THE BOOKENDS OF THE PAULINE CORPUS

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Abstract: *Romans at the head of the Pauline corpus and the Pastoral Epistles at or near the end act as bookends and provide a missional frame around the epistolary collection. Though the order of the letters appears to be due to the mechanical principle of decreasing length (Romans is the longest letter) and the (somewhat) arbitrary division made between letters to churches and to individuals, the position of Romans and the Pastoral Epistles at either end of the collection of Paul's letters makes sense, given the general and comprehensive character of Romans and the probable setting of the Pastoral Epistles late in Paul's missionary career as he contemplates his removal from the scene. Influenced by Romans, the reader of the letters that follow is alerted to when and how Paul sets his doctrinal and ethical instructions in a missional frame. Similarly, the Pastoral Epistles suggest a missional reading of the earlier letters. The letter to the Philippians is used as a test case for the influence that Romans and the Pastorals bring to bear on the reading of the intervening letters.*

Key words: *Pauline corpus, canon, mission, Romans, Pastoral Epistles, Philippians*

The canonical presentation of the letters of Paul as a collection invites readers to compare the individual letters, such that the primary context of Philippians, for example, is not the original situation at Philippi (in so far as it can be recovered) but the fact that it now comes within a collection of thirteen letters by Paul.[1] Though the contents of Paul's letters were originally evoked by contemporary and contingent factors in the life of particular churches (e.g., the problem of disunity in the church at Philippi, including the dispute between Euodia and Syntyche [Phil 4:2–3]),[2] their gathering into an epistolary corpus means that they are no longer being viewed as *occasional* letters, and the positioning of the individual letters within the canonical collection (*Sitz im Kanon*) is an important index of their meaning. As well, the position of each letter in a corpus provides a counter to overdependence upon the postulated historical background, the reconstruction of which is in large measure based upon an attempt to read between the lines of the letter itself with the

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[1] In the case of Philippi, several features of Acts 16 emphasize the Romanness of the Roman colony (e.g., Acts 16:12, 21, 38) and the obsession in Philippi with rank and social status; see Joseph H. Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi: Carmen Christi as* Cursus Pudorum, SNTSMS 132 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 110–28; Hellerman, "Vindicating God's Servants in Philippi and in Philippians: The Influence of Paul's Ministry in Philippi upon the Composition of Philippians 2:6–11," *BBR* 20.1 (2010): 85–102.

[2] E.g., Davorin Peterlin, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians in the Light of Disunity in the Church*, NovTSup 79 (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

attendant dangers of mirror reading.[3] The aim of this study is not to set historical setting against canonical context, but to see what guidance is provided by the structure of the canon for the reader who seeks meaning in a text whose original historical situation is only partially known.[4] In this article, my focus is the way in which the letter to the Romans at the head and Pastoral Epistles at the end (except for Philemon) bracket the Pauline corpus,[5] and I will seek to explore how these features shape the reading and use of Paul's letters.

I. THE CHURCHES/INDIVIDUALS DIVISION

How is it that Romans is at the head of the Pauline corpus and the Pastorals at or near the end? The study of manuscripts before the advent of printing indicates fluidity in the order of the Pauline letters,[6] but despite variations, Romans is almost always in first position and the letters are ordered according to decreasing size.[7] This scheme is exemplified by the oldest manuscript of Paul's letters (ca. AD 200), the single-quire codex 𝔓[46], except that Romans is followed by Hebrews, Ephesians precedes Galatians, and the manuscript breaks off at 1 Thessalonians 5:28 (folio 97 verso),[8] with seven leaves missing at the end, which perhaps contained 2 Thessalonians and Philemon.[9] In the canonical sequence found in modern Bibles, the letters are ranked according their (decreasing) length,[10] and according to recipient, with letters to the same church (e.g., 1, 2 Corinthians) or individual (1, 2

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[3] On the pitfalls of mirror reading, see John M. G. Barclay, "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case," *JSNT* 31 (1987): 73–93.

[4] Cf. Lockett, who argues that considerations of author, genre, and audience are necessary but not sufficient to fully interpret a biblical book; it also needs to be read in the context of "its near canonical neighbors." Darian Lockett, "'Necessary but Not Sufficient': The Role of History in the Interpretation of James as Christian Scripture," in *Explorations in Interdisciplinary Reading: Theological, Exegetical, and Reception-Historical Perspectives*, ed. Robbie F. Castleman, Darian R. Lockett, and Stephen O. Presley (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2017), 69–90, esp. 71.

[5] I do not treat Philemon as the closing bookend due to the extreme brevity of this letter. It belongs historically with the Letter to the Colossians (see below) but can be viewed as an addendum to the Pastoral Epistles as another letter of instruction to a "fellow worker" (v. 1).

[6] Jack Finegan, "The Original Form of the Pauline Collection," *HTR* 49 (1956): 85–103, esp. 88–90; David Trobisch, *Die Entstehung der Paulusbriefsammlung: Studien zu den Anfängen christlicher Publizistik*, NTOA 10 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1989), 14–61; Eugene H. Lovering, "The Collection, Redaction, and Early Circulation of the Corpus Paulinum" (PhD diss., Southern Methodist University, 1988), 259–62 (Table 2).

[7] See David Trobisch, *Paul's Letter Collection: Tracing the Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 11–22.

[8] See Frederic G. Kenyon, *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri: Descriptions and Texts of Twelve Manuscripts on Papyrus of the Greek Bible; Fasciculus III Supplement: Pauline Epistles* (London: Emery Walker, 1936); Henry A. Sanders, *A Third-Century Papyrus Codex of the Epistles of Paul*, University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series 38 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1935).

[9] For a discussion of the different possibilities, see James R. Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri*, NT Tools, Studies and Documents 36 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 202–4.

[10] The order Ephesians–Galatians in 𝔓[46] is perhaps due to the differing systems of stichometry (counting the number of lines in a text) in use in antiquity, for the two letters are closely similar in length; see Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills*, Good News Studies 41 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 123–24.

Timothy) placed together.[11] The Pauline order is set out in two major categories: letters to churches then letters to individuals (and the churches behind them),[12] and the result is that Colossians is separated from Philemon, whose close relation is signaled by the similar names mentioned in these letters (e.g., Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras).[13] In antiquity there were various ways a compiler of a collection of literary works (including letters) might organize a collection (e.g., chronological, alphabetical, thematic),[14] and the ranking of the letters of Paul according to their decreasing length may be influenced by the ordering of some OT groupings (e.g., the order of the prophets as preserved in b. Baba Bathra 14b).[15]

The same rationale lies behind the next series of four letters addressed to individuals, for 1 Timothy is in premier position as the longest letter, and Philemon, the shortest, is placed at the end. Features such as the general ecclesial instructions given in 1 Timothy and Titus (e.g., 1 Tim 3:14–15; 4:11; Titus 2:1) for Timothy and Titus as apostolic delegates to pass on to others, the character of 2 Timothy as a "testament" of Paul, and the fact that others besides Philemon are addressed in the letter to him (Phlm 1–2), make the wider application of the four letters obvious, so that the division between letters to churches and individuals is at least to some extent schematic,[16] though not all would agree that the distinction is artificial.[17] In this regard, comparison may be made to the seven letters of Ignatius (To the Ephesians, To the Magnesians, To the Trallians, To the Romans, To the Philadelphians, To the Smyrnaeans, To Polycarp), whose pattern of arrangement is the same as the

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[11] Robert W. Wall, "Romans 1.1–15: An Introduction to the Pauline Corpus of the New Testament," in Robert W. Wall and Eugene E. Lemcio, *The New Testament as Canon: A Reader in Canonical Criticism*, JSNTSup 76 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 144.

[12] See Jerome D. Quinn, "P46—The Pauline Canon?," *CBQ* 36.3 (1974): 379–85. The Muratorian Fragment differentiates between Paul's letters to seven churches and the letters he wrote "out of affection and love one to Philemon, one to Titus and two to Timothy" (lines 59–60; translation provided in Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1987], 305–7).

[13] See H. J. Frede, "Die Ordnung der Paulusbriefe und der Platz des Kolosserbriefs im Corpus Paulinum," in Frede, ed., *Epistula ad Colossenses*, Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel 24/2 fascicule 4 (Freiburg: Herder, 1969): 292, 294. Colossians is found between Ephesians and Philippians in 6th-century Codex Claromontanus (D 06), but the stichometric listing of biblical books (canon) on page 468 of the codex places Colossians between the Pastoral Epistles and Philemon. For the canon, see F. W. Grosheide, ed., *Some Early Lists of the Books of the New Testament*, Textus Minores 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1948), 16–17. For a photograph of page 468, see https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84683111/f869.image.

[14] See Eric W. Scherbenske, *Canonizing Paul: Ancient Editorial Practice and the Corpus Paulinum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 46–55, where examples are given of each scheme.

[15] Roger T. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism* (London: SPCK, 1985), 162.

[16] The suggestion is that of Nils Alstrup Dahl, "The Particularity of the Pauline Epistles as a Problem in the Ancient Church," in *Neotestamentica et Patristica: Eine Freundesgabe, Herrn Professor Dr. Oscar Cullmann zu seinem 60. Geburtstag überreicht*, ed. W. C. van Unnik, VTSup 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 266. It is likely that Timothy, for example, would share the contents of the letters addressed to him with the church at Ephesus to provide support for his reforming efforts, backed as they were by the wisdom and authority of Paul.

[17] See Jeffrey T. Reed, "To Timothy or Not? A Discourse Analysis of 1 Timothy," in *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics: Open Questions in Current Research*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and D. A. Carson, JSNTSup 80 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 90–118.

common ordering of the Pauline corpus, namely letters to churches (six) followed by a letter to an individual (Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna).

Paul wrote letters to seven churches (Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians) just as there are letters to seven churches embedded in Revelation 2–3. The Muratorian Fragment explicitly relates Paul's seven letters to the seven letters in Revelation, saying: "The blessed apostle Paul himself, following the example of his predecessor John, writes by name to only seven churches … it is clearly recognized that there is one church spread throughout the whole extent of the earth, for John also in the Apocalypse, though he writes to seven churches, nevertheless speaks to all."[18] This was a patristic argument that Paul's letters were intended from the beginning for the *ecclesia catholica*,[19] an argument that needed to ignore, however, the inclusion of Hebrews in the Pauline corpus, which, however, is not addressed as such to a geographically defined church, through probably the destination is Rome (Heb 13:24). If Hebrews were to be included, the point can perhaps be salvaged by noting that there are 14 (7x2) Pauline letters in total,[20] and also, if the Roman church is the recipient, the number of churches addressed stays at seven. So too, what can be gleaned about Marcion's Pauline collection, indicates that it consisted of ten letters, with letters to the same destination (seven destinations in total) clumped together in the following order (according to Epiphanius): Galatians, 1–2 Corinthians, Romans, 1–2 Thessalonians, Laodiceans (= Ephesians), Colossians-Philemon, and Philippians.[21] The numerology involving the number seven and the act of the bringing together of Paul's letters to form a *Corpus Paulinum* encourage a hermeneutic in which Paul's instructions and advice on local issues (whether to a church or individual) are now departicularized and deemed relevant and applicable to God's people in all times and in every place. In this way, their wider application is achieved without recourse to the redaction of the letters to increase their non-specificity (e.g., by excising Romans 16).[22] Their position side-by-side in a codex makes them *all* circular letters.[23]

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[18] Muratorian Fragment, lines 48–50, 57–59 (trans. Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 307).

[19] Krister Stendahl, "The Apocalypse of John and the Epistles of Paul in the Muratorian Fragment," in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Otto A. Piper*, ed. William Klassen and Graydon F. Snyder (London: SCM, 1962), 239–45; Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 59–62.

[20] A point made by J. K. Elliott, "Manuscripts, the Codex and the Canon," *JSNT* 63 (1996): 109. Festal Letter 39 of Athanasius (AD 367) notes that the letters of Paul, with Hebrews placed after the two letters to the Thessalonians, number fourteen. Alexander Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament* (London: Duckworth, 1912), 214–15. Eusebius's tally of fourteen Pauline Epistles must include Hebrews (*Hist. eccl.* 3.3.4–5).

[21] David C. Parker, *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and Their Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 251; cf. John Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament: An Essay in the Early History of the Canon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), 44–45; C. Leslie Mitton, *The Formation of the Pauline Corpus of Letters* (London: Epworth, 1955), 63–65.

[22] On this issue, see Harry Gamble Jr., *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans: A Study in Textual and Literary History*, Studies and Documents 42 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 33–35. Note the evidence of $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ in which the doxology is not at the end of chapter 16 but between 15:33 and 16:1, reflecting its exemplar, but this does not necessarily prove there was a form of Romans without chapter 16; see Edgar Battad Ebojo, "A Scribe and His Manuscript: An Investigation into the Scribal Habits of Papyrus

This adaptation does not need to be viewed as violating how Paul intended his letters to be used.[24] Paul's letter to the *Ephesians* may have been a circular letter, and no named individuals are greeted in the letter.[25] So also, there is a level of coherence in Paul's thinking as he addresses diverse church situations, such that churches would benefit from reading apostolic letters not addressed to them.[26]

II. ROMANS AT THE HEAD OF THE CORPUS

Though the position of Romans at the head of the Pauline corpus is due to the physical principle of length (it is the longest epistle), it is also the most treatise-like of Paul's letters, and so it appropriately functions as a theological introduction to the Pauline corpus. In his final book, Brevard Childs explored the significance of the premier position of Romans,[27] and he suggested that the rest of the corpus was to be read through the lens of the mature and comprehensive survey of Pauline teaching found in Romans.[28] Childs's view, in part, builds on Günther Bornkamm's famous discussion, "The Letter to the Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament."[29] According to Childs, "the placing of Romans as an introduction was not a tour de force, but was encouraged by the very nature of the letter itself."[30] The other part of his thesis is that Romans and the Pastorals act as bookends, with the Pastorals showing how the earlier letters are to be read as Scripture.[31] According to Childs, therefore, "the church already has a guide to its scripture, a guide built into the canon itself."[32] John Poirier finds fault with Childs for failing to mention that the Pauline corpus was ordered according to the decreasing length of the letters,[33]

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46 (P. Chester Beatty II – P. Mich. Inv. 6238)" (PhD diss., The University of Birmingham, 2014), 263–65.

[23] Cf. Scherbenske, *Canonizing Paul*, 53: "The codex allowed greater stability of ordering patterns and fostered a perception of univocality…. By enclosing multiple, disparate writings between two covers, the codex encouraged interpreting them as univocal."

[24] See David A. Smith, *The Epistles for All Christians: Epistolary Literature, Circulation, and* The Gospels for All Christians, BIS 186 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 37–42, who demonstrates that early Christian authors (Paul among them) expected their letters to circulate to multiple locations, indeed, a number of Paul's letters have multi-locale audiences explicitly in mind (see 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:2; Col 4:16).

[25] The phrase ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ("in Ephesus") of Eph 1:1 is absent from 𝔓46, Sinaiticus, and Vaticanus; see Ernest Best, "Ephesians i.1," in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black*, ed. Ernest Best and R. McL. Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 29–41; Smith, *The Epistles for All Christians*, 42–44.

[26] On how to coordinate coherence and contingency, see Douglas A. Campbell, *Framing Paul: An Epistolary Biography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 1–36.

[27] Brevard S. Childs, *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul: The Canonical Shaping of the Pauline Corpus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

[28] E.g., Childs, *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul*, 7, 66–67, 104, 117.

[29] Günther Bornkamm, "The Letter to the Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament," in *The Romans Debate*, ed. Karl P. Donfried, rev. ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 16–28.

[30] Childs, *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul*, 175.

[31] Childs, *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul*, 164–67.

[32] Leander E. Keck, "Faith Seeking Canonical Understanding: Childs's Guide to the Pauline Letters," in *The Bible as Christian Scripture: The Work of Brevard S. Childs*, ed. Christopher R. Seitz and Kent Harold Richards, SBL Biblical Scholarship in North America 25 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2013), 108.

[33] Childs does mention it in passing. Childs, *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul*, 5.

and Poirier sees this rationale for the ordering of the letters as ruling out any hermeneutical significance for Romans as the head of the corpus, seeing that its premier position is purely mechanical.[34] Poirier does not, however, deal with Childs's positive argument, namely the broad theological scope of Romans itself, that makes its foremost positioning appropriate, irrespective of the issue of whether the compilers *intended* the prominent place given to Romans to embody a hermeneutic.[35] The second part of Childs's thesis—the role of the Pastoral Epistles in relation to the Pauline corpus as a whole—is the focus of discussion in the next section of this article.

As the book of Acts ends with Paul in Rome, it is fitting that the letter to the Romans should immediately follow it (as in some Latin orders),[36] with Romans 1:8–15 and 15:22–29 discussing a possible visit to Rome. As well, Romans naturally follows Acts 28, wherein Paul quotes from Isaiah 6, for Romans explains the Jewish hardening predicted in the quotation of Acts 28:26–27 (cf. Rom 9–11). Romans also gives content to Paul's preaching of "the kingdom of God" (Acts 28:31; cf. Rom 1:3) and is, in effect, an answer to the false charges made against Paul in Acts 21:28, with Romans being an authentic summary of his teaching.[37] The teaching of this letter, which is the most theologically comprehensive of the Pauline letters, is designed to lay a platform for Roman support of his mission, and so it comes in the form of a "theological resume."[38] It does appear that this letter, in contrast to the ones that follow, is less influenced by the contingent factors and local problems that need to be addressed to assist the church to which it was sent.[39] The letter to the Romans is a *Missionsbrief*,[40] serving to introduce the message of Paul the missionary and, given the completion of his mission from Jerusalem to Illyricum (Rom 15:19), to promote a mission to Spain in the west (15:24, 28). His letter is written, at least in part, to enlist the help of the church in Rome, so that they might speed him on his way to Spain (15:22–29),[41] which suggests that its contents should be put under the heading of missional theology.

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[34] John C. Poirier, "The Order and Essence of Canon in Brevard Childs's Book on Paul," *BBR* 20.4 (2010): 505–9.

[35] *Pace* Poirier, "Order and Essence," 510.

[36] Samuel Berger*, Histoire de la Vulgate: Pendant les premiers siècles du moyen âge* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1976), 339–41.

[37] For details, see Gregory Goswell, "Reading Romans after the Book of Acts," *JETS* 62.2 (2019): 353–69.

[38] See Sam K. Williams, "The 'Righteousness of God' in Romans," *JBL* 99.2 (1980): 245–55 (with the quoted expression found on 254).

[39] This is an important aspect of Childs's argument; see *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul*, 139, 145, 147, 179.

[40] Robert W. Wall, "The Problem of the Multiple Letter Canon of the New Testament," in Wall and Lemcio, *The New Testament as Canon*, 181n40. Cf. Childs, *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul*, 75: "The Letter to the Romans with its prominent position as the introduction to the Pauline corpus sets forth the most comprehensive formulation of Paul's missionary message."

[41] Cf. Michael Prior, *Paul the Letter-Writer and the Second Letter to Timothy*, JSNTSS 23 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 130–35, esp. 131: "Paul is not presuming to address himself to the particular situation of the Church in Rome, but is, rather, dealing with the more general theological and missiological question of the world-wide significance of salvation in Jesus Christ, and the consequential ecclesiological question

Paul's extensive use of the OT in the argument of Romans (including some sixty quotations signalled by introductory formulae) appears to be triggered by reference to "the oracles of God" in 3:2. The substantial and explicit use of the OT is a feature of the next three Pauline letters as well (*Hauptbriefe*).[42] Romans, the two letters to the Corinthians, and Galatians contain all but a handful of his OT quotations. In other words, Paul's missional theology is firmly rooted in OT revelation. In Romans, Paul claims that "[God] promised [the gospel] beforehand through *the prophets* in the holy scriptures" (1:2), this being a way of referring to OT revelation as a whole in the Christian sense of pointing forward to the consummation of God's saving purposes for Israel and the world in Christ (cf. 16:26: "through the prophetic writings"). Later in Romans, the OT is subdivided in the follow-up claim that the revelation of God's righteousness as set out in Paul's gospel is supported by "the law and the prophets" (3:21), and this claim is proven by the use that Paul makes of Genesis 15:6 (quoted in Rom 4:3) and Habakkuk 2:4 (quoted in Rom 1:17). The same technique is used in Galatians, in which Paul's key OT passages are again Genesis 15:6 (Gal 3:6) and Habakkuk 2:4 (Gal 3:11). Viewed as representative of the teaching of the law (Pentateuch) and the prophets, namely of the OT as a whole, these two passages establish conclusively that justification has always been by faith.

Underlying Paul's teaching about the worldwide scope of salvation is the Abrahamic promise that he and his descendants "should inherit the world" (Rom 4:13; cf. 15:8–9),[43] with the later Davidic promise of rule over the nations as its vehicle, and Paul's law-free gospel of faith in Jesus will enable this to be fulfilled. Jesus's royal messianic status is fundamental to Paul's teaching and ministry. In fact, the theological presupposition behind Paul's mission is "the future hegemony of the Davidic messiah over the Gentile nations,"[44] as is made clear by his citation of Isaiah 11:10 (LXX) in Romans 15:12, which depicts the subjection of foreign nations to "the root of Jesse." It is significant that in verses near the beginning and end of the body of the letter to the Romans, Paul connects the messiahship of Jesus to his own mission to the Gentiles. Indeed, as pointed out by Christopher Whitsett, "Isaiah 11:10 is the note on which Paul concludes the entire argumentative body of Romans."[45] Citing Isaiah, Paul says of Christ, "he rises to rule the Gentiles" (Rom 15:12). The resurrection of Jesus shows that he has been elevated

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of the place of Jews and Gentiles within that mystery." Prior interprets 2 Timothy 4:17 ("that all the Gentiles [πάντα τὰ ἔθνη] might hear it") as an expression of Paul's confidence that he would be released and continue his world mission (cf. the only other uses of the key phrase in Rom 1:5; 16:26; Gal 3:8).

[42] See the listing provided by E. E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), 150–52 (Appendix 1A).

[43] N. T. Wright, "Paul's Western Missionary Project: Jerusalem, Rome, Spain in Historical and Theological Perspectives," in *The Last Years of Paul: Essays from the Tarragona Conference, June 2013*, ed. Armand Puig i Tàrrech, John M. G. Barclay, and Jörg Frey, WUNT 352 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 56.

[44] Matthew V. Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 366; cf. Wright, "Paul's Western Missionary Project," 57 (Wright mistakenly cites Isa 11:1).

[45] Christopher G. Whitsett, "Son of God, Seed of David: Paul's Messianic Exegesis in Romans 2:3–4," *JBL* 119.4 (2000): 671.

to the throne of David (1:4), and now through the gospel mission led by Paul, Jesus is extending his rightful messianic rule over the Gentiles, leading to "the obedience of faith" among the nations (1:5; 16:26; cf. 15:18: "to win obedience from the Gentiles"). How does Paul's teaching as summarized in Romans support the authenticity of his mission and its ultimate success among Jews and Gentiles?

The gospel preached by Paul first of all means a proclamation of coming judgment (1:18; 2:16), for the wrath of God hangs over humanity (1:18–3:20), both Jews and Gentiles (2:9–10: "the Jew first and also the Greek" [x2]). As noted by Jouette Bassler, the statement about divine impartiality rounds off the argument (2:11: "For God shows no partiality"), and 2:11 is a restatement and refinement of the thought in 2:6 ("For [God] will render to every man according to his works"),[46] with the section from 1:18 demonstrating that both Jew and Greek are subject to God's judgment and reward. According to Bassler, "the statement that God is impartial functions as a terse summary of the entire preceding unit,"[47] which does not explicitly mention Jews or Gentiles (as noted by Bassler) and so applies equally to both groups. Specifically, the impending judgment includes "those who are under the law" (3:19). Paul acknowledges the privileges of the Jews (2:17–20; 3:1–2), which are "much in every way" (3:2),[48] but the fact of sin means that the Jews are "not entirely" better off (3:9 [a better translation of οὐ πάντως than the RSV "not at all"]), for they, like the Gentiles, merit the judgment of God due to their sin. The Abrahamic promise, given in response to the universal problem of sin (Gen 12:1–3), answers the problem of both Jews and Gentiles. In line with this, the thesis statement in 1:16–17 refers "to the Jew first and also to the Greek," and "the righteousness of God" (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ read as a possessive or subjective genitive[49]) on display in Paul's gospel is best understood as God's faithfulness in keeping his promise to Abraham.[50]

Through the death of Jesus, God keeps his promise to Abraham by making people from all nations the sons of the one spiritual father (3:21–4:25); so the righteousness of God is his faithfulness to his promises to Abraham, promises that focus on the eschatological gathering of all the nations into the people of God. This occurs "apart from law" (χωρὶς νόμου) (3:21) and "through the faith of Jesus Christ" (interpreting πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive), that is, the faith of Christ that made him willing to die on the cross (3:22; cf. 3:25). By justifying Gentiles by faith and not by works of the law ("for all who believe"), God removes any barriers to the Gentiles' realization of the divine blessing and he keeps his promise to Abraham (cf. 15:8–9). In teaching this, Paul is not overthrowing the

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[46] Jouette M. Bassler, *Divine Impartiality: Paul and a Theological Axiom*, SBLDS 59 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 126. She makes reference to the chapter division in Vaticanus (122), noting that the codex regards 1:18–2:11 "as a single thought unit."

[47] Bassler, *Divine Impartiality*, 135.

[48] Here the only privilege mentioned is their possession of "the oracles of God" (3:2), but this theme will be elaborated and the list of privileges extended in 9:4–5.

[49] Just as "the wrath of God" (ὀργὴ θεοῦ, 1:18) is a possessive or subjective genitive (God's character expressed in action), referring to God's wrath against sinful humanity.

[50] Williams, "The 'Righteousness of God' in Romans," 265.

law (3:21b, 31), for, as depicted in the book of Genesis, Abraham is the model for both the uncircumcised believer and the circumcised believer (4:11–12).

Paul's heartfelt concern for his "brethren," his "kinsmen by race," is that they be saved (9:3; 10:1). Romans 9–11 is Paul's final vindication of God's faithfulness (9:6: "But it is not as though the word of God had failed"), thinking particularly of the Abrahamic promise.[51] Despite all their privileges (9:4–5), they are not enjoying the blessings described in chapter 8, whereas they should have been the first to receive them.[52] God has not rejected his people (11:1). Their stumbling does not mean that they (Israel) have fallen (11:11). There has been no change of intention on God's part, for God does not change his mind about his gifts and calling (11:29). All Israel will be redeemed and saved according to promise (11:26–27). Of this outcome, the present Jewish believing remnant (including Paul himself) is the guarantee (9:27; 11:1–5, 16). The salvation of the Gentiles and that of Israel are mysteriously intertwined. Israel has heard the word of the gospel (10:14–21), for the OT proclaims it in the prophetic writings, especially the Servant passages of Isaiah (10:15–16, quoting Isa 52:7 and 53:1). This prepares for the special role of Paul himself, the Servant,[53] who seeks to make Israel "jealous" by magnifying his ministry to the Gentiles (10:19; 11:11, 14).[54] Paul's Gentile mission in no way denies or undermines Jewish privileges but will be the means of winning over disobedient Israel (11:30–32). This mission dynamic fits the "two-fold vocation [of the Servant of Isaiah]: to bring Israel as a whole back to the Lord (Isa 49:5) and also to extend the Lord's salvation to the end of the earth (Isa 49:6–7)."[55]

The theme of the law dominates 5:12–7:25, having been touched on in 3:31 ("we uphold the law"). In both 3:31 and 10:4, the law is viewed as a witness to the righteousness that comes by faith and so points to Christ.[56] Romans 5:1–11 and chapter 8 form an *inclusio* around the long section about the law (5:12–7:25) that is the heart of Paul's letter. The central location of this section in the epistle is appropriate, given that Paul's gospel ministry aimed to bring about "the obedience of

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[51] Stephen Westerholm, "Paul and the Law in Romans 9–11," in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, ed. James D. G. Dunn, WUNT 89 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 220–26. "Paul presumes throughout these chapters that God is committed to the blessing of [ethnic] Israel" (226).

[52] As noted by Dunn, Paul's contemplation of being "cut off from Christ" (9:3) is in sharp contrast to the position of believers as portrayed in 8:38–39, since it is "in Christ" that God's love is experienced (8:39). J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, WBC 38B (Dallas: Word, 1988), 525.

[53] Windsor argues that Paul sees his gospel ministry as fulfilling Israel's vocation as the Isaianic servant (e.g., Rom 1:1, δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ). Lionel J. Windsor, *Paul and the Vocation of Israel: How Paul's Jewish Identity Informs His Apostolic Ministry, with Special Reference to Romans*, BZNW 205 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014).

[54] According to Williams, "This is an argument, he hopes, which will convince his detractors in Jerusalem that his missionary endeavor is by no means anti-Jewish in its import." Williams, "The 'Righteousness of God' in Romans," 248.

[55] Windsor, *Paul and the Vocation of Israel*, 111, addition mine.

[56] C. Thomas Rhyne, *Faith Establishes the Law*, SBLDS 55 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981). Cf. Robert Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law: Romans 10.4 in Pauline Perspective*, JSNTSup 10 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 118: "Paul clearly states in Rom 10:4 what he had only hinted in the previous verses, namely that Christ embodies that righteousness which the law promised, that righteousness which some Gentiles obtained through faith and which Israel rejected."

faith" among all the nations (1:5; 16:26), an ambiguous phrase that signifies both the obedience that springs from faith and the obedience (= proper response to God) that consists of faith.[57] Romans 5:1–11 follows logically from the end of the previous chapter (5:1: "Therefore, …"), with these verses summarizing the outcome of justification. Mentions of the indwelling of God's Spirit (5:5) and the hope of sharing "the glory of God" (5:2) are picked up by chapter 8, which describes the liberty of Paul the Jew who is indwelt by the Spirit and has the sure hope of glory. Finally, the ethical prescriptions for harmonious relations of Romans 12–15 contrast with the destructive effects of sin outlined in Romans 1.[58] The renewal of human relationships in the Christian community (encompassing differences over food and special days [chap. 14]) is the final *telos* of the gospel, namely the prospect of ridding the creation of the effects of sin (cf. 8:18–25).

The missional theology of Romans is the canonical context of the Pauline letters that follow, which are to be understood as providing applications of that theology in the different churches founded by Paul and his coworkers.[59] Instructed by the letter to the Romans, the reader of the epistles that follow in canonical order is helped to notice when Paul sets his doctrinal and ethical instructions in a missional frame. Using the letter to the Philippians as a test case, in the opening thanksgiving, Paul gives thanks for "their partnership in the gospel" (1:5) and links his imprisonment to "the defense and confirmation of the gospel" (1:7). Then Paul starts the body of the letter with a fuller discussion of his imprisonment (1:12–26),[60] his focus being on how it has served "the advance [προκοπήν] of the gospel" (1:12).[61] In line with the mission theology of the letter to the Romans, Paul explains how his imprisonment has led to the spread of the gospel (1:13) and has emboldened others to speak "the word of God" (1:14–18),[62] reflecting the fact that Paul sees a role for churches in gospel mission through prayer, witness, winsome lifestyle, and financial support,[63] just as he hopes that the Roman church will assist his mission to the west (Rom 15:30–32).[64]

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[57] Don Garlington, *Faith, Obedience, and Perseverance: Aspects of Paul's Letter to the Romans*, WUNT 2/79 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 13–31.

[58] Furnish notes the striking resemblances between Romans 1 and 12:1–2. Victor Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 103–4.

[59] For Paul's network of coworkers, see Smith, *The Epistles for All Christians*, 108–18.

[60] For the structuring of the letter, I acknowledge my substantial dependence upon David E. Garland, "The Composition and Unity of Philippians: Some Neglected Literary Factors," *NovT* 27.2 (1985): 141–73; cf. William J. Dalton, "The Integrity of Philippians," *Bib* 60.1 (1979): 97–102.

[61] Likewise, his restoration to them will serve their "advance" (προκοπήν) and joy (1:25). The repetition of the term forms an *inclusio* around the section; see David E. Garland, "Philippians 1:1–26: The Defense and Confirmation of the Gospel," *RevExp* 77.3 (1980): 331.

[62] The implied ethic is that the Philippians should act likewise, though with pure motives. See Dean Flemming, "Exploring a Missional Reading of Scripture: Philippians as a Case Study," *EvQ* 83.1 (2011): 3–18.

[63] Part of the purpose of Paul's letter to the Philippians is to thank them for their gift in mission partnership (1:5; 2:30; 4:14–19).

[64] See James P. Ware, *The Mission of the Church in Paul's Letter to the Philippians in the Context of Ancient Judaism*, NovTSup 120 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 5–8.

The next major literary unit in the letter to the Philippians (1:27–4:3) is indi-
cated by the *inclusio* of 1:27 and 3:20–4:3. The church community was disturbed by
rivalries and disputes (1:27–30), and what follows is an exhortation to humility and
self-abnegation. Paul is motivated to address the issue because he sees their disunity
as adversely impacting gospel mission (1:27–28; 2:12–16; 4:2–3).[65] Paul provides
four positive examples of the selfless attitude in the service of the gospel that he
wants the community to emulate, namely the examples of Jesus (2:1–11), Paul him-
self (2:12–18), Timothy (2:19–24), and Epaphroditus (2:25–30).[66] In the next phase
of the apostle's argument,[67] 3:1–11 presents the negative example of Jewish boast-
ing in identity markers like circumcision.[68] Properly understood, βλέπετε used three
times in 3:2 ("consider, take note of [the dogs]") holds up the Judaizers for consid-
eration as a cautionary example.[69] By contrast, Paul has abandoned his Jewish
boasts in favor of "the righteousness from God that depends on faith" (3:9), and
even as a Christian makes no claims to superiority (3:12–16), and the apostle calls
on the Philippians to follow his example and that of others like him (3:17). Paul
comes to the culmination of his argument in 4:1–3 (signalled by ὥστε ["Therefore"]
in 4:1a), with all that precedes leading up to the entreaty to Syntyche and Euodia
"to agree in the Lord" (4:2–3),[70] for these two women "have labored side by side
[with Paul] in the gospel," and the implication of Paul's exhortation is that their
reconciliation will enable them to resume their common labors in the gospel mis-
sion.

III. THE PASTORALS AND THE LEGACY OF PAUL

According to Childs, the Pastoral Epistles view and label the preceding letters
of the Pauline corpus "sound doctrine," and in this way, Childs provides an intra-

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[65] Ware argues that the exhortation to "work out your own salvation" (Phil 2:12) "functions as an
exhortation to spread the gospel despite the threat of persecution and suffering." Ware, *Mission of the
Church*, 288. Cf. Mark J. Keown, *Congregational Evangelism in Philippians: The Centrality of an Appeal for Gospel
Proclamation to the Fabric of Philippians*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs (Milton Keynes: Paternoster,
2008); Robert L. Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission: Did the Apostle Paul Expect the Early
Christian Communities to Evangelize?*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006).
Plummer's focus is the Corinthian correspondence, but he does interpret Philippians 2:16 ("holding
forth the word of life") as encouraging evangelistic efforts (76–77).

[66] For Timothy and Epaphroditus as further examples of the ethic of humility in the Christ Hymn,
see R. Alan Culpepper, "Co-Workers in Suffering: Philippians 2:19–30," *RevExp* 77.3 (1980): 349–58.

[67] Watson views 3:1 as a transitional verse. Duane F. Watson, "A Rhetorical Analysis of Philippians
and Its Implications for the Unity Question," *NovT* 30.1 (1988): 86.

[68] Reed views the section as ending with and including 3:1. Jeffrey T. Reed, *A Discourse Analysis of
Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate over Literary Integrity*, JSNTSup 136 (Sheffield: Sheffield Aca-
demic Press, 1997), 219–28.

[69] See, for example, Marvin R. Vincent, *Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon*, ICC (Edinburgh:
T&T Clark, 1897), 92; Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians*, rev. ed., WBC 43 (Grand
Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 174.

[70] Nils A. Dahl, "Euodia and Syntyche and Paul's Letter to the Philippians," in *The Social World of the
First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks*, ed. Michael White and O. Larry Yarborough (Minne-
apolis: Fortress, 1995), 3–15.

canonical reading of this key expression,[71] namely, that the preceding ten letters of Paul provide the details of what sound doctrine is. For example, the brief comments on the proper use of the OT law in 1 Timothy 1:8–11 require the fuller exposition found in Romans 2 and 7 and in Galatians 3 for an all-round understanding of the law in relation to Gentiles.[72] The account of Paul's experience of God's mercy in 1 Timothy 1:12–16 would be supplemented by what is recorded in Galatians 1. Paul's instructions about food and marriage in 1 Timothy 4:1–5 would be filled out by 1 Corinthians 7–10. According to James Aageson, a survey of the three letters shows that the content of the "faith" (e.g., 1 Tim 6:21; Titus 1:4, 13), "truth" (e.g., 1 Tim 2:4; 4:3; 2 Tim 2:15, 18, 25), and "sound doctrine/words/teaching" (e.g., 1 Tim 1:10; 2 Tim 1:13; Titus 1:9; 2:1) is implicit rather than explicit, but that it is both theological and ethical.[73] Theology and ethics are inextricably mixed in these productions (e.g., 1 Tim 1:19: "holding faith and a good conscience") as much as they are in Romans (12:1: "I appeal to you, therefore [οὖν], by the mercies of God, …"), which is not at all surprising if they come from the hand of Paul. The historical explanation of the lack of definition of these key terms is, no doubt, that Timothy and Titus had no need to be reminded of the teaching of the apostle and could expound its content as needed to any in the churches they served who might read the letters, but the *canonical logic* of the Pastoral Letters is that the terms now point back to the exposition of apostolic doctrine and ethics found in the corpus of letters of which they are the culmination. The fifteen references to "doctrine" (διδασκαλία) are often viewed by scholars as reflecting the idea of a fixed set of creedal beliefs that is more suitable to the "early catholicism" of the second century when heretics must be combatted than to the first century, but Romans 16:17 is similar to what we find in the Pastoral Epistles ("take note of those who create dissensions and difficulties, in opposition to the doctrine [διδαχή] which you have been taught"), and, as well, the role of Timothy and Titus in the final letters of Paul is little different to that outlined in 1 Corinthians 4:17 ("Therefore I sent to you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach [διδάσκω] them everywhere in every church"). Again, in terms of the canonical logic of these letters to apostolic delegates, if there is an implication of fixity or immutability in the terms "doctrine," "faith," and "truth" it is because they allude to a set corpus of Pauline letters.

The canonical role of the three letters attributed to Paul (but deuteropauline in Childs's view) is to "provide the hermeneutic by which Paul's ministry" can address the issues and concerns of the church in the time ahead.[74] Robert Wall accepts Pauline authorship but does not see their apostolicity and canonicity as de-

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[71] Childs, *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul*, 72–73.

[72] Kathy Ehrensperger, "Διδάσκαλος ἐθνῶν—Pauline Trajectories according to 1 Timothy," in *The Early Reception of Paul the Second Temple Jew: Text, Narrative and Reception History*, ed. Isaac W. Oliver and Gabriele Boccaccini with Joshua Scott, Library of Second Temple Studies 92 (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 91.

[73] James W. Aageson, *Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church*, Library of Pauline Studies (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 28–31, 37, 50–52, 85.

[74] Childs, *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul*, 110.

pendent on this fact but on the church's acceptance and use of the letters.[75] Wall is right to refuse to be a prisoner of modern historical reconstructions in which the letters purportedly address a situation that is post-Pauline (see 1 Tim 1:3; 2 Tim 4:6; Titus 1:5), though there is the danger that theology will be without historical foundation, for the factuality of Pauline authorship matters.[76] The essential function of the letters is to ensure that gospel mission continues in Paul's absence (see below) and that is still our situation today, so that the Pastoral Epistles ideally shape how contemporary readers use the Pauline corpus, noting its mission imperative.[77] In terms of genre, Wall views them as "succession letters," aiming to safeguard the gospel for the next generation (cf., e.g., 2 Tim 2:2). Armed with these letters, Timothy and Titus would play a key role in this regard, as would the suitably-qualified elders and deacons appointed in the churches (1 Tim 3:1–7, 8–13; 5:17–22; 2 Tim 2:2; Titus 1:5–9),[78] which arrangement is not to be thought of as a new organizational structure (Rom 16:1; Phil 1:1; cf. Acts 14:23).[79]

For Wall, the primary context for reading the Pastoral Epistles is their settled place in the thirteen-letter Pauline corpus, and he views this canonical grouping as providing "interpretive prompts" on how these texts are to be faithfully used as the church's scripture. Given the public reading of scripture in early churches (1 Tim 4:13),[80] the fact that Paul's letters were read in congregational meetings is highly significant (see Col 4:16; 1 Thess 5:27; cf. Acts 15:22–35). As well, their status as scripture may be implied in the parallel drawn between Paul's own "teaching" (2 Tim 3:10) and the OT scriptures (3:15–16), which are both said to contribute to Timothy's equipping as "[a] man of God" (3:17). Likewise, Paul quoting a dominical saying in 1 Timothy 5:18 ("The laborer deserves his wages") that reflects Luke 10:7 (cf. Matt 10:10) and coupling it with Deuteronomy 25:4 under the one introductory formula ("for the scripture [ἡ γραφή] says") implies a canon wider than just the OT (cf. 1 Tim 6:3: "the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ").[81] To this may

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[75] Robert W. Wall with Richard B. Steele, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 4–7.

[76] Andreas J. Köstenberger, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, EBTC (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021), 14–24; Stanley E. Porter, "Pauline Authorship and the Pastoral Epistles: Implications for Canon," *BBR* 5 (1995): 105–23; for the ensuing debate between Wall and Porter, see Robert W. Wall, "Pauline Authorship and the Pastoral Epistles: A Response to S. E. Porter," *BBR* 5 (1995): 125–28; Stanley E. Porter, "Pauline Authorship and the Pastoral Epistles: A Response to R. W. Wall's Response," *BBR* 6 (1996): 133–38.

[77] Robert W. Wall, "The Function of the Pastoral Letters within the Pauline Canon of the New Testament: A Canonical Approach," in *The Pauline Canon*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Pauline Studies 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 27–44, esp. 42: "What the Pastorals do, in my opinion, is to clarify the church's missionary vocation, worked out in other Pauline letters, for a post-Pauline setting."

[78] Wall with Steele, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 11.

[79] Wall, "The Function of the Pastoral Letters," 38–39.

[80] Philip H. Towner, "The Function of the Public Reading of Scripture in 1 Timothy 4:13 and in the Biblical Tradition," *SBJT* 7.3 (2003): 44–54; cf. Valeriy A. Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering: Origin, Development and Content of the Christian Gathering in the First to Third Centuries*, VCSup 102 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 147–68, esp. 164: "All in all, it may be concluded that the 'reading' mentioned in 1 Timothy 4:13 may well apply to the reading of Paul."

[81] So argues B. Paul Wolfe, "Scripture in the Pastoral Epistles: PreMarcion Marcionism?," *PRSt* 16.1 (1989): 13–14. The same points are made by Paul in 1 Cor 9:9 and 14.

be added the terse mention of "the books [τὰ βιβλία] and above all the parchments [τὰς μεμβράνας]" (2 Tim 4:13) that Paul wishes to retrieve (along with his coat), which may refer, in turn, to OT scrolls (cf. Luke 4:20; Gal 3:10; Heb 9:19) and to copies of Paul's own letters that he had retained in the form of a codex notebook, which, in effect, would be an early Pauline corpus.[82] On the basis of the high level of textual uniformity of the Pauline corpus after AD 200, Chris Stevens argues for Paul's personal involvement in preparing a corpus for circulation on the basis of duplicate copies of his letters that he kept in his possession.[83]

According to Wall, the Pastoral Epistles close the Pauline Canon by giving an authoritative portrait of Paul (*Paulusbild*) consistent with the presentation of Acts, notably the farewell speech to the Ephesian elders (20:17–35),[84] and they guide how the preceding letters are to be read as relevant for future generations of believers. Wall argues that the apostolic tradition embodied in Paul in Acts and his letters is indispensable for the ongoing health and vitality of the church, and this, for Wall, is the main implication of capping the Pauline Corpus with the three Pastoral Epistles. Aageson asks the question, "What happened to Paul after Paul?"[85] He examines the complexities of the reception and use of the Pastoral Epistles in the early church up to the middle of the third century. He strongly leans toward the view that the three canonical letters were not authored by Paul and he places them at the interface between the historical Paul and his later legacy. According to Aageson, the upshot is that Paul is not the author of the Pastorals, though this judgment ignores the claims made in 1 Timothy 1:1, 2 Timothy 1:2, and Titus 1:1. Aageson also sidesteps the moral problem represented by pseudepigraphy.

The instructions of the Pastoral Epistles serve a missionary purpose (see esp. 2 Tim 2:4: "[God our Savior] who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"), and the teaching content of the letters highlights the theme of salvation and is rooted in the apostolic mission of Paul and his associates. As pointed out by Andreas Köstenberger, the themes of teaching, salvation, and mission are keys to understanding the purpose for which Paul writes to his delegates,[86] in line with increasing scholarly appreciation of the mission context of

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[82] Michael J. Kruger, *The Question of Canon: Challenging the Status Quo in the New Testament Debate* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2013), 93–94; cf. E. Randolph Richards, "The Codex and the Early Collection of Paul's Letters," *BBR* 8 (1998): 151–66, esp. 161–62; cf. Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 50–52, 100–101; Serena Ammirati, "The Use of Wooden Tablets in the Ancient Graeco-Roman World and the Birth of the Book in *Codex* Form: Some Remarks," *Scripta* 6 (2013): 13. For an argument that Paul himself was involved in collecting and preserving his thirteen-letter corpus, see Stanley E. Porter, "Paul and the Pauline Letter Collection," in *Paul and the Second Century*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Joseph R. Dodson, LNTS 314 (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 32–35.

[83] Chris S. Stevens, *History of the Pauline Corpus in Texts, Transmissions and Trajectories: A Textual Analysis of Manuscripts from the Second to the Fifth Century*, TENTS 14 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 185–211, esp. 205–11.

[84] Wall with Steele, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 36–40.

[85] Aageson, *Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church*, 1.

[86] Andreas J. Köstenberger, "An Investigation of the Mission Motif in the Letters to Timothy and Titus with Implications for the Pauline Authorship of the Pastoral Epistles," *BBR* 29.1 (2019): 49–64; cf. Chiao Ek Ho, "Mission in the Pastoral Epistles," in *Entrusted with the Gospel: Paul's Theology in the Pastoral Epistles*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Terry L. Wilder (Nashville: B&H: 2010), 241–67; Ho, "Do the

Paul's writings generally.[87] The *salvation* word group is conspicuous in the three letters, both in nominal (e.g., σωτήρ, σωτηρία) and verbal (σῴζω) forms. Especially significant are the appellations "God our Savior" (1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4) and "Christ [Jesus] our Savior" (2 Tim 1:10; Titus 1:4; 2:13; 3:6), such that the Christology in these letters is largely focused on soteriology;[88] specifically, God instigates the plan of salvation (1 Tim 2:4) and Christ is its salvific mediator (1 Tim 1:15), and the saving plan has universal scope (1 Tim 2:4; 4:10; Titus 2:11).[89] Among the many arguments provided by Chiao Ek Ho for the mission character of the letters, he notes that Paul urges slaves to be well-behaved "so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior" (Titus 2:10; cf. 1 Pet 3:5), highlighting the motive for this ethic of good works as evangelistic (cf. 1 Cor 14:23; Col 4:5; 1 Thess 4:12).[90] Likewise, concern about what "outsiders" think of believers (1 Tim 3:7) makes the good character of potential church leaders essential for their office. And commenting on 2 Timothy 4:5, Ho notes that "it is instructive that Paul should single out Timothy's role as an evangelist in his final letter to him."[91] So also, instructions about praying "for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions" are for the purpose that peaceful conditions will allow the spread of the gospel (1 Tim 2:1–6). Finally, in the *personalia* at the end of the letters (esp. 2 Tim 4:9–18; Titus 3:12–14) Paul is preoccupied with organizing missionary work.[92]

Again, taking the letter to the Philippians as a test case, how do the Pastoral Epistles shape the reading of the preceding Pauline letters? We have already noted the mission theme in Philippians, and to that may be added the closely related theme of salvation (Phil 1:28; 2:12; 3:20), both of which would be more easily noticed after reading the Pastoral Epistles. As noted by Garland, no other salutation in a Pauline letter specifically mentions the local leaders of the church, so that Philippians is unique in addressing "bishops" (ἐπισκόποις) and "deacons" (διακόνοις),[93] though Paul refers to himself and Timothy as "slaves (δοῦλοι) of Christ Jesus," presumably in anticipation of the humility theme of the letter, including the peerless example of Jesus Christ who took the form of a "slave" (2:7, δούλου). The fuller description of the proven character required for bishops and deacons provided in Paul's instructions to Timothy and Titus (1 Tim 3:1–13; 5:17–22; Titus 1:5–9) is consistent with the focus in Paul's letter to the Philippians on humble service for the sake of the gospel and would serve to reinforce that point. The role of Timothy

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Work of an Evangelist: The Missionary Outlook of the Pastoral Epistles" (PhD diss., University of Aberdeen, 2000).

[87] See, e.g., Trevor J. Burke and Brian S. Rosner, eds., *Paul as Missionary: Identity, Activity, Theology, and Practice,* LNTS 420 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2011).

[88] Aageson, *Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church*, 97–98.

[89] George M. Wieland, "The Function of Salvation in the Letters to Timothy and Titus," in Köstenberger and Wilder, *Entrusted with the Gospel*, 153–72; Wieland, *The Significance of Salvation: A Study of Salvation Language in the Pastoral Epistles* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006).

[90] Ho, "Mission in the Pastoral Epistles," 243.

[91] Ho, "Mission in the Pastoral Epistles," 252.

[92] Ho, "Do the Work of an Evangelist," 152–54.

[93] Garland, "The Defense and Confirmation of the Gospel," 327.

outlined in Philippians 2:19–24 is filled out in the two apostolic letters addressed to him, and along the same lines. According to Paul Holloway, in Philippians, "Timothy is offered as a substitute for the imprisoned and likely soon-to-be-executed Paul."[94] Paul seeks to console the Philippians who are troubled by his absence (1:24–26; 2:12),[95] and he puts forward Timothy as a suitable replacement, since he is his "likeminded child" (2:22: "how like a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.")[96] This way of reading Philippians would be reinforced by what is found in the Pastoral Epistles (something not noted by Holloway), in which Paul designates Timothy in similar terms: "my true child in the faith" (1 Tim 1:2), "my son" (1:18), and "my beloved child" (2 Tim 1:2) (cf. Titus 1:4: "To Titus, my true child in a common faith"). Both in his teaching and behavior Timothy mirrors Paul and is an example of humble service in the mission of the gospel (Phil 2:21; cf. 1 Tim 4:12).

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The letter to the Romans at the head and Pastoral Epistles at the end (except for Philemon) act as bookends for the Pauline corpus, and together provide a missional frame around the epistolary corpus as a whole. Despite the fact that the positioning of these letters is probably due to the physical factor of decreasing length (Romans is the longest letter) and the (somewhat) arbitrary division made between letters to churches and to individuals, their position at either end of the collection of Paul's letters makes sense, given the general and comprehensive character of Romans and the probable setting of the Pastoral Epistles late in his missionary career as Paul contemplates his removal from the scene. Influenced by the letter to the Romans, the reader of the epistles that follow in canonical order is helped to notice how Paul sets his doctrine and ethics in a missional frame. The Pastoral Epistles label the preceding letters of the Pauline corpus "sound doctrine" and, like Romans, suggest a missional reading of the letters.

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[94] Cf. Paul A. Holloway, "*Alius Paulus*: Paul's Promise to Send Timothy at Philippians 2.19–24," *NTS* 54 (2008): 543.

[95] Holloway, "*Alius Paulus*," 552.

[96] Holloway, "*Alius Paulus*," 556.