height as he does in Rom 2:6-10, what, then, can we conclude about Paul’s understanding of works in relation to justification? The conclusion must be that works are necessary for justification, and, in fact, are one of the principle determining factors in whether or not one obtains salvation. We say this with the proviso that Paul outrightly condemns works done from boasting with a view toward obligating God to pay the worker with salvation (Eph 2:8-9; Tit 3:5).

The only way God can accept our works is through His grace, just as he accepts our faith through His grace. Works done under the auspices of God’s grace, that is, works done that do not demand payment from God but are rewarded only due to the kindness and mercy of God, are the works that Paul requires for salvation. These works must continue throughout our lives in order for us to be justified (Rom 2:13; Jam 2:1-26).

Corinthian Correspondences

When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, it had probably been about three years since he had stayed with them on his foundational visit. But in the meantime there have been contacts with some leading individuals of the community who had visited Paul, presumably at Ephesus (cf 16:17: “I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus”). There has also been previous correspondence. Paul had written to them (cf 5:9) about certain matters, and the Corinthians had addressed a letter to Paul (7,1) in which they obviously asked the questions which Paul explicitly answers in 1 Corinthians (cf 7:1-25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1-12). Paul has also sent Timothy to Corinth to remind the community of his ways in Christ Jesus (4:17).

A major issue at Corinth at this time seem to have been the parties and factions. There seem to have been groups that claimed allegiance to Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Christ (1:12; 3:4). That is why Paul spends a lot of time explaining how he sees the right relationship of the community toward himself and others who worked for the gospel among them, for instance Apollos.

Paul first looks at the past of their ministerial relationship. He thanks God that he did not baptize any of them except Crispus and Gaius (1:14). The apostle rather sees himself as “having fathered” (“having become the father of”) the community in Christ Jesus through the gospel (4:15b). He reminds them of the gospel which he proclaimed to them saying, “I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (2:2). He also recalls how he proclaimed the gospel: “And I came to you in weakness” (2:3). But Paul could not speak to them “as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ” (3:1). Since they were not ready for solid food, he fed them with milk (3:2).

As in 1 Thessalonians, Paul is using paternal and maternal images of his relationship with the community. Again the paternal image is not used to express authority, but love. In 4:15 *pater* is used antithetically with *paidagogos* (“instructor”, “teacher”, “guardian”) thus stressing the intimate personal love relationship of the father to his children over the more distant professional relationship of respect and authority between students and their guardian-instructor in the ancient Greek culture.

Paul wants the Corinthians to see Apollos and himself not as Christ, but as servants of Christ through whom they came to believe (3:5-9; 4:1). The apostle also stresses that he has made himself a slave to all (9:19b). Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gives the growth (3:6). In 9:11a he says that he has sown the spiritual good among them. He also compares himself to a “skilled master builder” who has laid a foundation on which someone else has built (3:10). Thus concerning the first evangelization at Corinth Paul compares himself to a father who begets a child, to a gardener who plants a plant, and to a builder who lays the foundation of a building, a servant who is working in someone else’s name. Regarding the deepening and strengthening of their faith, the pastoral work, Paul compares himself to a father who admonishes and appeals in love to his children, to a mother who feeds a baby with milk instead of solid food, and to a slave who is at someone’s service.

Paul presents these images of his ministerial relationship with the Corinthians in view of the present difficulties in the community. The quarrels and factions among them (cf. 1:11-12) indicate to Paul that

they did not understand his and the other ministers' role among them. Nor have they grasped the core of the gospel (cf. 2:1-16). They are still like infants with regard to faith and need to be treated that way (3:2b). But for Paul this seems to imply love, care and concern for their growth into adulthood rather than being authoritarian and patro-nizing or treating them as a tutor would. As children imitate their parents he wants the Corinthians to imitate him (4:16, cf. 4:14-15; 11:1).

It is clear that Paul wants them to change. The fact that the epistolary thanksgiving does not contain any quality of the community for which he thanks God is an indication that there is something seriously wrong which bothers Paul. They are to realize that they are "God's field, God's building" (3:9), "God's temple" (3:16). Paul is "God's steward" (4:1). They are called (1:9), chosen (cf. 1:28) by God. God's grace has been given to them (1:4). Paul wants them to understand that Christ and no one else was crucified for them (cf. 1:13b) and that they were baptized in Christ's name (cf. 1:15). Jesus Christ is the foundation which Paul has laid at Corinth (3:11). Paul proclaimed Christ crucified among them (1:23). Whatever Paul did at Corinth, he did as servant of God (3:9), in Christ Jesus and through the gospel (4:15b; cf. 4:17). On the basis of their and Paul's relationship to God in Christ they are to change their relationship with their apostle. Paul concludes with the expression of a certain threat asking the rhetorical question, "What would you prefer? Am I to come to you with a stick, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?" (4:21). This seems to be the only time in this letter where Paul brings the personal relationship to bear in connection with the ministerial relationship.

Despite Paul's critical evaluation of the way the Corinthians perceived and treated him, there are a surprising number of quite positive descriptions of their relationship. In 9:1-2 Paul calls himself an apostle to the Corinthians and them his work in the Lord as well as "the seal of my apostleship in the Lord". Paul boasts of the community (15:31). He also commends them because they remember him in everything and maintain the traditions just as he handed them on to them (11:2). Without any hesitation Paul gives instructions on how to take up the collection (16:1-4). He announces a future visit at Corinth and indirectly expresses his longing to be with the community. The coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus who refreshed his

spirit made up for the absence of the Corinthians as a whole (16:17-18). Paul hopes to spend an extended period of time at Cor-inth on his next visit, maybe even spend the winter, instead of just seeing them in passing (16:6-7). The apostle concludes his letter by assuring them explicitly of his love for them: “My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus” (16:24).

Nevertheless, Paul’s stern refusal to make use of his right to financial support from the community (9:15a) - a right which he strongly affirms - is an indication that Paul does not feel completely comfortable in the relationship with the Corinthian community. Paul sees in not accepting money a ground for boasting (9:15b). His intention is to proclaim the gospel free of charge (9:18) and to avoid putting an obstacle into the way of the gospel (9:12). One might wonder whether the lack of trust Paul displays here is connected with the issue of the Corinthi-ans’ ministerial relationship which is the focus of 1 Cor 3-4.

By way of conclusion we state that 1 Cor 5-8 and 10-15 display almost no reflection of the relationship between Paul and the Corinthians. There Paul is the expert who answers questions, gives theological explanations and moral exhortations. The relationship has retreated into the background. In the remaining chapters of the letter the focus is above all on the ministerial aspect of the relationship. Paul rejects the way the Corinthians relate to their apostles and ministers. He rather gives them alternati-ve images by reminding them of the relationship he established with them when he founded the community. It seems that the personal relationship between Paul and the Corinthians is not threatened. There are no direct appeals to the addressees regarding the improvement of the relationship. The positive descriptions seem rather to indicate that they are enjoying a phase of basically normal mutual relations. This will, however, quickly change within the following six months as is reflected in the material that is available in 2 Corinthians.

There are several critical issues in the study of Paul’s Corrinthin Correspondences

Authenticity

Not really a question in the scholarly world (except for the radical Dutch school)

Unity

Various theories about 1 (and 2) Corinthians:

- J. Weiss: 1 Corinthians is an editorial composition of 3 letters of Paul to Corinth and 2 Corinthians is an editorial composition of 2 letters
 - Letter A: 1 Cor 1:1-23; 6:12-20; 11:2-34; 2 Cor 6:14 - 7:1
 - Letter B: 1 Cor 7:1 - 9:23; 10:24 - 11:1; 12-15; 16
 - Letter C: 1 Cor 1:1 - 6:11
 - Letter D: 2 Cor 2:14 - 6:13; 7:2-4; 10:13
 - Letter E: 2 Cor 1:1 - 2:13; 7:5-16; 9
- W. Schmithals: 1 and 2 Corinthians are an editorial composition of 6 letters of Paul to the Corinthians
 - Letter A: 2 Cor 6:14 - 7:1; 1 Cor 6:12-20; 9:24 - 10:22; 11:2-34; 15; 16:13-24
 - Letter B: 1 Cor 1:1 - 6:11; 7:1-9, 23; 10:23 - 11:1; 12:1 - 14:40; 16:1-12
 - Letter C: 2 Cor 2:14 - 6:13; 7:2-4
 - Letter D: 2 Cor 10:1 - 13:13
 - Letter E: 2 Cor 9:1-15
 - Letter F: 2 Cor 1:1 - 2:13; 7:5 - 8:24

Various theories about glosses contained in 1 Corinthians that are not by Paul:

- 11:2-16 (W. Walker)
- 13 (E. L. Titus)
- 14:33-36 (W. Walker)

II. Paul's dialogue with the Corinthians

Paul's activity in Corinth and contacts with the Corinthians according to Acts

- As a result of the Jerusalem Conference, Paul undertakes a "second missionary journey" and revisits the immediate eastern Mediterranean world of Antioch, Cyprus and the coastal cities and trading ports of southern Asia Minor that he had visited in his "first missionary journey" (15:4 - 16:5):
- He then expands his field of action and moves north and eastward across Asia Minor to

Pauline Letters & Theology

- Phrygia (16:6)
- North Galatia (16:6)
- Troas (16:8-11): vision of “Macedonian man” beckoning Paul to come to Macedonia
- Macedonia (16:11 - 17:14)
 - Philippi (16:11-40)
 - Thessalonica (17:1-9)
 - Berea (17:10-14)
- Achaia
 - Athens (17:15-34)
 - Corinth (18:1-18a): 18 months
 - Cenchraea (18:18b)
- Ephesus (18:19-21)

Back to Caesarea (18:22a)

- After a very brief visit, Paul undertakes a “third missionary journey”:
 - Antioch (18:22), Galatia and Phrygia (18:23), Ephesus (19:1 - 20:1): 3 years
 - Macedonia (20:2a), Achaia (20:2b-3a): 3 months

Philippi (20:6)?, Troas (20:4-12), Miletus (20:17-38), Caesarea (21:8-14)

- Information From Corinth:
 - While Paul is in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:8?), he receives
 - information in oral form by means of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, and also from the people of Chloe (unless the three individuals names are “Chloe’s people”): the information concerns disputes (1:10 ff.), immorality (5:1 ff.), and possibly concerning abuses at the Lord’s Supper (11:17 ff.) and doubts about resurrection (15:1 ff.)
 - questions in written form concerning marriage (7:1 ff and 7:25 ff.), the eating of idol meat (8:1 ff.), the practice of spiritual gifts (12:1 ff.), the collection for the saints (16:1 ff.), and Apollos (16:12).
 - Is this information a response in some form to Paul’s “First Letter” to the Corinthians?
 - Is the absence of Crispus from the delegation crucial?

- Second Letter of Paul:
 - Paul writes 1 Corinthians as a response to the oral information and as a series of answers to the written questions
 - Paul includes his set of travel-plans to visit the Corinthians (16:5-9): from Ephesus (where he will remain a while longer (16:8) —> Macedonia —> Corinth (where he will spend the winter) —> Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:5-9)
 - The letter is possibly carried by
 - Timothy (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10-11; cf 2 Tim 4:20), or by
 - the three visitors from Corinth on their return trip to Corinth (cf 1 Cor 16:17), or by
 - Titus (2 Cor 8:6; 12:17-18)
- Second Visit of Paul:
 - Changing his announced travel plans, Paul travels to Corinth directly, though only in passing (2 Cor 1:15-16) NB: Paul had not been in Corinth more than once prior to writing 1 Corinthians: 1 Cor 2:1; 3:2; 11:2.
 - The visit is apparently disastrous: 2 Cor 2:1
 - Paul returns to Ephesus (2 Cor 2:1)
- Third Letter of Paul:
 - As a result of his failed visit, Paul writes a severe letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor 2:3; 4:9; 7:8-12)
 - This letter is probably sent via Titus (2 Cor 7:13-14)
 - Paul reiterates his original travel plans: Ephesus —> Macedonia —> Corinth —> Jerusalem

Then, Paul experiences “death” in Asia (2 Cor 1:8: The fact that Paul tells the Corinthians about this in 2 Cor 1:8 means that they did not know about it. This means that this experience must have occurred AFTER the writing of his “severe letter”.) (Hypothesis: Paul was arrested and put in prison in Ephesus, faced with a death sentence (cf 2 Cor 1:8-9).)

After his recovery or release from prison, Paul goes to Troas (2 Cor 2:12) and to Macedonia in search of Titus (in part, at least, in order to learn how the Corinthians had received the “severe letter” (2 Cor 2:12-14).

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- Information From Corinth:
 - Paul finds Titus in Macedonia and learns from him of the “repentance” of the Corinthians (2 Cor 7:5-16), suggesting that Paul’s “severe letter” to the Corinthians had its intended effect.
 - Titus may have told Paul at this point about “Judaizing” elements that had entered Corinth during Paul’s absence.
- Fourth Letter of Paul:
 - Paul writes 2 Corinthians (a letter of great joy at the news that Titus has given him)
 - Sends it with Titus and “the two brothers” (a representative of the Jerusalem church (2 Cor 8:18, 19) and another brother (2 Cor 8:22) who are going to Corinth, among other things, to complete the “collection” (2 Cor 8-9)
 - Paul reiterates his plan to visit the Corinthians (2 Cor 9:4-5; cf 12:14; 20:21; 13:1-10)
- Hypothetical Third Visit of Paul:
 - Does Paul ever get to Corinth, as he had planned?
 - Paul may have reached Corinth, or
 - Paul may not have reached Corinth but had news of the Corinthians
- Hypothetical Fifth Letter of Paul :
 - Paul learned of the work of Judaizers in Corinth and wrote 2 Corinthians 10:13 (similar in force to Galatians)
 - If this were the case, it would suggest that Paul’s fourth letter to the Corinthians (C8) consisted only of 1 Cor 1:9

III. The structure of 1 Corinthians

I. Salutation (1:1-9)

II. Divisions in the Church (1:10–4:21)

III. Disorders in the Church (5:1–6:20)

A. Failure to Discipline an Immoral Brother (5:1-13)

B. Failure to Resolve Personal Disputes (6:1-11)

C. Failure to Exercise Sexual Purity (6:12-21)

IV. Difficulties in the Church (7:1–14:40)

A. Concerning Marriage (7:1-40)

- B. Concerning Christian Liberty (8:1–11:1)
 - 1. Eating Meat Offered to Idols (8:1-13)
 - 2. Paul’s Personal Example: Restricting his Rights (9:1-27)
 - 3. Israel’s Failure as an Example to Believers (10:1-13)
 - 4. Eating Meat in Pagan Temples (10:14-22)
 - 5. The Principles Applied (10:23–11:1)
- C. Concerning Worship (11:2–14:40)
 - 1. Diversity in Worship Roles between the Sexes (11:2-16)
 - 2. Diversity in Worship Roles between the Classes (11:17-34)
 - 3. Diversity in Worship Roles because of Spiritual Gifts (12:1- 14:40)
- V. Doctrinal Correction of the Church Regarding the Resurrection (15:1-58)
 - A. The Evidence for Christ’s Resurrection (15:1-11)
 - B. The Necessity of Christ’s Resurrection (15:12-28)
- VI. Conclusion (16:1-24)
 - A. About the Collection (16:1-11)
 - B. News about Apollos (16:12)
 - C. Final Exhortations (16:13-18) and Greetings (16:19-24)

IV. An overview of 1 Corinthians

What is 1 Corinthians about?

Need to divide 1 Corinthians into three different parts according to the Body Middles:

- Part 1: The disunity of the community and Paul’s role (1:10-4:21)
- Part 2: Consequences of the disunity and Paul’s authority over the Corinthians in two particular areas caused by disunity (5:1-6:20)
- Part 3: Paul’s authority as expressed in specific responses to situations in the Corinthian assembly about which they have asked him (7:1-16:11)

The letter is written not as a rebuke but as a guide to “spiritual Christians” in the exercise of their new life in Christ (clear from the Thanksgiving, 1:4-9)

The subject matter of the Body Part I: The disunity of the community and Paul's role

- The immediate reason for writing is Paul's concern over the unity of the Corinthian community (1:11)
 - disunity in a socio-political body (like the Corinthian Christian assembly) is like disease in a physical body: the result will be death
 - disunity has resulted from attachment to different "leaders" or important people (1:12)
 - Paul's response is to exhort them to unity (1:10; cf. Phm 10)
- Consequences for Paul's role
 - Paul does not have the undivided allegiance of the Corinthian community but has become the standard of one group among them (cf 1:10-16)
- Basis of Paul's response
 - The gospel can only come to people in a mediated way (through the preaching of Christ)
 - The true Christ proclaimed by true proclaimers is Lord of All
- Elements of Paul's defence of his apostolate
 - Paul is an apostle: a true proclaimer of Christ, able to engender children for God (1 Cor 15:8-11; 9:1)
 - Paul has effectively mediated Christ to the Corinthian believers (see below 1:17; 2:16)
 - Paul's effective mediation makes him the Father of the Corinthians (4:15 = Paul's reason for writing!; 9:2-3; cf 1:2 Thessalonians)
 - Paul's Fatherhood over the Corinthian Christians allows him to call the Corinthian Christians back to unity and to correct their divisive, partisan approach (1 Cor 3)
 - As the Father of the community (i.e., the effective mediator of Christ and his Lordship to an originally disparate group of people), the apostle Paul can call Corinthians to imitate him (4:16 = confidence that they will do what he asks of them; 11:1)

Based on the perception that 1 Corinthians is largely a letter that responds to 2 main points (on the one hand, immorality (1 Cor 5:7): incest, prostitution, virginity, and marriage, and, on the other hand, idolatry (1 Cor 8:14): idol meat, spirits and the Spirit, veils vs

idolatrous worship) and that these are the same issues that comprise the content of the apostolic decree (Acts 15; 21:25 the items of the Noachic Covenant), J. C. Hurd suggests that the problems that Paul deals with in 1 Corinthians have to do with his introduction to Corinth of the apostolic decree.

Consequences of disunity 1 Cor 5-6

This section deals with the consequences that have begun to show themselves in Corinth as a result of their disunity. There are two: immorality and judgments of brothers/sisters.

- The body opening (5:1-2) suggests that the problems to be dealt with are a follow-through from the previous discussion.
- The body middle shows what matters most in Paul's mind:
 - the state of the community (5:3-8) and the consequences of disunity (6:1 ff.)
 - Paul's use of irony: strikingly, the Corinthians who are so attached to strong leaders that it has led to division can't find anyone strong or smart enough to adjudicate their case!
 - in the community, everything is in fact legitimate but only that which builds up the community should be in the mind of the community members
 - Paul speaks analogically: the social body (the Corinthian assembly) is like the physical body: you cannot "play" with the "body"/body and not get hurt

The subject matter of the Body Part III: Paul's apostolic authority in addressing questions posed to him by the Corinthian Christians

- 7:1-24
 - Paul's answer: It is better for men to abstain from all sexual relations (with women), unless they cannot. (In fact, in light of the shortness, it is better for everyone to stay just as they are and not engage in major changes.)
 - Corinthians' (hypothetical) question: "In view of the shortness of time (before the Lord comes), should Christian men be encouraged to be sexually abstinent? Is this how they will be holy?"

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- 7:25-40
 - Paul's answer: It is better for (young) women who have never married to remain unmarried.
 - Corinthians' (hypothetical) question: "Should fathers be encouraged to give their daughters to be married as fathers do now in the world as it is?"
- 8:1; 11:1
 - Paul's answer: While it really doesn't matter what you eat - since the gospel is not about abstaining from OR eating any particular foods but about NOT living by or for food alone - it may make a difference to those around you - both within the community and without. You should consider what they will think about what you do. But, you are still free to do what you need to do to practice the gospel: if you need to show your freedom, if you need to reach someone who is scrupulous about what s/he eats, etc.
 - Corinthians' (hypothetical) question: "Given what you have told us about our "freedom" that comes from our "knowledge" of this passing world and the enduring world to come, does it really matter what we eat, including meat, even though all the meat is prepared in temples and thus offered to idols?"
- 11:2-34
 - 11:2-34: the community is divided over the practice of the Lord's supper (with the rich bringing food and eating it before the poor have a chance to participate): this is further confirmation of their disunity and it must change since it makes a mockery of the LORD's Supper (the community is NOT divided over the practice of women/wives veiling their heads - either via veils or long hair - to show their subordination to their husbands/men)
 - Paul deals with the question after 8:1; 11:1, which deals with spiritual freedom and making sure that you consider others
- 12:1; 14:40
 - Paul's answer: The spiritual gifts, which are thankfully evident among you, are ways that God has gifted the "body of Christ" - a social body like none other in the world - and are thus a first taste of what the heavenly existence of the "body of Christ" and Christians as part of it will be like. It is marked above all

by gifts that contribute to the harmony of the whole. Any so-called gift that destroys that harmony, either by attacking God OR the body, is not of God.

- Corinthians' (hypothetical) question: "In our assemblies, there are some who speak in an inspired form saying that they are inspired by the "spirit". Some have even said what we think are curses, but have claimed their spiritual freedom in doing so. Could these utterances be "inspired"?"
- 15:1-58
 - 15:1-58: the community is divided over the proclamation of the Lord's resurrection: it is likely a division over how he arose that has led some to believe that he didn't arise at all (Paul explains that resurrection is not simply the resuscitation of a dead body but rather its spiritual transformation)
 - Paul deals with the question after 12:1; 14:40, which deals with the practice of spiritual gifts as an initial "clue" or "hint" as to what the transformed, resurrection life together will look like
 - CONCLUSION: Paul has applauded this spiritually gifted community NOT because their spiritual gifts are an indication that the NEW AGE has come (as they think) but because their spiritual gifts are a real indication of what the NEW AGE will look like.
- 16:1-4
 - Paul's answer: Here is what you are to do when it comes to the "collection" and why.....?
 - Corinthians' (hypothetical) question: "We have only heard that we are supposed to be taking up a "collection" for the saints in Jerusalem, but have no idea of what we are supposed to do. Please tell us."
 - This is followed by Paul's travel plans and the letter closing because the "collection" will be "fleshed out" by Timothy when he comes to them. This is also the reason why the next item is divided off from the rest of the answers to the letter....
- 16:12
 - Paul's answer: I have instructed Apollos to come to you when he can.

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- Corinthians' (hypothetical) question: "Where is Apollos and why isn't he here?"
- Is Paul being fully honest?

2 Corinthians

In the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians we meet a Christian community that is internally divided in many ways but is on good terms with Paul. By the time Paul writes the Second Letter to the Corinthians the situation has changed. Now the community seems united, but it is in conflict with Paul. The division between community and apostle precedes the letter and forms the situation which largely determines the way Paul addresses the community. Thus 2 Corinthians is one of the earliest documents in Christian history which witnesses to a major conflict between a community and their leader.

Structure of 2nd Corinthians

- I. Salutation (1:1-11)
- II. Apologetic/Defense of Apostleship: Answering the Critics' Charges (1:12-7:16)
 - A. The Defense of Paul's Conduct (1:12-2:13)
 - B. The Nature of a True Apostleship (2:14-7:16)
- III. Exhortation to Give: Collection for the Believers in Jerusalem (8:1-9:15)
 - A. The Necessity for Generosity (8:1-15)
 - B. The Mission of Titus to Corinth (8:16-9:5)
 - C. The Results of Generosity (9:6-15)
- IV. Polemics: Affirmation of Apostolic Authority (10:1-13:10)
 - A. In Spite of an Unimpressive Appearance (10:1-11)
 - B. Invasion of False Apostles into Paul's Territory (10:12-18)
 - C. Vindication of Authenticity of Paul's Apostleship (11:1-12:13)
 - D. The Planned Third Visit (12:14-13:10)
- V. Final Exhortation and Greetings (13:11-14)

Paul begins his second (canonical) letter to the Corinthians with a customary greeting (1:1-2), followed by a customary thanksgiving (1:3-11). But the thanksgiving this time is not for the church's

progress in the faith (as is usual in Paul's salutations), but for God's comfort of him in the midst of great hardships (1:3-11).

This note on God's comfort in affliction is a natural bridge to the body of the epistle, for 2 Corinthians is supremely about God's glory in the midst of suffering. There are three main sections to this epistle:

- ❖ defense of Paul's apostleship in the light of his critics' charges (1:12-7:16)
- ❖ exhortation of the Corinthians to give to the collection for the poor believers in Jerusalem (8:1-9:15),
- ❖ final affirmation of Paul's apostolic authority (10:1-13:10).

It will be seen that the first and third major sections are dealing with the same issue, though with a different tone (causing some scholars to argue that chapters 10-13 comprised a different letter, the "severe letter" [cf 2:3-4; 7:8]). There are further differences:

- in the first section Paul defends his altered plans to visit, while in the third section he again mentions his desire to visit;
- the first section boasts of the Lord, while the third section boasts of Paul. In many ways this letter heats up toward the end, with the second section (dealing with the collection) functioning as a calm before the final storm!

Chapter 6

Pauline Ecclesiology

Paul's letters reveal the nature of the early Church in the communities he founded approximately 20 years after the death of Jesus. At its inception, the Christian community enjoyed all the privileges of childhood. Construing Church as the body of Christ is the most significant notion of the Church according to Paul. The following are the main tenets of Pauline ecclesiology

1. The Body (*sôma*) of Christ

As Dunn points out, the body is “the dominant theological image in Pauline ecclesiology”

See in the Proto-Paulines:

1Cor 12:27: “Now you are the **body of Christ** and individually members of it.”

Rom 12:5: “so we, who are many, are **one body in Christ**, and individually we are members one of another.”

Note the similarities and differences between the two verses.

Relationship between the Believers and the Body of Christ

1 Cor 12:27	1 Cor 10:16	Rom 12:5
27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.	The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in (koinônia) the body of Christ?	so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.

See also in the Deutero-Paulines:

Col 2:19; “and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.”

Eph 4:15-16; “But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way **into him who is the head, into Christ**, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”

What is the difference between the use of the body metaphor in the Proto-Paulines and in the Deutero-Paulines?

In the proto Pauline letters Church as a whole is considered to be the body of Christ, whereas in the deuteron Pauline letters Christ is the head of the body.

Where did Paul get this term from?

- from his Adam christology (cf Rom 5:12-21)
- from the ‘in Christ’ of his mysticism (cf 2 Cor 5:17)
- “corporate personality”
- extension of his concepts of Messiah and people of God
- from the words of the heavenly revelation on the Damascus road (Acts 9:4-5)
- Gnostic primal man myth: “individuals as pieces of the body of the original heavenly man”.

[For a classical work on gnosticism in Corinth, see: Walter Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth: An investigation of the letters to the Corinthians*, trans. by John E. Steely, Nashville TN: Abingdon, 1971].

There is a growing consensus that gnosticism was not yet developed at the time of Paul. The beginning of gnosticism is dated more at the end of the first and beginning of the second century.

III. A combination of the following two points is often suggested to be the most likely theory:

1. Sacramental usage in 1 Corinthians 10:11 (cf from the last supper traditions)
2. The image of the city or state as a body as used in political philosophy: “the body as a vital expression of the unity of a community despite the diversity of its members.”

However, the Pauline Damascus experience where he got the revelation of the mystery of identification of the Church with Christ (“Why do you persecute me”) played a significant role in shaping this ecclesiological definition.

Typology of the Body-Members Metaphor in Extra-Biblical Literature

source: Andreas Lindemann, *Die Kirche als Leib. Beobachtungen zur “demokratischen” Ekklesiologie bei Paulus*, in *ZTK* 92 (1995) 140-165, pp. 142-146:

The body-members metaphor is used:

type	purpose	Sitz-im-Leben	representatives
status quo	to support the established social order and to defend it against criticism (p. 143)	strike, social unrest	Livy (Menenius Agrippa) Cassius Dio Dionysius of Halicarnassos
bonum commune	to illustrate that individuals have to subordinate their own interests to the good of the whole (p. 144)	philosophy	Seneca Cicero Epictetos
equality	equality and reciprocal relations of the members (p. 145)	philosophy	Plato Aristoteles
hierarchy	to legitimate a hierarchical order caput - corpus	ideology to support those in power	Seneca Philo

“Paul shifts the corporate image of the Christian community from that of nation state (historic Israel) to that of body politic, that is from a community identified by ethnic and traditional boundary markers to one whose members are drawn from different nationalities and social strata” (cf 1 Cor 12:13). Key distinguishing factor: “a sense of mutual interdependence in Christ, expressed in a mutual responsibility one for another which manifests the grace of Christ.”

The “Body of Christ” Metaphor in its Immediate Context

In the context of 1 Corinthians 12-14 Paul introduces the metaphor of the body of Christ to counter misconceptions and misunderstandings in the Corinthians community. Paul opposes those who insinuate that if there are no ecstatic charism there is a deficient form of being Christian. In 1 Cor 12:12-31 Paul is trying to say that the Corinthian enthusiasts misunderstood the gospel. He intends to exhort the strong and to encourage the weak. Paul applies the metaphor of the body to the *ekklēsia* in order to explain the dialectic relationship between the one and the many.

12:12a For just as the body is one and has many members

ONE BODY HAS MANY MEMBERS discussed in 12:14-19

12:12b and all the members of the body, though many, are one body

MANY MEMBERS FORM ONE BODY

discussed in 12:20-26

12:14-19 Encouraging the “Weak”

12:14-19 Encouraging the “Weak:” Here Paul addresses the problems of those Corinthians who do not belong to the glossolalists and miracles workers, i.e., those who had less spectacular charisms such as charity work and administrative work. Their problem is that they are not accepted or respected. In fact they are rejected by many. They have self-doubts asking whether they are truly Christians. Paul intends to convince them that they belong to the community and are needed for the life of the community. His key argument is found in 12:18: “But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.” God has given to each their characteristic charisms. Paul stresses the diversity and the need of diverse gifts for the proper functioning of the whole.

12:20-26 *Exhorting the “Strong:”* Here Paul addresses those who enjoy the respect of others on the basis of their charism (glossolalists, miracle workers). He intends to move the strong to recognize that the weak are important for the survival of the community. He insists that the strong must accept the weak as full members of the community.

The Meaning of the “Body of Christ” Metaphor

The metaphor “Body of Christ” is easily misunderstood by the modern reader. We need to remember here what was stressed in connection with the meaning of *sôma* body above. The *sôma* is the embodied I, the way the human person relates to others and the world. “Body of Christ” is used in a Eucharistic context (cf 1 Cor 10:16) and in an ecclesiological context (cf 1 Cor 12:12-31) does not refer to the body as a part of the human person (as distinguished from the soul) but as the embodied human person as a whole. “Body of Christ” means Jesus Christ himself in so far as he relates to God, others and the world.

Paul illustrates what the oneness in the body of Christ means (unity in diversity) means by applying it to the major social divisions of his time. 1 Cor 12:13 is in the immediate context of his statements on the “body of Christ”:

Gal 3:28	1 Cor 12:13	Col 3:11	Rom 12:5
There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female;	Jews or Greeks, slaves or free	there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scyth’ian, slave and free;	we, who are many
cf. Gal 3:27 for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.	For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -	but Christ is all and in all!	so we ... are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.

Col 3:11 is different from the Proto-Pauline quotes on important counts:

- 1) “Greek” is mentioned first and then “Jew”.
- 2) Barbarians and Scythians are only found in Colossians.
- 3) In Colossians the alternative to the “many” is expressed as “Christ is all and in all”. There is no explicit reference to “body” nor to “oneness”.

2. The People of God

Another underlying concept of Paul’s ecclesiology is the concept of the people of God. “People” is not a sociological concept. Upon studying various sociological essays, I discern that sociology is not about people because the concept of people is not a sociological classification; it is not observable. Rather, “people” denotes a theological categorization because it is an ideal projected like the promise made to Abraham.

Paul views Jesus’ disciples as the continuation of the people of Israel. The heads of Israel betrayed God’s promises to Abraham and abandoned the true Israel. The true and definitive Israel can be found in the communities of Jesus’ disciples, both Jews and Gentiles, as the promises to Abraham not only were addressed to a small segment of humanity, apart from the rest. Abraham’s descendants had to envelop the entire boundless world. But the Jews raised barriers and prevented the entrance of ethnic communities separate from the Jews. This is described in Chapters 9 - 11 of Romans, constituting Paul’s essential ecclesiology.

Paul does not seek to convert individuals; he wants to extend the people of God to the far corners of the world because that is the plan God revealed to Abraham. Jesus came to carry out that plan of Abraham. He died for that cause. But afterwards, his disciples broke down the barriers and spread out throughout the world so that the nation of God could encompass Jews and non-Jews. Jesus did not come to save souls; his mission was to reestablish Abraham’s descendants, breaking down the barriers and taking charge, personally, of the leadership of that people.

A people envelop the entire human existence. Jesus did not come to teach a religion or wisdom; he came to change every aspect of life.

“People” encompasses everything from economy, politics, culture, to corporeal life, from the food we eat to natural resources. All these facets comprise “people”. The disciples’ mission was to bring into being the people that will be the people of God, integrating all other peoples in the unity of Abraham’s project. There is room for everyone because barriers no longer exist. Jesus suppressed all barriers that originated from one culture, one segment of humanity, and one lifestyle, from some closely guarded Jewish leaders detached from other peoples. In raising practically insurmountable obstacles, the leaders of Israel made the entrance of pagans nearly impossible. Now the people are open to all and Paul believes it will soon envelope all humanity.

The Pauline communities and other disciples called by other Apostles constitute the inception of this now free and open people. They are numerically insignificant but Paul’s faith consists of the following: He sees in them the beginning of a new humanity reunited in a shared life in which diversity is united in love and solidarity.

3. The “ekklesia” (congregation, church)

Initially, the disciples of Jesus believed their gathering did not need a name. They were Jews, members of the chosen people of Israel. Within Israel they were followers of the way of Jesus. They awaited the kingdom of God that Jesus had announced. But the kingdom did not materialize. It appeared farther away than they had foreseen. The concept of the kingdom of God grew to be the day when this world would come to an end, ushering in a new world, anticipated as a great miracle of God. But now it seemed exceedingly distant in time. The disciples could not simply wait for that day in the remote future. They lived on the earth; earthly life continued. They had to give themselves a name, all the more so after pagans converted and disciples began to distance themselves from Orthodox Judaism.

Paul gave all his communities the same name to express a sense of unity. The name Paul adopted was “ekklesia,” a brilliant choice because it is a very significant word. The word “ekklesia” had but a single meaning. It referred to the assembly of peoples, the “demos,” that met to govern a city. It had no other meaning. Paul knew exactly

what he was doing in choosing that particular word. He did not choose a word with a religious connotation. During those times, various types of religious associations existed in Greek cities. However, Paul knew that he was not going to create a religion or a cult in the city. A religion or cult did not interest him. For Paul, his life was the cult of the disciples of Jesus. Paul's mission was to call for the formation of a people. A city's communities represented a people, the people of God in that city. They were the true people, forming a genuine "demos" even though they were an inconsequential minority. But Paul's vision looked far into the future, with an invincible faith. There gathered the people, in that assembly of disciples that was the assembly of the people.

Chapter 7

The Letter to the Galatians

If Galatians was written at about the same time as 2 Corinthians in Macedonia, as a number of scholars assume, the letter also has a fairly long pre-history which plays quite an important role in Paul's argument. In 4:19, obviously referring to his first evangelization in Galatia, the apostle says that he was in the pain of childbirth, until Christ was formed in them. He talks about a physical weakness which was the cause of his first proclamation of the gospel among them (4:13). Finally he reminds them, "I have become as you are" (4:12). Paul is reminding the Galatians that they had responded very positively to him during that first visit: "though my condition put you to the test, you did not scorn or despise me, but welcomed me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. ... I testify that, had it been possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me" (4:14-15). This is a very strong expression of their love and acceptance of Paul. As Paul presents it, they had a very high appreciation of him. But it was not just a human friendship. They welcomed him "as Jesus Christ" which might be an indication of the close connection between accepting Paul and accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ. The apostle also states that the community did him no wrong (4:12b).

These statements about the past relationship between Paul and the Galatians are all made in a context of severe crisis. This is clear in the letter right from the beginning. In the place of an epistolary thanksgiving we read: "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel" (1:6). It is obvious that the crisis at Galatia concerns both their relationship with Paul and their faith. Because of the good reception he had had at Galatia, Paul can hardly fathom that things changed so quickly. He expresses this when he says, "You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?" (3:1). Even though at the beginning they would have given to him what is most precious to them, now he wonders whether they consider him as their enemy (4:15-16). Thus Paul is afraid that his work for them may have been wasted (4:11).

After remembering how much the Galatians had loved and appreciated him, his view of the situation slightly changes. He expresses his own love for the community and begins to see a little hope as to the possibilities of their change. In 4:19, he addresses them with the vocative: "my children". It is immediately obvious that Paul does not call them children to emphasize his authority over them. Children means here the ones who are being born and for whom he as their mother suffers the pains of childbirth (cf 4:19). This is a strong expression of intimate love. Paul had assumed that the birth, obviously an image for the first conversion, had taken place and that Christ had been formed in them. In the present crisis, however, Paul sees again the need for a conversion, the process of their coming to faith in Jesus Christ needs to be repeated.

The fact that Paul can see the present crisis in this light is already a positive development after sounding quite pessimistic if not embittered in 1:6 and 3:1-5. Paul realizes and admits to the Galatians in 4:20 that he has been at a loss concerning them, quite disturbed without any perspective of future development, and that this is the reason for his harsh tone in the letter so far. If remembering their common past has already led him to change somewhat, being present with them would help him change his tone completely. Finally in 5:10 Paul can even express a certain confidence that the Galatians will abide with what he and the gospel exhort them to do.

Paul's love for the community has not changed, even though his harsh tone in the first half of the letter may have made the Galatians wonder. But Paul is stressing that their attitude toward him has changed. They have deserted him and turned to another gospel (1:6). Paul even asks whether they consider him their enemy (4,16). They expect salvation from doing the works of the law (3:2-5), desire to be subject to the law (4:21) and to be circum-cised (5:2). Even though Paul spends most of his time trying to convince them theologically, it cannot be overlooked that the faith crisis is coupled with a crisis in the interpersonal relationship. This is also noticeable regarding the future. Besides the exhortations concerning their faith convictions and faith life, Paul also begs them "become as I am" (4:12) and "let no one make trouble for me" (6:17). His reminder of their former deep appreciation for him in 4:15 is certainly an implicit request to return to that former attitude.

We conclude that in the letter to the Galatians Paul reminds the addressees both of their deep love and appreciation for him and of his maternal love for them at the beginning of their relationship. Paul emphasizes that, despite his harsh and sometimes sarcastic tone, his love for them is still there; for he accepts to suffer the pain of childbirth for them again. But implicitly Paul tells the Galatians that they are not faithful to their love for him. Even though the Galatian crisis is much more than a crisis of their relationship with Paul, the latter still plays an important part. There is a fundamental difference in comparison to 1 Thessalonians and Philippians, since in Galatians the relationship of the community to their apostle is not only threatened by faith issues, persecution or inner strife but also by their attitude toward Paul personally. It seems to Paul that they consider him their enemy. The reason why the relationship with the apostle is even more involved is apparently that the Galatians have rejected Paul's gospel and have turned to a different one. As compared to 1 Thessalonians and Philippians this aspect is new.

Critical issues in the Study of Galatians

Authenticity: No significant dispute

Unity: No significant dispute

Paul's Dialogue with the Galatians

Paul's activity in Galatia and contacts with the Galatians according to Acts

As a result of the decision of the Christian assembly in Antioch (13:1-3), Paul and Barnabas begin a missionary journey that takes them to Cyprus (13:4-12), and then on to Pamphylian coastal cities (13:13) and southern Galatian cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (13:14-14:23), then back to Antioch (14:26-15:2) and to Jerusalem (see below).

The area in question represents the southern portion of the Roman province of

- “Jerusalem conference” (15:4-29)
- As a result of the Jerusalem Conference, Paul undertakes a “second missionary journey” in which, via an in-land route (15:30-41, as opposed to via Cyprus and the coastal cities and trading ports of southern Asia Minor), Paul re-visits the southern Galatian cities (16:1-5) and then moves northward
 - Phrygia (16:6): no cities mentioned

(North) Galatia (16:6) (we assume he means “north” Galatia where he has not yet been, but no cities are mentioned), and then on to Macedonia, Achaia, Ephesus and back to Caesarea (see previous sessions)

This area that Paul now visits for the first time represents the northern section of the Roman province of Galatia (= the original ethnic region called “Galatia” from which the Roman province took its name)

After a very brief visit to Jerusalem (18:22), Paul undertakes a “third missionary journey”, in which, again by land, he travels through Galatia (18:23, north or south?) and Phrygia (18:23) (no cities mentioned in either region), and then on to Ephesus (19:1-20:1); 3 years, Macedonia (20:2a); Achaia (20:2b-3a); 3 months, Philippi (20:6); Troas (20:4-12), Miletus (20:17-38); Caesarea (21:8-14):

- There are no more mentions of contacts with the Galatian Christians
- Acts on Paul's time in Galatia and relations with the Galatians

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- The Acts picture of Paul's time in southern Galatia is marked by
 - the success of the mission of Paul (and Barnabas in the "first journey") among the Gentiles
 - the opposition of the Jews to the preaching of the gospel
- Especially noteworthy is the local "colour" given to Gentile beliefs (cf Acts 14:8-18 on the mission in Lystra)
- Acts suggests that Galatia is the region that Paul has visited most throughout his 3 missionary journeys

The sequence of Paul's contacts with the Galatians according to Paul's letters

Because Galatians depends heavily on what Paul says about his visits to Jerusalem, it is necessary to include this information here.

- Paul **FIRST** visited Jerusalem three years after his "conversion" (Gal 1:18-19)
 - he met only with Peter and James
 - Jews in Jerusalem and Judaea did not know him (Gal 1:22; cf 1:13)
 - we are not told by Paul where he was for the three years between his conversion and his visit to Jerusalem, though some of it was in Damascus (cf Gal 1:17b) and Arabia (Gal 1:17a)
- This visit to Jerusalem was followed by missionary work in Syria and Cilicia (Gal 1:21)
- Paul is engaged for 14 years (Gal 2:1)
 - where?
 - does Paul actually begin some of his missionary journeys during this period? (Galatia? Macedonia? Achaia? elsewhere?)
- Paul pays a **SECOND** visit to Jerusalem after this 14 year period (Gal 2:1-10)
 - From what Paul says, this accords with the "Conference" visit described in Acts 15
 - Paul mentions going to Jerusalem with Titus and Barnabas, and taking famine relief with him from Antioch
 - but this accords more with what Acts says about the visit described in Acts 11:27-30
- Paul encounters difficulty with Judaizers in Antioch right after this conference (Gal 2:11-14)
 - specifically, Peter! (but cf Acts 15)
 - Barnabas also is led astray (cf Acts 15)

- Paul may have then traveled to Galatia (then to Ephesus) to lay the foundation for the “collection” in those places (1 Cor 16:1; 8:19)
- Paul receives news of Judaizers working in Galatia and sends Galatians as a letter of admonition

QUESTIONS:

- Did Paul found a church or churches (Gal 1:2) in Galatia? And if so, when?
 - Paul apparently did found a church or churches in Galatia, since he treats the churches (pl) as he does the church in Corinth (also 4:13!)
 - When did he found such churches
 - during the initial three years before he visited Jerusalem?
 - during the 14 years after his FIRST visit and before his SECOND visit?
 - after the SECOND visit (“Conference”)?
 - only indication in Galatians: 4:13 “when I preached the gospel to you at the first”
 - “formerly”?
 - “first” (of two visits)? which would indicate that Paul has been there twice and that this letter is thus his third contact with them (understood: from him to them)
- If so, where?
 - southern Galatia?
 - northern Galatia?
 - both?

TENTATIVE RESPONSE:

- It may be possible to chart some of Paul’s engagement with his communities on the basis of the spread of a Judaizing counter-mission, which appears to spread from Jerusalem northwards to Antioch, Galatia, and then to Ephesus, Macedonia and Achaia.
- If so, this letter to the Galatians may slightly predate or be almost contemporaneous with Paul’s letter to the Philippians and 2 Corinthians (i.e., the period of the Ephesian imprisonment)

Pauline Letters & Theology

- This would suggest that Paul's account of his visits to Jerusalem in this letter (twice) differs from the account that Luke gives us in Acts (three by this point: Acts 9:11- 15)
- Such a scenario would suggest that by this point in his ministry (e.g., at the point of the Ephesian imprisonment) Paul has already been present among the Galatians once ("formerly", which thus accords with the picture in Acts, and would suggest that Paul is writing this letter after the Jerusalem Conference, and before he has visited them again), or "twice" (which might suggest that Paul was in Galatia more than once before the so-called "Jerusalem Conference")

III. The Structure of Galatians

1:1-5	Letter opening
-	Thanksgiving
1:6-10	Body opening I
1:11-12	Body opening II
1:13 - 4:11	Body middle
4:12-20	Body closing
4:21 - 5:15	Body middle (cont.)
5:16 - 6:10	Paraenesis
6:11-18	Letter closing

IV. An overview of Galatians

Letter Opening and Thanksgiving

- Galatians has a long letter-opening (esp the self-description of the sender(s), 1:1-2a, and the greeting, which goes into detail about the identity of Jesus, 1:3b-5)
- Galatians is the only Pauline letter NOT to have a thanksgiving (or blessing)
- Though missing the Thanksgiving, the letter-opening details indicate to us that Paul will in all likelihood
 - underscore his apostolic authority (which he invokes in 1:1), and
 - build on who Jesus is and what Jesus has done for the Galatians.

Body

The double body opening does not mean that there are two different topics to be dealt with; in this case, it indicates the emphasis that Paul wants to give to one topic: the abandonment (perceived or real) by the Galatians of the gospel that they had received from Paul

If that “gospel” was the same gospel that Paul had preached in his other churches, then what the Galatians appear to be abandoning is one (or more) of the following:

- apocalyptic scenario: “This age” || “New Age”
- and/or Christ’s role in that scenario (i.e., as the Lord of those who are now in the “New Age”, as opposed to those who still find themselves under the lordship of death, sin, law, etc.)
- and/or the apostles’ role as the one who makes the “transfer” possible (i.e., as the one who has made it possible for the “transfer” to the “new age” to happen)

It does not seem that it is the latter: Paul is upset that they are rejecting his message, not the role that he has played

- He appeals to them as his children and uses his apostolic authority to correct the situation, but he does so (apparently) on the basis that his authority still holds
- 1:11 - 2:14: delineates Paul’s “credentials” to preach the authentic gospel

It does appear, at least in part, that the scenario itself is in question: something is clearly different in the Galatians now from what it was before, but it does not appear to be apocalyptically different.

The reason has to do with the defining feature of the scenarios, i.e., the question of lordship.

Thus, it does appear to have to do with Christ’s role (as perceived by Paul) in this scenario: put simply, Christ is not their Lord, IF they are also contending that they have another Lord (namely, the Law). There is no “apocalyptic scenario” in the abstract; it is only one that exists where two lords are at odds. Thus, the appearance of the “risen Christ” as Lord of a “new age” has relativized all other claims to lordship, including that of the Law.

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- 2:15-21: two competing lords (law, flesh) vs. Christ
 - if Christ is not Lord, then Christ has died in vain (21)
- 3:1 - 5:1: faith in Christ (vs. obedience to the Law) is what allows us to be in the “new age”

Hagar (slave) // Sinai (law) || Sarah (free) // Jerusalem (promise)
Ishmael || Isaac

Those who have the Law as Lord (slaves of law) || Those who have Christ as Lord (free through Christ)

To be “in Christ” implies also having the “Spirit” (which is evidently not possible via the Law) because they have died in their own lives and now live only “in Christ” (i.e., if Christ is not real, then those who are “in Christ” are twice-dead!):

- Those who do not live “in Christ” through the Spirit (i.e., who have another Lord, and thus another spirit) have lives characterized by the vices listed in 5:19-21
- Those who live “in Christ” through the Spirit (i.e., who have Christ as Lord) have lives characterized by the virtues listed in 5:22-23

V. Tentative Conclusions

In Galatians Paul is fighting the same battle that he has begun to fight among the Corinthians, namely, against those who would say that someone can only be “in Christ” by being Jewish. (Jews may receive Christ as their Messiah, but Gentiles must accept the Law and THEN they can be “in Christ”.) This is why Brown can observe accurately “only parts of II Cor match it [i.e., Galatians] in passion” (Brown, Introduction, 467).

For Paul, someone can only be in Christ through “faith” alone, that is, through trust in God that God can do what God promises, without any human “work”.

- “faith in Christ” (2:16; 3:22) (= faith of a person in Christ? or = the faithfulness of Christ shown in his life and death?)
 - 2:16: expression is clarified by the second clause (“a person is not justified from works dictated by the law but rather through

faith in Jesus Christ, and we are those who have believed in (explicit) Jesus Christ”)

- 3:22: “under the Law everything falls under the category of sin, in order that the promise that comes from faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe”
- “faith in Christ” is the “means of transfer” from “this age” to “the new age”
 - it suggests a direction of the heart, and consequently the eyes (emotion-fused action), rather than the actions of the feet, or hands, or genitals (purposeful action)

Chapter 8

The Letter to the Ephesians

The letter to the Ephesians is one of the most encouraging, instructive and inspiring books in the Bible. The passages which describe God's great plan of salvation reach to the highest places in heaven, and the passages which instruct us on how we are to live godly lives here on earth address in great detail our lives here on earth. Where Christians have a man-centred doctrine of salvation, this letter will bring correction, where there are tribal or class divisions among Christians, this letter will bring unity, and where there is confusion with regard to day to day holy living, this letter will bring light and hope. The pastor who studies it carefully will find great benefit for his own soul, and when he preaches it he will feed his people rich food from God's word.

A. Paul and Ephesus:

- Largest city and political capital of Asia Minor; location of a large temple dedicated to the Greek goddess Artemis.
- Paul and his associates spend several years in Ephesus (see Acts 18:19-21; 19:1-40; 20:16-38; 1 Cor 15:32; 16:8-9).

- Other early Christian preachers also passed through Ephesus, such as *Priscilla and Aquila* (Acts 18:18-26) and *Apollos* (Acts 18:24-26)
- The Church in Ephesus continued to grow and became a major center of Pauline Christianity after Paul's own death (cf 1 Tim 1:3; 2 Tim 1:18; 4:12; cf Rev. 1:11; 2:1-7)
- Note: The words "in Ephesus" are missing from Eph 1:1 in many early biblical manuscripts.
 - Originally, verse one probably just read, "To the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus"
 - This again indicates that Eph may have been composed as a summary or an introduction to Pauline thought.

B. Object of the Letter

It has been said that Paul combated immoral doctrines and an antinomian propaganda that especially endangered those to whom the letters were addressed, but this hypothesis would not explain the dogmatic part of the Epistle, and even in the hortatory part nothing betokens polemical preoccupation. When we read the letter, Paul's reasons for writing it become clear. There are four main reasons why Paul wrote this letter:

- He wanted the church at Ephesus to understand that our salvation is something that God planned from eternity and that he planned it in such a way that it would show the glory of his grace.
- He wanted to teach them that as the saved people of God they were greatly blessed and he wanted to remind them of some of these great blessings they received when they came to salvation in Christ.
- He wanted to remind them that in Christ the middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles had been brought down, so that now in Christ there are no racial or tribal distinctions.
- He wanted to encourage them to live their lives worthy of the calling they had received. He wanted to show them that those who are saved must now begin to live distinctive lives here on earth. In this letter, therefore, Paul gives very specific teaching on how we are to live our lives in the local church, in the world and in the home.

C. Authenticity

The authenticity of the letter is often disputed on the basis of its vocabulary, style, doctrines, date and place of composition. We will discuss them in detail:

- ❖ **Vocabulary:** This letter like all Pauline letters contains *hapax legomena*, about seventy-five words which are not found in the Apostle's other writings; however, it were a mistake to make this fact the basis of an argument against Pauline authenticity. Of these words nine occur in quotations from the OT and others belong to current language or else designate things which Paul elsewhere had had no occasion to mention. Others, again, are derived from roots used by Paul.
- ❖ **Style:** This Epistle is remarkable for the length of its periods.
 - The first three chapters contain hardly more than three sentences and these are over laden with relative or participial causes that are simply strung together, frequently without being connected.
 - Often, too, several synonyms are in juxtaposition and in very many cases a noun has an explanatory genitive, the sense of which differs but very slightly from that of the noun itself. For all of these reasons the language of the Epistle, heavy, diffuse, and languid.
 - Moreover, it must be observed that all these peculiarities spring from the same cause: They all indicate a certain redundancy of ideas surging in upon a deep and tranquil meditation on a sublime subject, the various aspects of which simultaneously appear to the author's mind and evoke his admiration.
 - Hence also the lyric tone that pervades the first three chapters, which constitute a series of praises, benedictions, thanksgivings. A sort of rhythmic composition has been pointed out in chapter i, and in chapter iii traces of liturgical hymnology
- ❖ **Doctrines:** The favorite Pauline doctrines such as justification, the Law, the flesh, etc., are not totally lacking in this epistle. However, the writer's subject does not lead him to develop these particular doctrines. On the other hand, he clearly indicates, especially in chapter i,

- The supreme place which, in the order of nature and grace, is allotted to Christ, the author and centre of creation, the point towards which all things converge, the source of all grace, etc.
- In fact this Epistle treats more of the Church than of Christ. The word *church* no longer means, some local church or other, but the one universal Church, and organic whole uniting all believers in one body of which Christ is the head. Here we find the systematized development of elements insinuated from time to time in the letters to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans.
- At the death of Christ the wall of all separations was broken down and all have since had access to the Father in the same spirit. They do not meet on the Jewish ground of the abolished Law but in the edifice founded directly on Christ.
- From heaven, where He has been exalted, Christ bestows His gifts on all the faithful without distinction, commanding, however, that in the Church certain offices be held for the common welfare. The hierarchical terms used so constantly later on (*episkopoi, presbyteroi, diakonoi*) are not met with here. The apostles and prophets, always mentioned together, in the Epistle to the Ephesians

The exposition that we have given of the doctrines proper to the Epistle to the Ephesians has been so made as to show that none of these doctrines taken separately contradicts the theology of the great Pauline Epistles and that each one individually can be connected with certain elements disseminated in these Epistles.

- ❖ **Date and Place of Composition:** Like the Epistles to the Colossians, to the Philippians, and to Philemon, that to the Ephesians was written during the leisure hours of one of the Apostle's imprisonments.
- Apostle must have written them while a prisoner in Ephesus in 57 and prior to those which he sent to the Corinthians and Romans. But we are not acquainted with any of the details of this captivity at Ephesus.
- Moreover, the doctrine set forth in the letters in question belongs to an epoch subsequent to the composition of the Epistle to the Romans (58); hence they were not written previously to

the captivity in Caesarea (58-60). On the other hand, they are anterior to the first persecution, to which the author makes no allusion when describing the armor and combats of the faithful; therefore they cannot be assigned to the last captivity. It consequently remains for them to be ascribed to a period between 58 and 63, but whether they were produced in Caesarea or in Rome (61-63) is still a much mooted question.

- It is reasonable to deem that the Apostle, who was captive at Rome, was informed by Epaphras of the dogmatic and moral errors that had come to light in Colossæ and the neighbouring cities, in churches of which he was not the founder. This may be the immediate reason for the Apostle to write this letter.

D. Structure of the Letter

The letter to the Ephesians is divided into two sections. Chapters 1-3 consist primarily of doctrinal teaching on how God planned our salvation from before the foundation of the world and what are some of the consequences of this plan. Then in chapters 4-6 Paul applies this doctrinal teaching by giving very detailed and specific applications on how we are to live as the people of God. This is a broad outline of its contents.

Letter Opening (1:1-14)

- A. Sender & Recipients (1:1)
- B. Formulaic Greeting (1:2)
- C. Blessing Prayer: heavenly mysteries in Christ (1:3-14)

Letter Body (1:15 - 6:20)

- A. Prayer for the faith, love and hope of those whom God has made part of the body of the heavenly Christ (1:15-23)
 - B. Through the apostles God has made the Gentiles alive in Christ (2:1- 3:21)
1. Contrast between their old “death” in sin and life in Christ (2:1-10)
 2. Reconciliation of the Gentiles to God in the one body of Christ (2:11-22)
 3. Paul’s suffering and ministry to bring the Gentiles into the body of Christ (3:1-13)
 4. Prayer for faith and love among Paul’s converts (3:14-21)

C. Christian life in the world (4:1-6:20)

1. Unity of the body of Christ which is built up by different ministries (4:1-16)
2. Old life in darkness” contrasted with new life as “children of light” (4:17 - 5:21)
3. Household code: Marriage in Christ; children and parents; slaves and masters (5:22 - 6:9)
4. Gird yourselves for spiritual warfare (6:10-20)

Letter Conclusion (6:21-24)

- A. Paul is sending Tychicus, a faithful minister (6:21-22)
- B. Generic greetings to the whole community (6:23)
- C. Final Blessing (6:24)

Doctrinal Part: The following doctrinal themes are discussed in this letter

- A description of the grand plan of salvation (1:3-14). We often think of salvation from our own point of view: how we came to Christ in repentance and faith and how we received forgiveness for our sins and were adopted into the family of God as his beloved children. Ephesians, however, looks at our salvation from God’s point of view and not from ours. Paul begins by teaching us that our salvation did not begin with us, it began when God elected us and planned our salvation. These verses in chapter 1 follow a Trinitarian pattern: election and predestination by God the Father (vs. 3-6), redemption and forgiveness through God the Son (vs. 7-12) and sealing by the Holy Spirit (vs. 13-14). At the end of each section (i.e. in vs. 6, 12 and 14) we have the words “to the praise of his glorious grace” or “to the praise of his glory” which reminds us that the primary purpose in our salvation is the glory of God and of his grace.
- Paul’s first prayer for the Ephesians (1:15-23). A correct understanding of theology will do three things: it will move us to pray, it will inspire us to live a godly life and it will encourage us to reach the lost. Paul wrote great theology in vs. 1-14 and this immediately moved him to pray for the church at Ephesus. This is a model prayer that all pastors need to study carefully and to pray for their members. Paul knows Christians will only understand

great spiritual truths when the Spirit of God himself enlightens them; these things are not discerned naturally but spiritually. And so his first prayer for his readers is that God would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that they may know him better.

- Paul illustrates that the work of salvation is the work of a gracious and loving God (chapter 2). He uses the example of the Ephesians themselves to show the sheer power and beauty of the gospel. Here was a city which was full of idolatry and sin because her people were dead in transgressions and sins. There was no way they could save themselves since they were spiritually dead and full of sin. But when Paul came to the city to preach, the power of God came upon the Ephesians and they were made alive and created in Christ Jesus for good works. The Ephesians themselves knew well enough that their salvation could only be ascribed to the grace, mercy and power of God. Having been saved, they were reconciled to God and were brought into his kingdom where there are no racial or tribal walls: all such walls have been destroyed by Christ through the gospel.
- Paul the preacher of the mystery of God (3:1-13). In this passage Paul explains to the Ephesians the ministry that he has been given by Christ. He says that he was called to preach the mystery of God to the Gentiles, that they, the Gentiles, are heirs together with Israel and are members together of one body (3:6).
- Paul's second prayer for the Ephesians (3:14-21). Having reminded his readers of God's wonderful wisdom in the plan of salvation, Paul prays that his readers would be strengthened, that Christ would dwell in their hearts through faith and that they would grasp the great love of God.

Practical Part : Having explained to the Ephesians the great plan of God in salvation, Paul now gives them practical instructions on how they are to live a life worthy of the calling they have received. Broadly speaking, this part of the letter falls into four parts:

- Living the Christian life in the local church (4:1-16).
- Living the Christian life in the world (4:17-5:21).
- Living the Christian life in the home (5:22-6:9).
- Putting on the full armour of God (6:10-20).

E. Literary Dependence of Ephesians on Colossians:

- **Differences between Eph and Col:**
 - Ephesians is longer and better organized, but somewhat more generic than Colossians.
 - No specific opponents or false teachings are identifiable in Eph, in contrast to the greater detail of Col.
 - Theological ideas are more developed and language is even more “Christianized” in Eph than in Col.
 - Colossians is more personal and specific (thus possibly authentically by Paul); while Ephesians is much more formal and generic (thus more likely pseudepigraphic)
 - There are no greetings to individuals in the community at the end of Eph 6; this is very surprising, since Paul lived in Ephesus for over 3 years!
 - Several Pauline associates (Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Jesus/Justus, Epaphras) are mentioned at the end of Colossians (4:7-9), but only one, Tychicus, is mentioned as Paul’s envoy in Eph 6:21-22.
- **Similarities between Eph and Col** (whereas both are different from Paul’s earlier letters; see the table above)
 - Christology: Focus is on the divine, exalted, cosmic Christ
 - Soteriology: God’s mysterious plan, now revealed, is to save the whole world
 - Ecclesiology: Church is one worldwide entity; Christ is the head of the body/church
 - Eschatology: Christ is already now seated at God’s right hand (spatial)
 - Household Codes: Focus on community relations; longer and more “Christianized” in Eph
- **Result/Implication:** Most scholars think Colossians was the literary “source” and Ephesians was a later “expansion”; consider the following similarities in the themes and structures of both letters.

F. Literary and Theological Highlights of Ephesians:

- **Thesis / Blessing Prayer** (1:15-21):
 - first of many “quotable quotes” in Ephesians

- **Theological Section:** "Action of Christ" (2:1- 3:21)
 - Unity of Jews and Gentiles in the Church (2:11-22)
 - Mystery of the Church: the Body of Christ, with Christ as the head (3:1-13)
 - Inspiring concluding prayer (3:14-21)
- **Ethical Section:** "Living in Christ" (4:1- 6:20)
 - "... lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (4:1)
 - Unity of the Church: "one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all..." (4:2-16)
 - Lists of Vices and Virtues (4:17-32)
 - "Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." (5:1-2)
 - More Vices and Virtues: "live as children of the light" (5:3-20)
 - Relationships within Christian "households" (5:21-6:9)
- **Recapitulation:** Christianizing Roman Military Imagery (6:10-17)
 - Functions as a summary for the whole Epistle; "Be strong in the Lord"
 - Spiritualizes soldier's gear: whole armor, belt = truth, breastplate = righteousness, shoes = preaching, shield = faith, helmet = salvation, sword = Spirit = word of God
 - Note: A sword is the symbol typically associated with Paul in religious art; this is not because he himself was ever a soldier, but due to Eph 6:17

Chapter 9

The Letter to the Philippians

If we can trust the information given in the Acts of the Apostles (16:40 -17:1), Paul's foundational visit at Philippi almost immediately preceded that at Thessalonica. But the letter to the Philippians was probably written at Ephesus three to four years later. Thus Phil is one of the letters in the authentically Pauline corpus with the longest pre-history of the relationship between apostle and community. On this background it may be surprising that the past of their relationship plays a very subordinate role in our letter. While there is an autobiographical passage (3:4b-11), Paul never specifically focuses on the way he related to the community. He does, however, concentrate briefly on the relationship of the Philippians toward him. The motivation for the epistolary thanksgiving is that the Philippians shared in the gospel "from the first day until now" (1:5). Paul goes on to call that sharing in the gospel "a good work" (1:6). They were obedient not only in Paul's presence, but also in his absence (2:12).

The greatest emphasis, however, is on the financial support Paul had received from the community (4:10; 15:16). When Paul was in Thessalonica, thus shortly

after his stay at Philippi, they sent financial support “more than once” (4:16). When he had left Macedonia for Athens and Corinth (cf Acts 17:15 and 18:1) - Paul refers to this time as “the early days of the gospel” - no church shared with Paul in the matter of giving and receiving except the Philippians alone (Phil 4:15). Then, even though they continued to be concerned for Paul, they did not have an opportunity for some time to show it (4:10b). But shortly before the composition of Philippians they once again sent Paul financial support (4:10a).

The fact that Paul readily accepted financial support from the Philippians is frequently seen as an indication of Paul’s deep trust in them. H. Windisch even goes so far as to assume that Paul felt closer to Macedonia than to Achaia and that he loved Macedonia more than Achaia. This may well have been the Corinthians’ perception and their complaint, but in 2 Cor 12:13 Paul stresses that the Corinthians have not been worse off than the other churches. W. Pratscher has pointed out that Paul’s use of the parent-child relationship in 2 Cor 12:14-15 to explain why he did not accept financial support from the Corinthians is only correctly understood, if it is taken to be a characterization of the relationship between Paul and the Corinthian community as a love relationship. It is the special love relationship with the Corinthians that motivates his refusal to invoke his right to be financially supported.

1 Thess 2:9 seems to suggest that Paul did not accept financial support from a community while evangelizing there. But at Corinth, Paul had additional reasons for sternly rejecting their money. It was not his lack of love, but the tensions that existed in the relationship and his lack of trust. He was afraid that the opponents could use his acceptance of financial support against him, impress the Corinthians and damage the gospel (cf 1 Cor 9:12 and 2 Cor 11:12). Nevertheless, in 1 Cor 9:4-14, Paul firmly asserts the fundamental right of those who proclaim the gospel to be financially supported by the communities. Along the same lines Phil 4:10-17 clearly reflects that Paul expects financial support. Thus the fact that Paul invoked his right at Philippi is not a sign of the special love relationship, but rather an indication of the absence of tensions and of Paul’s trust that the Philippians were not prone to succumbing easily to accusations of the opponents.

It is striking that every time Paul refers to an aspect of the pre-history of his relationship with the Philippians, he stresses its continuity up to the present. The letter constitutes a new moment in the relationship between apostle and community. It reflects where the relationship is at, and it co-creates the present stage of the relationship. As in 1 Thessalonians, Paul sees the basis of their relationship in the sharing of the gospel. In 1:3-5 he not only thanks God that they accepted the gospel but also that they continue to share in the gospel which fills him with joy. In his love he misses the community and longs for them in the love of Christ Jesus (1:8 and 4:1; cf 2:24). Three times he calls them “beloved” (cf «my beloved» in 2:12; “my beloved brothers” and “beloved” in 4:1) and six times “brothers”. Paul realizes that it is more necessary for the Philippians that he remain in the flesh. Therefore he will continue with them for their progress and joy in faith (1:24-25). He rejoices when they support him financially, not for selfish reasons, but since he seeks their profit (4:17). He perceives the Philippian community as his joy and crown (4:1; cf 1 Thess 2:19). Finally, he is glad and rejoices with them and invites them to do the same (2:17b-18).

The way the Philippians relate to Paul at the time of the letter’s composition clearly indicates the mutuality that exists between them. They are sharers or partners in the gospel (1:5). In Paul’s imprisonment, in the defense and confirmation of the gospel they are his partners in grace (1:7). They have the same struggle as Paul (1:30) and are partners of his distress (4:14). Because they reciprocate in the relationship, because they respond to Paul’s love with love on their part, because they become his partners, they are his joy and his crown (4:1). Despite his fear regarding the future (2:16), at the present time it is clear that he had not run or labored in vain, for the community is his *staphanos*, the trophy, the reward for victory (4:1). His work has born good fruit.

There is one expression of deep affection in our letter which we need to focus on by way of conclusion. It is the articular infinitive (with preposition) *dia to echein me en tei kardiai hymas* in 1:7. Since both *me* and *hymas* could be the direct object of *echein*, two translations are possible: “because I hold you in my heart” and “because you hold me in your heart”. We are not going to enter into the discussion which one is to be preferred. Because of the mutuality in Philippians, Paul could have intended either of the two meanings.

Since Paul has a very positive view of the relationship, it is to be expected that he looks confidently into the future. In 1:6 he indeed expresses the confidence that God will bring to completion the good that already exists in the community. Paul sees that he has a responsibility in this process, namely to be available to them for their progress and joy in the faith (1:25).

There is, however, another side to this letter. We also meet a fearful Paul. His joy is not yet complete (cf 2:2). He knows that a relationship as well as a person's moral life is not static and that there is no guarantee that it will remain the way it is at a given moment. Paul is aware of the fragility of love, especially in a situation of internal friction in the face of threatening external persecution. Paul is afraid that on the day of Christ he may not be able to boast that he did not run or labor in vain. In order to avoid that, he addresses many exhortations to the community. Paul is above all concerned that they hold fast to the word of life (2:16; cf 2:12), "live a life worthy of the gospel of Christ" (1:27; cf 4:1) and that in doing so they live in unity with one another (cf 1:27; 2:1-5). In this context he would even be content, if they only held fast to what they have attained (3:16). To make it more concrete for them he exhorts them to imitate him and the ones among them who follow his example (3:17).

In his appeals, Paul is rather gentle. He gives them the example of Christ's journey from humiliation to exaltation (2:5-11) and his own journey from being a persecutor to being a believer (3:4b-11). In order to convince the community to follow his appeals, Paul even states that he is in a certain way dependent on their reaction to the gospel regarding the fruit of his life's work on the day of Christ. For it depends on their holding fast to the word of life whether he will come out good or bad in the final evaluation. Thus Paul has the courage to present himself in a fairly weak and dependent position.

By way of conclusion, we note that in Philippians, as in 1 Thessalonians, there are no appeals with regard to the relationship between apostle and community. Philippians presupposes a high degree of partnership and mutuality based on the sharing of the gospel. The Philippians had accepted the gospel preached by Paul, they have been obedient, and they have shared the financial burden of the evangelization. There was mutuality right from the beginning which

continued when Paul had moved on to Thessalonica, Corinth, and Ephesus. As the expressions of partnership show (cf 1:5 with 1:7), there is, as in 1 Thessalonians, a close connection between accepting the gospel and accepting Paul. While Paul does not express any fears concerning the mutuality of the relationship, he is very concerned about the steadfastness of the community's faith. He leaves no doubt that whether they live a life worthy of the gospel or not (1:27) involves him personally. His joy, even the total evaluation of his life's work at the end depends on it. Their mutual relationship is thus the basis of his moral exhortation.

The structure of Philippians

1:1-2	Letter opening
1:3-11	Thanksgiving
1:12-14	Body Opening I
1:15 - 2:18	Body Middle I
2:19-30	Body Closing I
3:1-2	Body Opening II
3:3 - 21	Body Middle II
4:1-9	Body Closing II
4:10 a	Body Opening III
4:10b-18	Body Middle III
4:19-20	Body Closing III
4:21-23	Letter Closing

This is now the fourth example of a letter of Paul with a tripartite, body (1 Thess, 1 Cor, 2 Cor). (The structure given here varies slightly from that given in Bloomquist, Function, 117).

An overview of Philippians

Paul's letter to the Philippians is intended to address three issues (which correspond to the three bodies of his letter):

- Paul's condition 1:12-2:30
- The danger presented by the Judaizers: 3:1-4:9
- Paul's response to the Philippians' support: 4:10-20

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A. Paul's condition (1:12-2:30)

That Paul's condition is what is primarily at stake in the letter is clear from both the letter opening ("servants") and in the thanksgiving (1:6-7).

- As expected, the thanksgiving also evidences that for which Paul gives thanks in the Philippians (1:5-6) and his "eschatological hope" (1:6 and 9-11)

The essence of Paul's presentation: Paul's attitude toward his imprisonment / sickness is that it is an occasion for the advance of the gospel

- May not be obvious, but it is obviously reaching places that it had not reached before as a result of the imprisonment
- It is true that some are preaching the gospel for the wrong reason (see the second part!), but at least the gospel is being preached in some form
 - Paul expresses his conviction that he will be freed, in part at least to correct the false preaching

Ultimately, the reason for Paul's rejoicing is that it allows him to reflect Christ (in his sufferings, the suffering of the "suffering servant", see Bloomquist, Function, 162-163), which is also true of Epaphroditus and of Timothy, as well as of the Philippians themselves

- Paul thus pictures himself, Epaphroditus, Timothy, and the Philippians, after the model of Christ "as the servant whose single-minded obedience leads him to give of himself and so jeopardize his life" (Bloomquist, Function, 166)
- And if one shares in Christ's death and suffering, then one will also share in the fate of Christ, namely, resurrection and honouring by God.

Chapter 10

The Letter to the Colossians

Epaphras, leader of the church in Colosse in Asia Minor (Colossians 4:12), came to Paul in Rome with good news and bad news about the church of Colosse. The good news was the gospel had born fruit among the Colossians (Colossians 1:6), who were continuing in the faith (Colossians 1:4) in Christ and in love for their fellow believers. The bad news was the Colossians were being troubled by a new teaching that was contrary to the gospel which Epaphras had been preaching to them. The new teaching claimed a profound knowledge apart from Christ (Colossians 2:8), an emphasis on following prescribed rituals (Colossians 2:16), the worship of angels (Colossians 2:18), and ascetic self-abasement (Colossians 2:18 & 20:23). The new teaching which included the worship of angels indicates that it invoked spiritual powers rather than calling on Christ in whom the fullness of God dwelt in bodily form (Colossians 2:9).

The new false teaching in effect denied the total sufficiency of Christ for salvation and the completeness of Christ's atonement. The details of the new false teaching are difficult to describe, because Paul did

not write about them point by point. Rather, Paul overwhelmed the false teaching and smothered it with the full and complete riches of Christ, his person and his redemptive work—the Christ who is the true God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, the Savior and God/Man who reconciled by his blood the sinners of the world to God, and who is the power of the believers' faith. In Christ is found the real knowledge, fullness, and completeness. Thus Paul asserted that Christians have no need for human philosophy and wisdom to be complete. They are complete in Christ, in whom they have the divine wisdom of his gospel and the perfect, complete salvation.

To deal with the new false teaching, Paul wrote his letter to the Colossians. Paul then dispatched his co-worker Tychicus to carry his letter to the church of Colosse (Colossians 4:7-8). Paul's letter was a circular letter to be shared with the other churches in the area, particularly nearby Laodicea (Colossians 4:16).

When Paul dispatched his letter to the Colossians, he sent the slave Onesimus with Tychicus back to his master Philemon, who was a member of the church of Colosse. This may explain why Paul wrote a longer section on the slave/master relationship than on the other human relationships, and why Paul emphasized his readers should forgive one another as God forgave them in Christ.

The Church of Colosse

Colosse was a city of southwestern Phrygia in the Roman province of Asia (Asia Minor) in what is now Turkey. It was located about 125 miles east of Ephesus near the cities of Hierapolis and Laodicea. Originally Colosse lay on the trade route from west to east. This location made it an important city. Mission work in Colosse was done by a man named Epaphras.

Paul called him his “dear fellow servant.” Epaphras had probably gone to Ephesus where he heard the gospel of Jesus from Paul. Afterwards he returned to his home in Colosse to start a congregation there. He likely did so under Paul's guidance. The church of Colosse appears to have consisted of mostly Gentile converts. Philemon was one of its members, to whom Paul wrote the letter we know now as the Book of Philemon.

The letter to the Colossians, like the letter to the Romans, was a letter addressed to a congregation which Paul had not established himself. Most of the members were unknown to Paul, as it appears from Colossians 2:1 in which he wrote: "I want you to know how great a struggle I am having for your sake, and for those in Laodicea and for all who have not seen me personally." Yet Paul enjoyed a close connection with the church in Colosse, which was located in the same Roman province of Asia in which Ephesus was the capital and where Paul had labored for more than two years. People from that entire area came to hear Paul, no doubt from Colosse as well. Furthermore, those who worked with Paul as well as those who were converted by Paul's preaching carried the gospel of Jesus to the entire area, for Acts 19:10 states: "Now this happened for two years, with the result that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks."

Outline of The Book of Colossians

Part 1: The Introduction, Colossians 1:1-14

- A. Greeting, Colossians 1:1-2
 - B. Thanksgiving for the faith and love of the Colossians in response to the hope of the gospel, which is the word of truth they had learned from Epaphras, Colossians 1:3-8
 - C. Prayer that the Colossians would be filled with a knowledge of God's will, Colossians 1:9-14
1. So they walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, Colossians 1:10
 2. So they are strengthened by the power of God in endurance and patience, Col 1:11
 3. So they give thanks to the Father for sharing in the inheritance of the saints of light, who were delivered from the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of his Son, in whom they had forgiveness, Col 1:12-14

Part 2: The Complete Sufficiency of Christ And His Gospel, Colossians 1:15-2:23

- A. The complete sufficiency of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Colossians 1:15-23
1. According to his person, Colossians 1:15-18

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- a. He is the very image and manifestation of the true invisible God, Col 1:15
 - b. He is the Creator of the angels and their invisible realm, as well as of the visible realm of this universe, Colossians 1:16-17
 - c. He is the Head of the church, Colossians 1:18
2. According to his work, Colossians 1:19-23
- a. He in whom the fullness of God dwells reconciled to God by his cross all things on earth and in heaven, Colossians 1:19-20
 - b. He reconciled the Colossians and us, the sinful humans that we were, by his death to present us to God as holy and blameless, so long as we continue to believe the gospel which was proclaimed in all creation, Col 1:21-23
- B. The complete sufficiency of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Colossians 1:24-2:5
1. This gospel led Paul to rejoice in what he suffered for the sake of the church to preach it, Colossians 1:24-25
 2. This gospel that God willed be made known to his holy believers consists of the formerly hidden mystery of Christ in you, the Christ who is the hope of glory, Colossians 1:26-27
 3. This gospel is proclaimed to present every person complete in Christ, Col 1:28-29
 4. This gospel gives the full assurance of understanding and true knowledge of God's mystery in the person of Christ, in whom are all the treasures of saving wisdom and knowledge, Colossians 2:1-3
 5. From this gospel and faith in Christ do not be misled by persuasive, fine-sounding arguments, Col 2:4-5
- C. The complete sufficiency of Christ and his gospel will free you from the heretical human regulations being imposed on you, Colossians 2:6-23
1. Walk in Christ Jesus the Lord and his gospel, for in him you have been rooted and built up, Col 2:6-7
 2. Let no one take you captive by means of empty, deceptive philosophy, which is based on human traditions and worldly principles, rather than on Christ, Col 2:8-15

- a. For in Christ all the fullness of the Godhead lives in bodily form, Colossians 2:9
- b. For in Christ you have already been made complete. He is the head over every power and authority, Colossians 2:10-15
- For in Christ you have the true spiritual circumcision of the heart, Colossians 2:11
- For you were baptized into Christ's death and resurrection, Colossians 2:12
- For God made you alive with Christ, forgave your sins, and canceled the legal code of the law that opposed us by nailing it to the cross, Colossians 2:13-14
- For God disarmed the powers of evil when he gave us the victory over them through Christ, Colossians 2:15
- C. For Christ is the true reality and fulfillment of the Old Testament ceremonial laws, to which you are no longer bound, Colossians 2:16-17
- D. So let no one who delights in abasing himself as a humble person and who delights in the worship of angels deprive you of the prize that you have in Christ, Colossians 2:18-19
- E. And since you died with Christ to the basic worldly principles, do not submit to ascetic decrees of what you cannot taste and touch, for such "wisdom" is merely a self-indulgence of the sinful mind that has no value in restraining the sinful urges of the flesh, Col 2:20-23

Part 3: Live the new life that you have with the All-Sufficient Christ, Colossians 3:1-4:6

- A. Having a new life in Christ, set your mind on the heavenly things, Colossians 3:1-4
- 1. Be dead to the sins you used to live in and live as the new spiritual person who is being renewed to be like God, Colossians 3:5-11
- 2. Display in your new life with Christ the virtues that are appropriate to be God's chosen, holy people, Colossians 3:12-15
- 3. Let the Word of Christ fill your heart in your worship services, and do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus with thanks giving, Colossians 3:16-17

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- B. Let your new life with Christ be evident in your personal relationships, Colossians 3:18-4:1
 - 1. In your marriage, Colossians 3:18-19
 - 2. In your home as parents and children, Colossians 3:20-21
 - 3. In your work place as slaves/employees and masters/employers, Colossians 3:22-4:1
- C. Let your new life with Christ be evident in prayer and in your conduct with those outside of the church, Col 4:2-6

Part 4: Conclusion, Colossians 4:7-18

- A. Tychicus and Onesimus will inform the Colossians about Paul's circumstances, Colossians 4:7-9
- B. Personal greetings, Colossians 4:10-15
- C. Closing instructions, Colossians 4:16-17
- D. Paul's personal closing greeting, Colossians 4:18

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Chapter 11

Pauline Christology

St. Paul insists on the truth of Christ's real humanity and Divinity, in spite of the fact that at first sight the reader is confronted with three objects in the Apostle's writings: God the human world, and the Mediator. But then the latter is both Divine and human, both God and man.

Paul encountered the risen Christ on the road to Damascus. After this experience, he changed his understanding of Jesus accordingly. How did Paul now understand the one whose followers he previously persecuted? It can be taken for granted that, after his conversion, Paul began to identify Jesus as Israel's Messiah; this is implied by the fact that Paul refers to Jesus as "Jesus Christ" "Christ Jesus" or simply "Christ". (What Jesus as the Christ accomplished will be considered later.) Also Paul came to believe that Jesus the Messiah, who had been crucified was now alive and dwelling in heaven, or at least no longer on earth. Paul's understanding of the person and nature of Jesus Christ, who or what exactly he is, is the subject of this inquiry.

Jesus Christ as a Human Being

Paul believes that Christ was and still is a human being. To express this idea, he uses various anthropological terms in his description of Christ and his salvation-historical work; he also identifies Christ as being a Jew in terms of his physical descent. Paul makes reference to “James the brother of the Lord” to have a brother implies that one is a human being (Gal 1:19). In Rom 5:15 and 1 Cor 15:21 Paul refers to Jesus Christ as a man (*anthrôpos*), in comparison and contrast to the first man. (Paul qualifies this by saying that Jesus Christ is the “man from heaven” as opposed to the “man from earth” [1 Cor 15:47-48]). Similarly, in 1 Tim 2:5 Paul calls Jesus a man (*anthrôpos*), the mediator between God and human beings.

Paul also uses the term “flesh” (*sarx*) to describe Jesus’ humanity; the term refers to physical or bodily existence. Paul also speaks of how God sent his own son “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (*en homoïomati sarkos hamartias*) by which he means that Christ appeared in history as a human being, under the constraints imposed upon the human race by sin (Rom 8:3) and in 1 Tim 3:16 he quotes from a hymn whose first line is “He appeared in flesh” (*ephanerothê en sarki*) by which is meant that Christ appeared as a human being. Finally, in Eph 2:14-15 Paul speaks of Christ’s “abolishing in his flesh (*sarki*)” the enmity between Jew and gentile. Paul also refers to Jesus’ body (*sôma*) in Rom 7:4 and in Col 1:21-22 he says that Christ reconciled “you” “by the body of his flesh” (*en to sômatitês sarkos autou*), by which he means Christ’s body as composed of flesh, or his human body.

In Rom 1:3 Paul says that, with respect to his physical descent (*kata sarka*), Jesus was from the seed of David and in Rom 9:5 he says that Christ, according to the flesh (*kata sarka*), was from the Israelites. In Gal 4:4, Paul says that God’s son was born of a woman (under the Law) which implies that he was a human being and a Jew. It should be noted, however, that Paul understands Jesus as a human being as sinless (2 Cor 5:21) righteous (Rom 5:19-19) and having humility (Phil 2:6-11); these characteristics set him apart from the rest of humanity.

Although Paul clearly believes in the humanity of Jesus, he makes little use of the gospel tradition in his letters, although he apparently

had access to it (see 1 Cor 7:25). That Paul makes little use of the gospel tradition is probably accidental, and does not reflect any prejudice against it. On three occasions, Paul makes use of gospel traditions that eventually found their way into the canonical gospels are: 1. 1 Cor 7:10 Paul cites Jesus authority for his prohibition of divorce (= Mark 10:2-12 pars.); 2. 1 Cor 9:14 Paul cites the Lord (Jesus) as an authority supporting the financial support of the apostles (= Matt 10:10; Luke 10:7) 3. Paul cites Jesus' words of institution in his dealings with the problem that the Corinthians were having at their celebration of the Lord's Supper (= Mark 14:22-25 par; Luke 22:14-20).

Jesus Christ as God

Jesus Christ is, in Paul's view, more than simply a human being; there are passages in which Paul affirms the pre-existence of Jesus and, more than this, that he has the same nature as God. On a few occasions Paul even identifies Jesus Christ explicitly with God.

As a partial religious-historical background, it should be noted that Jews in the second-Temple Judaism, both inside and outside of Palestine, personified divine attributes and believed in the existence of highly exalted ruling angels. But neither personified divine attribute nor ruling angel was ever considered to be equal with God or God Himself, unlike how Paul understands Jesus.

The Preexistence of Jesus Christ

Paul believes that Jesus pre-existed before his appearance in the world. He says in Gal 4:4 that when the fullness of time had come, God sent his son, born of a woman, born under the Law. For God to send implies the pre-existence of the one sent, because one must already be in order to be sent; in this case, the son as pre-existent takes upon himself a human existence ("born of a woman"). Similarly, in Rom 8:3, Paul writes that God sent his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, in order to condemn sin in the flesh. Again the fact that God *sent* his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh implies the son's preexistence. Also Paul refers to how Jesus, though rich, became poor, in order that believers may become rich through Jesus' poverty (2 Cor 8:9). Paul is alluding to Jesus' pre-existence as "rich" and his becoming a human being, thereby becoming poor. Finally, somewhat enigmatically, Paul identifies Jesus as the spiritual rock that followed the Israelites around in the wilderness (1 Cor

10:4). Whatever Paul meant exactly, it is clear that, in his view, Jesus preexisted his historical manifestation. Finally, in the two pre-Pauline hymns quoted by Paul (Phil 2:6-11; Col 1:15-20) Christ is assumed to pre-exist his historical appearance.

The Deity of Jesus Christ

Paul not only affirms the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, but also his deity. He does so in several passages using different terminology, but the undeniable conclusion is that Paul views Jesus as divine, which is a remarkable position for a second-Temple Jew to hold. Paul quotes from two early Christian hymns that bear a greater Hellenistic influence than what one would normally find with Paul.

Phil 2:6-8 (9-11)

Paul likely did not write this composition, for it contains too many instances of non-Pauline vocabulary (*morphê theou*; *isa theô*; *doulos*; *huperupsoein*; *harpagmon hegomai*; *katachthonios*) words and usages (*kenoein* used metaphorically of Christ; Christ as the indirect object of *charizomai*) to have originated with Paul. (Whether Paul modified the original hymn or interpolated elements into it has been long debated.) Rather, Phil 2:6-11 is probably a pre-Pauline hymn that he quotes (thereby signaling his agreement with its content) to make his point that Jesus Christ was humble (and so should the Philippians); but the hymn says much more about Christ Jesus than this.

“In the *morphê* of God” (2:6)

Before his coming in the appearance of a human being (*en homoiomati anthrôpôn*), Christ Jesus is said to have been in the form of God (*en morphê theou*). The meaning of *morphê* is varied in Greek literature and in Jewish literature written in or translated into Greek. There is a philosophical meaning for *morphê*, used in Plato and especially Aristotle (meaning “essential being” or “nature”) and a more common use in Greek and Jewish literature written in Greek meaning outward appearance or shape. (It should be noted that the scholarly discussion on this topic has been immense, far too much to consider exhaustively.)

Methodologically, one must first seek to determine the meaning of the term *morphê* in Phil 2 from the context, rather than simply import a meaning from other texts. The word *morphê* appears again

in the hymn: Christ Jesus is said to have taken the morphê of a servant, becoming made in the likeness of men. (The word morphê only occurs only these two times in Paul's letters, so that one cannot determine its meaning by comparing it to his other uses of the term.) This does not help much in determining the meaning of the term morphê, but does help some, as will be seen. Outside of the hymn, in the New Testament, the term morphê occurs in the longer ending of Mark (16:12) with the meaning of outward appearance. There are occurrences of morphê in the LXX and other Jewish literature written in Greek; in these the term also means outward shape or figure or some other, related meaning: LXX Judg 8:18; Tobit 1:13; Job 4:16; Wis 18:1; Isa 44:13; Dan 3:19; 4 Macc 15:4; *T. Benj.* 10:1) (In *T. Benj.* 10:7 there is a likely Christian interpolation based on Phil 2:6 *ton basileia tôn ouranôn ton epi gês phanenta morphê anthôpou tapeinôseôs*). The term is used of God or the gods, but with the sense of visible, outward appearance (Plato, *Rep.* 380d; 381b-c; Xenophon, *Mem.* 4:3-13; Philo *Leg. ad Gai.* 110)

Even though morphê in the New Testament, the LXX and second-Temple texts written in Greek has the more common meaning of outward appearance or shape, this does not, nevertheless, seem to be the meaning in Phil 2. Given the parallelism between the morphê of a servant and the morphê of God, the translation of "outward appearance" or "shape" does not seem to work, because neither has a specific outward appearance or shape. The other, more philosophical meaning for morphê, however, does make sense in the hymn in Phil 2:6-11. As indicated, in addition to meaning "outward appearance" or "shape", morphê can be used to mean "essential being" or "nature", that which defines thing. Aristotle, in particular, uses the term morphê as the equivalent in meaning to "eidos" ("idea") or to *ti en einai* ("essence") (lit. "the what it is to be"). But Plato also differentiates between the *eidos* ("idea") and that which has the same morphê of the *eidos* ("idea") (*echei de tèn ekeinou morphên aei*). An *eidos* ("Idea") can be said to have an morphê when speaking about an individual thing that participates in the Idea. He explains that the name of the *eidos* ("Idea") obviously applies to the *eidos* ("Idea"), but can also be applied to the individual things that shares the morphê of the *eidos* ("Idea") (*Phaed.* 103e). As Plato uses the term, the individual thing shares the morphê of an Idea insofar as it is an exemplification of the Idea. As used in the hymn in Phil 2:6-11, Christ Jesus is both

God and servant in his essential being or nature, that is, he has the morphê of each. To be “in” the morphê of God denotes existence “in” the same ontological realm in which God exists, which is to say divine being. In this way Christ is not simply identified with God, as if they are merely two names for the same being.

Nevertheless, each is what the other is, although that which is the morphê, i.e., Christ Jesus, is ontologically secondary to that of which is it the morphê, i.e., God.

It is probably too much, however, as Lightfoot suggests, to claim that the author of the hymn intends the full semantic field derived from Aristotelian philosophy (ousia [essential being] and phusis [nature]) be imported into an interpretation of the text, as if the author were an peripatetic philosopher. Lightfoot argues that the author meant by saying that Jesus was in the morphê theou that he participated in the divine ousia or phusis. This is contrasted with his appearance (schêma) as a human being, schêma referring to external appearance rather than essence. The meaning is probably looser and less rigorously Aristotelian, but still with the general meaning of essential being or nature. (Actually, Aristotle is not always consistent and exact in his terminology). One should probably assume that this looser philosophical meaning was current in the first century and it was used as a means by which to communicate Christ’s relation to the God by whoever was responsible for the composition of the hymn that Paul quotes in Phil 2:6-11.

There have been attempts to avoid the philosophical interpretation of morphê (even the diluted philosophical interpretation) by arguing that morphê is indistinct in meaning from the equivalent terms eikôn and homoïma, from which it follows that morphê in Phil 2:6 has the general meaning of “image of God” which does not necessarily mean that Christ has the same essential being or nature as God

(All three Greek words are used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew *zelem*, and in Gen 1:26-27; 26 Adam, who is not divine, is said to be the *zelem* and *demuth* of God.) Indeed, some interpreters argue that the hymn is actually contrasting Christ and Adam along the lines of Rom 5:12-19 and 1 Cor 15:45-49 and that it is not the intention to say anything about Christ as pre-existent or his sharing in the divine nature.

Without further evidence, the connection between *morphê* of God in Phil 2:6 with *zelem* and *demuth* in Gen 1:26-27, however, is far too tenuous to posit a connection between Adam and Christ. It has also been suggested that *morphê* is equivalent in meaning to *doxa* (glory), since both *morphê* and *doxa* are both used to translate the Hebrew *temuna* (form or shape); the assumption is that these two terms in certain contexts are synonymous. If so, Christ as the *morphê* of God could mean Christ as the glory of God, the visible manifestation of God. In this case “glory” is the *morphê* of God insofar as it is the outward appearance of God, the most common meaning of *morphê*. To call Christ the *morphê* of God in the sense of the glory of God is to say nothing necessarily about his ontological status in relation to God. It seems awkward, nonetheless, to identify *morphê* with glory, for the parallel phrase “*morphê* of a servant” seems incongruous if *morphê* of God is equivalent to glory of God. Finally, E. Schweizer, interprets the phrase *morphê* of God to denote Christ’s status or position as equal with God; the phrase carries no necessary implications concerning the essential being or nature of Christ. Since, in Phil 2:6b it is said that Christ Jesus did not consider “equality with God” (to *einai* to *theô*) as something to be used to his advantage, to be in the *morphê* of God must mean to have the essential being or nature of God, for otherwise Christ could hardly be said to have equality with God.

B. “Equality with God”

In the hymn quoted by Paul, Christ Jesus is said to have had equality with God, but nonetheless assumed the *morphê* of a servant. It seems that to be in the *morphê* of God is, by definition to be equal with God. Indeed, grammatically, the articular infinitive to *einai* isa *theô* (“to be equal with God”) is used to refer to something previously mentioned, namely, the fact that Christ Jesus is in the *morphê* of God. The implication is that the latter is explicative of the former. In other words, being equal to God is a necessary implication of having the same essential being or nature as God, for otherwise there would be no basis for a claim to equality. But Christ was able to “empty himself” by surrendering, not his *morphê* or equality with God, but the rights that he had by virtue of this ontological status; rather, he took on himself the *morphê* of a servant, that is, he came as a human being (“coming to be in the likeness of human beings”). Although this is

much-disputed question, to say that Christ Jesus did not consider equality to God-as a present possession-to be a harpagmos is to say idiomatically that Christ did not regard his equality with God as something to be used for his own advantage. Thus, in his appearance in the morphê of a servant, neither his divine morphê nor his equality with God is abandoned.

C. The Self-Emptying of Christ Jesus

According to the above interpretation, the author of the hymn is saying that Christ Jesus was of the same essential being or nature as God, and did not consider this equality or equal standing with God as something to be used for his own advantage; rather he emptied himself, and took on the morphê of a servant. (Other uses of kenoô include: Rom 4:14; 1 Cor 1:17; 9:15; 2 Cor 9:3; the meaning is “nullify”, “render void” or “eliminate”). This is not to say that he emptied himself of his divine nature or of his equality, but that he did not use his equality with God to his own advantage. What it means to “empty oneself” is explicated in the two participial clauses that follow: “taking the form of a servant coming to be in the likeness of human beings”. To take the form of a servant is to become a human being, “coming to be in the likeness of human beings” (en homoiomati anthrôpôn), and then to submit to the humiliation of crucifixion. In this state, Christ Jesus appeared to be (nothing more) than a human being, but was much more than that, even though he had emptied himself and thereby had renounced the advantages of his equality with God. It is clear that to take the form of a servant is to become a human being, to be “in the likeness of human beings”. This is indicated by the fact that the author of the hymn says that Christ Jesus came to be (or “was found”) in outward appearance as a human being (schêmati euretheis hês anthrôpos): The point is that Jesus Christ’s essential being or nature, his morphê, was divine, although he appeared to be *only* a human being. There have been attempts to find allusions to the Isaian suffering servant (Isa 52:13-53:12) in the description of the self-emptying of Christ Jesus and his taking the form of a servant. The phrase “taking the form of a servant” has been interpreted to mean assuming the role of the suffering servant (even though in the LXX the Greek word doulos is not used of the servant); likewise, the phrase “he emptied himself” is thought to be another way of describing the fact that the suffering servant “poured out his soul (to death)” (Isa 53:12). Thus, in

this case, for Christ Jesus to empty himself does not describe the incarnation, but his death on the cross. There is, however, insufficient evidence to conclude that the hymn in Phil 2:6-11 is influenced by the motif of the Isaian suffering servant.

In conclusion, it is clear from Phil 2:6-7 that Paul sees Christ Jesus as pre-existing before his becoming a human being as a being in the morphê of God, or having the essential being or nature of God, with the result that he had equality with God. Christ Jesus emptied himself of all the advantages of his equality with God and adopted the morphê of a servant, being a human being, and appearing to be *only* a human being.

Col 1:15-20 (Col 2:9)

Paul writes in the context of the Colossians' worship of angelic beings that Christ ("the son of God") is qualitatively different from these beings, being their creator. To make his point, Paul probably quoted from an early Christian hymn (1:15-20). The poem can be divided into a bipartite structure (1:15-17; 1:18-20); the first part deals with Christ as agent of creation, whereas part two treats Christ as agent of redemption

A. The Image (*eikôn*) of God

The hymn asserts that Christ was the image (*eikôn*) of the invisible God. The term *eikôn* has the literal meaning of physical image or copy. It is also used non-literally to denote that something is formally identical but ontologically secondary to another thing; that which is an image (*eikôn*) of another thing derives from that thing and is dependent upon it for its existence. The term image (*eikôn*) occurs in Jewish religious texts written in Greek as applying to personified attributes of God that serve as mediatorial figures. Philo uses the term in relation to the Logos, which is said to be the image of God, meaning that the Logos is formally identical to God, but derived from God (*De opf. mund.* 31; *De leg. all.* 3:96; *De conf. ling.* 97: 147). The author of Wisdom of Solomon, after referring to "her" as "the fashioner of all things" (7:21) "pervading and penetrating all things on account of her purity" (7:24) "*the effulgence of God's glory*" (7:25) "the reflection of eternal light" (7:26) calls sophia (Wisdom) "the image of his [God's] goodness" (*eikôn tês agathotêtos autou*) (7:26). Taken in context, to

say that Wisdom is “the image of the goodness of God” is to affirm that Wisdom derives from God and formally bears the essence of God. Thus, in Col 1:15 something similar is intended: Christ as the “image of the invisible God” means that he derives from and formally shares the essence of the invisible God. The significant advance beyond Jewish Wisdom theology represented by the hymn in Col 1:15-20, however, is the fact that Christ, a historical figure of recent memory, is said to be essentially one with God; in other words, the possibility of interpreting Christ as a personification of some attribute of God, like Wisdom, is excluded. As Wright puts it, Paul has modified Jewish monotheism so as to place Jesus Christ within the description, almost the definition, of the one God. Although the hymn in Col 1:15-20 appears to be Hellenistic in origin—at least in part—Paul believes that it expresses well his views on Christ, especially in the Colossian context.

B. Means of Creation and First-Born of Creation (*prôtotokos*)

That Christ is not part of creation is clear from the context, because it is said that all things were made “in him” or through Christ (1:16-17) (The use of *en* is instrumental). (All things includes all the spiritual beings, who are designated as “thrones,” “dominions,” “rulers” and “authorities”). The background against which to understand such a statement is Jewish Wisdom thought, in which Wisdom or the Logos as a personified attribute of God is viewed as being the means by which God created the cosmos. In the Book Proverbs, God created the earth by his Wisdom (see Prov 3:19 “Yahweh by wisdom founded the earth”; 8:30 “Then I was beside Him, as a master workman; And I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him”). In Wisdom, it is said of *sophia* (Wisdom) that she is the “fashioner of all things” (*hê pantôn technitis*) (7:21) or “the fashioner of all that exists” (*tôn ontôn technitis*) (8:6) and that she “orders all things well” (*dioikei ta panta chrêstôs*) (8:1) (see also Philo, *De fug* 109). In addition, in Wisdom of Solomon, the Logos of God is said to be the means of creation: “O God...who made all things by your word” (*Thee...ho poiêsas ta panta en logô sou*) (9:1). Similarly, Philo frequently attributes to the Logos the function of being the means by which all things are what they are. Thinking along Platonic lines, he describes the Logos as the mind of God in which is contained all the Ideas, from which all things derive their formal identity and reality. He writes, “God, having sharpened his own Logos, the divider of all things, divides the essence of the

universe which is destitute of form, and is destitute of all distinctive qualities” (*Rer. Div. Her.* 140). Similarly, expressing himself in more Stoic terms, he states, “If there is anywhere anything consolidated, that has been bound by the Logos of God, for this Logos is glue and a chain, filling all things with its essence. And the Word, which connects together and fastens every thing, is peculiarly full of itself, having no need whatever of anything beyond” (*Rer. Div. Her.* 188) (see also *Cher* 35; *Agr* 45; *Rer Div Her* 130:234; *De opf mund* 20, 36, 139, 146; *De leg all* 96). The difference the Colossian hymn and Jewish Wisdom theology is that Christ is not merely a personification of God.

Not only were all things were created in Christ but it is further said that “All things continue to exist in him” (*ta panta en autô sunestêken*) (1:17). The verb *sunestêkenai* is used in the sense of “to continue to exist or endure.”

Thus, Christ as first-born (*prôtotokos*) cannot mean “first created” in the sense that he was the first being in the cosmos brought into existence. Rather, the term denotes the privilege and authority that the first-born would have, not that Christ was in any way brought into being by God. Philo also calls the Logos the firstborn, referring to its supremacy over all angels (*De conf ling* 146). The author of this hymn means something similar, but not referring to a personification of God, unlike Philo, but to Christ.

C. Archê

It is difficult to know how to interpret *archê* in Col 1:18a. The word has the meaning of “beginning” but in what sense Christ is a beginning is not stated explicitly. It is possible that what is meant is that Christ is the beginning in the sense of being the firstborn from the dead, so that *archê* and “firstborn of the dead” are in apposition, being synonyms (see 1 Cor 15:20-23 Christ as “firstfruits” (*aparchê*) of those who sleep). In other words, Christ is the first to raised from the dead, and others will follow him. The word *archê* also has the meaning of “first principle” in Greek philosophy, that which causes other things to exist. This interpretation is certainly consistent with what is said about Christ in 1:15-17 as the instrument of the creation of all things and the one who holds all things together and sustains them in the unity of the cosmos.

D. Fullness of God

In Col 1:19 it is said that “He [i.e., God] was pleased to have all the fullness dwell in him”. Later in the letter, Paul reiterates this idea in his own words, “Because in him dwells all the fullness of deity (to plêrôma tês theotêtos) bodily (sômatikôs)” (2:9). Both statements should be taken as expressing the same theological point about Christ. All the fullness (of deity) means the sum total of what God is, the complete divine being or nature; thus the divine being or nature dwells in Christ bodily, meaning that it dwelt in the historical Jesus. What prompted Paul’s statement in Col 2:9 may have been the Colossian heresy: “fullness” (plêrôma) may have been a key theological term for those who were threatening the apostolic faith there. In later gnosticism, “fullness” was used to describe the eternal first principle, which emanated out from itself aeons, or derivatively divine beings; these beings may be identical to the elemental spirits (stoicheia) to which Paul refers in his letter (Col 2:8-20; see also 2:18 (Thus the occurrence of the term “fullness” in the hymn in Col 1:15-20 would have been a happy coincidence for Paul). It is difficult to know the exact nature of the Colossian heresy and its theological vocabulary; it is possible, but not ultimately provable, that Paul is addressing a heresy in which divinity is said to reside in numerous emanations from the one God. Nevertheless, Paul’s point is clear: that *only* in Christ does the “fullness” of deity dwell.

The Explicit Identification of Christ as God

There are three passages, each of which are unjustifiably disputed, where Paul explicitly identifies Jesus as God

Rom 9:5

In Rom 9:5, Paul says of Christ that “he is over all, God blessed forever and ever” or “he is God over all, blessed forever and ever”. On either translation, however, Paul has equated Christ with God. Objections to understanding of Rom 9:5b as a relative clause are unwarranted. The most natural way to translate this phrase is as a relative clause, and not as an independent doxology. In addition, independent doxologies would typically begin with the predicate nominative (see 2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:3), whereas doxological appositions typically would follow a relative pronoun (see Rom 1:25; 2 Cor 11:31

Titus 2:13

In this passage Paul refers to “the glory of our great God and savior Jesus Christ”. Some would like to see the phrase as denoting two subjects, but the omission of the definite article from savior should be taken to mean that the two are in apposition. This means that Jesus Christ is both God and savior.

2 Thess 1:12

In 2 Thess 1:12, Paul writes, “According to the grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ”. Because there is no definite article before “Lord Jesus Christ,” grammatically the phrase should be understood as standing in apposition to “our God”. If so, then Paul has identified Christ with God. Many exegetes prefer to see an implicit definite article before “Lord Jesus Christ,” so that Christ is distinguished from God. To do so, however, one must argue that Paul was careless in his composition of 2 Thessalonians, which seems less likely than he meant to identify Christ with God.

“Lord”

The most common title Paul uses in relation to Jesus Christ is “Lord” (*kyrios*); the title obviously has the connotation of authority, and should be understood in connection with Pauline soteriology, i.e., what Jesus accomplished redemptively. In each of his salutations of his thirteen letters (with the possible exceptions of Colossians and 1 Thessalonians), Paul sends greetings from God the Father and the Lord (*kyrios*) Jesus Christ. In some instances, when he refers to Jesus as Lord, Paul is ascribing the tetragrammaton (the four letter name of God in the Hebrew Bible) to Jesus. *Kyrios* is used in the LXX to translate YHWH; in quoting Old Testament passages in translation, Paul often uses *ho kyrios* to mean YHWH in accordance with the Old Testament usage (e.g., Rom 4:8 = Ps 32:2 (LXX 31); Rom 9:28-29 = Isa 10:22-23; Isa 1:9; Rom 14:11 = Isa 49:18/45:23; Rom 15:11 = Ps 117:1 (LXX 116); 1 Cor 1:31 = Isa 40:13; see 2 Cor 6:17-18 where Paul adds “the Lord (almighty) says” meaning YHWH to a catena of Old Testament texts. On two occasions, however, it seems that, when quoting an Old Testament passage where *ho kyrios* = YHWH, Paul is referring to Jesus Christ.

Rom 10:12-13 = Joel 2:32 Quoting Joel 2:32 Paul says that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Paul

means by “Lord” however, Jesus, so that Jesus is identified with YHWH (see Acts 2).

2 Cor 10:17 = Jer 9:24 Quoting Jer 9:24 Paul says that anyone who boasts should boast in the Lord; the context suggests that Paul understands “Lord” to refer to Jesus, so that he is identifying Jesus with YHWH.

(Although, usually, when he uses the term Lord, Paul means Jesus Christ, there are some cases where it is somewhat ambiguous as to whom Paul is referring by the term Lord. In such cases, one should assume that the term “Lord” means Jesus Christ, since Paul does not use the term to refer to God. Examples of instances of this ambiguous use include 1 Cor 7:25; 1 Cor 7:32-39; 14:37; 16:7; 3:17-18; 2 Cor 8:19-21; Eph 2:21; 5:8, 10:17).

4. Paul’s Distinguishing of Jesus Christ from God and His Subordination to God

Although he identifies Jesus Christ with God, Paul also distinguishes the two, implying that they are separate beings. In such cases, Jesus Christ is subordinated to God.

Son of God

A common designation for Jesus Christ in relation to God in Paul’s writings is “son” (of God); when Paul uses the term God, with the exception of the passages already mentioned, he means God as distinct from Jesus Christ/son (of God). Paul never explains what he means by son; no doubt, he takes over this christological title from the theology of the early church and from Jesus’ own use of the term to refer to himself. By inference, one can say that son is a relational term used metaphorically to denote the eternal relationship between God and Christ, the son. The title also has connotations of subordination. References to son (of God) in Paul’s writings include Rom 1:3; 4: 9; 5:10; 8:3; 29:32; 1 Cor 1:9; 2 Cor 1:19; Gal 1:16; 2:20; 4:4-6; Eph 4:13; Col 1:13; 1 Thess 1:10.

Chapter 12

The Letters to the Thessalonians

First Letter to the Thessalonians is now mostly considered to have been Paul's earliest letter written about 50/51. If that is the case, it is the letter composed closest to the foundation of the community. This means that 1 Thess is the letter that has the shortest pre-letter history of the relationship between apostle and community. Nevertheless, the retelling of the past stage of their mutual relationship plays an important part in 1 Thess 1-2.

In the course of this, Paul uses the expressions "we became" and "you became" each three times. The apostle reminds the Thessalonians of what kind of a person he had become among them for their sake (1:5). What this means, seems to become clearer later in the letter when he says that he became gentle or a little one (baby) among them, like a nurse or mother tenderly caring for her own children (2:7), and that he dealt with them like a father deals with his children (2:12). He also was (beca-me?) pure, upright and blameless among them. Thus Paul's says, "our gospel came to you not in word only" (1:5). It also came in what Paul had become and (thus) was among them.

Thus the acceptance of the gospel meant more than accepting mere words. Rather the Thessalonians became imitators of Paul and of the Lord (1:6) as well as of the churches in Judea (2:14). They also became very dear (*agapetoi*, “beloved”) to Paul (2:8). Actually their acceptance of “the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit” despite persecution (1:6; 2:14) was the foundation of their relationship with the apostle. Paul thanks God for their “work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:3). The reception of the “word” (1:6) is very closely connected with the welcome they gave Paul (1:9-10).

The maternal and paternal images mentioned above need to be looked at a little more closely. After stressing that he had become like a nurse or mother to them in 2:7, he continues in 2:8 to say, “we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves”. The sharing of one’s own self is what a nurse or a mother does. 2:7 is thus to be read in close connection with 2:8. The fact that Paul worked night and day in order not to burden the Thessalonians while he proclaimed the gospel of God to them which is underlined in 2:9 is probably yet another explicitation of what it means to care tenderly for the community like a nurse or mother caring for her own children. Or should 2:9 be read in the light of 2 Cor 12:14c where Paul states, “children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children”?

In 1 Thess 2:11-12 Paul complements the maternal image with the paternal one. The father’s task is seen in “urging and encouraging” the children and in “pleading that you lead a life worthy of God.” H. Koester is probably right in stressing that the father image is here not one of authority, but one of love. According to Koester, this is above all obvious in the fact that in 2:17 Paul turns the image around and calls himself an orphan in relationship to the Thessalonians after he had left the community and was thus spatially separated from them. For Koester this is typical of the mutual love relationship among equals that is reflected in 1 Thessalonians. After Paul’s departure from Thessalonica, their relationship did not come to an end. He remained united with them in heart and longed with great eagerness to see them again face to face, but was hindered by Satan (2:17-18). Paul was afraid that the tempter had tempted them (3:5). He was mostly concerned about the development of their faith (3:5). When he could

not bear the uncertainty any longer, he finally sent Timothy to Thessalonica. His return, which Paul relates in 3:6-10, has occasioned the present letter. This text is thus not surprisingly our main source for the present state of the relationship.

Timothy brings to Paul the good news (cf. *euaggelisamenou* in 3:6) of the faith and love of the Thessalonians. The apostle is relieved to know that the relationship is still as mutual as it used to be. The fact that they remember him kindly and long to see him, as he longs to see them, is a clear proof of that. The apostle is comforted through their faith (3:7) and does not find words to thank God for the joy with which he rejoices “before our God” (3:9).

In his enthusiasm over the positive situation of the relationship Paul reaffirms his love for them. An intersection between the past and the present stages of the relationship is found in 2:8. Because the community has become very dear to Paul and still is, he so deeply cares for them that he continues to be determined to share with them not only the gospel of God but also his own self. We have already pointed out that, in the light of 2:7, this is probably a continuation of the maternal image of tender care for the children. In 3:12 he explicitly states his love for the Thessalonians. He considers them his hope, his joy and his crown of boasting “before our Lord Jesus at his coming” (2:19). And he repeats in 2:20: “Yes, you are our glory and joy!”. Finally the mutuality is also one of prayer, Paul mentioning the community in his prayers (1:2) and asking them to pray for him (5:25).

Despite this enthusiastic view of the present relationship Paul sees a need to prevent possible negative developments from happening in the future. Obviously because of the positive evaluation of the relationship, Paul is very careful about the way he introduces his appeals. He begins with what they are already doing and asks that they do so more and more (4:1). He also uses the *praeteritio* technique saying that they have no need to have anything written about certain issues, but nonetheless writing to them about those issues. In looking back to the initial stages, Paul gives thanks to God for the Thessalonians concerning their faith, hope and love (1:3). When Timothy comes back, he has good news of their faith and love. Is hope not mentioned here since Paul realized that that was the weakest point in the community? The fact that the major exhortations precisely deal with Christian hope (4:13-18 and 5:1-11) seem to point in that direction.

Concerning faith, Paul says that he is praying most earnestly to get a chance to revisit the community to «restore whatever is lacking in your faith». In 3:12 and 4:9-10 Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to love one another.

We can thus conclude that in 1 Thessalonians there are no exhortations or appeals of Paul concerning the improvement of the Thessalonians' relationship towards him. The mutuality that their relationship had enjoyed in the early stages has continued even after Paul's departure and characterizes it even as Paul is writing the letter. 1 Thessalonians reflects a writer who is relieved, comforted, joyed because of the good news concerning the attitude of the community toward him. But this should not detract our attention from some serious problems which Paul perceives and addresses and which have potential of evolving into barriers in their relationship.

The apostle seems to hope that by stressing his self-giving love for them (2:8; 3:12) and by praising the positive qualities the community already has, the problems can be solved. As in the past the acceptance of the gospel was closely tied to the relationship with the apostle, in the future also their living according to the gospel "more and more" (4:1-10) will be intimately connected with their love for Paul. Thus Paul is implicitly making their positive, mutual relationship the foundation of his moral exhortations. We are left with the question whether the Thessalonians will realize the inconsistency between, on the one hand wanting a close relationship with Paul, and on the other hand not fully living out the gospel, between loving Paul, but falling short in loving one another.

Critical Issues in the study of 1Thessalonians

Authenticity: 1 Thess has been accepted as an authentic Pauline letter since the time of Marcion and Irenaeus up to our days

- The only exception to its acceptance: The Tuebingen school under F. C. Baur (late 18th - early 19th cent)
 - Rationale: 1 Thess is dogmatically insignificant (but this is to think of Paul as a dogmatic theologian only; if his writings are occasional, this is very Pauline)
 - Rationale: 1 Thess depends on the chronology and narrative of Acts (but as we shall see, there are significant differences)

- Furthermore, would a forger have written in Paul's name that Paul would live to see the Parousia (1 Thess 4:15), when the forger would have known very well that that was not the case?

Unity

While most scholars accept that 1 Thessalonians is a single letter, written by Paul, it has been argued that 1 Thessalonians is not a single letter but rather 2 letters that have been preserved as one

- Letter 1: 1:1-11; 12; 2:17 - 3:4; 11-13
- Letter 2: 3:6-10; 4:13 - 5:11; 4:9-10a; 5:23-26:28

It has also been argued that 1 Thessalonians contains material that is not by Paul

- The most significant suggestion of this: 2:13-16
 - Scholars have noted that 2:13-16 interrupts the rhythm of 2:12 and 2:17
 - It is suggested that this is an anti-semitic polemic introduced into the letter by someone other than the author, Paul
 - According to Baur, this was an influence of Acts (in which the Jews were always causing Paul problems: this interpolation would have been intended to bring readers alongside Jewish-Christians who were struggling with Jews)
 - Others suggest that it is a post-70 AD gloss (i.e., after the fall of Jerusalem): cf 2:16
 - Objections:
 - Paul's letters do have a certain dynamic or momentum, but that dynamic is regularly interrupted by Paul
 - 2:13-16 does not refer to any specific event
 - Paul can be quite strong in his language concerning the Jews: cf Phil 3:2 ff; Galatians passim.
- Paul in Thessalonica
 - According to Paul, what marks his arrival in Thessalonica was precisely that it took place after the severe persecution that they suffered in Philippi (1 Thess 2:1-2)
 - After the arrival in Thessalonica, Paul worked very hard to sustain himself materially (so as not to represent an economic

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burden for anyone in Thessalonica), and at the same time he preached much among the Thessalonians (1 Thess 2:9)

- NB: This theme of work in conjunction with the apostolic preaching will mark the entire letter 1 Thessalonians
- Contrary to Acts: there is no mention of any synagogue, nor of any Jews among the Thessalonian Christians
- Not only did Paul work: he also received money from the Philippian congregation, the “other” Macedonian church that existed at this time (Phil 4:15-16)
 - NB: The theme of money will be a crucial one in 1 Thessalonians
- According to Paul, during his time in Thessalonians there was some kind of personal anxiety or internal struggle or external persecution (1 Thess 2:2)
 - Is this what Acts was referring to when we read about violent reactions to Paul’s preaching?
- Paul left Thessalonica and apparently goes to Athens (1 Thess 2:17 ff., esp 3:1)
 - Contrary to Acts: Paul goes to Berea
- After Paul’s departure, an intense persecution of those who had become Christians began in Thessalonica (1 Thess 2:14 ff.)
 - It does not appear to be a persecution that the Jews cause but rather a persecution that is caused by other Gentiles in Thessalonica
- As a result of the persecution or for other reasons, the Thessalonians began to think that the coming of Christ was going to take place in those very days (2 Thess 2:1-3)
 - Possibly they wanted Christ to come to bring their sufferings to an end!
- Paul received news of the Macedonian Christians’ struggles, apparently becoming aware of them for the first time (1 Thess 2:18)
- Though Paul wanted to return to Thessalonica himself to encourage the Thessalonians himself, and tried to do so at different times, he was unable to do so (1 Thess 2:18)
 - Why?

- As a result, Paul sends Timothy (who may or may not have been known to the Thessalonians) to Thessalonica in order to encourage them (1 Thess 3:2)
 - It is possible that Paul sent the letter that we know as 2 Thessalonians with Timothy in order to remind the Thessalonians of a correct eschatology
 - NB: Personal couriers as the postal service of antiquity!
- While Paul was (possibly) in either Athens, Corinth, or Ephesus, Timothy returned to him with news about the Thessalonians, including questions from the Thessalonians on specific themes (1 Thess 4:9-13; 5:1)
 - It is clear as well that the primary concern of the Thessalonians is whether Paul has been honest with them (see below)
- Shortly after Paul receives the news from Timothy, Paul writes the letter that we know as 1 Thessalonians as a substitute for his personal presence and in order to answer some of the Thessalonian concerns and questions
 - The purpose, then, of 1 Thessalonians is very clear and very specific to the Thessalonians and to their circumstances

Structure of 1 Thessalonians

Letter Opening	1:1
Thanksgiving	1:2-10
Body of the Letter (Part 1)	2:1 - 3:13
(Body Opening)	2:1-2
(Body Middle)	2:3-16
(Body Closing)	2:17 - 3:13
Paraenesis	4:1-8
Body of the Letter (Part 2)	4:9 - 5:22
	4:9-12; 4:13-18; 5:1-11
Paraenesis	5:12-22
Letter Closing	5:23-28

An overview of 1 Thessalonians (*in light of the dialogue and structure*)

The Letter Opening (1:1)

- Paul, Silvanus, Timothy: the senders of the letter
 - All of Paul's letters, except Romans and Ephesians, have someone with him in the form of sender
 - Rationale: the gospel is not Paul's alone (perhaps Jewish motif of 2 or 3 witnesses)
 - Those who are senders with Paul also have apostolic authority
 - Paul does not appeal to himself as "apostle" (only here and in Phil, Phm, and 2 Thess)
 - Rationale: with this community (and the other Macedonian community of Philippi) Paul does not have to fight to establish his apostolic credentials
- The assembly in Thessalonica "in (or by) God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ"
 - the addition of a spiritual designation for the Christian assembly occurs in all of Paul's letters, except Galatians!
- Greeting: shortest one of Paul's letters (also Colossians)

The Thanksgiving (1:2-10)

- Found here, as in all of Paul's letters, except Galatians!
- Provides us with 2 clues as to what will follow:
 - What is it that Paul especially gives thanks for in reference to this assembly?
 - The victory of God (common to all Paul's "thanksgiving" sections)
 - the gospel is powerful to convince through the spirit (1:3-10)
 - the Thessalonians have shown themselves constant and faithful in maintaining the gospel and the fact that that gospel has taken root in them (1:4-5-9)
 - NB Pauline triad (faith, hope, love): work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope (1:3)
 - The subject matter that will follow:

- The fact that the gospel has taken root among the Thessalonians (1:5-9) and what the results of that “taking root” are (i.e., suffering and growth of numbers, 1:4-5; 6:8-9)
- If the gospel has proven powerful and the Thessalonians have committed to the gospel, it is because of the work of the apostles in their midst (1:9)
- Normally Paul concludes the Thanksgiving with an eschatological note (all letters, except Phm, Gal, and Rom)
 - Here: 1:10 (the risen Lord will save us - esp the suffering Thessalonians! - from the coming wrath)

The Body of the letter (part 1: 2:1 - 3:13)

Body opening (2:1-2)

- The body opening reveals the theme of the letter
- Paul reveals that the theme of this letter is not eschatology as such (as in 2 Thess), but rather a defence of his apostolate, or better said, of his ministry and character, over against detractors (picked up from 1:9)
 - Surprising given the absence of “apostle” in the letter opening? Unlike Galatians and other letters, probably not a defence against members of the Christian assembly but against those outside the community (see below). This is not a struggle as to whether Paul is an apostle (as opposed to say, Peter, or James) but about the Christian message and Paul’s work
- The body begins as a reminder (not new information): our work among you was not useless (ties the Thanksgiving to the development of the Body)

Body middle (2:3-16)

- Development of the defence (2:3-12):
 - the character of the life of the apostles
 - without any intent to deceive or please men; preaching the gospel to please God (2:3-4)
 - without taking on airs or glory and authority among them but living humbly (2:5-8)

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- the apostles did not rely on their authority, though they could have
- their example: they supported themselves by working (2:9)
- their behaviour: exemplary (2:10-12)
- In sum, Paul defends the actions and teachings of the apostles in the Thessalonians' midst against accusations of error, moral impurity, deception, flattery, using the preaching of the word to earn big sums of money, glorifying themselves, and of wanting even more than money from the Thessalonians.
- The picture that appears like a photographic negative from Paul's defence is that of the itinerant preacher who makes himself rich from those to whom he preaches (see Lucian, Philostratus 11-13)
- Rationale: abundance of itinerant preachers in Paul's day
- Hellenistic and oriental philosophers preaching religious salvation
- Stoics, Cynics, Platonists
- Gnostics
- Oriental theosophists
- Magicians and charlatans
- Various Christian sects, as well as some eccentric Jewish sect
- All of these offered answers for people who wanted to know
 - the future
 - how to have a stable life (how to be wealthy)
 - how to be freed from enemies (and sickness, unfaithful wife, people who hated you...) and unknown powers
- They were successful in their preaching if they could grab the ear of people by showing them mysteries or novelties, by being able to do strange and wonderful things, especially miracles and prophecies
- Writing on this section of 1 Thessalonians, G. Bornkamm says: "The detailed way in which [Paul] insists on what to our eyes should have gone without saying for an ambassador of Christ may appear strange to the modern reader, or even embarrass him. But we come to judge it all quite differently if we see it against the background of the religious propaganda of the post-classical

world. The normal heathen “missionaries”, particularly in the large Hellenistic cities, actually behaved in quite a different way from Paul and employed different tactics. They were itinerant apostles and miracle-workers of the most varied persuasions, heralds of heathen gods, and dispensers of salvation, adroit and eloquent, ardent and evoking ardor, but also smart and conceited in extolling the mighty acts of their gods and fooling the masses. These people are known, some even by name, from the pages of Lucian, Philostratus, and other Hellenistic writers. There can be no doubt that they constituted dangerous rivals of the gospel and that general popular opinion expected the Christian missionaries to be able to vie with them. Indeed the Pauline letters themselves show, as do other early Christian writings, how persuasively this current form of propaganda affected many of the representatives of the Christian mission among the masses, and how closely these preachers often approximated to this contemporary pattern. Here is the starting point if one is fully to understand the attacks on Paul’s apostleship and the doubts cast on it as found in the letters to Corinth, Galatia, and Philippi, attacks, be it noted, made by Christians. Of course the situation in 1 Thessalonians is different in that it does not speak of Christian agitators against Paul. But Paul very probably had every reason for contrasting his own work with the dubious activities of the rivals just mentioned”. (Guenther Bornkamm, Paul (1971), 64).

The situation of Paul:

- Paul came to Thessalonica preaching strange and new things, with mysterious and powerful signs
- He passed on to his followers those same wild and wonderful charismatic gifts
- After he had left the Thessalonians, a persecution of Christians began. Why? Probably for very human reasons
 - Perhaps jealousy, perhaps difference. Perhaps a wife showed less affection to her husband after joining the Christians. Perhaps the Greek national pride could not accept a “barbarian” preaching an elevated teaching.
 - Perhaps someone (a persecutor, a friend, even a member of the community) became aware of the fact that Paul left just

before the persecution had begun and had returned for his “children”

- Possibly he had written them a letter (2 Thessalonians?) to instruct them and to encourage them to some extent, but he hadn't yet returned in the flesh
- Perhaps beginning to doubt themselves, some among the Thessalonians let Paul know that others among the community were beginning to have doubts.
- So Paul defends himself:
 - He preached the gospel with confidence (he himself had suffered, if not in Thessalonica - though that is possible - certainly in Philippians), and they know that
 - Paul never sought to please men (through flattery or trickery), but only God
- If Paul had sought to please men, he would not and they would not have experienced such opposition and trouble
- Paul and his team are truly interested in the well-being of those who believe in the gospel (not simply flatterers who say that they care, but really don't)
- If Paul had not been interested in their well-being, would Paul have worked so hard and done so much for them while he was with them?
- Paul and his team never received money from the converts while he is with them. (Paul will receive money from communities that he has ministered in, but only after he has left them, eg. Phil 4. Paul's work is always in the context of “mission” never of “parish”.)
- Paul and his team behaved themselves in a way that no one could ever find fault with, and the Thessalonians know that.
- Either 1 Thessalonians is pure flattery or Paul is telling the truth and his defence is authentic: the Thessalonians will have to decide.
- Why does it matter whether Paul's defence is authentic or not?
- The gospel of Christ is not preached directly by Christ to those who do not yet believe in Christ; it is preached by the apostle.
- As such, the apostle is the person by whom Christ is made known to others.
- So, if the apostle is false, Christ and his gospel will be seen as false.

- The consequences: if the gospel and Christ are false, then the Thessalonians are not saved and their sufferings (which they experience for Christ) are pointless (cf 1 Cor 15)
- And what is that Gospel?
- not a book (in fact, no Gospels were probably even written at this point in Christian history)
- not a secret or esoteric doctrine (like the doctrines of the mystery religions, which demanded initiation before full acceptance)
- not a human invention or philosophy
- not a repetition of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, or a series of propositions, or a doctrine
- not even the following of Christ (as in the Gospels), nor forming part of “the Church” (as in later Christian teaching), nor the assurance that one’s sins and errors are forgiven, nor love toward persons
- rather, it is a divine vision of a new creation, a new world, a world that the apostle does not create but proclaims: that it exists, how it came to be, and how now to enter it (apocalyptic event)
- Apocalyptic
 - evident in some texts
 - OT: Daniel (parts of Ezekiel, Zechariah, Isaiah)
 - NT: Revelation, Mk 13 // Mt 24 // Lk 21
 - Extrabiblical literature: 1 Enoch, 2 Enoch, 4 Esdras, 2 Baruch, Psalms of Solomon, Sibylline Oracles
 - Characteristics:
 - Cryptic or mysterious visions, revealed to a seer, concerning the final days of a nation or the world, or hidden visions of the hidden parts of heaven
 - Normally with catastrophic or cosmic events (the “end” or “the end of history”)
 - Usually authored by a group of “faithful believers” who are suffering for their faith (persecution)
 - Characterised by a world divided into two: the just and the unjust
 - God is seen to be a sovereign who will ultimately intervene on behalf of the suffering faithful because God has ultimate control over all the events (though it might not appear so)

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- Constant desire to search for signs in the heavens that give clues as to when this will happen
- If Paul is authentic, then his gospel proclamation may also be authentic (but if he isn't, why should anyone trust the proclamation of this new world?)
- Renewal of the thanksgiving (2:13-16)
 - At this point, Paul renews the thanksgiving with which he began his letter: the Thessalonians are saved, their sufferings do have a point because they are experiencing what Jesus did experience and thus sharing with him in suffering and destined to share with him in life from God, and the Thessalonians know that this is the case. That is Paul's conviction.

Body closing (2:17 - 3:13)

- This section is dominated by the "apostolic parousia" (2:17 - 3:8), as in 2 Cor
- Blessing (3:11-13)
 - very similar in structure to 2 Thess 2:16-17, though the content is different
- NB: normally one finds in the body closing a repetition of the reason why the author has written the letter and an exhortation to the readers' responsibility to follow through on what is asked of them; that is missing here
 - Why? Because the letter is characterized by thanksgiving
 - 1:2-10
 - repeated: 2:13-16
 - repeated: 3:9-10 (in the form of a prayer)
 - The tone of 1 Thess: friendship (this is a community that Paul does not write to to correct but to encourage in their ongoing, valiant defence of the message of the gospel)
- The main problem with this body closing is that it does not occur at the end of the letter. Nevertheless, it does occur at the end of the body (the first part of the body) and seems to be designed to bring it to a close.

Paraenesis (4:1-8)

- Avoid idolatry
- Avoid immorality (through marriage)

The Body of the letter (part 2: 4-9 - 5:11)

- It is not customary for the Greek letter to have two parts, but in the case of letters that have more than one purpose to fulfill, it is not entirely surprising to find Paul addressing the main concerns that he has in one part and the main concerns that they have in another. We will find Paul doing exactly the same thing in 1 Corinthians.
- Rationale for thinking that Paul is addressing Thessalonian concerns: Greek phrase PERI DE (“Now concerning...”) appears to be an epistolary clue that the author will now address items that have been raised in written form in a letter received by the sender from the addressees (4:9; 5:1). 4:13 is introduced by another well-known formula: “We do not want you to be ignorant about...” (cf 1 Cor 1:8).
 - Probable situation:
 - Timothy goes to Thessalonica (perhaps carrying with him 2 Thess) in order to strengthen the Thessalonians in the midst of the persecution they are suffering (1Thess 3:1-5) and their anxiety in light of what the “final days” might bring (3:3)
 - Timothy leaves Thessalonica and brings back to Paul news about the faithfulness of the Thessalonians (1 Thess 3:6-8), along with a letter from them asking about the “final days” (4:9 - 5:11)
 - Since we don’t have the Thessalonian letter, we can only reconstruct it on the basis of what Paul answered them
- Answers of Paul are in three parts:
 - 4:9-12: “Brotherly love”
 - Paul’s answer: You have no need for me to write to you about this, since you are already doing what you need to do
 - Thessalonian question: Is it possible that we are not doing enough? If not, what more should we be doing? (perhaps in light of the persecution, the Thessalonians are wondering

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what one should do if a brother or sister is accused, or arrested, or is killed and the family is left without support)

- 4:13-18: The fate of dead Christians when the Lord comes
 - Paul's answer: Do not be distressed, since those who have died "in Christ" will not be worse off. In fact, they shall precede those of us who are still alive.
 - Thessalonian question: Is it possible that those who have died before the coming of the Lord will not be resurrected?
- 5:1-11: The coming of the Lord and the signs that will precede it
 - Paul's answer: While it is true that there is no way to know when Christ will return as he promised, there are some events that will suggest that he is returning
 - Thessalonian question: We are wondering how we will know when Christ is returning?
- What do we learn about Paul's thinking at this point from his answers?
 - Paul appears to respond to the Thessalonians in light of events that have taken place (rather than drawing out a pre-existing answer):

The death and resurrection of Jesus → intense expectation of the imminent return of Jesus (probably a salient characteristic of the early mission period of Paul) and the belief that there would be no deaths until Jesus returned → some deaths among Paul's initial converts (perhaps due to persecution) → questions raised by the converts: what will happen to our friends/relatives/spouses who have died? (perhaps expressed in the Thessalonian letter to Paul → Paul's response in 1 Thess 4
 - There is a difference between those who are "in Christ" and those who are not (those who "have no hope" and those who do: 4:13): The God who raised Jesus from the dead will also raise those who have had Jesus as Lord (i.e., those who are "in Christ")
 - Paul does appear to be working with images from apocalyptic images in Jewish apocalyptic literature:
 - there is the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God (drawn from Ex 19 and possibly the eschatological teaching

of Jesus, cf. Mt; cf. also Paul's later use of the same imagery in 1 Cor 15:51-52)

- at that point the Lord will descend from heaven (he does not appear to descend as far as earth)
 - those who have died "in Christ" appear only to be asleep - a kind of intermediary state - and will rise to life
 - NB: Paul appears to think that he will be among those who are still alive!
 - those who are still alive, but who are "in Christ", are taken up (without death) to live with Christ eternally (picture of immortality, as opposed to resurrection): cf. picture of Elijah, various ascensions throughout the OT, NT, and extrabiblical literature
- As in the case of other apocalyptic literatures, the apocalyptic sections of 1 Thess appear intended to be a means of encouraging those who are persecuted, rather than a kind of game:
- it is likely that Paul's preaching included prophetic instructions about the coming sufferings of Christians before the return of the Lord
 - the Thessalonians must have thought: we are already being persecuted; how much worse can it get? If Paul is right, it may get much worse! Then, we are really in trouble.
 - Paul's words in Thessalonians are meant to reassure the Thessalonians, not make them panic. They are certainly words that are intended only for the internal community, not as a threat to those outside the community.
 - While this will happen suddenly, there will be signs. And you shouldn't worry since God has your best in mind. Just be alert and prepared. This is no time to lose your direction and be found sleeping. So, continue acting irreproachably as you are now and you will be fine.

Paraenesis (5:12-22)

- assorted ethical exhortations along the lines: continue doing to the end what you are already doing now
 - those who are in authority
 - the lazy (cf. 2 Thess 3:6-15 which is much harsher)

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- spiritual life: the new life that will be “in Christ” is really a continuation of the kind of spiritual life that has begun among you (both happen “in the spirit”)

Letter Closing (5:23-28)

- Blessings (5:23-24; 28)
- Paul’s own “paraenesis” (5:25)
 - Suggests that Paul may not be the writer of the letter, though he is the author
 - Phenomenon of scribe (amanuensis)
 - NB: there is no “signature” of Paul, which would be hard to explain in a letter written by someone else
- Greetings (5:26)
- Instructions about the letter (5:27)

Tentative Conclusions

- Some tentative conclusions about Paul (from this picture):
 - Paul is a person who is completely given to his communities. His life is not his: he could live in the “new world” entirely but his mission is to reach out to those who are not there yet; thus, he has a foot in both worlds, just as Jesus did. His joy is not to be found in his own salvation but in that of those who have heard his message and have believed. In 1 Thessalonians he defends himself strenuously against those who say otherwise.
- Some tentative conclusions about the Thessalonians (from this picture):
 - The Thessalonian community is faithful, alive and very enthusiastic (charismatic) (1 Thess 1:7-8)
 - Their problems are the problems of new Christians, who in their enthusiasm experience the extraordinary gift of God, salvation
 - Their problems and their doubts are not about the gospel itself (as we shall see in Galatia, Corinth, and perhaps Colossae) but rather arise precisely because they are living out the gospel that Paul has preached in all its radical newness and experiencing the consequences of living the gospel of a new world in an old world (that is set against it).

2 Thessalonians

Critical Issues in the study of 2 Thessalonians

Inauthenticity

- History
 - since the late 1700s
- Similarity with 1 Thess
 - double thanksgiving (peculiar)
 - a blessing at mid-letter (peculiar)
 - same last verse
- Style and vocabulary
 - similar vocabulary between these two letters
 - longer sentence length (more like the sentences in Eph and Col)
- Composition
 - 2 Thess 2:4 suggests that the Temple is still standing i.e., pre 70 AD (or is it a reference to a divine temple?)
 - 2 Thess 2:3 “man of lawlessness” = Nero or a “new Nero” (Nero d. 68)
 - 2 Thess 2:5 suggests that there are signs that precede the coming of the Messiah vs. 1 Thess 5:1-11 which suggests that there are not
- Proximity to other supposedly inauthentic letters of Paul
 - atmosphere of deceptive false teachers cf. Pastorals
 - similarity of apocalyptic notions in 2 Thess and Rev (which, it is argued is from the end of the first century AD)

Authenticity

- The language is clearly Pauline
- The bulk of the letter deals with different matters from 1 Thess
- In apocalyptic literature, there are both signs of the end AND it is sudden
- Polycarp cites the letter as authentic (and even gets it a certain preeminence over 1 Thess)
- Less personal than 1 Thess (“might be explicable if 2 Thess was written very soon after 1 Thess” Brown, 593, or before 1 Thess, Bloomquist)
- Entirely explicable if written before 1 Thess (see below)

Structure

Letter opening	1:1-2
Thanksgiving	1:3-12 (NB the absence of an eschatological conclusion such as the one found in 1 Thess 1.10)
Body opening	2:1-2 (NB: the difference from 1 Thess 2:1-2 which has to do with revelation)
Body middle (part 1)	2:3-12
Body closing	2:13-17 (NB the differences from 1 Thess 2:17 - 3:13)
Body middle (part 2)	3:1-15
Letter closing	3:16-18 (NB the similarities with 1 Thess 5:23-24; 28; note the dissimilarities with 1 Thess 5:25-27)

An overview of 2 Thessalonians (in light of the dialogue and structure)

The Letter Opening (1:1-2)

- Senders: Paul, with Silvanus = Silas and Timothy (Paul is always with someone, except for Eph and Rom)
 - while the gospel is personal, there are witnesses
 - as in 1 Thess “apostle” is missing (so, too, Phil and Phm) because at this point in time “apostolic” authority was not an issue
 - one would expect this IF this were a later letter (either of Paul or by someone writing in Paul’s name)
 - the succinct greeting “Grace and Peace” is different from the one found in 1 Thess and in Col but the same greeting found in all other letters

The Thanksgiving (1:3-12)

- Alerts the readers to the subject matter to be addressed: the sufferings of the Thessalonians in light of the coming of the Lord (1:3-10)

- Paul evidences his belief in God’s victory in the community: abundance, constancy, faithfulness in the midst of persecutions (1:3-4)
 - Paul’s prayer is his “seal” on this victory (1:11-12; cf. Phil 1:9-11)
- This “telegraphed” message is picked up immediately in the body opening (2:1-2)

The Body (2:1-17)

- The body opening (2:1-2) is a petition (as in 1 Cor 1:10-16 and Phm 8:9): do not be disturbed concerning the coming of the Lord
 - They appear to have been alerted to this by
 - a spirit (charismatic)?
 - a speech or prophecy (charismatic)?
 - a letter from Paul?
 - As in the case of 1 Thessalonians, the reasons for the alarm may have been very practical
 - fear of losing family members
 - fear of losing friends or community members who are no longer part of the group?
 - fear of the weak in faith that they themselves might be lost?
 - fear that the coming of Christ will mean yet MORE persecution?
 - These are all real possibilities if Paul had preached, from the very beginning, his apocalyptic schema
 - it would imply that those who are not “in Christ” i.e., those for whom Christ is not Lord, would be destroyed with the world (cf 1:5-6; 8-9), while those for whom Christ is Lord would have gone on “in life” (cf 1:5-7; 10)
 - it would also imply, however, that those who are “in Christ” had to live the life of a new creation and abound in faith, love, patience, etc. just as they are (cf 1:3-4; 11-12)
 - But, the question is: how much time to we have to wait? (remember: this is a suffering community)
 - not surprising that one would find “charismatic” utterances that sought to affirm the length of time left

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- Paul attempts to provide his own clarification in what follows
- The body middle (2:3-12) is very brief: a clarification concerning the coming of the Lord (esp in light of their sufferings): This material is couched in the common language of apocalyptic (found extensively in Judaism, but also in Greco-Roman materials)
 - After preaching the risen Lord in their midst and the conversions that followed, a persecution of the Thessalonians began that was comparable to the persecution of Paul
 - it reflected the “mystery of lawlessness” at work in the world, which like labour pains, are such that the world that is perishing does not want to see the Thessalonian Christians come to birth (new life): 2:3a-7a
 - “lawlessness” is an apocalyptic term for that power under which the world that is perishing finds itself
 - in apocalyptic literature it is called variously “this age”, “the old age”
 - the fact that it is a “mystery” means that its ultimate source is unknown to humanity (normally “mystery” is something that is known only to God)
 - in other words, the Thessalonians are being persecuted by people who do not realize that they are agents in the power of something greater than themselves (namely, the “lord” of the persecutors)
 - This lawlessness can, in fact, be localized in a person, the “lawless one” (2:3b-4) and his works (2:9-12), though it is not clear to the world who that is (2:8)
 - In apocalyptic literature, “lawlessness”, like righteousness, is a kingdom with a king or lord:
 - Satan
 - Beliar/Belial
 - Sammael
 - Azazel
 - In apocalyptic literature this “lord” takes human form (much as the Lord took human form as Jesus), and does the work of the evil lord (just as Jesus does the work of the Lord in human form):

- Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Dan, 1:2 Macc)
- Pompey (Psalms of Solomon)
- Belial himself (Jubilees, Testaments of the 12 Patriarchs)
- “Antichrists” (1:2 John)
- Antichrist (Revelation; cf. Rev 17:5)
- His attitude is to usurp the place of God by taking his seat in the Temple of God
- Temple in Jerusalem? (Ps 5:8; 78:1; 137:2): Antiochus IV (see Dan 11:36-37), Caligula (see Josephus, Antiquities 18:8)
- Heavenly Temple? (Ps 10:4)
- The church, i.e., heresy? (1 Cor 3:16ff; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16 (this was the view of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Chrysostom, Jerome, Luther (against the pope!))
- A poetical or metaphorical expression (Is 14:13; Ezek 28:2)
- His goal is to deceive:
 - Because the lawless one does his work through the power of Satan, he can do “signs and wonders” in order to deceive those who are still part of “this age”
 - according to the apocalyptic schema (e.g., in the Qumran Community Rule 1QS 3:18-4:26) “deception” is a characteristic of the people of this age (along with evil and sensuality), as compared with truth, justice and salvation
 - Thus, common people, like the neighbours of those in Thessalonica, end up doing the evil deeds of the “lawless one” unwittingly (2:10-11)
 - The result: apostasy
 - of the Gentiles?
 - of the Jews?
 - of Christians?
 - The “lawless one” and those deceived by him will eventually be destroyed, and those who have believed in Christ will be saved
- But, right now, the deeds of the “lawless one” are being restrained by “the restrainer” (2:6-7)

Pauline Letters & Theology

- a person? e.g., a particular Roman emperor, military leader, Paul himself?
- a group? e.g., the Roman military, the church?
- an institution? e.g., the Roman empire?
- an action? e.g., the preaching of the Gospel?
- a spiritual being? e.g., Michael the Archangel (cf Daniel)
- The body closing (2:13-17)
 - reiterates Paul's reason for writing: his thankfulness at their steadfastness (2:13-14)
 - underscores their responsibility to do what Paul tells them: keep on being steadfast! (2:15)
 - the expected "apostolic parousia", i.e., the announcement of his visit is missing
 - if inauthentic, and Paul was long gone from the scene: he could not!
 - if authentic, and it precedes 1 Thess, Paul had just been with them (perhaps just a matter of weeks earlier)
 - if authentic, and postdates 1 Thess, more difficult to explain!

Body Middle Part 2 (3:1-15)

- 3:1-5: exhortations concerning prayer for the apostles (it is likely that this is the reason why the "end" has not yet occurred)
- 3:6-15: exhortations concerning a specific case: those who do not wish to work (perhaps in light of the highly contingent nature of the remaining days on earth before the Lord comes)
 - rather than not working at all, if the time is short one needs to work as hard as possible!

Letter Closing (5:23-28)

- Greetings (3:17)
- Signature (3:17)
 - a possible indication of inauthenticity?
 - a possible indication of the need to affirm the authenticity by Paul against the possibility of a well-intentioned forgery (cf 2:2)?
- Blessing: 3:16-18 (cf 1 Thess 5:23-24:28)

Chapter 13

Pauline Eschatology

The word ‘eschatology’ is derived from the Greek *eschatos* meaning ‘last’ or ‘farthest’. Eschatology is normally associated with the events surrounding the end of the world and the events of human history such as ‘the return of Christ’, ‘the resurrection of people’ and ‘the final judgment.’ The Old Testament concludes with a vision of the Messiah, appearing in the end of ages and that being the eventual phase of life. Paul sets apart his eschatology from his Jewish predecessors by arguing that the ‘eschaton’ has already begun with the resurrection of Christ.

Paul lists three main points as he offers eschatology to various early Christian communities. First, Christian living at the juncture of the ages await Christ’s coming at the absolute end of the present evil age (Phil 3:17-4:1). Second, the time of Christ’s coming is unknown, but it will occur suddenly (1Thes 4:15); so Christians should be prepared to meet Him by being watchful (1Thes 4:13-5:11). Third, because Christ is coming the Christians should live in hope and encourage one another (1Thes 4:18; 5:11).

Pauline Letters & Theology

In Paul's early preaching and writing, he clearly expects Jesus to come back *soon*:

- He longs for the *parousia* ("arrival" or "coming") of the Lord (1 Thess 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 1 Cor 15:23).
- He himself expects to be still alive when Jesus returns (1 Thess 4:15; 1 Cor 15:51-52).
- He ends one of his letters with the exclamation *marana tha*, meaning "Lord, Come" (1 Cor 16:22).
- Scholars debate whether the eschatology of 2 Thess is compatible with that of 1 Thess, or contradicts it:
 - The first letter seems to stress a *sudden*, unexpected end (1 Thess 4:16; 5:2-3).
 - The second letter mentions several events that must occur *before* the end (2 Thess 2:3; 6-10).
 - Is Paul himself correcting misinterpretations of his previous letter? Or is someone else later adapting his teachings?
- Later in life, Paul recognizes the possibility that he himself might die before Jesus returns:
 - He talks about groaning in our earthly bodies and longing for our heaven reward (2 Cor 5:1-5).
 - While in prison, he is sometimes unsure whether he will be released, or possibly executed (Phil 1:20-23).

What was Paul's View of the Culmination of Eschatological Salvation

Paul sees his time as spanning the time between the inauguration of the eschaton and its completion. Eschatological salvation does not come all at once, but progresses from its inception to its culmination, which is coincidental with the return of Christ, at which time there will be the presentation of the bride, the church, to Christ, the final subjugation of hostile spiritual beings, the resurrection of believers and final judgment. Paul refers to this final phase of salvation as a believer's hope, a confident expectation of the completion of the saving work already begun: Rom 5:2: "The hope of glory of God"; 1 Thess 4:13 "Hope"; Col 1:23 "The hope of the good news"; Titus 1:2; 3:7 "The hope of eternal life" (see 2 Cor 4:17 "An eternal weight of glory"). The culmination of eschatological salvation is also the time when understanding will be complete, when believers will no longer be as if they were looking in a mirror but not seeing a clear reflection (1 Cor 13:12). Although it is religious-historically unique in many ways,

Paul's position has parallels with other forms of Jewish eschatology. It should be noted that Paul believes that the full splendor of eschatological salvation is beyond description, except by the Spirit's revelation (1 Cor 2:9).

1. Christ's Return

Paul expects the return of Christ, and expresses this by several phrases (the parousia of Christ [1 Thess 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess 2:1-8; 1 Cor 15:23]; the epiphaneia of Christ [1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 1:10; 4:1-8; Titus 2:13] [In 2 Thess 2:8 occurs the dual phrase "the epiphaneia of the parousia of Christ"]; the apokalupsis of Christ [2 Thess 1:7; 1 Cor 1:7]; "the day" [1 Thess 5:4; 1 Cor 3:13] "that day" 2 Tim 1:12-18; 4:8], "the day of the Lord [Jesus and/or Christ] [1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2; 1 Cor 5:5; 1 Cor 1:8; 2 Cor 1:14; Phil 1:10; 2:16] or "the day of wrath" (Rom 2:5; see 2:16) [Phil 1:6 has the phrase "the days of Christ Jesus"). It should be noted that the phrase "the day of the Lord" occurs in the Hebrew prophets to denote a day of judgment for Israel (Amos 5:18-20; Ezek 13:5; Joel 1:15; 2:1- 11; Zeph 1:7-14; Zech 14:1) and sometimes other nations (Isa 13:6, 9; Jer 46:10; Obad 15; Joel 2:31; 3:14). Thus, Paul's use of the phrase would be immediately understood by any familiar with the Hebrew prophetic writings. The hope of the return of Christ was central to the beliefs of Paul's churches; he describes, for example, his Thessalonian converts as those who have turned from idols and who now "wait for his [God's] son from heaven" (1 Thess 1:10). At Christ's return, the possibility of being a participant in eschatological salvation is terminated. It is probable that Paul expected the return of Christ within his own lifetime or at least the lifetimes of some of his converts. From what is implied in 1 Thess 1:6-8 and what he says elsewhere in his letters (Rom 13:11-12; 1 Cor 7:29-31; Phil 4:4-5), Paul seems to believe in the imminence of Christ's appearance.

2. The Eschatological Differentiation between the Believer and Unbeliever

Paul expects an eschatological differentiation between believers and unbelievers. The eschatological differentiation of the righteous and the unrighteous is a theme common to Jewish apocalyptic literature. In so-called "apocalyptic" texts there is no judgment awaiting the righteous, only vindication. In these texts, the assumption is that

the righteous have already demonstrated their status as righteous by their obedience in difficult circumstances and sometimes by their suffering persecution. The implication is that the righteous are spared final judgment, because they have already proven themselves.

Points on which scholars say Paul changed his mind

Discrepancy in details of events to occur before the parousia:

Romans 9-11 may be compared to 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12. It seems that in the latter there is a somewhat pessimistic picture of events due to take place before Christ's return - life will get more difficult, a rebellion will take place and a 'lawless one' will be revealed (v. 2) who will engage in various wicked acts and deceptions (v. 9-10) before Christ destroys him (v. 8). However, in Romans 9-11, there is a rather more optimistic picture of events before the parousia. There is a positive view of the number of people to receive salvation, and in particular Israel's rejection of her Messiah is not final, and indeed 'all Israel will be saved' (11:26).

Did Paul expect the parousia within his lifetime, or after his death? It would seem that in 1 Thes 4:15-17 and 1 Cor 15:51-52, Paul expected the parousia to come quickly, so quickly that it would take place before his death. In 1 Thes 4:15-17, Paul twice uses the expression, 'We who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord', which may be taken to mean 'we Christians who survive until the parousia'. A similar idea may be seen in 1 Cor 15:51f., where the 'we' that is emphasised in verse 52b ('we shall be changed') indicates that Paul placed himself among the survivors at the parousia.

However, in Paul's later epistles, it seems that he no longer expected to be alive at the second coming of Christ, but rather to die before it took place. Verses such as 2 Cor 4:12 ('death is at work in us, but life in you'), 5:1-8 ('we know that if the earthly building we live in is destroyed ... we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord') are said to reflect this way of thinking, as well as Philippians 1:21-23 where Paul speaks of dying as 'gain' and of his desire to 'depart and be with Christ which is far better'. So now the apostle considers death before the parousia to be a real possibility, a perspective he did not seem to have prior to 2 Corinthians, and he now thinks that the parousia will no longer take place in the proximate future.

Discrepancy regarding the time at which the Christian receives the resurrection body: When did Paul think that believers would receive their resurrection body? Two passages which give information on this matter are said by some scholars to be inconsistent with each other. Thus in 1 Cor 15, it is clear that believers do not receive their resurrection bodies until Christ returns - see verses 22-26 (the order of the resurrection of the dead taking place is first Christ, then at his coming, those who belong to Christ - verse 23), and 51-52 (the dead will be raised imperishable at the last trumpet, i.e. at Christ's coming, and then receive the resurrection body) - compare also 1 The 4:14ff.

However, in 2 Corinthians 5:1 seems to say that it is at the moment of death that the heavenly body is received - there is no gap between death and the parousia during which the believer is disembodied. It is only by receiving the resurrection body at death that this state of nakedness will be avoided (v. 3). So for the individual Christian, it is at death that they will receive the building that God has provided, as soon as the present physical body is destroyed.

What is the intermediate state of the Christian dead? In his earlier epistles, Paul seems to have described this state as one of 'sleep', thus an unconscious intermediate state. Christ will return to raise sleeping, unconscious believers to life again. This appears to be reflected in verses such as 1 Thes 4:13-15 ('concerning those who have fallen asleep in Christ'); 5:10 ('whether we are awake or asleep') and 1 Cor 5:18-20:51.

However, two sets of verses in Paul's later letters seem to give rather a different picture of the apostle's view of the intermediate state: 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 ('away from the body and at home with the Lord') and Philippians 1:21-23 ('to die is gain ... to depart and to be with Christ'). These verses seem to indicate that when believers die, they go immediately into the presence of Christ without there being any state of unconsciousness or 'sleep' at all.

The nature of events preceding the parousia in 1 and 2 Thessalonians: In 1 Thes 5:1-10, it seems that the parousia will come suddenly and unexpectedly - like 'a thief in the night', whereas in 2 Thes 2:1-12, it is clear that certain events have to take place before Christ returns (the rebellion, the appearance of the lawless one, etc).

Future/realised eschatology in respect of the believer's resurrection with Christ: It seems clear that the resurrection is a future event in 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-16 and Romans 6:4f Colossians 3:1-4 however, seems to talk about resurrection as an event that has already taken place in the believers' lives ('you have been raised with Christ ... you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God'). Is there at least a different perspective on resurrection at this later stage in Paul's life?

Possible Methods of Resolving Apparent Inconsistencies

Theory of development (or change of mind)

If one is prepared to talk of 'development' in Paul's thinking, it is important to define how one understands this term. If it is taken to mean 'an increase in understanding', few would object to such a term being applied to Paul's theology. If, however, 'development' is meant to refer to a total change of outlook on Paul's part, involving acceptance of new ideas and the rejection of former beliefs as mistaken, then some would want to raise questions about 'development' being applied to Paul in this way.

Did, therefore, Paul modify or expand his thinking as his life proceeded? Did his ideas progress without the later ideas contradicting the previous ones, or did he at a later stage in his life modify or expand his thinking so as to hold different views which contradicted the earlier ones? This would seem to be an important distinction to bear in mind when considering development theories. Thus one writer says, 'Paul's theology was not formed and static, but open and developing throughout his ministry'.

This distinction is especially important to bear in mind when considering the work of someone like C.H. Dodd, who argues that Paul is likely to have developed his thinking as he went along in his missionary life - and by this, he seems to mean 'change of mind', as may be seen in certain areas which Dodd outlines. As far as the parousia is concerned, Dodd is of the opinion that Paul expected to be alive at Christ's return at an early stage in his missionary career reflected in what Dodd classifies as an earlier group of epistles (1 and 2 Thess 1 Cor 2 Cor 6:14 - 7:1; 10-13), whereas in a later groups of epistles, he expected to die beforehand (2 Cor 1-9, Rom, Phil, Col and Eph).

There is development in Paul's attitude to this world and its institutions

As far as the state is concerned, in 1 Corinthians 6:1-11, (written at an early stage in his Christian life), Paul has a comparatively negative view of the state, particularly the law courts and advises the Corinthians to have little to do with them (cf v 1 and 2 - it is a mistake to take grievances to court before unbelievers); however, in Romans 13:1-7 representing a later stage in Paul's thinking, Paul is rather more positive in his evaluation of the state - all are to be subject to the governing authorities which have been instituted by God and are his servants - verses 1 and 4.

As far as marriage is concerned, 1 Corinthians 7 seems to have some reservations about its value - see verses 28:29; 33-34; not least because at this stage Paul believed the parousia was near (vv 29: 31); but in Ephesians 5:22ff the institution of marriage is compared to that of Christ and his church, a high comparison. Thus Paul has at least changed his thinking on these matters.

Dodd is also of the opinion that Paul changed his mind on the time a believer receives the resurrection body (cf 1 Cor 15 and 2 Cor 5:1-10 - see above).

If it is the case that Paul has developed in his thinking on these matters, then an obvious question is why this took place. Dodd and a number of scholars subsequently, have suggested that it was an event which occurred in Asia which caused the apostle to change his thinking on various matters. This is described in 2 Corinthians 1:8-9. It seems Paul was in mortal danger here, and as a result of his almost miraculous escape from what seemed certain death, he underwent a spiritual crisis which transformed his eschatological (and other) thinking, as we see reflected in his later letters. So this harrowing experience (which is not easily identified but may have been a serious illness) made Paul realise that death was somewhat nearer than he had previously thought and caused him to think more carefully about the implications this had for belief in an intermediate state and the time of receipt of the resurrection body.

However certain points seem to modify somewhat the *prima facie* strength of this argument: it perhaps needs to be borne in mind that the danger of death referred to in 2 Corinthians 1:89 was certainly not

the first time Paul had faced imminent death. Earlier epistles give the impression that Paul had on several occasions been in danger of his life in the period before 2 Corinthians 1 - see e.g., 1 Corinthians 15:30-32. Further, it is doubtful if the events mentioned in 2 Corinthians 4:7-11; 6:4-10 and 11:23-33 refer only to the time shortly before the writing of 2 Corinthians. At no stage did Paul consider death to be an exceptional occurrence for the believer; as has been pointed out, the death rate in Paul's day was not so surprisingly low that few if any of his fellow believers had died in the twenty-five years or so after Jesus' crucifixion. Also the experiences mentioned in Acts 8:1 and 9:23f (as well as those mentioned above) hardly indicate that Paul had any confident expectation of life. So dangers were a consistent part of the apostle's life, and it seems fair to say that the possibility of death before the parousia existed for some time before the events described in 2 Corinthians 1:8f

Against this it might be said that the way Paul expresses himself in 2 Corinthians 1:8f seems to indicate such a severe experience that this was the catalyst that made the apostle consider to a greater degree than before the question of the state of the believer after death, made him transfer the time the Christian receives the resurrection body from the parousia to the moment of death, and forced him to reconsider his own relationship to the return of Christ. However we might ask whether personal experience would have granted to Paul insights which his pastoral concerns had failed to prompt. Was the apostle the sort of person to have one view when others' deaths were the issue, but another (more pleasant and congenial) view when his own death seemed near?

We may say then, that the change in Paul's personal circumstances reflected in 2 Corinthians 1:8f has perhaps been given too much emphasis as being the cause of Paul's eschatological alterations of perspective. So this view states that Paul's thinking developed, changed, progressed on these various matters in these particular ways. But perhaps there is another way of approaching these alleged inconsistencies, which reflects on them in a way different to that of development. One possibility is to consider whether a careful exegesis of certain passages helps to fit the verses together in a way that indicates that it is possible to see Paul's teaching fit together more coherently.

Alternative exegesis of relevant passages

Focussing on just three of the apparent inconsistencies mentioned above.

Paul's expectation of the parousia - in his lifetime or after his death?

A number of points are worth making concerning the earlier passages. Concerning 1Thessalonians 4:15-17 and 1Corinthians 15:51f., it appears quite possible to interpret these verses in a way other than that these passages indicate that Paul expected to be alive at the parousia. When the apostle used the first person plural to refer to believers, this does not necessarily mean he included himself. 1 Cor 6:14, 15 and 10:22 are examples of Paul classing himself with those he is describing without necessarily implying he is one of them. It also seems reasonable to say that in 1 Thes 4:15, 17, where Paul is talking about two classes of believers (those asleep and those alive), as he was in the latter class when he wrote, it was natural for him to use the first person plural of himself and his fellow believers.

It further seems possible to take 'we' of 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17 and 1 Corinthians 15:51f. in a future sense ('We who will be alive, who will survive'),¹ or as hypothetical ('If we are alive, if we survive'). Also 'we' may well signify nothing more than a general designation, "we", insofar as we are permitted to experience this and insofar as this will be found to apply to us'. It may also be argued that when 1 Thessalonians 5:10 is taken with 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17, the indication is that Paul held, simultaneously and in tension, the twofold possibility of his survival to Christ's return (1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17) or his death before that event (1 Thessalonians 5:10). One might further argue from 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4 that Paul taught the incalculability of the time of the return of Christ, and specifically claimed ignorance about its date. This would seem to add weight to an interpretation of 'we' as not necessarily indicating that Paul believed he would be alive at the parousia.

Thus it would seem that 'we' does not indicate a delimited hope; rather if it does not restrict the time of Christ's return to within Paul's life, it would seem a natural prelude to 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11. So it

might well be argued that Paul awaited the parousia as an event which might take place at any moment, and so he reckoned with the possibility of being alive at that time, without necessarily thinking that this would definitely be the case at any stage of his Christian life. It might also be said that if Paul thought he would live to see Christ's return, this would be to attribute to himself an immortality contrary to how he usually speaks of his own life and death (cf., for example, 1 Thess 5:10; Rom 14:7-9; 8:10f; Phil 1 22ff; 2:17; 1 Cor 4:11; 5:1ff).

Perhaps we may conclude this point that while Paul may well have thought more on the possibility that he might die before Christ's return in his later epistles, nevertheless he always thinks of the parousia as imminent throughout his life. It seems most likely that

'Paul took note of the deaths which had taken place and perhaps also came to believe that his own death would happen earlier than at first seemed to him likely, than that he radically altered his opinion about the time of the parousia'.

Absolute certainty concerning whether he would live to, or die before the parousia was something Paul would never have claimed at any stage in his life. Paul was certain that Christ would return, but a similar certainty concerning his own (or his contemporaries') survival to that time was something he would never have claimed. Thus we may say that it seems reasonable to argue that Paul always entertained the dual possibility of survival until or death before the parousia throughout his Christian life.

Intermediate state of the Christian dead

One issue to be explored is the meaning of the term 'sleep' as used in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15; 5:10 and 1 Corinthians 15:18; 20: 51; It could well be argued that this could be understood as a euphemism for death rather than as referring to a state of unconsciousness. A survey of OT, Intertestamental literature and Rabbinic writings indicates that the word 'sleep' was used in two main ways: to relate the certainty of resurrection which was portrayed as a waking from sleep, and also simply to describe the dead with no thought of resurrection in view. This being the case, it would seem hazardous to deduce anything so specific as 'unconsciousness' from the use of 'sleep' for death.

Concerning Paul's use of the term, it occurs eight times in his writings. While for most of them there seems no reason to say that the sense demands that 'sleep' should refer to unconsciousness rather than simply meaning 'to die', four instances seem to refer to the idea of a continuous condition of sleep, a continued state of being unconscious, rather than the fact of having died, a single act: 1 Thessalonians 4:13; 5:10; 1 Corinthians 11:30; 15:10; On the other hand, one might say that when Paul calls dead believers 'asleep', he appears to be looking upon their condition from a human point of view, as one looking forward to their resurrection. It also may be said that the condition of dead believers, who are said to be 'asleep in Christ', is intricately connected with their Lord who came alive from the dead. So 'sleep' is given a new context by the death and resurrection of Christ. However, the word is not meant to be an objective indication of the intermediate state of the dead believer. It may also be said that the force of the present tense in 1 Thessalonians 4:13 and 1 Corinthians 11:30 is that a continuous number of deaths keep occurring, in which case Paul's words do not support the idea of a continuous state of sleep.

If these interpretations are accepted, there is no information about the intermediate state in these verses at all. It then seems reasonable to conclude that the word 'sleep' as used by Paul may aptly be taken as a euphemism for death and nothing more, and there is no need to see it as referring to an intermediate state of unconsciousness.

It also seems that an interpretation of 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 and Philippians 1:21-23 which sees these verses as referring to an intermediate state of conscious fellowship with Christ is by far the most likely way of understanding these passages. The following points may be noted: concerning 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 it appears unlikely that a time gap divides the 'being away from the body' from the 'being at home with the Lord'. Verse 6 would seem to imply that the state of being at home in the body and the state of being away from the Lord occur at the same time: immediately the believer dies and is therefore no longer in the physical body, there is no longer an absence from the Lord. Also, verse 7 portrays walking by faith and seeing the Lord face-to-face 'as two mutually exclusive and immediately successive states of Christian existence'. Death may end the Christian's walk of

faith, but it brings immediate contact with Christ. Thus we may argue that in talking about the state of the Christian after death 'as one of dwelling in the company of the Lord', it seems most probable that Paul is thinking of a 'heightened form of inter-personal communion' between the believer and the Lord, a mutual fellowship.

Concerning the meaning of 'to die is gain' (Phil. 1:21), it seems most likely that the gain Paul is referring to is the idea that death would bring him personally into a deeper state of fellowship with his Lord, and allow him to be with Christ in a way far superior to what was possible on earth. Living, in Philippians 1:21, which is equated with Christ, and dying, which is gain, are not compared and contrasted, but rather dying is a consequence of living. Living in the present for Paul meant being taken up with Christ, and because of this, dying could only mean more of the same thing, but then without any of the problems associated with living in the physical body.

Concerning verse 23, what Paul appears to be saying is that the very moment he dies, at that precise moment, he will be with Christ. Paul is not using resurrection terminology here - the contrast in these verses is not between present sufferings and future glory (as at 3:10f 17-21), but between life and death.

A final indication that these two sets of verses indicate that Paul expected to find himself in the presence of Christ immediately after death is as follows: if Paul had contemplated being unconscious and inactive during the interval between his death and the parousia, how are we to explain his preference (2 Cor 5:8) or desire (Phil 1:23) to depart to Christ's presence? Even with all its difficulties, active conscious life on earth would doubtless have seemed preferable to a state of unconsciousness after death. It appears unlikely that Paul would have believed that Christians could have their union with Christ interrupted, even temporarily, by bodily death. Thus the apostle's knowledge that life in the immediate presence of Christ is far superior to earthly existence formed the ground of his preference for departure in 2 Corinthians 5:8 and of his desire for departure in Philippians 1:23.

So the alleged inconsistency on the intermediate state is best resolved by an alternative exegesis of the verb 'to sleep' in 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians which argues that it does not refer

to any intermediate state of unconsciousness, but rather is simply a euphemism for death. Thus Paul intends to make no statement on the intermediate state by the use of this term.

Time of receipt of the resurrection body

It seems clear that 1 Corinthians 15 does clearly teach that the resurrection body will be given to the believer at the parousia, a view which the vast majority of commentators hold to. However while 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 is a much more difficult passage to get to grips with, a good case can be made for these verses referring to the parousia as the point at which the resurrection body is bestowed. In particular, the following points are important:

(1) The 'building from God', the 'house not made with hands' of 5:1 almost certainly refers to the resurrection body, for the following reasons: it would seem most natural to give to 'house' in verse 1b the same meaning as it has in verse 1a. Also, as there are several references to the physical body in 2 Corinthians 4 (see w. 7, 10, 11, 16a), it seems most likely that 'the earthly tent/house' (5:1a) refers to the physical body than to any sense of corporate identity.

(2) The way the 'house' is described in 5:1 ('from God', 'a house not made with hands', 'eternal in the heavens') has direct parallels with the description of the resurrection body found in 1 Corinthians 15:2. 2 Corinthians 5:1-2 talks about the 'house' being 'from God', a 'heavenly dwelling', to which we may compare 1 Corinthians 15:38 (God gives a body); it is spiritual (2 Cor 5:1 - 'not made with hands') - compare 1 Corinthians 15:44 - 46 - a spiritual body; it is permanent and indestructible (2 Cor 5:1 - 'eternal'), corresponding to the new body being 'imperishable' in 1 Corinthians 15:42; 52-54; it is 'heavenly' (2 Cor 5:1) which may be paralleled with 1 Corinthians 15:40; 48f referring to heavenly bodies and those who are 'of heaven' bearing the image of 'the man of heaven'. This close correspondence between the way Paul describes the resurrection body in 1 Corinthians 15 and his description of the 'building' in 2 Corinthians 5:1 would seem to be a good indication that the two should be identified.

In arguing that 2 Corinthians 5:1 refers to death before the parousia, we may note the following: at death, the earthly tent-dwelling is 'taken down' and destroyed. This is not the type of language Paul uses to

refer to those alive at Christ's return. In the latter case he talks about transformation (cf Phil 3:21) which will involve a 'putting on' of the new spiritual body without the necessity of a prior 'taking off' of the old body (cf 2 Cor 5:2-4; 1 Cor 15:51ff). There will be no destruction of the earthly body of those still alive at the parousia, although it will be changed. It is fair to say that Paul is more personally involved in the question of death before Christ's return in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 than in his earlier epistles, but even so his assurance is similar to that of 1 Corinthians 15: if he does die, he knows that he has a resurrection body from God.

This brings us to the question of the meaning of 'we have' in 2 Corinthians 5:1. I would argue that this should be taken as designating a future possession of the spiritual body at the parousia. It appears reasonable to take 'we have' as giving the sense of assured possession, a futuristic present used by Paul to express his certainty of gaining the resurrection body at the Lord's coming. So convinced was Paul that this would be the case that he could speak of it as present.

It also seems possible to interpret Paul's use of 'to be further clothed, 'to put on over' in verse 4 as indicating his desire to put on the heavenly habitation over the earthly tent at the parousia rather than at the moment of death. Paul says he groans because he does not wish to be unclothed, but to be 'clothed upon', to be further clothed, to put on one garment over another (v 4). He appears to be saying that he does not wish to experience an interval of being unclothed, but that he should be able simply to put on his future heavenly body over the top of his present earthly body. It is hard to see how Paul could have thought of this taking place at death, for at death the earthly body is taken off. It is true that Paul's groaning in verses 2-4 is a contrast to his previous confidence, but we would argue that it is the result of his desire to put on the new body *over the* present, earthly body, without death coming first.

Paul also says in verse 4 that when the heavenly dwelling is put on, then what is mortal is swallowed up by life. These are very similar terms to those he uses in 1 Corinthians 15:54 and that chapter clearly indicates that it is at Christ's return that this will take place. It is not unfair to say that the same would be the case in 2 Corinthians 5:4 unless there is clear evidence against this assumption.

In considering the meaning of 'naked' in verse 3, a likely interpretation in the context seems to be that which refers it to the state of disembodiment which death before the parousia would bring for the believer. It appears that 'naked' is opposed to the idea of being clothed in verse 3, and synonymous with the notion of 'to put off, be unclothed' in verse 4, and where this clothing is seen as specifically referring to embodiment, then 'naked' quite naturally refers to the disembodiment which believers would enter upon at death. Paul argues that the object of the Christian's longing is not the stripping off of the body, but a new heavenly form of embodiment - the believer shrinks from a state of not being clothed. In verse 4, the groaning is connected with great oppression, and this is 'because we do not wish to be unclothed, but to be further clothed'. So there are two reasons for groaning: negatively, the dislike of the prospect of putting off the present body, and positively the desire to put on over it the heavenly body, which could only take place if the parousia occurred before death. Paul fears death because it would be a much happier event to survive to Christ's return; if he died first, he would have to spend some time 'naked', and then be raised up, whereas if he lived until the parousia, he would be transformed immediately.

Death however, does have an attractive side for the believer despite the prospect of nakedness, and Paul is prepared to leave the physical body for the sake of being at home with the Lord (vv 6-8). So if death comes to destroy the 'outward man', fellowship with Christ will continue, be much deeper, and will end with the spiritual body which God has prepared for the believer to receive at Christ's return. Thus death might mean temporary nakedness, but it would also mean freedom from the frustration of living in the earthly body which restricts the Christian's fellowship with Christ.

An objection that is sometimes raised to this interpretation is that it means Paul had two contradictory attitudes to death within ten verses. At first he shrinks from the nakedness that death would bring, and then he says that if faced with the choice between death and remaining in the present body, he would prefer to die because this would mean being with the Lord. But it might be said that Paul was in two minds about death. In one sense death was an enemy; it would lead to a state of disembodiment. However death would also lead a believer

into the Lord's presence even without resurrection, and communion would be enhanced since it would no longer be subject to the limitations of the physical body. Faced by death, Paul thinks of the realities of heaven. The temporary nature of the state of nakedness is shown by his assurance of the reality of the future heavenly body, and this makes death seem abnormal. Yet even if death destroys the physical body it cannot damage Paul's link with his Lord. This will continue through death, even though the earthly body does not, and eventually the resurrection body will be received at Christ's return. There will be individual blessedness at death, while the soul is disembodied until the parousia, but the total Christian hope is of something more than individual blessedness, since perfect fullness of life has to be corporate. Thus it is the parousia with its 'perfection of corporateness' given in the bestowal of the physical body to every believer for which Paul really longs.

It might also be said that if Paul had undergone a complete change of mind in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 it is hard to see indications of this in the passage. For example, regarding 'we have' (v 1), the present tense seems inadequate evidence for suggesting a change in Paul's thinking. If Paul now wished to say that the resurrection body was to be received at death it would be more accurate to call this a complete contradiction of what he had previously taught, rather than a development from it. The specific order of events described in 1 Corinthians 15:23-26 would no longer be correct and the mystery described in 1 Corinthians 15:51ff. that at the last trumpet the dead would be raised imperishable would no longer be true. Yet there is no indication of such a complete break with what he had previously meant when the apostle mentions the resurrection of the dead in 2 Corinthians 1:9 and 4:14.

It would be fair to say that 'for we know' (2 Cor 5:1) is an unlikely way of introducing a new teaching which has been made clear to Paul only recently. These words would seem rather to indicate that the teaching of 2 Corinthians 5 will have been known already to the Corinthians and will agree with Paul's previous teaching (which is that the receipt of the spiritual body is at the parousia).

Thus this alleged inconsistency on the time a believer receives their resurrection body is resolved by an alternative exegesis of 2

Corinthians 5:1-10 which interprets these verses in terms of the resurrection body being bestowed at the second coming of Christ, not at the moment of death.

Conclusion

It has been argued that the method of solution which provides the most satisfactory way of resolving the three alleged inconsistencies that we have examined is an alternative exegesis of appropriate passages, and the conclusions we have reached provide us with a coherent picture of Paul's eschatological thinking on these matters. Thus in arguing that for Paul the parousia was always imminent, that he looked upon death as a possibility at all stages of his Christian life, not just from the time immediately before he wrote 2 Corinthians (although it seems that he considered death for himself more probable as time went on), it was natural for Paul also to consider the state of the believer between death and the parousia (which, we argue, he thought to be one of disembodied conscious fellowship with Christ), and the events which would take place at Christ's return (including the receiving by believers of the spiritual body), although one should also bear in mind that it was often the questions of, and the difficulties facing the Christians Paul wrote to, that have resulted in us having his views on these matters.

Thus we submit that the three alleged inconsistencies which we have considered are more apparent than real, and given an appropriate exegesis of the relevant passages, a basic coherence and consistency in Paul's writings on these matters is to be seen. In addressing altered situations in his own life and in the life of his churches (especially the Corinthian Church), Paul may use new imagery and apply further reflection, and particular situations may have evoked particular emphases in his teachings, but he does not go back on anything he has asserted in previous epistles. Paul's basic eschatological framework, which posits the dual possibility of the believer's death or the prior return of Christ, remains constant.

Chapter 14

The Letter to Philemon

Besides Romans, there is still another letter which is not addressed to a community that Paul founded. It is the letter he wrote to the individual Philemon. The apostle only gives a few hints concerning their previous relationship. In the address (v 1) Paul calls Philemon «our beloved and co-worker». In all the letters, there are only five other individuals, one woman (Persida, Rom 16:12) and four men (Epaenetus, Rom 16:5; Ampliatus, 16:8; Stachys, 16:9; and Timothy, 1 Cor 4:17) whom Paul addresses as his beloved (*agapetos*, -e). In Phlm 16, Paul implicitly asks that Philemon welcome Onesimus as «a beloved brother».

‘Co-worker’ (*synergos*), on the other hand, is, as V.P. Furnish says, “one of Paul’s most typical descriptions of his associates”. Thirteen individuals are described by this term among whom people as prevalent as Timothy (Rom 16:21), Titus (2 Cor 8:23), Apollos (1 Cor 3:9), Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25) as well as Prisca and Aquila (Rom 16:3). Four co-workers, Mark, Aris-tarchus, Demas, and Luke) are named at the end of Philemon (v 23). Thus the expressions “beloved” and “co-worker”

closely associate Philemon with Paul. This association clearly has its origin in the past. It is to this previous stage of their relationship that Paul is referring when mentioning that Philemon owes him his own self (v 19b). Even though there is no evidence that could tell us what specifically Paul is hinting at here - Philemon certainly knew - it is a very strong expression of the man's indebtedness to Paul, an indebtedness which can hardly be purely rhetorical.

On the basis of these personal and almost intimate aspects of the past relationship it is surprising that in the introductory thanksgiving Paul does not mention any more personal reasons why he should thank God in his prayers for Philemon. The reason he gives is the love and faith of Philemon toward the Lord Jesus and all the saints about which Paul keeps hearing (v 5). Philemon's love which has resulted in the refreshment of the hearts of the saints has given the apostle much joy and comfort (v 7).

Paul's retelling of the previous relationship with Philemon is clearly in function of the new moment of the relationship that this present letter tries to create. The love they have shared in the past and the work they did together is still relevant for their relationship today. Besides "beloved" and "co-worker", Paul calls Philemon "my brother" (v 7) and "brother" (v 20). By naming people who like Philemon are "brother" (Timothy, v 1) and "co-workers" (Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, v 24) to him, he implicitly shows Philemon the prominent place he has in the network of Paul's own relationships. He even suggests that Philemon should consider him as his "partner" (*koinonos*). Paul has not taken any one-sided decisions, nor is he going to command Philemon to do what he wants him to do (v 8). He rather appeals to on the basis of love (v 9) hoping that obediently (and lovingly) Philemon will do even more than what Paul asks for (v 21). Similarly in 2 Cor 8:8; Paul is not giving the Corinthians a command (*epitage*) to donate money generously for the collection, he would rather prefer them to do it out of love (*agape*).

It is the future stages of the relationship which Paul is clearly most concerned about, since the appeal he has to make concerns the way Philemon is going to receive his slave Onesimus who comes back to him after he had run away. It is in view of this future that Paul is stressing the reciprocity of their relationship. He is trying very hard to

make Philemon feel as an equal in the relationship. He prefers not to behave like someone who has authority over him, yes, he even encourages him to treat himself as his partner. The basis of their relationship and Paul's appeal should be love and a free response in love. But then Paul points out: you owe me your own self. This clearly endangers Philemon's freedom to respond in love, since he now might do what Paul asks out of a sense of indebtedness, obligation, maybe even guilt feelings. But this is not the only way Paul puts Philemon under pressure.

Paul's strongest support for his appeal is to be seen in the fact that he so completely identifies with Onesimus (cf v 12) that whatever Philemon will do to his runaway slave Paul will consider done to himself. The way Philemon responds to Paul's appeal will affect their mutual relationship. In Onesimus, Paul is sending back to Philemon his own heart, that is himself insofar as his emotions and his love are concerned (v 12). Quite consistent with this he asks in v 17 "welcome him as you would welcome me". If Philemon does what Paul asks him to do, the apostle would consider that a benefit in the Lord, a refreshment of his heart in Christ (v 20).

We conclude that Paul is making his relationship to Philemon the model of Philemon's relationship to Onesimus. Paul is calling him "beloved" and "brother", and he appeals to Philemon to accept Onesimus as "a beloved brother" (v 16). Paul consciously chooses not to relate to Philemon on the superior to inferior model (v 8). He wants Philemon to do the same with regard to Onesimus. Paul is not asking Philemon to return what he owes him which is what he implicitly expects of Philemon regarding what Onesimus might owe him (vv 18-19). In addition, Paul also wants Philemon's own attitude toward Paul to be the model for Philemon's attitude toward Onesimus. In Onesimus he is to see Paul's loving presence (v 12), he is to welcome Onesimus as he would welcome Paul (v 17).

Thus in his appeals to Onesimus Paul is making their mutual relationship the basis for requesting the liberation of the slave Onesimus. In the way Philemon will treat Onesimus the mutuality of their relationship will be put to the test. The letter to Philemon is thus a single-minded appeal to extend the existing mutuality to include Onesimus with whom Paul identifies himself unreservedly.

Philemon and Its Value as a Canonical Text :

Put yourself back into the world of early Christianity. Imagine yourself sitting on one of the great councils trying to decide what NT books should be deemed “canonical” and which ones should not be counted as such. Which books would you insist on? Which books from our modern NT would you exclude? Which books not in our NT would you add? Would you really bother with texts like 3 John, Jude, or Philemon? If so, why? Are they valuable because of the people they are associated with, or is there something within their contents that makes them valuable?

Bring yourself back to 2007. Ask yourself: Apart from reading Philemon as one of the requirements for this course, when was the last time you read the letter and reflected upon its significance? Is it significant at all? When was the last time you heard someone preach a sermon based on this text? If you are a minister, when was the last time you preached from it? When was the last time you heard someone describe Philemon as their “favourite” book of the Bible, or speak about the great illumination and change that occurred in their life upon reading it?

Perhaps the only place where this text has received a lot of attention is within the context of colonial settings where slavery thrived for hundreds of years. The irony in such settings, however, was that Philemon was most often interpreted according to one's social location. Slaves would insist, based on the authority of Paul's words, that their Christian masters should treat them as Paul asked Philemon to treat Onesimus. On the other hand, in the debate about the abolition of slavery, it was often handily pointed out by the slave owners that even the great apostle Paul never called for the complete abolition of slavery. The position of both parties could be argued from the same text.

Perhaps some of the reasons Philemon has been set aside in the contemporary age: its subject matter and its social context are completely foreign to our 21st century North American mindset; there are no real inspirational catch phrases or intriguing storylines; there is no magic, no gems.

Despite the lack of overt “glamour” associated with this epistle, it is a surprisingly rich and meaningful resource for the student of Paul.

Pauline Letters & Theology

This is a masterfully crafted letter that deals with a number of important issues:

- The pastoral nature of Paul’s theology (How do theology and faith intersect with real life?)
- How does the gospel affect our understanding of, and the way we live in relation to, the world’s social structures?

The Structure of the letter:

Letter Opening (1:3)

- Paul “a prisoner of Christ Jesus” (unique among his canonical letters; he usually refers to himself as apostle or servant; he is titleless in 1 and 2 Thess; a paradoxical title when we consider the “freedom” he has in Christ).
- The addressees of the letter (apparently the letter is addressed to Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and Philemon’s house church, but in reality Paul seems to be directing his words specifically at Philemon. Why?)

Thanksgiving (4:7)

- This is the “buttering up” section where Paul sets out Philemon’s exemplary faith, love, and actions. Why? (Philemon’s response to Paul’s request will test whether or not this is true)

Body Opening (8:10): Paul makes an appeal for Onesimus:

- Paul sets out that he is bold enough to command Philemon, but since Philemon’s love is exemplary, Paul makes his appeal on that level.
- Paul describes his relationship to Onesimus in the strongest terms (father-son). Paul is not simply making an appeal for a slave/piece of property, but is appealing for his son (someone of great value).

Body Middle (11:16): Why should Philemon take Onesimus back?

- Onesimus has gone from being useless to useful; so useful that Paul would like to keep him for himself
- Philemon is a good guy
- The incident with Onesimus happened for a reason

Body Closing (17:21): How can Philemon refuse?

- Paul appeals to his relationship with Philemon (If you are a partner with me...)
- Paul offers to compensate Philemon, which is pretty generous since
- Philemon owes Paul anyways
- Philemon is invoked to continue to be exemplary (compare verse 20 with 7)
- Philemon is so exemplary that he will surely go above and beyond what is asked of him

Letter Closing (22-25)

- Paul is going to do a personal follow up visit to check on the situation

Transformations in the Letter to Philemon:

1. Transformations relating to Onesimus that precede the letter:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Slave (of Philemon) | → Free (in Christ) (this is the cause of the current problem) |
| Property | → Sonship (with respect to Paul) |
| Useless/unprofitable | → Useful/profitable |

2. Paul's proposed transformation of Onesimus with respect to Philemon:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Slave | → Brother |
| Someone of lesser value | → Someone of equal value |

3. Paul's proposed transformation of Philemon with respect to Onesimus:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Master | → Brother |
| Someone of greater value | → Someone of equal value |
| Someone with authority | → Someone without authority |

4. The transformations that will occur if Philemon disregards Paul's request:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Partner with Paul | → not a partner with Paul |
| One who is exemplary | → one who is not exemplary |

5. *The transformation that will occur if Philemon heeds Paul's request*

Affirmation of Roman social order → Affirmation of the Divine social order

Paul's Position on Slavery :

In the contemporary age, Paul's "failure" to call for the abolition of slavery has been coupled with some of Paul's other more memorable lines (women saved through childbearing; women be silent in church; the inclusion of homosexuality on his listing of damning offenses, etc.) as a point of departure for people who have undertaken to refine some of Paul's "mistaken" beliefs and ideals. For these people, Paul is often thought of as being simply a product of his environment. But as we have seen over the last number of weeks, Paul was not simply a product of his environment, but was also one who responded to his environment and accordingly sought to influence it. Though he may have said (or not said) some things that puzzle us, perhaps there is good reason for this.

Brown suggests an apocalyptic rationale allowed for Paul's apparent toleration of slavery - the view that the world was soon going to pass away allowed Christians to tolerate unjust social structures and institutions for the short term as they waited for the return of Christ (the task of completely reworking the entire Roman social order was just not a feasible short-term project). Even so, Paul requests that Philemon defy the usual social conventions: to forgive and receive back a run away slave; to refuse financial reparation; to free the runaway slave; and to recognize Onesimus as a brother.

Is there even any value in Paul making a statement in this context that demands the complete overhaul of the entire Roman social order? Does such a young religion even have a say in the discussion? Apart from some sort of apocalyptic intervention, how can such deeply entrenched societal values be changed?

Chapter 15

Pauline Pastoral Epistles

The Pauline Pastoral Epistles are three: 1-2 Timothy and Titus. They were not known as pastorals until the eighteenth century when they were given this title by D.N. Berdot in 1703. The name was popularized by Paul Anton in 1726. The epistles are not precisely pastoral but are more like church administrative handbooks. Furthermore, in the strictest sense Timothy and Titus were not serving as pastors but as official missionary delegates of Paul to assist the churches in policies, polity and practice. Although the letters are written to individuals they are not only personal but official in character. They were clearly intended to be read by a wider audience.

- It is believed that these letters are written by Paul during his following his first Roman imprisonment.
- ❖ 1 Timothy,
- ❖ 2 Timothy
- ❖ Titus
- Not addressed to communities (cf. “Great epistles”; Captivity Epistles)

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- Addressed to individual pastors (young “bishops”)
- Very Personal, Exhortatory, and Intimate

Literary Genres :

- Letters/Epistles: All three of these works can be classified as “letters” or “epistles” (based on their form); but their literary genres can be defined even more precisely (based on their content).
- Church Orders (*magisterial instructions*)
 - Literary works that give instructions about the organization, practices, leadership structures, and other practical matters for the Christian communities.
 - NT examples: both 1 Timothy and Titus are easily recognized as “Church Orders”; smaller sections within other NT writings might also be similar in genre.
 - Non-canonical examples: outside the NT, several other early Christian writings also fit this genre, such as the Didache and the Apostolic Constitutions.
- Final Testament or Farewell Discourse:
 - Literary works (usually *pseudepigraphic*) that purportedly give the final words of a great leader, shortly before his/her own death.
 - Typical characteristics of this genre, as the dying person passes on his/her “spiritual legacy”:
 - *Reflecting on the past*: the dying person’s own life and actions as a good example; reflections on the meaning of his life and work.
 - *Speaking of the future*: personal exhortations for his “sons” to live well and to serve God; warnings about potential dangers or problems.
 - *Blessings and prayers*: praying on behalf of his/her children and/or followers.
 - Personal or biographical elements: added for greater authenticity (such as 2 Tim 1:15-18; 4:9-18).
 - OT examples: the last words of Jacob (Gen 49); the last words of Moses (Deut 33)

- NT examples: farewell words of Paul to his “son” (2 Timothy); farewell address of Jesus to his disciples (John 14 -17); farewell speech of Paul in Troas (Acts 20:17-38); farewell message of Peter (2 Peter 1- 3)
- Non-canonical examples: *Testament of Abraham*; *Testament of Solomon*; *Testaments of the 12 Patriarchs*; etc.

The Question of Authenticity:

Many biblical scholars question the attribution of this or that letter of the NT to the Apostle Paul, but none come under any greater fire in this regard than the Pastoral epistles - 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. Critics commonly assert that the Pastorals are “pseudox”, and that they may be dated to c. 100-120 AD based on any number of factors.

History of dispute:

- Church Fathers: unanimous attribution to Paul
- Friedrich Schleiermacher: Liberal Protestant theology; first doubts the authenticity of these letters (1807)
- Modern Scholarship: divided on question of authenticity (*heterolegumena* or *antilegumena*)

1. Arguments against Authenticity

There are four main reasons for questioning Pauline authorship of the Pastoral epistles.

I. Textual reasons

- ✓ The earliest codex of Pauline writings stop at I Thessalo. 5:5.
- ✓ Marcion did not include the Pastorals in his canon.
- ✓ The Muratorian canon included the Pastorals as an appendix to the Pauline corpus.

II. Distinctive Assertions

- ✓ Faith is not so much a personal commitment as it is a body of propositions to be believed. (I Timothy 1:19)
- ✓ Remarkable stress on good works (I Timothy 2:10; 5:10; 6:8; II Timothy 2:21; Titus 2:14)
- ✓ Justification, on the human side, is the outcome of both faith and works. (Titus 3:5ff)

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- ✓ “Savior” is a title used for God as well as for Christ. God: (I Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4). Christ (II Timothy 2:10; Titus 1:4; 2:13; 3:6).
- ✓ “Epiphany” is a term used to refer to both the first and second comings. It can refer to both God and Christ. (II Timothy 1:9f; Titus 2:13).
- ✓ Theological stance in the epistles against the Gnostics: But “Gnostics,” were not around until after Paul’s death (2nd cent. AD)

III. Advanced Church Structure

- ✓ Ecclesiology: church hierarchy is too developed (monarchical episcopate)
- ✓ The presence of *episcopos*, *presbuteros*, *diakonos*

IV. Style and Vocabulary

- ✓ Style and Vocabulary: some words and phrases unique (Titus 2:13; 1 Tim 6:15)
- ✓ Atmosphere and Vocabulary close to Luke-Acts (Brown, *Intro.*, 666)

2. Arguments in Favor of Authenticity

Objections answered (in brief)

- Internal Evidence: Explicit attribution to Paul
- External Evidence: unanimous testimony of Church Fathers
- Theological stance is not against the Gnostics but Judaizers (1 Tim 1:3-7; Titus 1; 3:9-11)
- Church hierarchy is not yet developed to monarchical episcopate. The deacons and elders are present already in the time envisioned in the Acts of the Apostles.
- Situation: reflects that of early Christian communities
- Question of the difference in style is due to the change of subject and situation
- Inconsistency of Inauthentic dates of the critics: 80s-90s, 100-130 AD, or 180-200 AD

Major Objections answered (*in detail*)

Kummel [*Introduction*, 371-4], along with Dibelus and Conzelmann, use the five standard arguments against Pauline authorship of the pastoral epistles.

- **Confusion over definition of the law** (1 Tim 1:8-10): Definition of Law is different in the pastoral letters and other Pauline epistles: The critics argue that whereas in Galatians and Romans, the law is “a power hostile to man,” here it simply condemns evildoers. But this evaluation is wrong. Paul with his reverence for Jewish law, could never have said that it was not intended for righteous men.”
 - *The views about the law are complimentary and compatible - not contradictory:* Paul could easily conceive of the law both as hostile to man AND as a check on evildoing - as indeed I would. Paul’s reverence for the law does not contradict the idea that it was not intended for righteous men (because at any rate, according to Romans 3, there aren’t any). This is conceptually much the same as saying that when Jesus said that He came to call not the righteous, but sinners,
 - *In context, Paul is addressing a heresy that misuses Jewish beliefs:* In verse 7, Paul refers to the heretics thusly: “They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.” Obviously, these heretics were making improper use of the law, and Paul was simply “emphatically opposing the futilities of much Pentateuchal speculation” - hence the seeming lack of “reverence” for the law.
- **Confusion over “faith” - personal, or loyalty to a church tradition?** Throughout the Pastorals, Paul refers to “the faith” in the sense of a creed or a tradition, which is said to contradict Paul’s usual way of referring to faith only in a personal way. This argument is also not withstanding: Paul refers to “the faith” in a creedal way in other places (Rom. 4:12, 4:16; 1Cor 16:13; 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 1:23; 3:23, 6:10; Phil 1:25, 27; Col 2:7). It was therefore not a foreign usage to him; he simply uses it that way more often in the Pastorals, as we would expect if he were writing to church leaders whose job it was to safeguard creeds and

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traditions - and considering that he was near the end of his life, this would not be a bad idea.

- **The Pastorals lack the Pauline mysticism:** The lack of mysticism is simply due to the personal nature of these letters. Why do we expect personal letters to contain mysticism, and why should we expect Paul to always be the same way every time he writes a letter.
- **Confusion over baptism** (Titus 3:5): Critics claim that this is reflecting a step towards later sacramentalism, seeing baptism in itself as effective for salvation. But this argument is baseless, because the Pauline reference to *washing* in Tit 3:5 is symbolic and metaphorical. There is an allusion here to water baptism, but the basis of this verse is metaphorical, referring to the spiritual cleansing (“rebirthing”) power of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the word Paul uses here for “renewal” is used elsewhere in the NT in connection with the renewing, cleansing work of the Holy Spirit. For similar imagery, see Romans 6:4, 1 Cor 6:11, and Eph. 5:26). It may be further added that the word we translate “rebirth” had broader meanings in Jewish and pagan contexts as well.
- **Contra Acts?** [Acts 20:25-38 indicates Paul would no longer be able to return to the East]: Some critics object that the Pastorals cannot fit into the chronology of Acts, because Pastorals refers to Pauline return to the East. This argument is also out place with regard to the pastoral letters. There is no proof of such a journey to the East, or of Paul’s release from prison in the pastoral letters. Actually, there is some evidence of this in Acts: **An expectation of release is found in Acts and in the prison epistles.** (Acts 26:30; Phil 1:25; 2:24; Philm 22). It is wise to think that Paul was released from his first imprisonment, and would have had time both for a journey to the East and for the Pastorals. Indications that Paul was released from prison are also found in the *Muratorian Canon* and in the *Acts of Peter*.

Date of Pastorals : ca. 64-66 A.D.

- Some time after Roman imprisonment (ca. 62 A.D.; end of Acts)
- Paul is at the end of his life (2 Tim 4:6-8)

The Sacrament of Holy Orders (As Envisioned in the Pastoral Letters)

1. Titus and Timothy: two young bishops are ordained by the Laying on of Hands

- Candidates chosen by “prophetic utterance” (1 Tim 1:18-20)
- Episcopal ordination: through “laying on of hands” (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6)
- Priestly ordination: also by laying on of hands (1 Tim 5:22)
- OT background: laying hands and consecration to death (Nu 8; Ex 19)

3. Three Degrees of Holy Orders in the NT and Their OT Background (St. Clement; St. Jerome)

- High Priest (Aaron) - Bishop (Gk *episkopos* - cf. Titus 1:5- 16)
- Priests (Sons of Aaron) - Presbyter (Gk *presbyteros*)
- Levites (Aaron’s Tribe) - Deacon (Gk *diakonos*)

4. Requirements of a Bishop or Priest (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-16)

- Man of Integrity: above Reproach
- Monogamous: Not a Polygamist/Remarried: “husband of one wife”
- Virtuous: temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable
- Good Teacher
- Spiritual Father and Leader: manages his household well
- Mature: not a recent convert
- Respectable to outsiders (cf. John Paul II)
- Humble: not arrogant or quick-tempered
- Temperate: not a drunkard or greedy for gain; master of himself; self-controlled
- Holy: “consecrated” or “set apart” (Hb *qadosh*)
- Orthodox: a teacher of “sound doctrine” (Gk *didaskalia*)

5. Requirements for a Deacon or “Servant” (Gk *diakonos* - 1 Tim 3:8-13)

- Serious
- Straight-Talkers: not “double-tongued” (cf. Matt 5:37)

Pauline Letters & Theology

- Temperate: not addicted to much wine; not greedy for gain
- Orthodox and Orthoprax: hold “the mystery of faith”
- Proven: let them be tested first
- Monogamous: “husband of one wife”
- Spiritual Fathers and Leaders: manage children and household well

6. Responsibility of the Pastors:

- Spiritual fatherhood (1 Tim 5:1-2)
- Teaching Morality (Titus 2:1-10)
- Teach the rich to share (1 Tim 6:17-19)
- Take care of the consecrated religious: the order of the “Widows” (1 Tim 5:3-16)
- Relating to the World: submission to earthly rulers (Titus 2:9-10; 3:1-8)
- Protect the people of God from False Teachers (2 Tim 3:1-9; 1Tim 4:1-5)