

Theo 210, Week #14:
Pauline Literature III (ANSWER KEY)
The University of St. Francis

True/False

1. False *From the Video...* The Greek Speaking follower from Antioch referred to those who followed Christ as “Nazareans.”
(From “Chapter Three: Running the Race”)
2. True *From the Video...* In Hebrew, the word “Pharisee” is understood as one who is “set apart,” or separate from other believers.
3. False In Romans 1, Paul asserts that Gentiles stand under the judgment of God because they are completely ignorant of the nature and expectations of the one true God.
4. True In Romans 7, Paul speaks of sin as if it were an animate force inside of him, forcing him to do what he would otherwise not do.
5. False In Romans 13, Paul argues that the Roman government is in league with Satan and that Christians should oppose Rome whenever and wherever possible.
6. True Galatia is the name of a region, not a city.
7. False Paul claimed in Galatians 1 that his version of the gospel was correct because he received it directly from the apostle Simon Peter.

8. True In contrast to Acts, Paul in Galatians portrays himself as essentially independent of the authority of the Jerusalem church.
9. True The Letter to the Romans is regarded as a more systematic expression of Paul's theology of justification by faith than that found in Galatians.
10. False As is the case with Romans, Paul wrote most of his letters to churches that had been founded by someone else.
11. True In Galatians, Paul claims that in Jesus Christ all believers are equal regardless of race, social class, or gender.

Multiple Choice

1. Why did Paul write the Book of Romans?
- a. The Roman Christians had abandoned Paul's version of the Gospel after Paul left Rome.
 - b. The Roman Christians had written Paul a letter asking for his advice on several theological and ethical issues.
 - c. Paul wanted to thank the Roman Christians for sending him a monetary gift while he was in prison.
 - d. *Paul wanted to enlist the help of the Roman church for his upcoming mission trip to Spain.*
2. In both Galatians and Romans, Paul uses which Hebrew Bible character as an example of a Jew who was justified before God because of his faith and not because of his obedience to the Torah?
- a. Jesus
 - b. *Abraham*
 - c. Adam
 - d. Moses

3. In Romans 5, Paul uses the Greek term hamartia or “sin” to describe humanity’s rebellion against God. What does term hamartia literally mean?
- a. Falling away.
 - b. *Missing the mark.***
 - c. Starting a war.
 - d. Self-deception.
4. Some later theologians used Paul’s description of sin in Romans 5 to formulate what doctrine, which is the idea that all human beings are innately corrupt morally and inherit an unavoidable tendency to do evil?
- a. *Original Sin***
 - b. Universalism
 - c. Eschatology
 - d. Realized Eschatology
5. In Romans 9-11, Paul argues that Israel’s rejection of Jesus’ messiahship is part of God’s plan to allow the Gospel to be brought to the Gentiles. Later theologians used such arguments to formulate what doctrine, which claims that God has already decided who would be saved and who would be damned?
- a. Forbearance
 - b. Eternal Security
 - c. Adoption
 - d. *Predestination***
6. According to the “South Galatia” theory, the intended readers of Paul’s letter to the Galatians may have lived in which cities below where Paul had already established churches?
- a. Corinth and Athens
 - b. *Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe***
 - c. Philippi, Beroea, and Thessalonica
 - d. Ephesus and Colossae

7. Paul's opponents in Galatia may have advocated the mixing of selected practices from several different religions, including Judaism. This mixing of religious traditions is known as what?
- a. Mythology
 - b. Samsara
 - c. Polytheism
 - d. Syncretism**
8. In Galatians 2, Paul recounts an incident at Antioch in which he directly confronts which apostle, because that apostle was behaving inconsistently in associating with uncircumcised believers?
- a. Barnabas
 - b. Peter**
 - c. Thomas
 - d. Apollos
9. Paul asserts in Galatians that the original purpose of the Law was to do what?
- a. To teach people that they are sinners.**
 - b. To show persons how to please God through moral living.
 - c. To lay out a plan of salvation that applied to Jews alone.
 - d. To test the faith of committed Jews by requiring them to keep the Law's extensive ritual requirements.
10. Some of the Galatians used Paul's doctrine of freedom from the Law as an excuse to indulge in any desire or appetite, a view known as what?
- a. Democracy.
 - b. Laissez-Faire.
 - c. Authoritarianism.
 - d. Antinomianism.**
11. *From the Video...* What term below *was not* used by those who followed Christ in the First Century to describe their fellow believers?
- a. The Way
 - b. Nazareans
 - c. Sodomites**
 - d. Christians

12. *From the Video...* On what street was Ananias called to meet and heal Paul in the city of Damascus?

- a. Main Street
- b. The Way Street
- c. ***Straight Street***
- d. None of These

Short Answers from the Video

1. How did Saul's early years in Tarsus prepare him for his future ministry?

During Paul's childhood, the city was filled with Romans, Greeks and Jews, united by Roman law. The diaspora and Hellenization both influenced the life of Saulos Paulos (born around 10 AD). He was given his two names, Paul (which meant "short") and Saul (named after the first king of Israel). Saul inherited his Roman citizenship by birth. Every theology and philosophies were found in Tarsus. As a strict Jew, Saul was taught the faith of his fathers. At five years, he learned the scriptures, at ten, the Mishnah, and at thirteen, the works of the law. (Part One)

2. How did Saul's training under Gamaliel in Jerusalem prepare him for his preaching of the gospel?

At fifteen, Saul travelled to Jerusalem and studied under the most famous teacher of his time, Gamaliel. As the highest point of the area, this was where David established the capital of the Israel. For several years, Gamaliel taught Paul about the teachings and prayers of the Jewish tradition. Saul studied under him both in Hebrew and Greek. (Part One)

3. Do you think Saul believed he was truly serving God when he persecuted the Church? Why?

The word "Pharisee" meant to be "set apart," keeping distance from Gentiles and even every day Jews. He took his being set apart seriously. They took seriously the role they played as ushering in the new era of God. (Part One)

4. Why did some of the Jews accept Jesus as the Messiah and why were others so hostile to him?

False messiahs were nothing new. To the Pharisees, Jesus was just another blasphemer, false messiah and a real threat. If God was to restore Israel, the Pharisee believed that the law of Moses had to be strictly obeyed and false teachers must be destroyed. (Part One)

5. How would you explain the “Mystical Body of Christ?” (Part Two)

When the Church suffers, Christ feels our pain. St. Paul would emphasize that Christ and us are one body – Christ is in us and we are in Christ. Christ is the head in heaven and we are his body on earth.

6. How would you explain the “Mystical Body of Christ?” How did Jesus’ question to Saul on the road to Damascus become the foundation of Paul’s theology? (Part Two)

When Jesus said, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me.” The response was profound that it affected Paul the rest of his life and served as the foundation of Paul’s theology.

7. What is baptism and how does it fit into the scheme of salvation? (Part Two)

Paul said that salvation did not come from circumcision or the 613 laws of Moses. Salvation cannot be earned but by faith and obedience to Jesus Christ. From CCC #1213, baptism was necessary for salvation. We enter the Church through the “door” of baptism. Baptism was the new covenant that replaces the circumcision of the old. Baptism was the “spiritual mark” that Sts. Peter & Paul defined as the entry way into the life of faith.

8. What does the word Christian mean? Where and when was this word first used? (*Part Two*)

From the Greek word "Christos," the Gentiles in Antioch used this word instead of Nazareans or "The Way" to describe the followers of Christ.

Essay

1. What issues do Romans and Galatians share? What is the difference in how they are handled in the two letters?

Paul had neither established (see Acts 28: 14–15) nor ever met the Roman churches (Rom. 1: 10–13). He does not write in response to a crisis within the community. His treatment of differences between the "strong" and the "weak" (14: 1–15: 6) is general. There may have been differences in practice within – or between – the Roman assemblies, but Paul's knowledge of them does not appear either detailed or intimate – there is no urgency to his discussion, unlike the situation in Galatians. He is careful throughout the letter not to assert the same role he thought he could assume with the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4: 15), since he was neither a founder nor a father. He qualifies his desire to "impart some spiritual gift to them," for example, by adding quickly, "that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, yours and mine" (1: 12). Although he wrote "on some points very boldly by way of reminder" (15: 15), he does not suggest that the Romans deserve rebuke for any deficiency: "I myself am satisfied about you, my brethren, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and are able to instruct one another" (15: 14; cf. 16: 17–20).

Paul uses Abraham as his example in the diatribal argument and as proof that Torah is "established" on the principle of faith. He does this through a midrash on Gen. 15: 6: "Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." In contrast to what he did in Gal. 3: 6–18, Paul here concentrates on Abraham himself and the structure of his faith. His presentation relies on two midrashic premises: (1) The textual sequence of events is significant; thus,

Abraham was called righteous in Gen. 15: 6 before he was circumcised in Gen. 17: 11. (2) The meaning of a term in Torah can be clarified by use of the same term elsewhere in Scripture (the term “reckon,” used in both Gen. 15: 6 and Ps. 32: 1, shows that God is not a passive “keeper of the book” but one who “makes righteous” even the ungodly). Paul’s presentation of Abraham as the father of everyone who believes (4: 11) is all the more striking because of the praise of Abraham within contemporary Judaism as one whose righteousness was proved by his “works” (see, e.g., Aboth de Rabbi Nathan 7, 33; James 2: 18–26).

2. How do Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar figure in Paul’s argumentation in Romans and Galatians? Why would Paul have chosen these three figures in dealing with the issues he addresses?

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First, Paul argues that Abraham was called righteous not because of his accomplishments but because of his faith (4: 1–12). He did nothing that could give him reason to boast (4: 2) or that earned God’s obligation (4: 4–5). His righteousness was a gift of God received by faith; God makes humans righteous (4: 5, 6–8). That he was declared

righteous before his circumcision demonstrates that his righteousness derived from his obedient response to the promise. He thus manifested the principle of faith for all, becoming the “father” of both Gentiles—“who believe without being circumcised and who thus have righteousness attributed to them”—and Jews—“the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but also follow the example of the faith of Abraham” (4: 11–12).

Second, Paul asserts that the law played no role in making humans righteous (4: 13–15). He deliberately twists the implication of 3: 31 that the principle of faith would destroy (katargeō) Torah. Here, Paul asserts that if law were the principle of righteousness, faith would be empty (kenos) and destroyed (katargeō; 4: 14).

Third, Paul declares that the structure of Abraham’s faith is the same for Christians, involving trust, hope, and obedience. Despite all the appearances of death (his age, Sarah’s “dead” womb—nekrōsis, 4: 19), Abraham had faith in the God “who gives life to the dead and calls into existence things that do not exist” (4: 17; cf. 1 Cor. 1: 28). Abraham was not an idolater who refused to glorify God (1: 21); for he grew strong in faith, giving “glory to God” (4: 20). In this way, the structure of Christian faith is specified, not by the birth of Isaac from the dead womb of Sarah but by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Indeed, Christians have placed their trust in a God who consistently illustrates this pattern in his activity—he continually “raises from the dead”—the prime example for which was the raising of “the dead Jesus our Lord; who was put to death for our transgressions and was raised for our righteousness” (4: 24–25).

3. What does Paul mean by “faith” and “the faith of the Messiah”? What difference is made by translating the Greek phrase *pistis christou* as “the faith of the messiah”?

Announcement of Thesis (1: 16–17)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith [ek pisteōs eis pistin]; as it is written, “The righteous by faith shall live.”

The thesis is properly dense. Paul purposely understates for effect when he says that he is “not ashamed,” since the “good news” is actually his basis for boasting, in contrast to any basis in human accomplishment (3: 27; 5: 2–3; cf. 1 Cor. 1: 31; 2 Cor. 10: 17; Gal. 6: 13–14). The “good news” is not merely verbal. It is a power (dynamis) for salvation (see 1 Cor. 1: 18–21; 2 Cor. 2: 15) at work universally: among both Jew and Greek (see chaps. 9–11). In this “good news,” God’s righteousness (or, “justice,” dikaiosynē) is revealed. The phrase is polyvalent. It refers both to a quality of God (he is just) and to God’s activity (he establishes humans in right relationship with him; see esp. 3: 26). That God is righteous was axiomatic in Judaism; that humans could be righteous before him was equally assumed. The edge of Paul’s thesis comes in the assertion that these propositions are “revealed in the good news” by free gift (3: 24; 5: 15), being appropriated by the response of faith.

The revelation of righteousness itself is qualified by the elliptical phrase ek pisteōs eis pistin, literally, “out of faith to faith.” The phrase might simply be adverbial: “thoroughly faithfully,” or “beginning and ending in faith.” It might also specify the dynamic of gift and response: the revelation of righteousness begins in God’s faithfulness to humans and is answered by their obedient acceptance. A third possibility is even more specific and quite likely correct: God’s righteousness is revealed out of the faith of Jesus and leads to the faith of Christians. In this way the ambiguity in the Habakkuk citation – “the righteous by faith shall live” – intentionally denotes both Christ (the righteous one who lives by faith) and the believer (the one made righteous by faith and who lives as a result). If the “faith of the Messiah” is thus an essential part of the free gift from God – and Paul explicitly says it is (3: 25–26; 5: 12–21) – then the text of Hab. 2: 4 refers first of all to Jesus. He is the one who through faithful obedience unto death is righteous and lives by the resurrection (see above, 1: 4). The faith of Christ toward God, in turn, initiates the faith of the believer, which is specified by the confession of Jesus as Lord (10: 9) and expressed through faithful obedience toward the One who raised Jesus from the dead. This is the compressed statement Paul will develop throughout the letter.

4. How has the issue of “Christ and Torah” affected all of Christian history?

God's revelation of his righteousness in the body and freedom of a crucified Messiah has taken place apart from, and even against, the norm of Torah. But this does not make Torah totally irrelevant. It is a witness to God's way of making humans righteous (3: 21). Paul will next show how, but first he makes three rapid assertions. First, all human boasting is now excluded; one can glory (or, boast) only in the gift of God. No human achievement, not even the observance of God's commandments, can place a claim on God (3: 27-28). Second, Jews do not have privileged access to God's gifts or to righteousness (3: 29-30). Such partiality would contradict God's very being, and would reduce the one God of heaven and earth to the level of a tribal deity. If God is Lord of all creation and if God is fair, then there must be one principle by which all humans can be righteous before him. It is in fact the principle of faithful obedience. Known already in Torah, the principle was obstructed by the power of sin. But now it has been made powerfully available through the faithful death and life-giving resurrection of Jesus. Third, Torah itself is therefore properly established in its true status as a witness to God's righteousness when it is read as evidencing its basis in faithful obedience (3: 31). To that demonstration, Paul now turns.

5. What does Romans share with the classical rhetorical style of “diatribe”? How does that affect the interpretation of the letter?

The affinity between Romans and the Hellenistic rhetorical style known as the diatribe has long been observed. A vivid, dialogical form of discourse, the diatribe uses many of the stylistic devices that are detectable in Romans: apostrophe (2: 1, 3, 17); rhetorical questions (2: 3-4, 21-23; 7: 1; 8: 31-35; 9: 19-21, 30; 10: 14-15; 11: 34-35); questions answered by abrupt answers like “By no means” (3: 2-9; 6: 1-2, 15; 7: 7, 13; 11: 1, 11); hyperbole (8: 37-39; 9: 3); vice lists (1: 29-31); exemplars from the past (4: 1-25); and citation of written texts as authorities (9: 1-11: 36). All these devices help place the reader in the context of a literary dialogue between a speaker and an imagined “interlocutor” (a person or group) to whom the speaker responds,

enabling the argument to develop its own internal momentum, logic and clarity. The concentration of these elements outside Romans is strongest in the Discourses of Epictetus, but the elements are found in other philosophers and rhetoricians as well.

Because of the oral character of the diatribe, it was long thought to be a style of public preaching such as that carried out by Cynic philosophers on street corners. By analogy, Romans would then be a sample of Paul's oral preaching, but sent to the Romans in epistolary form. Recent investigation has shown, however, that the life setting for the diatribe was not public preaching but the classroom.

Epictetus, for example, ran a school for would-be philosophers, in which he trained his followers in the techniques and message of his philosophy. By analogy, then, Romans is a sample of Paul's teaching within his school of delegates and fellow workers. The diatribe is not a formless rant but a structured form of argument with the following features: (1) a statement of the thesis (e.g., "Every good person is free"); (2) a demonstration by means of antithesis (e.g., vice leads to slavery); (3) a restatement of the thesis; (4) a demonstration of the thesis by example (e.g., Heracles was free because of his virtue even though he was a slave); (5) an exposition of the thesis; (6) an answering of objections to the thesis (e.g., to the objection "Are there not virtuous people who are prisoners?"). These components are not always found together, but they are combined often enough to support the suggestion that Romans is such a scholastic argument, worked out by the Pauline school and sent to the Roman church as a commendation of Paul's gospel.

The pattern of argumentation also provides the key to reading Romans. Paul states his thesis in 1: 16-17 and follows immediately with its antithesis in 1: 18-3: 20. He then restates the thesis in 3: 21-31 and demonstrates it by example in 4: 1-25, before completing his exposition in 5: 1-21. Objections to the thesis are raised as early as 3: 1-8, but are not picked up and answered systematically until 6: 1-11: 3.

6. What conclusions can you draw from the names mentioned in Romans 16? Which of these names appear in other letters of Paul and Acts?

Phoebe & Aquila were the names of women who played a prominent role in St. Paul's Ministry.

7. Why is the term "the Torah" better than "the Law" in a discussion of first-century Judaism?

Paul is not at all certain who is responsible for their "turning to another gospel" (1: 6). He asks them, "Who has bewitched you?" (3: 1), and "Who hindered you from obeying the truth?" (5: 7). He is certain that at stake is the "truth of the gospel" (2: 5, 14; 4: 16; 5: 7). Since Paul is vague, and perhaps even ignorant, concerning the troublemakers' identity, we have no definite knowledge of them either. The methodological problems of identifying the rivals in Corinth face us here as well. There are real people whom Paul opposes, but we do not know their understanding, only Paul's perception of it. Many suggestions about the opponents in Galatia have been made. Were they representatives of the "James party" from Jerusalem (2: 12), or "Gnostics" (4: 9)?

The problem is made more complex because the real difficulty seems to lie within the community. A stimulus may have come from the outside ("They make much of you," 4: 17), but individuals within the church are promoting a different version of the gospel ("those being circumcised," 5: 3). Although Paul is against those who "compel you to be circumcised" (6: 12-13), he may himself not know whether they are insiders or outsiders. Consequently his energy is directed at those likely to be seduced, the "foolish Galatians" themselves. From ancient times, the deviance Paul struggles to correct has been called "Judaizing" (from "to live like a Jew," 2: 14), a term appropriate not for Jews but for Gentiles who wish to imitate them. It indicates in broad terms the question agitating the young gentile communities: Did they need Torah as well as Christ?

The agitators have two interrelated complaints. First, like the rivals

in Corinth, they question Paul's apostolic credentials. Paul is not one of the original apostles but is dependent on Jerusalem. He is inconsistent in his teaching and practice, trying to please people rather than God; indeed, he has even circumcised one of his closest delegates, Titus (2: 3). But second, just as Paul's apostolic credentials are deficient, so is his "good news." He has preached only of God's work in the crucified Messiah. He therefore delivers to the Galatians an incomplete, inadequate form of Christianity. In order to be truly righteous—to be in a proper covenantal relationship with God—it is necessary as well to observe the commandments of Torah.

The Messiah is, after all (we can hear them say), a Jewish savior. Being "in the Messiah" therefore demands becoming part of the historic people, the "Israel of God" (6: 16) as well. Circumcision is the ritual symbol for "taking on the yoke of Torah" (see 5: 1), which initiates one into this people. Paul deceived the Galatians by foisting on them merely the ritual washing of baptism. Like commitment to Christ, it is a beginning, but more is required for full maturity. Obedience to the gospel without obedience to Torah's commandments is, according to Paul's opponents, a superficial and distorted version of Judaism. The ultimate norm for God's righteousness, and therefore for human righteousness, is now—as always—Torah. If they are circumcised, the Galatians signal their willingness to advance to this more mature position within the people of God (5: 2). Such an argument would have made excellent sense to those who converted directly from paganism, for multiple initiations signaling stages of introduction into a mystery were a standard feature of Greco-Roman religions (see Apuleius, Golden Ass XI), and even Philo can speak in terms of being initiated into the "holy mysteries" of Moses (On the Cherubim 42, 48-49).

This much of their argument seems clear. Some details are hard to pin down, because we do not know whether they or Paul injected them into the debate. Did they, for example, make a point of the angels' role in the giving of Torah, or did Paul (3: 19)? Did they advocate obeisance to angelic forces, the "elements of the universe," or did Paul draw that polemical equation (4: 3, 9)? Did they or he make the connection between the observance of "days and months and seasons

and years" and the observance of Torah (4: 10)?

In any case, the religious issues by this dispute over circumcision go far beyond proper ritual procedure. They touch on the adequacy of the experience of God in Jesus, and on whether Torah or "the law of Christ" is the ultimate norm for Christian existence. These questions lead to the relationship between God and humans: Is it established by human effort or always by God's gift? Is God constrained by human ways of measuring his consistency, or must humans measure themselves by the ways God shows himself to be consistent?

8. What is the deeper significance of the battle over circumcision?

Against insinuations that his apostleship is derived and dependent, Paul insists that it came about by a direct call (1: 1) and election (1: 15) from God, who, in a revelation of Jesus Messiah (1: 12), turned Paul's life around. He was not then and is not now dependent on the leaders of the Jerusalem community. He did not confer with them after his call (1: 16). His only meeting was a private one three years after the start of his ministry (1: 18-20). When he had a full meeting with the "pillars" of that church fourteen years later, he was recognized by them as their full equal. They agreed to divide the mission between him and Peter (2: 9); Titus was not required to be circumcised (2: 2-3); and their only request concerned a matter he had already begun in his collection: the care for the poor (2: 10). All this took place despite the "false brethren" who had tried to "spy out our freedom" (2: 4). Paul wants the Galatians to grasp this analogy to their present situation. He had not then submitted to the false brethren, "so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you" (2: 5). So now, he wants them to resist any threat to their freedom.

The final evidence for both Paul's independence and the consistency of his preaching is his confrontation with Cephas. When even Paul's partner Barnabas (see 2: 1) had capitulated to the pressure exerted by "certain men from James" (2: 12) and stopped eating with Gentiles in Antioch, Paul opposed Cephas to his face (2: 11), because Cephas, Barnabas, and all the Jews had not been "straightforward about the truth of the gospel" (2: 14). Paul's consistency is also shown by the

opposition he had to face in the past and continues to face: “If I were still pleasing men, I would not be a slave of Christ” (1: 10). The sign of the servant is suffering and rejection: “But if I, brethren, still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted?” (5: 11); “I bear on my body the marks of Jesus” (6: 17).

Paul turns the charge of insincerity back on his opponents (2: 13). Those upsetting the Galatians are like the “false brethren” who had bothered him in both Jerusalem and Antioch (2: 4, 12). They are deceivers: “They make much of you, but for no good purpose; they want to shut you out, so that you may make much of them” (4: 17). In a pointed statement, Paul suggests in 6: 12–13 that their real motivation is not only to gain prestige but to avoid persecution from the Jews:

It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh.

What stake did community members have in circumcision? According to Paul, it made them appear to be normal members of Israel rather than candidates for persecution and martyrdom, a persecution that was brought about precisely because the crucified Messiah was a stumbling block to those who saw Torah as the ultimate norm of righteousness (3: 13)—a point illustrated by Paul’s own past experience (1: 13–14). While it may be difficult to contextualize these statements in the life of the Galatian church—since we know so little about their experience—it is clear that, in Paul’s eyes, the choice of circumcision was both cowardly and a rejection of the experience of God through the preaching of the crucified Messiah (3: 1). Paul himself utterly rejects that choice (6: 14):

9. Who was advocating the conformity to the Mosaic regulations in Paul's churches?

Paul's third appeal to Scripture (3: 16–18) is a midrash on the promise to Abraham in Gen. 12: 3–7. It is complicated and depends on the technique of reading a collective noun (sperma, "seed" or "offspring") as a singular, referring not to all of Abraham's descendants but to a single individual – the Messiah (see also 2 Sam. 7: 14) – and then subsequently moving out to those who belong to him. Paul has thereby shown that the Messiah is the ratification of the essential covenant (diathēkē, also "will") between God and humans, thus sidestepping the Mosaic covenant as though it were only a digression in God's larger plan.

But was the Mosaic covenant simply a mistake? Only in its claims, not in its purposes. Torah was not eternal but only a temporary agreement; it was not given directly by God but only through the mediation of Moses, and angels; it did not, above all, lead to life (3: 21). It could reveal transgression and teach morality, but it could not empower or transform. The law did not contradict, but neither did it fulfill the promise (3: 21–22). Only in the Messiah's faith is the promise fulfilled (3: 22). And Christians are joined to the Messiah by the response of faith and by the ritual of baptism; they become thereby "one in Christ Jesus . . . heirs according to the promise" (3: 28–29).

10. What strategies does Paul use in Galatians to defend his role as apostle?

Against insinuations that his apostleship is derived and dependent, Paul insists that it came about by a direct call (1: 1) and election (1: 15). from God, who, in a revelation of Jesus Messiah (1: 12), turned Paul's life around. He was not then and is not now dependent on the leaders of the Jerusalem community. He did not confer with them after his call (1: 16). His only meeting was a private one three years after the start of his ministry (1: 18–20). When he had a full meeting with the "pillars" of that church fourteen years later, he was recognized by them as their full equal. They agreed to divide the

mission between him and Peter (2: 9); Titus was not required to be circumcised (2: 2-3); and their only request concerned a matter he had already begun in his collection: the care for the poor (2: 10). All this took place despite the “false brethren” who had tried to “spy out our freedom” (2: 4). Paul wants the Galatians to grasp this analogy to their present situation. He had not then submitted to the false brethren, “so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you” (2: 5). So now, he wants them to resist any threat to their freedom.

The final evidence for both Paul’s independence and the consistency of his preaching is his confrontation with Cephas. When even Paul’s partner Barnabas (see 2: 1) had capitulated to the pressure exerted by “certain men from James” (2: 12) and stopped eating with Gentiles in Antioch, Paul opposed Cephas to his face (2: 11), because Cephas, Barnabas, and all the Jews had not been “straightforward about the truth of the gospel” (2: 14). Paul’s consistency is also shown by the opposition he had to face in the past and continues to face: “If I were still pleasing men, I would not be a slave of Christ” (1: 10). The sign of the servant is suffering and rejection: “But if I, brethren, still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted?” (5: 11); “I bear on my body the marks of Jesus” (6: 17).

11. How is Paul’s experience and that of the Galatians critical to Paul’s argument?

What stake did community members have in circumcision? According to Paul, it made them appear to be normal members of Israel rather than candidates for persecution and martyrdom, a persecution that was brought about precisely because the crucified Messiah was a stumbling block to those who saw Torah as the ultimate norm of righteousness (3: 13)—a point illustrated by Paul’s own past experience (1: 13-14). While it may be difficult to contextualize these statements in the life of the Galatian church—since we know so little about their experience—it is clear that, in Paul’s eyes, the choice of circumcision was both cowardly and a rejection of the experience of God through the preaching of the crucified Messiah (3: 1). Paul himself utterly rejects that choice (6: 14):

But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

The Galatians outrage and puzzle (4: 15) Paul all the more because of their willingness to deny their own experience, something he refuses to do. In their hearing of the gospel, they had already experienced the Holy Spirit powerfully (3: 2-5). In their baptism, they had already been joined to the Messiah as children of God and heirs of the kingdom (3: 26-27), calling God "Father" (4: 6-7). To seek now another form of initiation is to denigrate the first. To seek righteousness by the norm of Torah means denying the righteousness they received from the faith of the Messiah. The Galatians resemble healthily breathing people who are told the only way to breathe is by means of an artificial respirator. No one can deny the efficiency of a respirator for those who cannot breathe for themselves. But if the Galatians are now breathing by the life of the Spirit, to choose a respirator is to choose slavery.

12. If Saul considered Jesus a genuine threat to the Jewish nation and the coming of God's kingdom, how might Saul have justified his persecution of the Nazarenes, the followers of Jesus? Do you think it was possible for some Jews to think they were serving God by persecuting Christians (Jn 16: 2; 1 Tim 1: 13)? What would you have done? Should modern day Jews be held responsibility for killing Jesus (CCC 597)?

It was held by the community that ANYONE who preached against God would interrupt the coming of the Savior. For the entire nation, it was of vital importance to maintain Torah until the reestablishment of David's kingdom. From that viewpoint, it would absolutely make sense for the Jews to persecute and kill Christians. The very existence of the Nazarenes threatened thousands of years of Mishna teachings and the very future of the people. Because all they understood was the old covenant and were not yet aware of the resurrection they could not see beyond death. For Christ and His followers to come and preach that there was life beyond death and that Jesus was the one for whom the Jews had waited was sure to cause a faithful Jew attached exclusively to the teachings of the

Hebrew scriptures to rebel.

"All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." It doesn't matter if it's a modern or ancient Jew. We are all, by our sins, responsible for the death of Jesus regardless of whether a Jew or a Gentile. The Jews are guilty for not following Torah and the Gentiles for not listening to the prompts from the very earth.

13. *To whom did Paul submit his gospel (Gal 2: 1-2)? What did Peter decide (Acts 15: 6-11)? What did the council write (Acts 15: 13-29)? What did Paul do next (Acts 15: 30-41)? From these passages, does it appear that Paul functioned as a "Lone Ranger" or did he function within the hierarchy of the Church? Does salvation come by faith in Christ or by circumcision and obeying all the 613 laws of Moses (Rom 3: 28; Gal 2: 16; CCC 161, 183)? Is the Good News of Jesus Christ only for the Jew (Mt 28: 18-20; CCC 543, 831)? Comment on Paul's approach to this Jewish/Gentile issue and compare it with the Catholic/ Protestant contention over "faith vs. works".*

Paul presents his mission to the apostles at the Council of Jerusalem (Gal 2: 1-2). St. Peter defends Paul's ministry to the Gentiles (Acts 15: 6-11), as Paul describes and defends his ministry. St. James supports Paul's mission as the main representative of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem (Acts 15: 30-41). The apostles support St. Paul in his ministry (15: 22-29), commissioning Barnabus & Paul to convey the apostles' message to the Gentiles. Salvation comes, among the Gentile people, through faith lived out in baptism, thus making Christianity accessible to the Gentiles as well as Jewish Christians. Paul will argue in Galatians 3: 36-29 that Christian Gentiles are brothers to Jewish Christians due to their via through baptism:

For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendant, heirs according to the promise.

Theo 210, Week #14:
Pauline Literature IV (ANSWER KEY)
The University of St. Francis

True/False

1. True *From the Video...* in St. Paul's four recorded journeys cited in Acts, scholars calculated that he most likely traveled by foot well over 6,000 miles.
2. False *From the Video...* St. Paul and St. Barnabas were constant companions during the four major journeys cited in the Acts of the Apostles.
3. False *From the Video...* St. Paul refers to the loss of all things as "refuse" to gain Christ in the scriptures. In this case, "refuse" refers to what we would call kitchen garbage.
4. False *From the Video...* A first century fear existed called "The Rapture," where Christ would secretly reappear before the last day and the faithful prematurely, leaving the rest behind.
5. False Some scholars doubt whether Paul was in prison in Rome when he wrote Philippians because there are no New Testament references to his being in prison there.
6. True In Paul's interpretation of Jesus' crucifixion, Jesus' voluntary death paid the Torah's penalties for all lawbreakers (sinners).
7. True Paul enjoyed an unusually warm and affectionate relationship with the church at Philippi.

8. True According to the letter to the Philippians, Paul corresponds with the Philippian church through Epaphroditus, a Philippian church member who became ill while visiting Paul in jail.
9. True The main theme of the “hymn to Christ” found in Phil. 2: 6-11 is that Jesus’ behavior of humble service to others is the supreme example for the Philippians to follow.
10. True Some modern scholars believe that the “hymn to Christ” found in Phil. 2: 6-11 was not authored by Paul but was borrowed by him from some other source.
11. False The main subject of the letter to Philemon is a slave named Philemon.
12. False The main theme of Ephesians is justification by faith.
13. False The author of 1 Timothy stresses that pastors and deacons must be people who are full of the Holy Spirit.
14. False The man Titus, to whom the Book of Titus was supposedly written, was a Jewish Pharisee whom Paul converted to Christianity while in Antioch.
15. True In the letter to Philemon, Paul seems to hint that he wants Philemon to release Onesimus from service as a slave so that Onesimus can work for Paul’s missionary organization.
16. True If Paul actually wrote Colossians, he had not yet visited the church when he wrote the epistle.
17. False Many scholars associate the letter to the Colossians with the Book of Galatians because both books include greetings from many of the same persons.

18. True The purpose of the Christology of the Book of Colossians is to demonstrate that Christ is presently superior to all rival cosmic beings.
19. True Recalling the initiation language of Greek mystery religions, the author of Colossians portrays baptism as the rite of initiation into Christ's "body," the church.

Multiple Choice

1. *From the Video...* Who was St. Paul's first European convert and provided her house as the first "house Church" established by Paul in Europe?
- a. Cornelius
b. Lydia
c. Festus
d. Apollo
2. According to early church tradition, we know for a certainty that Paul wrote how many canonical letter(s) while imprisoned in Rome?
- a. One
b. Two
c. Three
d. Four
3. According to early church tradition, we know for a certainty that Paul wrote how many canonical letter(s) while imprisoned in Rome?
- a. One
b. Two
c. Three
d. Four
4. Which of the following cities is NOT a location scholars have suggested as the probable place where Paul was imprisoned when he wrote the captivity letters?
- a. Antioch**
b. Ephesus
c. Rome
d. Caesarea

5. Paul wrote the Book of Philippians to thank the church at Philippi for what reason?
- a. Opposing the Roman government's persecution of Christians.
 - b. Working to get Paul's son out of jail.
 - c. *Sending Paul a gift of money while he was in prison.***
 - d. Editing and publishing his letters.
6. The name of this person appears in the superscription of Philippians as coauthor of that book with Paul.
- a. Clement
 - b. *Timothy***
 - c. Epaphroditus
 - d. Barnabas
7. Which of the following statements best describes the attitude that Paul expresses in Philippians concerning his imprisonment?
- a. Paul is sad that he was unable to complete his third missionary journey.
 - b. Paul is afraid of dying in prison.
 - c. *Paul sees his imprisonment as an opportunity to share the Gospel of Christ with his prison guards.***
 - d. Paul does not understand why God is allowing him to suffer so much.
8. Since the fourth century, many Christian theologians have understood the Christ hymn of Phil. 2: 6-11 to refer to what?
- a. Jesus' virginal conception.
 - b. Jesus' fulfillment of prophecies in the Hebrew Bible.
 - c. *Jesus' prehuman existence.***
 - d. Jesus' ability to heal the sick and raise the dead.

9. A growing number of scholars see the Christ hymn in Phil. 2: 6-11 as contrasting the ways Christ behaved toward God and the way which character responded to God in the Hebrew Bible?
- a. *Adam* c. Abraham
b. Moses d. Jeremiah
10. In Phil. 3, Paul suddenly lashes out at his enemies the Judaizers, calling them which term ancient Jews commonly used to refer to Gentiles?
- a. Swine c. Slugs
b. Donkeys d. *Dogs*
11. Paul's letter to Philemon is his shortest letter, a book that contains exactly how many verses?
- a. 22 c. 24
b. 23 d. *25*
12. According to the letter to Philemon, what did Paul do when he found out that his new friend was a slave who had run away from another old friend of Paul's?
- a. *Paul sent the runaway slave back to his original master.*
b. Paul wanted to buy the slave for himself.
c. Paul turned the slave in to the Roman authorities and used the reward money to get out of jail.
d. Paul wrote this letter to Philemon, bitterly criticizing him for enslaving another human being.
13. The practice of writing new works under the name of a well-known but deceased person is known as what?
- a. *Pseudonymity* c. Apocalyptic
b. Pseudepigrapha d. Form Criticism

14. In the Christ hymn of Col. 1: 15-20, the author portrays Christ using imagery that recalls what from the Hebrew Bible and elsewhere in ancient Judaism?
- a. Legal rituals
 - b. Three of the Ten Commandments
 - c. *The concept of divine Wisdom***
 - d. Nothing
15. The contents and style of the Book of Ephesians closely resemble that of which New Testament book?
- a. 1 Thessalonians.
 - b. Galatians.
 - c. 1 Timothy.
 - d. *Colossians.***
16. Why did many scholars believe that Ephesians was written as a kind of “cover letter” introducing a collection of Paul’s letters?
- a. Ephesians directs the reader to study Paul’s “other letters.”
 - b. The words “in Ephesus” do not appear in the earliest manuscripts of Eph. 1: 1.
 - c. *The author of Ephesians was plainly a Gentile.***
 - d. It makes reference to each of Paul’s twelve other New Testament letters.
17. In Eph. 6, the author encourages his readers to be faithful by portraying them as what?
- a. Fishermen who toil all night to catch a single fish.
 - b. Merchants who sail great distances to complete their business.
 - c. Farmers who sow seed in all kinds of soil.
 - d. *Soldiers who wear their armor and are always ready for battle.***

18. Why did the author of 1 Timothy claim that women are not to teach or have authority over men?
- a. *Eve sinned before Adam in the story of the Fall in Genesis 3.*
 - b. Women are not good public speakers.
 - c. There are no prophetesses in the Hebrew Bible.
 - d. Preachers and teachers are to keep their hair short.
19. Though most scholars doubt the authenticity of all of the pastoral letters, some scholars suspect that parts of what New Testament book might have come from the historical Paul?
- a. 1 Timothy
 - b. *2 Timothy*
 - c. Titus
 - d. Philemon
20. *From the Video...* To what did Paul compare his self-righteousness of based the law?
- a. His sinful condition.
 - b. Human refuse.
 - c. A righteousness based on Christ.
 - d. *All of these.*

Short Answer Questions from the Videos

1. Why is salvation not by faith alone? What does the word believe mean and what else is required of the believer for salvation and a right relationship with God?

Faith must always be accompanied by works, as stated in the letter of James and even the joint statement from the Lutheran/Roman Catholic Dialogue, promulgated in 1992, which stated the following...

We confess together that sinners are justified by faith in the saving action of God in Christ. By the action of the Holy Spirit in baptism, they are granted the gift of salvation, which lays the basis for the

whole Christian life. They place their trust in God's gracious promise by justifying faith, which includes hope in God and love for him. Such a faith is active in love and thus the Christian cannot and should not remain without works. But whatever in the justified precedes or follows the free gift of faith is neither the basis of justification nor merits it. (#25)

This leads to the interpretation of the biblical word "believe." It includes the word "faith," 100% commitment and obedience.

2. In returning to Jerusalem as a convert, what was Paul's relationship to Peter and the Church?

In returning back to Jerusalem as a convert, Barnabus brought Saul to Peter and the disciples. For fifteen days, Paul was taught by Peter, whom he called "Cephas" (the rock). Throughout Jerusalem, Saul preached Jesus as the Christ as Israel. Saul taught that salvation took place through faith and baptism.

3. In what way did Paul "count as refuse" for the sake of gaining Christ and attaining to the resurrection from the dead?

During his days as a Pharisee, Paul tried to merit his salvation through his own zealous efforts. But he considered his Jewish legalism and self-righteousness as refuse.

4. What attitude should we have toward the great saints who have gone before us and what can we do to follow their example?

We see Paul as the model Jew and as a contender to the faith. He argued from scripture and tradition that God offered salvation for you and me. It was God's plan that all men should be saved and that we all have the ability to seek the truth. As he suffered for Christ for our salvation. Salvation comes from faith and obedience through Jesus Christ, to both Jew & Gentile.

Essay (From Johnson's Book)

1. What characteristics have suggested to some scholars that Philippians has been pieced together from multiple letters of Paul?

The authenticity of Philippians is not seriously challenged, but the presence of apparent editorial seams, changes of tone within the letter, and conflicting information lead some to doubt its literary integrity. As for the matter of the seams, the letter appears to have several endings, since Paul twice uses the phrase “finally” (το λοιπον) – an expression that usually signals a conclusion – without actually ending the letter but moving on, instead, to another section (3: 1; 4: 8). The shift in tone is found only in one place, when Paul moves from an encouragement to rejoice in the Lord (3: 1) to a warning against “the dogs” (3: 2). As for conflicting details, in 2: 25–28 Paul says he plans to send Epaphroditus, the Philippians’ emissary, back to them after he had been sick to the point of death; but when he mentions Epaphroditus’ delivery of their monetary gift in 4: 18, no mention is made of a lengthy stay. Some also consider Paul’s not thanking them for their gift until 4: 10–20 to be unconscionable, whereas if this were a separate letter (beginning in 4: 10), Paul’s thanks would be direct and his comments on Epaphroditus more consistent.

Such literary observations are joined to a reconstruction of the Philippian situation that emphasizes the role of the “opponents” (1: 28). Paul says that some preach the gospel out of envy and rivalry (1: 15–17), that there is murmuring and grumbling in the community (2: 14), and that some of the mission workers are not getting along (4: 2–3). He also mentions some who are “enemies of the cross” (3: 18); and refers to certain “dogs” and “evil workers” who put their pride in circumcision (3: 2–4). The conclusion is reached that the fragments of Philippians reveal stages of a conflict developing in the community generated by Pauline opponents and answered by Paul in a series of notes.

On this reading, three separate letter fragments are later sewn together, which accounts for the unevenness in the final version. The

first is 4: 10–20, a note thanking the Philippians for their gift of money. The second warns against divisions in the church (1: 1–3; 1; 4: 4–7, 21–23). The third sharply attacks the false teachers who have fomented dissension (3: 2–4; 3; 4: 8–9). The history of the community troubles follows the same progression. There is no hint of trouble in the first letter. In the second, there is rivalry and grumbling, which Paul thinks he can contain by exhortation. The third letter reveals a situation more dangerous than he had supposed, requiring a direct rebuttal of the opponents.

2. What image of Jesus emerges from the “hymn” in Phil. 2: 6–11? What gets left out of this characterization?

*Paul’s language in 2: 6–11 is dense and rhythmic, possibly indicating reliance on a traditional Christian hymn about Jesus. The correspondence in structure and language to the rest of this section is so close that it is also possible that Paul himself wrote the hymn or, at the very least, that he conformed his language in the surrounding text to match the vocabulary of the poem. Certainly of greater significance is the content of the hymn, and how it functions for Paul as part of his larger argument in Philippians. Playing off Paul’s previous use of friendship language – particularly in association with the use of *posWeeks* – the hymn establishes a model for Christian imitation in terms of possessing and dispossessing positions of power. Paul writes of Jesus (2: 6–11), who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of humanity. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

*Here is one who was in the form of God (*morphē tou theou*) but did not reckon or count (*hēgēomai*) himself above God, and therefore did not seize the position of equality (*isos*) with God as one would take *posWeek* of something (*hapargmon* suggests “booty”). Rather, he*

“emptied himself” and took on the form of a slave (morphē doulou). This is the essential exchange.

Then, being found (heuretheis) in the form of a human being, he humbled himself further (etapeinōsen) by his obedience that led to his death on the cross (2: 8). The cross is the ultimate symbol of self-emptying and of the obedience that is faith precisely because it was the human symbol—in Paul’s day—for ultimate rejection, scorn, and degradation. The hymn has thus moved downward, toward “disposWeek.” It also clearly corresponds to the command for community members to “reckon” and “be humble” (2: 3): Jesus illustrates—indeed actualizes—these principles in his own life.

Now, the movement is reversed. The one who did not “grasp at” equality with God has been honored by God (2: 9) and exalted as Lord. He is greeted and worshiped as Lord by all creation (2: 10–11). The pattern is therefore clear: precisely because (dio, “therefore,” in 2: 9 is emphatic) Jesus gave up his “legitimate interest” of equality with God, he was honored with exaltation. In a marvelous line of reversals, the one who dispossesses all—indeed coming to the point of being dispossessed himself—comes to possess, in the end, all things as Lord. This principle had a strong impact on early Christian teaching (cf. Mark 9: 33–35; 10: 35–45; Matt. 23: 11–12; Luke 9: 46–48; 22: 24–27), particularly in the sense that Paul uses it here: as a model not only for Christian fellowship in general, but for Christian leadership in particular.

Scholars debate whether the pattern describes the mythological descent and ascent of the incarnation: the preexistent Christ “emptied himself out” of his divine status by becoming human only to receive it back in the resurrection. This would not be foreign to Paul, who is fond of cosmic exchanges (cf. 2 Cor. 5: 21; 8: 9; Gal. 4: 4–7). Others argue that the focus is less on the incarnation than on the manner of Jesus’ messianic activity. They claim that Paul here interprets the story of Jesus through a meditation on Isaiah 52–53—the Song of the Suffering Servant—showing how in his lifetime Jesus refused the status of claiming equality with God and consistently “emptied himself out” in service. This reading too is intelligible and

corresponds to Paul's sensitivity to the faith of Jesus as the cause and shape of Christian identity. There is no real need to choose between the options. For Paul, both the gift of God that was the coming of the Messiah and the "Messiah's faith" that was spelled out in obedience take the form of "self-emptying for others."

Jesus is a model to the Philippians of how they should not "grasp after equality" by seeking their own interests, but "empty themselves" in service to one another, with the expectation that, like Jesus, they will be honored and glorified by God. The work of the spirit in them replicates the pattern of its work in Jesus. This is why Paul introduces the hymn in this manner: "You have this mind in you which is yours in Christ Jesus" (2: 5). The ambiguity of the Greek should not go unnoticed, as it can be read both indicatively ("you do have") and imperatively ("you must have"). They have this mind already because of the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 2: 16); but they must strive to live it out in imitation of Jesus. The hymn concludes then with the following: "Therefore my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now" (2: 12); otherwise, Paul's work among them has been in vain (2: 16). God's work among them (2: 13) should not lead to divisiveness (2: 14) but to mutual service.

3. How would you describe Paul's notion of community based on Philippians?

Since the Spirit came to them through the hearing of the "good news," theirs is also a "fellowship in the gospel" (1: 5). The "good news" has bound them together from the beginning (4: 15). They have supported it financially (4: 10-20), have labored together in its proclamation (2: 22; 4: 3), and have suffering together in its defense (1: 7, 12, 16, 29-30; 3: 10). If they are "one soul" it is because they "struggle together in faith for the gospel" (1: 27). That "good news," furthermore, demands from them a response consonant with the gift: "Let your life be worthy of the gospel of Christ" (1: 27).

Envy is a vice in which one seeks one's own good at the expense of others. For Paul, it is unthinkable that rivalry, envy, and competition should arise over the preaching of the gospel (1: 15), when that is

precisely the focus of Christian unity. In his use of the language of fellowship, Paul therefore rebukes those members of the community who abandon the common good, seeking their own self-interest. If they are grumbling and complaining against each other (2: 14), they will no longer “shine like lights in the world” (2: 14), missing the real reason why God has called this fellowship into existence: “God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (2: 13).

4. In what ways does Paul portray himself as an example for the Philippian church?

Paul has therefore allowed the form of Christ's self-emptying to become the form of his own existence. Unlike those who preach circumcision, he does not cling to a status of which he can boast but receives the gift of righteousness that comes by Jesus' faith. So also should the Philippians regard themselves (3: 15–16). The process has not yet been completed in Paul; he still must struggle as an athlete (3: 12–14); he has not reached the resurrection glory. He is still being conformed to the suffering of Christ. This is their call as well, since “Christ Jesus has made [them] his own” (3: 12–14).

Paul calls them to imitation in 3: 17–21. They can look to Jesus, Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus as examples of the mind of Christ: “. . . join in imitating me, and observe those who so live according to the example you have in us.” As often in parenesis, Paul contrasts this positive command with its negative opposite—those opponents of the cross whose minds are set on earthly things (3: 18–19)—before picking up the language of the hymn once more and drawing his readers with him into the Spirit's work of transformation (3: 20–21):

Our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly to be like [or, formed with: the body of his glory, by the power which enables him to subject all things to himself.

5. What word-plays does Paul use in the letter to Philemon?

The letter contains a number of elegant puns. The Greek name Onesimus means “useful.” Paul tells Philemon that Onesimus had formerly been “useless” (achrestos) to him but now had become “useful” (euchrestos) (v. 11), since he had been “begotten” by Paul as a son in the faith (v. 10). The pun is actually double, since the Greek chrēstos suggests “Christ” (Christos). So, before his conversion, Onesimus was useless (achrestos) because he was “without Christ” (a-Chrestos) but now he is useful (euchrestos) because he is a “good Christian” (eu-Chrestos). Onesimus, in other words, found his true identity in the gospel, as did Philemon himself (v. 19).

6. How would you describe the relationships between Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus?

Here is a possible reconstruction. Paul is in prison with the founder of the Colossian community, Epaphras. He is joined by the runaway slave Onesimus. The slave or someone else brings news to Paul and Epaphras of a crisis regarding the Christian faith in the Colossian church. Epaphras asks Paul to support his ministry there by writing a letter to the troubled community. Paul obliges. He also writes a letter of support for Onesimus, and uses the occasion of sending the slave back to his master to have the Colossian letter delivered. The critical link here is this: Philemon’s congregation is among the house churches of Colossae, so it is only natural that the letters of Philemon and Colossians should have been connected—they arrived together—and this ensures the preservation of the personal letter to Philemon.

7. What situation prompts Paul’s writing of this letter? What has changed in Onesimus’ circumstances?

Paul needs considerable diplomatic skill for his situation is awkward. Philemon, the slave owner, has the Roman law on his side, and since Paul is the cause of Onesimus’ defection, he is legally to blame. But he is also convinced that Onesimus—now that he is a Christian—cannot be considered simply property. He is an equal

before the Lord and a “brother.” By accepting Onesimus among his companions, Paul has brought some financial harm to Philemon, which he promises to repay (v. 18). At the same time, Paul is Philemon’s benefactor: through the Pauline mission, Philemon has been given life, so that Paul can say to him, “You owe me even yourself” (v. 19). Paul may owe Philemon monetary recompensation, but Philemon owes Paul much more. Paul thus trumps Philemon in the hierarchy of obligation.

The situation is even more complex: Paul does not want to lose the assistance of Onesimus, so he would like Philemon to send Onesimus back. Although Paul’s position may be tenuous from a legal standpoint, he states that “in Christ” he can indeed command Philemon’s compliance (v. 8). One of the great examples of Paul’s power of suggestion is that after stating this, he goes on to say that he will not demand Philemon’s submission on the issue but will “appeal” to him on the “basis of love” (v. 9). Yet, Paul’s remarks about his being “an old man” (or, “ambassador”) and “a prisoner of Christ Jesus” should be read as his subtle – perhaps not so subtle – manipulation of the “appeal on the basis of love.” Actually, in the realm of the Christian oikomene (which includes not only Philemon’s immediate household, but all the Christian households in the larger Pauline communities), Paul possesses the authority of a “head.” This means, in effect, that Paul has authority over Philemon’s own household, including Onesimus, thus trumping the Greco-Roman social hierarchy of obligation. Clearly Paul wants Philemon to read between the lines and follow his wishes, but he has also left him little choice in the matter. Paul does, however, provide a way out of the situation that will also bring honor to Philemon.

8. How can Philemon fairly be called a “letter of commendation?”

The Letter to Philemon opens a small but light-filled window on the Pauline mission. It shows us the close network of fellow workers (vv. 2, 23–24), the importance of benefaction (v. 7) and of hospitality (v. 22), the leadership role of women (v. 2), the understanding of the community as “the holy ones” (vv. 4, 7), and the prominence of the households as the place of Christian meeting (v. 2). We find the

fellowship (koinōnia) of the Christian community to be one of faith that is active in sharing (v. 6), service (v. 13), and reciprocity (v. 17). The fellowship “in Christ” (vv. 8, 20) and “in the Lord” (v. 16) transcends natural kinship relationships and social stratification. Paul is a “father” to Onesimus because he converted him to the “good news” (v. 10), and that new status makes the slave now also a “beloved brother” to his master (v. 16). We begin to see how this new sort of fellowship – the Christian household – will strain ever more urgently against the framework of ancient social structures, so that not even tact and diplomacy will resolve the tension between these statements: “There is neither slave nor free” and “Slaves be submissive.” And at last we see again the paradox of Paul, who, while in chains, is giving freedom to both slaves and masters through the “good news.”