

Understanding Pauline Studies. An Assessment of Recent Research: Part One

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Publications in Pauline studies continue at what appears to be an ever-increasing pace. Although the work is not uniformly of the same standard, it all bears testimony to the continued interest in 'the second founder of 'Christianity', as Wilhelm Wrede called Paul (not without some merit). This two-part study attempts to survey and assess a number of works on Paul and his writings from 1991 to the present. In this study, I wish to draw attention to several of the major areas of work, including work in commentaries. I do not pretend to have read everything in Pauline studies (nor would I even want to try), but I will try to offer an informed critique of some of the major works and what they might have to offer a serious student of the NT. Since I am the editor of one of the major monograph series in NT studies (JSNT Supplement Series), I will note where a contribution has been made by the series but (usually) refrain from commenting on these volumes.

In the discussion that follows, I divide the books on Paul into two broad and roughly even categories. The first is concerned with books on Paul and the issues that surround him and his letters. The second, to be published in the next issue, includes treatments of individual letters, including commentaries and monographs. I will take each of these categories in turn, and then conclude with some general observations on the state of Pauline studies.¹ Here, then, I shall concentrate on general Pauline studies. In this section, assessment is given of a number of studies, grouped under convenient headings. Not only are there a number of fundamental studies on Paul, but there are a few volumes each on such related topics as Paul and the law, the Pauline letter legacy, Pauline ethics, Paul and the OT, Paul and Jesus, Paul and ancient rhetoric, and monographs on Paul.

Fundamental studies

Probably the single most important work on Paul in the last five years, in so far as general applicability is concerned, is the *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*.² This dictionary of close on 1 million words is a compendium of over 200 articles representing the latest and best thinking by an international group of evangelical scholars (with 'evangelical' healthily broadly defined). The articles range in length from fairly short to lengthy and detailed treatments. Since I wrote a few of the articles, it is unfair for me to surreptitiously single them out for accolades. But there are plenty of other articles that merit close scrutiny. In fact, there are so many that it would be unfair to mention only a few. They are virtually all up to date (except possibly the one on Qumran and Paul, in the light of recent publication of Cave 4 documents). If there is a word of caution that needs to be expressed regarding this dictionary (and most others) is that the articles display several different kinds of approaches, which cannot always be equated. For example, some are essentially word studies and fall victim occasionally to the limitations of equating concepts with individual words; others are

¹ In Part Two, I take the Pauline epistles generally in their canonical sequence.

² G.F. Hawthorne and R.P. Martin, with D.G. Reid (eds), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Leicester: IVP, 1993).

theologies, with one or two being more theologies of the Reformation than of Paul; and others are studies of particular passages. If used wisely, however, this may well be the single most reliable general guide to Paul's writings and thought, and a very useful tool for preparing for examinations and papers (and even lectures!). I might also mention in passing a collection of fourteen essays on Paul, including some on Paul the Apostle, Pauline interpretation of sacred tradition, Pauline theology and the Pauline letter-form and rhetoric. These were all published in *JSNT* between 1978 and 1993, and

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offer a useful selection for those wishing to read serious scholarly essays on these topics.³

There are two studies on the life of Paul that are worth mentioning. The first is Martin Hengel's study of what he calls *The Pre-Christian Paul*.⁴ This book is a very useful continuation of his previous work on the Hellenistic nature of Judaism during Hellenistic times,⁵ with a recognition of the historical reliability of the biblical documents, including Acts. Hengel, for example, defends the Roman citizenship and Pharisaism of Paul, beliefs doubted by some critical scholarship today. He goes further and shows how Paul's being educated by Gamaliel in Jerusalem does not negate Paul's knowledge of Greek as his first language, along with his having learned Hebrew and Aramaic. Hengel illustrates how very Greek Jerusalem, as well as Palestine, was at this time, including in its educational system. This has direct implications for understanding Paul and his writings. Throughout, Hengel documents his study with reference to numerous primary and secondary sources. Although in the past (and still in some circles) there were lines drawn between Hellenism and Judaism, Hengel shows the clear connections between them, such that one can fully appreciate Paul as a Jew of the Hellenistic world, without this being a contradiction in terms. Hengel closes with an endorsement of the radicalness of Paul, well understood by Augustine and Luther, a position that puts Hengel at odds with much recent Pauline scholarship.⁶ Hengel's book is to be contrasted with Hyam Maccoby's *Paul and Hellenism*,⁷ which attempts to show that Paul, who was not rabbinically trained, was influenced by Gnosticism and the mystery religions. This laid the foundation for Christian anti-Semitism, especially with his teaching regarding the death of Jesus (Paul also made up the idea of the eucharist!). Although Maccoby does raise some interesting questions, his method and evidence cannot sustain his analysis of Paul. This book does not represent mainstream Pauline studies.

Quite a different book is C.K. Barrett's book, *Paul*.⁸ Whereas Hengel's is narrow in focus and detailed, Barrett's is an overview of the life and thought of Paul, clearly based on a lifetime of

³ S.E. Porter and C.A. Evans (eds), *The Pauline Writings: A Sheffield Reader* (Biblical Seminar 34; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

⁴ M. Hengel with R. Deines, *The Pre-Christian Paul*, trans. J. Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1991). This is a translation of a work that first appeared as 'Der vorchristliche Paulus', in M. Hengel and U. Heckel (eds), *Paulus und das antike Judentum* (WUNT 58; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991), pp. 177-291.

⁵ See, for example, M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, trans. J. Bowden; (London: SCM Press, 1974).

⁶ Here I refer to the so-called 'new perspective' on Paul, illustrated in the work of E.P. Sanders and J.D.G. Dunn. Although many have hailed this as a 'paradigm shift' in Pauline studies, there are still significant scholars who have not accepted the new understanding. The key works are E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (London: SCM Press, 1977); idem, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); and J.D.G. Dunn, 'The New Perspective on Paul', *BJRL* 65 (1983): 95-122.

⁷ H. Maccoby, *Paul and Hellenism* (London: SCM Press, 1991).

⁸ C.K. Barrett, *Paul: An Introduction to His Thought* (London: Chapman, 1994).

serious study of the apostle (Barrett's commentaries on Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians and the Pastoral Epistles are all highly commended). Barrett (rightly) approaches Paul as the first and probably the greatest Christian theologian. His discussion utilizes the Pauline epistles as virtually the only sources for understanding Paul (downgrading Acts and especially apocryphal sources). After briefly discussing Paul's life and his controversies, Barrett discusses the major points of theology in the major Pauline letters (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, along with Philemon). He devotes a very important section to disputing the view that Paul is opposing covenantal nomism (*i.e.* the new perspective on Paul), seeing Paul as arguing in Galatians and elsewhere against works righteousness. He also offers an exposition of Phil. 2:6-11 that begins with the pre-existent life of Christ, a topic of recent importance and dispute.⁹ Barrett then discusses the remaining Pauline letters in a chapter on the sequel to Pauline theology, and concludes with a brief application to today. While some will not think that Barrett has sufficiently established the non-Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles, there is much of value in his analysis of Paul's thought. Whereas there have been a number of Pauline theologies written in the past (*e.g.* Anderson Scott, Whiteley, Ridderbos), this is the only one of recent times, and it merits attention.

Paul and the law

Since the issue of the law has been raised above, it is perhaps appropriate here to mention three books that specifically address this topic. The first is a study of the use of the Greek word *nomos* (law) in Paul by Michael Winger.¹⁰ Most commentaries and treatments of the law in Paul do not have a linguistically sound approach to analysis of this lexical item. The result is that all too often there are attempts to force the evidence. What Winger attempts to do is to use principles of modern

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linguistics to provide a study of the various possible uses of the word. By usefully differentiating between meaning and reference (sense and reference might have been better terms), by which he means the basic meaning of a word and how it might be used in a given context, he is able to describe various components of the meaning of the word. He then applies these to two Pauline passages (Gal. 2:15-21 and Rom. 7:14-25), showing how the word *nomos* is used in a variety of ways. Winger is clearly right to dispute how *nomos* has been interpreted by previous commentators, especially since so many of them want to equate it with the Torah. His differentiation of a number of semantic features of the word is also very useful. The difficulty is when one attempts to analyse given passages. Then one realizes that in more than a few instances there is still room for serious debate.

The second and third books on the law are similar in that they are theological discussions of Paul and the law. It is impossible here to recapitulate the significant discussion that this topic has engendered in the last approximately twenty years. The major names in the discussion of

⁹ Barrett is opposing the kind of view found in J.D.G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: SCM Press, 1980), who posits an Adam Christology, that is, that Christ is being equated with Adam's position in Phil. 2:6-11.

¹⁰ M. Winger, "By What Law? The Meaning of Nomos" in the *Letters of Paul* (SBLDS 128; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992). See also H. Raisanen, *Jesus, Paul and Torah: Collected Essays*, trans. D.E. Orton (JSNTS 43; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), with several essays on the question of law in Paul.

late, besides Sanders and Dunn, are H. Raisanen and S. Westerholm, among others¹¹, but these latter two books provide serviceable treatments of the issue. Both start with a discussion of the history of Christian thought regarding Paul and the law, bringing the reader up to date on the issue's complexities. Then the books diverge in approach and conclusions. Both are written by evangelicals who have previously published on the topic, and are in their own ways fine books. Frank Thielman,¹² who wrote the article on 'Law' in *the Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, treads a middle line between the traditional Reformation and Lutheran view, and the new perspective on Paul. Whereas he does not think that Judaism was by nature legalistic (here he follows a covenantal approach), he does think that in Paul's time there were Jews who tried to combine God's grace with the doing of the law. With the coming of Christ, the Mosaic law, which had been established on the same gracious basis, was rendered obsolete. Paul, therefore, in passages that seem to argue for a legalistic Judaism, is dismissing the capacity of righteousness through works, something that Judaism had never endorsed. Thielman develops this consistent Pauline position on the basis of exegesis of the individual Pauline letters discussed in order, an approach that has much to commend it.

Thomas Schreiner,¹³ on the other hand, provides a more systematic account of the evidence, treating the NT by topic rather than by book. He also extends his discussion to address contemporary issues regarding the continuing use and function of the law, such as the theonomy movement (something probably of more relevance to a North American audience). Schreiner argues two points worth noting here. The first is that he believes that careful exegesis of the Pauline passages indicates that Paul was in fact arguing against a Judaism characterized by works righteousness, and he is not willing to accept that Paul, as a former Pharisee, was not correct in his understanding. The second point is that he subjects Sanders's assessment of whether Judaism was legalistic to direct scrutiny, contending that he can find even in Sanders's own evidence, indications of Judaism as legalistic. So which of these two volumes is better? Although I am more inclined to think that Schreiner is correct, it is not my job here to press the point. Contained within each volume is a lot of provocative exegesis, which rewards study. Three significant passages—Rom. 3:27-4:8; 9:30-10:8; Phil. 3:2-11—are worth comparison, since these are three passages that are at the heart of the dispute over whether Paul was opposing a legalistic form of Judaism. Most heartening, perhaps, is that evangelicalism is large enough to have two such serious efforts put on the table for consideration.

The Pauline letter and its legacy

In the light of the several different approaches to the Pauline letters witnessed in several of the books mentioned above, it is appropriate here to mention

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several books that address the Pauline letters and their legacy in various ways. Calvin Roetzel, for example, has issued a third and expanded version of his introduction to Paul's letters first

¹¹ H. Raisanen, *Paul and the Law* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1983; repr. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); S. Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith: Paul and his Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988).

¹² F. Thielman, *Paul and the Law: A Contextual Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994).

¹³ T.R. Schreiner, *The Law and its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993).

published in 1975.¹⁴ There is a little bit of almost everything here; an appreciation of Paul's Hellenistic background, including use of the Septuagint; something on the Pauline letter form; on the content and argument of each of the letters (he accepts the same seven as authentic as does Barrett, and treats the deutero-Pauline letters separately); and a brief synopsis of Paul's thought. He also includes useful bibliographies. Although one might disagree at any number of points with Roetzel, he provides a summary of current mainstream Pauline scholarship, while his brevity begs for the student to do more. And it has to be done. For example, Jeffrey Weima has recently published an entire monograph on the endings of the Pauline letters,¹⁵ a topic discussed by Roetzel in two pages. Similar to Roetzel's volume is a book by Anthony Tambasco¹⁶ which, after introducing basic facts about Paul's life and the world in which he lived, goes through each of Paul's seven letters. The study is very basic and might be more suitable for a church study group than serious study by undergraduates (although the drawings are very useful).

Whereas most studies of Paul proceed along fairly traditional and well laid out lines, I am thankful that there are always exceptions to this. A new and innovative theory regarding the collecting together of Paul's letters has been proposed by David Trobisch.¹⁷ This is certainly one of the most fascinating books in Pauline studies that I have read in a long time. On the basis of examining a number of ancient letter collections, as well as a huge variety of biblical manuscripts, Trobisch argues (in a theory very similar to one argued by E.J. Goodspeed in the 1930s) that there is a consistent arrangement in the manuscripts of Paul's letters. On the basis of the length of the letters, he contends that the first four letters, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Galatians, were selected and edited for publication by Paul himself. They were concerned with the theme of the Jerusalem collection, and were preceded by Romans 16 as a cover letter. Ephesians to 2 Thessalonians, and then the personal letters (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon), were two later appended collections, made after Paul's death. Although many will welcome the thought that Paul was involved in collecting his own letters, others will not be as happy with particular details, such as the Corinthian letters representing seven letters, the return to Baur's four major letters, and the arguments for the deutero-Pauline letters. In any event, the book is an engaging one for contemplation, and has a number of implications for describing the history of early Christianity, including the process of the forming of the canon.

Although the question of how Paul's letters apply today is a valid and useful one to ask, J.C. Beker's book on the Pauline legacy does not to my mind present the answer.¹⁸ He assumes the deutero-Pauline character of 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles, without confronting the problems that their pseudonymous character raises for the issue of canonical formation and continuing application. According to his description of Paul as a contingent thinker, there is little that would disqualify him from writing these letters, by Beker's own criteria. Beker's sections on Acts are better, since here we know that we have an interpreter of Paul. When it comes to application, one wonders whether the exercise is even

¹⁴ C.J. Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context* 3rd edn (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991).

¹⁵ J.A.D. Weima, *Neglected Endings: The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings* (JSNTS 101; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994).

¹⁶ A.J. Tambasco, *In the Days of Paul: The Social World and Teaching of the Apostle* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991).

¹⁷ D. Trobisch, *Paul's Letter Collection: Tracing the Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994).

¹⁸ J.C. Beker, *Heirs of Paul: Paul's Legacy in the New Testament and in the Church Today* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991).

necessary. Beker distinguishes between a catalytic and a literalistic hermeneutic—it is no surprise that the catalytic one, endorsing adaptation of the Pauline message, wins out.

Pauline ethics

On a related topic, ethics, Dieter Georgi's book on the history of Paul's collection for the Jerusalem church has appeared in English translation.¹⁹ Following his own chronology, he reconstructs the starts and re-starts of Paul's collection, as it encountered various difficulties in his churches, for example in Galatia and Corinth. Georgi shows how important the collection was to Paul's missionary

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endeavour, and goes further in showing how the language associated with the collection has theological resonance, so much so, that the collection itself has direct bearing on Paul's view of justification. Georgi also attaches an appendix on the relevance of ancient attitudes towards wealth for today, reflecting the fact that the English revision of this book was being produced during the collapse of East Germany. This book is consistent with another by Georgi²⁰ arguing that ultimately Paul was martyred by the Romans for treason, since he was proclaiming a political gospel, that is, one that was not privatized and removed from social implications on the basis of an abstract or eschatological frame of reference. Paul, Georgi claims, proclaims Christ, the one crucified on a Roman cross, as now living and equal to the biblical God. This is a direct political and social threat to the Roman establishment, including the place of Caesar. Although there is a good chance that Georgi has overread the Pauline evidence in an effort to promote a politicized Paul, the political and social implications of Paul's proclamation of the good news merit further examination. There is much still to be learned regarding how Paul saw Christianity in the light of Roman political and social institutions. As Georgi emphasizes, some of Paul's articulation of this was indirect and subtle. On the basis of the seven Pauline letters, J. Paul Sampley offers a broader view of the range of Paul's ethical positions.²¹ Without reference to secondary literature, Sampley's volume is a basic recounting of Paul's view of life (Christians live in the in-between period) as part of a community of those 'in Christ'. He then discusses Paul's view of how to respond to a variety of circumstances. Although there is plenty here to stimulate thought, the book may not meet the rigours of what is required for degree-level study of the topic.

Paul and the Old Testament

The use of the OT and related traditions in the NT is a topic of perennial interest. There have been a number of books on this topic in Pauline studies in recent years,²² and James Aageson's joins the ranks. Although designed for students new to understanding Paul's use of the OT, Aageson puts forward a tentative interpretative model, which he calls a 'conversation model'. It is based upon what he calls the 'circle of plausibility', in which the interpreter

¹⁹ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992). The original German was published in 1965.

²⁰ D. Georgi, *Theocracy in Paul's Praxis and Theology* trans. D. Green (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991). the original German was published in 1987.

²¹ J.P. Sampley. *Walking between the Times: Paul's Moral Reasoning* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 1991).

²² The most important may well be R.B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in tire Letters of Paul* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989).

carries on a dialogue with the text and its context. After outlining Paul's christologically based theology in brief (and uncritically accepting the new perspective on Paul), Aageson offers interpretations of Galatians 3:16 and Abraham, Romans 9-11, and Romans 5:2-21, before finishing with a number of christological passages. Although the bibliography is slim and the method underdeveloped, Aageson's is a good book to begin with, because it presents a method and applies it to particular texts.

More detailed and much fuller than Aageson's volume is Christopher Stanley's *Paul and the Language of Scripture*.²³ As much a study in method as it is a study of individual passages, Stanley's volume is first concerned to define what constitutes a direct quotation and where each comes from. He then studies all the direct quotations in Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Galatians, and compares how citation of authoritative sources was handled in a variety of Greco-Roman and Jewish writers. Stanley concludes some important things regarding Paul's use of the OT. In some ways, Paul conforms to what one might expect from a Jewish writer of the time, including his view of Scripture as authoritative, and his following a recognizable text. But there are a number of things that Paul does in adapting his quotations, including changing certain words and word order, that distinguish him from Jewish writers and make him look more like Greco-Roman writers. Paul is also unique in some ways, including the way that he introduces his quotations with a form of the word 'write'. Stanley attempts to discern the possible causes of Paul's manipulation of his source texts, including adaptation to his particular linguistic context and alteration for rhetorical purposes. This study raises interesting questions, some

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of which go unanswered. I am not as convinced as is Stanley, that Paul follows the Jewish technique. Since the study limits itself to explicit quotations, there is also plenty of room for dealing with other kinds of citation. From this study, one can move to a recent collection of essays, *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*,²⁴ containing a lengthy critique of Hays's *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, and then a number of very good studies of Paul's use of Scripture. This volume is definitely for the advanced student, and reflects the current state of play in NT studies.

Paul and Jesus

A further area of recent study is the question of how much Paul knew of Jesus and how he got this information. As a brief introduction, Victor Paul Furnish's small volume on *Jesus according to Paul* is excellent.²⁵ It covers the major issues in a short and compact form, devoting its lengthiest discussion to sayings of Jesus in Paul's letters (he finds three certain ones: Cor. 7:10; 9:14; 11:23-25) and the presence of Jesus in Paul's gospel. Furnish also includes a chapter on how Jesus fared in the letters of the Pauline corpus. There is a brief bibliography and study questions. For those desiring a more detailed discussion, David Wenham's book on Paul is to be highly recommended.²⁶ Wenham will be no stranger to

²³ C.D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (SNTSMS 74; Cambridge: CUP, 1992).

²⁴ C.A. Evans and J.A. Sanders (eds), *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel* (JSNTS 83; SSEJC 1; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).

²⁵ V.P. Furnish, *Jesus according to Paul* (Understanding Jesus Today; Cambridge: CUP, 1993).

²⁶ D. Wenham, *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

readers of this journal, and several of the articles that he has written over the years have contributed to this sizable volume.²⁷ He does not follow the usual pattern, which focuses primarily on Paul. Instead, he selects a number of issues, some of them quite difficult, and describes Jesus' perspective on each, followed by Paul's perspective, and then a section connecting them. Topics he discusses include the kingdom of God, where he admits that Paul uses language of righteousness instead of Jesus' of kingdom; titles of Jesus; views of the death of Jesus; the church; ethics; eschatology; and Jesus' life and ministry. Wenham concludes that Paul was a follower of Jesus rather than the founder of Christianity, a conclusion that is hard to resist. Wenham is modest and judicious in the results he squeezes from the evidence, but he makes a very good case for Paul having direct and indirect access to a wealth of knowledge regarding Jesus.

Paul and ancient rhetoric

Rhetorical studies of Paul's letters have become a significant area of recent research.²⁸ A useful guide to much of this is to be found in a recent bibliography by Duane Watson and Alan Hauser.²⁹ The classical scholar George Kennedy, who has probably been the single most influential scholar in inspiring rhetorical criticism of the NT,³⁰ has been honoured with a recent *Festschrift*, which contains several rhetorical studies on dimensions of Paul's letters, as well as assessments of Kennedy's approach.³¹ The NT scholar Wilhelm Wuellner, who has tried to introduce a modern rhetorical approach to NT study, has also been given a *Festschrift*,³² this one containing not only a variety of rhetorical approaches but a number of methodological essays, subjecting various presuppositions of rhetorical criticism to necessary scrutiny (see especially those by J.T. Reed, C.J. Classen and S.E. Porter).

Two studies in particular are worth discussion, especially as they both examine 1 Corinthians. The first is by Margaret Mitchell.³³ Following an approach developed by Hans Dieter Betz in his commentary on Galatians,³⁴ Mitchell examines 1 Corinthians as a deliberative letter. That is, she examines it as if it were a piece of deliberative rhetoric, designed to persuade regarding future behaviour, although couched in an epistolary form. After establishing the deliberative nature of the letter, she examines the use of various political topics (or *topoi*) in the body of the letter, especially those concerned with factionalism. As a result, she claims to be able to show that the letter is a unified whole. This monograph is not for the beginner. The exegesis is detailed (relying heavily on the Greek text), and there are numerous important discussions carried on in the footnotes, with reference to a number of extra-biblical texts. Two

²⁷ See also D. Wenham, *The Rediscovery of Jesus' Eschatological Discourse* (Gospel Perspectives 4; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984).

²⁸ Cf. also I.11. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters* (JSNTS, 111; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

²⁹ D.F. Watson and A.J. Hauser, *Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: A Comprehensive Bibliography with Notes on History and Method* (BI 4; Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 178-202 on Paul.

³⁰ Among many works, see G.A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

³¹ D.F. Watson (ed.), *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* (JSNTS 50; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991).

³² S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (eds), *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (JSNTS 90; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).

³³ M.M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of I Corinthians* (HUT 28; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991).

³⁴ H.D. Betz, *Galatians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979).

fundamental problems seem evident, however, making it questionable whether Mitchell should be followed as an example of

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rhetorical analysis. The first is the supposed proof of the existence of the deliberative letter type. Mitchell's argument is based upon the use of similar wording in the rhetorical and epistolary handbooks, an argument that has not been accepted by all. The fact that similar words are used in these handbooks does not prove that one should use the categories of ancient rhetoric to analyse letters. This leads to the second issue, and that is whether the arrangement of the various parts of an oration (including its thesis statement, statement of facts and proofs) can be imposed on what is clearly a genuine letter. There is the further difficulty, therefore, of whether her conclusion regarding the letter's unity can be drawn from this method.

The second rhetorical study is by Duane Litfin.³⁵ His volume is divided into two parts and in some ways stands as two separate discussions. The first major section is a treatment of the history and development of classical rhetoric, from its beginnings in Athens, through Plato, Aristotle and the orators, to the two best-known Roman rhetoricians, Cicero and Quintilian. Litfin summarizes the state of rhetoric in the first century in terms of its persuasive and adaptive power. In the second major section, he analyses 1 Corinthians 1-4, in terms of two major issues. The first is the use of rhetoric at Corinth and the place of this passage in the book, and the second is how Paul understands his preaching especially in terms of 1 Corinthians 1:10-2:5. Litfin wishes to contrast these two approaches. Whereas the goal of rhetoric is to persuade, according to Litfin, the engendering of faith is left to the Spirit. Paul is engaged in proclamation, not persuasion. Litfin's summary of the development of ancient rhetoric is a worthwhile overview of the field, especially for someone who is new to the subject. His analysis of 1 Corinthians 1-4, however, is not entirely convincing. It seems that he has drawn too clean a distinction between rhetoric and proclamation, perhaps over-theologizing Paul's method and approach.³⁶

Monographs on Paul

I will conclude this part of our study with a brief description of several volumes that are more technical and specialist in origin.³⁷ They are summarized briefly to give the interested student guidance as to what they contain, because they may well prove useful in exploring a particular topic or dimensions of particular Pauline letters. The first is *Pauline Theology*, a collection of essays on the theology of the Thessalonian letters, Philippians, Galatians and Philemon.³⁸ These essays were originally delivered as papers at the Society of Biblical Literature annual meetings in 1986-88. There are five sections, all but one with at least two essays and then a

³⁵ D. Litfin, *St Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (SNTSMS 79; Cambridge: CUP, 1994).

³⁶ See also D.A. Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3.21-26* (JSNTS 65; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992); L.G. Bloomquist, *The Function of Suffering in Philippians* (JSNTS 78; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).

³⁷ See also the following two collections of technical essays: B.H. McLean (ed.), *Origins and Method: Towards a New Understanding of Judaism and Christianity, Essays in Honour of John C. Hard* (JSNTS 86; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); L.A. Jervis and P. Richardson (eds), *Gospel in Paul: Studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker* (JSNTS 108; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994).

³⁸ J.M. Bassler (ed.), *Pauline Theology. 1. Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians. Philemon* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991).

response. The first section is concerned with method, and in particular addresses the question of the contingent nature of Paul's letters, a topic frequently addressed in Pauline studies in the light of the work of such scholars as J.C. Beker, who has an essay on this topic here. Other essays in the volume worth noting are R. Jewett on 2 Thessalonians as authentically Pauline (whereas many dispute this), J.D.G. Dunn on covenantal nomism in Galatians (reflecting his contribution to the new perspective on Paul), and several attempts to synthesize Paul's theology, by N.T. Wright (who makes some helpful distinctions regarding contradictions in Paul) and R.B. Hays, among others. There are also extensive bibliographies. Like any collection of essays, not all are of equal merit, but there are some here worth reading, although these are for the advanced student. The bibliographies are useful places to go for up-to-date references for research.

Many good things can also be said for N.T. Wright's *The Climax of the Covenant*.³⁹ This is a collection of essays, mostly previously published (some dating back to the 1970s). They are all meant to support his thesis that the covenantal purposes of God reached their climax in the death and resurrection of Jesus. The introduction is found in essence in Barsler's volume, noted above, on Pauline theology. Also noteworthy are Wright's discussion of

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Philippians 2:5-11 and Colossians 1:15-20, where he argues for christological monotheism. Many of the essays are on particular verses (e.g. Rom. 8:3; Gal. 3:10, 14, 15-20; Phlm. 6) or passages (Rom. 7, 8, 9-11; 1 Cor. 8; 2 Cor. 3), so their greatest value is probably if one has particular interest in these Pauline texts and their relation to the general thrust of Paul's theology. They are not easy going, (knowledge of Greek is recommended), and some of the conclusions are distinctively Wright's, but there is much here to think about.

In a study which presupposes knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, David Capes⁴⁰ argues that the term 'Lord' originated in a Palestinian rather than a Hellenistic context, and that Paul clearly applies quotations from the OT that refer to God (Yahweh), to Jesus. These include Romans 10:13; 14:11; 1 Corinthians 1:31; 2 Corinthians 10:17; 1 Corinthians 2:16; 10:26; and 2 Timothy 2:19. Not all have found these passages equally convincing, especially since Capes invokes ideas regarding a supposed Jewish corporate concept of God. There are also problems with his estimation of the Palestinian origins of the terminological usage, since the firm distinction between Palestinian and non-Palestinian Judaism cannot be made, as Hengel has demonstrated. Nevertheless, the christological implications are clear—Paul thought of Christ as in some way equal with or sharing in the same status as the God of the OT. This is one of several recent studies that argue in this direction, representing to my mind, a healthy movement in NT research.

In an equally demanding, but rewarding, monograph, James Scott argues that the Pauline terminology of adoption,⁴¹ especially as found in Galatians 4:5, 2 Corinthians 6:18, and

³⁹ N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991).

⁴⁰ D.B. Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts in Paul's Christology* (WUNT 2.47; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1992). Cf. N. Richardson, *Paul's Language about God* (JSNTS 99; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), which investigates God-language in Romans 9-11, 1 Cor. 1:18-3:23; 2 Cor. 2:14-4:6, and other places.

⁴¹ J. M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of HUIOTHESIA in the Pauline Corpus* (WUNT 2.48; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1992).

Romans 8:15, 23, derives not from a Hellenistic but from a Jewish background, especially 2 Samuel 7:14. His study is based on a commendable survey of both the Jewish and Greek evidence. Although I am not convinced regarding the Jewish origins of Paul's adoption language, and there seems to be some lack of clarity regarding the word study, Scott's study is insightful and meticulous.

I have made my own contribution in studying Pauline vocabulary. analysing all of the known uses of the word often translated 'reconciliation' (*katallassō*) in ancient Greek literature, including the NT.⁴² This is a fairly common treaty word in Greek literature, in which antagonistic parties restore a peaceful relationship. After surveying this usage, I examine 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, Romans 5:9-11, Colossians 1:20, 22 and Ephesians 2:16, and find that Paul clearly uses this word in line with extra-biblical Greek, although he is the first to use it in a form in which God as the offended party in a relationship takes active steps to restore peace. This is the clear sense in 2 Corinthians 5:18, 20.

In a massive tome running to over 950 pages, Gordon Fee examines references to the Holy Spirit in Paul's letters.⁴³ One must be thoroughly committed to knowing about virtually every passage in the Pauline corpus to appreciate the work that has gone into this volume. Fee is to be thanked for including some preliminary comments on Paul's use of spirit language, as well as a 100-page synthesis of his findings. Inevitably one will disagree with some of the interpretations. It is odd to have to observe that Fee has perhaps included a few passages that are not references to the Holy Spirit but to some other kind of spirit (e.g. Rom. 1:9), but such seems to be the case. Nevertheless, virtually all of the evidence is here, especially since Fee includes all thirteen of Paul's letters.

In a collection of essays mostly on Pauline passages, half of which have been published before, Bruce Winter, warden of Tyndale House, Cambridge, explores early Christianity's view of its social obligations as citizens and benefactors.⁴⁴ He discovers that, contrary to much social analysis of early Christianity, Christianity drew from a range of social strata and maintained both public and private lives within the polis or city. Pauline passages discussed include Romans 13:3-4, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13, 1 Timothy 5:3-16, Philippians 1:27-2:18, 1 Corinthians 6:1-11, Galatians 6:11-18,

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1 Corinthians 7:17-24, 8-11:1, and Romans 16:23. Although a knowledge of the ancient world is helpful for this volume, enough is explained to make it very useful for background studies to the Pauline letters. Recent work in Pauline studies has appreciated more fully the place of Greco-Roman social institutions, including the role of the benefactor, and Winter's volume adds to our knowledge from the NT.

⁴² S.E. Porter, *Katallassō in Ancient Greek Literature, with Reference to the Pauline Writings* (Estudios de Filología Neotestamentaria 5: Cordoba, Spain: Ediciones El Almendro, 1994).

⁴³ G.D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994).

⁴⁴ B.W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World; Carlisle: Paternoster; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994). One of these appeared in *Themelios* 13.3 (1988) pp. 91-94.

One of several volumes from Ben Witherington III amounts to a Pauline theology.⁴⁵ He calls it an analysis of *Paul's Narrative Thought World*, and by this he means that there are four major 'stories' that encapsulate Paul's theology, all based in the OT. These are: the story of the world gone wrong, or the fall and sin; the story of Israel; the story of Christ; and the story of Christians, including Paul. Under these headings, and drawing heavily on his several other recent works on Paul and Jesus,⁴⁶ Witherington discusses most of the major topics found in more traditional theologies, but organized in a way that, he contends, grows out of the way Paul expresses himself in his letters. The emphasis is upon the coherence of Paul's thought and the conclusions are almost uniformly conservative. It is impossible to list the various topics discussed here, but they include the story of Adam and Eve and the fall, Abraham and the law (he does not engage in much debate with Dunn or Sanders over their interpretations), the pre-existent Christ especially as discussed in two pre-Pauline hymns (Phil. 2:6-11 and Col. 1:15-20), the second Adam, the cross and resurrection, eschatology,⁴⁷ and the life of Paul, including his so-called conversion. While there is much of merit in these discussions, including the attempt to utilize sociological insights in a commentary-like exposition, there are also limitations. At several points Witherington is probably too dependent upon the Wisdom tradition for his categories in Paul, especially when he is looking at preexistence and the christological hymns. Although many of his other conclusions are sound enough, the way they are arrived at is not always convincing. At times Witherington engages in detailed exegesis, with heavy reference to secondary literature; at other times there are simple assertions where argument is required. There is also a whole wealth of important secondary literature, and its attendant debate, overlooked, which students should be aware of if they are using this material. Not infrequently a point is made on the basis of a grammatical point needing stronger support. (Some readers will be more than a little annoyed by Witherington's citing of his own poetry along with the work of Herbert, Donne and Hopkins.)

A related study is Ellen Christiansen's *The Covenant in Judaism and Paul*.⁴⁸ Reflecting the concerns of her doctoral supervisor, J.D.G. Dunn, Christiansen primarily engages in a study of Jewish rituals that identify the boundary of a faith community. She then applies this to Pauline Christianity, especially in terms of describing how Paul argues against circumcision but not to replace it with baptism. Baptism is a boundary marker established in its own right to symbolize the faith relationship of the community. One suspects that there is a Lutheran apologetic behind some of this exegesis.

Let me mention a last book under this heading, Neil Elliott's *Liberating Paul*.⁴⁹ This study of Paul's thought, although occasionally verging on the emotive—perhaps appropriately for the subject matter—offers a liberation theological view of Paul's writings. According to the

⁴⁵ B. Witherington III, *Paul's Narrative Thought World: The Tapestry of Tragedy and Triumph* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994). Cf. N. Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem: A Study in Relationships and Authority in Earliest Christianity* (JSNTS 66; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992).

⁴⁶ See, for example, B. Witherington III, *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World: A Comparative Study in New Testament Eschatology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992); *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994).

⁴⁷ On the use of apocalyptic categories to analyse Paul, and a treatment that debunks much of the secondary discussion, a very important recent work is R.B. Mattock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul: Paul's Interpreters and the Rhetoric of Criticism* (JSNTS 127; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

⁴⁸ E.J. Christiansen, *The Covenant in Judaism and Paul: A Study of Ritual Boundaries as Identity Markers* (AGJU 27; Leiden: Brill, 1995).

⁴⁹ N. Elliott, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (Biblical Seminar 27; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), published in the United States by Orbis of New York in 1994.

author, this interpretation helps to clarify and liberate Paul from some misunderstandings. After citing a number of instances where Paul has been not only misinterpreted but misapplied, often with fateful consequences, Elliott tries to show what Paul was actually concerned to say, even in passages that have traditionally been problematic, such as Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15. First, Elliott claims that many of the problematic passages occur in pseudonymous works, *i.e.* in other words, books not written by Paul at all. Then, in the light of what he sees as Paul's concern for the Jews and his apocalyptic framework, Elliott examines key authentic Pauline passages. I am far from convinced by the exegesis that Elliott

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offers at several places, including his view that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is an interpolation. But the book is provocative in a new area of research.

So much for general Pauline studies. We shall turn to particular epistles in the next part.

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