

“I am Not Ashamed of the Gospel”: Paul and His Gospel, Toward a Theology: The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus, the Christ

Let me open us in prayer, and then we have an ambitious day ahead of us. We will see how far we can get.

Father, it has been a joy to be with these students, and I am excited about their desire to serve You that has brought them here to this seminary, that has brought them to a desire to study Your Word and to study it passionately, for its implications in their lives and in the lives of the people to whom they minister. I pray that as they open the Word of God over the next many years, that passion and that excitement would remain and that the inspired Word of God through the working of Your Holy Spirit in the lives of these students would avail to their knowledge of Christ and of God, to their love of Christ and of God, and to their love of their people. I pray that You would bless their ministries, whatever the ministerial calling that they have, be it lay or vocational. I pray that You would use them mightily to bring Your glory into this world, and it is in the name of Jesus our Savior that we pray. Amen.

Here is what I want to do. I have a conclusion to the course that I want to do, but for the next 50 minutes we will talk about Paul. That is obviously not enough time to do justice to Paul, but there are a few key principles that I want you to bear in mind when you approach the apostle Paul. That is really what I want to do here.

You have read quite a lot about Paul; Ladd likes Paul, does he not? He has a nice long section on Paul. There is no way that I could begin to cover as many of the theological themes, certainly not in the depth that he covers them, so I will let Ladd cover most of that. You also had some readings on Paul's life in F. F. Bruce's book on New Testament history, and you had a short reading on the Pastoral Epistles, I believe, in the book by Carson, Moo, and Morris, arguing for the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles. I am assuming that you have read all of that, so I want to highlight just a few things that I want you to bear in mind when you approach Paul.

The first thing is that I want to give you a bit of a background in terms of some of the issues in contemporary scholarship, because, as I pointed out before, when you go to read a book in the library on the apostle Paul, there are at least 200 years of discussion of interpretation of Paul that lies behind the book, even if it is just a very common lay-friendly book that is written by someone with some academic credentials. As with the Gospels, there are a number of questions that are asked, such as critical techniques and so forth, and there are with Paul as well, but they are quite different in some respects than those with regard to the Gospels. We will highlight those for a moment.

The first thing, and I believe I have mentioned this before, has to do with the legacy of the Tübingen school, and especially Ferdinand Christian Baur. You will remember his name from the very beginning of our time together when I mentioned that this was a very important moment in New Testament studies, when Ferdinand Christian Baur came along and suggested a different way of synthesizing the history of the New Testament. I ultimately want to say that it is a highly defective way, but I do not want to get ahead of myself.

Basically, what Baur did is he looked especially at the book of Galatians. You will remember that in the book of Galatians, Paul is trying to oppose the circumcision party, the party of people who are often called Judaizers. What they wanted to do was to ask that the Gentiles who had come to Christ would undergo circumcision. Paul opposed this, because in his mind, that meant that they would be asking the

Gentiles to take on the whole weight of the Law. The danger there is that the works of the Law become a substitute for faith in Christ, so that you seek your salvation based on what you do, and in particular, on your keeping of the Law. You remember that in many ways, that is the essence of what Galatians is about. Along the way, in the book of Galatians, Paul mentions some background history to show that his gospel is the true Gospel. What that means, in part, is that he says that he was even willing to oppose Peter to his face when Peter withdrew from eating with the Gentiles because of people from the circumcision party. Now, using that as the guiding heuristic for the history of New Testament interpretation, Ferdinand Christian Baur said that on the one hand there was Paul, who represented a sort of Gentile Christianity, and on the other hand there was Peter, who represented Jewish Christianity. Then, later in the church, there was a synthesis. So he said that it was “Peter versus Paul,” if you would.

Now I think that I briefly described this at the beginning of the course, and you will remember that this is predicated on a philosophical outlook that was prevalent in nineteenth-century Germany, namely Hegelianism. Without going into all the murk and mire of Hegel, who was a very complex philosopher to try to understand, I will try to give you a rough idea of some of the basics. Hegel had the concept that has been described as “thesis, antithesis, synthesis.” Those of you who have ever studied Karl Marx will understand that kind of progression that Marx drew from Hegel and then applied to the sphere of economics. Many people were very taken with this approach. What would happen is that you would have a thesis, an antithesis, and a synthesis. Then the synthesis itself would become a thesis, effectively, and there would be another antithesis, and then another synthesis. This is how the history of human thought has progressed over time. It also has to do with the very ways that we think, because our categories are determined this way. So Baur was looking for this. In other words, this is a philosophy-laden approach to the New Testament. He needed a thesis, he needed an antithesis, and he needed a synthesis—and he found them. So in some ways, he was guided more by his philosophy than by the materials themselves.

Some of the problems with this, and I am very interested that you know what some of the problems are, have to do with just where you fit then the rest of the New Testament in this. So for instance, in the book of Acts, in Acts chapter 15, the council in Jerusalem is there to determine whether Gentiles need to be circumcised. And do you know what the decision of the council is? They do not think that Gentiles need to be circumcised. Acts 15 is very early on, just after Paul’s first missionary journey, so very early on in the book of Acts the decision is made. And who steps up to defend the idea that the Gentiles do not need to be circumcised? Certainly Paul, but do you know who else? Peter, and also James, eventually. James, the brother of Jesus, ultimately makes the final call, if you would, by more or less drawing a conclusion about what the sentiment of the church is. So, at least in Acts 15, Peter does not stand for Jewish Christianity as opposed to Gentile Christianity.

When you ask Baur what he does with the book of Acts, his answer is that that is part of the synthesis. That is part of the second-century synthesis. In other words, he says that the book of Acts was written long after the fact; it is of dubious historical value, and its principal theological aim is to create a synthesis between the opposing Gentile and Jewish Christian parties. That is where he would put that. Well, okay, we will try a different book, then. How about 1 Peter or 2 Peter? Second Peter 3:16—my goodness, what does it say about Paul? Let me quote it for you. I will start with 2 Peter 3:15, which says, “And regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation, just as also our beloved”—this is Peter speaking—“brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.” Peter is saying there, “Paul is the beloved brother; you need to listen to him; yes, his books are hard to read, but the only problems

with them come from people distorting his books. The books themselves are great; in fact, they belong with the rest of Scripture.” So Peter likes Paul!

Well, if you are Ferdinand Christian Baur, then, where do you put 2 Peter? You say that it is part of the synthesis also. It also has to have been written in the second century. Well, there are other books in the Pauline corpus that speak quite highly of the Law, in some respects, and of the need for works. So for instance, Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “For by grace you have been saved, through faith, and it is not according to yourselves; it is the gift of God.” Then there is the statement in 2:10 that “we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, that we might walk in them.” There is a positive view of works there. Works are not the vehicle of salvation, but they are a necessary corollary of salvation. Well, what do you do with Ephesians, then, if you are Baur? You have to put it in the synthesis also! Increasingly, then, there is less of Paul that was actually written by Paul, none of 1 and 2 Peter were written by Peter, and Acts is in the second century. You have to date everything very late in order for this kind of opposition to work!

In particular, Baur held that there are only—only!—four authentic Pauline letters. There are only four letters that were actually written by Paul, and those letters are Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians. Those are known as the *Hauptbriefe*, the “chief letters.” Those are the ones that are authentically Pauline. Paul actually sat down and wrote them himself. Everything else was somebody later. Do you see any problems with Baur’s synthesis? I see a few. One is that it is very theory-laden, working more off of a philosophical presupposition than what you actually find in the text itself. Second, it only accepts a part of the letters that are written by Paul as truly Pauline, in part because the other letters do not fit his theory. Next, it requires a late date for pretty much the rest of the New Testament, especially the book of Acts and certainly 1 and 2 Peter. Those are at least some of the issues with this.

In point of fact, in the book of Galatians, although Paul represents himself as opposing Peter to his face, he then never talks about the resolution of that. As a result, depending on when you date the book of Galatians, it is very likely that a high degree of resolution is expected. The book of Galatians itself says that Peter used to eat with the Gentiles, but it was out of concern for the circumcision party that Peter separated from the Gentiles. That means that Peter did not seem to have a personal problem with Gentile Christianity, but he separated from them out of sensitivity to some of his Jewish colleagues who did have problems with that. In some ways, Peter was trying to mediate between two different positions, but Paul was saying, “In that mediation, Peter, you are doing something that is incredibly dangerous.” So I would argue that the book of Galatians itself does not really pit Paul against Peter, except only temporarily. That is the issue of the Ferdinand Christian Baur thesis.

Let me tell you about some of the ramifications for this. Basically, there are ramifications for pretty much every New Testament book other than the Gospels, because if you follow this theory, then suddenly you are assigning very late dates to most of the rest of the New Testament. The ramifications go outside of just the Pauline corpus to impact Acts and everything else. Within the Pauline corpus, there is still a sense of this in Pauline studies today. Everybody will agree that Galatians, Romans, and 1 and 2 Corinthians were written by Paul. Everyone will definitely agree to that. Most people will also add other books, such as Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon. These are also agreed upon. Even by the most critical of scholars today, these are also accepted as truly Pauline. People have added to Baur’s *Hauptbriefe*, but it remains the core, and the question is always, “Do these other letters cohere with the core?”

Thus, when it comes to dating Pauline letters, there are a few issues that come up again and again. One has to do with stylistic affinity to the “known Pauline letters.” Another has to do with theological

vocabulary and the degree to which that coheres with the “known Pauline letters.” What we mean, by the way, by “the known Pauline letters” is these four especially: Galatians, Romans, and 1 and 2 Corinthians. So to the degree to which a book such as Ephesians has stylistic similarities and theological vocabulary that overlaps with these, people will argue that that is authentically Pauline. To the degree to which it varies from these, people will say that perhaps it is not Pauline.

Well, there are some problems with this. One is that we know, from the way that Paul will say, “Notice that I am signing this letter with my own hand,” that he used scribes in the process of writing. Depending on the degree to which he felt confident in a scribe, that scribe could have a broader range of literary techniques that he could bring to bear. In other words, Paul might tell him the gist of what he wanted to say, but individual word choice could vary slightly from scribe to scribe, because sometimes the scribe could put in his own way of wording a concept. So you can see how trying to maintain a kind of stylistic homogeneity between all the letters is kind of working against the very process of writing that we know that Paul likely employed.

Second, let me just ask you a question. You occasionally write letters, although maybe you are more an e-mail generation now. If you ever sit down and write a letter, do you write letters now the way you did 20 years ago? Do you use the same vocabulary? Do you always use the same grammatical forms? Do you sign your letters the same way? After 20 years, could there not be some change? Well, given the notion that Paul’s letters could have been written over a period of 15 to 20 years, we might expect some stylistic variation. Given that some of his letters, such as Philemon and 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, were written to individuals, whereas most of his letters were written to churches, we would expect some stylistic variation, right? So stylistic variation is a problem. Moreover, to do real stylistic study you need a very large sample. You need a large sample of very secure material, so that you know, for instance, based on these 600,000 to a million words, that these are the standard vocabulary and stylistic devices that are used by that author. Then, if you have another large work of several thousand words, you can compare that to the main database, because all of this is basically probability and statistics. You need large samples to do any good probabilistic work. We do not have a large enough sample for Paul to say securely, “This is his style, and he did not do anything other than that.” We can say, “This is his style, and he generally follows this,” but to say that he cannot vary from it, we would need a much larger sample. So there are problems with stylistic issues.

When it comes to theological vocabulary and some of the words that we consider to represent the core of Paul’s theology, do you realize that Paul uses those words differently in his letters? An example would be the word “flesh,” (the Greek word is *sarx*) in Paul. Sometimes it means the physical body that we have. In other places, it means the sinful flesh, the sinful nature. Because of Paul’s theological use of it to mean the sinful nature, theologians generally think of “flesh” in Paul as an entirely negative concept. But in point of fact, if you study the Pauline literature, you will realize that very often flesh is a neutral concept referring just literally to our bodily substance. Sometimes, in letters such as Colossians, for instance, both uses occur simultaneously. Basically the first half of the book of Colossians uses “flesh” to refer to the physical body substance; the second half of the book of Colossians uses “flesh” to refer to the sinful nature. So to say that every term that we typically associate with Paul’s theology is a technical theological term is also problematic. And some of the terms that are most associated with Paul, such as justification, show up very often in the book of Romans but are almost entirely missing from, say, a book like 2 Corinthians, which is within the very same *Hauptbriefe*, if you would. What I am basically trying to say is that there are significant problems with the kind of criteria that people often try to apply to say that certain things were written by Paul and others were not.

If you want further details on that, you can consult the Carson, Moo, and Morris article on the Pastoral Epistles. The key issue in Paul really is the Pastoral Epistles, because they have the greatest degree of stylistic variation from, say, the *Hauptbriefe*. I would argue that is because he is writing a personal letter to a friend, and he is writing much later in his ministry than some of these other letters. If you read through the Carson, Moo, and Morris article, keeping in mind some of those things I just mentioned, you will see why they discuss what they discuss in terms of authorship issues.

One of the problems, theologically, then, that is an implication of this, is the core of Paul's theology is still invariably found in these four books. What that means with regard to books like Ephesians, or certainly the Pastoral Epistles, is that if you take a book that is a major scholarly work on Pauline theology and you go to the Scripture index and see what percentages of which books of the Pauline corpus are quoted, you will see it is primarily those four books (Galatians, Romans, and 1 and 2 Corinthians). This means that some of the things Paul talks about in some of his later letters are almost entirely excluded from the discussion. This is very problematic at times. For instance, when Paul talks about poverty and wealth in the Pastoral Epistles, which he does—he is very harsh at times on the issue of wealth and being rich—that is not typically found elsewhere in the other Pauline letters. It is a theme we know elsewhere, from the Gospels, especially Luke. It is a theme that we know from the book of James, and so it is a concern that we certainly find in the early church. It is not a concern we normally associate with Paul. Why not? Well, it is because we have focused on one set of letters to the exclusion of the rest of Paul. So there are effectively theological implications in my vocation from this Baur concept, and you should know that. I would suggest that there needs to be fundamentally a corrective in some of the approaches that have been made over the years to Pauline theology, because we have focused on the wrong things.

One last little story: this is kind of cute little illustration. There is a New Testament scholar named Harold Hoehner, who works at Dallas Theological Seminary, and a few years ago he came up with the idea of using these very same criteria to argue against the authenticity of the book of Galatians. You will find distinct theological vocabulary in Galatians. There are also distinct structural elements in the book of Galatians. There is no thanksgiving. Usually after the introduction—"Paul, an apostle to the Gentiles," etc.—the next thing that comes up is "I give thanks to my God," and then he goes on and gives a long thanksgiving. There is no thanksgiving in the book of Galatians. There is a very strong tenor against the church in Galatians that you do not find in many of the other letters, and there are stylistic variations, as well, in some of the ways that Paul writes Galatians. So Hoehner argued against Galatians as being authentically Pauline. Now his point was—he is an evangelical scholar and he was not really trying to say that Galatians was not written by Paul—but he was trying to say that if you use the very same criteria that are used against, say, Timothy, and you apply them to Galatians, the conclusion is that there is nothing written by Paul, because there is such a range of stylistic variation and theological vocabulary variation between the different Pauline books. I think the point should be very well taken. What we need to do is to broaden our scope and simply allow Paul to be Paul in all the diversity of his letters.

That will connect with something I will say later about the diversity of Paul's letters, because we need to understand that Paul was not a systematic theologian trying to write out a coherent systematic theology. Certainly, he thought in theological terms, but primarily he wrote to crisis situations in the church, and he addressed each crisis as it came along. That means that the letters are much more, to use a technical word, "occasional." That means that Galatians is written to a particular occasion in the church, Romans to a particular set of issues that Paul thought needed to be addressed in Rome, and the same with 1 and 2 Corinthians and so forth. This accounts for the diversity that you find in Paul, because there is a diverse set of situations going on in these different churches. I will stop there and address some questions.

To what degree does Paul quote the Gospels? We cannot know for sure, because when Paul quotes Jesus it is as if he is quoting his Lord. We do not know if it is from the Gospels per se. There are certainly passages where Paul quotes Jesus, which then cohere well with the Gospels. For instance, Paul's account of the Lord's Supper coheres very well with Luke's account of the Lord's Supper. There is significant overlap.

In the readings, there was the suggestion that Luke might have been one of the scribes that Paul used. I think that is very possible. Again, we do not know for sure, because Paul does not always name his scribes. There are a few places where he seems to, like at the end of the book of Romans, but it is very possible that Luke might have been one of the scribes whom Paul used. By the way, I meant to mention this when we talked about the book of Acts: one of the reasons that Luke is associated with Paul is that there are parts in the book of Acts where, instead of describing the events in the third person—"they did this"—he suddenly switches to the first person plural and says "we did this." These are known as the "we" passages in Acts, because Luke uses the word "we." So I think we have every reason to believe that Luke was in the Pauline train. He was one of the people who followed Paul.

The discussion of Baur has to do with our first point: the legacy of the Tübingen school and some of the questions with regard to the authenticity of Paul's letters. We will move on now to our second point: the legacy of the historical Jesus quest and nineteenth-century German liberalism. When I use the word "liberalism," I am using a technical term that has been in use for years; I do not mean "liberalism" in a pejorative sense, but that is the name that is given to this movement. Basically what you need to know is this: nineteenth-century German liberalism, and then eventually American liberalism, as well, in that period, typically drew a distinction between Jesus and Paul. The idea was that Jesus taught about the kingdom, he was interested in poverty, and he was interested in the brotherhood of mankind. The three main phrases for nineteenth-century German liberalism are "the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the infinite value of the human soul." Those were the main theological points that came out of German liberalism. You will note no major mention of sin, certainly no mention of dealing with sin; it is just saying that we are all basically good people, God is our father, and we need to act as brothers of one another because we are all worth something.

Obviously, that is not Paul, because Paul likes to talk about sin. He talks about it a lot. And certainly there was the awareness among the more sophisticated people within liberalism that the church had principally discussed Christianity in different terms—the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man created in God's image, and the death of Jesus and His resurrection to produce atonement for our sin. There might be other propositions that you would want to put in there, but you will notice that those three propositions are very different from the liberal propositions. You will also note that those propositions can be easily defended in Paul.

So the idea was that Paul took the Jesus movement in a different direction from the way that Jesus actually went. And so Paul became—and this is a term that they actually used—"the founder of Christianity." That is not a good thing, if you are a liberal, because Christianity is different from what the historical Jesus taught. So the historical Jesus quest was trying to find out what Jesus taught, as distinct from Paul's distortion of that. What they wanted to find was that Jesus taught about the brotherhood of man and Paul stood in the way, so you spoke of Paul as the founder of Christianity who ultimately obscured what Jesus was trying to teach. If you want to see a good representation of this, Adolf von Harnack's book, *What is Christianity?*, from that period, discards Paul very quickly on these very bases. There are people teaching today in universities who basically argue the same thing, and there is a very nice book by David Wenham to argue against that. The name of the book is *Paul: Follower of*

Christ or Founder of Christianity? His point is that Paul followed Christ instead of founding this new religion, but you need to know that that is also an assumption that many people have when they approach Paul.

Moving to our third point, a new movement in the last 30 or 40 years is the New Perspectives on Paul movement. This requires a lot of development, but I am just going to give you a short take on the New Perspectives on Paul. The New Perspectives on Paul really started with the new perspective on Judaism. The view of Ed Sanders, E. P. Sanders, is that New Testament scholarship has typically disparaged ancient Judaism. It has done so by saying that Judaism in the first century was largely a legalistic religion. The idea is that if you keep the Law, you get to go into the world to come. Sanders argues that if you go back to the Jewish sources especially from the Palestinian vicinity that are pertinent to the first century, you do not have this kind of legalism in ancient Judaism. Instead, you have what he calls “covenantal nomism,” which has two aspects to it. First, the covenant is a relationship created, effectively, by grace, where God chooses His people Israel. The idea is that if you were to correctly synthesize the functioning of Jewish religion in the first century, if you asked a Jewish person, “Why do you anticipate going into the world to come?” he would say, first of all, “Well, I was born into the covenant that God established with His people, and ultimately it is God’s work there. Now to stay in the covenant, I have followed the Law.” So there is a difference between getting into the covenant and staying in. You get in through being born into the covenant or being accepted as a Gentile proselyte. You stay in by keeping the Law. This is known as covenantal nomism. Sanders’ take on this, then, is that this is fundamentally a gracious view. It is not a legalistic view; it is a gracious view. As Jewish people in the first century, we would say that our salvation is not fundamentally predicated on us keeping the Law; it is fundamentally that we are in the covenant, and that is something God did with His people. Now Sanders’ point was, if this is how Judaism is properly understood in the first century, then when you come to Christianity and Paul, Paul could not have been fundamentally concerned about opposing the legalism in his Jewish youth. He must have been concerned about something else, because the Jewish religious system was not legalism, according to Sanders. That is basically what is being taught with regard to the New Perspectives on Paul. Everyone who follows the New Perspective would agree with that perspective on Judaism. They might add a few more details, but that is basically the idea.

The outworking of this is that there are three major different approaches that assume this view of Judaism and then talk about Paul. The first is Sanders, and Sanders basically says—I will have to oversimplify here, just for the sake of time—“What was Paul’s problem with the Jewish people? His problem was that they were not Christians. They did not accept the Messiah, so because they missed the Messiah, that is their problem. That is what Paul is concerned about.”

The next viewpoint is that of Jimmy Dunn, James D. G. Dunn, and the idea of Jewish identity markers. Dunn, I think, is much more nuanced when he approaches Paul, and he agrees with Sanders about Judaism. It is much more gracious than we have ever allowed before. So Paul could not have been concerned about legalism in Judaism, but he does talk repeatedly about the works of the Law and how these are not salvific. So what are the works of the Law? For Dunn, they are the items in the Law that separate Jew from Gentile—circumcision, food laws, and keeping the Sabbath being the principal issues, especially circumcision. These constituted Jewish identity markers. How did you know that you were Jewish in the ancient world? Well, you were circumcised, you did not eat the same foods that the Gentiles ate, and you kept the Sabbath. Dunn’s view is that Paul was concerned about that. And so what was Paul concerned about? He was trying to say that the Gentiles should be accepted without having to keep the Jewish identity markers.

The last perspective is that of N. T. Wright, who has a much more evangelical approach to it. I have to tell you that it is just too complex to go into Wright at this stage, so I am not going to talk about him. We have to do other things with this time. But it is important that you know Dunn and Sanders.

Now, let me tell you about the problems, in my mind, with this. You will certainly not find the terminology “covenantal nomism” in ancient Judaism. In point of fact, ancient Jewish people did not write systematic theologies. That is not how they thought, and so when Sanders explains covenantal nomism, he cannot go to a systematic theology that says that the covenant comes first and then you have to stay in the covenant by keeping the Law. What you find is that some texts in ancient Judaism talk about the covenant as the gracious work of God, and then some texts—I would argue a lot of texts—talk about the need to keep the Law. Sanders says, “What is the logical order to put these in?” He would say that the gracious texts come first and the texts about law-keeping are a response to that.

The problem is that you will not find ancient Jewish authors talking about that logical order, and so, in short, I want to question whether this synthesis is a wholly accurate understanding of what was going on in ancient Judaism. There was a tendency to see the need to keep the Law as a requirement for entering into the world to come. Even in, say, Protestant, and certainly in non-Protestant churches today, if you talk repeatedly about how it is important that you keep these rules and these commandments and so forth, and you say these things again and again and again, and you only rarely talk about grace, what do the people understand? Keeping the Law. How am I saved? I keep the Law. I want to at least hold out the possibility that something analogous to that was going on in Judaism in the first century. Now, I am oversimplifying greatly. I would have to support that; I am teaching a whole class, a research class, on this next year with ThM students. However, I think that Sanders is oversimplifying to a point of danger and lack of clarity.

Second, while I would agree with Dunn that Paul is concerned with these Jewish identity markers, it seems like he is concerned more than that. He is not just concerned that you do not have to keep the identity markers; he is fundamentally concerned that the Law is not what saves. The Law cannot save. This seems to be part and parcel of the whole argument of Galatians and Romans, and certainly the point is made very clearly in the passage I quoted earlier from book of Ephesians—“For by grace you have been saved”—and so therefore the Law cannot save. He is talking about more than just circumcision and food laws. He is saying that the Law cannot save. Now the practical concern is that Gentiles do not have to be circumcised, but the broader concern is that salvation comes by faith. I think we need to emphasize that when we approach Paul.

I have covered that too quickly, but it is still important. We will move on now to discussing theological themes in Paul. Here is what I want you to write in your notes under the heading of theological themes in Paul: “See Ladd.” Ladd writes well over 100 pages on this, and I think he does an excellent job of drawing out the theological themes in Paul.

Now I want to talk about the book of Galatians and the book of Romans, especially. There is an issue with regard to the dating of Galatians. I will touch on a few key points here. Galatians is a lightning-rod of Pauline scholarship because everyone believes that it was written by Paul and because it was very much a part of the Baur synthesis. Galatians remains very prominent in Pauline studies, and it should. It is a very important book. I would say that we need to bring in more of Paul than just Galatians, but there is at least that. One of the issues has to do with the dating and location of Galatians.

If you looked at a map of Asia Minor, there is a northern part of Galatia and a southern part of Galatia. If you remember Paul’s first missionary journey, you will remember that Paul went to an island called

Cyprus, then up into southern Galatia, then he came back out and returned home. That is the first missionary journey of the apostle Paul. He did not make it up into northern Galatia on that journey. One of the issues with dating Galatians is which part of Galatia it was written to—the northern Galatians or the southern Galatians. An issue related to that is the degree to which Galatians corresponds to chapter 15 of the book of Acts. I have mentioned Acts 15 a number of times. It talks about the Jerusalem council, where there is ultimately an agreement about circumcision. Gentiles do not have to be circumcised. Yet in the book of Galatians, Paul is concerned about Gentiles not having to be circumcised, and he does not simply mention, as you would think would be possible, that they decided this back in Jerusalem. On that basis, many evangelical scholars, especially, would date the book of Galatians to the time in or after Paul's first missionary journey, before the Jerusalem council. So he wrote Galatians before Acts 15, in which case it must be written to the southern Galatians. In other words, it must be Paul's first book, before he wrote anything else, because he had not been anywhere else—Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi. He had not ever been to those places, so Galatians is his first book.

On the other hand, if you hold the view that the book was written to the northern Galatians, then you are inevitably saying that the book was written to the northern Galatian church after the Jerusalem council. I am simplifying somewhat; you could still hold that he was writing to the southern Galatians somewhat later in his ministry, but usually if somebody mentions the "southern Galatian theory," they are saying that the book was written to the southern Galatians before Acts 15. That provides a means of synthesizing Acts 15 with Galatians. In Galatians, Paul has to get really harsh on the issue of circumcision, because it had not yet been officially decided by the church. Then it was officially decided by the church, and although it cropped up again in Paul's ministry, it did not crop up with the same fervor in his other letters. So one possibility is to date and locate Galatians in south Galatia prior to Paul's ministry to the other churches and prior to the Acts council.

I am going to leave the question of the prevailing purpose of Galatians and just move to Romans for half a second, because I want to illustrate basically one thing by looking at Romans. It is the danger of asking the question, "What is *the* purpose of the book?" It is a dangerous question because of the word "the" and because of the singular nature of the word "purpose." What is *the* purpose of the book?

There have been a lot of debates over the last hundred years over the purpose of the book of Romans. Basically, over the last hundred years, this is the shift that has occurred. Chapters 1 through 5 are principally about salvation, especially justification. So, coming out of the Protestant Reformation, what do people say the book of Romans is about? Justification by faith alone. What is the key section of the book of Romans? Chapters 1 through 5. As we moved into the twentieth century, people started saying, "You know, Paul did not stop with chapter 5, so clearly he was concerned about something else." Some people suggested that he was really concerned about them understanding justification by faith alone, but then living out a life that brings glory to Christ, especially by dying to sin and being a slave of Christ. That is Romans 6, especially 6 through 8. So that is what Romans is about. But still, that stops short. I mean, we are only halfway through the book of Romans at that point. Some people, especially those coming out of the discussion of Judaism (which arose in part because of the Holocaust), have said, "No, what really matters is chapters 9 through 11," because Paul is trying to wrestle through why it is that not all of Israel will be saved. Well, he says that all Israel will be saved, but why it is that not every individual in Israel seems to be following the Law, following Christ. Paul is concerned about why it is that Jewish people are not flocking to Christ—chapters 9 through 11. Finally, some people have most recently argued, "No, what he is really interested in is the end of the book," where he is talking about the relationships between Jew and Gentile. He is trying to bring a sense of the unity of Jew and Gentile into the church. One last option is that what he was really after was a ticket to Spain, because if you know

the end of the book of Romans, what he is talking about is, essentially, “Here are my plans: I want to go into Spain. Please receive me and send me on.”

So what is the purpose of the book of Romans? Is it a ticket to Spain? Is he interested in Jew-Gentile relationships? Or is it primarily justification by faith? I have a suggestion. It is not new with me, but it is fairly radical suggestion: maybe he is interested in all of that. By trying to ask the question as “What is *the* purpose?” we have unduly constrained the various purposes that he may have had in writing the book. Be careful when you ask that question, and be much more inductive: let Paul tell you what his purposes are in terms of what he covers.

What I have basically argued up to now is that there is a diversity within Paul, and the diversity comes because each letter is written to a particular issue or set of issues that are going on in the church to whom he is writing. Thus, it is very important that when you read the book of Ephesians, or let us say Philippians, that you understand why he wrote the book as a whole before you try to interpret each and every passage in the book. Therefore, I want you to know the diversity of occasions—the things that have called forth the books—and therefore the various purposes for which these were written. I want you to understand the diversity of the letters of the apostle Paul.

There is one thing I want to do in the last few minutes. I want to try to bring this course together in about five or six minutes. We have covered a whole range of topics, and again, as I mentioned the very first day of class, I am assuming that you have read the New Testament before many, many times so that you know, in general, the contents of the New Testament. If you do not, this was the wrong course. This is not a content course. Really what have tried to do is to frame the ways that we approach Scripture. I want you to approach Scripture certainly interested in individual interpretations of passages and with some confidence that you can do that—even in light of your preunderstanding. Do you remember some of the hermeneutical issues that we talked about? However, I especially also want to help you frame Scripture in two major ways: in terms of the history that we find in Scripture and in terms of the theology that we find in Scripture. So I have repeated here some of the course objectives, and you can see that these were some of the purposes and goals I have had here.

I want to end with two concluding questions: Why is it important to study the New Testament through the lens of history? Well, first of all, because it purports to discuss history. The book of Acts talks about the history of the church. The Gospels talk about the history of Jesus the Messiah. Paul talks to particular historical circumstances: when he is writing to the people in Corinth, he is interested in the issues of the people in Corinth. They are historical issues, and so we need to see that he has written to historical events. Another reason, aside from the fact that they purport to be historical books, is that if the history is untrue then our faith is useless. That is Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 15 with regard to the resurrection. If the resurrection is not a true, historical event, then we are wasting our time studying these things. We need to understand it as representing real history. Another reason that you need to understand the New Testament through the lens of history is that it then allows us to interpret Scripture correctly.

You will remember my diagram about the author and the audience and the background in which they wrote and the Old Testament, which they drew on and the teachings of Jesus that they drew on explicitly. All of this is under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Of course, we then apply this to us today in our own cultural framework. We need first of all to understand the New Testament historically in terms of the questions that were being framed in the time of Paul and Jesus. When Paul addresses the issue of circumcision, it is because it was a real issue in the first century. When Paul, at the very end of the book of Ephesians, talks about relationships between husbands and wives, fathers and children, and

slaves and masters, there is a reason that those things are all in place. It is because in the ancient *oikos*, in the ancient house, you had husbands and wives, fathers and children, and you had slaves in the house. We need to understand all of that in terms of its first-century referent. For us, slavery was a horrible socioeconomic thing that had to do with the marketplace, but in the ancient world it was a widely accepted way of conducting your household, and so you need to understand Ephesians from that lens and judge it on those bases and understand what he is saying on those bases. When he talks, in the beginning of the book of Ephesians, about the predestining hand of God, we need to understand that when he brings up predestination, he is bringing it up in a context where, remember, the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the Essenes all disagreed on this issue. It was a live issue within Judaism. It was a live issue within Greco-Roman contexts, because the Stoics disagreed with the Epicureans on this. When we understand it in that framework, then we are trying to see what Paul says about predestination within his first-century context instead of immediately applying it to the twenty-first century. So another reason we need to understand the New Testament through the lens of history is that it helps us interpret it correctly.

So here are some rationales for seeing the New Testament books through the lens of history: first of all, they are historical books, and they purport to report history; second, if that history is false, then our faith is useless; third, in order to interpret them correctly, we need to understand the historical issues that they themselves are addressing before we apply it to our particular contexts today. Those are at least three reasons.

The next question is “Why is it important to engage in the activity of New Testament theology?” Because in seeing the diversity of emphases in the different authors, we can expand our horizons theologically. Also, because in seeing the synthesis and the unity that is in the New Testament, we can understand what the church fundamentally needs to care about in terms of its theology. So the diversity of emphases adds to our sense of the theology of the New Testament, and then we can synthesize it and come back to kind of a sense of the core of theology.

Then there is a third reason, which is that if we inductively approach the New Testament and ask, “What are the theological purposes going on here?” then we recognize that there might be areas where our own theology is lacking. I made this point several weeks ago when I talked about the resurrection and how in most Western systematic theologies, the resurrection of Jesus gets just a handful of pages, and yet it was obviously much more important than that in the New Testament itself. If we approach it inductively, instead of taking our systematic theology and always approaching the New Testament as proof-texts for the theology we already have, if we go to the New Testament itself and allow the theology that it presents to bubble to the surface, we will find our own systematic theology confirmed but also expanded. That is what I would suggest as another help to doing New Testament theology. So there are at least three reasons: the diversity helps us test our theology more, the synthesis helps us develop a core, and by inductively approaching the New Testament, we can again test our own systematic syntheses that we have been working with for hundreds of years.

Now as an approach to that, the very end of this lesson is basically to say that if you look at the cross in New Testament writers, you will see a diversity of emphases. You will see that some works will emphasize, as Paul does, the justification that comes from the cross. If you approach the Gospels themselves, they will talk of the cross and Jesus’ blood poured out to create a covenant, so it is a much more covenantal discussion. If you look at the Gospel of John, one of the things that comes out of the Gospel of John is that Jesus’ glory is when He is lifted up. His very suffering on the cross is glory to Jesus, and through that He draws all men to Himself. So you see these kinds of different emphases that occur. Obviously, they all cohere very well, but they are different emphases. If you approach the book of

Hebrews, you see that Jesus becomes the High Priest who presents Himself as an offering. That is another picture of the cross, and of course, you have studied 1 Peter and some of the diversity there.

However, while we can see distinct emphases, we can also see synthesis across the variety of New Testament authors that we can synthesize at the end. I give you four propositions. The first is that Jesus' death produces salvation. That is given a variety of figures throughout the New Testament, whether it is the priest presenting himself as an offering in Hebrews or justification as in Paul, etc., but it has salvific importance. It provides an example to us. Most of you have seen very well in 1 Peter that the suffering of Jesus on the cross provides us an example in suffering, so that we as Christians are willing to endure suffering. Therefore, the cross has exemplary force to us, and you see that as well in Jesus when He talks in Mark 10:45. The sense is that Christians should not exalt themselves over others but should be humble, because "...even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." So His death serves as an example for others. Jesus' death is inseparable from His resurrection, and it is also inseparable from His person. He is the Son of God who came to die. He is God incarnate who came to die, and that is why His death is particularly important.

What I am trying to illustrate there, although I have done it very briefly, is that there is a diversity and yet there is a synthetic unity to the New Testament in terms of theology. That is what we should expect when we study the New Testament from a theological viewpoint. That was quick, but there is some sense of where I wanted us to go: that you need to see the New Testament through the lens of history and that you also need to understand the New Testament as theological, with the distinct emphases of the different authors and yet the ultimate synthesis that comes throughout. If you have that, that is basically really what I wanted you to get out of the course.