

The Theology of Paul's Letters (Part 1)

Perseverance in Persecution, the Church and the World, and The Sanctity of the Church

1. Introduction
 - a. Review
 - b. The plan for considering Paul's theology synthetically
 - i. Five recurring themes:
 - ii. Three fundamental convictions out of which Paul's response to these five problems arises:
2. Perseverance in the Midst of Persecution
 - a. From the very first, Christians in the Roman empire were persecuted because of the threat that their religious convictions were thought to bring to social stability.
 - b. Paul's Response to the Problem of Perseverance in the Face of Persecution (1 Thess. 1:1-10)
 - i. Identity formation—
 - ii. The coming of the Day of the Lord
 - iii. Imitation of the Examples of Those Who Have Suffered and Remained Faithful
3. The Witness of the Church to the Unbelieving World
 - a. Paul was also interested in the witness of the church to the unbelieving world.
 - b. The theme is most prominent in the Pastoral Letters
 - i. 1 Timothy
 - ii. Titus 2:1-10
 - c. Does the prominence of the theme in the Pastorals mean that the Pastorals come from a post-Pauline era of concern with *christliche Bürgerlichkeit*?
4. The Sanctity of the Church
 - a. The vocation of God's ancient people Israel
 - b. Paul believed that this time of restoration had come with the coming of Christ
 - c. The church should separate itself from the nations by means of a law.
 1. Not the law of Moses
 2. Nevertheless, including
 - a. The ten commandments
 - b. The love commandment—
 3. This is probably what Paul would call "the law of Christ"
 - ii. Differences between "the law of Moses" and "the law of Christ"

The Theology of Paul's Letters (Part 2)

The Unity of the Church, the Preservation of the Church From Theological Error, and Paul's Basic Theological Convictions

1. The Unity of the Church
 - a. The extent of the problem
 - i. Disunity in Corinth-
 - ii. Disunity in Galatia-
 - iii. Disunity in Philippi-
 - iv. Disunity in Romans-
 - b. The theology of Paul's solution
 - i. The gift-character of salvation
 - ii. The church's responsibility to "edify" others
2. The Preservation of the Church from Theological Error
 - a. The Nature of the Final Day
 - i. The Resurrection
 - ii. The Imminence of the End
 - b. The Criterion for Acquittal in God's Court
 - i. Galatians, Philippians, and Romans focus on the criterion for entry into the eschatologically restored people of God.
 - ii. What does Paul's justification language mean?
 - iii. How does "justification by faith in Christ's death and through God's grace" answer the problem in Galatia and the position of the unbelieving Jewish interlocutor in Romans?
 - c. The Relationship between the Visible and Invisible Worlds
3. The Basic Structure of Paul's Theology
 - a. The centrality of Christ in the restoration of creation
 - b. The comprehensiveness and seriousness of human sin.
 - c. The lavish response of God's grace

The following resources were helpful to me in the preparation of my lectures on Paul's theology:

- Barclay, John M. G. *Obedying the Truth: Paul's Ethics in Galatians*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991.
- Carson, D. A., et al. *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, 2 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001, 2004.
- Plevnik, Joseph. *Paul and the Parousia: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997.
- Westerholm, Stephen. *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Wilken, Robert L. *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983

