

GETTING PERSPECTIVE ON RECENT DISCUSSIONS OF PAUL

Pablo T. Gadenz

Seton Hall University

The pace of Pauline studies is moving forward so rapidly that it is helpful to survey the big picture and get a “perspective” on recent discussion of Paul. The goal of this essay is to provide such an overview by referring to dozens of recent works on Paul, as well as some earlier landmark studies.¹ Students of Paul will thus also be able to better understand the key debates, major trends, and important players in Pauline scholarship. In order to make the presentation user-friendly, the essay is organized into four broad areas: Paul’s life and letters; perspectives on Paul; Paul’s background as Jew, Greek, and Roman; and Pauline theology.

Paul’s Life and Letters

Biographies and textbooks on Paul typically include a timeline for his life, which is constructed by searching *both* his letters *and* the Acts of the Apostles for fixed points or “anchors” that establish an absolute chronology.² One such anchor is Gallio’s one-year term as proconsul in Achaia, during which Paul was brought before his tribunal.³ Based on an inscription discovered at Delphi, the beginning of Gallio’s term is dated to the middle of the year 51. If Paul had already stayed in Corinth a year and a half, his arrival there occurred sometime in 50. This is consistent with his meeting Aquila and Priscilla (Prisca), who had recently come to Corinth from Rome because the emperor Claudius had expelled the Jews, an event occurring possibly in 49. A relative chronology of events in Paul’s life can be determined based on this and other datable events, so as to produce a timeline like the one below.⁴ It begins with Paul’s Damascus

1 For a survey of English-language works up to 2012, see N. T. Wright, “Paul in Current Anglophone Scholarship,” in N. T. Wright, *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul, 1978–2013* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 474–488.

2 See Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1–31, 341–371; Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 40–45; Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology*, trans. M. Eugene Boring (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 47–57.

3 Acts 18:1–12.

4 See Rainer Riesner, “Pauline Chronology,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Paul*, ed. Stephen Westerholm (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 9–29, in addition to the sources in note 2.

experience, which is typically dated one to three years after Jesus' crucifixion (which is itself generally dated either to Friday, April 7, 30, or Friday, April 3, 33).⁵ A possible timeline for the letters is also given (see the discussion below).

Paul's Life

32–34	Conversion/Call of Paul on road to Damascus (Gal. 1:15–16; Acts 9, 22, 26)
35–37	Visit to Jerusalem (Gal. 1:18; Acts 9:26)
35–45	In Syria and Cilicia (Tarsus), then Antioch (Gal. 1:21; Acts 9:30; 10:25–26)
45–47	Relief mission to Jerusalem (Acts 11:29–30; see Gal. 2:1)
45–48	1st Missionary Journey: Cyprus, Galatia (Acts 13–14)
48–49	Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15; see Gal. 2:1)
48–52	2nd Missionary Journey: Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece (Acts 15:36–18:22)
52–57	3rd Missionary Journey: Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece (Acts 18:23–21:15)
52–55	In Ephesus for three years (Acts 19:1, 8, 10, 22; 20:1, 31)
56–57	In Macedonia and Greece (Acts 20:1–3)
57	Arrival and Arrest in Jerusalem (Acts 21:15–23:22)
57–59	Imprisonment in Caesarea under Felix and Festus (Acts 23:23–26:32)
60–62	Imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:14–31; see 2 Tim. 1:16–17)
62–64	Mission to Spain? (see Rom. 15:24; Muratorian Canon) ⁶
64/67	Martyrdom in Rome under Emperor Nero (1 Clement 5.5–7) ⁷

5 Paul's birth is more difficult to date, and typically a range of years is given in the first decade of the Christian era. This is based on Paul's being an "old man" (Philem. 9)—a term meaning 50 to 56 years old—when he wrote Philemon from his (Roman) imprisonment. Falling into the acceptable range was the Catholic Church's celebration in 2008 of a "Year of St. Paul" to mark his 2000th birthday. For a collection of the papal catechesis on Paul during that year, see Pope Benedict XVI, *Saint Paul* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009).

6 See John M. G. Barclay, Jörg Frey, and Armand Puig i Tàrrach, eds., *The Last Years of Paul: Essays from the Tarragona Conference, 2013* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015).

7 The various non-biblical accounts and patristic references regarding Paul's (as well as Peter's) martyrdom are collected in David L. Eastman, *The Ancient Martyrdom Accounts*

Paul's Letters

50–51	1–2 Thessalonians from Corinth
54	Galatians, 1 Corinthians from Ephesus (Galatians in 48 from Antioch?)
55–56	2 Corinthians from Ephesus/Macedonia
57	Romans from Corinth
60–62	Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians (Philippians, Philemon, Colossians in 55 while imprisoned in Ephesus?)
62–67	1–2 Timothy, Titus

Some scholars instead prefer to construct Paul's timeline primarily or *only* using his letters, rather than attempt to synthesize their information with that found in Acts. The focus is more on the relative sequence of the letters.⁸ Taking this approach to an extreme, Douglas Campbell has recently proposed much earlier dates for Paul's missionary activity and his letters (for example, circa 40–42 for the Thessalonian letters and 52 for Romans).⁹

However, aspects of Campbell's proposal will not win adherents in many (even critical) circles, due to his flippant dismissal of Acts: "The Acts data . . . could be spun out of thin air, for all we know."¹⁰ More interesting are Campbell's arguments defending Paul's authorship of 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, and Ephesians. Since the nineteenth century, these letters (along with those to Timothy and Titus) have been regarded as "disputed," in contrast to the seven "undisputed" letters,¹¹ in the canon of thirteen letters that

of *Peter and Paul, Writings from the Greco-Roman World* 39 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2015).

8 Gregory Tatum, *New Chapters in the Life of Paul: The Relative Chronology of His Career*, Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 41 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association, 2006). Tatum's approach and title recall the earlier work by John Knox, *Chapters in a Life of Paul* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1950), revised ed. (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987).

9 Douglas A. Campbell, *Framing Paul: An Epistolary Biography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 412–414.

10 Ibid., 21.

11 See the discussion in Albert Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters: A Critical History*, trans. W. Montgomery (London: A. & C. Black, 1912), 25–28.

bear Paul's name.¹² With regard to Ephesians,¹³ for example, Campbell argues (as others have before him) that it is the lost letter to the Laodiceans,¹⁴ but also that it was written in 50, *before* letters like Galatians and Romans, and hence in different circumstances. In this way, he deals with the objection that Ephesians is not from Paul because of its different theological content. On the basis of statistical studies, he also concludes that the different style of the letter is not a determinative argument regarding its authorship. Campbell's support for the authenticity of Ephesians, however, is dependent on his historical reconstruction. Nonetheless, it is significant that important scholars are taking a critical look at the consensus on the "disputed" letters. In recent years, careful arguments have also been proposed defending 2 Timothy, which is accepted as Pauline by a number of scholars.¹⁵

A different approach to the question is taken by Stanley Porter. Through his work on the process by which Paul's letters were collected (a process possibly initiated by Paul himself, with help from Luke and Timothy), he suggests that it is possible that all thirteen letters are authentic, since the thirteen letter collection emerged fairly early (for example, *1 Clement* seems to allude to various letters, including Titus).¹⁶

12 Though it does not mention Paul by name, Hebrews is the fourteenth letter in the Pauline canon, as it appears after Romans in the earliest manuscript collection of Paul's letters, the Chester Beatty papyrus P46, dated circa 200. For a recent detailed proposal that Paul delivered Hebrews as a speech that Luke then edited and published for circulation among Jewish-Christian communities, see Andrew W. Pitts and Joshua F. Walker, "The Authorship of Hebrews: A Further Development in the Luke-Paul Relationship," in *Paul and His Social Relations*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Land, Pauline Studies 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 143–184.

13 Campbell, *Framing Paul*, 309–338.

14 Col. 4:16.

15 See Michael Prior, *Paul the Letter-Writer and the Second Letter to Timothy*, Library of New Testament Studies 23 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989). Scholars who thus accept eleven letters as written by Paul (all except 1 Timothy and Titus) include Gorman (*Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 91) and (with some distinctions) N. T. Wright (*Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 2 vols. [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013], 1:61). Luke Timothy Johnson, among others, accepts all thirteen letters. For his defense of Paul's authorship of the Pastoral Letters (1–2 Timothy, Titus), see Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 35A (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 55–99.

16 Stanley E. Porter, "When and How was the Pauline Canon Compiled? An Assessment of Theories," in *The Pauline Canon*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Pauline Studies 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 95–127; Porter, "Paul and the Process of Canonization," in *Exploring the Origins of the Bible*, eds. Craig A. Evans and Emanuel Tov (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 173–202; Porter, "Paul and the Pauline Letter Collection," in *Paul and the Second Century*, eds. Michael F. Bird and Joseph R. Dodson (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 19–36.

Perspectives on Paul

Much of the ongoing debate in scholarly circles on Paul focuses on getting the right “perspective.” Some review is in order, even at the risk of oversimplification, so as to understand the main positions and to see where recent works fit into the debate.

Old Perspective (“Lutheran” Paul)¹⁷

In the traditional view going back to the Reformers (and, in a sense, to Augustine before them), the heart of the gospel message preached by Paul is justification by faith in Christ. Individuals stand in need of salvation but cannot save themselves. Created good but corrupted by sin, human beings are justified by grace through faith alone, apart from any works they do in observance of the law. There is obviously much to be commended in this perspective on Paul. Proponents of the new perspective indeed affirm that the old perspective was right in emphasizing the importance of faith and the inability of human beings to earn their salvation.¹⁸ However, there are some difficulties as well. For example, Luther so emphasized the opposition between law and gospel that this opposition tended to be carried over to the biblical canon itself. The relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament thus becomes primarily one of discontinuity, rather than promise and fulfillment. Within the New Testament itself, it becomes difficult to read Paul and James together—and at times, even Paul and Jesus! Moreover, a similar opposition between works and faith—as in Luther’s famous addition to Romans 3:28 of faith “alone”¹⁹—raises questions about the role of works in the Christian life, that is, in the life of a person who has already received the grace of justification.²⁰

New Perspective on Paul²¹

Other concerns expressed with the old perspective included its description of the individual’s plight as a legalistic attempt at self-justification, which

17 Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

18 James D. G. Dunn, “What’s Right about the Old Perspective on Paul,” in *Studies in the Pauline Epistles: Essays in Honor of Douglas J. Moo*, eds. Matthew S. Harmon and Jay E. Smith (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 214–229.

19 See the comment of Pope Benedict XVI, *Saint Paul*, 82: “Luther’s phrase ‘faith alone’ is true, if it is not opposed to faith in charity, in love.”

20 For a nuanced, old perspective treatment of the role of works, see Thomas R. Schreiner, “Justification apart from and by Works: At the Final Judgment Works Will Confirm Justification,” in *Four Views on the Role of Works at the Final Judgment*, ed. Alan P. Stanley (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 71–98.

21 For an accessible explanation, see Kent L. Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul: An Introduction* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011).

could only lead to failure and (as in Luther's case) a troubled conscience. This view seemed to ignore Paul's own "robust conscience."²² The individualistic focus also seemed to ignore Paul's historical and social context regarding the relationship between Jews and Gentiles.

E. P. Sanders set the stage for the new perspective on Paul by critiquing the old perspective's typical portrayal of Judaism as a legalistic system of works righteousness.²³ He also contended that the first-century context was not being taken into account: "We have here the retrojection of the Protestant-Catholic debate into ancient history, with Judaism taking the role of Catholicism and Christianity the role of Lutheranism."²⁴ Sanders instead describes first-century Judaism as following the pattern of "covenantal nomism": God's gracious election of Israel as his covenant people *precedes* the human response of obedience. Obeying the law (as well as atoning for transgressions) was therefore not a matter of "getting in" to the covenant relationship through one's merits, but rather of "staying in" that relationship with God and hence reaching salvation.²⁵

James Dunn, accepting Sanders's work on first-century Judaism but still looking for a satisfactory understanding of Paul that followed from it, advanced the phrase "The New Perspective on Paul" in a 1982 lecture.²⁶ He proposes that the Jewish-Gentile context of Paul's discussions of justification needs to be kept in mind. Israel's identity as God's covenant people was tied up with its separateness from the nations. Distinctive Jewish practices such as circumcision, Sabbath observance, and dietary laws marked the boundaries between Israel and the nations. Paul's discussion of justification apart from "works of the law"²⁷ especially had such boundary markers in mind, in response to some Jewish followers of Christ who were still insisting on them. Paul instead explained that the Gospel led to the overcoming of the barrier

22 See Phil. 3:6. An important article that prepared the way for the new perspective is Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *Harvard Theological Review* 56 (1963): 199–215.

23 E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977). Occasionally, earlier scholars had raised similar concerns; for example, George F. Moore ("Christian Writers on Judaism," *Harvard Theological Review* 14 [1921]: 197–254) extensively critiques the influential German textbook on Judaism by Ferdinand Weber.

24 Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 57.

25 Ibid., 75, 236, 420–424. See also Sanders, "Covenantal Nomism Revisited," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 16 (2009): 23–55. For his less influential views on Paul in relation to first-century Judaism, see also Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983). Another book on Paul is forthcoming: Sanders, *Paul: The Apostle's Life, Letters, and Thought* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015).

26 For a collection of essays, including his 1982 lecture, see James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul*, revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

27 See Gal. 2:16 and Rom. 3:28.

between Jews and Gentiles.²⁸ Therefore, works of the law do not play a role in initial justification. However, in considering the whole process of salvation, Dunn (in contrast to many old perspective proponents) explains that works *do* play a role in final justification, since Paul teaches that a person is judged according to works.²⁹

Like Sanders and Dunn, N. T. Wright, in his books both small and large, challenges aspects of the old perspective reading of Paul. For example, in light of Paul's first-century context as a Jew steeped in the Old Testament, Wright explains that the phrase "the righteousness of God"³⁰ refers not to the righteous status given to believers, but to God's own righteousness, that is, the quality of God's covenant faithfulness and the saving power associated with it.³¹ This righteousness of God has been revealed through the gospel of Jesus. God, on account of his righteousness, thus justifies those who believe in Jesus; that is, he declares them to be righteous. However, this declaration, he explains, is not about "getting in" ("how someone *becomes* a Christian") but rather about "how you could tell who was in" ("the declaration that they *have become* a Christian"). Justification is thus not primarily about individual salvation, but about membership or status in the new covenant community.³²

In response to the various proponents of the new perspective, old perspective scholars concede that the new perspective has led to a better understanding of Judaism in the first century, even if the accuracy of Sanders's description is still debated, especially in view of the variety of Jewish move-

28 Responding to his critics in an essay written more than twenty years after his original lecture on the new perspective, Dunn ("The New Perspective: Whence, What and Whither?" in *New Perspective on Paul*, 1–97, at 23–28.) clarifies that the phrase "works of the law" certainly refers to all that the law requires, and not just boundary markers, but that nonetheless Paul's discussion of justification in Galatians arose in response to the insistence of Jewish followers of Christ on the boundary markers separating Jews from Gentiles.

29 For example, Rom. 8:13; 2 Cor. 5:10; Gal. 6:8. See Dunn, "New Perspective," 71–89.

30 For example, Rom. 1:17; 3:21–22; 10:3.

31 For his primer, see N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 95–111. For his *magnum opus* (note the title!), see his *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 2:774–1042. Elsewhere, Wright explains at greater length that this understanding of God's own righteousness is found in the work of Ernst Käsemann, the old perspective Lutheran scholar who in this way anticipated the new perspective. See Wright, "A New Perspective on Käsemann? Apocalyptic, Covenant, and the Righteousness of God," in *Studies in the Pauline Epistles*, 243–258. For Wright's survey of Käsemann and other Pauline scholars, see his work (whose title alludes to Schweitzer's similar work for his generation—see n. 11), *Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015). In another book, he responds to his critics: *The Paul Debate: Critical Questions for Understanding the Apostle* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2015).

32 Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 119, 125. Wright's views on justification have generated an ongoing debate (see below).

ments in the first century. The new perspective has also resulted in a better appreciation of the social context (or horizontal dimension) of Paul's teaching on justification; namely, that the gospel breaks down the barrier between Jews and Gentiles. However, there is concern that the vertical dimension of one's relationship with God is not being given sufficient emphasis³³ and disagreement regarding the emphasis or meaning that Dunn and Wright attach to terms like "works of the law" and "justification."³⁴

Post-New Perspective

Since the new perspective is no longer new and actually involves multiple perspectives, one wonders what other perspectives will develop.³⁵ Wright himself has written about moving to a "fresh perspective" on Paul.³⁶ Because of the ongoing debate, one suggestion is to bridge the gap by finding a *via media* that combines the best of the old and new perspectives, for example, on justification.³⁷ Others advocate going, not backward toward Luther, but forward "beyond the New Perspective."³⁸

Douglas Campbell has taken this idea further than others and speaks of a "post-new perspective." He appreciates the work of Sanders as providing a necessary corrective to distorted views of Judaism, especially in view of the post-Holocaust context, but he contends that the proposals of the new perspective (for example, regarding "works of the law") have not really solved

33 This is a common critique of the new perspective. For example, regarding Paul's concept of zeal, see Dane C. Ortlund (*Zeal without Knowledge: The Concept of Zeal in Romans 10, Galatians 1, and Philippians 3*, Library of New Testament Studies 472 [London: T&T Clark, 2012]), who appreciates Dunn's work but argues for the priority of a vertical understanding of zeal (referring to Jewish obedience to God) against Dunn's more horizontal understanding (involving Israel's concern to maintain its identity as set apart from other nations).

34 Stephen Westerholm, "What's Right about the New Perspective on Paul," in *Studies in the Pauline Epistles*, 230–242. For a collection of essays responding to the new perspective, see D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism: A Fresh Appraisal of Paul and Second Temple Judaism*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001–2004).

35 See the diverse essays by eight scholars in Mark D. Given, ed., *Paul Unbound: Other Perspectives on the Apostle* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010).

36 N. T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 40.

37 Michael F. Bird, "Justification as Forensic Status and Covenant Membership," in Michael F. Bird, *The Saving Righteousness of God: Studies on Paul, Justification, and the New Perspective* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2006), 113–154. A recent textbook on Paul also takes a complementary approach, comparing the traditional view and the new perspective: Bruce W. Longenecker and Todd D. Still, *Thinking Through Paul: A Survey of His Life, Letters, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 326–334.

38 Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective*, revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 25. See also Michael F. Bird, "When the Dust Finally Settles: Beyond the New Perspective," in *Saving Righteousness of God*, 88–112.

the problem. He therefore describes the current situation as needing “a major reappraisal of the apostle’s gospel that responds to a massive interpretive crisis within much of his interpretation. The ‘post’ in the title ‘post-new perspective’ is therefore an emphatic one.”³⁹ In his major work to date, he launches a sweeping attack on traditional “justification theory” as he reviews the work of earlier scholars and confidently summarizes the current landscape of Pauline studies as having “no successful strategy . . . only a wide path leading to hermeneutical destruction for all traveling upon it.”⁴⁰ Clearly, no one can accuse him of understatement! What he can be accused of, however, is “incipient Marcionism,”⁴¹ on account of his bizarre reading of Romans 1:18–3:20, in which he contends that Paul *contrasts* his views with those of a (Jewish) “teacher” (who, he claims, speaks in Romans 1:18–32), such that the revelation of Christ is of “a fundamentally different God . . . a God of deliverance, not punishment.”⁴² Campbell’s dialectic, ultimately one between the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament, is inconsistent with his stated concerns about avoiding distortions of Judaism. Indeed, the “apocalyptic” approach he takes to Paul—which sees the revelation of Christ as the radical breaking in of God’s deliverance—tends in this direction when taken to an extreme, since it emphasizes the discontinuity between the Christ-event and anything prior (like the Old Testament), and hence needs ultimately to be reconciled with a salvation-historical approach that sees the continuity of God’s promises and their fulfillment in Christ.⁴³

39 Douglas A. Campbell, “Christ and the Church in Paul: A ‘Post-New Perspective’ Account,” in *Four Views on the Apostle Paul*, ed. Michael F. Bird (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 113–143, at 116.

40 Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 466.

41 Douglas J. Moo, “Review of *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* by Douglas A. Campbell,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 53 (2010): 143–150, at 150.

42 Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 812; see also 184; 706. Campbell’s discussion of Romans 1:18–3:20 is found in chapter 14 (519–600), in which he sets forth Paul’s rhetorical argument—erroneously. Among those pointing out this error is Robin Griffith-Jones, (“Beyond Reasonable Hope of Recognition? *Prosōpopoeia* in Romans 1:18–3:8,” in *Beyond Old and New Perspectives on Paul: Reflections on the Work of Douglas Campbell*, ed. Chris Tilling (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014)), 161–174, who writes that this error in an indispensable part of Campbell’s argument may thus “bring the building down” (172). For a better explanation of Paul’s rhetorical argument in this section of Romans, see Jean-Noël Aletti, *God’s Justice in Romans: Keys for Interpreting the Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Peggy Manning Meyer, *Subsidia Biblica* 37 (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2010), 61–91. As Aletti says, “the function of [Romans] 1:18–3:20 is to eliminate the Jewish exception” (63), that is, to level the playing field between Jews and Gentiles—on the basis of Scripture itself!—and thus to prepare for the exposition in the following section of justification by faith for all.

43 See the comments along these lines in Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1:39–

Yet another perspective—now called “Paul within Judaism”—has developed, and counts among its adherents some Jewish scholars of Paul.⁴⁴ They take the appreciation of Paul’s first-century Jewish background even further than the new perspective, so theirs is a “radical new perspective” that holds that Paul should be interpreted “within Judaism” rather than “within Christianity.” There are some helpful insights from this perspective, such as the appreciation of Paul’s Judaism and the continuing role that ethnic identity—Jew or Gentile (non-Jew)—plays among believers in Christ.⁴⁵ However, there are also weaknesses. For example, some hold to the two-covenant view—which is certainly not Paul’s view⁴⁶—that there are two ways to salvation, the Sinai covenant for Jews and the new covenant in Christ for Gentiles.⁴⁷ There is also an overemphasis on maintaining distinctions between Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ.⁴⁸ Moreover, emphasis on the continuity between

41; 2:1512–1513. See also Wright’s critique of the immediate precursor of Campbell’s “apocalyptic” rereading of Paul—namely, J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997)—in Wright, “Paul in Current Anglophone Scholarship,” 373: “Martyn cannot escape the charge levelled by Sanders against the more common forms of the ‘old perspective.’ He has rendered Paul radically un-Jewish, even anti-Jewish. Scholars too readily toss around the word ‘supersessionism,’ but if it belongs anywhere it is right here.” Voicing similar concerns about this aspect of “apocalyptic” interpretation of Paul is Richard B. Hays, “Apocalyptic *Poiësis* in Galatians: Paternity, Passion, and Participation,” in *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel, and Ethics in Paul’s Letter*, eds. Mark W. Elliott, Scott J. Hafemann, N. T. Wright, and John Frederick (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 200–219, at 203–204.

44 See the essays by nine scholars—eight proponents and one new perspective respondent (Terence L. Donaldson)—in Mark Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm, eds., *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015). In particular, the “Introduction” by Nanos (1–29) and the first chapter, “Paul within Judaism: The State of the Question,” by Zetterholm (31–51) summarize the key ideas. See also Nanos, “A Jewish View,” in *Four Views on the Apostle Paul*, 159–193, and Magnus Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul: A Student’s Guide to Recent Scholarship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009).

45 For example, Paul describes the role specifically of Jewish believers in Christ, to whom he gives the biblical term “remnant,” as proof that God’s promises have not failed (Rom. 9:27; see 9:6), and as proof that God has not rejected his people, but that eventually all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:5; see 11:1, 26).

46 A. Andrew Das, *Paul and the Jews*, Library of Pauline Studies (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 96–106.

47 This view is associated with scholars such as Lloyd Gaston (*Paul and the Torah* [Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987]) and John G. Gager (*Reinventing Paul* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000]).

48 See Rom. 3:22; 10:12; Gal. 3:28. See the critique in Terence L. Donaldson, “Paul within Judaism: A Critical Evaluation from a ‘New Perspective’ Perspective,” in *Paul within Judaism*, 277–301, at 298.

Judaism and Paul does not need to extend to the assumption that there is only discontinuity between Paul and "Christianity."⁴⁹

"Catholic" Perspective?

Since the old perspective is associated with a "Lutheran" reading of Paul, and the responses to it are generally from other Protestants, a legitimate question arises: Is there such a thing as a "Catholic" perspective on these matters and, if so, how does it align with some of the other perspectives? Luke Timothy Johnson gives a good response to both aspects of the question. He explains that the Catholic tradition is broad, "defined not by a single standpoint . . . but in a conversation among standpoints, trying to avoid whenever possible the sharp alternatives of 'either-or' in favor of a more balanced (even when dialectical) 'both-and.'"⁵⁰ Indeed, there are points of contact between Catholic teaching and various perspectives on Paul.

For example, the more traditional Lutheran perspective is in view in the Lutheran-Catholic Joint Declaration on Justification, signed in 1999, after years of study.⁵¹ By contrast, the new perspective (which was relatively new in the years of preparation of the Joint Declaration) plays little role.⁵² The agreement shows how, despite the different nuances given to theological terms by Lutherans and Catholics, substantial agreement on justification can be reached. The "Lutheran" Paul has much in common with a "Catholic" Paul, after all!⁵³ In the aftermath of the Joint Declaration, concerns were thus expressed that since proponents of the new perspective tend to displace justification from its central role in traditional Protestant understandings of

49 For example, Paul's letters do not use the word "Christian," but it appears in Acts in reference to Paul (Acts 11:26; 26:28). The issue, again, is the relationship between Paul's letters and the Acts of the Apostles. Assuming complete discontinuity between the two is not the only interpretive option. On continuity and discontinuity between Paul, Judaism, and Christianity, see the contrasting viewpoints in the collected essays in Reimund Bieringer and Didier Pollefeyt, eds., *Paul and Judaism: Crosscurrents in Pauline Exegesis and the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations*, Library of New Testament Studies 463 (London: T&T Clark, 2012).

50 Luke Timothy Johnson, "The Paul of the Letters: A Catholic Perspective," in *Four Views on the Apostle Paul*, 65–96, at 65.

51 John Reumann, "Righteousness" in the New Testament: 'Justification' in the United States Lutheran–Roman Catholic Dialogue, with responses by Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Jerome D. Quinn (Philadelphia: Fortress; New York: Paulist, 1982).

52 David E. Aune, "Recent Readings of Paul Relating to Justification by Faith," in *Rereading Paul Together: Protestant and Catholic Perspectives on Justification*, ed. David E. Aune (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 188–245, at 242.

53 John Reumann, "Justification by Faith in Pauline Thought: A Lutheran View," in *Rereading Paul Together*, 108–130, at 130: "The 'Lutheran' Paul . . . also fits positions of Augustine, Calvin, and others, embracing Reformed, Catholic, and other theologies."

Paul, the significance of the Joint Declaration could be diminished.⁵⁴ The new perspective apparently made some get the feeling that the goalposts were being moved in the middle of the game!

Others, however, believe that the new perspective will contribute to ecumenical progress, that there is “a good chance for a new dialogue,” one that will focus on “Paul himself and his presentation of justification theology in the life of the young church” rather than on “the controversies of the sixteenth century.”⁵⁵ In particular, because the new perspective highlights how Paul’s doctrine of justification involved the breaking down of the barrier between Jews and Gentiles, it “is in fact the great *ecumenical* doctrine.”⁵⁶

Another area of possible convergence between Catholic teaching and the new perspective is in the understanding of the role of works in Christian life. As already noted, James Dunn has expressed concern with the old perspective’s downplaying of the role of works,⁵⁷ pointing out that, for Paul, justification is by faith but judgment is by works.⁵⁸ He thus finds much in common with a Catholic perspective on works described in an essay by Michael Barber⁵⁹: “I found myself warming to Michael Barber’s ‘Catholic perspective.’ It is ecumenical; it effectively chops down the ‘dividing wall’ between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. . . . Grace is as fundamental to both systems, even, arguably (as Barber provocatively suggests), more fundamental to Catholic teaching.”⁶⁰

Hopefully, the coming years will see more examples of converging positions between Protestants and Catholics, arising from their study of Paul from perspectives old and new.

54 Richard E. DeMaris, “Can We Reread Paul Together Any Longer? Joseph A. Fitzmyer’s View of Pauline Justification in Context,” in *Rereading Paul Together*, 95–107, at 103.

55 Thomas Söding, “Justification and Participation: Ecumenical Dimensions of Galatians,” in *Galatians and Christian Theology*, 62–81, at 77.

56 Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 158. See also Dunn, “New Perspective,” 58.

57 See n. 29 above and also Dunn, “What’s Right about the Old Perspective on Paul,” 228.

58 James D. G. Dunn, “If Paul Could Believe in Justification by Faith and Judgment according to Works, Why Should That Be a Problem for Us?” in *Four Views on the Role of Works*, 119–141.

59 Michael P. Barber, “A Catholic Perspective: Our Works Are Meritorious at the Final Judgment Because of Our Union with Christ by Grace,” in *Four Views on the Role of Works*, 161–184.

60 James D. G. Dunn, “Response to Michael P. Barber,” in *Four Views on the Role of Works*, 197–202, at 197.

Paul's Background: Jew, Greek, Roman

Paul is a man of "three worlds":⁶¹ a Jewish Pharisee and Roman citizen immersed in a Greek culture.⁶² In God's providence, this triple background equipped him to be the apostle to the Gentiles. Recent scholarly discussion of certain aspects associated with each of these worlds will be discussed here.

Jew

One of the positive results of the new perspective, in contrast to much scholarship during the twentieth century,⁶³ is a greater appreciation of Paul's Jewish background: "his education and upbringing were Jewish; the main categories of his thought were Jewish; his mission was set in the framework of Jewish eschatology; the final outcome for which he longed was a universal form of Jewish hope."⁶⁴ Here, a few specific topics related to Paul's Jewish background will be treated.

The first regards the careful study in recent years of Paul's use of Scripture.⁶⁵ For example, scholars identify over eighty scriptural citations,⁶⁶

61 Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*, 3–13; Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, chapters 2–5 and 12–15.

62 For example, see Phil. 3:5 (Jew); 1 Cor. 1:22 (Greek); and Acts 16:37–38; 22:25–29 (Roman). On Paul's "multicultural" background, see Marc Rastoin, *Tarse et Jérusalem: La double culture de l'Apôtre Paul en Galates 3,6–4,7* [*Tarsus and Jerusalem: The Double Culture of the Apostle Paul in Galatians 3:6–4:7*], *Analecta Biblica* 152 (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2003); and the collection of essays in Stanley Porter, ed., *Paul: Jew, Greek, Roman*, *Pauline Studies* 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

63 For example, Rudolf K. Bultmann (*Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel, 2 vols. [New York: Scribner, 1951–1955; repr. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007], 1:187) doubted whether Paul was ever educated in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3) and described the Hellenistic Jewish environment of his upbringing in Tarsus as one marked by religious syncretism because of influence of the mystery religions and Gnosticism.

64 See E. P. Sanders, "Paul's Jewishness," in *Paul's Jewish Matrix*, eds. Thomas G. Casey and Justin Taylor, *Bible in Dialogue* 2 (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press; Mahwah, NJ: Stimulus, 2011), 51–73, at 73.

65 See the collected papers originally presented at meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature: Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Stanley, eds., *As It Is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture*, *Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series* 50 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008); and Christopher D. Stanley, ed., *Paul and Scripture: Extending the Conversation*, *Early Christianity and Its Literature* 9 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012). For a primer on the subject, see Steve Moyise, *Paul and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).

66 Dieter-Alex Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* [*Scripture as Witness to the Gospel: Investigations on the Use and Understanding of Scripture in Paul*], *Beiträge zur historischen Theologie* 69 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986), 11–24; Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*, *Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series* 69 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 34.

that is, Old Testament references marked in some way, such as by an introductory formula ("as it is written"⁶⁷). Paul generally relies on the Septuagint text for these citations. The Old Testament books he cites the most are (in descending order): Isaiah,⁶⁸ Psalms, Deuteronomy, Genesis, and Exodus. These citations, however, are not isolated proof-texts, but generally form part of a larger narrative framework with fundamental themes.⁶⁹ Through these citations, Paul tells his account of the biblical story, demonstrating how the gospel was "promised beforehand . . . in the holy Scriptures."⁷⁰ These citations all appear in four letters having substantial doctrinal sections: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians. The highest concentration is found in Romans 9–11, with about twenty-five citations (see an example below). The citations often function as proofs from authority in Paul's arguments.

At times, Paul combines scriptural texts in his proofs, for example, linking two passages together that have a common word that is used in a similar way. This technique, already found in the Old Testament and at Qumran, was later called by the rabbis the rule of *gezerah shawah*. An important example occurs in Romans 4, where Paul demonstrates that justification by faith is biblical.⁷¹ Indeed, Paul's sophisticated use of this technique here is *necessary* in order to show that the principle of justification by faith apart from works applies to all, circumcised or uncircumcised. It is only in Paul's interrelated use of two texts⁷² that he finds the scriptural basis needed to prove his thesis, as neither text by itself is sufficient.⁷³

Besides Paul's citations, scholars have also studied his *allusions* to Scripture, which can be identified using various "tests," such as common vocabulary and thematic coherence.⁷⁴ Even a letter like Philippians, which does

67 Rom. 1:17; 2:24; 3:4, 10.

68 See, for example, J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Gospel: Isaiah and Paul 'In Concert' in the Letter to the Romans*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 101 (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

69 Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 18, 23. A revised edition is forthcoming.

70 Rom. 1:2. Unless otherwise indicated, biblical quotations are taken from the Revised Standard Version, 2nd Catholic Edition.

71 The scriptural argument in Romans 4 is Paul's demonstration of the thesis on justification by faith enunciated in Rom. 3:21–22a.

72 Gen. 15:6 and Ps. 32:1–2.

73 Pasquale Basta, "Paul and the Gezerah Shawah: A Judaic Method in the Service of Justification by Faith," in *Paul's Jewish Matrix*, 123–165; Jean-Noël Aletti, "Romans 4 and Genesis 17: The Importance of the Gezerah Shawah," in Jean-Noël Aletti, *New Approaches for Interpreting the Letters of Saint Paul: Collected Essays: Rhetoric, Soteriology, Christology, and Ecclesiology*, trans. Peggy Manning Meyer, Subsidia Biblica 43 (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2012), 37–60.

74 Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 29–32, presents seven tests for detecting allusions or echoes. He develops

not have scriptural citations (on account of its hortatory subject matter and Gentile audience), nonetheless has several allusions, some of which have great theological importance.⁷⁵ For example, the Christ hymn in Philippians says that “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”⁷⁶ This is an allusion to a verse from Isaiah (cited elsewhere by Paul⁷⁷), which in the Septuagint (LXX) reads: “to me every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess to God.”⁷⁸ Thus, the words that refer to God in Isaiah refer in Philippians to Jesus. Jesus is also given a name “above every name,”⁷⁹ which is the same name as the God of Israel: *Lord*.⁸⁰ Moreover, the Isaiah passage emphasizes monotheism: “For I am God, and there is no other.”⁸¹ With this allusion, therefore, Paul can affirm the divinity of Jesus while also still affirming monotheism, an important teaching in the polytheistic culture of Philippi. There are implications here for Paul’s theology (as will be discussed in the next section).

Regarding Paul’s Jewish background, mention also needs to be made of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Although Paul identifies himself as a Pharisee,⁸² the parallels between his letters and the texts at Qumran suggest broader influences on his theology.⁸³ For example, the discussion in Galatians of “works of the law” in a context involving the reckoning of righteousness and the Deuteronomic blessings and curses⁸⁴ finds remarkable parallels (though not direct dependence) in the set of Qumran manuscripts called 4QMMT

his thought further in his *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel’s Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

75 Stephen Fowl, “The Use of Scripture in Philippians,” in *Paul and Scripture: Extending the Conversation*, 163–184.

76 Phil. 2:10–11.

77 Rom. 14:11.

78 Isa. 45:23 LXX (my translation).

79 Phil. 2:9.

80 The divine name YHWH appears in the following two verses (Isa. 45:24–25). The Septuagint translates the divine name as Lord (*kyrios* Isa. 45:25, LXX).

81 Isa. 45:22.

82 Phil. 3:5.

83 Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, eds. Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1998–1999), 2:599–621. More recently, Karl P. Donfried, “Paul the Jew and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Context: Integrating the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Study of Ancient Text, Languages, and Cultures*, eds. Armin Lange, Emanuel Tov, and Matthias Weigold, 2 vols., Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum* 140 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 2:721–733. See also the recent collection of fifteen essays in Jean-Sébastien Rey, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Pauline Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

84 Gal. 2:16; 3:2, 5–6, 10–14.

("Some Works of the Law").⁸⁵ Also exhibiting parallels to the sectarian texts are Paul's methods of biblical interpretation, his use of terms such as "mystery" and "covenant," and cultic metaphors involving the temple and priesthood. Indeed, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is one factor that has contributed to a renewed study of the ways in which Paul explains the work of Christ, his own mission, and the consequent situation of Christians using cultic metaphors related to the Jewish temple, sacrifice, and priesthood,⁸⁶ as well as Jewish festivals such as Passover.⁸⁷

Greek

The Greek language and Hellenistic culture were dominant in the world Paul inhabited and traveled. Two aspects of this culture will be addressed here.

The first is Greek philosophy. Paul frequently uses concepts commonly found in Stoic philosophy and integrates them into his teaching, modifying them as necessary in light of the Gospel of Christ. Examples include his discussion of believers forming one body in Christ and his ethical teaching on subjects like the natural law, virtue, and the concept of self-sufficiency.⁸⁸ Recently, a Stoic influence regarding a "material spirit" has also been suggested for Paul's understanding of how the Spirit empowers Christians for ethical living,⁸⁹ but this view has rightly been met with skepticism.⁹⁰

85 James D. G. Dunn and James H. Charlesworth, "Qumran's *Some Works of Torah* (4Q394–399 [4QMMT]) and Paul's Galatians," in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 187–201. See also N. T. Wright, "4QMMT and Paul: Justification, 'Works' and Eschatology," in *Pauline Perspectives*, 332–355.

86 For example, temple: 1 Cor. 3:16–17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; sacrifice: Rom. 12:1; 15:16; Phil. 2:17; 4:18; priesthood: Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 9:13. See Nijay K. Gupta, *Worship that Makes Sense to Paul: A New Approach to the Theology and Ethics of Paul's Cultic Metaphors* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), especially 213–221, 223, for his conclusions and a helpful chart.

87 1 Cor. 5:7. For example, see the article in this issue of *Letter & Spirit* by Christopher M. Ciccarino.

88 For example, Rom. 2:14–15; 12:4–5; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Phil. 4:8, 11. See Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000); Michelle V. Lee, *Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 137 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Runar M. Thorsteinsson, "Stoicism as a Key to Pauline Ethics in Romans," in *Stoicism in Early Christianity*, eds. Tuomas Rasimus, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, and Ismo Dunderberg (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 15–38.

89 Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

90 See the critique of Engberg-Pedersen's work in Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 2:1386–1406. For an alternative proposal that emphasizes the Spirit's transforming effect through the new relationships a believer has with God, Christ, and the community, see Volker Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul: Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2:283 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

The second and more pervasive aspect, since Paul is writing in Greek, is his use of Greek rhetorical techniques and figures for the purpose of communicating more effectively with his audience. Studying Paul's rhetoric is important for understanding his thesis statements and the arguments he uses to demonstrate them, such as examples and scriptural proofs.⁹¹ By failing to understand Paul's arguments, one risks misunderstanding his theology.⁹² Paul's use of rhetorical figures is also closely associated with his theology. One thinks, for example, of the different metaphors used to describe the Church (see below). Another example is his use of paradox (often together with hyperbole) as he stretches the limits of human language to convey how God's ways go beyond the ways of human beings. For example, Paul contrasts "the wisdom of the world" with the "folly" of "the cross," in which God "made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Similarly, Christ, "though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich."⁹³ With such paradoxes, Paul finds apt expression for the unfathomable mysteries of the incarnation and the redemption.

Roman

Recent scholarship has also paid more attention to the political context of the Roman Empire as background to the study of Paul. Paul defends his rights as a Roman citizen⁹⁴ and seems to defend Roman authority,⁹⁵ yet there is an implicit anti-imperial polemic in several of his letters.⁹⁶ For example, since Philippi was a Roman colony where the cult of the emperor was practiced, Paul's statements to the Philippians describing Jesus with titles typically applied to the emperor (though drawn from the Scriptures) carry a political message: Jesus is Lord and Savior, not Caesar.⁹⁷ Another example of such confrontation is the opening of Romans—his letter to the Christians *in Rome*—where other titles and terms used in relation to the emperor, like "Son

91 For an overview, see Jean-Noël Aletti, "Rhetoric in the Letters of Paul," in *Blackwell Companion to Paul*, 232–247. See also the collection of essays in J. Paul Sampley and Peter Lampe, eds., *Paul and Rhetoric* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010).

92 See the discussion above regarding Campbell's misunderstanding of the argument in Romans 1:18–3:20, which leads to his misunderstanding of justification by faith.

93 1 Cor. 1:18–21; 2 Cor. 5:21; 8:9.

94 Acts 16:37–38; 22:25–29.

95 Rom. 13:1–7.

96 See chap. 12, "The Lion and the Eagle: Paul in Caesar's Empire," in Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1271–1319, where Wright further develops the treatment of the topic in his earlier essays. He also cautions against one-sided readings of Paul (which he detects, for example, in the works of Horsley) that tend to set Paul's "politics" against his theology.

97 Phil. 2:6–11; 3:20–21.

of God” and “gospel,” are used to describe Jesus, whose dominion extends to “all the nations” and who is “Christ” (that is, Messiah-king) and “Lord.”⁹⁸ Not all scholars are convinced, however, that the Roman Empire is of great significance for Paul.⁹⁹ Since the topic is relatively new in scholarship, it is an interesting area for further exploration, remembering of course that the “revolution” against Rome that Paul was advocating was not the same as that of his contemporaries, the Jewish zealots in Jerusalem!

Pauline Theology

The general works on Paul’s theology that have been published in recent years reflect the debates about perspectives old¹⁰⁰ and new.¹⁰¹ A common discussion in such works is whether there is an organizing center for Paul’s theology. Those in the tradition of the “Lutheran” Paul, such as Bultmann and Käsemann, have identified this center as justification by faith. Other suggestions have included participation in Christ (see below) and the theology of the cross.¹⁰² Moreover, a recent textbook on Pauline theology by Frank Matera is organized around the theme of God’s saving grace.¹⁰³ Some individual topics of Paul’s theology that have received significant attention in recent years are considered here.

Justification

In the traditional Lutheran view, justification is forensic, extrinsic, or imputed: one is declared righteous, not made righteous. One who is justified remains a sinner (*simul iustus et peccator*), as the snow of righteousness has covered

98 Rom. 1:1–7.

99 For example, John M. G. Barclay, *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 275 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 363–387. Wright responds to Barclay’s views, pointing out areas of agreement and disagreement, in *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1307–1319.

100 Thomas Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001).

101 James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

102 For example, see Jean Zumstein, “La croix comme principe de constitution de la théologie paulinienne” [“The Cross as Constituting Principle of Pauline Theology”], in *Paul, une théologie en construction [Paul: A Theology under Construction]*, eds. Andreas Dettwiler, Jean-Daniel Kaestli, and Daniel Marguerat (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2004), 297–318. See also the essays by Zumstein and others in Andreas Dettwiler and Jean Zumstein, eds., *Kreuzestheologie im Neuen Testament [Theology of the Cross in the New Testament]*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 151 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002). For a recent discussion in English of the work of Zumstein and others, see the chapter, “The Folly of the Cross,” in Alexander J. M. Wedderburn, *The Death of Jesus: Some Reflections on Jesus-Traditions and Paul*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 299 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 129–148.

103 Frank J. Matera, *God’s Saving Grace: A Pauline Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012).

over the dung heap of one's sins. In the sixteenth century, such a view led to a Catholic response, emphasizing the transformative effect of justification: one is not only declared righteous, but also made righteous. However, as seen above, recent challenges to the Lutheran view on justification have come from different quarters, namely, proponents of the new perspective and beyond.¹⁰⁴ Scholars taking an old perspective have in turn responded, often in short works intended for a wide audience.¹⁰⁵

While short works are always useful for providing an overview of scholars' positions, it is essential to go back to Paul himself and to consider the exegesis of the passages related to justification. Fulfilling this need is a recent work in English by the French Jesuit Jean-Noël Aletti.¹⁰⁶ For example, recalling that the verb *dikaioō* belongs to the class of verbs ending in *-ōō*, which in general are factitive or causative and not merely declarative, Aletti confirms such a meaning in Paul's use of *dikaioō* in Galatians and Romans.¹⁰⁷ In Philippians, Paul also indicates that justification is not merely extrinsic, but something belonging to the believer and, hence, transformative. Indeed, the believer is conformed to Christ.¹⁰⁸ The key text is Philippians 3:9, which, however, needs to be translated and understood properly: Paul has *as his own* (since it was given to him) the righteousness that comes from God through faith in Christ.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, regarding the question of the center of Paul's theology, Aletti prefers to say that justification is a *fundamental* part of Paul's theology in that it is a precondition that renders the rest of his theology (for example, about Christ's universal mediation) applicable to all people.¹¹⁰

104 For example, see the dialogue between old and new perspectives between John Piper and N. T. Wright. In response to the covenantal understanding of justification found in Wright's earlier works, John Piper wrote *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007). Responding to Piper, Wright wrote *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009). More recently, see the treatment of justification in Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 2:925–1032.

105 For example, see Stephen Westerholm (*Justification Reconsidered: Rethinking a Pauline Theme* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013]), who responds in individual chapters to the views of Sanders, Dunn, Wright, and others. See also Thomas Schreiner, *Faith Alone: The Doctrine of Justification* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015).

106 Jean-Noël Aletti, *Justification by Faith in the Letters of Saint Paul: Keys to Interpretation*, trans. Peggy Manning Meyer, *Analecta Biblica Studia* 5 (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2015). Also included is a discussion of justification in James in relation to Paul (189–201).

107 Rom. 5:1, 9; Gal. 2:17. See Aletti, *Justification by Faith*, 19–27, 54–55. Also demonstrating from Paul's letters that the language of justification in Paul is not merely forensic but transformative is Thomas D. Stegman, "Paul's Use of *Dikaio-* Terminology: Moving beyond N. T. Wright's Forensic Interpretation," *Theological Studies* 72 (2011): 496–524.

108 Phil. 3:10.

109 Aletti, *Justification by Faith*, 182–188.

110 Aletti, *Justification by Faith*, 209–210.

Participation in Christ

A hundred years ago, Albert Schweitzer emphasized participation, or “being-in-Christ,” as the center of Paul’s theology, relegating justification to a secondary place.¹¹¹ The work of Sanders brought renewed attention to the theme of participation.¹¹² In recent years, Michael Gorman has developed this line of thought, at the same time stressing that justification and participation are complementary. Gorman builds a bridge between justification and participation by offering a “thick” understanding of justification: the “judicial image” of justification “must be understood within a wider covenantal, relational, participatory, and transformative framework.”¹¹³ Moreover, he reaches back in history and across ecumenical lines by taking up the patristic term *theosis* (divinization, deification) to describe Paul’s understanding of salvation in Christ as transformative participation in the life of God.¹¹⁴ Gorman’s work has led to further study of *theosis* in Paul in concert with patristic interpreters, such as Irenaeus and Cyril of Alexandria.¹¹⁵ For example, the insights of Cyril and of modern exegesis regarding the Christ-hymn in Philippians are similar: Christ’s self-emptying followed by glorification becomes the model for the Christian, who is conformed to Christ’s death and resurrection.¹¹⁶

Divine Grace and Human Agency

The thorny issue of the role of works in salvation has already been raised in the discussion above regarding the new perspective. The legacy of Luther’s either-or approach is that scholars maintaining an old perspective on Paul are wary that any role given to human works or merit takes away from God’s grace. Followers of this “competitive” model hold that Paul was opposing Jewish “synergism” or cooperation between God and human beings and

111 Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. William Montgomery (London: A. & C. Black, 1931), 225.

112 Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 434–442, 456, 502–508.

113 Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul’s Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 55, 103. In an earlier book—*Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001)—Gorman emphasizes the christological aspect of participation as conformity to Christ crucified.

114 Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 161–162. A third monograph completes his trilogy on Paul by developing the theme of mission. Christians not only believe the gospel but also become the gospel, experiencing transformative participation (*theosis*) in God’s life and mission (*Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015]).

115 Ben C. Blackwell, *Christosis: Pauline Soteriology in Light of Deification in Irenaeus and Cyril of Alexandria* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

116 Phil. 2:5–11; 3:10–11, 20–21. See Blackwell, *Christosis*, 85–88, 98, 109, 204–209.

teaching “monergism” instead.¹¹⁷ Recent work by John Barclay on grace may shed some light on this issue. He suggests the term “energism” to move the debate beyond the impasse: “Believers are energized by the Spirit to work.”¹¹⁸ Moreover, he emphasizes that, in contrast to modern understandings of grace as “pure’ gift . . . without strings attached,” Paul’s understanding of grace, as explained in Romans 6 for example, involves reciprocity: “grace carries demands.”¹¹⁹ The human response of obedience is made possible by grace but is also required by grace. This is what it means to be “under grace.”¹²⁰ Barclay also speaks of the construction of a Christian *habitus*—or set of perceptions, dispositions, and values—which is formed by living out in daily practice one’s new life in Christ.¹²¹ One of Barclay’s doctoral students has recently published his dissertation on this issue and argues that works are thus, for Paul, more than simply the evidence of salvation (the typical Reformed position).¹²² The ecumenical implications of such studies are evident.

Christology

The dominant view from the early part of the twentieth century was that of scholars, like Bousset, belonging to the history-of-religions school, who held that Paul derived his christological understanding under the influence of the pagan Hellenistic culture he was trying to evangelize. This view was coupled with an evolutionary model of development that assumed that high expressions of theology were “late” developments. However, the study above of the allusion to Isaiah 45 in the Christ-hymn in Philippians suggests, instead, the scriptural, and hence Jewish background, of Paul’s understanding of Christ, as well as his “early” belief in Christ’s divinity, understood within Jewish

117 See the discussion in Simon J. Gathercole, *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul’s Response in Romans 1–5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 14–15. For a collection of essays on this topic from different perspectives, see John M. G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole, eds., *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, Library of New Testament Studies 335 (London: T&T Clark, 2006).

118 John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 129. The term “energism” is derived from the verb *energeō*, which is used to describe how God is at work in the believer, empowering various deeds. See 1 Cor. 12:6, 11; Gal. 2:8; 5:6; Phil. 2:13.

119 Barclay, “Under Grace: the Christ-Gift and the Construction of a Christian *Habitus*,” in *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5–8*, ed. Beverly Roberts Gaventa (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013), 59–76, at 61.

120 Rom. 6:14–15.

121 Barclay, “Under Grace,” 69–75; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 493–519.

122 Kyle B. Wells, *Grace and Agency in Paul and Second Temple Judaism: Interpreting the Transformation of the Heart*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 157 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 306. Interacting with the unpublished version of Wells’s work and especially comparing Paul and Qumran on divine and human agency, but from the old perspective, is Preston M. Sprinkle, *Paul and Judaism Revisited: A Study of Divine and Human Agency in Salvation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013).

monotheism. Indeed, since the 1970s, the view of scholars like Bousset has largely given way to an appreciation of Paul's christology in light of his Jewish background, thanks to the work of scholars such as Larry Hurtado, Richard Bauckham, and Gordon Fee.¹²³ Continuing this line is the recent study of Chris Tilling, who explores Paul's relational christology mainly in passages in 1 Corinthians 8–10, as well as texts such as the Christ-hymn in Philippians. Paul witnesses to an early, divine christology in that he describes the relationship between believers and Jesus using the kind of language Jewish sources of the time used to describe the relationship between Israel and YHWH.¹²⁴

Ecclesiology

Much recent work in Pauline ecclesiology focuses on the identity of the new community of believers in Christ—the Church—in relation to the communities of origin, namely, Israel and the nations.¹²⁵ In this regard, in Romans 9:24, Paul explains that the members of this new community (“us”) are drawn from the Jews, but also from the Gentiles. In his letters, Paul uses various metaphors to describe this community, for example, God's field and building, the temple of God, the body of Christ, and the people of God.¹²⁶ This last-named metaphor—the people of God—has at times been proposed as Paul's fundamental ecclesiological metaphor,¹²⁷ but as Aletti explains, this view needs adjustment. For example, following Romans 9:24, Paul applies the

123 For example, see Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Others Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2008; repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007).

124 Chris Tilling, *Paul's Divine Christology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012; repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), especially 8, 73, 76, 90–104, 255. For example, in 1 Cor. 8:4, 6, Paul gives a christological reading of the first part of the *Shema* prayer (Deut. 6:4). Also studying this passage of 1 Cor., as well as the Philippians hymn, but with a view to understanding Jesus in relation to God and the trinitarian implications, is Wesley Hill, *Paul and the Trinity: Persons, Relations, and the Pauline Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).

125 For this section, see Pablo T. Gadenz, *Called from the Jews and from the Gentiles, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2:267* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), especially 99, 107–115, 225, 302, 327.

126 1 Cor. 3:9, 16–17; 12:12–27; 2 Cor. 6:16; Rom. 9:25. See Jean-Noël Aletti, “The Status of the Church in the Proto-Pauline Letters: Reflections on Some Paradoxes,” in *New Approaches*, 261–287, at 262.

127 Wolfgang Kraus, *Das Volk Gottes: Zur Grundlegung der Ekklesiologie bei Paulus* [*The People of God: On the Foundation of Ecclesiology in Paul*], *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 85* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996). In this regard, note also that Matera (*God's Saving Grace*, 127) discusses “The People of God” as the first topic in his chapter on Paul's ecclesiology.

word “people” to the new community in Christ as he cites Hosea 2:23 and 1:10¹²⁸ in Romans 9:25–26. The emphasis in these verses, however, is not on the word “people” but rather its opposite, “not my people,” which is the common phrase linking together the two Hosea verses cited by Paul. The point of arrival in Paul’s use of Hosea is the description of those who were “not my people” as “sons of the living God.”¹²⁹ Paul thus moves to a family metaphor that he has already developed at length in Romans 8: Christians as children of God. One reason for this preference of family language to describe the new community is that it better describes the central role of Christ: Christians are *filii in Filio*—sons and daughters in the Son.¹³⁰ Another reason is that Paul continues to use the word “people” for the people of Israel¹³¹ because it still has a role in God’s plan of salvation.¹³²

To return to the phrase “not my people,” these prophecies of Hosea were originally addressed to Israelites of the northern kingdom. However, Paul applies them (in view of Rom. 9:24) to Gentiles. As a recent study by David Starling explains, Paul understands the plight of the Gentiles to be like that of the northern Israelites: because of their disobedience they effectively became “not my people,”¹³³ and Gentiles had always been “not my people.”¹³⁴ From the common plight comes a common solution in Christ, which also suggests why, for Paul, the full restoration of Israel (involving the reunification of northern and southern tribes) is wrapped up with the incoming of the Gentiles.¹³⁵

128 Hos. 2:25 and 2:1, according to the Hebrew numbering.

129 Something similar occurs in 2 Cor. 6:16–18, where the chain of scriptural citations moves from “people” and ends with a focus on God’s “sons and daughters.”

130 Aletti, “Status of the Church,” 282–286. See also Aletti, *Essai sur l’ecclésiologie des lettres de saint Paul* [Essay on the Ecclesiology of the Letters of Saint Paul], Études bibliques 60 (Paris: Gabalda, 2009), especially 75–109.

131 Rom. 11:1–2; 15:10.

132 Lionel J. Windsor, *Paul and the Vocation of Israel: How Paul’s Jewish Identity Informs His Apostolic Ministry, with Special Reference to Romans*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 205 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), especially 198–247.

133 Although, as Paul goes on to explain in Rom. 9:27–29, the existence of a remnant in Israel shows that God’s word in his promises to Israel has not failed (Rom. 9:6).

134 See (and note the title!) David I. Starling, *Not My People: Gentiles as Exiles in Pauline Hermeneutics*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 184 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), especially 162–164. Besides Rom. 9:25–26, Starling considers three other passages where Paul similarly applies to Gentiles scriptural texts originally directed toward Israel: Gal. 4:27, 2 Cor. 6:14–7:1, and Eph. 2:17.

135 See Rom. 11:25–26. Along these lines, see the interesting article of Jason A. Staples, “What Do the Gentiles Have to Do with ‘All Israel’? A Fresh Look at Romans 11:25–27,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130 (2011): 371–390. Staples notes that “the transgression of the northern kingdom caused them to be intermingled among the nations, providing for the incorporation of the Gentiles when Israel is restored through the new covenant” (384). He therefore suggests that in Rom. 11:25–26, “Paul is simultaneously proclaiming

Conclusion

“And what more shall I say? For time [and space] would fail me to tell”¹³⁶ of the many other scholars who have contributed to Pauline studies in recent years. And yet there still remains “fruitful labor”¹³⁷ to be done. Indeed, of “making many books there is no end,” bringing “weariness of the flesh” through “much study”¹³⁸ to those who write them, but also to those who read them! This essay has tried to make that task a little easier for students of Paul. Hopefully, it has also shown that “Paul matters”¹³⁹ for the life of the Church and the life of Christians. For the gift of Paul, therefore, one can express gratitude. “How can one not admire a man like this? How can one not thank the Lord for having given an Apostle of this stature?”¹⁴⁰

the salvation of the Gentiles and the return of the northern kingdom—as the same event” (388).

136 Heb. 11:32.

137 Phil. 1:22.

138 Eccles. 12:12.

139 Michael F. Bird, “Introduction,” in *Four Views of the Apostle Paul*, 9–17, at 16.

140 Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus, the Apostles, and the Early Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 112.