

To Preach Him among the Gentiles

A Study of Paul's Missionary Preaching According to his Epistles

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Statement of Originality

I declare that this work has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution. Sources are credited in the section titled “works cited” and in footnotes.

Signed: _____

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Stephen David Morrison

Synopsis

Many have attempted to uncover or reconstruct Paul's missionary message from various texts, chiefly Paul's epistles and Acts. This study explores what of Paul's missionary preaching we can uncover only from his epistles, but with reference to the secondary epistles and the Pauline tradition as presented in Acts.

Following a review of the literature, a detailed examination is made of Paul's word use in relation to his preaching. This includes words such as "gospel", "word" and "mystery" and response words like "faith" and "repentance". Attention then turns to specific summaries of the gospel in Paul's epistles. These include 1 Thess. 1:9-10, 1 Cor. 1-2 and 15:3-5, Gal. 1:11-17 and Rom. 1:1-4. Included with the last passage is an exploration of the question of Romans itself being Paul's gospel.

The purpose of this thesis is to agree that there is one gospel/kerygma but that the expression of that changes with context. With unbelievers, the evidence would suggest that Paul preached the gospel in way that would most potently bring people to repentance and faith, but without compromising the truth of the message he presented. But with believers, the message became less (or non) negotiable and centred on the death and resurrection of Christ.

Section 1 - Literature Review

Introduction

A stark silence from Paul's Epistles on the topic and a lack of sources makes a study on the subject of Paul's evangelistic preaching to Gentiles ambitious. However, despite this difficulty, many have sought to compile a reconstruction of the ancient apostolic preaching.

This thesis will argue that there is not much that we can glean from Paul's epistles about the way he delivered the gospel to unbelieving Gentiles. Many of the passages that are often used to attempt to reconstruct Paul's mission preaching, such as Rom. 1:3-4, 1 Cor. 1-4 and 15:3-5, are better understood as Paul's teaching to converts of the gospel which is to be their central belief rather than a proclamation of the gospel seeking initial repentance and faith. But there are some passages which provide some information about Paul's missionary preaching. Specifically, 1 Thess. 1:9-10 and Gal. 1:16 help us know some of the missionary content but those and other passages also indicate that Paul varied the emphasis of his message depending on the audience.

Scholarship initially sought to uncover the kerygma of the earliest church.¹ But as the debate escalated questions were raised about the nature of the kerygma. Was the kerygma primarily about content or was it more about the preaching itself?² Later, questions were raised about whether we should speak of the kerygma or rather should we account for the biblical variation by the plural kerygmata?³ For those that want to maintain that there is one kerygma,

¹ See, for example, C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963). Please note in this introduction that the references are broad and general. More details on these assertions will follow in the literature review.

² Paul Althaus, *The So-Called Kerygma and the Historical Jesus*, trans. David Cairns (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1959) Hans Werner Bartsch, *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*, 2 vols. (London: SPCK, 1953) Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols. (1; London: SCM, 1952)

³ Most notable is James D. G. Dunn, *Unity And Diversity In The New Testament: An Inquiry Into The Character of Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM, 2006b).

what then should be said of the variations in the message?⁴ For those that claim there is variation or kerygmata, what accounts for, determines or drives that variation?⁵

Complicating the debate is the question of which source material is included. The findings of scholars tend to vary depending on which Pauline material they regard as authentic and probably even more influential is their treatment of Acts. There are almost as many treatments of the ancient material as there are scholars writing on the topic.

Another complication in the debate(s) is that scholars vary their methodology depending on whether they are seeking specifically Paul's initial preaching or whether they are trying to uncover the Apostolic preaching more generally.⁶ Some will argue that Paul's kerygma is the one and the same kerygma as the other Apostles, especially Peter, while other scholars find Paul's kerygma different and in some cases irreconcilable with Peter's kerygma.⁷

Because there is so much variety in the way scholarship has tackled the kerygma question, a detailed examination of the most important contributions is needed to start this thesis. This will explain why some scholars receive more attention than others in the body of the thesis

⁴ Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2 vols. (Downers Grove; Leicester: InterVarsity; Apollos, 2004), Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies, and Methods* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2008).

⁵ To date no author has directly addressed this question. This is noteworthy and will be a determining factor in the direction of this study. Green has addressed some associated questions and will be examined later. Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Rev edn.; Eastbourne: Kingsway, 2003).

⁶ Compare, for example, Dunn, *Unity And Diversity In The New Testament: An Inquiry Into The Character of Earliest Christianity*, with Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*.

⁷ For the former see Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, James S. Stewart, *A Faith To Proclaim* (London: Hodder & Stoughton 1953), Robert H Mounce, *The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), Eugene E. Lemcio, 'The Unifying Kerygma of the New Testament', *JSNT*, 10/3 (1988), 3-17, Eugene E. Lemcio, 'The Unifying Kerygma of the New Testament (II)', *JSNT*, 12/3 (1990), 3-11. And for the latter see Paul Barnett, 'Paul's Preaching Reconsidered', *Move in for Action: Report of the Commission on Evangelism of the Church of England Diocese of Sydney* (Sydney: Anzea, 1971), 59-68, Dunn, *Unity And Diversity In The New Testament: An Inquiry Into The Character of Earliest Christianity* For an interesting variation that has already been noted see Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*.

and will help clarify what source material is being used and hence, which scholars will be related to the boundaries of this project.

This review will limit itself to examining works that explicitly try to uncover Paul's initial preaching and also those that make contributions to the kerygma debate. That is, there are works included in this review that do not focus specifically on uncovering Paul's kerygma. The reason for this, which will be expanded in the conclusion, is that many of those engaging in the broader kerygma debate claim that they are also presenting Paul's kerygma. Likewise, there will be works reviewed in this section which speak to the kerygma debate but which include the Acts material and little of Paul. Similarly, there are important studies in Paul and commentaries that will be referred to in this thesis but that will not be reviewed in this section.

Adolf Harnack (1908)

In 1902 Harnack published (in German) a book on what he regarded as the neglected subject of early Christian mission.⁸ In proportion to its influence, the monograph was republished in German in 1905 and then in English in 1908 and again in 1962. Harnack's task was ambitious as he endeavoured to reconstruct the way that the Christian mission expanded through the first three centuries, but also the external and internal factors influencing such expansion.

Harnack uses the biblical data to categorise mission preaching to Jews into three stages. The first stage is recorded in Matt. 10:7f and is summarised by: "The kingdom of God is at hand;

⁸ Adolf von Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, trans. James Moffatt (London; New York: : Williams and Norgate; Harper Torchbook, 1908, 1962). Adolf von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums: in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1902).

repent”.⁹ The second stage has the tenet: “The risen Jesus is the Messiah... and will return from heaven to establish his kingdom”.¹⁰ The texts supporting this are Matt. 10:32 and 1 Cor. 15:4f.¹¹ The third stage was “marked by the interpretation of the Old Testament as a whole” particularly “from the standpoint of its fulfilment in Jesus Christ”.¹² The main text supporting this is Acts 13:38.¹³

While Harnack is not singling out Paul in his reconstruction of “mission preaching”, his reconstruction of the first mission preaching to Gentiles rests on Paul’s letters and Acts.¹⁴ He also draws extensively from other early material, much of which is worth examining. Missionary preaching in its narrow sense refers to “the crucial message of faith and the ethical requirement of the gospel”.¹⁵ Harnack does not explain why he uses the phrase “message of faith” (repeatedly) when faith features only as part of the response to the message. He also does not attempt to define what he means by faith.¹⁶

The “mission-preaching to pagans in a nutshell”¹⁷ comes from two key Pauline passages: 1 Cor. 12:2 and 1 Thess. 1:9-10.

Harnack emphasises both the preaching of God and Jesus the Son in a context where judgment is prominent but security can be found in “Jesus the Lord”.¹⁸ The response to this

⁹ Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, 87.

¹⁰ Ibid., 88.

¹¹ Ibid., 88.

¹² Ibid., 88.

¹³ Ibid., 88.

¹⁴ Ibid., 89-91.

¹⁵ Ibid., 86.

¹⁶ Ibid. But note that “we owe faith and devoted service; to God’s Son as *Lord*, our due is faith and hope” (page 89) and that faith is to be placed in the resurrection body (page 92).

¹⁷ Ibid., 89.

¹⁸ Harnack summarises the preaching as follows: “The ‘living and true God’ is the first and final thing; the second is Jesus, the Son of God, the judge, who secures us against the wrath to come, and who is therefore ‘Jesus the Lord.’ To the living God, now preached to all men, we owe faith and devoted service; to God’s Son as *Lord*, our due is faith and hope.” Ibid., 89.

preaching is “faith and devoted service”.¹⁹ We should note here what Harnack does not include. There is no reference to the cross, to the resurrection, repentance and the Holy Spirit. That is not to make any judgment about that yet but to note the difference between his own conclusions and the many scholars who follow.

Although the Areopagus was put “into the mouth of Paul” by Luke, it is “typical and particularly instructive”.²⁰ “We must combine this speech with First Thessalonians, in order to understand how the fundamentals of mission-preaching were laid before pagans”.²¹ In the same sentence Harnack is keen that we “get rid of the notion that Galatians and Romans are a model of Paul’s preaching to pagan audiences”.²²

While Harnack’s treatment is brief and many historical questions remain unanswered it is worth noting that his presentation of “unity and variety” in the early preaching is largely overlooked in the *kerygma* debate of the next fifty years.²³ It is not until Green’s work in 1970 and Dunn in 1977 that this variety is again thoroughly examined.²⁴

Roland Allen (1912)

In 1912 Roland Allen published a book analysing the missionary methods of Paul and comparing them with *modern* trends in missionary work.²⁵ Motivated by the contrast between his time spent in China and his time as a pastor in England, Allen’s main objective was to

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 90.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 84. See for example Allen (1912) and Dodd (1936) who seek to uncover a single *kerygma*. Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*

²⁴ Dunn, *Unity And Diversity In The New Testament: An Inquiry Into The Character of Earliest Christianity*, Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*.

²⁵ Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*

promote biblical priorities when formulating and evaluating mission work. In doing this he did a thorough analysis of “the substance of St Paul’s preaching”.²⁶

Allen prioritised Acts, only including 1 Corinthians 2:2 and 1 Thessalonians from the Epistles.²⁷ He argues that Paul’s speeches in Lystra (Acts 14:15-17) and Athens (Acts 17:22-31) are not “typical examples of St Paul’s preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles” but that they were “made under exceptional circumstances at dramatic moments in St Paul’s career”.²⁸ Allen puts forward four “characteristics” of Paul’s preaching which never change.²⁹ These include sympathy with the hearer, courage without compromise, respect for the hearer and confidence in the truth of the message. Allen argues that the “elements” of the preaching remain basically the same in both the synagogue preaching and preaching to heathen with two notable exceptions.³⁰ First, the Jews were not commanded to break with the old religion in the way that the heathen were, and secondly, judgment on the heathen was emphasised.³¹ Other than this, the chief elements were constant and reflected an exposition of Trinitarian doctrine:

“That Gospel involves a doctrine of God the Father, the Creator; a doctrine of Jesus the Son, the Redeemer, the Saviour; a doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling source of strength; but these in the simplest and most practical form.”³²

²⁶ Ibid., 62.

²⁷ Ibid., 62 and 68.

²⁸ Ibid., 65.

²⁹ Ibid., 64.

³⁰ Ibid., 63.

³¹ Ibid., 64.

³² Ibid., 87.

Albrecht Oepke (1920)

In 1920 Oepke published a study that narrowly focussed on Paul's missionary preaching.³³ It has not been re-published or translated from the gothic German script and is rarely cited by scholars. Referring to Paul's initial preaching to Gentiles Dunn says that for a "narrowly directed study we have to go back to Oepke".³⁴ Nearly everyone who references this work manages to avoid actually saying anything about it other than what the title says.³⁵ The scholar who interacts with this thesis is Schnabel and most (maybe all) of his references seem favourable.³⁶ Given the weight and work of Schnabel himself in this area we will not examine Oepke in this study.

C. H. Dodd (1936)

In the 1920s Dodd wrote a book titled "The Gospel in the New Testament".³⁷ The book is very simple (targeting Sunday School teachers) but demonstrates Dodd's early thinking on the gospel and how it is applied in the modern setting.

In 1936 Dodd's lectures on the apostolic kerygma were published in a remarkable work exploring the developments of that message.³⁸ To this day, Dodd's book would stand alone as the most significant contribution in uncovering the apostolic preaching.

³³ von Albrecht Oepke, *Die Missionspredigt des Apostels Paulus: Eine Biblisch-Theologische und Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1920).

³⁴ James D. G. Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem* (Christianity in the making; Grand Rapids; Edinburgh: Eerdmans; Alban [distributor], 2009), 573, note 233. See also the section on Dunn below.

³⁵ See Beauden, for example. John William Beauden, *Paul's Theology of Preaching* (NABPR dissertation series; Macon: Mercer, 1988), 26.

³⁶ Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*.

³⁷ C. H. Dodd, *The Gospel in the New Testament* (London: The National Sunday School Union, 1920's). The actual publication date is unknown. However, the title page reads 'Author of "The Meaning of Paul for Today"'. That volume was published in 1920. It also says that Dodd is at Oxford with the job title "Professor of New Testament Greek and Exegesis at Mansfield College, Oxford". Dodd left in 1930.

³⁸ Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*.

In the New Testament writings the kerygma refers to the “message of the preacher”.³⁹ The writers also draw a clear distinction between teaching and preaching, which is the “public proclamation of Christianity to the non-Christian world”.⁴⁰ Dodd says that his task is to “discover the actual content of the Gospel preached or proclaimed by the apostles” and because of his definition above, he is able to look at occurrences of the word “gospel” in the Epistles and then use those to reconstruct what Paul had preached to his converts evangelistically.⁴¹

Dodd begins with the kerygma of Paul as presented in his epistles, specifically: “a proclamation of the facts of the death and resurrection of Christ in an eschatological setting which gives significance to all the facts.”⁴² Dodd also wants to emphasise that there is a high likelihood that Paul “gave a place in his preaching to some kind of recital of the facts of the life and ministry of Jesus.”⁴³ This emphasis is connected with his goal of showing that there is continuity in Paul’s presentation of the kerygma with that of the other apostles, although he does point out some differences in content.⁴⁴

Given that Dodd wants to argue for consistency on the most part between Paul’s kerygma and the earliest preaching, or the “primate Christian gospel”, his work on the speeches in Acts is important.⁴⁵

In approaching Acts, Dodd uses only the speeches up to chapter 13. “We may with some confidence take these speeches to represent, not indeed what Peter said upon this or that

³⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 7.

⁴¹ Ibid., 7,9-10.

⁴² Ibid., 12.

⁴³ Ibid., 30. See also 27-31.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 25-27. Dodd puts this down to non-Pauline origin of material in most cases.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 16.

occasion, but the kerygma of the early Church at Jerusalem at an early period.”⁴⁶ Together, the speeches “afford a comprehensive view of the content of the early kerygma”.⁴⁷

Dodd proposes 6 parts to this early kerygma:⁴⁸

1. The age of fulfilment has dawned. This is the Messianic age which was spoken of by the prophets (Acts 2:16, 3:18 and 24).
2. This has taken place through the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:23-31 specifically citing Psalm 132:11, Acts 3:13-22, Acts 4:10).
3. By virtue of the resurrection, Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of God, as Messianic head of the new Israel (Acts 2:33-36 citing Psalm 110:1, Acts 3:13 and Acts 4:11 citing Psalm 118:22).
4. The Holy Spirit in the Church is the sign of Christ’s present power and glory (Acts 2:17-21, 33 and Joel 2:28-32).
5. The Messianic Age will shortly reach its consummation in the return of Christ (Acts 3:21 and 5:42).
6. An appeal for repentance, the offer of forgiveness and of the HS, and the promise of salvation to those who enter the elect community (Acts 2:38-39, Joel 2:32, Isaiah 62:19, Acts 3:19, 25-23 citing Genesis 12:3, Acts 4:12, 5:31 and 43).

Like Allen before him, Dodd overlooks the speeches in Lystra and Athens despite the fact that he makes references to Paul’s other activity in Acts. He does, however, seem to point towards a thematic thread of Lordship in the death and resurrection of Christ which climaxes

⁴⁶ Ibid., 21.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 21.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 21-24.

in the eschatological implications.⁴⁹ Dodd points out that there are “three points in the Pauline kerygma which do not directly appear in the Jerusalem kerygma of Acts”.⁵⁰

1. Jesus is not called ‘Son of God’ (in Acts)
2. The Jerusalem kerygma does not assert that Christ died ‘for our sins’.
3. The Jerusalem kerygma does not assert that the exalted Christ intercedes for us.

Dodd then points out that the important element of the ministry of Jesus seems to be missing from Paul’s preaching.⁵¹ He goes on to suggest that Paul probably did make reference to Jesus’ ministry but this remains “uncertain”.⁵²

Dodd’s highly influential work rightly points to an examination of the language associated with the gospel as the starting point of uncovering the kerygma. However, his uncovering what he sees as a single harmonious initial proclamation message with “essential elements” fails to account for the texts that suggest diversity in this message.⁵³ This is despite the fact that he observes variation in content between Paul and the Jerusalem kerygma as presented in Acts 2-13. To be fair to Dodd, his scope and brevity probably prohibit examination in detail of every relevant text although it is surprising that he chose to not include Acts 14 and 17. Where Dodd wanted to argue for a unified kerygma, soon others would argue for diversity.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 12-13.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 25.

⁵¹ Ibid., 27.

⁵² Ibid., 29.

⁵³ Ibid., 26.

Rudolf Bultmann (1952)

Bultmann's most significant work (and most referenced by other scholars in this debate) was his "Theology of the New Testament" published in German in 1948 and English in 1952.⁵⁴

In his reconstruction of the kerygma, Bultmann, unlike Dodd who drew freely from Acts, only takes the "tradition utilized by the author of Acts, so far as it can be ascertained by critical analysis".⁵⁵ He also analyses material from the Pauline letters (of which he accepts seven as "undoubtedly genuine") and the synoptics.⁵⁶

Bultmann begins by examining the message of Jesus and then the kerygma of the early church. Because Jesus had become the Messiah, as the earliest church took his message it was adapted because of that fact. "He who formerly had been the *bearer* of the message was drawn into it and became its essential *content*. *The proclaimer became the proclaimed*".⁵⁷ The heart of this earliest kerygma lay in Jesus as Messiah, that is, "the real content of the Easter faith: God has made the prophet and teacher Jesus of Nazareth Messiah".⁵⁸

"It is clear in the first place that when Jesus was proclaimed as Messiah it was *as the coming Messiah*, in other words *as Son of Man*. Not his *return* as Messiah, but his *coming* as Messiah was expected."⁵⁹ This Messiahship does not rest on the fact that Jesus was "prophet and teacher" or in him being a "great personality".⁶⁰ This is the only way "of understanding why the teaching of the historical Jesus plays no role, or practically none, in Paul and John".⁶¹

⁵⁴ Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*. The German edition: Rudolf Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1948).

⁵⁵ Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 33.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 190 and 33.

⁵⁷ Emphasis in original. The same applies for all quotes with *italics*. Ibid., 33.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 42-43.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 33.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 34-35.

⁶¹ Ibid., 35.

Similarly, “And so it comes about that the personality of Jesus has no importance for the kerygma either of Paul or of John or for the New Testament in General.”⁶²

In its waiting for Jesus’ coming as the Son of Man, “The earliest church regarded itself as the congregation of the end of days”.⁶³ This “eschatological congregation” was distinctively Christian but was not as removed from Judaism as the later church.⁶⁴ This proclamation that Jesus is Messiah is the “proclamation of salvation”, the “gospel”, or the “tradition about the occurrence of salvation” is a fixed traditional message.⁶⁵

When Bultmann examines (at length) Paul’s theology specifically, he does not seek to uncover Paul’s kerygma as such. That is because Bultmann understands that the kerygma of the Hellenistic Church is the “historical presupposition for Paul’s theology”.⁶⁶ Bultmann, therefore, examines “the kerygma of the Hellenistic church aside from Paul” before moving to Paul’s theology specifically.⁶⁷ This Hellenistic kerygma is both prior to and contemporary with Paul and although “*pre-Pauline Hellenistic Christianity was by no means a unity*” it is possible to uncover a “general Christian kerygma”.⁶⁸ That said, while Bultmann does not refer to kerygmata (as Dunn later does, see below) he clearly understands there to be *two* fixed kerygmata: That of the oldest (Jewish) church and that of the Hellenistic Church.

To reconstruct the Hellenistic kerygma is difficult because “there are scarcely any witnesses available”.⁶⁹ Bultmann relies on the following:

⁶² Ibid., 35.

⁶³ Ibid., 37.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 37 and 59.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 34 and 60.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 63.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 63.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 63-64.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 64.

- (1) Some few data in *Acts*
- (2) Some primary material from Paul (such as 1 Cor. 11:23ff and 15:1ff as well as inferences from his letters)
- (3) Inferences from sources of later date such as Hebrews, Barnabas, 1 Clement, James and the Kerygma Petri.

In Bultmann's reconstruction certain biblical texts are repeatedly cited, notably 1 Thess. 1:9-10 and Acts 17:16-32. (it is worth noting that Bultmann sees that the Athenian sermon as "eschatological missionary preaching of Christians").⁷⁰ The Hellenistic kerygma (or "*Christian missionary preaching in the Gentile world*")⁷¹ can be broken up into the following three key sections:

1. The preaching of God and his judgment

Gentile preaching "had to begin with *the proclamation of the one God*".⁷² That is because "the Christian mission first reached those classes in which polytheism was still a living force".⁷³ The pagan world is contrasted with the Christian faith, the former being marked by ignorance and error, the latter by knowledge and truth.⁷⁴ The two adjoined facts that God is creator and therefore ruler are important to understanding God and the reasons for his judgment.⁷⁵ Because of these facts repentance and faith are essentially the same call. The judgment is not private (in terms of the private fate of the sinner), as some Jews and Gentiles

⁷⁰ Ibid., 92.

⁷¹ Ibid., 65.

⁷² Ibid., 65.

⁷³ Ibid., 65.

⁷⁴ Bultmann says "The pagan world is held to be sunk in ignorance *ἄγνοια* and error *πλάνη*... Hence to accept the Christian faith is called 'to know God' or 'the truth'". Ibid., 66-67.

⁷⁵ "God is described as essentially the *Creator*, often in expressions of the Old Testament of Judaism... In addition to these terms, certain Hellenistic (Stoic) formulations serve to describe God's creatorhood and rulership of the world." Ibid., 69-70.

thought, but will be for the whole world. Therefore, preaching about God is necessarily preaching about judgment.⁷⁶

2. Jesus Christ, the Judge and Saviour

When resurrection is preached judgment must also be preached.⁷⁷ Although God as Creator is also Judge, in Paul, “statements about God’s judgeship stand unreconciled beside others about Christ as Judge of the world”.⁷⁸ Therefore Christ must be in the kerygma as *both* saviour and judge.⁷⁹

The shifting use of titles for Jesus is noteworthy at this point. “Savior’ became a title for Christ used in a formula-like manner.”⁸⁰ “The *title* ‘Son of Man’ drops out of Hellenistic Christianity”.⁸¹ It “can be contrasted with the title ‘Son of God’ to indicated the mere humanity of Jesus”.⁸² “The *title* ‘the Christ’ (ὁ χριστός) also gradually is lost and ‘Christ’ becomes a proper name”.⁸³ These special titles given to the Christ who rises amplify the historical Jesus of Nazareth as judge and saviour.⁸⁴

The resurrection implies the crucifixion.⁸⁵ From Acts, Bultmann argues that these two historical events form the “focal point” of the kerygma and hence “furnish” the call to repentance.⁸⁶ It is difficult to determine how much of the effect of the cross was preached but Bultmann does say that that it must have been to some extent taught as “expiatory

⁷⁶ Ibid., 72-74.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 77.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 78.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 78-79.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 79.

⁸¹ Ibid., 80.

⁸² Ibid., 80.

⁸³ Emphasis in original. Ibid., 80.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 80.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 82.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 83.

sacrifice for sins”.⁸⁷ Bultmann then spells out that statement by speaking of a substitutionary sacrifice, of expiation (ἱλαστήριον: note that Bultmann wrote pre-Morris on the propitiation debate). To varying degrees, the Hellenistic preaching also spoke of forgiveness, release or deliverance, ransom, justification, sanctification, purification and reconciliation.⁸⁸

Bultmann then comes to the εὐαγγελ- and κηρυ- word groups. He views both groups as important and does quite a technical analysis of their use. The “Gospel” is the literary form of the kerygma.⁸⁹ “The germ-cell is the kerygma of the death and resurrection of Jesus, so that the gospels have been rightly called ‘passion-narratives with an extensive introduction.’”⁹⁰ He gives another six reasons as to why the kerygma required the Gospel record of Jesus’ life.⁹¹

Εὐαγγέλιον and εὐαγγελίζεσθαι soon appear in Hellenistic Christianity as “message”, “news”, “proclaim” and “preach”.⁹² “If the intention is to emphasize that *good* news is meant, a complementary object such as ἀγαθά (good things) is added to the verb”.⁹³ These two words are “in use, completely synonymous with ‘to herald...’ κηρύσσειν, ‘to announce...’ καταγγέλλειν, ‘to speak...’ or ‘to testify to’ the gospel and, correspondingly, ‘gospel’ is synonymous with ‘the message’, ‘kerygma’ (κήρυγμα), and ‘the word,’ ὁ λόγος”.⁹⁴

⁸⁷ “But in contrast to the Son of Man of the apocalypses and in agreement with the Son of Man of the earliest Church, the eschatological Judge and Savior Jesus Christ is none other than the crucified Jesus of Nazareth whom God raised from the dead and appointed to his eschatological role. Hence, the message of the *raising* or the *resurrection of Jesus* is a basic constituent of the Hellenistic kerygma...” Ibid., 84.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 85.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 86.

⁹⁰ Ibid., quoting: M Kähler, *Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche biblische Christus* (2nd edn., 1896).

⁹¹ Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 86.

⁹² Ibid., 87.

⁹³ Ibid., 87.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 87.

3. The demand for faith

“Acceptance of the Message is called *pistis* (‘faith’ and ‘belief’) or *pistenein* (‘believing’ or ‘having faith’).”⁹⁵ Bultmann acknowledges that “faith” must have an object which is “the kerygma”, “the gospel”, the testimony”, “the word” or the *ἀκοή*.⁹⁶ It is more than simply acceptance of the message though, it is “believing acceptance”.⁹⁷ Faith “came to be understood as the attitude which through and through governs the life of the religious man”.⁹⁸

Faith can mean 1. Belief in the one God; and 2. Belief in God’s saving deed in Christ. There are various phrases that describe the “content” of this faith and even its nature, but the “concept of faith underwent an *expansion and enrichment* in earliest Christianity.”⁹⁹ This is most evident in the idea of faith as “trust”.¹⁰⁰

Bultmann downplays the numerous passages that refer to the “object” or “content” of faith being Christ to the point where he concludes “that faith as a personal relation to the person of Christ is an idea that was at first foreign to the earliest Christian message”.¹⁰¹ **That conclusion is dubious given the plethora of passages that speak of faith being in Christ or God the Father and the very few references where the object of faith is something different. We will make reference to this in the section on terminology.**

⁹⁵ Ibid., 89.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 89.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 89.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 89.

⁹⁹ Emphasis in original. Ibid., 89-90.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 90.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 92.

The highlight of Bultmann's work in contrast with those who came before him is his reconstruction makes more sense of the passages in the New Testament which claim to have Paul's evangelistic message revealed. However, when we reconstruct 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 later in this thesis we will draw a distinction, particularly over how much Jesus being the saviour was proclaimed in the missionary preaching of Paul.

James Stewart (1953)

Stewart sets out, not to uncover the kerygma, but to seek to apply it to modern evangelism.¹⁰² That said, he still presents an interpretation and shape of the kerygma that is slightly different to those before him.

The main emphasis of the message "fell on the death and resurrection".¹⁰³ The "core" of the apostolic kerygma is the resurrection, being the "master motive of every act of Christian evangelism".¹⁰⁴ That said, "the words and deeds of the Master formed an integral and vital part of the *kerygma* of apostolic Christianity".¹⁰⁵ That included the preaching of Paul.¹⁰⁶

Stewart divides the kerygma into five main categories:

1. Proclaiming the Incarnation

The incarnation is vital to the kerygma because it demonstrates the historical and unique nature of God's coming into the world.¹⁰⁷

2. Proclaiming forgiveness

¹⁰² Stewart, *A Faith To Proclaim*, 13-14.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 15.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 104.

¹⁰⁵ Emphasis in original. Ibid., 15.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 17 and 21.

The context for proclaiming forgiveness is universal sin.¹⁰⁸ This not only makes the preaching relevant to all hearers, but demonstrates through forgiveness the profound Christian conception of healing which is achieved through the blood of Christ.¹⁰⁹ Stewart then presents a seven-part argument examining the mechanics and necessity of forgiveness.¹¹⁰ He draws from texts across the whole New Testament as well as the Old Testament. He finishes the section by saying that forgiveness comes in response to repentance and faith.¹¹¹

3. Proclaiming the cross

Because the cross was “set forth as the climax of revelation” in the New Testament, it “must always be a primary concern of the preacher of the Gospel”.¹¹² The emphasis on the preaching of the cross (most notable in Paul p76-77, see p84 too) was on the revelatory nature of the cross (especially in relation to the veil in the temple) and the “atonement, guilt-bearing, expiation”.¹¹³ Thirdly, the “apostolic *kerygma* never omitted” the “deepest insight” of the cross which was the “*predestination of God*”.¹¹⁴ This last point included triumph over the demonic forces.

4. Proclaiming the resurrection

“This is our Gospel. For this is what Christianity essentially is—a religion of Resurrection.”¹¹⁵ The Apostles preached the resurrection in terms of a

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 48.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 50.

¹¹⁰ The seven parts will be named here but in this study they require no further dissection. They are: 1) The armour of an illusion (that is, is forgiveness necessary?); 2) God’s way of piercing the armour; 3) The irreparable past; 4) Restoring the broken relationship; 5) The ethics of pardon; 6) The alchemy of grace; 7) Of such is the kingdom (a call to make this “*kerygma* of forgiveness plain”, emphasis in original). Ibid., 51-75, quotation taken from page 73.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 75.

¹¹² Ibid., 79.

¹¹³ Ibid., 84.

¹¹⁴ Emphasis in original. Ibid., 97.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 110.

cosmic, eschatological event that ushered in a new age.¹¹⁶ Stewart spends quite a few pages examining one occasion where the resurrection was preached – Athens. He understands this to be a summary of the preaching of Paul by Luke and at its heart Paul is preaching Jesus and the resurrection.¹¹⁷ Stewart then gives six points summarising the Apostolic preaching of the resurrection:

- a) They preached a Christological resurrection.¹¹⁸ The most noteworthy passages that present this are Rom. 1:4 and Phil. 2:10-11.
- b) Vindication of righteousness¹¹⁹
- c) Shared risen life.¹²⁰ Stewart seems to understand this as a present reality that is applied at conversion, not a future event such as a bodily resurrection.¹²¹
- d) Unseen companionship¹²²
- e) Birth of the church¹²³
- f) The defeat of death.¹²⁴ See note under c) which seems confirmed at this point.

5. Proclaiming Christ

Our basic need is “a rediscovery of Christianity as *a vital relationship to a living Christ*’”.¹²⁵ Stewart’s emphasis here is that the Christian is not in relationship with a set of theological structures but rather a real historical and glorified

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 106 and 109.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 112-119.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 119f.

¹¹⁹ Emphasis in original. Ibid., 121.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 126.

¹²¹ Ibid., 127-8.

¹²² Ibid., 129.

¹²³ Ibid., 130.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 133.

¹²⁵ Emphasis in original. Ibid., 143.

living person.¹²⁶ Again, this point is argued from a variety of texts drawn from across the whole New Testament and a couple in the Old Testament.

Stewart's work exhibits a good use of texts and his inclusions are broader, than for example, Dodd. However, his use of texts is probably too broad. He draws conclusions on what is part of the missional message from passages which do not warrant such attention, such as much of the content in the epistles.

Robert Mounce (1960)

In his book "The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching", Mounce attempts to uncover the kerygma from the New Testament. He builds on the work of Dodd but has notable points of departure and clarification.¹²⁷ As the title suggests, while this is a notable scholarly work, Mounce wants to present the kerygma with implications for the modern preacher, both in terms of content of the message but also in terms of the nature of preaching.

Mounce begins by looking at the role of the herald in the ancient world. This includes an examination of the LXX and the word *kerussein*.¹²⁸ Mounce then examines John the Baptist as "messianic Herald" and looks at the preaching of Jesus and the twelve.

Mounce spends the bulk of his writing building up an argument surrounding the content of the Apostolic Proclamation. This begins with a chapter titled: "Preaching in the Early Church".¹²⁹ In this chapter he examines two aspects of the apostolic preaching:

¹²⁶ Ibid., 145.

¹²⁷ Mounce, *The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching*.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 18.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 52.

- 1) that which is heralded (The Message Proclaimed) and;
- 2) the nature of the heralding itself (the proclaiming of the message).¹³⁰

Drawing broadly across the NT, the summary of the content of the kerygma is “To preach the Gospel is to preach Christ.”¹³¹ However, the term kerygma in the New Testament has a “twofold connotation”: “In some instances it refers primarily to the content of the message; in others, to the acts of proclaiming.”¹³²

The proclamation of the message had several prominent characteristics. First, there was a “polemic quality” to the preaching, particularly to Jews.¹³³ Secondly, preaching was a divine commission. “Without a commission, the preaching of Christ is only propaganda.”¹³⁴ Thirdly, the apostolic preaching was transparent in both message and motive in the sense that the language used had clarity and “was not obscured by eloquent wisdom and lofty words”.¹³⁵

In the next chapter “The Apostolic Proclamation”, Mounce signals his departure from Dodd. “The crux of the trouble lies in a misunderstanding of what the *kerygma* is meant to represent. It is not the outline of any particular sermon. Much less is it a ready-made proclamation that was delivered on every occasion by all the apostles alike. Rather, it represents the apostolic message in a much wider sense. It is a systematic statement of the theology of the primitive Church as revealed in the early preaching.”¹³⁶ Mounce asserts that

¹³⁰ Ibid., 52.

¹³¹ Ibid., 53.

¹³² Ibid., 55.

¹³³ Ibid., 55.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 56.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 57-58.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 64.

the source material, especially from Acts, has been part of the problem. He wants to use only the speeches that are “evangelistic” but then narrows these to exclude any that Luke credits to Paul.¹³⁷

Where Dodd included Paul’s speech in Acts 13, Mounce rejects it from the “Apostolic proclamation” because “the fourteen or fifteen years that have elapsed since Pentecost have allowed a certain amount of theological reflection and development.” For similar reasons Acts 14 and 17 are rejected but also because they are not “typical examples of evangelistic preaching”.¹³⁸ Mounce is happy to include Peter’s speech in Acts 10 as proper source material because it can be dated earlier than its chronological placement in Acts.¹³⁹

With the remaining data, predominately (maybe entirely) credited to Peter, Mounce reconstructs the kerygma as:

- (1) A proclamation of the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus, seen as the fulfilment of prophecy and involving man’s responsibility.
- (2) The resultant evaluation of Jesus as both Lord and Christ.
- (3) A summons to repent and receive forgiveness of sins.¹⁴⁰

Mounce points out that his main departure from Dodd is that he gives “no mention of the dawning of the Messianic Age” which “Dodd gives pride of place in his *kerygma* and holds that most of all the items, the entering of the *eschaton* into history was most ‘surely

¹³⁷ Ibid., 65.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 66.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 67.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 77.

primitive”¹⁴¹ Instead, the “heart” of the declaration was centred on redemption, achieved by God in Christ.¹⁴²

Mounce then examines the “semi-creedal elements that are found embedded in the Pauline Epistles”.¹⁴³ In doing this, Mounce is seeking to achieve a harmony between Paul and speeches in Acts, a result which would validate his reconstruction of the kerygma.¹⁴⁴

Mounce examines 1 Cor. 15:3ff. “What we have here is obviously just a fragment of the total *kerygma*. Paul is not giving a comprehensive report of how he went about bringing men to faith in Christ. He is reminding the Corinthians that the resurrection was a fundamental part of the message that they had accepted.”¹⁴⁵ He then looks at Rom. 10:9. This is a “proper balance” of the previous passage and is a “kerygmatic summary”.¹⁴⁶

“The harmony of content and emphasis leads us to conclude in a tentative way that there are no broad discrepancies between the *kerygma* in Acts and what we have found in the main pre-Pauline passages.”¹⁴⁷ That said, Mounce then also examines other passages that “although they do not purport to give direct evidence to the actual ‘word of faith,’ they do reflect the theological atmosphere of the early Church.” These include Rom. 1:3-4, Rom. 4:24-25 and Rom. 8:34.

In the next chapter Mounce examines the question of the source of the kerygma. In this section he examines certain terms and titles but not from Paul. The final chapter is

¹⁴¹ Emphasis in original. Ibid., 85.

¹⁴² Ibid., 86.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 88.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 88.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 93.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 93.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 95.

concerned with applying his findings in the modern setting. This is centred on a proclamation of the redemptive activity of God where the preaching itself “*is* revelation”.¹⁴⁸

Mounce’s work is correct to critique Dodd but his scope then fails to include anything that Acts attributes to Paul. He does use Paul’s epistles but his conclusions show that his use of texts is inconsistent with his own critique of Dodd.

Hans Conzelmann (1969)

The structure of Conzelmann’s “Outline of the Theology of the New Testament” shows immediate similarity to Bultmann’s outline nearly two decades earlier.¹⁴⁹ Conzelmann makes this explicit in his introduction where he says that “Bultmann’s work will remain basic for a long time yet”.¹⁵⁰ However there are various reasons why a “new account is justified”.¹⁵¹

Conzelmann points out the significance of proclamation (εὐαγγελ-) and faith (πιστ-).¹⁵² The εὐαγγελ- words refer generally to “good news” but most notably a “technical usage develops, without the genitive. For exegesis, this means that the word must not be translated emphatically everywhere as ‘the good news’. There is no special stress on εὐαγγέλιον/εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, it simply means ‘preaching/preach’.”¹⁵³

Faith is important to raise at the same time because “on the side of the hearer, faith corresponds to preaching”.¹⁵⁴ But Conzelmann wants to stress that faith is not

¹⁴⁸ Emphasis in original. Ibid., 152.

¹⁴⁹ Hans Conzelmann, *An outline of the Theology of the New Testament* (1st U.S. edn.; New York: Harper & Row, 1969). Original German edition: Hans Conzelmann, *Grundriss der Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Einführung in die evangelischen Theologie; München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1967).

¹⁵⁰ Conzelmann, *An outline of the Theology of the New Testament*, xiv.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., xv.

¹⁵² Ibid., 60.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 60.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 61.

“psychological”.¹⁵⁵ Faith cannot be understood in the term “trust” but “rather means the acceptance of the message of the saving event in Christ”.¹⁵⁶ So the many πιστεύειν εἰς passages do “not mean a psychological relationship to Jesus but simply a shorter version of the statement: ‘I believe that God raised Jesus from the dead’ (Rom. 10:9)”.¹⁵⁷

The content of the proclamation can most simply be summarised as “the Person and Work of Christ”.¹⁵⁸ The work of Christ “is given by the statement that God has raised Jesus (Rom. 10:9). It is expanded by statements about his death and its saving significance (Rom. 4.25; 1 Cor. 15.3-5).”¹⁵⁹ The person of Christ is confessed in the Christological Titles.¹⁶⁰ Most important in these titles are “Messiah”, “Son of God” and “kyrios”.¹⁶¹

In terms of the structure of the kerygma: “No primitive Christian preaching has been transmitted to us. But the gist of the preaching is still to be found in the epistles, from which types and patterns can still be reconstructed.”¹⁶²

Conzelmann summarises these into three parts:

- (a) Promise of salvation
- (b) The connection with scripture
- (c) The newness of Christian existence in contrast to the past¹⁶³

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 61.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 61.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 61.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 64.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 64.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 64 and 72.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 72-85.

¹⁶² Ibid., 88.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 88-89.

Like Bultmann, Conzelmann's lexical work and conclusions are very helpful. His use of Pauline texts is solid but his conclusions and methodology will be at odds with this study. It is strange that he does not deal with Acts and asserts that we have no record of primitive preaching. That is most likely due to the commonly held view that Acts is historically unreliable.

William Barclay (1970)

Barclay differs from both Dodd and Allen in that he regards the Athenian sermon in Acts 17 as normal Pauline preaching despite the fact that the Acts sermons are *mere* summaries.¹⁶⁴

Barclay says that in "his missionary approach Paul had no set scheme and formula; his approach was completely flexible. He began where his audience was."¹⁶⁵ He argues for continuity in that "the elements of the sermon in Antioch reappear in the sermon in Athens".¹⁶⁶ The common point in both those sermons is that the coming of Christ was the decisive event in history. If we include Lystra then "when it was possible to say very little, this was the one thing that Paul was determined to say".¹⁶⁷ Barclay then uses the Acts sermons to reconstruct Paul's missionary preaching into seven parts which he claims make up the "elements".¹⁶⁸

Whether Paul taught the life of Christ is the other question that Barclay addresses. He uses a series of arguments to conclude that "it is a fair deduction that in the missionary preaching

¹⁶⁴ William Barclay, 'A Comparison of Paul's Missionary Preaching and Preaching to the Church', in W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin (ed.), *Apostolic History and the Gospel. Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1970), 165-75, 165.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 167.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 167.

there must have been instruction in the actual historical life of Jesus”.¹⁶⁹ This is a point which many others have agreed with since and which this study will address.

Michael Green (1970)

Michael Green’s 1970 contribution in “Evangelism in the Early Church” is a *popular* and broad contribution to the kerygma debate, but is nevertheless an important one. His task is to “understand afresh the gospel these early Christians preached, the methods they employed, the spiritual characteristics they displayed, the extent to which they were prepared to think their message through in the light of contemporary thought forms, to proclaim it to the utmost of their power, to live it and to die for it”.¹⁷⁰

Green draws across the whole New Testament but does so acknowledging the various authors and literary styles. After examining the pathways and obstacles to evangelism he then turns specifically to “The Evangel”.¹⁷¹ In that chapter he identifies the most significant word groups and explores the use of *euaggelizomai*, *kerusso* and *marturia*. In Paul, “the gospel’ has a clearly defined content; so much so that in about half his references it stands by itself without qualification”.¹⁷² Although Paul’s gospel was “very much” like that of Mark, Paul would translate language and use synonyms.¹⁷³ This was the case, for example, in terms such as “kingdom” and “repentance” which appear rarely in Paul.¹⁷⁴ In Paul’s gospel the cross and resurrection are central.¹⁷⁵ “It is the same gospel the world over, to Jew and Greek alike, though it may be couched in different terms and even thought forms.”¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 168.

¹⁷⁰ The revised edition was published in 2003. Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 8.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 76

¹⁷² Ibid., 84-85.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 84.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 84.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 84.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 85.

The genuinely distinctive elements in Paul's gospel-preaching seem to have been as follows:¹⁷⁷

- 1) He used the forensic language of justification
- 2) He stressed the final and absolute power of the gospel
- 3) Paul stressed the ethical implications of the gospel.

Green then moves to answer the question: "Was there a fixed kerygma?" He is specifically speaking to the work of Dodd at this point but over a number of pages does a thorough review of the debate from the thirties through until the late sixties.¹⁷⁸ Green concludes that the proclamation of the early Christians was "united in its witness to Jesus" but "varied in its presentation of his relevance to the varied needs of the listeners" while being "urgent in the demand for decision".¹⁷⁹

Green urges for a treatment of Acts that regards the speeches as "very old stratum" which, although influenced by Luke's hand, still remain genuine Pauline and Petrine material.¹⁸⁰ This is important because it will influence the way that Green understands Paul's preaching.

Green's main point in his examination of the "Evangelizing of the Gentiles" is that there was not a "crippling uniformity" in the proclamation.¹⁸¹ "That there was a basic homogeneity in what was preached we may agree, but there was wide variety in the way it was presented."¹⁸²

He argues that there was both "Flexibility in approach" as well as "Unity in approach".

Green uses words such as "translating" and "transposing" to describe this process of

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 86.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 93-95.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 101.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 104.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 164.

¹⁸² Ibid., 165.

presenting the gospel with flexibility to different audiences. The key question then to take to Green is what are the factors or drivers that determine how the message will be translated?

There are various angles to answering this question. First, it must “make sense” to the Gentiles.¹⁸³ Secondly, the words and ideas had to be put into “other dress” so that they could be “assimilated”.¹⁸⁴ How this assimilation determines the message or is then qualified is unclear. Thirdly, the message had to have meaning for heathen minds that was helpful and if possible not open to being “misinterpreted” or “twisted”.¹⁸⁵ It is not until later, in his chapter on conversion, that Green then speaks of the response that the apostles looked for, no doubt as a result of the above impact.¹⁸⁶

Green asserts that the apostles ask “people to decide for or against the God who had decided for them”.¹⁸⁷ If people are to respond to the message they “must” do three things:

1. Repent – change their attitude to their old way of life and be willing to let go their sins
2. Faith – toward the Lord Jesus Christ and belief on him. The content of this faith was the message about Jesus.
3. Baptism – It was the seal both on God’s offer of forgiveness and the Spirit and on man’s response to that offer in repentance and faith.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸³ Ibid., 165.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 165.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 165-167.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 212-214.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 212.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 212-213.

To summarise, Green summarises Stott's "The Meaning of Evangelism" here as turning from sin and turning to God.¹⁸⁹

In his last three chapters on evangelistic motives, methods and strategies, Green makes brief observations concerning Paul's evangelistic preaching. After examining how "final judgment before God" must have featured "prominently in Paul's thought", Green summarises Paul's preaching to men and women as proclaiming "their danger and need, and the wonderful steps God had taken to meet it".¹⁹⁰ This can be further summarised as "the Lordship of Jesus that God's light breaks into blinded hearts".¹⁹¹ To reach these conclusions, again, Green draws broadly from Paul's letters and Acts.

One final point worth noting is that as Green looks at Evangelistic methods he has a category called "Literary Evangelism".¹⁹² The most important inclusion in this "first century apologetic" is Luke/Acts. especially since "evangelism is the supreme concern of the writer".¹⁹³ "He wants to make sure that Theophilus and the other readers on the fringe of Christianity get the essence of the gospel message into them by dint of constant repetition."¹⁹⁴ This understanding of Acts and his use of the speeches are the highpoints of Green's work.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 213. John R. W. Stott, *The Meaning of Evangelism: A Study of Apostolic Practice* (London: Falcon Books, 1964).

¹⁹⁰ Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 283 and 291.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 292.

¹⁹² Ibid., 346.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 348-349.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 349.

Paul Barnett (1971)

Barnett was published in 1971 in “Report of the Commission on Evangelism of the Church of England Diocese of Sydney”.¹⁹⁵ Barnett argue that the Areopagus sermon in Acts 17 is indeed “typical of a sermon to Gentiles” a point which sets them apart from most that have been mentioned previously (and still many to come).¹⁹⁶ Barnett’s main concern to is to assert that the crucial element in Paul’s Gentile missionary preaching is the judgment in the light of the resurrected Christ.¹⁹⁷

This quickly prompts the question, as Barnett calls it, namely the “puzzle” between this view and what is presented in 1 Cor. 1-2 and 15 and Gal. 3.¹⁹⁸ The puzzle is why Paul’s gospel summaries centre on the death of Christ and its effective salvation and Acts do not. In fact, Barnett points out that no sermon in Acts link salvation and Christ’s death.¹⁹⁹ Unlike almost all other scholars who attempt to reconstruct Paul’s missionary preaching, Barnett argues that salvation is not proclaimed to unbelievers in a way that it connects it to the death of Christ.²⁰⁰ The Pauline passages that refer to atonement and explicit crucifixion language being taught to Gentiles refer “to a group which *already* has some identifiable existence”.²⁰¹ Therefore, according to Barnett, those key passages (most of these will be examined in this study) should not be regarded as missionary content.

¹⁹⁵ Barnett, *Paul's Preaching Reconsidered*, 59-68. Donald Robinson also wrote an interesting section on preaching and gospel: Donald Robinson, 'Theological Note on Preaching', *ibid.*, 137-40.

¹⁹⁶ Paul Barnett, 'Paul's Preaching Reconsidered', *ibid.*, 59-68, 60.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 64.

²⁰⁰ Emphasis in original. *Ibid.*, 64.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.* Note, however, that in a more recent work Barnett writes: “Paul became convinced that God had called him to preach ‘Christ crucified’ to the nations of the world”. This is in the context of discussing Jewish mission and should be also taken in the context of Barnett’s understanding of “gospel” in Paul. Paul Barnett, 'Jewish Mission in the Era of the New Testament and the Apostle Paul', in Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson (ed.), *The Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul's Mission* (Leicester: Apollos, 2000a), 263-83, 280.

The key text to which Barnett points to show coherence between the Acts sermons and the letters is 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10.²⁰² This connection sets Barnett apart from all the scholars reviewed in this section. This study will not examine Acts in detail. However, our examination of Paul will point us strongly towards the plausibility of Barnett's thesis regarding the Luke-Paul link.

In a more recent publication Barnett examines 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 in more detail specifically attempting to uncover Paul's missionary preaching.²⁰³ That passage contains "echoes" of Paul's mission preaching and using 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 he argues that "deliverance from *wrath*... was part of his initial mission catechesis".²⁰⁴ Barnett then summarises the "elements of mission teaching that underlie these two brief statements" as follows:

1. God is Father
2. Jesus is "Son [of God]", the "Lord," and "Christ"
3. In regard to the *past* Jesus died for us, and in regard to the *future*, deliverance from wrath and obtaining salvation is through him.

In the more recent work Barnett does not discuss the Athenian sermon as he did in his previous work. However, his conclusion that deliverance and Jesus' death being "for us" are part of the missional preaching would seem to contradict his earlier view. The use of 5:9-10 to construct missionary preaching is also inconsistent with his earlier thesis. Later when we examine 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 the argument will suggest that the "reuses us" phrase is a

²⁰² Barnett, *Paul's Preaching Reconsidered*, 62.

²⁰³ Paul Barnett, *The Birth of Christianity: The First Twenty Years* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2005)

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 43 (emphasis in original).

Pauline addition which shows the *effect* of the missionary message when it receives a positive response.

Stephen G. Wilson (1973)

Stephen G. Wilson's 1969 Ph.D. thesis was published in a modified version in 1973 titled "The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts".²⁰⁵ Wilson's study is faithful to his title tracing the Gentiles and mission from Jesus through until the Areopagus speech. This speech features as a major part of Wilson's study and helpfully for this study he includes a critique of the Pauline content of the speech. He notes the Acts 14 speech but due to its length and simplicity it is only used to shed light on the Athenian sermon.²⁰⁶

Wilson examines the Areopagus speech in detail. There is no doubt in Wilson's mind that Luke is presenting an evangelistic sermon, or more precisely "an example of missionary preaching to the Gentiles".²⁰⁷ After exploring the setting and contents of the speech he then discusses its origin. He notes that the speech "is dependent not directly on Greek thought, but on that thought as mediated through Hellenistic Judaism".²⁰⁸ The primary question in understanding the speech is to first solve the problem of the Pauline origins of the speech.²⁰⁹

There are three reasons "which suggest that Paul was not the author of the Areopagus speech":²¹⁰

²⁰⁵ S. G. Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts* (Monograph series/ Society for New Testament Studies; Cambridge: Cambridge, 1973).

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 196.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 216.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 210.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 212.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 213.

- 1) The use of the knowledge of God implied in nature is used differently in Luke and Paul. (argued from Rom. 1 and 2)
- 2) The relationship between god and man, their proximity and relatedness, described in Acts 17:27-9, is not typical of Paul. (argued from Rom. 1-3, 5:10 & 2 Cor. 5:20-1)
- 3) The two epochs before and after Jesus, are characterised in Acts 17 as ‘ignorance-knowledge’, whereas for Paul they are characteristically described as ‘sin-grace’.

In terms of the Pauline nature of Acts 17 it would “seem improbable that Paul would have spoken in the way Luke says he did”.²¹¹ The key text supporting this idea is Rom. 1-3 and the argument is fundamentally theological. That is, Wilson claims that the theology of the Areopagus speech is theologically inconsistent with what Paul argues for in Rom. 1-3. Wilson concludes that in his account of Paul’s preaching, “Luke goes a little more astray”. While there is no doubt a common tradition and some truth in the type of arguments that Luke presents, “Luke seems to have allowed his picture of Paul’s preaching to be influenced by the sort of Gentile missionary sermon common in his own day”.²¹²

While Wilson is very clear that there are theological differences in Luke and Paul, he falls short of offering a suggestion as to what Paul’s missionary preaching would have included, and that is not his task (that is, unless he understands Romans 1-3 to be evangelistic).

George Eldon Ladd (1974)

Ladd titles the relevant chapter in his *Theology of the New Testament* “The Eschatological Kerygma”.²¹³ Ladd understands that the kerygma that he is searching for is the “earliest

²¹¹ Ibid., 215.

²¹² Ibid., 262.

²¹³ George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 238.

interpretation of Jesus” which can be found in the “primitive preaching”.²¹⁴ Ladd builds on Dodd’s foundation noting that Dodd’s conclusions “merit detailed study, although not necessarily in the order listed by Dodd”.²¹⁵

Ladd draws his evidence almost entirely from Acts. He claims that while Jesus is a real man, his words and life are not the content of the kerygma but simply “background” to the important events which he focusses on – atonement, resurrection and exaltation.²¹⁶ This then turns attention to the early church’s understanding of “Jesus’ sufferings”.²¹⁷

Because the sermons in Acts say very little about the atonement, Ladd concludes that the theology of Acts is “primitive”.²¹⁸ According to Ladd, this point is further enhanced by the fact that in Acts “*Christos*” has become a title but it has not become a “proper name”.²¹⁹ However, some idea of the atonement is “implicit” in the early speeches because of the use of words such as Messiah and Servant.²²⁰

Ladd has a later chapter called “The sources of Paul’s thought” in which he examines important passages like 1 Cor. 1-2, 15:3b-5 and Rom. 16 plus many others.²²¹ In this chapter he also speaks about kerygma and gospel but does not attempt to reconstruct what Paul’s preaching to unbelievers might have looked like.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 329.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 329.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 330.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 330.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 330.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 331.

²²⁰ Ibid., 330.

²²¹ Ibid., 376-395.

James Dunn

Dunn has written a number of significant commentaries on both Paul's epistles and Luke/Acts. They will be passed over here but will be referenced when texts are examined.

Unity and Diversity (1977)

In 1977 James Dunn compiled his two part undergraduate course lectures from the University of Nottingham into a book titled *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*.²²² Speaking particularly to Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, Dunn argues that there is diversity and even disagreement in thought amongst the New Testament writers which expels the idea that there was a "'pure' form of Christianity that existed in the beginning which can properly be called 'orthodoxy'".²²³ But in the New Testament there is "a fairly clear and consistent unifying strand", that strand being "the unity between the historical Jesus and the exalted Christ".²²⁴ Dunn argues for this unity in diversity by examining various expressions of the early church as presented in the New Testament and observing this consistency in the presentation of Christ.

In his search for unifying elements in the early church Dunn first examines the preaching of the early church. Dunn understands preaching to be primarily talking about evangelism, bringing one to conversion and regeneration.²²⁵ His question is whether we should speak of "the NT kerygma" or whether we should speak of the NT *kerygmata*?²²⁶

²²² Originally published in 1977 under the same title the 2006 third edition is quoted in this thesis. Dunn, *Unity And Diversity In The New Testament: An Inquiry Into The Character of Earliest Christianity*

²²³ Ibid., 3. Walter Bauer, Robert A. Kraft, and Gerhard Krodel, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM, 1972)

²²⁴ Dunn, *Unity And Diversity In The New Testament: An Inquiry Into The Character of Earliest Christianity*, 403.

²²⁵ Ibid., 11.

²²⁶ Ibid.

Dunn briefly summarises the positions of Dodd and Bultmann in the debate and points out that Dodd has focused attention on “kerygma as *content*” while Bultmann has focussed on “kerygma as *preaching*”.²²⁷ Dunn is supportive of Bultmann in that against Dodd he asserts that the kerygma is always situational and therefore it is “very unlikely that the kerygma can simply be abstracted from these different contexts as a fixed formula”.²²⁸ His key question is whether there is an “absolute form” of the kerygma or whether the delivery of the kerygma will be “relative to some extent”.²²⁹

Dunn’s method is not in his words a “fully balanced” study but rather is an “aerial survey” of the most important kerygma texts. He begins by looking at the kerygma of Jesus. The three characteristic features of Jesus’ kerygma are:

- (1) The proclamation of the kingdom of God;
- (2) The call for repentance and faith, noting that Jesus himself was not the object of faith;
- (3) The offer of forgiveness and a share of the messianic feast of the new age, with its ethical corollary of love.

To reach this conclusion Dunn only examines the synoptics, saying that John is not giving original or historical Jesus tradition but is rather giving “what he sees to be a true picture of the historical Jesus”.²³⁰ Dunn deals with John’s kerygma later.

²²⁷Emphasis in original. Ibid., 12.

²²⁸Ibid.

²²⁹Ibid., 13.

²³⁰Ibid., 28.

Acts reveals Luke's portrayal of the kerygma of the earliest believers. Dunn draws from all the speeches notably including the Acts 17 speech. He notes a theological shift from the kerygma of Jesus, that being that Jesus is now the subject of the kerygma. The theology of the Acts kerygma(s) also varies greatly from that of Paul, John and the writer to the Hebrews. Dunn concludes that there is a consistent core to Luke presentation:

- (1) the proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus;
- (2) the call for a response to this proclamation, for repentance and faith in this Jesus;
- (3) the promise of forgiveness, salvation, Spirit to those who respond.²³¹

The task of uncovering Paul's kerygma is "not so difficult" since he preserves "various kerygmatic and confessional formulae... which he must have used in bringing his readers to the point of commitment".²³² Dunn draws from more than the seven undisputed epistles to conclude that in contrast to the presentation of the kerygma in Jesus and Acts, for Paul there was "*no standardized pattern, no extended outline of Christian proclamation*".²³³ Paul's gospel "did not take any final or fixed form" and he "recognized the validity of other proclamations and called them also 'gospel'".²³⁴ Two other important factors concerning Paul's preaching are that the form of the kerygma was determined by the circumstance but also that his kerygma "developed over the years" resulting in an alteration in emphasis and tone.²³⁵

²³¹Ibid., 22.

²³²Ibid., 22.

²³³ Emphasis in original. Ibid., 24.

²³⁴Ibid., 26.

²³⁵Ibid., 26.

After noting the probable disagreement between Paul, Matthew and James, Dunn concludes that “*within the NT itself we have not simply diverse kerygmata, but in fact kerygmata which appear to be incompatible* – that is, gospels which are incompatible when compared directly with each other without reference to their different life-settings”.²³⁶

In examining John’s presentation of the kerygma Dunn says that John’s Jesus is not historical. Dunn notes similarities between John and the other kerygmata but says that the distinctive feature of John’s kerygma is in the sharp ‘either-or’ decisions that the hearer must make.²³⁷

Leaving aside the Jesus kerygma and focussing on the post-Easter kerygma, Dunn concludes by saying that if we look at the distinctiveness and individuality of Acts, Paul and John there is no “common kerygma” shared by them. However, he wants to maintain that there is in fact a “common kerygma” or “*core* kerygma” present in the proclamations.²³⁸ There are three key components to this core:

- (1) proclamation of the risen, exalted Jesus;
- (2) the call for faith;
- (3) the promise held out in faith.

This unity amongst the diversity of the kerygmata is an abstraction since “no NT writer proclaims this kerygma as such”.²³⁹ Dunn emphasises that while the various kerygmata

²³⁶ Emphasis in original. Ibid., 27.

²³⁷ Ibid., 29.

²³⁸ Emphasis in original. Ibid., 30-31.

²³⁹ Ibid., 31.

contain this core, each of the presentations were different in content. This was not simply because of the situation, although that was an important reason for the differences, but was because of different theological understandings amongst the proclaimers.²⁴⁰

While there is unity amongst the post-Easter kerygmata there is little unity between the gospel Jesus proclaimed and those who came later. The reason for this is Easter itself. “*The first Christians were not concerned simply to reproduce the message of Jesus... In short, the Christian Church is built round the post-Easter kerygma, not the teaching of the historical Jesus.*”²⁴¹

In the next chapter Dunn examines more specifically the primitive creeds which he calls “confessional formulae”.²⁴² These are important to the kerygma discussion because they “lay behind the proclamation” but with a different emphasis to the previous chapter Dunn sees a distinction between what the first Christians proclaimed and what they confessed.²⁴³ Dunn criticises Dodd for looking for a single unified creed.²⁴⁴ He goes on to examine ‘the different ways in which Jesus was confessed’ focussing on the various titles he is given in the formulae.

Like the confessional formulae, Dunn argues (as did Ladd above) that the Jesus-tradition cannot be simply taken to be kerygma. The reason for this is the way that Paul cites Jesus-tradition in matters of ethics but his death and resurrection appear in Paul’s kerygmatic tradition.²⁴⁵ Dunn then rightly points out that Paul’s preaching was not simply repeating

²⁴⁰Ibid., 31-32.

²⁴¹Emphasis in original. Ibid., 32.

²⁴²Ibid., 34.

²⁴³Ibid., 34.

²⁴⁴Ibid., 35.

²⁴⁵Ibid., 84-85.

Jesus' teaching. It was grounded in the fact that Christ had been crucified and raised and this formed the central part of Paul's kerygma.

The Theology of Paul the Apostle (1998)

Dunn has an extensive section looking at "The Gospel of Jesus Christ".²⁴⁶ His breakdown of the content of Paul's gospel is quite similar to his other writing but he is presenting Paul's gospel not just as his evangelistic message, but rather as the central core to all Paul taught and held fast to. Or, if you like, the gospel is the centre of Paul's theology. In this work, the connection between Paul's gospel and his evangelistic preaching is assumed more than spelt out.

In this broad look at Paul's gospel Dunn covers some important topics that will feature in this study. He looks at particular important words and word groups such as "gospel", "messiah" and "tradition" and also examines important issues such as Paul's knowledge of and uniformity with the Jesus tradition, even speculating about Paul's influence on Mark's gospel (which would then influence the other two synoptics).²⁴⁷ Dunn summarises Paul's gospel under the following headings:

- a) Jesus the man
- b) Christ crucified (central to Paul's theology)
- c) The risen Lord
- d) The pre-existent one
- e) Until he comes

²⁴⁶ The book was published in 1998 and the paperback edition in 2006. James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006a), 163.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 232.

Beginning from Jerusalem (2009)

Dunn summaries Paul's missionary preaching in a section titled "Paul's Gospel".²⁴⁸ Paul's Acts sermons are overlooked as relevant data due to Luke's own influence on the content although Dunn does note that the "overlap between the Pauline sermons in Acts and Paul's letters is not so minimal as is sometimes claimed".²⁴⁹ Dunn accepts the seven undisputed epistles and adds that Colossians and 2 Thessalonians must have been written with Paul's approval, although maybe not by his hand. Ephesians and the pastorals were written after Paul's death.²⁵⁰

It is not an overstatement to say that Dunn is at pains to point out that his brief examination of key passages in Paul are not a sequence, structure or outline that Paul necessarily followed but they simply show a "thrust" or "common bond" in Paul's preaching.²⁵¹ The key passages and themes are as follows:²⁵²

- a. To turn from idols to the living God (1 Thess. 1:9)
- b. Christ Crucified (1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2)
- c. God Raised Jesus from the Dead (Rom. 10:9)
- d. Jesus is Lord (Rom. 10:9)
- e. To Wait for his Son from heaven (1 Thess. 1:10)
- f. We have believed in Christ Jesus (Gal 2:16)
- g. You will receive the Holy Spirit
- h. The dinner of the Lord

²⁴⁸ Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 572.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 573.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 99-100.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 573 and 587.

²⁵² Ibid., 573-587.

i. How to live

Dunn is emphatic at the end of this section that these nine points make up some sort of formula or set creed that Paul used for missionary preaching. In fact, Dunn argues for diversity in Paul's preaching while maintaining that the body of teaching would have been a shared unity amongst the Gentile mission, even those to whom Paul wrote but had never met.²⁵³

J Christiaan Beker (1980)

J. Christian Beker was a Dutch scholar who spent his scholarly career in North America until his death in 1999. His most significant contribution to Pauline studies was in 1980 when he published "Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought".²⁵⁴ His thesis contains two main areas of study: First, "The Contingency of the Gospel"²⁵⁵ and secondly, "The Coherence of the Gospel".²⁵⁶ I will briefly summarise the conclusions of these two arguments.

Contingency and Coherence in Paul's Letters

Beker first argues that Paul's "letters are occasional, but not casual; they are not private, but personal; they are authoritative and not simply products of the moment".²⁵⁷ The genre of letter is important because while it distinguishes itself from the gospel genre they still contain the "gospel as a word on target in the midst of human, contingent specificity".²⁵⁸ Beker critiques many attempts to search for Paul's doctrinal unity by showing that they fail to grasp

²⁵³ Ibid., 587.

²⁵⁴ Johan Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 23-131. There is also an introduction and conclusion forming Parts one and four of the book.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 135-350.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 23.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 24.

Paul's hermeneutic.²⁵⁹ Beker shows that this is not because there was any disunity or incoherence in Paul's gospel but rather his letters "should be interpreted as gospel for particular situations, 'enfleshing' the gospel into human particularity".²⁶⁰

Beker then does an extensive examination of "Paul's theological thinking"²⁶¹ in Galatians and Romans. He points out that these might be a surprising choice because "these letters are often used together to exhibit Paul's systematic doctrinal thought".²⁶² But that is exactly why he does choose them – to test his claims outlined above. There is not space to flesh out this argument here (although he covers important material related to this study in those sections so references from Beker will appear in the relevant sections on Galatians and Romans in this thesis) but Beker contrasts the two books by saying that while Romans reveals Paul's apostolic understanding of the gospel, Galatians "pushes Paul's theocentric apocalyptic theme to the periphery".²⁶³ But that is not to say that Galatians in any way contradicts Romans. In fact, the opposite applies.²⁶⁴ Beker concludes by saying that we cannot impose doctrine on Paul.²⁶⁵ This is an important principle for Pauline studies. Paul must be read on his own terms and not through a theological grid to which he must conform.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 27-33.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 35.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 37.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid., 58. In his revised edition (covered next), Richard B. Hays now disagrees with this conclusion on Galatians even though he agreed in his initial publication (which focuses on Galatians). He says "in light of subsequent insights and a fuller consideration of the evidence I now think the case is very strong for reading Galatians, no less than Paul's other letters, within an apocalyptic narrative framework". Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11* (2nd edn., The Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids. Dearborn: Eerdmans; Dove, 2002), xxxviii.

²⁶⁴ Beker writes: "The different contextual situations necessitate a contingent argument that reveals both the versatility of Paul's hermeneutic and the richness of his thought. The gospel indeed allows a wide diversity of interpretation without sacrificing its coherent center." Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*, 108.

²⁶⁵ In Beker's own words: "However, it was Paul, more than any other early theologian, who opened the way to the doctrinal purity of the gospel." Ibid., 131.

The Coherence of the Gospel

In this second half of his argument Beker's main thesis is that Paul's thought must be interpreted from the position of a right understanding of its "apocalyptic texture".²⁶⁶ It is this point which leads to his most potent critique of many in the kerygma debate.²⁶⁷ For the remainder of the second half Beker works through what he interprets as the key elements of Paul's gospel. The "coherent center" of his gospel must be the "Christ-event".²⁶⁸ The key elements of Paul's gospel include: The resurrection, the cross, sin and death, a right understanding of the Mosaic law, responsibilities for those in Christ, the church and the destiny of Israel.

Beker does not attempt to reconstruct Paul's missionary preaching but rather interpret Paul's gospel as the centre of his thought and how it manifests itself situationally in his letters, all of which are written to believers. This is evidenced by the way he finishes his work by summarising Romans 8 as the "triumph of God".²⁶⁹

Richard B. Hays (1983)

Richard B. Hays' PhD thesis was published as a book in 1983 titled "The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11". As the title suggests, Hays proposes that the framework which guides Paul's writing is not to be found by viewing him as a "systematic theologian",²⁷⁰ but rather to see his writing flowing out of a narrative,

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 135.

²⁶⁷ Ibid. Best summarised from pages 176-181. Note especially p181.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 135.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 362-367.

²⁷⁰ Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2.

specifically “his gospel story”²⁷¹ which is the “story of Jesus Christ”.²⁷² However, “Paul never merely recites the foundational story” which makes Hays’ task difficult but not impossible.

His approach is quite similar in method to Beker, a point which Hays makes in his opening paragraph.²⁷³ Similarly, Hays also extracts key elements of Paul’s gospel (calling his findings a “bare kerygmatic story-outline”)²⁷⁴ but focusses only on Gal. 3:1-4:11. Hays spends the first two chapters (of six) very carefully nuancing his methods and comparing and distinguishing them from both (a) the way scholars have searched for the constant elements of Paul’s gospel²⁷⁵ and (b) also handling of the narrative dimension of Paul’s thought.²⁷⁶

There is no need to summarise his own self-comparison with other scholars here but it is worth noting that he specifically compares his approach with that of Dodd. His concluding paragraph in that section says that his approach is “formally very close to Dodd’s in attempting to distinguish between a gospel foundation and its theological developments”.²⁷⁷ The main difference is that Hays narrowly focusses on one passage in Galatians while Dodd uses the New Testament as a whole while “making practically no use of Galatians”.²⁷⁸

The book title embodies the main conclusions that Hays draws concerning what is contained in the story of Jesus Christ. “The argument of Gal. 3:1-4:11 finds its point of coherence in the story of the Messiah who lives by faith.”²⁷⁹ Salvation, in Paul’s gospel story “hinges on

²⁷¹ Ibid., 21.

²⁷² Ibid., 228.

²⁷³ Ibid., 1. Although note that he is not quoting Beker’s 1980 book but an article from 1978: Johan Christiaan Beker, ‘Contingency and Coherence in the Letters of Paul’, *USQR*, 33 (1978), 141-51, 148. Also note the footnote above which shows Hays’ disagreement with Beker on the apocalyptic nature of Galatians.

²⁷⁴ Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 220 n26.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 1-31.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 34-71.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 64.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. To be fair to the author, there are more nuanced differences with Dodd’s work that Hays points out but there is no need to go into more detail here.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 207.

the faithfulness of Jesus Christ”.²⁸⁰ The story includes pre-existence and the incarnation as well as the passion and the resurrection. Hays then rightly poses the question about the relationship between Paul’s gospel story and Gospels. He rightly disagrees with Eusebius that Paul’s “gospel” is not the gospel of Luke, but does point out that “Paul’s letters mark a point within a historical development *toward* the formulation of ‘gospels’”.²⁸¹

While Hays gives some insight into the gospel story standing behind Paul’s letters, he does not attempt to use this to reconstruct Paul’s missionary preaching. However, his methods and conclusions are very valuable to a study like this, especially since Galatians will include a key text that will be examined later.

Eugene E. Lemcio (1988)

In 1988 Eugene Lemcio published an article specifically seeking to identify a “central, discrete kerygmatic core that integrates the manifold plurality of the New Testament”.²⁸² He writes directly to the kerygma debate and briefly addresses the key contributors. While Dodd attempted a similar task, he was criticised for “what seemed to be an artificial harmonizing of Pauline material and an insufficiently critical reliance upon the speeches of Acts as accurate representation of apostolic preaching”.²⁸³ Following Heitmüller, Bultmann was the other key contributor to this debate, although “perhaps the fullest flowering of this critical legacy is J.D.G. Dunn”.²⁸⁴ Lemcio’s article then sets out to specifically prove that Dunn’s thesis that

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 205.

²⁸¹ Emphasis in original. Ibid., 219.

²⁸² Lemcio, 'The Unifying Kerygma of the New Testament', 3.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 4. Wilhelm Heitmüller, 'Zum Problem Paulus und Jesus', *ZNW*, 13 (1912), 320-37, Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, Dunn, *Unity And Diversity In The New Testament: An Inquiry Into The Character of Earliest Christianity*

the kerygma in a fixed form can only be an “abstraction” is not right and in fact, there is a concrete kerygma.²⁸⁵

In his procedure, Lemcio cleverly treads a line between regarding the “New Testament *per se*” as a body of literature while still acknowledging that the New Testament is a collection of different writings from different authors.²⁸⁶ He is consistent with this and even uses the question of Pauline authorship of certain epistles to strengthen his case.²⁸⁷ However, while Dodd, Bultmann and Dunn were all specifically looking for the kerygma in terms of early apostolic preaching, Lemcio presents his task more as finding a kerygmatic core in the New Testament. (The difference is subtle but noteworthy at many points in this debate, not just with Lemcio). Lemcio presents a “kerygmatic core” that contains six constant items. These are a ‘form’ which occur in the same context or passage.²⁸⁸ This form is not “formulaic”, however, it is “cohesive”, even if it appears in a different order.²⁸⁹

The six items in this kerygmatic core (that can be found in “every canonical unit”) are:²⁹⁰

1. God who
2. sent (Gospels) or raised
3. Jesus.
4. A response (receiving, repentance, faith)
5. towards God
6. brings benefits (variously described).

²⁸⁵ Lemcio, 'The Unifying Kerygma of the New Testament'

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 5.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 9. See also Lemcio, 'The Unifying Kerygma of the New Testament (II)', 5.

²⁸⁸ Lemcio, 'The Unifying Kerygma of the New Testament' 6.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

Lemcio then sets out to identify the key literary groups in the New Testament and present examples where all six elements are present. His argument is that every literary group contains and reveals this central core. However, Lemcio stops short of saying that every presentation of the kerygma in the New Testament does contain all six elements. This is evidenced in the material that he chooses to use in the various literary examples (most notably Acts).

The passages he cites which contain the six elements are: Acts 5:30-32 (Peter before the Sanhedrin), Acts 13:30-43, Romans 10:8-9, Colossians 1:25-28 and 2:12-13, 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10, Titus 3:4-8, Hebrews 6:1-21, 1 Peter 1:18-21, Revelation 12:1-17, Matthew 10:40-42, Mark 9:37 and John 5:24.

In a subsequent article in 1990, Lemcio sought to increase his evidence by examining another nine passages from the New Testament, again, regarding the NT as a “literary phenomenon”.²⁹¹ He then also included an appendix that contained “five samples for the same pattern in the sub-apostolic, early apologetic and apocryphal literatures”.²⁹² The nine additional NT passages which contain the six points are: Mark 9:37 (which was discussed in 1998 but not yet included), Luke 1:68-75, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Galatians 4:4-7, Ephesians 2:4-10, Philippians 2:5-11, 1 Timothy 3:15-16 and 4:7-10, 2 Timothy 2:8-15 and 1 John 4:7-10.

The five non-canonical examples are: 1 Clement 26:2-3 and 27:7, Polycarp, the letter to the Philippians 12:2, The Epistle to Diognetus 10:1-2, Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho 106 and The Acts of Paul and Thecla 3:17.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 4.

²⁹² Ibid.

Although Lemcio takes a new approach to uncovering the kerygma, his use of texts is too extensive. To attempt to reconstruct the kerygma by taking passages right throughout the new testament, even passages which do not claim to have any kerygmatic content will provide dubious results. In this sense, Lemcio is guilty of the opposite of his own critique of Dodd. Where Dodd was too narrow and over-harmonised (a correct assessment), Lemcio is too broad.

Peter O'Brien (1993)

The volume "Consumed by Passion" was published in 1993 in Australia but was republished in 1995 by Baker books.²⁹³ The later edition is the same but has a different title.²⁹⁴ Dunn cites this book along with Oepke as being the only studies that have tried to uncover Paul's evangelistic preaching to Gentiles and says that O'Brien "draws freely from across the board in one or more of Paul's letters".²⁹⁵

O'Brien clearly sets out to speak on the content of Paul's missionary preaching as well as its goals, motivating power and results.²⁹⁶ O'Brien draws from Paul's letters and uses the Acts record as only supplementary material.²⁹⁷ But he does not explicitly engage with the kerygma debate as summarised above. Most of the works mentioned above do not even rate a mention.

He focuses on two passages in order to uncover Paul's understanding of his own missionary calling: Gal. 1:11-17 and Eph. 3:1-13. From the former, "The gospel which Paul received on

²⁹³ Peter Thomas O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids; Carlisle: Baker; Paternoster, 1995)

²⁹⁴ In the author's own words: "The Americans could not cope with the Australian title so they changed it!" (Personal email).

²⁹⁵ Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 573.

²⁹⁶ O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis*, 133.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 133 and xiii.

the Damascus road, and thus the content of his preaching may be defined Christologically: it is Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Gal. 1:12, 16; cf. 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 3:8) who is the crucified, risen and ascended Lord”.²⁹⁸ This gospel that Paul preached to Gentiles “may be identified with the promise made to Abraham in which blessings will be extended to Gentiles” (Gal. 3:8).²⁹⁹ Notably, this covenant relationship can only be entered into through faith.³⁰⁰

From Eph. 3:8 it can be seen that Paul’s preaching to Gentiles contained the “unsearchable riches of Christ” or “the good news of Christ’s unfathomable wealth”.³⁰¹

Harry L. Poe (1996)

In 1996 American scholar Harry L. Poe wrote a book speaking into the kerygma debate titled “The Gospel and its Meaning: A Theology for Evangelism and Church Growth”.³⁰² He confesses that he has “crossed disciplines” and that this work is not only a biblical treatment of the gospel “but it also includes a theological treatment in historical perspective”.³⁰³

In his opening chapter, Poe does a literary review of the kerygma debate and also presents his own conclusions regarding the kerygma. He then spends the rest of the book biblically defending his conclusions, drawing across the whole New Testament.

Poe agrees with the critics of Dodd who argue that the kerygma did not exist as a “fixed formula”. That said, “Dodd was correct to the extent that the *kerygma* existed as a fixed content upon which the early Christians drew when proclaiming their faith in Christ”.³⁰⁴ Poe

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 9.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 11 and 134.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 11.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 17 and 21.

³⁰² Harry Lee Poe, *The Gospel and its Meaning: A Theology for Evangelism and Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996)

³⁰³ Ibid., 9.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 40.

argues that passages such as Acts 14 and 17 are to be included as evangelistic expressions of the early church and that this is consistent with what we find in the rest of the New Testament (notably including Paul's letters).³⁰⁵ Thus, "one might expect a change in the expression of the message without an alteration in its substance".³⁰⁶

The *drivers* in these changes of expression are the Holy Spirit, the need for "deeper meaning" in particular aspects of the gospel and the "world's experience of the effects of sin".³⁰⁷ Thus, while the gospel is set and fixed in terms of content, the "ministry of presenting Christ revolved around several basic elements":³⁰⁸

1. The Creator God
2. The fulfilment
3. Son of God/Son of David
4. Death for sins
5. Resurrection
6. Exaltation
7. Gift of the Holy Spirit
8. Return for Judgment
9. Response

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 41.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 41, 43-44.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 45. The nine points come from p45-46.

Eckhard Schnabel

Early Christian Mission (2002 2xVols)

In 2002 Eckhard Schnabel produced a two volume German work entirely devoted to mission.³⁰⁹ The second volume was dedicated to the mission of Paul and the Early Church and both volumes were translated into English in 2004.³¹⁰ In this extensive work Schnabel examines the question of missionary preaching to Gentiles at length. He includes all the epistles and the Acts account of Paul and draws his conclusions from a broad base of biblical texts.

Schnabel reconstructs the key elements of “Paul’s missionary preaching to pagans” using four key Pauline passages (1 Thess. 1:9-10, 1 Thess. 2:13, 2 Cor. 11:4 and 1 Thess. 4:2-7).³¹¹ It is worth noting that Schnabel includes the gospel summaries recounted in 1 Cor. 1-2, 15:1-14 and Rom. 1:1-4 as preaching to “Jewish Audiences”.³¹² There are then seven factors which are of “foundational importance” in Paul’s missionary preaching to Gentiles:

1. active entrance of the apostle and
2. the passive acceptance by the listener,
3. the God of Israel is the one true God,
4. life and ministry of Jesus and the significance of his death and resurrection,
5. Jesus will return to save his people, repenting from pagan gods and turning to the living God,
6. the goal and purpose of conversion is “faith in God” and
7. God demands obedience from all who are reconciled.³¹³

³⁰⁹ In German as Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Urchristliche Mission* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus Verlag, 2002)

³¹⁰ Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1386-7.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 1380-1385.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 1387-1391.

Schnabel argues that the Areopagus sermon in Acts 17 is not a recounting of normal Gentile missionary preaching but rather is a “Dialogical Concentration” or an “Explanation of the Gospel”.³¹⁴ The preceding verses (Acts 17:16-21) show that Paul is being invited to the Areopagus by the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers to answer the question “whether Paul intended to introduce ‘foreign’ gods, deities unfamiliar to the Athenians”.³¹⁵

Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods (2008)

In this volume Schnabel moves between Acts and Paul’s letters (of which there are 13) in his gathering of data.³¹⁶ In relation to Paul’s missionary preaching content he first examines Paul’s letters and then looks at the preaching recorded in Acts.

Like O’Brien, Schnabel sees a strong link between Paul’s conversion (and therefore his identity) and his missionary preaching.³¹⁷ From Paul’s writings his missionary preaching, broadly speaking - to Gentiles, includes “the crucified and risen Jesus Christ”.³¹⁸ “The decisive factor of missionary work is therefore not the missionary but Jesus Christ, who is proclaimed, not the messenger but the message.”³¹⁹ “Paul understands his missionary work as public proclamation of the victory of God, who had conquered him and leads him through the world in his triumphal procession (2 Cor. 2:14-16).”³²⁰ And one last quotation: “The central process of missionary work is the oral proclamation of the good news about Jesus the Messiah and Savior (Rom. 10:14-17; 15:18; 1 Cor. 15:1-2, 11; Col. 1:28).”

³¹⁴ Ibid., 1392. Similarly, Nissen: “including dialogues”. Johannes Nissen, *New Testament and Mission: Historical and Hermeneutical Perspectives* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 61.

³¹⁵ Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1394.

³¹⁶ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies, and Methods*

³¹⁷ Ibid., 123 and 152.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 151.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid., 152.

Although he points out that Paul may well have written out his sermons and therefore Luke can draw from genuinely Pauline material, Schnabel maintains his view that the Athens sermon was “not the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ with the goal of convincing his listeners to become follower of Jesus” but that he was answering the claim that he wanted to “introduce new deities to Athens”.³²¹

In the 2002/4 volume, Schnabel made very little of the importance of the Lystra sermon in Acts 14 in the task of reconstructing Paul’s preaching to Gentiles. However, in this volume it is the only text used to summarise the Gentile missionary preaching.³²² He does think though that Paul’s mission preaching can be reconstructed from his own writings.³²³ This is not only from “succinct summaries of the gospel” but also from places where Paul talks about the “process of conversion”.³²⁴

Using the Acts 14 Lystra sermon as “preaching of the gospel before a pagan audience”, Schnabel then breaks the sermon into two main sections with 3 & 6 subsections:³²⁵

- a) Narratio: The difference between human beings and God (Acts 14:15a-c)
 - 1. The address of the “men” (v. 15a)
 - 2. Introductory question (v. 15b)
 - 3. Affirmation that human beings are not gods (v. 15c)
- b) Argumentatio: Proclamation of the one true God (Acts 14:15d-17)
 - 1. The worthlessness of the traditional gods (v. 15d)
 - 2. The necessity of turning away from idols (v. 15d)

³²¹ Ibid., 156 and 168.

³²² Ibid., 162. Contrast with Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1391.

³²³ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies, and Methods*, 156.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Ibid., 162-163.

3. The good news of the possibility of worshipping the living God (v15d)
4. The one true God is the Creator of the universe (v. 15e)
5. God did not intervene in the affairs of the pagan nations in the past (v. 16)
6. God cared for pagan nations even in the past (v. 17)

Similarly to his view on the end of the Athenian sermon, there is no conclusion to this sermon because of the reaction of the audience.³²⁶ Following Oepke, Schnabel categorises this sermon as “propaedeutical preaching”.³²⁷ “When Paul preached before polytheists, he first needed to speak about the God of Israel as the one true and living God before he could speak about Jesus the Lord and Savior.”³²⁸ By “propaedeutical” preaching Schnabel means this is preaching that is not gospel preaching but is background information that needs to be communicated before the gospel can be preached. He regards the teaching about the one true God as prior to the gospel preaching of Jesus as Lord and saviour.

Graham N. Stanton (2003)

Graham Stanton had a chapter published in the Cambridge Companion to St Paul in 2003 titled “Paul’s gospel”.³²⁹ In this chapter Stanton seeks to uncover the “central themes of Paul’s gospel” which make up the content of his “initial missionary preaching” and “the proclamation at the heart of his letters”.³³⁰

³²⁶ Ibid., 163.

³²⁷ Ibid., 168. Oepke, *Die Missionspredigt des Apostels Paulus: Eine Biblisch-Theologische und Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, 65.

³²⁸ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies, and Methods*, 168.

³²⁹ Graham Stanton, 'Paul's Gospel', in James Dunn (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to St Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 2003), 173-84

³³⁰ Ibid., 173-174.

Stanton notes the importance of the words that Paul uses to refer to this initial preaching. He particularly notes *euaggelion*, *logos* and *rhema*, *akoe*, *kerygma* and *martyrion* and the fact that they are “often used almost synonymously as are the corresponding verbs”.³³¹ He notes the primary importance of *euaggelion* and traces its history and use in Paul, although discussion of Paul’s gospel “should not be confined to his usage of the noun and related verb”.³³² These Greek words are key to Stanton’s methodology as he uses this language to uncover when Paul is referring specifically to his initial preaching.

While Stanton uses this language of “initial preaching”, it is unclear what exactly he thinks was proclaimed in person by Paul the missionary to his unbelieving hearers.³³³ He acknowledges that in Paul’s letters “certain theological themes are prominent, but that those very themes are conspicuous by their absence elsewhere”.³³⁴ This is in addition to the fact that “our knowledge of the content and contours of Paul’s proclamation is more limited than we would like, for his letters are not treatises on the gospel”.³³⁵ This observation is incisive and very important to this thesis. Ladd (see above) uses Acts almost entirely, to attempt to uncover Paul’s initial preaching. In contrast, Stanton points out that to uncover Paul’s missionary preaching from his letters is not an easy task.

Rather than engaging with what determines the variation specifically, he seeks to uncover “a set of convictions concerning the gospel from which the apostle never wavered, even though the circumstances of the recipients of his letters elicited varying emphases”.³³⁶ Stanton first argues from Paul’s writings (most notably 1 Cor. 15:1-3 and 1 Thess. 1:9-10) that the central

³³¹ Ibid., 173.

³³² Ibid., 173-174 and 183.

³³³ Ibid., 173.

³³⁴ Ibid., 174.

³³⁵ Ibid., 183.

³³⁶ Ibid., 174.

themes of Paul's gospel did not originate with him but rather with his Christian predecessors.³³⁷

Stanton summarises Paul's gospel into five central themes as follows:

1. The gospel as God's initiative through his Son.

The gospel comes from "*God's* initiative" (Rom. 1:16-17); it is "*God's* effective saving power" (1 Cor. 1:18) for Jew and Gentile alike (Gal. 3:28); it is "*God's* disclosure of unveiling of his righteousness" (Rom. 1:17) and is "*God's* disclosure of Jesus Christ as his Son" (Gal. 1:1).³³⁸ But while the gospel is initiated by God, the focus of the gospel is Christ.³³⁹

2. Christ crucified and raised for our salvation

This is "the heart of the gospel transmitted to Paul by his predecessors".³⁴⁰

The proof for this is "several important passages" including: 1 Cor. 15:3-7; 1 Cor. 1:17, 18, 22, 24; Rom. 3:21-26; Rom. 5:6-11; and Rom. 10:8.³⁴¹

3. Justification

For Luther and others "justification by faith' is seen as *the* hub of Paul's gospel".³⁴² Because of the close association of justification with gospel in Romans and Galatians and in contrast to the new perspective on Paul, justification "can hardly be sidelined as a peripheral theme in Paul's gospel".³⁴³ The key texts supporting this are Gal. 2:11-16, Rom. 1:16-17 and 3:21-31.³⁴⁴ Stanton notes that the texts repeatedly make a connection between

³³⁷ Ibid., 174-175.

³³⁸ Ibid., 176, emphasis in original.

³³⁹ Ibid., 177.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 177-178.

³⁴² Ibid., 179, emphasis in original.

³⁴³ Ibid., 179-180.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 180.

justification and faith and that the object of this faith is Christ.³⁴⁵ However, it is worth noting that Stanton does not either define faith in Paul or expand on its connection or role in Paul's gospel.

4. Reconciliation

Although reconciliation is only expounded in detail in two of Paul's (undisputed) letters, it stands as a "central strand in Paul's gospel".³⁴⁶ The two key passages are 2 Cor. 5:18-21 and Rom. 5:9-11.³⁴⁷ Reconciliation is enmity between God and humanity being replaced with peace.³⁴⁸ Hence, it is closely related to justification and can only take place through Christ.

5. The gospel came in power and in the Spirit

"The gospel is not merely a set of statements to be affirmed" but is rather the power of God for salvation (Rom. 1:16 and 1 Thess. 1:5).³⁴⁹ The gospel makes its impact "through the power and conviction of God's Spirit".³⁵⁰ Again it is worth noting here that while Stanton mentions the connection with faith, he does not expand on the nature of faith and how it connects with the impact of the gospel.³⁵¹

Darrell Bock 2010

Bock's 2010 work on the question of the gospel is, like many of the other works on the topic, a fairly accessible or *popular* treatment done by a respected New Testament scholar.³⁵²

Bock's purpose is to show that the gospel is "good news" and that while the "core" of the

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 180-181.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 181.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 182.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid., 183.

³⁵² Darrell L. Bock, *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel: Reclaiming the Gospel as Good News* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010)

gospel is the message of the cross, there is more to the gospel message.³⁵³ He sets out to “affirm Jesus’ death for sin as a key element of the gospel and yet not lose a comprehensive appreciation for all that the gospel is”.³⁵⁴ The gospel “is a relationship rooted in God’s love, not just a transaction”.³⁵⁵ Bock draws across the New Testament including Acts (and notably Acts 17) as reliable material containing evangelistic insight.

Bock outlines his logical approach to the content of the gospel are follows:

- a) The Gospel starts with a promise: Relationship in the Spirit.³⁵⁶
- b) The Gospel is a Meal and a Washing: The Lord’s Table and Baptism.³⁵⁷ The washing is being cleansed from sin (baptism) while the meal is fellowship with God (the Lord’s Supper).³⁵⁸
- c) A Unique Action Meeting a Comprehensive Need: The Cross.³⁵⁹
- d) The Gospel is Inaugurated as a Gift of God’s Grace.³⁶⁰

These four key points of content are then followed by three more important contextual points:

- e) The Gospel is Affirmed in Divine Action and Scripture: God showing who Jesus is.³⁶¹
- f) Embracing the Gospel: Repentance and Faith.³⁶²

³⁵³ Ibid., 1-3.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 4.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 125.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 7-20.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 23-38.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 37.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 39-55.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 57-72.

³⁶¹ Ibid., 73-87.

³⁶² Ibid., 89-109.

- g) A Different Kind of Power Through a Way of Life Pleasing to God: Reconciliation, Peace, and Power of God unto Salvation.³⁶³

Point (f) above is worth additional note as Bock places special emphasis on the response to the gospel. By implication, what Bock is saying is that the gospel has no power in building relationship between sinner and God unless there is an embracing of the gospel.

Bock focusses on three words found across the whole New Testament: *turn*, *repent*, and *faith*.³⁶⁴ The most important passage in Paul for the term *turn* is 1 Thess. 1:9-10. The key in this verse is the “response is summarized in terms of a change of direction. In fact, the issue is stated as a change in loyalty.”³⁶⁵ For *repentance* Bock focusses on Rom. 2:4 where “Repentance, in the end, is not a response growing out of the fear of God’s punishment. It is a response to God’s abundant kindness, forbearance, and patience. Repentance calls us to change our minds about God.”³⁶⁶ *Faith* is found right throughout Paul as “a key summary term for a proper response to the gospel”.³⁶⁷

Similarly, Bock finds all three terms with similar meaning in Luke/Acts. The most noteworthy of these in relation to *repentance* is Luke 24:44-49 which he links with Rom. 15:8-12. There are also “two Pauline summaries from Acts” which contain all three terms: Acts 20:21 and 26:15-23.³⁶⁸

³⁶³ Ibid., 111-122.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 89.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 91.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 98.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 104. Bock draws particular attention to Rom. 3:21-22, 4:24-25, 5:1-2, 10:8-9, Gal. 2:16 and Eph. 2:8-10.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 108.

Scot McKnight (2011)

In a recent book addressing contemporary church issues, Scot McKnight addresses the question of how God's "plan of salvation" took over from the gospel.³⁶⁹ His chief concern in contemporary missionary preaching is the shift from the New Testament's understanding of gospel to the modern emphasis now being focussed on God's plan of salvation.

McKnight has a chapter devoted to the apostolic gospel of Paul where he focusses on 1 Cor. 15 and divides it into three parts pertinent to Paul's gospel: v1-2, v3-5 and then includes v20-28. He concludes using the language of "story" to describe Paul's gospel.³⁷⁰ The story is not the story of salvation itself but is the "salvation-unleashing story of Jesus, Messiah-Lord-Son, that brings to completion the Story of Israel as found in the Scriptures of the Old Testament".³⁷¹ This story spans from creation to consummation and every time Paul makes reference to "gospel" this is what he is referring to.

Importantly, McKnight says that 1 Cor. 15 is only shorthand for the full story of Jesus which is "fully expounded in the gospels themselves".³⁷² In fact, "Paul's gospel was the same as Jesus' and – in fact- the same as everyone's in the first century".³⁷³ Both are "declaring the Story of Israel as resolved in the Story of Jesus. That was Paul's gospel, and it was the apostolic tradition".³⁷⁴ Building on the work of Dickson, McKnight concludes that along

³⁶⁹ Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 62-63.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 78.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 79.

with Paul's gospel being the same as the gospel contained in the Gospels, "the Four Gospels and the gospel are one".³⁷⁵

McKnight's scope and aim make it difficult to be critical of his conclusions. However, more work must be done to justify his conclusions regarding Paul's gospel, its relation to the Gospels and the purpose of 'gospel' in Paul. As this study addresses McKnight's claims, special attention needs to be paid to the origins and purpose of the creed in 1 Cor. 15:3-5. As with Dickson, McKnight may well be right about this passage, but great care needs to be taken in drawing the conclusions that he does.³⁷⁶

Conclusion

Much of the literature covered in this literary review could be questioned as to its relevance to the question of Paul's initial preaching to Gentiles. Many of the writers, including some of those who specifically seek Paul's gospel, begin with the presupposition that Paul's initial preaching would have been based on and consistent with an earlier apostolic gospel story. So, although they seek to harmonise with Paul's own writing, some build much of their argument on the book of Acts (such as Dodd or Mounce). While the harmony is warranted (with clarifications) the order may well be questioned, especially since Paul pre-dates Acts. Again, this is further complicated by the way that Acts is used by scholars. Even those who believe that Acts will reveal an early apostolic kerygma vary in the material they select.

This approach in its various forms has the underlying assumption that there was one fixed kerygma (Dodd being the champion of this view). That makes sense of why the kerygma

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 81. McKnight works from: John P. Dickson, *The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission: Promoting the Gospel with More Than Our Lips* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 111-140.

³⁷⁶ See: John P. Dickson, *Promoting the Gospel: A Practical Guide to the Biblical Art of Sharing your Faith* (Sydney South: Blue Bottle, 2005a)

debate has focussed so strongly on trying to uncover that fixed kerygma, whatever the method that is deployed. It has only been in the last 45 years or so that scholarship has questioned this assumption. Most notable in this discussion is Dunn.

The other major distinction noted during this review is that scholars tend to either argue on the one hand for one fixed kerygma or on the other hand for variation, translation, or even kerygmata. The problem with those arguing for the fixed kerygma is noted above. However, none of the scholars that argue for a variation in kerygma, whether it is through different people or situations, presents a satisfactory *driver* for that variation. That is, scholars may strongly argue for variation in Paul's gospel preaching (both those who argue from Acts or the Epistles) but it seems that no scholar yet is able to satisfactorily explain what it is that determines the material presented as original content.³⁷⁷

Early twentieth Century contributions to the study of Paul's initial preaching focused mainly on his Jewish preaching in Acts while giving attention only to limited material from his epistles. In 1970 Green, Barclay, and subsequently Barnett (1971), asserted that Paul's Gentile preaching in Acts 14 and 17 should also be included in any such study.³⁷⁸ More recently, however, Schnabel has emphasised the Pauline material.³⁷⁹ He divides carefully between the Jewish and Gentile material in the epistles but chooses not to include Luke's record of Paul's sermons in his reconstruction of the initial Gentile preaching. Notably,

³⁷⁷ A good example of this is Dunn who argues that "Paul varied his proclamation according to circumstances" but he does not explain what it was about the circumstances that determined what variation Paul employed. Dunn, *Unity And Diversity In The New Testament: An Inquiry Into The Character of Earliest Christianity*, 25.

³⁷⁸ Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 346-349. Barclay, *A Comparison of Paul's Missionary Preaching and Preaching to the Church*, 165. Barnett, *Paul's Preaching Reconsidered*, 145-146.

³⁷⁹ Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*

nearly all who have contributed to this task (including those not covered here) claim that there must have been teaching on the life of Jesus in Paul's foundational preaching.³⁸⁰

Given this history, it is clear that a broader study may provide insights into Paul's initial preaching. None of the above authors attempt to harmonise with any great depth both Acts 17 and the key Pauline passages in their study (such as 1 Cor. 15:3-8 and Rom. 1:3-4). While Schnabel includes more Pauline passages than most, he chooses to bypass the Athenian sermon. Similarly, while Barnett includes Acts 17 as vital in his study, he regards 1 Cor. 15 as being a tradition *passed on* by Christians.³⁸¹ Also lacking is an argument that adequately justifies the inclusion of teaching on the life of Jesus in Paul's initial gospel preaching to Gentiles.³⁸²

It is proposed that this study will attempt to begin to answer these questions focussing on the Pauline epistles historically. The harmonisation with Acts with all its difficulties will have to wait for a future study, but such a study could build on this one. As you see below, we will look primarily at the eight undisputed epistles as primary material. This will reference the five secondary epistles and Acts which will be regarded as Pauline tradition.

³⁸⁰ C. K. Barrett, *Essays on Paul* (London: SPCK, 1982), 68. Paul E. Davies, 'Paul's Missionary Message', *JBL*, 16/4 (1948), 205-11, 208.

³⁸¹ In a more recent work, Barnett maintains that Paul 'handed over' this teaching. Paul Barnett, *1 Corinthians: Holiness and Hope of a Rescued People* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2000b), 270-271.

³⁸² This is not to ignore the plethora of recent material written on the subject of the 'Jesus tradition' by Wright, Kim, Wenham and many others, but is to distinguish between the goals of each debate. To mention a few: Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on The origin of Paul's Gospel* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament,; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 259-292. N. T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (1st pbk edn.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 154-161. N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God; London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1992), 408-409. David Wenham and Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (Great Britain). *Paul and Jesus : the true story* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2002)

Section 2 – Terminology: Paul’s use of Preaching Words

Introduction

In his epistles Paul will refer back to his initial preaching quite often, although most of the time he gives no details about the content of that preaching. Paul uses a variety of words to refer to what he preached and these are important as they will identify the occasions when Paul does give us some clue or information as to the content of that initial preaching.

The method employed in this section is an analysis of every use of the relevant words and their meaning. This will cover all or part of the primary material (1 Thessalonians, Philippians, Philemon, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, 2 Corinthians, Romans and Colossians¹), the

¹ Dunn says that Colossians is a “bridge” between the Pauline and Post-Pauline letters. James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (New International Greek Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids, Carlisle: Eerdmans; Paternoster 1996b), 19 and 39. Dunn himself concludes that Colossians is Pauline “in the full sense of the word” but it was probably written by Timothy during Paul’s life and probably with Paul’s oversight or commission. Ibid., 38. See also Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 13. Dunn says he agrees with Schweizer, Ollrog and Wedderburn. Eduard Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians: A Commentary* (London: SPCK, 1982b), 23-24. Eduard Schweizer, *Neues Testament und Christologie im Werden: Aufsätze* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982a), 150-163. Wolf-Henning Ollrog, 'Paulus und seine Mitarbeiter: Untersuchungen zu Theorie und Praxis der paulinischen Mission', A revision of the author's thesis, Heidelberg, 1974 (Neukirchener Verlag, 1979), 236-242. A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology Against its Graeco-Roman Background* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament; Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 71. While scholarship is split (Brown says 60% of scholarship says non-Pauline authorship) on the question of authenticity, stimulated on the one hand by the style and content variations from Paul’s seven undisputed epistles and on the other hand by the similarities with Philemon, we will include it as primary material for the purposes of this study without engaging any further with Dunn’s conclusions. Raymond Edward Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (The Anchor Bible reference library; New York. London: Doubleday, 1997), 610. The argument that comes closest to be convincing for post-Pauline authorship is presented throughout Lohse’s commentary. Lohse does not draw his conclusion until the end of the commentary but due to the fact that Colossians “lacks a great many characteristic terms of Pauline theology” (p178) and it is Christology and eschatology he settles for a date of around 80AD, soon after Paul’s death (p182, note 17). Lohse concludes: “It is abundantly clear from the examples cited above that the author of Col was thoroughly acquainted with the principal themes of Pauline theology. He acquired this familiarity by an exacting study of the Pauline school tradition.” Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon: A Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 182. See also: Mark Kiley, *Colossians as Pseudepigraphy* (The Biblical Seminar; Sheffield: JSOT, 1986); Outi Leppä, 'The Making of Colossians: A Study on the Formation and Purpose of a Deutero-Pauline Letter', Thesis (doctoral) (University, Helsinki, 2000., Studies that argue for Pauline authorship among many others include: Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon* (The Pillar New Testament commentary; Grand Rapids. Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2008)28-41; and Peter Thomas O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* (Word Biblical Commentary; Waco: Word, 1982), xli-xlii. While there are likely to be future changes to the scholarly census of Pauline authorship that should not devalue this study. References that are currently “secondary” can simply be moved to “primary” and vice versa.

secondary material (2 Thessalonians, Ephesians, 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus), the Pauline tradition (Acts with reference to Luke)² and examination where valuable of other New Testament texts, the Hebrew Old Testament, the LXX and Greco-Roman literature.³ The use of the word “secondary” should not imply any judgment on my part in relation to their authorship but rather is an acknowledgement of their disputed status in current scholarship.

Some definitions are also needed at this point to show when particular words are used to refer to speaking the gospel to unbelievers, to believers, or both. In this study, for consistency, we will use “evangelistic” and the slightly more difficult “missionary” to refer specifically to speaking the gospel to unbelievers. The word “initial” will be used with a clarifier to show whether it is referring to initial preaching to unbelievers or believers or both. The words “preaching” and “proclaiming” will be used in the same sense as “gospelling” in referring to the speaking of the gospel in any context (this will be defended further below). Although not a real word, “gospelling” (and gosselled) will at times be used intentionally as a neologism to preserve the essence of the *εὐαγγελ*- word group.

First, the various nouns that refer to the content of the preaching are examined. We are particularly looking for occasions where information is given as to the content of the preaching. Genitives following the nouns are also examined. Secondly, the verbs describing the activity of gospel communication are examined and the contexts are evaluated for further analysis. The third group of words examined consists of the verbs of response to the

² The references to Acts will sometimes appear in the body of the text and sometimes in footnotes depending on the point being made. In this thesis no judgments are being made about the authorship, purpose or historicity of Acts. When it is included it is for the sake of comparison (either similarity or difference) in a document that can be categorised as “Pauline tradition”. Fitzmyer defends the “Paulinism” of Acts against the “clearly exaggerated view” of Vielhauer whose writing in 1950 (in German and in English in 1963 and 1968) has become “the matter of much debate ever since”. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (The Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 1998), 145-147. P. Vielhauer, 'Zum 'Paulinismus' der Apostelgeschichte', *EvT*, 10 (1950-51), 1-15, P. Vielhauer, 'On the "Paulinism" of Acts', *PSTJ*, 17/1 (1963), 5-18

³ Unless indicated, translations in this thesis are my own.

message communicated. These words are important as they will give clues as to whether Paul is speaking of gospel preaching to unbelievers or to already-believing Christians.

The content of the preaching (nouns)

εὐαγγέλιον

The Hebrew **בִּשְׂרָא** occurs only six times in the Old Testament with the meaning of either “good news” or “reward for good news”.⁴ Each time the LXX will use *εὐαγγέλια* except in 2 Sam. 4:10 where it takes the plural of *εὐαγγέλιον*. All occurrences can be translated as “reward for good news”.⁵ The equivalent verb **בִּשַׂר** is far more common in the Hebrew occurring 24 times. It “has the general sense of ‘proclaiming good news’” and sometimes can mean “sad news”.⁶ The LXX will normally use a form of *εὐαγγελίζομαι* when translating this verb.⁷

The noun *εὐαγγέλιον* is an adjective used as a substantive.⁸ “It means that which is proper to an *εὐάγγελος*.”⁹ Prior to the New Testament *εὐαγγέλιον* had the broad meaning of “good

⁴ Gerhard Friedrich, 'euaggelizomai, euaggelion, proeuaggelizomai, euaggelistes', in Gerhard Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (2; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 707-37, 721. Holladay gives a more neutral translation with either “message” or “messenger’s reward”. William Lee Holladay, Ludwig Koehler, and Walter Baumgartner, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Based Upon the Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner* (15th Corrected Impression. edn.; Grand Rapids; Leiden: Eerdmans; Brill, 2000), 51.

⁵ Friedrich, *euaggelizomai, euaggelion, proeuaggelizomai, euaggelistes*, 725.

⁶ Ibid., 707 and 714. Dickson has a helpful and detailed discussion on the use of **בִּשַׂר**. John P. Dickson, 'Gospel as News: euaggel- from Aristophanes to the Apostle Paul', *New Testament Studies*, 51/2 (1st April 2005b), 212-30, 217-220. “bring (good or bad) news”: Holladay, Koehler, and Baumgartner, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Based Upon the Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner*, 50-51. “to bring good news, tell, announce”: Gary Davis Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *The Vocabulary Guide to Biblical Hebrew* (1st edn.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 174.

⁷ Friedrich, *euaggelizomai, euaggelion, proeuaggelizomai, euaggelistes*, 712. See also: Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem* 552-553.

⁸ Friedrich, *euaggelizomai, euaggelion, proeuaggelizomai, euaggelistes*, 721.

⁹ Ibid., 721.

news” amongst the Greeks.¹⁰ Homer used *εὐαγγέλιον* to mean “reward for good news”.¹¹ Aristophanes used the word comically to speak of the “news” of the price of anchovies.¹² In the imperial cult the meaning of the noun “wholly conforms to that in wider Greek literature: the announcement of *news* (concerning the emperor’s deeds)”.¹³ The word is most used to speak of the emperor’s birth, coming of age and accession.¹⁴ “The imperial cult and the Bible share the view that accession to the throne, which introduces a new era and brings peace to the world, is a gospel for men.”¹⁵ In Judaism, notably Philo (14 times) and Josephus (16 times, the LXX already mentioned above), *εὐαγγελ-* always means news.¹⁶

In summary, prior to the writing of the New Testament, the meaning of the word can best be understood as *news*.¹⁷ This meaning is preserved in the New Testament but it is built on,

¹⁰ For an introductory summary see Wright, but for more details see Dickson. N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids Cincinnati: Eerdmans, 1997), 41-44. Cf. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*, 77. N. T. Wright, 'Paul as Preacher: The Gospel Then and Now', *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 72/2 (May 1, 2007 2007), 131-46, 139. Dickson, 'Gospel as News: *εὐαγγελ-* from Aristophanes to the Apostle Paul', John P. Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe,; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis*, 78f. A. J. Spallek, 'The Origin and Meaning of Euangelion in the Pauline Corpus', *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 57/3 (/ 1993), 177-90, 176-179. Conzelmann, *An outline of the Theology of the New Testament*, 60.

¹¹ Hom. Od., 14, 152f., 1664. Friedrich, *euaggelizomai, euaggelion, proeuaggelizomai, euaggelistes*, 722.

¹² Aristoph., *Knights*, 644-7. See: Dickson, 'Gospel as News: *εὐαγγελ-* from Aristophanes to the Apostle Paul', 214. Friedrich, *euaggelizomai, euaggelion, proeuaggelizomai, euaggelistes*, 722. For other broad Greek uses of the substantive and verb see Lycurgus *Against Leocrates* 1.18, Pausanias's *Description of Greece* (IV.19.5), Demosthenes *On the Crown* 18.323, Plutarch *Pompey* 41.3 (verb), 66.3 (noun); *Sertorius* 11.4 (verb); *Phocian* 23.4 (noun); *Moralia* (*On the Fame of the Athenians*) 347.D (singular noun used twice); Chariton *Callirhoe* VIII.2.5 (noun); Philostratus *Life of Apollonius* VIII.27.2 (noun); *Lives of the Sophists* I.508.14 (noun).

¹³ Dickson, 'Gospel as News: *εὐαγγελ-* from Aristophanes to the Apostle Paul', 214.

¹⁴ For birth see the Priene inscription (OGI 2, 458). The other references are from: Friedrich, *euaggelizomai, euaggelion, proeuaggelizomai, euaggelistes* 724-725.

¹⁵ Ibid., 725. Wright argues strongly that we must understand Paul's use of “gospel” as being influenced by the imperial cult and not simply Jewish. Paul's gospel is “confronting the ‘good news’ carved in stone around Caesar's empire”. N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013b), 410. See also: Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?*, 43-44.

¹⁶ A helpful summary in: Dickson, 'Gospel as News: *εὐαγγελ-* from Aristophanes to the Apostle Paul' 215-216.

¹⁷ For all the Pauline primary, secondary and Lukan occurrences of the word BDAG defines *εὐαγγέλιον* as “God's good news to humans, *good news* as proclamation” (emphasis in original). William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (3rd edn.; Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), 402. Similarly Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (9th edn.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 705.

particularly by Paul, to refer to more than simply the initial proclamation to unbelievers. The noun of agency was used “to express in summary fashion the message that Paul announced to the world of his day” and “could describe the activity of preaching the gospel as well as the content of the message”.¹⁸ These are not “two distinct meanings of the word” but are rather “two sides of one concept”.¹⁹ No word is more important to Paul’s understanding of his own ministry than *εὐαγγέλιον*.²⁰ In the primary material Paul uses *εὐαγγέλιον* 49 times across 46 verses.²¹

Dickson has argued that the *εὐαγγελ-* word group in Paul “uniformly connotes the announcement of *news*” and that “‘gospel’ for Paul refers not to ongoing instruction within the church but to proclamation outside it”.²² Dickson is right in that there is teaching within the church such as ethical practice and imperative that is never referred to as “gospel”. Similarly, (particularly relating to the verb) Moo says that Paul “rarely uses” it “for anything except initial evangelistic preaching”.²³ Dodd writes: “For the early Church, then, to preach the Gospel was by no means the same thing as to deliver moral instruction or exhortation.”²⁴ Similarly, O’Brien states that *εὐαγγέλιον* “served as a label to express in summary fashion the

¹⁸ O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis*, 77-81.

¹⁹ Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter Thomas O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (New studies in Biblical Theology; Nottingham: Apollos, 2001), 173-4 (and 192f). Quoting: Einar Molland, *Das paulinische Evangelion, das Wort und die Sache* (Avhandlingar (Norske videnskaps-akademi i Oslo. II--Hist.-filos. klasse); Oslo: I kommisjon hos Jacob Dybwad, 1934), 48. See also: Peter Thomas O’Brien, ‘Thanksgiving and the Gospel in Paul’, *NTS*, 21/1 (1974-1975), 144-55, esp. p147 and 149.

²⁰ Don N. Jr. Howell, ‘Mission In Paul’s Epistles: Genesis, Pattern, and Dynamics’, in William J. And Williams Larkin, Joel F. (ed.), *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998b), 63-91, 71.

²¹ Rom. 1:1, 9, 16; 2:16; 10:16; 11:28; 15:16, 19; 16:25; 1 Cor. 4:15; 9:12, 14, 18, 23; 15:1; 2 Cor. 2:12; 4:3-4; 8:18; 9:13; 10:14; 11:4, 7; Gal. 1:6-7, 11; 2:2, 5, 7, 14; Phil. 1:5, 7, 12, 16, 27; 2:22; 4:3, 15; Col. 1:5, 23; 1 Thess. 1:5; 2:2, 4, 8-9; 3:2.

²² Dickson, ‘Gospel as News: *εὐαγγελ-* from Aristophanes to the Apostle Paul’, 212 and 230. See also Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission*, 86-94.

²³ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New international commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1996), 63, note 62.

²⁴ Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 8. Howell says that Paul uses ‘gospel’ to identify his ‘core message’. Howell, ‘Pattern and Dynamics’, 71.

message that Paul announced to the world of his day”.²⁵ O’Brien further expands the idea that the gospel word group is used by Paul “to cover the whole range of evangelistic and teaching ministry”.²⁶ Likewise Bowers says that “Paul’s familiar formula of ‘proclaiming the gospel’” is “not simply an initial preaching mission but the full sequence of activities resulting in settled churches”.²⁷

The problem with the message always being “new” (so Dickson) and the idea that the message covers the “whole range” of teaching (so O’Brien and Bowers) is that it does not sufficiently account for Paul’s use of the word group. On the one hand, Paul will at times use the εὐαγγελ- word group to refer to what is best regarded as a central or core message but that is not *news* to the hearer. Even though the Corinthians already believe Paul makes effort to “remind” them of the gospel they know with an exhortation to both “stand” in it and “hold firmly” to it (1 Cor. 15:1-3, see more detailed notes below. Cf. Phil. 1:27).²⁸ Paul will tell the beloved in Rome that his gospel “establishes” them (Rom. 16:25)²⁹ and as we shall see below, he spends Romans 1-8 expounding the gospel message to those who already believe. The Galatians are chastised for turning to a different gospel (Gal. 1:6) implying that they are to be holding on to Paul’s gospel as their central belief. Paul will speak of his ministry as being “set apart” for “the work of the gospel” (Rom. 1:1 and Phil. 2.22). Paul will also speak of those who preach the gospel as deserving of earning their living from it (1 Cor. 9:14). O’Brien’s helpful description of this activity is that Paul is “building up ... believers

²⁵ Peter O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis* (Homebush West: Baker, 1995), 78. See also Ibid. pages 61-65. O’Brien also has a stimulating discussion observing the fact that this word group is used frequently by Paul in introductory thanksgivings but not in his petitionary prayers. Peter O’Brien, ‘Thanksgiving and the Gospel in Paul’, *NTS* 21 (1974-5): 144-155.

²⁶ O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis*, 62.

²⁷ P. Bowers, ‘Fulfilling the Gospel: The Scope of the Pauline Mission’, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 30/2 (/ 1987), 185-98, 198.

²⁸ Dickson argues that 1 Cor. 15:1-5 is a reminder of what was previously “evangelised” but that fails to account for the emphasis of γνωρίζω. See below for more detailed notes. Dickson, ‘Gospel as News: εὐαγγελ- from Aristophanes to the Apostle Paul’, 223.

²⁹ Friedrich says about this verse: “This proclamation is the strengthening of the community”. Friedrich, *euangelizomai, euaggelion, proeuangelizomai, euangelistes*, 730.

and grounding them firmly in the faith”.³⁰ He argues that they do not “leave the gospel behind” and hence the gospel “needs therefore to be preached to those who have already received it and have become Christians”.³¹ Dickson likewise rightly says that “Paul believed the preaching of the gospel to be the foundation stone of a community’s existence and the measure of all subsequent ‘pastoral’ teaching”.³²

On the other hand, to say that the word “gospel” covers everything Paul teaches is inconsistent with his use of the word. Dodd was right to observe that there is a difference of language between *kerygma* (which he includes *εὐαγγέλ*- language in) and *didache*.³³ There is a central body of content which Paul calls his “gospel” but it is not a word that can be used to speak of everything he teaches. For example, in 1 Cor. 15:1 Paul moves from various teachings in previous chapters that are not gospel to turn his readers’ minds to this specific and central body of information in 15:3-8.

It is important to recognise that while there is a distinction between teaching and gospelling, there is overlap between the two. Teaching is a broader category while gospelling is a narrower category. The two words are not synonymous but there is overlap. But teaching would most necessarily include the gospel because the application of the gospel into the lives of believers must stem from the gospel.³⁴

³⁰ O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis*, 63.

³¹ Ibid., 63.

³² Dickson, 'Gospel as News: *εὐαγγέλ*- from Aristophanes to the Apostle Paul', 221.

³³ Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, 8. C. H. Dodd, *History and the Gospel* (London: Lisbet, 1938), 51 and 74. Note, however, that Dodd was highly criticised for being too “rigid” in his distinction. Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission*, 88. William Baird, 'What is the Kerygma? A Study of 1 Cor 15:3-8 and Gal 1:11-17', *JBL*, 76 (1957), 181-91, 182. Moule rejects the distinction altogether. C. F. D. Moule, *Essays in New Testament Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1982), 43.

³⁴ An example of this would be Romans 12-15.

It is therefore best to think of Paul's gospel as his "core message".³⁵ When he is proclaiming this message to the unbelieving world it is *news* and when he is reminding or grounding Christians in it, it is best thought of as *foundational* or *central*. A very important question that this thesis will examine later is whether these two types of gospel presentation have the same content, emphasis and shape or whether they vary and if so, how. Of particular interest is whether there is variation between proclamation to Jews, God-Fearers and Gentiles.

Importantly to Pauline studies is the observation that Paul seems to have been the first of the early Christian writers to give such a distinct and important "technical term to his own proclamation".³⁶ It may even be an adaption from a new type of use of the word by Jesus himself to refer to his own proclamation before his death.³⁷ In Paul, the gospel "has a clearly defined content; so much so that in about half his references it stands by itself without qualification".³⁸ The word is a "short-hand summary" of the "the message about Jesus Christ".³⁹

It is hard to overstate the importance of this word in uncovering Paul's initial missionary preaching, if that is possible. No other word, except maybe *kerygma* (see below) has such a specific and designated association with Paul's core message to both Jews and Gentiles. In the secondary material *εὐαγγέλιον* is used ten times.⁴⁰ The usage and the meaning are

³⁵ Howell, *Mission In Paul's Epistles: Genesis, Pattern, and Dynamics*, 71.

³⁶ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 168.

³⁷ See Mark 8:38, Luke 9:26 and a usage similar to the way Paul does in Matt. 24:14. Ibid., 168. C. K. Barrett, *New Testament Essays* (London: SPCK, 1972), 116-143.

³⁸ Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 84. For the importance of the word Green also cites: Bédaride, *Saint Paul - Les épîtres aux Thessaloniens* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1956), 158.

³⁹ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies, and Methods*, 34.

⁴⁰ Eph. 1:13; 3:6; 6:15, 19; 2 Thess. 1:8; 2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:8, 10 and 2:8.

synonymous with the primary material with the word occurring in similar locations and contexts. In Acts the noun is only used twice but again preserves the same meaning.⁴¹

Most often Paul will speak of “the gospel” without qualification. But he will also qualify with genitives of possession such as “my gospel”⁴², “God’s gospel”⁴³ and “our gospel”.⁴⁴ The most common genitive “gospel of Christ”⁴⁵ and “the gospel of his Son”⁴⁶ could be either (or both) genitives of possession or content. Wallace suggests that “gospel of God” (and hence also “gospel of Christ”) is best understood as Plenary, that is “*both* subjective and objective”.⁴⁷

Dunn argues that Paul wants to “distinguish ... clearly” his gospel from the Jewish gospel of Peter even if “it was not so very different from Paul’s gospel in content”.⁴⁸ But while Paul will use a variety of phrases to describe his gospel this must not overlook the fact that he believes in “the” gospel. Wallace says that “often ‘the gospel’ ... employ articles *par excellence*. In other words, there as only one gospel and one Lord worth mentioning as far as the early Christians were concerned.”⁴⁹ Similarly Friedrich says “Paul does not preach a special Gospel

⁴¹ Acts 15:7 and 20:24.

⁴² Rom. 2:16 and. 16:25. Cf. 2 Tim. 2:8.

⁴³ Rom. 1:1, 15:16, 2 Cor. 11:17, 1 Thess. 2:2, 2:8 and 2:9. Cf. 2 Thess. 2:14. Although we will not go into it in detail (at least in this section), Wright argues that this construction has God himself as the content (or part thereof) of the gospel. N. T. Wright, *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul, 1978-2013* (London: SPCK, 2013a), 85.

⁴⁴ 2 Cor. 4:3 and 1 Thess. 1:5.

⁴⁵ Rom. 15:19, 1 Cor. 9:12, 2 Cor. 2:12, 9:13, 10:114, Gal. 1:7, Phil. 1:27 and 1 Thess. 3:2. Cf. 2 Thess. 1:8 where “the gospel of our Lord Jesus” is possessive. See: Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids; Carlisle: Eerdmans; Paternoster, 2000), 228. Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (Rev.ed. edn.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 204. But note also: Ernest Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (London: Black, 1972), 260-261.

⁴⁶ Rom. 1:9.

⁴⁷ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament; with Scripture, Subject and Greek Word Indexes* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 119-121. Dunn uses these titles to argue that the “main emphasis in Paul’s evangelistic preaching seems to have been on Jesus Christ”. Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 574.

⁴⁸ Dunn, *Unity And Diversity In The New Testament: An Inquiry Into The Character of Earliest Christianity*, 23-24.

⁴⁹ Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament; with Scripture, Subject and Greek Word Indexes*, 223.

compared with the other apostles ... If he calls the Gospel his own, it is because he as an apostle is entrusted with its declaration.”⁵⁰

κήρυγμα

Discussion over the past century concerning the content of Paul’s missionary preaching has become known as the *kerygma debate*.⁵¹ The irony of that title is that the word only occurs four times in the primary material⁵², twice in the secondary material⁵³ and not once in Acts where much of the debate is centred. In the rest of the New Testament κήρυγμα only occurs twice, both in the synoptics and both referring to the message of Jonah.⁵⁴

The Greek usage of κήρυγμα had “a twofold sense like the word proclamation, signifying both the result of proclamation (what is proclaimed) and the actual proclaiming”.⁵⁵ Philo

⁵⁰ Friedrich, *euaggelizomai, euaggelion, proeuaggelizomai, euaggelistes*, 733.

⁵¹ Summarising the missionary preaching as “kerygma” originated with Dodd in 1936. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* Calling it a “debate” probably originated from the 1953 book: Bartsch, *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate* See also: Louis A. Drummond, *The Canvas Cathedral* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 87-93. Cf. his earlier work: Louis A. Drummond, *The Word of the Cross: A Contemporary Theology of Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992) Also see: Poe, *The Gospel and its Meaning: A Theology for Evangelism and Church Growth*, 20-23. Dunn, *Unity And Diversity In The New Testament: An Inquiry Into The Character of Earliest Christianity*, 11.

⁵² Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 1:21; 2:4 and 15:14. Note that the whole doxology in Rom. 16 is a textual variant with P46 being the notable source omitting the variation. Metzger’s explanation (so Stott) is plausible in that there a shorter version, as we have in P46, sent to other churches (such as Ephesus) but that the original longer version was sent to Rome. Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (Fourth Revised Edition)* (2nd ed edn.; London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 476-477. John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans: God's Good News for the World* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1994), 403.

⁵³ 2 Tim. 4:17 and Tit. 1:3.

⁵⁴ Matt. 12:41 and Luke 11:32. Also in Mark 16:8 but the second half of that verse is a later addition. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (Fourth Revised Edition)*, 102-106. William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) That occurrence is significant, however, since it shows the early post-NT usage of the word. “sacred proclamation” (ἁγίον κήρυγμα) would be consistent in meaning as would the connection with salvation (see 1 Cor. 1:21) but the addition of αἰώνιος more likely reveals a later usage, possibly influenced by the later Rev. 14:6. Barnett argues that John is referring to the one eternal gospel in Rev. 14:6 and that he is drawing on a word used in a secular context in Asia since 9BC. That is in strange contrast to Robert Mounce who wants to argue that “eternal gospel” in this verse refers not to “the gospel of God’s redeeming grace” but to “judgement and salvation in the coming eternal age”. Given that the New Testament writers speak of redemption and grace as being for the coming judgment it is strange to try to separate “eternal gospel” from the one gospel that the other early Christian writers spoke of. Paul Barnett, *Apocalypse Now and Then: Reading Revelation Today* (Sydney: AIO, 1989), 116-117. Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 270-271.

⁵⁵ Gerhard Friedrich, ‘kerygma’, in Gerhard Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (III; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 714-18, 714.

would particularly use *kerygma* for “both the herald’s cry and for the declaration or decree”.⁵⁶ The word only appears 4 times in the LXX⁵⁷ and translates the Hebrew קול (in Jon. 3:1) and קריאה (in 2 Ch. 30:5).

In all six occurrences in the primary and secondary material, κήρυγμα functions with the same meaning as εὐαγγέλιον. The word literally means “preaching” or “proclamation” but it “signifies not the action of the preacher, but that which he preaches”.⁵⁸ Of the three occurrences in 1 Corinthians two probably refer to Paul’s evangelistic gospel content (1:24 and 2:4) while one (15:14) could refer to either gospel preaching to believers or unbelievers or both. In Romans 16:25 κήρυγμα probably refers to gospel in relation the grounding of believers in a similar way to εὐαγγέλιον in 1 Cor. 15:1-3.

However, in both Rom. 16:25 and 1 Cor. 2:4 it could seem that Paul is drawing a distinction between his εὐαγγέλιον and κήρυγμα. In the former he refers to “my *gospel* and the *kerygma* of Jesus Christ” (τὸ εὐαγγελιόν μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) and in the second “my *word* and my *kerygma*” (ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου) where λόγος is being used synonymously with εὐαγγέλιον (see below on “λόγος”). The question is whether the καί is functioning in an explanatory or connective sense, or some other sense. Most translations go with connective simply “and” as with my own translations above. NIV 2011 translates 1 Cor. 2:4 as a connective with “my message and my preaching” but translates (in contrast to the 1984 version) Rom. 16:25 with an explanatory καί as “my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ”. Notably, it is the understanding of the genitive that is also distinctive. NIV

⁵⁶ Ibid., 715.

⁵⁷ 2 Chron. 30:5, Prov. 9:3, Jon. 3:2 and 1 Esd. 9:3.

⁵⁸ Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, 7. Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 543. Cf. Mounce, *The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching*, 11-18.

2011 interprets the genitive Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as a genitive of content rather than as a genitive of relationship, description or possession (see notes on logos below). The genitive is not controversial, however, as either option is asserted elsewhere in Paul.

λόγος⁵⁹

The word λόγος is used widely and importantly in Greek thought.⁶⁰ “Indeed, in its manifold historical application one might almost call it symbolic of the Greek understanding of the world and existence.”⁶¹ However, we need not examine that in detail here partly for space constraints but also since “from the very first the NT λόγος concept is alien to Gk. thought”.⁶² More important to Paul’s use of Logos is the understanding in the Old Testament. The Hebrew words used for “word” are אָמַר, דָּבָר and the rarer מִלָּה. In the LXX they are translated with λόγος, λόγιον, ῥῆμα and ῥῆσις. “In every spoken word there should be a relation of truth between word and thing, and a relation of fidelity between the one who speaks and the one who hears.”⁶³

λόγος is an important gospel *word* for Paul but because it has a variety of meanings and his uses of it require careful observation. Broadly speaking, λόγος refers to a “word” or “message” but it can have a range of meanings from a command, question or statement through to an embodiment of the revelation of God (as in the case of John).⁶⁴ In the primary

⁵⁹ The less common words ῥῆμα (6 times in the primary material and 2 times in the secondary material) and λόγιον (only in Paul in Rom. 3.2) are also worked into this section.

⁶⁰ See: Albert Debrunner, '*lego, logos, rhema, laleo*', in Gerhard Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (IV; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 69-77. The word’s development and meaning are particularly important in Socrates/Plato and Aristotle: H. Kleinknecht, 'The Logos in the Greek and Hellenistic World', *ibid.*, 77-91, 78 and 80.

⁶¹ Kleinknecht, *The Logos in the Greek and Hellenistic World*, 77.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 91. “No matter how we construe it as used by the Greeks, it stands in contrast to the “Word” of the OT and NT.” *Ibid.*, 79.

⁶³ O. Procksch, 'The Word of God in the Old Testament', *ibid.*, 91-100, 93.

⁶⁴ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 599-600.

material Paul uses λόγος 55 times. The word occurs 29 times in the secondary material, 32 times in Luke and 65 in Acts.

In the primary material Paul uses λόγος to refer to the gospel 20 times.⁶⁵ Four of those are with λόγος alone and the rest are followed by genitives.⁶⁶ Paul writes about “my word”,⁶⁷ “our word”,⁶⁸ “word of God”,⁶⁹ “word of truth”,⁷⁰ “word of life”,⁷¹ “word of the cross”,⁷² “word of Christ”,⁷³ “word of the Lord”⁷⁴ and “word of reconciliation”.⁷⁵

⁶⁵ Rom 9:6; 1 Cor. 1:18, 2:4 (λόγος occurs twice but only once refers to gospel in that verse), 14:36, 15:2; 2 Cor. 1:18, 2:17, 4:2, 5:19, 6:7; Phil. 1:14, 2:16; Col. 1:5, 25, 3:16, 4:3; 1 Thess. 1:6, 8 and 2:13 (twice). Note that in 1 Thess. 2:13 where λόγος occurs three times that Paul uses it twice to refer to the gospel and once in contrast to refer to οὐ λόγον ἀνθρώπων, “the word of men”. That is the only occurrence of λόγος in the primary, secondary or Pauline traditional material where λόγος means ‘gospel’ (meaning ‘news’) but does not refer to *the* gospel. O’Brien sees both λόγος and ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (see below) as being “synonyms” for εὐαγγέλιον. O’Brien, “Thanksgiving and the Gospel in Paul”, 149. Stanton includes a whole number of words as being used “almost synonymously” with gospel including λόγος and ῥῆμα. Stanton, *Paul’s Gospel*, 173. See also: Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 307.

⁶⁶ Rom. 9:6; 1 Cor. 15:2, Phil. 1:14, Col. 4:3, 1 Thess. 1:6.

⁶⁷ 1 Cor. 2:4.

⁶⁸ 2 Cor. 1:18.

⁶⁹ Rom. 9:6; 1 Cor. 14:36; 2 Cor. 2:17, 4:2; Col. 1:25; 1 Thess. 2:13 (twice, see note above).

⁷⁰ Note the similarity here with the use in the LXX (above). 2 Cor. 6:7 and Col. 1:5. It is interesting that most translations (including the NIV, ESV and RSV) translate λόγῳ ἀληθείας as “truthful speech” in 2 Cor. 6:7 but in the other four occurrences of the phrase in the New Testament they will translate as “word of truth” (Col. 1:5, Eph. 1:3, 2 Tim 2:15 and James 1:18). Notably, CSB translates it as “the message of truth”.

⁷¹ Phil. 2:16.

⁷² 1 Cor. 1:18.

⁷³ Col. 3:16. See also ῥῆμα in Rom. 10:17: διὰ ῥήματος Χριστοῦ. The genitive in this verse can well be understood to be a genitive of content, but with clear reference to “the gospel message”. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: Tyndale, 1963), 209.

⁷⁴ 1 Thess. 1:8. So Dickson and O’Brien. Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission*, 96. Peter Thomas O’Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 192.

⁷⁵ 2 Cor. 5:19.

In the secondary material *λόγος* is used synonymously with “gospel” 14 times.⁷⁶ Its use is very similar to the primary material with the word appearing alone six times⁷⁷ and the rest with genitives. *λόγος* is “my word”,⁷⁸ “word of truth”,⁷⁹ “word of the Lord”,⁸⁰ “word of God”,⁸¹ “word of our Lord Jesus Christ”⁸² and “word of the faith”.⁸³ Similarly, in Acts *λόγος* is used the same way but with slight variations in the genitives. In Acts *λόγος* occurs 36 times referring to the gospel, 11 times alone⁸⁴ and 25 times followed by a genitive. *Λόγος* is “your word”,⁸⁵ “word of God”,⁸⁶ “word of the Lord”,⁸⁷ “word of salvation”,⁸⁸ “word of the gospel”⁸⁹ and “word of his grace”.⁹⁰

⁷⁶ Eph. 1:13, 6:19; 2 Thess. 3:1; 1 Tim. 4:6, 5:17, 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13, 2:9, 15, 4:2, 15; Tit. 1:3, 9 and 2:5. *λόγος* in 2 Tim. 4:2 has often been understood to be referring to broad Christian exhortation rather than preaching of the gospel (either to believers or unbelievers). Mounce, for example, argues that while *Paul* is charging Timothy here to “preach the gospel”, his use of an anaphoric definite article identifies the word as the Scripture which is mentioned in 3:16-17. William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 572. Other examples of this or similar views are: Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary* (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries; London: Tyndale, 1964), 166; Gary W. Demarest, *The Communicator's Commentary. 1, 2 Thessalonians, 1, 2 Timothy, Titus* (The Communicator's commentary series; Waco: Word, 1984), 292; Herman N. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of his Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 483. But given that *λόγος* often means gospel (which is always clear in the context) and that it appears as the object of the writer's imperative to “preach” (*κήρυξον*), the phrase is best understood to be referring to gospel communication. Dickson argues this case well: Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission*, 322-324. See also: Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (IRev. edn., New International Biblical Commentary; Peabody; Carlisle: Hendrickson; Paternoster, 1995b), 100-101 and 284-285; Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids. Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006), 600. Towner also cites Oberlinner “who sees no missionary dimension in this command”. Ibid., 200, note 22; Lorenz Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 3 vols. (Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1994) Murphy-O'Connor acknowledges that *λόγος* is sometimes “equivalent to ‘the Gospel’” but only cites 16 verses from both the primary and secondary material as examples. J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul on Preaching* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1964), 167 and 194.

⁷⁷ Eph. 6:19, 1 Tim 5:17, 2 Tim 1:13; 4:2, 15 and Tit. 1:9.

⁷⁸ Tit. 1:3.

⁷⁹ Eph. 1:13 and 2 Tim. 2:15 (see note above).

⁸⁰ 2 Thess. 3:1.

⁸¹ 2 Tim. 2:9 and Tit. 2:5.

⁸² 1 Tim. 6:3.

⁸³ 1 Tim. 4:6. Note, however, that Paul will use this phrase with *ῥῆμα* in Rom 10:8: *τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως*. The phrase there “denotes not the confession of faith but the gospel message itself”. C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols. (6th edn.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 526. Cf. C. K. Barrett, *A commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Repr. with minor changes. edn., Black's New Testament commentaries; London: A. & C. Black, 1962), 200.

⁸⁴ Acts 4:4, 6:4, 8:4, 21, 10:36, 44, 11:19, 14:25, 16:6, 17:11 and 18:5.

⁸⁵ Acts 2:29.

⁸⁶ Acts 4:41, 6:2, 7, 8:14, 11:1, 12:24, 13:5, 7, 46, 17:13 and 18:11.

⁸⁷ Acts 8:25, 13:44, 48, 14:3, 15:35, 36, 16:32, 19:10 and 20.

⁸⁸ Acts 13:26.

⁸⁹ Acts 15:7.

⁹⁰ Acts 20:32.

As with the word “gospel” Paul develops an already familiar phrase and uses “word of God” to refer to his gospel. Every occurrence in the primary epistles, secondary epistles and in Acts refers to the central gospel message. The language could suggest that Paul’s use of the phrase is a reference to the Old Testament recalling prophetic promises, the Pentateuch and commands for obedience. But the phrase only occurs three times in the LXX and none of those have the New Testament gospel sense of the phrase.⁹¹ The best way to understand Paul’s use of “the word of God” is to see it as synonymous with “gospel” in terms of content but with a rich undertone of God’s gospel purposes which are pointed to and promised beforehand in the Old Testament.⁹²

The only occurrence of the phrase “word of God” in Paul (primary or secondary) or Acts where the meaning is disputed is Rom. 9:6. Some scholars say that “the word of God” in that verse may not refer specifically to the gospel. Moo argues that while the phrase here “might specifically refer to the gospel”, it is more likely being used in the same way as λόγιον in Rom. 3:2, that is, “God’s OT word, with particular reference to his promises to Israel”.⁹³ The

⁹¹ The three being 2 Sam. 16:23 where one “enquires into the word of God”, Ps. 106:11 where *logos* is in the plural and Jer. 1:2 where the LXX strangely translates YHWH as “God”.

⁹² “The apostles ... preached and taught the ‘word of God’ ... This *logos* of the early Christian mission is the word that the missionaries proclaim to everyone who is willing to listen.” Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1548.

⁹³ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 573. Similarly, Morris argues that while the phrase is “more commonly” in the New Testament a way of “referring to the gospel” there can be “no doubt” that “*God’s word* here means all God’s promises to Israel” (Morris, *italics in original*). Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids; Leicester: Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity, 1988), 352. See also: Grant R. Osborne, *Romans* (Downers Grove. Leicester: InterVarsity, 2004), 242; Paul Barnett, *Romans* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2003b), 217; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: The English text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), Vol. 2, 8-9. Murray notes the nineteenth century scholar James Morison who supposes that it is not grief that the apostle entertains but the “word of threatening”. James Morison, *Exposition of the Ninth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans* (New edn.; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1888), 164f. Dunn, on the other hand, makes an explicit link between this verse Israel and the gospel although he does not deal with the particular phrase “word of God” in his argument. James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word, 1988a), 546-547. Cranfield goes further translating the phrase as “the declared purpose of God” (after Sanday and Headlam) and saying that while certain Old Testament passages are in mind “it is a mistake to attempt to make a hard distinction between the significance the phrase has here and its significance elsewhere in the NT”. He goes on to quote Barth and concluding that the “divine election” of Israel is “the sum of the Gospel”. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 472-473. W. Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (5th edn.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), 240. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, trans. Geoffrey William Bromiley and Thomas F. Torrance, 14 vols. (2d edn.; London. New York: T. & T. Clark, 2004), II/2, p. 13f. Compare with Barth’s earlier writing on this verse: Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: Oxford, 1968), 340-342. Stuhlmacher says that the word of God here “refers to the word of promise with which God, the creator, directs Israel’s history”. He then makes the specific link here

problem with splitting the use of the phrase here from his normal reference to *gospel* is twofold. First, it would be the only occurrence of the phrase in the Pauline primary and secondary material as well as most of the rest of the New Testament where it does not refer to the gospel.⁹⁴ Given that the phrase has already been used in 1 and 2 Corinthians, which predate (or are written around the same time as) Romans, and that it is again used in the same manner in Colossians and the secondary epistles, it would be strange that Paul would use such a formulaic phrase uncharacteristically, especially in such a carefully written discourse. Secondly, the context in Rom. 3:2 is quite different from 9:6. The context in Rom.

between Paul's "gospel of justification" and his "missionary preaching" and says that "God's word of promise promulgated to Israel" (which by implication must be part of Paul's gospel and missionary preaching) "remains valid". Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 147.

⁹⁴ The phrase occurs four times in Luke (5:1, 8:11, 8:21, 11:28), each of which refer to the gospel. It occurs in the same context in Matt. 15:6 and Mark 7:13. As with the other uncertain examples, these occurrences are in the context of Old Testament quotations and/or references. However, the context, similar to Rom. 9:6 could hint at a *gospel* fulfilment of Old Testament promises. The textual variant in Matt. 15:6 replacing λόγον with νόμον indicates the unusual occurrence of the phrase in such a setting, possibly confirming a gospel emphasis in the phrase. Morris notes this variant and how the phrase is not what is expected. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Leicester: Eerdmans. Inter-Varsity, 1992), 393. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (Fourth Revised Edition)*, 31. McNeile says that λόγον "refers to the divinely inspired Pentateuch, and does not differ in meaning from νόμον". A. H. McNeile, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew: The Greek Text* (London: Macmillan, 1915), 224. France says that the phrase "the word of God" became a "synonym for Scripture" in later usage but that in the New Testament it normally refers to the Christian message. He says that in Matt. 15:6 it refers to the "divine commandments recorded in Scripture which are quoted in v. 4". R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2007), 581. Filson argues that the phrase refers to the "Law of God" which is "the explicit will of God expressed in the Pentateuch". Floyd V. Filson, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (2nd edn., Black's New Testament commentaries; London: A. and C. Black, 1971), 176-177. Hebrews uses the phrase three times (4:12, 5:12 and 13:7) all of which probably refer to the gospel message, although this requires some quite tight nuancing. For a thorough argument on the use of the phrase and the history of interpretation, especially by the Fathers, in Heb. 4:12 see: Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: the Greek Text* (3rd edn.; London: Macmillan, 1903), 100-102. Both Bruce and O'Brien fall short of identifying the phrase as gospel here (O'Brien specifically identifying the genitive "of God" as subjective) but both speak of the word in a gospel-type manner. On this point, note O'Brien's understanding of Paul's use of "gospel" above. Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews* (The Pillar New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids; Nottingham: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2010), 174-176. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Rev edn.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 111-113. John uses the phrase with an interesting variety of meanings. In John 10:35 the phrase most likely refers to God "addressing Israel at the time of the giving of the law" (Carson). Carson also notes the argument for John's use of "word" as the pre-existent Word but all options he connects to the Old Testament. D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester: Apollos, 1991), 397-399. For pre-existent Word of God see: Raymond Edward Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols. (The Anchor Bible; London: G. Chapman, 1971), 410-411; Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Gospel According to St John: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1908), 70. Morris broadly understands it to refer to Scripture and notes the use of γραφή in the singular. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Rev edn.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 468-469. In 1 John 2:14 the phrase most likely refers to the gospel. Of the six occurrences in Revelation four refer to the gospel (Rev. 1:2, 9, 6:9, 20:4), once to Jesus (19:13) and once is used in the plural referring broadly to the "words of God" (17:17). 1 Pet. 1:23 has λόγου ζωῆς θεοῦ which refers to the gospel.

3:2 is that of the advantage of being a Jew, especially in terms of covenantal circumcision. The use of λόγιον in the plural (which Paul only uses once) would be better compared to Heb. 5:12 (one of the other three New Testament occurrences) where it is also used in reference to the Jewish Scriptures. In Rom. 9:6, however, the context, while still being rooted in Old Testament promises and imagery, is a more central gospel theme for Paul, specifically the elective purposes of God for his people.⁹⁵

So rather than distinguishing between the Old Testament promises to Israel which are fulfilled in Christ, “the word of God” in Rom. 9:6 is best understood in the context of Rom. 1:1-4 where the gospel is promised beforehand in the Scriptures and which concern the seed of David. Similarly, in Gal. 3:8 the gospel is connected to the promises made to Abraham. Paul also makes the connection between the Scriptures and the gospel in 1 Cor. 15:3-4. With this fuller understanding of Paul’s point, Rom. 9:6 could then read: “It is not as though God’s *gospel* purposes revealed through the Old Testament promises had failed...” In this interpretation we affirm both the Old Testament promises of God pointing towards his purpose for the elect of Israel, while maintaining that Paul is making a rich gospel point regarding God’s purposes in the Old Testament and through the promises made to Israel.

Another important question arising out of the use of λόγος is whether any of the genitives outlined above are genitives of content.⁹⁶ Most of the genitives are either descriptive (as in “word of truth”), possessive (“word of God”) or genitives of relationship (“my word”). However, those occurrences requiring further examination and categorisation are: 1 Cor.

⁹⁵ Schnabel sees λόγος as what the early Christian missionaries proclaimed and includes Rom. 9:6 as an example of this. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1548.

⁹⁶ See Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament; with Scripture, Subject and Greek Word Indexes*, 92. For this study we are also interested in genitives of material as they may reveal gospel content. Ibid., 91.

1:18⁹⁷ and 2 Cor. 5:19 in the primary material; 1 Tim 4:6 in the secondary material; Acts 13:26 and 20:32 in the Pauline tradition.⁹⁸

μυστήριον

“Mystery” is probably the most *loaded* of all the words Paul uses to describe his gospel. From the 7th Cent BC *μυστήριον* had been used in cultic settings to speak of cultic rites which were normally connected with a specific location.⁹⁹ The mystery cults were religious in the sense that they offered “salvation” but earn their name through their secretive practices.¹⁰⁰

Participants needed initiation before they could attend ceremonies and had to agree to vows of silence.¹⁰¹ Plato adapts the term but changes the meaning to be less sacramental and more about secret teachings. Caragounis concludes that in Plato “the ‘mysteries’ are not readily intelligible to anyone: the non-specialist has to rely on the specialist, the ‘initiated’ philosopher, so to speak, to explain them.”¹⁰² Caragounis also notes that during its history the word “never lost its religious character”.¹⁰³ But most noteworthy for this study:

“By the time the term reaches the NT is [sic] has already been used in the domain of Philosophy, Magic, Apocalypticism. Its usage has ceased to be the sole prerogative of

⁹⁷ “Word of the Cross”. Given the context and how Paul works out from this phrase in 1 Cor. 1:18 this is clearly a genitive of content. So Fee, Garland, Wright, Barnett and Thiselton (albeit with some clarification). Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 68. David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 62. N. T. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (Great Britain) Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians* (2nd edn.; London; Louisville: SPCK; Westminster John Knox, 2004), 12. Paul Barnett, *1 Corinthians: Holiness and Hope of a Rescued People* (Focus on the Bible; Fearn: Christian Focus, 2011), 31. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 153.

⁹⁸ That further examination will not take place in this study.

⁹⁹ The most important site is Eleusis which is west of Athens and is first mentioned by Homer (Hom. Hymn. Cer., 273, 476). There are also the Samothracian, Egyptian Osiris and Dionysus mysteries. Günther Bornkamm, ‘*Mysterion*’, in Gerhard Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (IV; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1942), 802-28.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 803-805.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 804-806.

¹⁰² Chrys C. Caragounis, *The Ephesian Mysterion: Meaning and Content* (Coniectanea biblica. New Testament Series Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1977), 20. So also Harvey: A. E. Harvey, ‘The Use of Mystery Language in the Bible’, *Journal of Theological Studies*, 31/2 (1980), 320-36, 322.

¹⁰³ Caragounis, *The Ephesian Mysterion: Meaning and Content*, 33.

cultic religion. Where it does bear the ‘attenuated’ sense of *secret*, or is not applied to the Mysteries, it is generally used of a teaching, or truth, or purpose which transcends the human mind and is, on that account [sic], characterized as mysterious or incomprehensible.”¹⁰⁴

μυστήριον appears in the LXX only in Daniel (9 times, ܡܝܨܬܪܝܢ in Aramaic) but it occurs elsewhere an additional 14 times in the LXX.¹⁰⁵ In Daniel the word has a slightly different meaning to the Greek contemporary meaning. It refers to an “eschatological mystery”¹⁰⁶ which is not yet known. Harvey argues that this “mystery” in the LXX would be better translated “secret deliberations” rather than simply “secret”. Nevertheless, this was only for “a privileged seer of a privileged people”.¹⁰⁷ As a well-educated Jew, this eschatological understanding of the mystery that would be revealed forms the background of Paul’s understanding which is then transposed into the first century where the word amongst the Gentiles had a different meaning, again closer to secret. It is this combination that gives the word its potency, both to those with Gentile backgrounds who see the gospel in the light of Greek thinking and to Jewish readers who hear the gospel through their Old Testament framework.

¹⁰⁴ Emphasis in original. Ibid., 33-34.

¹⁰⁵ Jdt. 2:2, Tob. 12:7, 11, Tbs. 12:7, 11, 2 Ma. 13:21, Wis. 2:22, 6:22, 14:15, 23, Sir. 22:22, 27:16-17, 21, Dan. 2:18-19, 27-30, 47 and 4:9.

¹⁰⁶ Bornkamm, *Mysterion*, 814.

¹⁰⁷ Harvey, 'The Use of Mystery Language in the Bible', 326-328.

Paul uses *μυστήριον* 12 times in the primary Epistles¹⁰⁸ and 9 times in the secondary material.¹⁰⁹ The word only appears 7 other times in the rest of the New Testament. The word is used in a general sense (both in the singular & plural)¹¹⁰ but is mostly used to refer to the gospel.¹¹¹ However, *μυστήριον* is not simply used synonymously with *εὐαγγέλιον*. Paul is no doubt using the word intentionally within the context of the “secret teachings” of the Greco-Roman world where the *μυστήρια* were “concealed within many strange customs and ceremonies”.¹¹² Paul contrasts this (no doubt with focus on the contemporary 1st Century mystery religions) by speaking of *the* “mystery”¹¹³ which in the past was “hidden”¹¹⁴ but which now is “revealed”¹¹⁵ “proclaimed”¹¹⁶ and able to be “known”.¹¹⁷ Harvey argues strongly that Paul here has an Old Testament context in the sense that he uses “mystery” more like “the Semitic *raṣṣ*” than the “Greek *μυστήριον*”.¹¹⁸ This does not contradict what

¹⁰⁸ Rom. 11:25, 16:25, 1 Cor. 2:1, 7, 4:1, 13:2, 14:2, 15:51, Col. 1:26-27, 2:2 and 4:3. The occurrence in 1 Cor. 2:1 is a variant with possibilities of *μαρτύριον* or *σωτήριον* replacing *μυστήριον*. Most translations prefer *μαρτύριον* (NIV, CSBO, ESV, RSV, NEB) with only a few taking *μυστήριον* (translated by these as “secret”: TEV, PME). *σωτήριον* is poorly attested and is not Pauline language so can be easily dismissed. The internal evidence could go either way on the remaining two words. Paul uses *μαρτύριον* in the previous chapter and uses mystery 6 verses later. Externally there is good support for *μαρτύριον* but *μυστήριον* has earlier support. Metzger concludes that “from an exegetical point of view” *μαρτύριον* “is inferior to *μυστήριον*”. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (Fourth Revised Edition)*, 480. Fee disagrees and says that the fact you would more likely expect *μυστήριον* in a Pauline context like this is the very reason why *μαρτύριον* is preferred. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 88 and note 1a. Barrett also prefers *μαρτύριον*. C. K. Barrett, *A commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (2nd edn.; London: A. & C. Black, 1971), 62-63. Thiselton argues that in the context *μυστήριον* will “more especially” show the divine origin of what is preached. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 207-208. In his popular commentary Wright prefers *μυστήριον*. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians*, 19. We agree with Ciampa and Rosner who say *μυστήριον* “is preferable in 2:1 on the grounds that it seems more likely that a scribe would make a change based on what he has recently transcribed (1:6) than based on what he will transcribe a few verses later (2:7)”. Roy E. Rosner Ciampa, Brian S., *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Pillar New Testament commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 113-114, note 103.

¹⁰⁹ Eph. 1:9, 3:3, 4, 9, 5:32, 6:19, 2 Thess. 2:7 and 1 Tim. 3:9, 16.

¹¹⁰ See: Rom. 11:25, 1 Cor. 13:2, 14:2, 15:51, 2 Thess. 2:7.

¹¹¹ Cf. Eph. 3:4.

¹¹² See Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 661.

¹¹³ Which is always singular except for 1 Cor. 4:1. In that verse it is best understood that *μυστήρια* still refers to the gospel since the language is very similar to when Paul speaks of his gospel ministry such as in 1 Thess. 2:4 (see also Gal. 2:7 and 1 Tim. 1:11). In 1 Cor. 4:1 Paul is referring to the individual “mysteries” that make up his one gospel.

¹¹⁴ Rom 16:25, 1 Cor. 2:7 and Col 1:26.

¹¹⁵ Rom 16:25, 1 Cor. 4:1.

¹¹⁶ Rom 16:25, 1 Cor. 2:7 and Col 4:3.

¹¹⁷ Col. 2:2.

¹¹⁸ Harvey, 'The Use of Mystery Language in the Bible', 331.

was pointed out above: “it does not follow that the writer did not intend, and the reader did not pick up, some echo of the Greek mystery-metaphor”.¹¹⁹ In my view, the most likely reading of the evidence is that Paul’s view was well informed by both the Jewish apocalyptic understanding of the mystery that would be revealed to all and the Greek mysteries which manifest exclusiveness. This distinction between the two uses of the same word is what allows Paul to give his nuanced and rich meaning to “mystery”.

The mystery that is revealed from God¹²⁰ is not just the gospel but the crucified Christ who is at the centre of that gospel. When Paul speaks of the content of his εὐαγγέλιον there is quite a range of variation in the content that he chooses to summarise (compare Rom. 1:1-3 with 1 Cor. 15:3-5, for example). When Paul refers to the μυστήριον, however, very similar content is given. The mystery is quite simply about “Christ”, him “crucified” and “in you”.¹²¹ As Garland states: “Paul uses ‘mystery’ to refer to God’s saving purposes in and through Christ. Its content is succinctly described in [1 Cor.] 2:2 as ‘Jesus Christ crucified’”.¹²²

So where the Ancient world was not privy to the μυστήριον of the gods, Paul’s converts had insight into the greatest mystery of all – the crucified Christ.¹²³ This message was the heart of Paul’s gospel for believers. In contrast to the secret teachings of the mystery cults, the God of the cosmos had revealed his plan through early revelation of his Christ, fulfilling the

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 331.

¹²⁰ See the possessive genitives “of God” in 1 Cor. 4:1, Col 2:2 and Col 4:3 where “of Christ” could be possessive or content, more likely the latter given what he says in Col 2:2. 1 Cor. 2:1 is a harder case with μυστήριον being a textual variant. The translations go with the less attested μαρτύριον but Metzger et al prefer μυστήριον. There are exegetical influences on either option but μυστήριον is most likely (see Garland p83) and it is followed by possessive genitive “of God”. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (Fourth Revised Edition)*, 480. Garland, *1 Corinthians*

¹²¹ Rom 16:25, 1 Cor. 2:1-2, Col 1:27, 2:2 and 4:3. Cf. 1 Tim. 3:6 where mystery is used synonymously with gospel in the broader sense.

¹²² Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 83.

¹²³ See Thiselton p241 and Schrage p250 and 277. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4 vols. (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1991)

apocalyptic expectation of contemporary Jews. However, as in the mystery cults initiation was required for participation, Paul's mystery could only be understood by those who believed.¹²⁴

The Act of Gospelling (verbs)

εὐαγγελίζομαι

The verb “to gospel” is the word Paul most prefers to use when referring to his initial communication of the gospel. There is not much that needs to be added here (to what was said above under εὐαγγέλιον) since Paul will always use the verb to refer to preaching the gospel.¹²⁵ He uses εὐαγγελίζω 19 times in the primary epistles¹²⁶ but the verb only appears twice in the secondary epistles.¹²⁷ Luke uses the verb 25 times in total, 10 in Luke and 15 in Acts.¹²⁸ The rest of the New Testament uses the verb 8 times while it appears in the LXX 22 times.¹²⁹ The earlier and more common middle form of the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι is used in most of the New Testament references and all of the Old Testament references.¹³⁰

¹²⁴ 1 Cor. 2:1-10 and Col 1:26.

¹²⁵ O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis*, 61-62.

¹²⁶ Rom. 1:15; 10:15; 15:20; 1 Co. 1:17; 9:16 (twice), 18; 15:1f; 2 Co. 10:16; 11:7; Gal. 1:8 (twice), 11, 16, 23; 4:13 and 1 Thess. 3:6. All bible references come from Bibleworks. (check copyright requirements here)

¹²⁷ Eph. 2:17 and 3:8.

¹²⁸ Lk. 1:19; 2:10; 3:18; 4:18, 43; 7:22; 8:1; 9:6; 16:16; 20:1; Acts 5:42; 8:4, 12, 25, 35, 40; 10:36; 11:20; 13:32; 14:7, 15, 21; 15:35; 16:10 and 17:18.

¹²⁹ New Testament: Matt. 11:5; Heb. 4:2, 6; 1 Pet. 1:12, 25; 4:6; Rev. 10:7 and 14:6. LXX: 1 Sam. 31:9; 2 Sam. 1:20; 4:10; 18:19f, 26, 31; 1 Ki. 1:42; 1 Chr. 10:9; Ps. 39:10; 67:12; 95:2; Joel 3:5; Nah. 2:1; Isa. 40:9; 52:7; 60:6; 61:1 and Jer. 20:15.

¹³⁰ The exceptions being Rev 10:7 and 14:7. There is also a variant reading in D(*) with the active verb replacing καταγγέλλουσιν. Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 402., C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 2 vols. (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 787.

Εὐαγγελίζω refers to the ‘bringing’, ‘announcing’, ‘proclaiming’ or ‘preaching’ of news.¹³¹ In every New Testament example the verb refers to the activity of spoken word.¹³²

Κηρύσσω

The meaning of κηρύσσω is similar to εὐαγγελίζω and Paul will use the two interchangeably to refer to his speaking of the gospel.¹³³ The verb is used 17 times in the primary material.¹³⁴

With one exception, Paul will use the verb to refer to speaking the gospel.¹³⁵ In the primary epistles, κηρύσσω will normally refer to the reminding of, grounding in or teaching of

believers the gospel but will sometimes refer back to initial evangelistic preaching.¹³⁶ The

verb occurs twice in the secondary material.¹³⁷ While 1 Tim. 3:16 clearly refers to evangelistic proclamation 2 Tim. 4:2 simply commands Timothy: κήρυξον τὸν λόγον. However, in both the

primary and secondary material λόγος will be used primarily to refer to gospel content

indicating that κηρύσσω in this verse is referring to gospel preaching, either to believers,

unbelievers, or both.¹³⁸ The verb appears 8 times in Acts and again, every case refers to

¹³¹ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 402. Liddell, Scott, and Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 704-705. For an extended and helpful examination of the εὐαγγελ- word group see: Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission*, 86-91. Dickson, 'Gospel as News: εὐαγγελ- from Aristophanes to the Apostle Paul' Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, 7-10. Note, however, that not all scholars agree that εὐαγγελ- refers only to “news”. O’Brien seems to argue this case when says the verb (in the context of Rom. 1:15) refers to “the whole range of evangelistic and teaching ministry”. However, this is clarified by “the building up of believers and grounding them firmly in the faith” which may imply a narrower band than simply *all* Christian teaching. O’Brien certainly argues in most cases that εὐαγγέλιον “served as a label to express in summary fashion the message that Paul announced to the world of his day”. O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis*. 64 and 78.

¹³² Note, however, that this does not mean that communication of the news was *restricted* to spoken word. For example, see Mark 1:1.

¹³³ Interchangeably does not mean the same as synonymously. See also below on μετανοέω and ἐπιστρέφω.

¹³⁴ Rom. 2:21; Rom. 10:8; 14:15; 1 Co. 1:23; 1 Co. 9:27; 1 Co. 15:11-12; 2 Co. 1:19; 2 Co. 4:5; 2 Co. 11:4; Gal. 2:2; Gal. 5:11; Phil. 1:15; Col. 1:23 and 1 Thess. 2:9.

¹³⁵ The exception being Rom 2:21.

¹³⁶ The former being: 1 Cor. 1:23; 9:27; 15:11, 12; 2 Cor. 1:19 and 11:4. Rom 10:14 and 15 most likely refer to evangelistic preaching while Rom 10:8; 2 Cor. 4:5; Gal 2:2; 5:11; Phil 1:15 and Col 1:23 could go either way or are unclear in the audience they refer to.

¹³⁷ 1 Tim. 3:16 and 2 Tim. 4:2.

¹³⁸ See below, “logos”, for defence of this point and especially the footnote relating to 2 Tim. 4:2.

communication of the gospel. In the LXX the verb occurs 26 times.¹³⁹ *κηρύσσω* refers to an official announcement or a public declaration, literally “to announce”, “to make known” or “to proclaim aloud”.¹⁴⁰ The word can also carry the implication that the one making the declaration is a herald.¹⁴¹

Καταγγέλλω

Two observations concerning this verb stand out. First, *καταγγέλλω* appears in the primary epistles¹⁴² and Acts¹⁴³ but not in the secondary epistles nor the rest of the New Testament or LXX. Secondly, in the two literary bodies where the word does appear the usage is slightly different. In both bodies the word always refers to proclamation or announcement of news but the setting of the proclamation varies between the two bodies.¹⁴⁴

In the primary Pauline epistles Paul uses *καταγγέλλω* seven times, every time referring to news but with a variety of audiences and proclaimers. Six of the seven times it is used for “proclaiming Christ”¹⁴⁵ Twice he will refer to his own proclamation of Christ (1 Cor. 2:1 and Col. 1:28) and both of these could be taken to refer to proclamation to believers. Three times Paul speaks more generally of those who specifically proclaim Christ (Phil. 1:17 and 18) or the gospel (1 Cor. 9:14). Once, in 1 Cor. 11:26, he will speak of the recipients of his letter as Christ proclaimers, not through word, but through their actions of participating in the Lord’s Supper. The one reference not to proclaiming Christ is in Rom. 1:8 where the faith of the

¹³⁹ Gen. 41:43; Exod. 32:5; Exod. 36:6; 2 Ki. 10:20; 2 Chr. 20:3; 2 Chr. 24:9; 2 Chr. 36:22; Est. 6:9, 11; Prov. 1:21; Prov. 8:1; Hos. 5:8; Mic. 3:5; Joel 1:14; Joel 2:1, 15; Joel 4:9; Jon. 1:2; Jon. 3:2, 4-5, 7; Zeph. 3:14; Zech. 9:9; Isa. 61:1 and Dan. 3:4.

¹⁴⁰ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 543.

¹⁴¹ Liddell, Scott, and Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 949.

¹⁴² Rom. 1:8; 1 Co. 2:1, 9:14, 11:26; Phil. 1:17-18 and Col. 1:28.

¹⁴³ Acts 3:24; 4:2; 13:5, 38; 15:36; 16:17, 21; 17:3, 13, 23 and 26:23.

¹⁴⁴ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 515.

¹⁴⁵ 1 Cor. 2:1, 9:14, 11:26; Col. 1:28; Phil 1:17 and 18. Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995a), 120.

Roman beloved is being proclaimed in the whole world, presumably by other non-Roman believers.

In Acts, ten of the eleven (or maybe all eleven) uses of *καταγγέλλω* refer directly to the proclamation of the gospel to unbelievers¹⁴⁶ and maybe importantly, nine of these are in reference to Paul's preaching.¹⁴⁷ Six of these occurrences of the verb are associated with information revealing the content of the proclamation as revealed in the Pauline tradition. While Acts 4:2 is not about Paul's preaching, the content is not dissimilar from what Paul also proclaims in a Jewish setting in Acts 17:3. In Acts 4:2 the apostles were proclaiming "in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" and in Acts 17:3 Paul proclaims that in this Christ had to suffer and rise and that this "Jesus" that Paul is proclaiming is indeed the Christ. Two other passages that give some indication of what Paul was proclaiming in Jewish settings are Acts 13:38 where Paul speaks at the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch saying "though Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you" and Acts 26:23 where Paul recounts to King Agrippa that Christ would indeed suffer and rise and "would proclaim light to the people and to the Gentiles". The remaining two occurrences that have content are in Gentile settings. In Acts 16:17 the spirit-possessed slave girl says that Paul and companions are "proclaiming to you the way of salvation" while in verse 21 of the same chapter the owners of the slave girl take exception to their message which is "advocating customs unlawful for Romans".

παρρησιάζομαι

The verb *παρρησιάζομαι* occurs only once in the primary material where Paul refers back to his initial preaching in Thessalonica.¹⁴⁸ In the rest of the New Testament this verb occurs

¹⁴⁶ Acts 4:2; 13:5, 38; 15:36; 16:17, 21; 17:3, 13, 23 and 26:23. The eleventh is Acts 3:24 where the verb is still used as news but in terms of the *gospel days* of Acts being the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies.

¹⁴⁷ Acts 13:5, 38; 15:36; 16:17, 21; 17:3, 13, 23 and 26:23.

¹⁴⁸ 1 Thess. 2:2.

seven times in Acts and once in the secondary material.¹⁴⁹ The verb always refers to verbal communication of the gospel to unbelievers, sometimes with a clarifying clause (such as τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ in 1 Thess. 2:2 or τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ in Acts 19:8) and sometimes alone where the context assumes the content (such as Acts 9:28 or 14:3). The word means to “express oneself freely” but also has an overtone of *openness*, *frankness* and *boldness*.¹⁵⁰ “It always denotes bold, open Christian proclamation.”¹⁵¹ The occurrence in 2 Thessalonians 2:2 contains no surrounding clues as to the gospel content (even though it gives clues about Paul’s own mission strength and motivation) so this word, while worth noting here, will not be important to this study.

Response Words

μετανο-

μετανοέω refers to the changing direction or setting of one’s mind (νοῦς).¹⁵² Paul uses the verb μετανοέω, “to repent”, only once¹⁵³ and on that occasion he refers to the believer who has not repented from specific sin. Paul uses the noun μετάνοια (“repentance”) three times in the primary sources¹⁵⁴ and once in the secondary sources.¹⁵⁵ All four occurrences of the noun

¹⁴⁹ Acts 9:27-28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8; 26:26 and Eph. 6:20;

¹⁵⁰ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 782. Liddell, Scott, and Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1344.

¹⁵¹ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 469 and 670. See also James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Epworth commentaries; Peterborough: Epworth, 1996a), 188, and Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* 527. For a more extensive examination of the ancient use of the verb and its corresponding noun

παρρησία see: Heinrich Schlier, ‘*parresia and parresiazōmai*’, in G. W. Bromiley (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (V; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 871-86 See also more recently: J. Paul Sampley, “Paul and Frank Speech”, in J. Paul Sampley (ed.), *Paul in the Greco-Roman world: a handbook* (Harrisburg: Trinity 2003), 293-318

¹⁵² For an extended examination of repentance language see: George J. Zemek, *A Biblical Theology of the Doctrines of Sovereign Grace: Exegetical Considerations of Key Anthropological, Hamartiological, and Soteriological Terms and Motifs* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2005), 185-193.

¹⁵³ 2 Cor. 12:21.

¹⁵⁴ Rom 2:4, 2 Cor. 7:9 and 10.

¹⁵⁵ 2 Tim 2:25.

speak of repentance as a response that leads to salvation.¹⁵⁶ In Romans 2:4 the contrast is drawn between repentance in response to God's kindness and "the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed" (Rom. 2:5). Similarly, in 2 Corinthians 7 repentance from "godly sorrow" that "leads to salvation" is contrasted with "worldly sorrow" that "brings death". It is worth also noting the consistent use in 2 Timothy 2:25 where Timothy's opponents are to be gently instructed so that God might grant them repentance "leading to a knowledge of the truth". That is so they "will escape the trap of the devil" (2 Tim. 2:26). BDAG concludes that all New Testament occurrences of the words refer to the concepts of feeling remorse, repentance, turning and conversion.¹⁵⁷

ἐπιστρέφω

Paul uses ἐπιστρέφω three times (all in undisputed letters).¹⁵⁸ The most notable of these is 1 Thess. 1:9 where he refers back to his initial preaching and the response that defined the conversion of the Thessalonians. Again, in 2 Cor. 3:16, the word is used to describe a conversion as one "turns to the Lord". Interestingly, the third occurrence in Paul in Gal. 4:9, refers to the turning away (ἐπιστρέφετε), again (πάλιν), to the world, the implication being away from God. Note though that in that verse it is not primarily referring to the opposite of conversion, the losing of salvation as it were,¹⁵⁹ but rather to what might be better described as *backsliding* on the part of the Galatian believers.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ Dunn says that Rom 2:4 is the only time Paul uses "repentance" in "what we might call a conversion situation". Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 327. Dunn is probably right that 2 Cor. 7:9-10 is not speaking in terms of conversion but 2 Cor. 9:10 makes it clear that Paul repentance leads to salvation (σωτηρία).

¹⁵⁷ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 640. ¹⁵⁸ 2 Cor. 3:16, Gal. 4:9 and 1 Thess. 1:9.

¹⁵⁹ Although Paul does imply here (and elsewhere) that continuing in this behaviour without repentance will put their salvation at risk: "Christ will be of no benefit to you" (Gal. 5:2).

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Georg Bertram, 'Strepbo', in Gerhard Friedrich (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (VII; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 714-29, 726.

While it might seem that Paul was “shy”¹⁶¹ to use repentance language, the use of ἐπιστρέφω in conversion contexts directs us towards Luke’s repeated use of the word, especially where the word is used on Paul’s lips in Acts.¹⁶² Four times Luke has Paul speaking the verb in the context of conversion (although note that Acts 28:27 is quoting Is. 6:10 LXX).¹⁶³ Although contemporary scholarship will not allow us to accept Acts as necessarily portraying Paul’s actual words, the consistent use of ἐπιστρέφω referring to conversion response in both Acts and Paul is noteworthy, especially the language echoes in 1 Thess. 1:9 and Acts 14:15. Paul’s use is consistent with the meaning in the Old Testament, the Jesus tradition and in profane Greek.¹⁶⁴ The most common translation is “to turn” or “to convert”.¹⁶⁵

It would not be correct to say that Paul uses both μετανοέω and ἐπιστρέφω synonymously (similarly to what we saw above with εὐαγγελίζω and κηρύσσω). However, it is clear that Paul uses both words to refer to the same action of repentance in the context of conversion. It would probably be correct to say that Paul uses the two concepts interchangeably as he refers to the right response of the receiver of the gospel. For this study as we seek clues to Paul’s missionary preaching we note particularly what people are turning *from*: specifically sin in the form of idols¹⁶⁶ and sexual sin.¹⁶⁷ It could be reasonable to assume that this is in the light of the coming judgment.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶¹ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 327.

¹⁶² The word appears 18 times in Luke/Acts across 18 verses: Luke 1:16-17, 2:39, 8:55, 17:4, 31, 22:32, Acts 3:19, 9:35, 40, 11:21, 14:15, 15:19, 36, 16:18, 26:18, 20, 28:27.

¹⁶³ Luke has the words on Paul’s lips in Acts 14:15, 26:18, 20 and 28:27.

¹⁶⁴ Bertram, *Strephe*, 722-729.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 722-728. Cf. Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 382. Liddell, Scott, and Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 661. See also ἐπιστροφή in Acts 15:3 which translates as “conversion”. Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 382. See also: Liddell, Scott, and Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 662.

¹⁶⁶ 1 Thess. 1:9.

¹⁶⁷ 2 Cor. 12:21.

¹⁶⁸ See 2 Cor. 7:10 and 1 Thess. 1:9. For various arguments that reach this conclusion see: Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, 98. Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?*, 64. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, especially 73-77. Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 283-291. Barnett,

πιστ- Word Group

For Paul, faith is by far the most important response to the gospel. It is not that belief is in contrast to repentance; quite the opposite. Bultmann writes “the call to believe in the one true God is simultaneously a call to repentance”.¹⁶⁹ Repentance and faith go together. Much has been written in recent scholarship on what Paul means by the word which we need not cover here. Our focus will be on Paul’s use of the πιστ- words in soteriological contexts and the object of that faith. The essential meaning of faith “is the attitude whereby a man abandons all reliance on his own efforts... It is the attitude of complete trust”.¹⁷⁰

Paul uses the verb πιστεύω forty-nine times¹⁷¹ in the primary texts and twelve times¹⁷² in the secondary.¹⁷³ The noun πίστις occurs ninety-four times¹⁷⁴ in the primary texts and forty-six times in the secondary material.¹⁷⁵ Paul also uses the adjective πιστός 13 times¹⁷⁶ in the primary texts and twenty times in the secondary.¹⁷⁷ The corresponding negatives ἀπιστία and

Paul's Preaching Reconsidered, 59-63. Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 580. Poe, *The Gospel and its Meaning: A Theology for Evangelism and Church Growth*, 40-46.

¹⁶⁹ Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 73. Dunn thinks that the reason Paul employs “faith” language more than “repentance” because “he wanted... a different emphasis, and possibly a more positive summons”. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 327.

¹⁷⁰ Leon Morris, ‘Faith’, in J. D. Douglas (ed.), *The New Bible Dictionary* (London: IVP, 1962), 410-13, 411. For a more technical and thorough study on the meaning of “pist-“ see: Rudolf Bultmann, ‘pistēm’, in Gerhard Friedrich (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (VI; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1959), 174-228 See also: Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 314-329.

¹⁷¹ Over 39 verses and in 20 forms: Rom. 1:16; 3:2, 22; 4:3, 5, 11, 17f, 24; 6:8; 9:33; 10:4, 9ff, 14, 16; 13:11; 14:2; 15:13; 1 Co. 1:21; 3:5; 9:17; 11:18; 13:7; 14:22; 15:2, 11; 2 Co. 4:13; Gal. 2:7, 16; 3:6, 22; Phil. 1:29; 1 Thess. 1:7; 2:4, 10, 13 and 4:14.

¹⁷² Over 11 verses and in 9 forms: Eph. 1:13, 19; 2 Thess. 1:10; 2:11f; 1 Tim. 1:11, 16; 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:12; Tit. 1:3 and 3:8.

¹⁷³ ἀπιστέω occurs only in Rom 3:3 and not in a soteriological sense.

¹⁷⁴ Acts 85 verses and in 4 forms: Rom. 1:5, 8, 12, 17; 3:3, 22, 25ff, 30f; 4:5, 9, 11ff, 16, 19f; 5:1f; 9:30, 32; 10:6, 8, 17; 11:20; 12:3, 6; 14:1, 22f; 16:26; 1 Co. 2:5; 12:9; 13:2, 13; 15:14, 17; 16:13; 2 Co. 1:24; 4:13; 5:7; 8:7; 10:15; 13:5; Gal. 1:23; 2:16, 20; 3:2, 5, 7ff, 11f, 14, 22ff; 5:5f, 22; 6:10; Phil. 1:25, 27; 2:17; 3:9; Col. 1:4, 23; 2:5, 7, 12; 1 Thess. 1:3, 8; 3:2, 5ff, 10; 5:8 and Phlm. 1:5.

¹⁷⁵ Across 45 verses and in 4 forms: Eph. 1:15; 2:8; 3:12, 17; 4:5, 13; 6:16, 23; 2 Thess. 1:3f, 11; 2:13; 3:2; 1 Tim. 1:2, 4f, 14, 19; 2:7, 15; 3:9, 13; 4:1, 6, 12; 5:8, 12; 6:10ff, 21; 2 Tim. 1:5, 13; 2:18, 22; 3:8, 10, 15; 4:7; Tit. 1:1, 4, 13; 2:2, 10 and 3:15.

¹⁷⁶ Across 13 verses and in 4 forms: 1 Co. 1:9; 4:2, 17; 7:25; 10:13; 2 Co. 1:18; 6:15; Gal. 3:9; Col. 1:2, 7; 4:7, 9 and 1 Thess. 5:24.

¹⁷⁷ Across 19 verses and in 10 forms: Eph. 1:1; 6:21; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Tim. 1:12, 15; 3:1, 11; 4:3, 9f, 12; 5:16; 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:2, 11, 13; Tit. 1:6, 9 and 3:8.

ἄπιστος occur four and fourteen times respectively in the primary material¹⁷⁸ and once and twice respectively in the secondary.¹⁷⁹ The object of faith in relation to conversion is what interests us in this study as it may be reasonable to conclude that what Paul calls people to place their faith in will give us clues as to the content of his missionary preaching message (similar to what we concluded above with the ‘turn’ words).

The object of faith for Paul and those he writes to is most commonly (ἐν¹⁸⁰, εἰς¹⁸¹, ἐπὶ¹⁸², πρὸς¹⁸³) either Jesus or God. The most common and most noteworthy reference to an object

¹⁷⁸ ἄπιστία: Rom. 3:3; 4:20; 11:20 and 23. ἄπιστος: 1 Co. 6:6; 7:12; 10:27; 14:22; 2 Co. 4:4 and 6:14.

¹⁷⁹ ἄπιστία: 1 Tim 1:13. ἄπιστος: 1 Tim 5:8 and Tit 1:15.

¹⁸⁰ 1 Cor. 2:15, Gal. 2:20 and Col. 1:4. Cf. Eph. 1:15, 1 Tim. 1:14, 3:13, 2 Tim. 1:13 and 3:15.

¹⁸¹ Rom. 3:22, 10:14, Gal. 2:16, Phil. 1:29 and Col. 2:5. There is a current scholarly debate over whether, in certain verses, it is “faith in” Jesus, or the “faith of” Jesus (esp. Rom 3.22). For this study the conclusions will not make a lot of difference as the many occurrences elsewhere give us ample material to draw our conclusions whichever (the subjective or objective) is correct. Scholars in favour of the objective (“faith in” Jesus) interpretation (not including the many translations that prefer the objective genitive) include: Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, 102; Barrett, *A commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 73-74. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 203. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 174-175. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 166 and Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 224-225. More recently see: R. Barry Matlock, 'Saving Faith: The Rhetoric and Semantics of πίστις in Paul', in Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (eds.), *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies* (Milton Keynes. Colorado Springs: Peabody. Hendrickson, 2009), 73-89. Scholars who argue for the subjective (“faith of” Jesus) include: Luke Timothy Johnson, 'Rom 3:21-26 and the Faith of Jesus', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 44/1 (1982), 77-90; Richard N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964 Reprinted 1976), 149-150; Donald W. B. Robinson, 'Faith of Jesus Christ: A New Testament Debate', *Reformed Theological Review*, 29/3 (1970), 71-81; Most recently see: Douglas A. Campbell, 'The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ in Romans 3:22', in Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (eds.), *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies* (Milton Keynes. Colorado Springs: Peabod. Hendrickson, 2009), 57-71. Wallace maybe leans slightly towards a subjective genitive but points out that the final decision cannot be reached purely on grammar. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament; with Scripture, Subject and Greek Word Indexes*, 115-116. A good example of this (in the midst of an extensive argument) is Wright, who prefers a subjective genitive in Rom. 3:22 based on his understanding of Christos. Wright is consistent in that he does not think all the occurrences should be interpreted as subjective genitives. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 839.

¹⁸² Rom. 4:24, 9:33 and 10:11. Cf. 1 Tim. 1:16.

¹⁸³ 1 Thess. 1:8. Sometimes there is no preposition: Rom. 3:26, 4:3, 5, Gal. 2:16 twice, 3:6, 22, Phil. 3:9 and Col. 2:12. Cf. 2 Thess. 2:13.

for the purposes of this study is faith is to be in “Jesus”¹⁸⁴, “Christ”¹⁸⁵, “Jesus Christ”¹⁸⁶, “Christ Jesus”¹⁸⁷, the “Lord Jesus”¹⁸⁸, “Jesus our Lord”¹⁸⁹, the “Son of God”¹⁹⁰ or a pronoun referring to Christ.¹⁹¹ Secondly but less commonly faith of the believer in “God” (including pronouns referring to God).¹⁹²

The object of faith can also be placed in an event (past, present or future), a message (the gospel) or a character or achievement (of God or Jesus). Faith can be in “ἐν” “his blood”¹⁹³, referring to Christ, or in “God’s power”.¹⁹⁴ Faith can also be in (with no preposition) “the working of God who raised him from the dead”¹⁹⁵ and in the secondary material (again, with no preposition), in the “truth”¹⁹⁶ or in “our testimony”.¹⁹⁷ Faith can also be placed in the fact that (ὅτι): “God raised him from the dead”¹⁹⁸; “Jesus died and rose”¹⁹⁹; and “we will also live with him”.²⁰⁰

¹⁸⁴ Rom. 3:26.

¹⁸⁵ Gal. 2:16, Phil 3:9 and Col. 2:5. Cf. Eph. 1:1. For the last reference which could be translated as “believers” or “faithful ones” see Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union With Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012) See also: F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 250-251. Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans; Apollos, 1999), 87. Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, 2 vols. (1st edn., The Anchor Bible; Garden City: Doubleday, 1974), 68-69. So also: John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, 22 vols. (21; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003b), 195-196.

¹⁸⁶ Rom. 3:22, Gal. 2:16 twice and 3:22.

¹⁸⁷ Col. 1:4. Cf. 1 Tim. 1:14, 16, 3:13, 2 Tim. 1:13 and 3:15.

¹⁸⁸ Philemon 1:5. Cf. Eph. 1:15.

¹⁸⁹ Rom. 4:24.

¹⁹⁰ Gal. 2:20.

¹⁹¹ Rom. 9:33 and 10:11 although note the Old Testament context.

¹⁹² 1 Thess. 1:8. Cf. 3:8. Note also the Old Testament context for faith in God: Rom. 4:3, 5, 10:14 and Gal. 3:6. For a broader perspective on whether the object of faith is God or Christ see: John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Library of Christian Classics; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 346-348.

¹⁹³ Rom. 3:25.

¹⁹⁴ 1 Cor. 2:5.

¹⁹⁵ Col. 2:12.

¹⁹⁶ 2 Thess. 2:12 and 13.

¹⁹⁷ 2 Thess. 1:10.

¹⁹⁸ Rom. 10:9.

¹⁹⁹ 1 Thess. 4:14.

²⁰⁰ πιστεύομεν ὅτι καὶ συζήσομεν αὐτῷ (Rom. 6:8).

παραλαμβάνω

Paul uses παραλαμβάνω ten times²⁰¹ in the primary sources and once²⁰² in the secondary. The verb is twice used by Paul with παραδίδωμι, “to hand down”,²⁰³ and Paul uses it to mean “take over” or “receive”.²⁰⁴ O’Brien points out that παραλαμβάνω is a “semitechnical term specifically employed to denote the receiving of something delivered by tradition... Early Christianity took over from rabbinic Judaism the idea of transmitting and safeguarding a tradition” (regarding the two verbs above).²⁰⁵ Delling contends that in the New Testament it is Paul who “developed the קָבַל of rabbinic terminology”²⁰⁶ and he used it in 1 Cor. 11 and 15 to mean: “to receive in fixed form, in the chain of Christian tradition”.²⁰⁷ Similarly, Wenham says “‘receiving’ and ‘passing on’ are probably technical terms such as were used by the Jewish rabbis to refer to the systematic teaching and learning of traditions”.²⁰⁸

Paul uses παραλαμβάνω to refer to the handing down of the gospel but only in Colossians 2:6 is the word clearly used to refer to the *initial* response to the gospel. In that verse the object of what is “received” is “Christ Jesus the Lord”.²⁰⁹ In that verse the verb is not referring to a handed down body of tradition but to the reception of Christ himself. Five times the word is used to refer to response to the gospel but it is not immediately clear whether that is initial

²⁰¹ 1 Cor. 11:23, 15:1, 3, Gal. 1:9, 12, Phil. 4:9, Col. 2:6, 4:17, 1 Thess. 2:13 and 4:1.

²⁰² 2 Thess. 3:6.

²⁰³ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 762.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 768. The two occurrences are 1 Cor. 11:23 and 15:3.

²⁰⁵ O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 105. See also Ellis. Earle E. Ellis, ‘Traditions in 1 Corinthians’, *New Testament Studies*, 32/04 (10/1986 1986), 481-502, 481-482.

²⁰⁶ Gerhard Delling, ‘*paralambano*’, in Gerhard Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (IV; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 11-14, 14, note 11.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 13.

²⁰⁸ Wenham and Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (Great Britain). *Paul and Jesus : the true story*, 143.

²⁰⁹ παραλάβετε τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον. Scholars disagree as to whether “Christ” is a title or a proper name here. For a summary of the options and views (although we do not necessarily agree with his conclusions) see: Murray J. Harris, *Colossians & Philemon* (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament; Nashville B&H, 2010), 80.

response or the ongoing response required by the believer.²¹⁰ Where necessary those occurrences will be examined in more detail below, particularly 1 Cor. 15:1 and 3. The remaining four occurrences (and the one occurrence in the secondary evidence) refer to the receiving of broader Christian teaching (such as the Lord's Supper).²¹¹

Other words

There are several other words that Paul employs to show appropriate response to the gospel which are worth mentioning here briefly but will only receive further treatment if they occur in the particular passages of interest. *ἐλπὶς* is quite common in Paul (36 times across both primary and secondary) and it means “hope”, “expectation” or “something hoped for”.²¹² The most noteworthy occurrence for this study is in Col. 1:23 where the saints there are to not move from the “hope held out in the gospel”.

There are four other words of response that are used in two passages that will be examined in close detail later. In 1 Thess. 1:9 Paul says the initial response of the believers was “*δουλεύειν θεῷ*” (“to serve God”).²¹³ Of the other seventeen times *δουλεύω* is used (in primary and secondary sources)²¹⁴ Paul does not again use the verb to refer to initial response. In the next verse Paul also said that the believers responded by waiting (*ἀναμένω*) for the Son of God. The word is a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament and means to “wait” or “expect”.²¹⁵ In 1 Cor. 15:1 Paul reminds the Corinthians of the gospel on which they have

²¹⁰ 1 Cor. 1, 3, Gal. 1:9, 12 and 1 Thess. 2:13. In Galatians 1:12 Paul speaks of receiving the gospel he received through a revelation of Jesus Christ. Commentators generally agree that this was on the road to Damascus. As with the other examples here this could refer to his own initial *conversion* or to the receiving and commissioning of his gospel ministry. James D. G. Dunn, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (Black's New Testament Commentaries; London: A & C Black, 1993), 53.

²¹¹ 1 Cor. 11:23, Phil. 4:9, Col. 4:17 and 1 Thess. 4:1. Cf. 2 Thess. 3:6.

²¹² Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 319-320.

²¹³ Ibid., 259.

²¹⁴ Rom. 6:6, 7:6, 25, 9:12, 12:11, 14:18, 16:18, Gal. 4:8-9, 25, 5:13, 2:22 and Col. 3:24. Cf. Eph. 6:7, 1 Tim. 6:2 and Tit. 3:3.

²¹⁵ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 68.

taken their stand (ἵστημι).²¹⁶ In the next verse Paul also says that they will only be saved if they “hold fast” (κατέχω) to the gospel.

²¹⁶ ἵστημι has a broad semantic range but with a consistent meaning along the lines of establishment or maintenance. See: *ibid.*, 482-483. Liddell, Scott, and Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 841. Walter Grundmann, 'steko, histemi', in Gerhard Friedrich (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (VII; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964b), 636-53, especially 651-652.

Section 3 - Particular Passages in Paul

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

The importance of this text

1 Thess. 1:9-10 has been viewed by many as the clearest summary of Paul's missionary message, "the mission kerygma"¹ to Gentiles, or a "typical Pauline sermon".² Harnack says that this passage is "mission-preaching to pagans in a nutshell".³ Likewise Krentz calls it a "'Classic description' of the fundamental message of early Christian missionary proclamation to non-Jews."⁴ Some have argued that the two verses are a pre-Pauline formula but there is little evidence to support that theory.⁵ The verses may well contain phrases that Paul used

¹ Martin Hengel, *Paul Between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years* (London: SCM, 1997b), 32.

² Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 30. Cf. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 243. Wright says that these verses are the clearest examples of "the kind of thing we must assume [Paul] to have said". Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*, 103. Hahn says it is a "missionary sermon". Ferdinand Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1965), 76, 135. So Schnabel: Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies, and Methods*, 127.

³ Harnack also adds 1 Cor. 12:2 to this passage. Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, Vol 1, 89. Wright says this passage is a "thumbnail sketch" of Paul's "gospel" and wants to argue that it is the same message that is in Romans 1 and 1 Cor. 15, that is, "the God of creation and covenant/ the son of God whom he raised from the dead; the coming day of judgment; the assurance of deliverance". Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 918 and see p637. "A schematic summary of mission preaching". Conzelmann, *An outline of the Theology of the New Testament*, 69. So also: David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves, and E. Randolph Richards, *Rediscovering Paul: An Introduction to his World, Letters, and Theology* (Downers Grove. Nottingham: IVP. Apollos, 2007), 130.

⁴ Edgar Krentz, 'Evangelism and Spirit: 1 Thessalonians 1', *Currents in Theology and Mission*, 14/1 (1987), 22-30, 25. Cf. Dunn, *Unity And Diversity In The New Testament: An Inquiry Into The Character of Earliest Christianity*, 49.

⁵ See Best who says v9b-10 are "a traditional creedal formula" and the critique of this by Wanamaker. Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, quote p81. See also p85-87. Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (The New International Greek Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids. Carlisle: Eerdmans. Paternoster, 1990), 84-89. See also: Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 84-89. Stanton also says this is non-Pauline since 'deliver' is used in preference to Paul's more common 'save' in v10. Stanton, *Paul's Gospel* Riesner says that it contains "elements of tradition". Rainer Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology* (Grand Rapids. Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998), 400 (and see p398). Instead of a creed it is better understood as "a summary of Paul's initial missionary preaching to pagans". Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1386. Munck has a good summary of what scholarship was saying 50 years ago answering this and the previous question. Johannes Munck, '1 Thess. i. 9-10 and the Missionary Preaching of Paul: Textual Exegesis and Hermeneutic Reflexions', *NTS*, 9/2 (January 1963), 95-110, 100-103. Hooker builds on Munck and provides the most convincing argument for this being Paul's own words. Morna D. Hooker, '1 Thessalonians 1.9-10: a Nutshell - But What Kind of Nut?', in Martin Hengel et al. (eds.), *Geschichte, Tradition, Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag* (3; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1996), 435-48, see especially 442-443. Like Hooker, Kim argues that the language is Pauline here but unlike Hooker he argues that this passage "echoes a central aspect of Paul's preaching among the Gentiles in Thessalonica and elsewhere". Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on The origin of Paul's Gospel*, 91. Cf. Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul's gospel* (2nd edn., Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1984), 133. See also Friedrich who

initially in his evangelism in Thessalonica but the phrases are best understood as Paul's own design or summary of the report coming from the believers in Macedonia and Achaia (v7). It may even well be that in these words we have both the summary coming from the reports and a summary of Paul's initial message. In that case we would have from Paul "a letter to a predominately Gentile church [where] he actually rehearses the very message he originally brought to them".⁶

The context of the text

Paul's introduction to 1 Thessalonians flows right through the first chapter.⁷ After Paul's normal "epistolary prescript"⁸ he then begins with a prayer of thanks for the Thessalonians' work, labour and endurance which is produced by their faith, love and hope (v2-3). He then moves into a section of teaching and a reminder about the conversion of the Thessalonians beginning with God, then the gospel and ending with their response. The church of the Thessalonians is both loved (ἀγαπάω) and chosen (ἐκλογή) by God (v4). The evidence of this love and choosing (ᾠτι)⁹ is the way in which the gospel came to them: "our gospel came to

says this is "non-Pauline terminology for conversion". Quote from: Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 382. Gerhard Friedrich, 'Ein Tauflied hellenistischer Judenchristen: 1. Thess. 1,9f', *Theologische Zeitschrift* 21 (1965), 502-16, 504.

⁶ Barnett, *Paul's Preaching Reconsidered*, 63. See also: Howell, *Mission In Paul's Epistles: Genesis, Pattern, and Dynamics*, 71.

⁷ Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids. Leicester: Eerdmans. Apollos, 2002), 75. Scholars generally agree with this but also want to note that the themes in chapter 1 serve also as content introduction for the letter. Wanamaker notes that 1:5-10 introduce the main theme of the letter, namely "the future occurrence of the day of the Lord". Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 51. See also William Hendriksen, *I & II Thessalonians* (New Testament commentary; London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1972), 36. Hooker says this is an "introductory chapter" which is "a summary of the subjects with which Paul is going to deal". Hooker, *1 Thessalonians 1.9-10: a Nutsbell - But What Kind of Nut?*, 443-444 and 446-447. Jewett has a different view and argues in detail that the introduction ends after verse 5 and that v6-10 are a "congregational imitation". Robert Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety* (Foundations and facets New Testament; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), quote page 73 and argument p76-77.

⁸ Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 67.

⁹ The question of whether ᾠτι is exegetical or causal is debatable with some (such as Lightfoot, Milligan and Best) arguing for exegetical on the grounds that it is a more common use for Paul and others (such as O'Brien, Wanamaker and Rigaux) arguing for causal based on the context. The latter is more likely. For a discussion see: Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 73; Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *Notes on Epistles of St Paul from Unpublished Commentaries* (London: Macmillan, 1895), 12; George Milligan, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians* (London: Macmillan, 1908), 8; O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul*, 151-2; Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 78; Rigaux, *Saint Paul - Les épîtres aux Thessaloniens*, 372.f. So also: Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 93-94.

you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction”

(NIV) (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ [ἐν] πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ).

The most important thing to note in the four verses which precede verses 9-10 is the way that Paul unpacks the relationship between himself, the Thessalonian church and the gospel. In verse 5 he calls it “our gospel” (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν) and then refers to it again as “word” in verse 6 (as τὸν λόγον) and verse 8 (as ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου).¹⁰ These phrases are significant as “gospel” and “word” point to specific content¹¹ and “our” and “the Lord’s” refer to both the human possession and divine origin of the message. The Thessalonians have responded to the gospel by welcoming (δέχομαι, v6) it, by faith (πίστις, v8) and by becoming an example (τύπος, v7) to other believers. It is this interrelationship and response that make way for Paul’s reminding and teaching in verses 9-10 in the context of the gospel “ringing out” (ἐξηχέω, v8) through the Thessalonians.

We know of only three Sabbaths when Paul proclaimed in the synagogues in Thessalonica.¹²

We can assume that his proclamation was directed at those who had knowledge of Judaism given that those present in a synagogue would have been either Jews or God-fearers.¹³ So the

¹⁰ Refer to the section on Paul’s word use in this thesis. See also: Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 101 and J Ware, ‘The Thessalonians as a Missionary Congregation: 1 Thessalonians 1:5-8’, *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 83 (1992), 126-31, 127. For both these phrases and a helpful broad examination of v8 see: Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission*, 95-103. Note the nuance that Paul will use the phrase “the word of the Lord” rarely and with emphasis on the divine origin of the gospel. Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 51.

¹¹ Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 45.

¹² Acts 17:2-3.

¹³ Cf. Acts 13:26 and 17:17. So Hultgren: Arland J. Hultgren, *Paul’s Gospel and Mission: The Outlook from his Letter to the Romans* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 139. Bruce writes: “Only by visiting synagogues could Paul find these Gentile ‘God-fearers’”. F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co, 1980), 277. Without engaging here, we should note the scholarly discussion at present over who the “God-fearers” were, if they even existed (as some suggest). See: R. S. MacLennan and A. T. Kraabel, ‘The God-Fearers--A Literary and Theological Invention’, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 12/5 (/ 1986), 46 J. M. Lieu, ‘The Race of the God-Fearers’, *Journal of Theological Studies*, 46/2 (/ 1995), 483-501 Thomas M. Finn, ‘The God-Fearers Reconsidered’, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 47 (1985), 75-84, Dietrich-Alex Koch, ‘The God-Fearers Between Facts and Fiction’, *Studia Theologica*, 60/1 (2006), 62-90

message that Paul proclaimed would have in all likelihood been similar to that presented in Pisidian Antioch rather than what Luke says Paul presented in Athens. Therefore, since Paul is recalling what he said to Gentiles,¹⁴ it may be that Paul was explicitly preaching about idolatry, the character of God, the resurrection of Christ and his place as rescuer and the coming judgment. The summary that Luke gives of Paul's preaching in Thessalonica in Acts 17 seems to indicate that the message was in fact centred on the person and work of Christ. Luke summarises the message: "On three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. 'This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah,' he said" (Acts 17:2-3, NIV). However, the fact that this is what Luke records as being preached on three Sabbaths does not mean that Paul restricted his proclamation to the Jews and God-fearers. In fact, it seems highly probable that, given that the converts had turned to God from idols (ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων), they were not God-fearers at all and were most likely hearing Paul outside the Synagogue, simply detail that Luke didn't cover.¹⁵

The Content of the Message

Scholars generally agree that verses 9 and 10 contain some content regarding the initial preaching to Gentiles, whether or not the passage had Pauline origins. The question is: How much content can we reclaim from these verses regarding the original message? Paul has received a report (ἀπαγγέλλω, v9) from the believers in Macedonia and Achaia concerning the reception (or "act of finding acceptance", εἰσοδος, v9)¹⁶ given by the Thessalonians. In

¹⁴ Terence L. Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 183.

¹⁵ So Dunn who calls it "preaching to Gentiles". Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 101. Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on The origin of Paul's Gospel*, 91. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?*, 58. C. K. Barrett, *On Paul: Aspects of his Life, Work and Influence in the Early Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 65. Although, note Wright, who said "Paul must have sounded very Jewish... As Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 1.9f., he summoned his hearers to turn from idols to serve a living and true God and to wait for his son, the deliverer, to reappear from heaven. This is an essentially Jewish message to a pagan world." Wright, *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul, 1978-2013*, 319. s

¹⁶ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 294.

that sense, what we approach initially is a report of “the effect of the gospel”¹⁷ which is a “classic description of conversion”.¹⁸ Importantly, this was regarding ἔσχομεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, that is, Paul’s own preaching ministry in Thessalonica (“reception we had among you” 1 Thess. 1:9, ESV). What follows in the (probably brief and summarised) version of the report concerns Paul’s own preaching.

The message is made up of three responses with correlating objects or reasons for the response. The report first tells how the Thessalonians turned (ἐπιστρέφω) from idols (εἰδωλον) to God (θεός). The need to turn *from* and *to* something is worth noting.¹⁹ Paul’s preaching involved the turning of worship away from a false object of worship and towards God, the right object of worship. This turning is followed by the infinitive “to serve” (δουλεύω) the living and true God (θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ). The infinitive shows that the serving is directly related to the turning. In fact, the turning “to God” is probably synonymous with “serving the living and true God”. The repetition of θεός and the expansion of “God” to “living and true God” is probably a deliberate device by Paul to remind the readers of the emphasis in his original message. The “living and true God” is no doubt the right object of worship as opposed to idols which are dead, mute and false.²⁰

The third response is more unusual, not only in Paul but in the whole New Testament. As the Thessalonians turned from idols to serve God they also turned to “wait” (ἀναμένω, v10)

¹⁷ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Thessalonians: Preparing for the Coming King* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1991b), 36.

¹⁸ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: a Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove. Leicester: InterVarsity. Apollos, 2001), 271. Hooker expands both these points. Hooker, *1 Thessalonians 1.9-10: a Nutshell - But What Kind of Nut?*, 442.

¹⁹ Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: a Pauline Theology*, 271-272. Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 82. Cf. Jakob van Bruggen, *Paul: Pioneer for Israel's Messiah*, trans. Ed M. Van Der Maas (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2005), 55.

²⁰ Cf. 1 Cor. 12:2 and Jer. 16:19.

with expectation for God's Son from heaven.²¹ As with the idea of serving God, "waiting" is connected with the initial "turning" from idolatry to God. This is indicated by the timing of the response (starting with their conversion) and also by the way both verbs are present active infinitives. In the turning to God the responses are both active service and waiting in the light of the returning Son (v10) and the rescue (v10) which he is bringing.²²

Paul's recount of his initial preaching in Thessalonica is hinged around three responses with theological and historical content shaping and giving reason to these three responses.

V9b: And how (καὶ πῶς)

You turned (ἐπεστρέψατε)

To God from idols (πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων)

To serve (δουλεύειν)

The living and true God (θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ)

V10: And to wait (καὶ ἀναμένειν)

For his Son from heaven (τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν)

Whom he raised from the dead (ὃν ἤγειρεν ἐκ [τῶν] νεκρῶν)

Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath

(Ἰησοῦν τὸν ῥυόμενον ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης.)

²¹ ἀναμένω is a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament but does appear four times in the LXX (Job 2:9 and 7:2, Is. 59:11 and Jer. 13:16) and five times in the Apocrypha (Jdt. 7:12 & 8:17, 2 Ma. 6:14, Sir. 2:7, 5:7 & 6:19). For the sense of expectation to the waiting see: Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 68.

²² The active infinitive for "wait" shows that he waiting is an active decision on the part of the Thessalonians to wait for the returning Son.

So what did Paul preach in Thessalonica?

After analysing these two verses the questions still remain: How much can we mirror-read from these words concerning Paul's initial preaching? One of the issues raised above is that the recounting we have in this passage is from the original preacher to the original hearers but in the context of a report from a third party. Paul is recounting the report from the believers in Macedonia and Achaia concerning the response of the Thessalonians (the very people to whom he is writing) to what Paul originally preached to them. The advantage of this is that we know there will be accuracy in the content. The disadvantage is the question of why Paul is recounting at all.

Paul is probably recounting this initial message for both encouragement (as with much of chapter 1) and also as a reminding and even teaching tool.²³ We see Paul do this elsewhere as he reminds those to whom he writes about what he said previously.²⁴ Our question is which parts are encouragement and a reminder of initial preaching and which are teaching?

It can be reasonably deduced that the three responses must have been part of the original preaching. These are all *conversion* responses. We can draw the conclusion that these responses were part of the original preaching since Paul gives a theological/historical reason for the response. Using the same logic, we can assume that the theological/historical

²³ This is a standard rhetorical ploy in Graeco-Roman paraenesis. See: Wiard Popkes, 'Paraenesis in the New Testament: An Exercise in Conceptuality', in Troels Engberg-Pedersen and James M. Starr (eds.), *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context* (Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft Und Die Kunde Der Alteren Kirche; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 13-46

²⁴ See Rom 15:15, 1 Cor. 4:17 and 15:1. Cf. 2 Tim. 1:6 and Tit. 3:1. There are various words used in these verses (ἐπαναμινῆσκω, ἀναμινῆσκω, γνωρίζω and ὑπομινῆσκω) but with similar purpose.

response was also part of the original missionary message. To reverse the order slightly, we can deduce that the original message probably contained the following:

- Content 1: Idols are *worthless*, there is one true God (monotheism).²⁵
- Response 1: Turn to God.²⁶
- Content 2: God is living and true.
- Response 2: Serve him.
- Content 3: God raised the Son from the dead²⁷ and he is returning from heaven
in judgment
- Response 3: Wait for him.

The immediate question about this summary is why is “Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath” excluded from the summary and everything else included? It may be that this was included in Paul’s initial summary.²⁸ Evidence supporting that is that he will rarely use “Jesus” as a title without “Christ” or “Lord” in his epistles. The title is normally reserved for something either historical about Christ or in relation to initial profession.²⁹ We could,

²⁵ Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 53. To see possibilities of how this might have been expressed see; Acts 14:15, 17:22-31, 1 Cor. 12:2 and 2 Cor. 6:16.

²⁶ Wright argues that the “main message” that Paul preached to Gentiles was in fact “deeply Jewish”, namely, “that pagans should turn from idols to worship the true and living God”. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1411. C.f. N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 126.

²⁷ Becker argues that this was not part of Paul’s proclamation. Jürgen Becker, *Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), 141-145. See also: Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 577. Wright argues that this must have been proclaimed since it is the connection between Jesus of Nazareth and “the god of Israel, the creator, the one who could be referred to as *ho theos*, God with a capital G”. N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God; London: SPCK, 2003), 725. On “Son” see: O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis*, 68.

²⁸ So Barnett who says that “Jesus who rescues us from the wrath to come” is part of the “mission preaching”. Barnett, *The Birth of Christianity: The First Twenty Years*, 43.

²⁹ For example, see Rom. 10:9, 1 Cor. 12:3 and Phil. 2:10.

therefore, take the word “Jesus” from this phrase and assume that it was part of the initial preaching, in a similar way to what the Pauline tradition portrays in Acts 17:18.³⁰

The rest of the phrase would suggest that this was not part of the initial preaching, but rather, Paul using these verses as a chance to remind the believers (in a teaching sense) of what their right response to his gospel achieves for them at the coming judgment. This possibility would allow us to agree partly with Munck and Hooker that this summary is in fact a summary of what Paul is going to cover in the letter.³¹ This point should not be

³⁰ That is not to say that Acts 17 necessarily contains content or summary material from a Pauline speech. But as we saw in the literary review many scholars who have explored this question note the remarkable similarity between the two passages. Wenham, for example, says there is “significant evidence that Paul did preach in places like Athens in the way Acts describes. The most striking evidence is in 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, where Paul describes how the Thessalonians ‘turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, who he raised from the dead – Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath’. The summary that Paul gives here of the conversion of the Thessalonians is strikingly like the contents of the Areopagus speech – starting with the question of idols, going on to refer to the living creator God, concluding with reference to coming judgment, and to Jesus’ resurrection.” David Wenham, ‘From Jesus to Paul - Via Luke’, in Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson (eds.), *The Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul’s Mission* (Leicester: Apolos, 2000), 83-97, 87. See also Rohde. Joachim Rohde, *Rediscovering the Teaching of the Evangelists* (London: SCM, 1968), 206. Similarly, even Barrett who is quite critical of overstating the similarities between Rom. 1 and Acts 17, does make the link with 1 Thess. 1:9-10 and Acts 17. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 826. After summarising the Acts 17 speech, Jakob van Bruggen says: “We find these central these also in 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10.” Bruggen, *Paul: Pioneer for Israel’s Messiah*, 67. Although this thesis is not the place to explore Acts in detail it is worth noting Acts 17 here a little further since in the whole New Testament it is the only occurrence where a claim is made to give any detail to Paul’s evangelistic preaching. Whatever we make of Acts, the Pauline tradition, the author not only of Acts but of the speech, the similarity between this very early record from Paul’s own hand in 1 Thess. 1:9-10 and the Areopagus account is striking. That said, the view of Seyoon Kim is noteworthy: “In Acts 14:15-17; 17:22-31 Luke may have faithfully recounted the gist of Paul’s actual sermons. Even if he has composed the sermons himself, he has composed them in a way everybody, Paul included, would have preached in the given situations.” Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on The origin of Paul’s Gospel*, 91. What is also striking is that in 1 Thess. 1:9-10 we have more detail of Paul’s evangelistic preaching than anywhere else in Paul (primary or secondary). Yet many scholars want to argue that the speech in Acts 17 is not trying to present itself as “evangelistic”. See, for example, Allen, Schnabel and Gibson. Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?*, 68. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1482. Richard Gibson, ‘Paul and the Evangelization of the Stoics’, in Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson (eds.), *The Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul’s Mission* (Leicester: Apolos, 2000), 309-26, 322. In support of the speech having a self-understanding that it is evangelistic see Stott, Bruce, Wenham, Carson and Barnett. John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: To the Ends of the Earth* (Second edn.; Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1991a), 284. F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Tyndale, 1951), 20. David Wenham, ‘Acts and the Pauline Corpus II: The Evidence of Parallels’, in Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clarke (eds.), *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting: Volume 1, The Book of Acts in its Ancient Literary Setting* (1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 215-58, 247. D. A. Carson, ‘Athens Revisited’, in D. A. Carson (ed.), *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 384-98, 396-397. Barnett, *Paul’s Preaching Reconsidered*, 62. There is not space to defend that point further other than to say that the writer of Acts clearly has Paul expanding in the Areopagus what he was preaching in the marketplace, that is, “Jesus and the resurrection” (Acts 17:18). That activity was *εὐαγγελίζω*.

³¹ Hooker overstates the point, however, by saying that this is “not ... what Paul said when he first came to Thessalonica” and hence “is not the gospel preached to pagans”. Mitchell balances the original preaching with the theological emphasis but again maybe goes too far when she says that because the problem is theological

overstretched because the evidence in Paul is minimal (but still there) and would rest partly on an understanding of the authorship, purpose and reliability of Acts. The evidence in the primary material is that Paul will not speak of rescue in relation to unbelieving Gentiles in this way, but rather to believers to remind them of their assurance and their salvation. See, for example, where Paul reminds the believers in Colossae that God has “rescued (ἐρρύσατο) us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of his Son” (Col. 1:13).³² Bosch (who then quotes Meeks) writes that “The expression ‘turning to God from idols’ in 1 Thessalonians 1:10 is language inherited from the Jewish diaspora, ‘but it is immediately reinforced by an eschatological clause with distinctive Christian content’”.³³

Finally, we must note that of the three main content statements of the creed only one centres on an *historical* fact, that is, that Jesus was raised from the dead (v10). The other two (or maybe three) points in the summary are *theological*, that there is one God who is not an idol and that he is living and true (and maybe that Jesus will return, which would be a future-historical assertion based on the one historical fact). In noting this we can see a contrast between the other gospel summaries which focus more on the historical events and the theological interpretation that are connected to those historical events.

Paul’s “remedy requires a fresh, revised version of his initial kerygma – which had stressed the expectation that God’s Son, Jesus, will come soon from heaven”. Hooker, *1 Thessalonians 1.9-10: a Nutshell - But What Kind of Nut?* 443 and 447. Munck, ‘1 Thess. i. 9–10 and the Missionary Preaching of Paul: Textual Exegesis and Hermeneutic Reflexions’. Margaret M. Mitchell, ‘1 and 2 Thessalonians’, in James Dunn (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to St Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 2003), 51–63, 56.

³² Paul will use ῥύμαι to refer to other short term or physical rescues as well as well as salvation rescue. As well as the above two examples see: Rom. 7:24, 11:26, 15:31, 2 Cor. 1:10. Cf. 2 Thess. 3:2, 3:11 and 4:17–18. The argument also holds in Paul (and Acts for that matter) that he will speak of propitiation (ἱλαστήριον, Rom. 3:25), reconciliation (καταλλάσσω, Rom. 5:10, 1 Cor. 7:11, 2 Cor. 5:18, 19 and 5:20) and salvation (Rom. 1:16, 10:1, 10, 11:11, 13:11, 2 Cor. 1:6, 6:2, 7:10 and 1 Thess. 5:8–9. Cf. Eph. 1:13, Phil. 1:19, 28, 2:12, 2 Thess. 2:13, 2 Tim. 2:10 and 3:15).

³³ David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 135. The *quote in the quote* is from: Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale, 1983), 95.

Conclusions on 1 Thess. 1:9-10

We have shown that it is possible to reconstruct some of Paul's initial missionary message in Thessalonica from this text. Although we do not see much we can see three assertions and three required responses. The message Paul proclaimed in Thessalonica would have included (but is not necessarily limited to):

As opposed to your worthless idols, there is one living and true God. This God raised (his) Son (who is) from heaven and he will return in judgment. So turn to God, serve him and wait for the Son.

1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 1-4

In the first chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians Paul refers many times to his own gospel work. In 1:6 Paul refers to the testimony³⁴ which has been confirmed among the Corinthians. This testimony is what Paul preached (εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, 1:17) when he was among them and what was preached (κηρύσσομεν, 1:23) is the kerygma (τοῦ κηρύγματος, 1:21)³⁵ that God used to call (κλητοῖς, 1:24) and save those who believed (πιστεύοντας, 1:21). In the three chapters that follow Paul expounds how “through the gospel” (διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, 4:15), which is “my word and my kerygma” (ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου, 2:4)³⁶ he has become

³⁴ The NIV with Ciampa and Rosner translate τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ as “our testimony about Christ”. Adding “our” is probably unhelpful in the context of 1 Corinthians. As we will see in the discussion on 1 Cor 15, most scholars agree that the creed in 15:3b-5 is pre-Pauline and therefore his gospel was the same as the earliest of the Apostles. In this verse it would be better to maintain a simple translation to preserve either the ambiguity or the continuity of Paul's gospel with *the* testimony (gospel). Later on Paul will make specific reference to his work and his kerygma. Ciampa, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 60 and 64.

³⁵ Paul uses κήρυγμα four times in his primary material and twice in the secondary and it is in 1 Corinthians that he uses the word most (1:21, 2:4 and 15:14).

³⁶ In our word study, we concluded that Paul will very often will use “word” to refer to “gospel”. We also argued that “kerygma” and “gospel” were virtually synonymous. That prompts us to ask why Paul in 2:4 will speak of both “my word and my kerygma”? Fee, amongst others, argues that by using the two words Paul is referring to the “content and form of Paul's actual delivery”. However, this would not make sense of Paul's use of the two words both in and outside this context. It is better understood that Paul is emphasising something precious to himself and the heart of his ministry. Ciampa and Rosner liken the phrase to “fear and trembling” in the previous verse. The two words are therefore best taken synonymously with some rhetorical force. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 94. Ciampa, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 116-117.

their “father” (4:15). It is this gospel that he proclaims (καταγγέλλων, 2:1), speaks (λαλοῦμεν, 2:6, 13) and teaches (διδάσκω, 4:17). In these chapters Paul poetically describes his preaching as “planting” (ἐφύτρευσα, 3:6) and Apollos’ as “giving a drink” (ποτίζων, 3:7 and 8).

This rich gospel language gives us two questions to consider: First, what content of the kerygma is revealed in these chapters? And second, is this referring to missionary preaching to unbelievers, gospel grounding for believers, or both?

The answer to the first question is that we have a number of references to the content of the preaching, but these are brief, albeit punchy. Paul’s message is “the testimony of Christ” (1:6)³⁷, “The cross of Christ” (1:17), “The word of the cross” (1:18), “Christ crucified” (1:23), “the mystery of God” (2:1),³⁸ “Jesus Christ and him crucified” (2:2), “God’s power” (2:5), “mystery” (2:7 and 4:1, note the plural) and simply “Jesus Christ” (3:10).

Testimony (μαρτύριον) in 1:6, a rare word in Paul,³⁹ can be simply interpreted as “gospel” in this context.⁴⁰ That means the following phrase “of Christ” (τοῦ Χριστοῦ) should be taken as an objective genitive making “Christ” the content of the message.⁴¹ The phrases in 1 Corinthians 1-4 (summarised in the previous paragraph) show the importance of the word “Christ” in relation to the gospel content. The use of “Christ” climaxes in chapter 15. For

³⁷ What sort of genitive is τοῦ Χριστοῦ? Most translations and commentators agree that it is an objective genitive, that is, the testimony is *about* Christ. Thiselton argues that it’s difficult to tell if it is a subjective (Christ does the witnessing) or objective genitive. For this study we need not pursue the question further other than to say that either option is plausible. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 94.

³⁸ The word “mystery” here is a textual variant, the other possible option being “testimony” as in 1:6. Metzger says the latter is well attested to “mystery” makes more sense exegetically and has earlier, although less support. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (Fourth Revised Edition)*, 480.

³⁹ Other than here only found in 2 Cor. 1:12 in the primary material. See also 2 Thess. 1:10, 1 Tim. 2:6 and 2 Tim 1:8.

⁴⁰ Ciampa, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 64. O’Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul*, 118.

Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 94.

⁴¹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 40.

that reason, we will cover its purpose and meaning in the next section in more detail while noting the importance and emphasis of the words in these early chapters of the epistle.

We examined Paul's use of "mystery" above and while it refers to Paul's "gospel" it is with a specific rich nuance relating to the crucified Christ. Similarly, the fact that Christ was crucified is Paul's point in the very important gospel summary that we will cover in detail in chapter 15. That leaves us with the question of Paul's use of the "cross" in these chapters and what role "the cross" plays in Paul's gospel content as well as "power" and how it relates to the gospel.

Paul uses *σταυρός* 9 times in the primary material (1 Cor. 1:17, 18, Gal. 5:11, 6:12, 14, Phil. 2:8, 3:18, Col. 1:20 and 2:14) and it appears only once in the secondary material (Eph. 2:16). The relative verb *σταυρόω* is used 8 times by Paul in the primary material (1 Cor. 1:13, 23, 2:2, 8, 2 Cor. 13:4, Gal. 3:1, 5:24 and 6:14) and it does not appear in the secondary texts. By the mid-first century the image of the cross was striking in the most horrific sense to those occupied by Rome. It is this fact highlights with symbolic power the absurdity at the centre of the narrative which formed the basis of their shared belief.⁴²

In 1 Cor. 1:17 Paul refers to the "cross of Christ", a phrase which he repeats in three other places (Gal. 6:12, 14 (Note: "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ") and Phil. 3:18). This is an intentional catch-phrase which he summarises elsewhere as "the cross" (Gal. 5:11, Col. 1:20, and 2:14. Cf. Eph. 2:16). Beker notes that Paul only ever uses "cross" in terms of the "death formula" in 1 Cor. 1:13⁴³ and even there it is in the form of a hypothetical question expecting

⁴² Wright agrees with Horrell that the cross is "a symbol on which Paul draws".⁴² While Wright acknowledges that the evidence of the symbolic nature of the cross is more prominent in the "symbolic imagination of Paul's successors", he says this is "because it already possessed a symbolic power within the narrative itself". Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 406.

⁴³ Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*, 199.

a negative answer: “Was Paul crucified for you?” (μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν;). This does not imply that Paul views “cross” and “crucified” as being a different aspect of the narrative to those parts where he does speak of the effective work of the cross (such as “Christ died for our sins” in 15:3) but rather, his selective use further emphasises the symbolic undertones of such a claim – that the Christ was crucified. This point is verified by the use of the phrase “Christ crucified” in 1 Cor. 1:23 where the *gospel* of “the cross” (ὁ λόγος, see the section on words above for defence of the way Paul often uses λόγος synonymously, but intentionally, to mean “gospel”) in verse 18 is no doubt synonymous with what “we preach” (ἡμεῖς δὲ κηρύσσομεν) in verse 18.⁴⁴

In 1 Cor. 1-2 Paul specifically draws a connection between both the “cross” and “Christ crucified” and the fact that the message is “foolishness” (μωρία, 1:18 and 23) to the unbelieving (Gentile) and a “stumbling block” (σκάνδαλον) to Jews (1:23). Ciampa and Rosner imply that this message is missionary preaching since it requires a “response” or an “assessment” from the unbeliever. They use Acts 17:16-34 as an illustration of this response which is quite surprising since in that summary neither the cross, Christ or crucifixion are mentioned at all.⁴⁵ Likewise Schnabel argues that 1 Cor. 1-2 (along with Rom. 1:1-4) summarise “Paul’s missionary proclamation” to Jews and “the message of ‘Jesus crucified’ is

⁴⁴ Concerning “The cross of Christ” (ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ) in 1 Cor. 1:17, Ciampa and Rosner say that it “does not just refer to the crucifixion of Christ but is Paul’s shorthand for all that the death of Jesus accomplishes”. They defend that point well from the other references (Col 1:20, 2:24 and Eph. 2:16) and say that the “message” of the cross of Christ is “Christ crucified”. Ciampa, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 87. It is worth observing that Thiselton argues for the translation “a crucified Christ” in 1:23, a point which is possible without changing meaning but which adds emphasis to the absurdity of the idea. He also notes Gal 3:1 in this. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 170-171.

⁴⁵ Ciampa, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 91. So too Garland who also connects “foolishness” with the Athenian response. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 61-63. The link with Acts 17 should not be too quickly dismissed, however, the differences between Acts 17 and 1 Cor. 1-2 should be carefully observed. In Acts 17, as Ciampa and Rosner point out, there is “sneering” from the Athenians over the “resurrection of the dead” (Acts 17:32). But this sneering is as a result of comprehension of a concept (as part of the Jesus-narrative) which that had previously not understood in the marketplace (Acts 17:16-20). In that sense, it is quite different to the incomprehensible foolishness and unwise perception that the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles of 1 Cor. 1-2. When the stubborn unrepentant unbeliever looks *into* the beliefs of the believer they find the thought of a Christ crucified on a cross incomprehensible.

the missionary message pure and simple”.⁴⁶ However, this very reaction from the unbeliever suggests that it is not initial proclamation that is being rejected but rather foundational gospel beliefs that are seen as unbelievable or stupid to the outsider. Thiselton’s emphatic rejection of “doctrine” being a translation of *logos* in 1:18 misses the connection between the gospel and the foundational, core message that the believer is to hold firm to and stand in (see ahead in 1 Cor. 15). “Doctrine” may well be a slightly misleading translation in this context but the connection between “teachings” (διδασκαλία) and the important gospel message that is “handed down” and “received” (παραλαμβάνω, παραδίδωμι), which has received much scholarly attention,⁴⁷ make good sense of Paul speaking to the central gospel narrative, “the foundational... story of Jesus Christ”⁴⁸ which is held onto by believers as a non-negotiable core of teaching (=gospel). This difference in language is consistent in Paul when he gives reference to his missionary preaching (as we saw 1 Thess. 1:9-10 and will see in Gal. 1:16) and when he refers back to foundational gospel grounding for believers. This point, that 1 Cor. 1-4 refer to gospel-grounding for believers is further emphasised by Paul’s use of “power” in these chapters.

Paul relates “gospel” and “power” several times in his letters.⁴⁹ The word Paul uses for “power”, δύναμις, has a broad semantic range but when he uses it in gospel contexts it clearly refers to power.⁵⁰ In 1 Cor. 2:3-5 Paul is at pains to point out that the power is not his own

⁴⁶ Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1385. See also Ibid. p1359-62 for further connections between 1 Cor. 1-2 and missionary preaching.

⁴⁷ See above to the section titled παραλαμβάνω. Note that παραδίδωμι is covered in the same section.

⁴⁸ Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 228.

⁴⁹ Note particularly in the primary material Rom. 1:4, 16, 1 Cor. 1:17-18, 24, 2:4-5, 6:14, 2 Cor. 4:7, 6:7, 13:4, Gal. 4:29, Phil. 3:10, 1 Thess. 1:5 and in the secondary Eph. 1:19, 3:7 and 2 Tim. 1:8.

⁵⁰ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 262.

power. In contrast to his own “weakness” (ἀσθένεια, 2:3), the power is “God’s power” (δυνάμει θεοῦ, 2:5) and often specifically the “Spirit is Power” (πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως, 2:4).⁵¹

In some cases, “power” is part of the gospel content such as Rom. 1:4 where Jesus is “declared (to be) Son of God in Power through the Spirit” (τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα).⁵² But in most cases “power” refers to the work of God (often the “Spirit”) in the people who are hearing the gospel. Fee says that this use of power in 1 Cor. 2:4-5 “lies with the Corinthians themselves and their own experience of the Spirit as they responded to the message of the gospel”, that is, “their actual conversion”.⁵³ This conclusion is attested to by Romans 1:16 where the “gospel is the power of God unto the salvation of all who believe” (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι).

Therefore, in most cases where Paul uses “power” in a gospel context he is using it to describe to believers the way that God has saved them through the gospel. That is, the power is God’s own power which he uses in saving people. This is very important for believers because in 1 Cor. 2:5 it is to be the object of their faith. When he uses it to speak of the power of God in raising Christ, he does so only in contexts where he is reminding believers of the gospel in which they are to stand. Both uses of “power” in Paul are therefore to be

⁵¹ The Greek literally reads “Spirit and power”, a phrase which has received much scholarly attention which need not be analysed in detail here but I refer to an extensive discussion of the issues and the scholarship in Thiselton. We will agree with Thiselton who argues for the translation “brought home powerfully by the Spirit” agreeing with Fee who translates it “the Spirit, that is, Power”. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 222. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 95.

⁵² See also 1 Cor. 6:14, 15:43 and Phil. 3:10, all of which associate also associate power with resurrection.

⁵³ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 95. Grundmann says “the Pauline concept of power is constructed from two different standpoints. On the one side πνεῦμα expresses the modes in which the exalted Lord is present and there is identification with Him. On the other, it expresses the corresponding mode of existence of believers.” Walter Grundmann, 'δύναμις/δύναμις', in Gerhard Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964a), 284-317, 311.

taken as part of the gospel that believers are to take their stand on and place their faith in, effectively meaning they will trust God himself since the power is his.

Interestingly for this study, the word is not used in 1 Thess. 1:10 where the fact that God raised his Son is part of the message that the Thessalonians heard as unbelievers (see reconstruction above). Similarly, in the Pauline tradition, Luke does not have Paul including the word “power” when he talks about God raising Jesus from the dead as proof of his coming judgment (Acts 17:31). But this is not sufficient evidence to draw the conclusion that Paul did not use the word in his missionary preaching, simply that the word cannot be part of the reconstruction of it in this study. In Paul’s letters the word is used to tell believers about how God saved them through their hearing of the gospel. Paul never asserts that this was part of the missionary message, even though he clearly thinks God is powerfully at work when missionary preaching is occurring.

The fact that “power”, “cross”, “Christ” and “mystery” are all words which Paul uses in his teaching for believers will help us answer our second question about what sort of preaching Paul is referring to in these chapters. Many scholars argue that there are elements of Paul’s missionary preaching revealed in these chapter, particularly 1 Cor. 2:2. In his reconstruction of Paul’s missionary methods, other than Acts, Allan only uses 2:2 and 1 Thessalonians.⁵⁴ Likewise, Dunn says that 1:23 and 2:2 are “evangelistic preaching”.⁵⁵ Stanton includes 1 Cor. 1-2 as evangelistic⁵⁶ as does Schnabel although he clarifies that is “missionary proclamation”

⁵⁴ Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*, 62 and 68.

⁵⁵ Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 574-577.

⁵⁶ Stanton, *Paul's Gospel*, 176-177.

to “Jewish audiences”.⁵⁷ Bruce says that 2:2 is evangelistic but situational.⁵⁸ But does 1 Cor. 1-2 show us missionary preaching content?

Even if (and it likely is true) the references in 1 Corinthians 1-2 point us towards “the communication of Jesus tradition” as being “the subtext of these references”⁵⁹ as we have seen in our examination of these passages, they point to teaching for believers, not references to missionary preaching, although missionary themes and memories are probably in the background thought of both Paul and the Corinthian believers. The symbolic uses of “cross” in Paul along with “mystery” and “Christ” points to the conclusion that there is very little, maybe even nothing, we can take from these chapters to reconstruct Paul’s missionary preaching. In 2:2, the verse which many scholars refer to as missionary preaching, the phrase “Jesus Christ and him crucified” with its deep symbolic undertones points us rather to teaching for believers, albeit foundational and gospel teaching. The fact that the cross and Christ crucified are “a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles” (1:23) is more evidence that these are beliefs held onto by believers, not missionary preaching. It seems mostly likely that Paul is telling the Corinthians to hold onto the story of the crucified Christ *despite* the world which scorns such a suggestion. This brings us to the very important passage in chapter 15.

⁵⁷ Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1380-1385.

⁵⁸ He argues for it being situational because he views both Acts 17 and 1 Thess. 9-10 as also be evangelistic. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 243-247.

⁵⁹ Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 575.

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

A Creed in an Epistle

When Davies wrote on Paul's missionary message he said that 1 Cor. 15:1-8 is the "clearest statement of the gospel".⁶⁰ Likewise Dodd calls it the "*locus classicus*" of Paul's gospel.⁶¹ The passage is certainly the most closely examined in relation to Paul's gospel. But did the creed originate with Paul? Most scholars argue that the creed contained from v3b to v5 (a and/or b, most likely the whole verse, or as Conzelmann says, v3-8⁶²) is an earlier tradition, possibly even the earliest articulation of the gospel.⁶³ This is often used to argue for the theory of a set kerygmatic formula in missionary preaching.⁶⁴

Arguments for this theory are that Paul does not elsewhere use this language to speak of the death or resurrection of Christ.⁶⁵ The patterned arrangement of the phrases (examined below) makes it easy to memorise or recall the content and suggest that Paul might be drawing on familiar and early material. Bruce says the use of παραδίδωμι and παραλαμβάνω "implies that the outline of the Christian message which follows was imparted to him by others".⁶⁶ This theory is complicated by the change in tense of one verb in particular. The creed is centred on four verbs (see below), three of which are aorist indicatives but the difficulty is the perfect tense of ἐγγίγερται (v4). It is not just that one of the four verbs is perfect but is exaggerated by the fact that the resurrection is Paul's key topic in this chapter

⁶⁰ Davies, 'Paul's Missionary Message', 207. So also Wright. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 518, note 157.

⁶¹ Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, 13.

⁶² Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Hermeneia- A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 251.

⁶³ For the possibilities see: Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible; New Haven: Yale, 2008), 540-544. Fee says v3b-5 is the "very early Christian creed". Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 722.

⁶⁴ See, for example: Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, 88; Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, 13; Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 80; Stewart, *A Faith To Proclaim*, 14; Mounce, *The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching*, 93; Conzelmann, *An outline of the Theology of the New Testament*, 64; McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited*, 61.

⁶⁵ Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1985), 201.

⁶⁶ F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (New century Bible; London: Oliphants, 1971), 138.

and verbal aspect theory would suggest that he is using the perfect specifically to place emphasis on this verb.⁶⁷ Fee notes that Paul uses the perfect passive “implying that he was both raised and still lives” and that “the perfect is repeated throughout the chapter when referring to Christ (vv. 12, 13, 14, 16, 17 and 20)”.⁶⁸ The fact that Jesus’ resurrection was *passive*, in the sense that he was raised by God, is emphasised at the start of the chapter so that Paul can shape the rest of the chapter around that fact.⁶⁹

Therefore, it would be best to understand this passage primarily as “traditional pre-Pauline creedal material that would have been familiar to the Corinthians and other early Christians” while leaving open the possibility that Paul modified this in some small way.⁷⁰ It may be that the emphasis on the resurrection with the perfect tense was in the original creed and hence Paul constructs chapter 15 around that fact. Or it may be that the perfect tense was inserted by Paul for the sake of the chapter and his present point.⁷¹ If the second were the case it would be likely that Paul modified a verb that was already present. So a likely possibility

⁶⁷ Contra Wright who says Paul does not “modify” this “formula which he tells the Corinthians is traditional”. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 518. The argument for modification might not be dissimilar to what Dunn contends for in Romans 1:3-4 that in that creed Paul has “framed” the earlier creed and would “expect his handiwork to be noticed”. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 23. On the perfect tense Campbell concludes that “the perfect is able to handle both stative and transitive verbs, by either focusing and/or intensifying verbal occurrences, or by viewing them as prominent”. Constantine R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative: Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament* ed. D. A. Carson (Studies in Biblical Greek, 13; New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 210. See also Constantine R. Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect in Biblical Greek* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008a), 209-210. Rosner and Ciampa also note this point. Ciampa, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 748. Wenham links the content of this creed with the context of the chapter. Wenham and Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (Great Britain). *Paul and Jesus : the true story*, 174.

⁶⁸ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 726 and 726, note 64.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 726, note 64.

⁷⁰ Ciampa, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 746.

⁷¹ Conzelmann notes the different verbs (see below) but says the perfect verb form “is the original statement of the creed, which can stand on its own”. The perfect “donates the aftereffect”. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 255-256 and 256 note 67. Bruce suggests that the perfect is used “perhaps indicating that, having been raised from death by God, he is alive for evermore”. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 139.

might be to suggest that in the original creed ἐγείρω may have been also an aorist indicative, possibly active but more likely passive.⁷²

First we will examine the content of this creed and then second how this creed relates to Paul's missionary preaching.

The Content of the Creed

The credal section contains four key historical (and theological) assertions centred on four verbs:⁷³

ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφάς
That Christ died (aor. act. ind.) for our sins according to the Scriptures

καὶ ὅτι ἐτάφη
That he was buried (aor. pass. ind.)

καὶ ὅτι ἐγύγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς
That he was raised (perf. pass. ind.) on the third day according to the Scriptures

καὶ ὅτι ὤφθη Κηφᾶ εἶτα τοῖς δώδεκα.
That he appeared (aor. pass. ind.) to Cephas and then to the Twelve

However, the verbs “do not have equal weight”.⁷⁴ The supporting phrase “κατὰ τὰς γραφάς” only appears twice as Scriptural evidence in support of the statements in the creed. The two verbs not having this support, raised and appeared, seem to be functioning as support or evidence phrases. That is, that “Christ died for our sins” is supported by both the Scriptures and the fact that he was buried. Similarly, that he “rose on the third day” is supported by

⁷² So Thiselton, who follows Dahl and notes the “passive force” of the verb. Thiselton also has a good summary of the passive use of “raise”. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1193-4. M. E. Dahl, *The Resurrection of the Body* (London: SCM, 1962), 96-100.

⁷³ Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 138.

⁷⁴ Hans Conzelmann, 'On the Analysis of the Confessional Formula in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5', *Interpretation*, 20/Jan (1966), 15-25, 21.

both the Scriptures and the fact that he appeared to both Peter and the twelve. This helps draw attention to the two most important statements⁷⁵ in the creed:

1. Primary statement: That Christ died for our sins
 - a. Scriptural attestation: According to the Scriptures
 - b. Historical evidence: And that he was buried

2. Primary statement: That He was raised on the third day
 - a. Scriptural attestation: According to the Scriptures
 - b. Historical evidence: He appeared to Cephas and then the Twelve

The creed itself offers only one theological implication from these four historical statements: That the death of Christ was for “our sins”.⁷⁶ Paul will spend the rest of the chapter explaining the theological and eschatological implications of the resurrection. That raises the question then of how the second primary statement functions in the creed. If this is the creed that saves (δι’ οὗ καὶ σωζέσθαι) the Corinthians (v2), it makes sense that the intention of the death of Christ be made clear. But how does the resurrection contribute to the saving aspect of the gospel?

There are two options in terms of the creed’s self-understanding. The first is that the theological implications of the resurrection are implicit. That Christ was raised and is now Lord and returning judge is assumed knowledge in the listener. This possibility could be dismissed lightly on the grounds that the hearer would not know that fact prior to hearing the gospel. But this first option would hold more weight if the creed was understood as a

⁷⁵ “For Paul the heart of the good news is the story of Jesus and His suffering, death and resurrection.” Friedrich, *euaggelizomai, euaggelion, proeuaggelizomai, euaggelistes*, 730.

⁷⁶ Stuhlmacher says that sin in the plural is pre-Pauline and Paul prefers sin in the singular (in the context of arguing whether “righteousness of God” is Pauline or Pre-Pauline). That is noteworthy here because it suggests Paul is drawing on earlier material and if he did modify it, that word would probably not have been. Quoted in Hultgren. Hultgren, *Paul's Gospel and Mission: The Outlook from his Letter to the Romans*, 21. Peter Stuhlmacher, *Gerechtigkeit Gottes bei Paulus* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 74-75.

memory jogger for the one who has already taken their stand on the gospel. We will return to this in the next section.

The second possibility is that the resurrection of Christ participates somehow in the nature of His death being “for us”. That is to say, the fact that Jesus rose contributes somehow to the fact that his death (and resurrection) were ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν. At this point it is probably sufficient to say that the internal evidence in the creed does not suggest either option more than the other. However, if the creed is indeed for already-believing Christians (as creeds normally are) then the first option would make more sense.

The use of Χριστός in verse 3 requires analysis since it is an important word in 1 Corinthians and in the other key passages examined in this study (in the primary material) Paul prefers the word “Son”.⁷⁷ Consistently throughout the epistle Paul has a titular use for Christos.⁷⁸ Paul uses Χριστός and Κύριος almost the same number of times in 1 Corinthians (63 and 65 consecutively) but it is noteworthy that in chapters 1 and 15 he chooses Χριστός over Κύριος.⁷⁹ In both cases he is speaking of the saving work of Christ. Every time Paul mentions the cross of Christ in 1 Corinthians he uses Χριστός and all but once (1 Cor. 6:14) when speaking

⁷⁷ Rom. 1:3, Gal. 1:16, 1 Thess. 1:10 but note Χριστὸς in Eph. 3:8

⁷⁸ So Marshall, Bruce and Wright. I. Howard Marshall, *The Origins of New Testament Christology* (Updated edn.; Leicester: Apollos, 1990), 91-93. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, 421. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, 43. Note, however, that in his most recent work Wright nuances this following the work of Novenson. “Christos is in fact neither a proper name (with denotation but no necessary connotation) nor a ‘title’ as such (with connotation but flexible denotation, as when ‘the King of Spain’ goes on meaning the same thing when on king dies and another succeeds him). It is, rather, an *honorific*, which shares some features of a ‘title’ but works differently”. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 824. Matthew V. Novenson, *Christ Among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* (New York. Oxford: Oxford, 2012) Hengel partly agrees but is very keen to avoid oversimplification: “The amazingly many-sided use of ‘Christos’ in Paul, the most frequent name of Jesus in his letters, is no coincidence nor thoughtless convention, no mere assimilation to Gentile-Christian terminology. On the other hand, it makes little sense to seek to discover in Paul the use of the name as a title.” Martin Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity* (London: Xpress Reprints, 1997a), 76. There is further disagreement in the broader debate of how “Christ” functions in 1 Corinthians and Paul. For further investigation see: Ferdinand Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity* (London: Lutterworth, 1969), 168-172. C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1977), 56. Reginald H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology* (London: Lutterworth, 1965), 198. Johannes Weiss, *Earliest Christianity: A History of the Period A.D. 30-150* (Harper torchbooks; New York: Harper, 1959), 457.

⁷⁹ Particularly noting 1 Cor. 1:17, 23, 15:3 and the extended use of the word in v12-23.

of the Resurrection. The use in 1 Cor. 15:3 is completely consistent with his use in the book. When Paul speaks of the *Christ*, he wants to recall his death and resurrection, which is what he explicitly does in 1 Cor. 15:3-5. The title is intended to recall the messianic fulfilment in the death and resurrection of Christ, not as a substitute for the entire story of Jesus' life.⁸⁰ Notice that it is for this reason that we can view "the cross of Christ" and "Christ crucified" as synonymous in meaning even if each is designed to recall slightly different symbolism (see above in 1 Cor. 1-4).

The Creed and Paul's Missionary Preaching

As we saw above, many have argued that this creed reveals the earliest missionary preaching, and certainly that of Paul. "In effect, he is repeating what he has already proclaimed to them when he first evangelized Corinth."⁸¹ In support of this is the language introducing the creed. Paul begins this section with a clear indication that he is now moving to something new and important. He starts with: Γνωρίζω δὲ ὑμῖν ἀδελφοί (v1). Most translate γνωρίζω as "remind"⁸² but the word probably has more force.⁸³ Paul's preferred choice for reminding is one of the - μιμνήσκω words which is used in a more straightforward sense of reminder.⁸⁴ But Paul's relatively common use of γνωρίζω nearly always has the sense of revelation of information.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ So Hengel who writes: "The use of 'Christos' basically embraces the whole saving event" where what is central is "the representative death and the resurrection of Jesus". Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity*, 70.

⁸¹ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 540. Wright says 1 Cor. 15:3-8 is what Paul "announced" when "Paul arrived in...Corinth". Wright, *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul, 1978-2013*, 220.

⁸² So NIV, ESV, RSV and others. But note CSB: "clarify".

⁸³ So Thiselton. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1183. C.R 1 Cor. 12:1 and see: D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 26. Robertson and Plummer say "there is a gentle reproach in the word". Archibald Robertson, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1911), 331. Barrett says that the context "here is somewhat embarrassed- Paul is reminding the Corinthians of what they ought never to have forgotten". Nevertheless, Barrett still goes with the softer translation of "I draw to your attention". Barrett, *A commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 335.

⁸⁴ ἐπαναμιμνήσκω in Rom. 15:15. ἀναμιμνήσκω in 1 Cor. 4:17 and 2 Cor. 7:15, Cf. 2 Tim. 1:6. Also compare ὑπομιμνήσκω in 2 Tim. 2:14 and Tit. 3:1.

⁸⁵ See: Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 203. Γνωρίζω is used in Rom. 9:22-23, 16:26, 1 Cor. 12:3, 15:1, 2 Cor. 8:1, Gal. 1:11, Phil. 1:22, 4:6, Col. 1:27, 4:7 and 9. Cf. Eph. 1:9, 3:3, 5, 10, 6:19 and 21.

BDAG notes that although 1 Cor.15:1 seems to be dealing with “something already known... γ. is nevertheless correctly used because of the instruction, which evidently introduces someth. new”.⁸⁶

The fact that this creed is not new “news” to the Corinthians is supported by the three remaining verbs in verse 1. Both εὐηγγελισάμην (verse 1 and 2) and παρελάβετε are aorist and are most simply understood as past tense preaching and receiving. Similarly, the perfect ἐστήκατε reflects a stance that the Corinthians have made in the past but which continues in the present (see below). The object of the preaching of the gospel is to generate faith and in verse 2 ἐπιστεύσατε is also remembering something that happened in the past (and no doubt continues into the present).

The combination of the two aorist verbs παραδίδωμι and παραλαμβάνω in verse 3 also suggest that the material that follows has been transmitted by Paul in the past. As we saw above, these two words are “rabbi-to-disciple language”⁸⁷ used “in Judaism for the oral transmission of religious instruction”.⁸⁸ These words all suggest that the creed is well known by the Corinthian readers. But the question remains, was this Paul’s *missionary* message in Corinth?

Again supporting this view is the *gospel* language that Paul employs. Twice he uses the verb εὐαγγελίζω (v1-2) and once the related noun, as the subject of the verb: τὸ εὐαγγέλιον δ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν (v1). As we saw earlier (in the section on words), Paul will always use both the noun and verb to refer to his central or core *gospel* and when proclaimed to unbelievers this is “news”. Both the verb and the noun do not always refer to the evangelistic preaching or message. They often do, but they can also refer to the central message that a

⁸⁶ Ibid., 203.

⁸⁷ Barnett, *1 Corinthians: Holiness and Hope of a Rescued People*, 214.

⁸⁸ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 499.

Christian believes and understands. So the use of the εὐαγγέλ- words here might refer to the missionary message of Paul in Corinth or it might refer to the central message that the Corinthians were grounded in when or after they believed.⁸⁹ Either way, the words indicate that this is certainly “gospel”.

If we move to the end of the section we also find language that could be either initial missionary preaching or ongoing gospelling of the believer. In 15:11 Paul says this message is both what he preaches and what they believed (κηρύσσομεν καὶ οὕτως ἐπιστεύσατε). This message is in fact τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν (15:14), which no doubt refers back to the content of v3-5.⁹⁰ As we saw above all three words (κήρυγμα, κηρύσσω and πιστεύω) are used to refer to the gospel preaching of Paul and the right response. But we saw that all three words can be used in both initial and reminder contexts for the gospel.

There are however two words which might suggest that the gospel context here is not one of a reminder about what message the Corinthians heard as unbelievers but rather a reminder of the central and core truths of Christianity which the Corinthians are to be committed to. The first in verse 1 (mentioned above) is ἵστημι – to stand.⁹¹ The verb is a perfect active indicative with present force (ἑστήκατε) and describes the response of the Corinthians to the gospel which they received. Some translations speak of the *standing* as an event that happened in the

⁸⁹ For those who believe in one fixed kerygma (see the Literature Review above) this point is lost because they do not see the difference, or more to the point, they see that there is no difference (or perspective or change in depth) between the message preached to unbelievers and the message which Christians hold as central. This is the fault of the early arguments but is still widely believed today. Similarly, those who promote kerygmata have to move beyond the biblical language that there is one gospel/kerygma, even though their general conclusions might not be that far from the ones in this thesis. The purpose of this thesis is to agree that there is one gospel/kerygma but that the expression of that changes with context. So with unbelievers, the evidence would suggest that Paul preached the gospel in way that would most potently bring people to repentance and faith, but without compromising the truth of the message he presented. But with believers, the message became less (or non) negotiable and centred on the death and resurrection of Christ.

⁹⁰ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 701.

⁹¹ It is really an oversimplification of the semantic range of the verb to say it means simply “to stand” but it is suitable in this context. See: Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 483.

past but with a sense that carries into the present (NIV, HCSB, Phillips and NEB) while others prefer to refer to it as an ongoing present action (ESV, KJV, TEV, RSV). The sense is probably a combination of the two which makes it difficult to translate. It gathers the obvious initial commitment which Paul is reminding them of, but shows why he needs to remind them of it – because it continues in the present. Thiselton prefers “have taken your stand” to “took their stand” because it “indicates *present* stability on the basis of past action as well as present state” (italics in original).⁹² Ciampa and Rosner say that the present is used “referring to their current stance and status”.⁹³

The second action from the Corinthians is that they are to “hold fast” (κατέχω, 15:2) to the gospel (λόγος).⁹⁴ Their salvation (σώζω) is conditional (εἰ)⁹⁵ on them doing this. The present active indicative indicates that this should be an ongoing activity throughout the life of the believer but it does not separate it from the original profession of faith. The meaning here is the same as that of Rom. 1:16 where the gospel is for the salvation of those who believe through both initial reception and life-long commitment to it.

If we now examine verse 3a along with these two introductory verses, we see that the gospel message here is referring to the central body of information that the Corinthians were taught when they first believed and not necessarily missionary preaching. Paul says twice, in verse 1 and verse 3, that this message was “received” (παραλαμβάνω). In verse 3 it was Paul who received this message and in verse 1 it was the Corinthians who received it. He also says in verse 3 that he handed down (παραδίδωμι) this message to the Corinthians. We saw above that these two words are very important in the transmission of a body of information so that

⁹²Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1185.

⁹³ Ciampa, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 743, note 31.

⁹⁴ See the word study above. So Ciampa and Rosner. *Ibid.*, 744.

⁹⁵ Fee: “Provided”. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 721.

the tradition would be safeguarded. Given that the only other occurrence of the two words together refers to the handing on of the Lord's Supper tradition (1 Cor. 11:23), it would be reasonable to assume that the message Paul then recounts is a format designed for believers to commit to, or in the language Paul himself employs, to grasp and to stand in.

If we move to the internal content of the creed there is not clear evidence as to whether this creed is *evangelistic*. However, if we compare the content of 1 Thess. 1:9-10 (and the similarities with how the Pauline tradition portrays Paul's evangelistic preaching in Acts 14 and 17) then it is worth raising some questions that could be examined more closely in a different context. If this is a recalling of Paul's missionary preaching to Gentiles in Corinth then why does Paul in his missionary preaching refer to the Scriptures twice as the key authority to these events? Also, why does the phrase "for our sins" appear when the effective substitutionary nature of the cross is never elsewhere affirmed to unbelievers in Paul (primary or secondary) or the Pauline tradition (Acts)?⁹⁶ While there is not space to answer these questions here, both options make sense if Paul is indeed repeating the central content that he emphasised to Gentile believers *after* they believed. In comparing this to the themes we already raised in 1 Thess. 1:9-10 (and the similarity with the Acts 17 speech) Barnett concludes "that the I Corinthians 15 message, and the Lord's Supper teaching and other teaching was 'handed over' at an appropriate stage, and not necessarily at the same stage, in the emerging congregational life of those who had been challenged by the call to repent from Idolatry".⁹⁷ This suggestion is plausible and would suggest that the "remind" language is not

⁹⁶ Wright contends that this phrase along with others "Points to a strongly implicit 'back story'", the back story being the "implicit narrative" which "is an account of the achievement of the *Messiah*" (italics in original). Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 518.

⁹⁷ Barnett, *Paul's Preaching Reconsidered*, 64.

of a message preached while they were unbelievers, but rather material taught to a new believer as of primary importance.

Lastly, as we noted at the beginning of this section, most scholars agree that the body of material in v3b-5 as a “creed” which has non-Pauline origins. Many scholars use that fact as an argument to suggest that Paul’s missionary message would have been this Christian creed. However, a body of material designed to summarise core beliefs into a compact phrase for easy memorisation would suggest that this creed is in fact designed for believers, not unbelievers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we understand that the creed contained in v3b-5 is the message that Paul’s converts are to hold onto as the non-negotiable central body of information. This gospel is historically centred on the death and resurrection of Christ and theologically hinged on the fact that Christ’s death was “for us”. This conclusion is reached because the language Paul uses to introduce and conclude this creed reflects the grounding in central truth of Paul’s gospel. While the *εὐαγγελ*- words can refer to speaking to either unbelievers or believers (the gospel), the *παραλαμβάνω/παραδίδωμι* language is used for the handing down of tradition from teacher to disciple. This being taken with the fact that the death of Christ was “for us” who say the creed, we conclude, as we did in 1 Corinthians 1-4 that this creed was not a recounting of Paul’s missionary message in Corinth.⁹⁸ **This creed is best understood as a compact summary of core beliefs which all believers, especially including new believers, would be taught once they had positively responded to the missionary message.**

⁹⁸ What we have here is “an early *creed which declares the absolute fundamentals of Christian faith and on which Christian identity (and the experience of salvation) is built*”. Italics in original. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1186.

Galatians 1:11-17

Galatians 1:11-17 is one of two passages highlighted by O'Brien to uncover Paul's missionary message.⁹⁹ O'Brien focusses on verse 16 where Paul tells of God's revelation of his Son (τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ) to him and of Paul's response, that he might εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. O'Brien says that this is "Paul's missionary commission" but he notes the connections with both Abraham (C.f. προεὐαγγελίζομαι in 3:8) and that Paul "is continuing the important salvation historical work of the servant figure of Isaiah 40-55".¹⁰⁰

The use of the word "Son" by Paul in verse 16 does not help us narrow the answer any further. Hengel and Schwemer note that in Acts 9:20 the writer has Paul proclaiming Jesus in the synagogue as "The Son of God" and they ask: "Is it mere coincidence that in Acts 9.20 as in Gal. 1.16, the messianic title 'Son of God' appears, a title which is not very frequent in Luke and Paul – and which for Acts is very pointed?"¹⁰¹ It is true that in Acts the author has Paul intentionally employing different language in different situations.¹⁰² But when we look at Paul's Epistles we see that he will use the word "Son" broadly but "Son of God" rarely.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ The other is Ephesians 3:1-13. O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis*, 2-21.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 11-12. So also Riesner who cites other supporting studies. Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology*, 236. Also McRay. John McRay, *Paul: His Life and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 55. Hultgren notes the similarities also with Jeremiah 1.5 and the call of the prophet there. Hultgren, *Paul's Gospel and Mission: The Outlook from his Letter to the Romans*, 129.

¹⁰¹ Hengel, *Paul Between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years*, 46.

¹⁰² The author of Acts portrays a Paul who only ever teaches Jews (not Gentiles) that Jesus is the Son of God (Acts 9:20). Likewise the Paul of Acts exclusively teaches Jews the messianic truth that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 9:22, 17:2-3), about the connection between Jesus and the Old Testament (Acts 28:23) and that the Christ had to suffer (Acts 17:2). We note however the Χριστός language that Luke employs in Acts 20:21, 24:24 and 28:31 but this does not necessitate messianic teaching on the part of Paul on these occasions). We also note that according to these summaries in Acts we have no record of Paul either proclaiming the death of Christ to Gentiles or ever teaching atonement to either group (Why 'the Christ had to suffer' may well imply atonement. However, it is clearly noted that it is at best implicit. We also note that in Acts 25:19 Jesus 'was dead'. however, this is best interpreted as an affirmation of the reality of his resurrection, in that Christ was really *dead*, rather than a statement concerning his *death*). When the Paul of Acts proclaimed the gospel to Gentiles he proclaimed monotheism and hence the problem with idolatry (Acts 14:15, 19:26). We see, therefore, that Acts reveals that different elements are being emphasised to Jews than to Gentiles.

¹⁰³ Hengel argues that less use of "Son of God" in Paul means that when he does use the phrase he is emphasising importance. Martin Hengel, *The Son of God: The Origin of Christology and the History of Jewish-Hellenistic Religion* (London: S.C.M., 1976), 59-66. For a deeper examination of what Paul means theologically by the term in his epistles (especially the messianic undertones) see Wright. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 690-701.

Especially worth noting in this context is that Paul uses the word both in gospel summaries that are very messianic in tone (Rom 1:3-4) and in Gentile oriented summaries (1 Thess. 1:10).

The focus of Galatians 1 is on Paul and the gospel he preaches. Writing in a polemical situation against those who are preaching “another gospel” (v6), Paul argues passionately that there is only one gospel (v9) and that anyone who preaches another gospel should be *ἀνάθεμα*! This one true gospel comes from God himself (v11 and 15) and has been entrusted to Paul. Paul goes on to argue in chapter 2 that this is the one same gospel that belonged to the other apostles (see esp. 2:2) and that disagreements over circumcision and the like need to conform to this true gospel.¹⁰⁴ In chapter 1 we have then Paul speaking of *both* his gospel preaching to unbelievers which is connected to his Damascus Road conversion and his gospel grounding for believers, especially in the context of false gospels and their threat. But is verse 16 speaking more narrowly of the gospel and the intended audience for “his Son”?

The context of this gosselling of “his Son” makes most sense if it is understood as a broad summary of all Paul’s gospel preaching. That is, whilst still focussing on the core message of the gospel, “his Son” is a bare-bones summary of the gospel as presented to both believer and unbeliever, Jew and Gentile alike.¹⁰⁵ Paul had “a specific call of bringing the gospel to the Gentiles” and that “bringing” in this verse would include the grounding in the gospel after

¹⁰⁴ Contra Dunn who on argues that both Paul and James would have been unhappy with each other’s ‘kerygma’ as presented in the NT documents. Dunn, *Unity And Diversity In The New Testament: An Inquiry Into The Character of Earliest Christianity*, 27. Hengel and Schwemer argue from 1 Cor. 15:11 that there must have been “real ‘agreement’” between Paul’s gospel and that of the other apostles. Hengel, *Paul Between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years*, 44.

¹⁰⁵ Contra Riesner who understands this as only “missionary”. Riesner, *Paul’s Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology*, 235, 236 and 262. Rather than “missionary” we prefer the slightly broader language of Schreiner says Paul’s “distinctive mission was to preach the gospel to the Gentiles”. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ: a Pauline Theology*, 236.

conversion.¹⁰⁶ That is why the message Paul heard, received and proclaimed (to both believer and unbeliever) can be captured by the simple phrase “his Son”.

But to call it “bare-bones” is not to say that the phrase is not profound. From the two words in this context a multitude of rich gospel themes through salvation history are uncovered as O’Brien pointed out above. To proclaim “his Son” may manifest itself in a monotheistic call from idols to respond (turn, wait, serve) for this risen Son who is returning in judgment.

That is exactly what we reconstructed as Paul’s evangelistic message in 1 Thess. 1:9-10.

Similarly, in 1 Corinthians, to proclaim “his Son” may be a rich reminder to believers of “the mystery of God” which is quite simply “Jesus Christ and him crucified”.¹⁰⁷ That crucified and risen Christ is the centre of the gospel on which believers are to “take their stand” and “hold fast” to.¹⁰⁸ Likewise in Romans the gospel is about “his Son” who is there identified as “Jesus Christ our Lord”.¹⁰⁹

Romans

Introduction

Writing in the Spring of AD57 at the house of Gaius in Corinth, Paul constructs what will be his most profound and influential work.¹¹⁰ We examine this with a slightly different approach to the previous texts. While we do have a clear gospel summary in Rom. 1:3-4, we also need to briefly address the claim that the book of Romans is partly or wholly *gospel*.¹¹¹ First, we will look at the content in Rom. 1:3-4 placed in the context of the introduction to the epistle

¹⁰⁶ Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: a Pauline Theology*, 49-50.

¹⁰⁷ 1 Cor. 2:1-2. See footnote above in word studies on the textual variant in 1 Cor. 2:1.

¹⁰⁸ 1 Cor. 15:1-2.

¹⁰⁹ Rom. 1:3-4.

¹¹⁰ Rom. 16:1-2, 23 and Cf. Acts 20:2.

¹¹¹ See below under “Is Romans Paul’s ‘gospel’?” for references.

(Rom. 1:1-17). Then we will move to the broader question of whether Romans is itself an expression of the *gospel*, whether it be all, part or implications that follow from, the gospel.

Romans 1:1-7

Introduction

This introduction to the most famous Epistle in the Pauline corpus serves not only to give a credal summary of the gospel but also to spell out its importance to Paul and the believers in Rome. Paul had not yet visited Rome, at least since his conversion, but most likely he had never been since there would be little call for a young Pharisee from Tarsus to travel to the empire's capital. So in writing a letter to believers he has not yet visited¹¹² (although he certainly knew many personally),¹¹³ the apostle provides insight to his gospel and how it relates to himself and his hearers.

The content of the gospel (v3-4)

Friedrich says that Rom. 1:3-4 is the “most explicit” summary of the “evangelical message”.¹¹⁴ Many scholars claim that v3-4 are a confessional or kerygmatic style formula, so the unique content of the two verses warrant an examination of that question. Dodd says that “this is scarcely a statement of Paul’s own theology”¹¹⁵ and “therefore falls short of what Paul would regard as an adequate doctrine of the Person of Christ”.¹¹⁶ Stuhlmacher says that “Paul is taking up a tradition” in these verses since vv3-4 “create a parallelism like those we often encounter in the Psalms or in the wisdom poetry of the Old Testament” and since the

¹¹² Rom. 1:13.

¹¹³ Rom. 16:3-15.

¹¹⁴ Friedrich, *euaggelizomai, euaggelion, proeuaggelizomai, euaggelistes*, 730.

¹¹⁵ C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (Moffatt New Testament Commentary; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1932), 4.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 5.

language is unique in Paul.¹¹⁷ Dunn argues that “Paul had taken pains to quote a formulation first coined by the Palestinian churches” and he also adds that Paul has “framed” the creed with “concerning his Son” and “Jesus Christ our Lord” since “Paul would presumably expect his handiwork to be noticed”.¹¹⁸

However, Moo questions whether this can be regarded as a tradition at all and says that “it is not clear that he is quoting a set creed or hymn”.¹¹⁹ Similarly Poythress closely examines the arguments for the tradition and says that while it is possible that it is tradition, it is also a “live possibility” that it “is a free composition using a number of traditional expressions and ideas”.¹²⁰ That is certainly feasible since Paul would have been well versed in the Psalms and poetry of the Old Testament and if he were to compose a poetic Hebrew-style gospel summary then where better than the start of an Epistle like Romans.¹²¹ Whatever can account for the origin of this summary, Paul is here affirming the gospel that he has been set apart for (Rom. 1:1) and, hence, “whatever Paul quotes, he himself affirms”.¹²²

¹¹⁷Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, 18. So Barnett, Cranfield, Cullmann, Bultmann and Käsemann, to name a few. Barnett, *Romans*, 26. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 57. Oscar Cullmann, *The Earliest Christian Confessions* (London: Lutterworth, 1949), 55. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 49. Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 10-13.

¹¹⁸ Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 22-23. Bruce agrees saying that “Paul has recast its wording so as to bring out certain necessary emphases”. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, 72. Osborne takes a similar view and says even if Paul has written this it is “a significant passage pointing back to early Christian tradition”. Osborne, *Romans*, 30, note 1:3-4.

¹¹⁹ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 45-46, note 31.

¹²⁰ V. S. Poythress, 'Is Romans 1:3-4 a Pauline Confession After All?', *The Expository Times*, 87/6 (1976), 180-83, 182.

¹²¹ Most strongly suggesting this is a Pauline construction is Wright. He argues on the basis that Messiahship most definitely would have been very Pauline in thought. Wright, *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul, 1978-2013*, 241. For the broader argument on Paul and Messiahship (including an extended section on Χριστός) see: Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, 18-55.

¹²² Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 46, note 31. Moo cites Wright's PhD also. N. T. Wright and University of Oxford. Faculty of Theology., 'The Messiah and the People of God: A Study in Pauline Theology with Particular Reference to the Argument of the Epistle to the Romans', Thesis (D Phil) (University of Oxford, 1981, 1980), 51-55. Stott remains undecided but says if it was a creed, “he now gives it his apostolic endorsement”. Stott, *The Message of Romans: God's Good News for the World*, 49. So also Morris. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 43-44. Barrett seems to think the text being a formula is feasible but if so Paul “supplements” it. Barrett, *A commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 20.

The introduction to the summary “concerning his Son” (περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ) points to the chief subject or the “substance of the gospel” (C.f. Gal. 1:8 above).¹²³ As we move to the message of the verses we notice that there “are two lines in antithetic parallelism, in which the ‘flesh-spirit’ contrast of Paul’s salvation-historical framework appears”.¹²⁴ These give us “two affirmations about the Son of God”.¹²⁵ We can analyse the summary and notice the parallelism as follows:

Introduction to the subject

περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ (verse 3a)

“Concerning his Son”

Verse 3b¹²⁶

Verse 4a

τοῦ γενομένου

τοῦ ὀρισθέντος

“who was descended”

“who was appointed”

ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ

υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει

“from the seed of David”

“Son of God in power”

κατὰ σάρκα

κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης

“according to the flesh”

“according to the Spirit of holiness”

ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν

“from the resurrection of the dead”

Closing Summary (verse 4b)

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν

¹²³ Stott, *The Message of Romans: God's Good News for the World*, 49. Murray defends at length the claim that “in this instance the title refers to a relation which the Son sustains to the Father antecedently to and independently of his manifestation in the flesh”. Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: The English text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, 5.

¹²⁴ Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, 176. See also: Barrett, *A commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 18.

¹²⁵ Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, 176.

¹²⁶ This patterning based on Moo. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 45.

“Jesus Christ our Lord”

The two parallel verses first say that the gospel that this is about “his Son” and build a two pronged case that works towards the closing summary title “Jesus Christ our Lord”. Paul’s goal here is to present the person of Christ whose glory is attested by his works (particularly his death and resurrection) and the titles he is given. First, Paul affirms that the historical Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah.¹²⁷ He was from the seed of David in the flesh fulfilling the hope in the Scriptures of an heir of David who would be king forever (2 Sam. 7:12-16).¹²⁸ Luther says the point of this phrase is to show that “He emptied Himself and became a weak man”.¹²⁹ That is, the summary is saying that the Son is the “Christ”. As we saw above, Paul uses the term “Christ” in 1 Corinthians to focus on the crucified and risen Messiah.¹³⁰ So although the cross is maybe unexpectedly missing from this summary it may be that Paul intends the cross-centred mission of the Christ to be recalled in the minds of the readers. Paul’s intentional and focussed language points to the fact that the death and resurrection of Christ are effective because Jesus *is* the Messiah. This was the mission of the Messiah.

The second section of the summary builds a case for the affirmation that the Son is in fact “Christ” *and* “Lord”. Just as Jesus was descended from David, so now he has been “appointed” the “Son of God in power”. “Paul does not mean that Jesus *became* the Son of God by the resurrection, but that He who during His earthly ministry ‘was the Son of God in weakness and lowliness’ became by the resurrection ‘the Son of God in power’.”¹³¹ This is an

¹²⁷ Barnett, *Romans*, 27.

¹²⁸ Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, 176.

¹²⁹ Martin Luther, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. John Theodore Mueller (Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Kregel, 1954), 35. “Paul is asserting Jesus’ share in our common humanity.” Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1993), 234.

¹³⁰ See the section on 1 Cor. 15.

¹³¹ Emphasis in the original quotation from Bruce and Bruce in turn quotes Nygren (*ad loc.*). Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, 72. Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (London: SCM, 1952)

intentional and emphatic phrase from Paul with all the grandeur that it suggests (see above in the section on 1 Cor. 1-4 for Paul's use of "power"). Paul only uses the phrase "Son of God" three times¹³² in the primary epistles and once in the secondary.¹³³ But in none of the other occurrences does he speak so emphatically about the title with phrases such as "he was appointed" or "in power" (v4). This assertion of the magnitude of the identity of the Christ rests on the fact that this was "according to" or "through" the "Spirit of holiness" and "by (his) resurrection from the dead" (v10). Again, Paul is testifying to the importance of the person of Christ, not just his works. This creed serves to show the inseparable nature of the two in the gospel. The Risen One is indeed "Lord" (v4). Stott points out that the contrast here between flesh and spirit is not referring to the two natures of Christ but "to the two stages of his ministry, pre-resurrection and post-resurrection, the first frail and the second powerful through the outpoured Spirit".¹³⁴

These two prongs present both the human and the divine Son. Calvin points out that both are necessary in the gospel: "Two things must be found in Christ, in order that we may obtain salvation in him, even divinity and humanity... Hence, the Apostle has expressly mentioned both in the summary he gives of the gospel".¹³⁵ Stott says that both titles "Son of David" and "Son of God" are "universally recognised as messianic title[s]".¹³⁶ Stott goes on to say that the "two titles together speak, therefore, of his humanity and his deity".¹³⁷ So Paul concludes his summary with a complete understanding of his human and divine Son as "Jesus Christ our Lord" (C.f. Acts 2:36). Barth says "This is the Gospel and the meaning of

¹³² Rom. 1:4 (here), 2 Cor. 1:19 and Gal. 2:20.

¹³³ Eph. 4:13.

¹³⁴ Stott, *The Message of Romans: God's Good News for the World*, 50-51. So Murray who calls it the "historical progression in the messianic achievements of our Lord". Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: The English text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, 12.

¹³⁵ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003a), 44.

¹³⁶ Stott, *The Message of Romans: God's Good News for the World*, 49.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

history. In his name two worlds meet and go apart, two planes intersect, the one known and the other unknown.”¹³⁸

As we saw in 1 Cor. 15:3-5, this gospel summary rests on historical facts and events. The four historical touchstones of the gospel in 1 Cor. 15 were Christ’s death, burial, resurrection and appearances. In Romans 1:3-4 the two historical touchstones are that Jesus of Nazareth is descended from David and that he rose from the dead.

Conclusions on 1:3-4

In Romans 1:3-4 we no doubt have a summary of the gospel. In our examination of the *credal* nature of these verses we saw that it was inconclusive as to whether Paul was quoting something earlier or if this was his own construction. What is quite clear about this summary is that unlike what we have in 1 Thess. 1:9-10 or 1 Cor. 15:3-5, Paul is not recalling some earlier preaching of the gospel that *he* did. He does not make the explicit link between this gospel summary and his own preaching (to either unbeliever or believer).

In these verses we again see that historical facts lie at the heart of Paul’s gospel and *drive* the theology. In this summary, the historical facts are that Jesus was descended from David and that he rose from the dead.

Is Romans Paul’s “gospel”?

Introduction

Luther said Romans is “the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest gospel”.¹³⁹

Robert Jewett says that the introduction to Romans “demonstrates that Romans should be

¹³⁸ Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 29.

¹³⁹ Luther, *Commentary on Romans*, xiii.

interpreted as a missionary document, not as an abstract, theological treatise”.¹⁴⁰ Ladd points out that unlike other letters which are “*ad hoc* correspondence”¹⁴¹ in Romans we have “the one letter that was not written to deal with a particular local need”.¹⁴² Ladd goes on to say that “it is the nearest thing we have to a balanced statement of his message. However, it is clearly not a complete outline, but only the core of his gospel.”¹⁴³ More recent scholarship, however, suggests that Romans is (at least in some way) occasional,¹⁴⁴ a suggestion that is supported by internal data in the epistle itself.¹⁴⁵ So in what way, if any, can we speak of Romans as Paul’s “gospel”?

Paul and the gospel in Romans

Before answering the question directly we should note what Paul is asserting concerning the gospel in the Epistle. First, while Paul’s activities extend beyond gospelling, the ministry of the gospel is his priority. In Rom. 1:1 Paul asserts that he is “set apart for (εἰς) the gospel”. This commission is inseparably linked with his self-understanding as an apostle and a servant of God. Morris says this was more than simply preaching the gospel. “It means to be a gospel man, to live the gospel.”¹⁴⁶ Paul is “not ashamed” of this gospel (Rom. 1:16). In fact, proclaiming it is a “priestly duty” (Rom. 15:16). Secondly, we note what the gospel can accomplish. It achieves “obedience” (ὕπακοή, Rom 1:5 and 16:26), “salvation” (σωτηρία, Rom. 1:16) through God’s “power” (δύναμις, Rom. 1:4 and 16),¹⁴⁷ a revelation (ἀποκαλύπτω)

¹⁴⁰ Robert Jewett, ‘Romans’, in James Dunn (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to St Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 2003), 91-104

¹⁴¹ Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 377.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 377.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 377.

¹⁴⁴ William S. Campbell, ‘The Romans Debate’, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, /10 (1981), 19-28 T. H. Tobin, *Paul’s Rhetoric in Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004)

¹⁴⁵ Without engaging with the debate here, there is material in Romans which shows Paul is writing in a *situation* to a particular audience where he no doubt shapes certain things that he writes for that audience. In that sense, even if only to a small degree, we can say that Romans is occasional. For example, see the specific references and content in: Rom. 1:7-15, 14:1-15:9, 15:14-16:23.

¹⁴⁶ Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 40.

¹⁴⁷ See section on 1 Corinthians 1-4 for Paul’s use of “power” in gospel contexts.

of the “righteousness of God” (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, Rom. 1:17), Gentiles becoming an “offering acceptable to God” (προσφορά and εὐπρόσδεκτος, Rom. 15:16),¹⁴⁸ “sanctification” (ἀγιάζω, Rom. 15:16), “establishment” (στηρίζω, Rom 16:25) and it brings about “belief/faith” (πιστεύω/πίστις, Rom. 1:16-17). Lastly we note Paul’s own connection with the gospel and his activities in relation to it. Interestingly, in Romans, Paul does not tell us what that actually involves beyond twice referring to the activity of “gospelling” itself (εὐαγγελίζω in Rom. 1:15 and 15:20).¹⁴⁹ But where the activity associated with the gospel is not spelled out, Paul does

¹⁴⁸ See Moo on the meaning of προσφορά and the offering which “is more likely to be the Gentiles themselves” (as a subjective genitive). Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 890 and 890, note 33.

¹⁴⁹ Romans 1:9, 15:16 and 15:19 seem to speak of gospel activity but lack a verb. Translations add them (for example NIV adds “preaching” and “proclaiming”) but we need to be careful for this study to note their absence. More controversially though NIV adds in the word “call” to describe Paul’s ministry in Rom. 1:5 where instead of a verb we have εἰς. The NIV translation reads: “Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name’s sake.” The relative pronoun οὗ refers to Christ Jesus in verse 1 who is then the subject in v3-4 (not to the gospel in v2). The translations get that right. The fact that Paul uses a plural “we” (Plural aorist of λαμβάνω) here is strange since no co-writer was identified in verse 1. Cranfield suggests that it is a “writer’s Plural” maybe to emphasise authority. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 65. Wallace calls this an Epistolary Plural. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament; with Scripture, Subject and Greek Word Indexes*, 394-395. Moo who calls it an “editorial” plural. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 51. It would seem strange that Paul here, where an economy of words is a premium, would say that he has received grace (ἐλάβομεν χάριν) from God in a general sense. It is best understood as a hendiadys that grace is referring to the receiving of his apostleship. It was given to him by grace, not by merit. So Cranfield & Bruce & Moo. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 65-66. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, 74. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 51. There is an (intentionally) missing verb explaining how what Paul has received relates to the nations. The NIV goes with “call”, probably because of apostleship, but it should only be chosen if Paul elsewhere refers to his evangelistic activity as “calling”. We will return to that question shortly. ESV and RSV go with “bring about” which is not bad since it is ambiguous. Cranfield simply says “For the purpose of bringing about” is the translation of εἰς here. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 66. Moo says εἰς here denotes purpose. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 51. As we can see, the interpretation of εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως is tricky. ESV and RSV translate with the simple ‘obedience of faith’ presumably meaning faith is in itself obedience, although they may be preserving the ambiguity. But NIV translates the phrase ‘the obedience that comes from faith’. The fact that the article is missing is interesting. The noun ὑπακοή is used 11 times by Paul (all in primary: Rom. 1:5, 5:19, 6:16, 15:18, 16:19, 26, 2 Co. 7:15, 10:5-6 and Phlm. 1:21) and the exact same phrase εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως occurs at the end of the book in 16:26. BDAG says that while Garlington’s “to promote obedience to the message of faith” is alright but prefers Parke-Taylor’s more general “with a view to (promoting) obedience which springs from faith” (quotes are from BDAG). Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 1028. Don Darlington, *The Obedience of Faith: A Pauline Phrase in Historical Context* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2009), G. H. Parke-Taylor, ‘A Note on εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως in Romans i.5 and xvi.26’, *ExpT*, 55 (1943-44), 305-06 Dunn says that the translation “most probably” can be “obedience which consists in or springs from faith” which is clever because it preserves two meanings. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 24. Wallace categorises this as a Genitive of Production. That is “The genitive substantive produces the noun to which it stands related.” Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament; with Scripture, Subject and Greek Word Indexes*, 104-106. “To bring about the obedience that is based on faith in Christ.” Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, 74. Davies argues that this is a genitive of origin saying that the obedience comes from faith. Glenn N. Davies, *Faith and Obedience in Romans: A Study in Romans 1-4* (Journal for the study of the New Testament. Supplement Series; Sheffield: JSOT, 1990), 26. “To have stated in 1.5 that faith was the act of obedience required by God of man, therefore, would have obscured the

tell us that he is “set apart” for the gospel (ἀφορίζω, Rom. 1:1), he is “eager” to gospel (πρόθυμος, Rom. 1:15, see more below), he “fulfils” the gospel (πληρώω, Rom. 15:19) and gospeling is his “ambition” (φιλοτιμέομαι, Rom 15:20).

Is Roman’s Paul’s gospel?

Barnett says “Romans, all of it, is Paul’s gospel.”¹⁵⁰ Likewise Dahl says that “Paul does in this letter what he had hoped to do in person: he preached the gospel to those in Rome”.¹⁵¹ Both Barnett and Dahl point to Rom. 1:15 where Paul says that he is (or was) eager (πρόθυμος) “to gospel you in Rome” (ὕμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελίσασθαι).¹⁵² Other scholars agree and also point to the similarities between chapters 1 and 16 and a possible inclusio.¹⁵³ Other scholars

distinction between the two, upon which the example of Abraham depends. This is not to say, however, that faith cannot be viewed as an obedient response to God (10.16), but that it is only one aspect of the obedience required by God (cf. 2.7-16, 25ff)". Ibid., 28. Cranfield argues against taking ἔθνεσιν in its "proper inclusive sense" and says that in context it makes most sense to translate "among all the Gentiles". Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 67. Bruce does not seem to think that it makes any difference and points out that the word could mean either. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, 74. Moo is very strongly pro-Gentile and has a long footnote arguing the point. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 53, note 76. This prompts the question (only suitable for a footnote in this study): Does Paul ever use “call” language to describe his own evangelistic activity? The adjective κλητός is used 7 times by Paul all in Romans and 1 Corinthians (Rom. 1:1, 6-7, 8:28, 1 Co. 1:1-2 and 24). Every time the word refers to the work of God, never of human evangelistic effort. The verb ἐπονομάζω is used only once in Paul in Romans 2:17 and that refers to what one calls oneself. The verb καλέω is the most common verb and appears in (primary and secondary) Paul 33 times (Rom. 4:17, 8:30, 9:7, 12, 24-26, 1 Co. 1:9, 7:15, 17-18, 20-22, 24, 10:27, 15:9, Gal. 1:6, 15, 5:8, 13, Eph. 4:1, 4, Col. 3:15, 1 Thess. 2:12, 4:7, 5:24, 2 Thess. 2:14, 1 Tim. 6:12 and 2 Tim. 1:9). 31 of these refer to God's work, mostly in terms of election but sometimes in what God might call someone (such as 'his people'). The other two occurrences are in 1 Cor. 10:27 referring to a dinner invitation and 1 Cor. 15:9 where Paul says that he is unworthy to be “called” an apostle. The verb ἐπικαλέω appears 6 times in (primary and secondary) Paul (Rom. 10:12-14 3 times, 1 Co. 1:2, 2 Co. 1:23 and 2 Tim. 2:22). Twice it refers to the work of God but the other 4 refer to people calling on God, either with a purpose (such as 2 Tim 2:22) or for salvation. One interesting example of the latter for this section is Romans 10:14 where Paul says someone can't call on the name of the Lord until someone has κηρύσσοντος them. The verb χρηματίζω only occurs in Paul in Rom 7:3 and there refers to what an adulterer is called. Another interesting verb is λεγω which can sometimes mean 'call'. In this sense it appears 4 times in Paul but never in relation to evangelistic activity. The noun κλήσις appears 9 times in Paul and all 9 refer to God's work (Rom. 11:29, 1 Co. 1:26, 7:20, Eph. 1:18, 4:1, 4, Phil. 3:14, 2 Thess. 1:11 and 2 Tim. 1:9). To answer our question, we can conclude that no-where does Paul refer to his evangelistic activity as 'calling'. To finish we can note an interesting verse, 2 Thess. 2:14, where Paul says that God is the one who does the calling through Paul's gospel.

¹⁵⁰ Paul Barnett, 'Why Paul Wrote Romans', *Reformed Theological Review*, 62/3 (/ 2003a), 139-51, 140. We will return to what Barnett means by this a little later but note that in the same year Barnett wrote a longer (albeit easily accessible) commentary on Romans where he argues that Paul expands his gospel “in the first part of the letter” but also wants to include the “building up” of believers as part of his definition. Barnett, *Romans*, 23, 37-41.

¹⁵¹ Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), 77.

¹⁵² Barnett says Paul “is coming to ‘proclaim the gospel to you,’ that is, to his Romans readers (1:15)”. Barnett, 'Why Paul Wrote Romans', 140.

¹⁵³ Don N. Jr. Howell, 'Mission in Paul's Epistles: Theological Bearings', in William J. Larkin and Joel F. Williams (eds.), *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1998a), 92-118, 93. Joel

think that a part of Romans contains the gospel (such as Rom. 1-3, 1-8 and possibly even 9-11).¹⁵⁴ Dodd goes so far as to suggest that Rom. 8:34 is part of the Jerusalem kerygma and suggests that it is possibly quoting 1 Cor. 15:3-5.¹⁵⁵ Davies (and others) also points to “natural revelation” in Rom. 1:18-32 and note the similarities with Acts 17:22-31.¹⁵⁶

The verse that requires most attention is Rom. 1:15: “That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome” (NIV). Stuhlmacher argues that verse 15 refers to a past desire: “In Greek the verse avoids a direct main verb and says only that at the time it was Paul’s intention to preach the gospel also in Rome (as the first one).”¹⁵⁷ Stuhlmacher argues for this because of the apparent contradiction with Rom. 15:20 where Paul desires not to gospel where Christ is not yet named (εὐαγγελίζεσθαι οὐχ ὅπου ὠνομάσθη Χριστός). “Rather, he desires with his letter and his personal visit to create clarity concerning the gospel”.¹⁵⁸

Dickson agrees and says that the pronoun in Rom. 1:15 (ὅμιν) “is general and retrospective”.¹⁵⁹ Morris goes further saying that the pronoun is best understood in connection with national identity rather than spiritual identity. Paul “writes to his readers as

F. Williams, 'Conclusion', *ibid.*, 239-48, 242. Davies, 'Paul's Missionary Message', 206-207. O'Brien says that “the ‘gospel’ is the *theme* of the letter” and “although the topics of ‘salvation’ and ‘justification by faith’ are often singled out and made the key to Paul’s epistle, both are subordinate to the gospel. Further, a topic as broad as ‘gospel’ is needed to include the various materials in the letter.” Emphasis in original. O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis*, 57. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 29, 32.

¹⁵⁴ Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 34 and 174. Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on The origin of Paul's Gospel*, 95. Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, 173-179. Munck sees Rom. 9-11 as missionary document but he does not necessarily mean that it is evangelistic. Johannes Munck, *Christ & Israel: An Interpretation of Romans 9-11* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967)

¹⁵⁵ Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 144.

¹⁵⁶ Davies, 'Paul's Missionary Message', 206. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 231. Barrett argues that the Acts 17 and Romans 1 use a “different approach”. C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Shorter Commentary* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2002), 165. C.f. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 824-826. Although, in another work he writes that Acts 17 ‘is perhaps not totally irreconcilable with Romans 1’. Barrett, *On Paul: Aspects of his Life, Work and Influence in the Early Church*, 67.

¹⁵⁷ Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, 26.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 27. So also Klein but Dunn thinks that “Klein in particular makes too much of the conflict between this verse and 15:20”. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 34. Günter Klein, 'Paul's Purpose in Writing the Epistle to the Romans', *Romans debate* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), 32-49, 47.

¹⁵⁹ Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission*, 89, note 12. Dickson cites Stuhlmacher. Peter Stuhlmacher, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Das Neue Testament Deutsch NTD; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 27-28. See also: Dickson, 'Gospel as News: ευαγγελ- from Aristophanes to the Apostle Paul', 223.

Romans rather than as Christians (so Godet). In Rome as elsewhere it is to nonbelievers that he would bring the gospel.”¹⁶⁰

Let us first examine the pronoun since its meaning will determine how much attention we need to give to the verb. To say that the pronoun must refer to Romans (in Rome) generally because “in Rome as elsewhere it is to nonbelievers that he would bring the gospel”¹⁶¹ is to force a meaning onto the text where the internal evidence suggests otherwise. A few verses earlier Paul has already said that the letter is for those ἐν Ῥώμῃ (Rom. 1:7), the exact same phrase that he uses here in verse 15 - ἐν Ῥώμῃ.¹⁶² “His precise wording is ‘*to you also* who are in Rome’, that is, *to the recipients* of the letter who have already been described as believers (cf. v. 8, ‘your faith is proclaimed in all the world’).”¹⁶³ The interpretations of Stuhlmacher, Dickson and Morris are better applied to the pronoun ὑμεῖς in verse 13 where Paul is definitely referring to the past. In verse 15 καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ is far more specific, as in verse 7, and is best understood as referring to those reading the epistle.

Since the most obvious reading of verse 15 points to the intended target of Paul’s gospelling being the recipients of the letter, let us have a closer look at the aorist infinitive εὐαγγελίζεσθαι. There is little in the verse that helps determine the intended sense of the temporal frame. Wallace says this is an epexegetical infinitive so as a dependent clause it has

¹⁶⁰ Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 65. Frédéric Louis Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883)

¹⁶¹ Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 65.

¹⁶² A few later manuscripts omit “ἐν Ῥώμῃ” (B 1739^{ms} 1908^{ms} it^g Origen). Metzger suggests this is “in order to that that the letter is of general, not local, application”. But the vast majority of MSS retain the phrase including the earliest ones. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (Fourth Revised Edition)*, 446. See also: Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 238.

¹⁶³ (Italics in original). O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis*, 61-62.

“no functional subcategories”.¹⁶⁴ There is no temporal marker which means it is very difficult to judge the timing of this gosselling.¹⁶⁵ Dickson notes this point and says that the timing can be found in the aorist indicatives in verse 13.¹⁶⁶ However, it would make more sense that Paul returns to the aorist infinites of verse 11 (ιδεῖν and στηριχθῆναι) and 12 (συμπαράκληθῆναι) which are clearly talking about the future, in fact, about Paul’s intention to visit these believers. We could then understand the verb in verse 15 as an irrealis infinitive.¹⁶⁷ Campbell says “it appears that the aorist infinitive is particularly apt in functioning as an irrealis infinitive. Statements about the future, questions, negative statements, and unfulfilled desires all regularly employ the aorist infinitive.”¹⁶⁸ So in verse 15 Paul returns to the future (and present) desire to gospel the believers in Rome before a definite *gear change* in verse 16-17 which then leads to the main body of the letter. The fact that verse 14 moves the present tense-form further suggests this interpretation. The logic can be understood as follows:

| | | |
|------------------|--|----------------|
| Verses 11 and 12 | - I long to see you for encouragement | (future) |
| Verse 13 | - I intended that to happen earlier | (past) |
| Verse 14 | - I am obligated to everyone | (present) |
| Verse 15 | - That is why I am eager to gospel you in Rome | (present/fut.) |

So it makes most sense that verse 15 refers both to Paul’s desire to go to Rome, which extended into the past, present and future, where he can ground the believers there in his gospel so they can form a missionary partnership for his trip to Spain.¹⁶⁹ What will follow is

¹⁶⁴ Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament; with Scripture, Subject and Greek Word Indexes*, 661-662.

¹⁶⁵ Constantine R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect and Non-Indicative Verbs: Further Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament* (Studies in Biblical Greek; New York: Peter Lang, 2008b), 110-112.

¹⁶⁶ Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission*, 89, note 12.

¹⁶⁷ Campbell, *Verbal Aspect and Non-Indicative Verbs: Further Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament*, 112.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 112.

¹⁶⁹ “In coming to Rome Paul would only be continuing the work he had been doing for years among ‘Greeks’”. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 8. See also for a similar conclusion: Hultgren, *Paul’s Gospel and Mission: The*

“his explication of the gospel, as in this very letter”.¹⁷⁰ In the end we can agree with Stuhlmacher’s general purpose statement that Paul’s letter and visit are to “create clarity concerning the gospel”¹⁷¹ while disagreeing with the idea that verse 15 refers only a past desire to gospel “you” in Rome.¹⁷² His desire to build gospel links with the believers in Rome is exactly why Paul writes an extended epistle where the primary focus is the gospel. In Romans, Paul will expand in much greater length the implications flowing out of the Jesus story – the gospel. He is doing a similar (but more detailed) thing to what he does in 1 Cor. 15:3-5 but he was the one who first brought the gospel to Corinth. So in 1 Cor. 15 he “reminds” them of the gospel and in Rom. 1 he expresses his desire to gospel them so they can share a common faith and be missionary partners. To make way for his visit and subsequent trip to Spain Paul therefore certainly does clarify his gospel in the epistle to the Romans.¹⁷³

Let us answer our question: Is Romans Paul’s gospel? In light of the discussion above, including the understanding of Paul’s relationship with the gospel as shown in Romans, we can understand Romans as a gospel document but not an *evangelistic* document. That is, Romans is a letter with the gospel at the heart of it but it is a letter of recruitment¹⁷⁴ and

Outlook from his Letter to the Romans, 7, 31 and especially 131. Similarly, Fitzmyer argues against taking this simply as past tense (so Stuhlmacher above). Rather, Paul’s “preaching in Rome will merely take place *en passant*”. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 251.

¹⁷⁰ Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 34.

¹⁷¹ Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, 27.

¹⁷² Barrett says “an alternative way of rendering the awkward Greek sentence is, ‘As far as I am concerned, I am... ready to preach the Gospel to you in Rome as well as to the rest’”. Barrett, *A commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 26.

¹⁷³ While we affirm that the gospel is preached to believers to ground them in the faith it is going too far beyond the meaning of the scope of *εὐαγγελίζομαι* to say “Preaching the gospel here most likely includes not just evangelistic ministry to the pagan community but also a teaching ministry in the churches” (Osborne) without clarification. While grounding a believer in the core message of the gospel can be called “teaching” or “discipleship”, both those words have a broader scope than the word gospel. For example, teaching about prayer, giving and service are not part of the activity of *εὐαγγελίζομαι* but are certainly part of Christian teaching and discipleship. Osborne, *Romans*, 39.

¹⁷⁴ Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1472.

partnership, not a recounting of evangelistic preaching.¹⁷⁵ In order to win believers that he has not yet visited to be partners in his mission to Spain Paul writes what Schnabel aptly calls a “closely argued theological, historical and ethical explanation and exposition of the gospel message”.¹⁷⁶ So in Romans we do have the gospel but it is expounded and explained. Paul “propounds his understanding of the gospel” but in a broader and multi-purpose context.¹⁷⁷ It is not sufficient to say that Romans is, in and of itself, *the* gospel. His desire is to establish a gospel centred relationship with the Romans from which he can have a long and fruitful ministry to Spain. Paul covers more in the book of Romans than what he would refer to as “gospel”. Dodd concludes that Romans is objective¹⁷⁸ and that Paul “therefore sets before them a comprehensive and reasoned statement of the fundamentals of Christianity as he understood it”.¹⁷⁹

As the gospel is expounded in Romans we do see themes that we reconstructed from 1 Thess. 1:9-10 such as the need to respond to God (Rom. 1:16, 3:22 and 10:9-10 as examples), judgment (Rom. 2:5, 8 and 5:9 as examples) and so on. But these are in a context where a *fuller* exposition of the gospel is taking place. While Barnett argues that all of Romans is the gospel he argues that “perhaps Paul’s greatest goal in Romans, was to achieve practical expressions of Jews’ and Gentiles’ unity in the church”.¹⁸⁰ That is, Romans is written for believers. The purple passages of Rom. 3:21-26 and Rom. 8:1-4 and 31-39 are clearly written for the understanding, assurance and benefit of believers. We nowhere, in Paul, (primary

¹⁷⁵ Campbell helpfully shows the intertwined message of both gospel and broader missionary agenda in the epistle. William S. Campbell, 'Paul's Missionary Practice and Policy in Romans', *Irish Biblical Studies*, 12/1 (/ 1990), 2-25

¹⁷⁶ Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1484.

¹⁷⁷ The quote is from Fitzmyer who says “Paul writes Romans for ad hoc purposes”. Although Fitzmyer is right in that it is not simply for one purpose, saying that Romans is multi-purpose might be better. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 79.

¹⁷⁸ “It was not any internal conditions in the church of Rome that called forth the letter, but the development of Paul’s own plans.” Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, xxv.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., xxv. Dodd says that Rom. 1:16-15:13 are “The gospel according to Paul”. Ibid., 8. This interpretation does not mean that Romans is not occasional. In fact, as we suggested earlier, the opposite is most likely the case.

¹⁸⁰ Barnett, 'Why Paul Wrote Romans', 150.

material, secondary material or even in the Pauline tradition of Acts) see the gospel being articulated in these terms to unbelievers.¹⁸¹ So while Romans gives us great insight into the priority of the gospel for Paul, the depth of the gospel content, the assurance one can have in the light of the gospel and so on, it is of little help in reconstructing Paul's evangelistic message as it stands on its own. However, further study on the Pauline tradition in Acts and the common themes in Rom. 1-3 and the Athenian sermon (as many scholars have already noted) may provide some insight or clarification on Paul's missionary preaching.¹⁸²

Ephesians 3:1-13 (esp. v8)

Despite being in the secondary material Ephesians 3:8-9 needs attention since O'Brien has singled these verses out (along with Gal 1:16)¹⁸³ as the key to the content of Paul's "missionary" preaching to Gentiles.¹⁸⁴ O'Brien understands that the "unsearchable riches of Christ" were Paul's gospel to be preached to unbelieving Gentiles so that they could be "incorporated", "converted" and "brought into a covenant relationship".¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ Without labouring that point here, the same case could be made for the entire New Testament (at least, post the resurrection). Nowhere is substitutionary atonement proclaimed in an evangelistic context. However, once one has believed it becomes central to the believer's salvation and therefore for their need to understand it.

¹⁸² See, for example, Dunn who argues persuasively for continuity of thought between Acts 17 and Rom. 1-3. He says "arguments from the natural order were as much Jewish as Greek, and Romans 1 shows a similar willingness to use characteristically Stoic categories". Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 46. Similarly, Bruce says "it is not too difficult to envisage the author of the first three chapters of Paul's letter to the Romans making several of the points which are central to the *Areopagitica*". Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, 244. See also: Vielhauer, 'On the "Paulinism" of Acts'

¹⁸³ Lincoln also notes the connection between Eph. 3:8 and Gal. 1:16. Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (Dallas: Word, 1990), 182-183.

¹⁸⁴ O'Brien uses the word "missionary" in this context to refer generally to the preaching of the gospel to unbelievers. However, note that he understands that the preaching of the gospel also happens to believers (see εὐαγγέλιον- above). O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis*, 16-21. He also affirms the same point in his commentary on Ephesians. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 241, note 78. Markus Barth makes the same connection between Eph. 3.8 and Gal. 1:16 which is a "parallel verse". Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, 341.

¹⁸⁵ O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis*, 21 and 134.

The language employed in the surrounding verses shows that *Paul* is referring to his gospel in these verses.¹⁸⁶ His use of “mystery” three times and the link made between both the gospel and the mystery in verse 6 show that he is thinking very particularly about his central message. “The unsearchable riches of Christ” are “the staple of that good news which he proclaimed”.¹⁸⁷ So our specific question is whether O’Brien is right in saying that the verb *εὐαγγελίσασθαι* and its content *τὸ ἀνεξιχνίαστον πλοῦτος τοῦ Χριστοῦ* is referring to the unsearchable riches of Christ being proclaimed to unbelievers?

The initial reference to “Christ” in this verse points us back to the 1 Cor. 15 use of the word and its meaning for believers. Lincoln argues persuasively from the uses of *πλοῦτος* in the rest of Ephesians and particularly Col. 1:27 and 2:3 that this should be interpreted as an objective genitive: “Christ himself constitutes the content of the riches of the gospel, and the wealth of the salvation to be found in him is unfathomable.”¹⁸⁸ The uses (particularly in Col. 1:27) of *πλοῦτος* suggest that Paul uses this word in affirming and reminding believers of their benefits from these riches. The initial observations suggest that Eph. 3.8 is not an evangelistic message.

Furthering this hypothesis is Paul’s use of the word *μυστήριον* throughout the passage. As we saw in the word study, Paul uses “mystery” to reveal the crucified Christ at the centre of the gospel.¹⁸⁹ The mystery was at the heart of understanding the gospel for believers and could only be comprehended by those who believe. So rather than understanding this as a

¹⁸⁶ For simplicity I will simply refer to the author of Ephesians as “Paul” but I am not doing that to argue that Paul is the author. Ephesians remains in the secondary material where the authorship is considerably questioned.

¹⁸⁷ John Eadie and William Young, *A Commentary on the Greek text of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians* (3rd edn.; Edinb, 1883), 226.

¹⁸⁸ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 184. Contra Meyer who argues for an objective genitive. Regina Pacis Meyer, *Kirche und Mission im Epheserbrief* (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977), 164.

¹⁸⁹ In context this would make sense of Barth’s observation that “the ‘riches’ of God or of his grace have been mentioned in 1:7; 2:4, 7. Eph. 3:8 is the only verse in Ephesians that speaks of the *Messiah*’s riches”. Emphasis in original. Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, 341.

summary of his evangelistic message, it is better understood as a summary of the message that he grounded the new believers in and now reminds them of.¹⁹⁰ Lincoln furthers this hypothesis by noting that the “emphasis on grace in regard to Paul’s apostleship echoes the thought of 1 Cor. 15:10, so the self-designation ‘the very least of all the saints’ recalls that of 1 Cor. 15:9, ‘the least of the apostles.’”¹⁹¹ We saw above in that section of 1 Cor. 15 and the creed therein that Paul is reflecting on the gospel as recounted in early preaching to believers.

As the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul’s gospel ministry entailed more than just evangelism. A very important part of his *gospel* activity was teaching new believers about their salvation and assurance. This theme comes up many times in Ephesians. Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 1:18 is that the Ephesians “may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people” (NIV). In 3:18 his prayer is that they will “grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ” (NIV). Through the preceding verses in chapter 3 he is reminding the Ephesians of the very content of the mystery: “This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel...” (3:6, NIV). That mystery is “this gospel” (3:7). As Paul preaches “to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ” (3:8, NIV) he is also at the same time making “plain to everyone the administration of this mystery” (3:9 NIV).

As Paul teaches the content of the mystery (and the gospel) in the Epistle he also reflects back on the initial teaching and grounding in this profound message that he gave them after they first believed. That is why he can say that he is a prisoner “for the sake of you Gentiles”

¹⁹⁰ Bruce (like Barth, above) makes the link between Gal. 1:16 (and Rom. 11) but in noting that Eph. 3:8 “is a more rhetorical wording of his statement in Gal. 1:16”. The use of rhetoric would suggest that this is indeed a recounting for believers. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 319.

¹⁹¹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 182.

(3:1 NIV) and in the following verse “the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you” (3:2 NIV).

Other Passages

A few more verses in Paul require brief attention. In 1 Cor. 14:25 Paul speaks of the apparent conversion of outsiders who hear prophesying in the church gathering. This prompts the question; can we learn anything from that passage about Paul’s gospel? Three times (twice in the primary material and once in the secondary) Paul uses the phrase “κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου”.¹⁹² In both Rom. 2:16 and 2 Tim. 2:8 the writer(s) gives us specific information regarding the content of this gospel. That content is interesting because it appears to confirm what we have already seen in the gospel for unbelieving Gentiles and in the grounding of believers in the gospel.

Romans 2:16

In this section Paul is showing “the reality of the condemnation under which the Gentiles stand”.¹⁹³ This is the same judgment under which the Jews stand.¹⁹⁴ Some scholars argue that this verse is abstract and possibly even a copyist addition, but other scholars rightly argue that in context, verse 16 makes sense of the verbs in verse 15¹⁹⁵. For this study this is

¹⁹² The primary occurrences are in Rom. 2:16 and 16:25. The secondary occurrence is in 2 Tim. 2:8.

¹⁹³ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 154.

¹⁹⁴ Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, 43. Or, to phrase it slightly differently: “His immediate point, however, is to maintain against his supposed Jewish interlocutor that the pagan has just as good a chance of being acquitted ... as any Jew”. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 37. “Neither could claim exemption from the judgment of God.” William Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans* (Rev. edn.; Edinburgh: Saint Andrew, 1975), 46.

¹⁹⁵ So Moo. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 154. “The connection between verse 15 and 16 is in fact quite a good one. Whatever their conscience may do in the meantime, it will certainly be a witness against sinners on Judgment Day. The strong eschatological note runs through the whole section.” Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 128. Stuhlmacher says that verse 16 is a “pointed concluding observation” to the “main thesis” of verse 13. Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, 42. Moo cites Bultmann and Bornkamm as wanting to “eliminate” the verse. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 153, and 153, note 51. Rudolf Bultmann, ‘Glossen im Römerbrief’, in Rudolf Bultmann and Erich Dinkler (eds.), *Exegetica: Aufsätze zur Erforschung des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1967), 282-283. Günther Bornkamm, ‘Gesetz und Natur: Röm 2:14-16’, *Studien zu Antike und Urchristentum* (München: Verlag, 1970), 93-118, 117.

noteworthy because we have now a recounting of a summary (or more likely a summary of a specific part) of Paul's gospel in a Gentile context.

The structure of the verse makes translation a little tricky, especially the second prepositional phrase διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.¹⁹⁶ The first two thirds can be understood fairly simply as the content of what is “according to Paul's gospel”.¹⁹⁷ Paul's gospel looks forward to a day when (ὅτε) “on (that) day” (ἐν ἡμέρᾳ) “God judges” (κρίνει ὁ θεός)¹⁹⁸ “men's secrets” (τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων). Returning to the question of the second prepositional phrase, we need to ask whether “through Christ Jesus” is part of the summary or if it is functioning in some other way.¹⁹⁹ If this is indeed a recounting of a part of Paul's evangelistic preaching to Gentiles then the presence of the unexpected Χριστός would need to be accounted for.

Fitzmyer says “Paul's gospel bears witness not to the judgment of humanity by God, which was standard Jewish belief, but to that which God will carry out through Christ.”²⁰⁰ Likewise, Moo says the phrase should be included in the content of the gospel: “It is possible to take ‘through Christ Jesus’ with ‘will judge,’ with ‘according to my gospel’ dependent on the whole statement, and particularly on the reference to the Christological element in the judgment: ‘It is through Christ Jesus that God will judge, as my gospel teaches.’”²⁰¹ This is definitely a Pauline concept. In 2 Cor. 5:10 Paul says “we must all appear before the

¹⁹⁶ There is a textual variant on whether Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ stands alone or whether it takes “our Lord” as well – Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν. Metzger is hesitant (giving only a “C” reading) and concludes: “In view of considerable doubt as to which sequence is original, the Committee preferred to adopt the reading supported by the oldest extant witnesses”. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (Fourth Revised Edition)*, 448.

¹⁹⁷ The straightforward translation makes most sense of this prepositional phrase. NIV's “as my gospel declares” imports too much to the text and suggests emphasis not warranted in the Greek.

¹⁹⁸ Although the verb is a present active indicative the activity being described is still future. CSBO (and ESV is very similar) get the sense well: “on the day when God judges”. Morris says that the present is used for “greater vividness”. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 129.

¹⁹⁹ Cranfield gives a summary of the possibilities. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 163.

²⁰⁰ Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 312.

²⁰¹ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 155.

judgment seat of Christ”.²⁰² Campbell says the phrase “according to my gospel” could be regarded as “parenthetical. If this is correct, the sentence might be paraphrased as *on the day when God judges **through Christ** Jesus what people have kept secret, according to my gospel*. This verse then indicates the instrumentality of Christ in God’s judging activity and thus constitutes a reference to the Trinitarian nature of the work of God in Christ.”²⁰³

The question then is how do we understand this gospel content in its setting when it contains concepts of the Gentile judgment while using the unexpected “Christos”? The answer is precisely in the question. Paul here is recounting a part of his evangelistic preaching to Gentiles but he is addressing Jews. The content on judgment harmonises with the judgment that we see in 1 Thess. 1:10 (and the Pauline tradition in Acts 17:31). The “Christos” that we have harmonises with the concise gospel summary we saw in 1 Cor. 15 whilst still making sense of the context of Rom. 2.

Paul is making a point to Jews about the judgment of the Gentiles. He adds a reference to his own gospel (as he preached it to unbelievers) but connects it to the Messiah. Paul’s point here is about “the heathen also come within the jurisdiction of the Messiah”.²⁰⁴ “According to Paul’s gospel, Christ is the judge of the world”.²⁰⁵ It is precisely because he is linking the Gentiles with the judgment domain of the Messiah that he uses both language about judgement and the word “Christ”.

²⁰² Morris goes further saying “this is the distinctive Christian teaching about judgment”, that is, that it is through Christ. He references John 5:27 and Acts 17:31). Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 129.

²⁰³ Emphasis in original. Campbell, *Paul and Union With Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study*, 256.

²⁰⁴ Quoting Barrett but note that he uses the phrase negatively in respect to “my gospel” but implies that this is Paul’s point. Barrett, *A commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 54.

²⁰⁵ Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, 43-44.

This deduction does not further our understanding of Paul's gospel but rather helps to confirm what we have already seen. Paul will use different language to describe his gospel but this is all part of a coherent historical and theological tapestry that makes up Paul's gospel.

2 Timothy 2:8

Given this verse is in the secondary material we will only give a short comment. The author writes to Timothy telling him to "remember" (μνημόνευε)²⁰⁶ "Jesus Christ risen (or raised, perfect²⁰⁷ participle) from the dead" (Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐγχερμένον ἐκ νεκρῶν). Following the first verb Timothy is also to remember that Christ is "from the seed of David" (ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυίδ). These two key facts about Christ are "according to my gospel" (κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου). "Together these two realities, **Jesus Christ** risen **from the dead** and **Jesus Christ** of the seed **of David** form a brief epitome of **my gospel**".²⁰⁸ Again, although this will not add to our understanding the connection and echoes of the other gospel summaries are obvious. The particular echo is with Rom. 1:3-4 where both the resurrection and the seed of David are mentioned. But instead of the "Son" language in Romans, in 2 Timothy we have "Jesus Christ". Towner says these words "may represent part of a formula".²⁰⁹ That might be correct but we concluded above that we could not be conclusive about whether Rom. 1:3-4 was a formula. It may be that the writer (Paul or other) of 2 Timothy intentionally writes verse 8 to sound like Rom. 1:3-4.²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ Towner suggests that this verb applies through the whole sentence from v8-10. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 499. Mounce says it is not so much instructing him but "consoling and encouraging". Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 511.

²⁰⁷ Mounce says the perfect tense is "emphasizing its abiding significance to Timothy". Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 512.

²⁰⁸ Emphasis in original. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 246.

²⁰⁹ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 499. Guthrie notes that the only two places where "according to my gospel" occur are here and in Romans "which may suggest that Paul intentionally used common elements of primitive preaching when appealing to *my gospel*, to show that what he preached was the common gospel". Emphasis in original. Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary*, 143.

²¹⁰ Towner has a detailed discussion on the possibilities and implications of this suggestion. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 500-502. Follow the references there to his further writing. But as Mounce (probably

1 Corinthians 14:21-25.

In 1 Cor. 14:23 Paul speaks of “inquirers or unbelievers” (NIV, *ἰδιῶται ἢ ἄπιστοι*) coming into the gathering and having two different reactions. They either say “you’re out of your mind” (1 Cor. 14:23) or “the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, ‘God is really among you!’” (1 Cor. 14:25 NIV). The different reactions are caused by whether the outsider comes in while everyone is speaking in tongues (1 Cor. 14:23) or if they come in while everyone is prophesying (1 Cor. 14:24). The question is whether we can learn anything about Paul’s initial preaching from the enquirers and unbelievers and their reaction to prophecy?

Conzelmann says that in this passage “ecstasy... is considered in regard to its missionary effect”.²¹¹ Carson gives content to what we can learn from this passage: “Schlatter rightly observes that this picture fosters the assumption that Paul was concerned, in evangelism, to begin by producing a consciousness of guilt.”²¹² Dickson says that what we see here is a true believer (who is being converted) and “it is probably correct to see v24-25 as Paul’s idealized portrait of conversion.”²¹³

The immediate difficulty for this study is that Paul is not talking about his own preaching at all. Another difficulty is that the reaction is not obviously repentance and faith (although it may lead to that).²¹⁴ Paul’s point in the context seems to be that the obvious working of God

helpfully) suggests: “Discussions of the supposedly creedal origin of this gospel summary are not helpful in understanding the text”. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 512.

²¹¹ Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 242.

²¹² Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14*, 116. Quoting: Adolf Schlatter, *Paulus der Bote Jesu: Eine Deutung Seiner Briefe an die Korinther* (4.Auflage. edn.; Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1969), 382.

²¹³ Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission*, 300.

²¹⁴ Fee implies that conviction of sin would automatically lead to repentance (p677). He goes so far as “Prophecy... will lead to their conversion.” That is, the “conversion of the visiting unbeliever”. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 678 and 685.

is through the audible speaking of his truth.²¹⁵ The speaking of the truth of God in this context leads to the person realising his or her sin and consequently worshipping God.

Dickson says that Paul is describing a conversion and that this is “widely acknowledged”.²¹⁶

Suffice to say here that while the passage may be useful in gaining some information on Paul’s broader theological understanding of conversion the contribution to this study is minimal.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Johanson has a long and detailed examination of this passage in relation to this question. B. C. Johanson, ‘Tongues, a Sign for Unbelievers?: A Structural and Exegetical Study of I Corinthians XIV. 20–25 1’, *New Testam. Stud.*, 25/2 (1979), 180–203. See also chapter 7 of Christopher Forbes’ volume. Christopher Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and its Hellenistic Environment* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament: 2. Reihe; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1995), 175–182.

²¹⁶ Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission*, 300.

²¹⁷ In a study with broader scope, such as Paul’s understanding of mission for others (in the church), this passage could receive far greater treatment. Many who have written more broadly on mission have sought to do so. One big question is how prophecy is a sign to believers. At the heart of this question is what is meant by believer. Fee argues that is a sign to those prophesying that when the unbeliever is converted they know that God is amongst them. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 683. Dickson argues against that saying that unbeliever and believer are to be understood “in terms of the effect or end result of tongues/prophecy upon the hearer”. Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission*, 296. What truth is then being spoken by the prophet(s)? In the context it is clear that according to Paul’s instructions not all members of the congregation are prophesying at the same time but that each in turn have what they have said weighed (1 Cor. 14:29). Paul does not actually define what prophecy is here but simply talks of its effects (strengthening, encouragement and comfort). It is defined as a spiritual gift (πνευματικός 1 Cor. 14:1) but it is not clear whether it is the Spirit speaking directly through the prophet (So Morris “divine message” 193, and Dickson “Divine Speech” 297) or whether by the working of the Spirit the prophet then has insight into truths about God (see 1 Cor. 13:2). Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 193. Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission*, 297. A question worth consideration is whether the outsiders are being addressed by the prophet(s) directly or whether by listening in to what is being said they draw their conclusions. Given the way he is introduced in verse 23 it would be fair to assume that he is ‘listening in’ to what is being said. That would make sense of the person being convinced that they are a sinner. As to how he will be judged by all it is unclear. Dickson argues that this describes an outsider coming in and he overhears “a typical utterance aimed at the gathered faithful.” Ibid., 301. So Carson who specifically says this is “not evangelistic preaching”. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12–14*, 116. Given the way the outsiders react, it may be that the content of the prophesy is eschatological. So: Barnett, *1 Corinthians: Holiness and Hope of a Rescued People*, 261. It may be put in the present context but may also involve reference to the return of Christ, judgment and resurrection. Paul will return to discuss the resurrection at length in the following chapter.

Section 4 - Conclusions: Confidence, Caution and Further Study

Required

Kerygma or Kerygmata Revisited

According to Paul there can be only one gospel. He speaks of “the” gospel¹ and proclaiming anything else is anathema.² Paul understands that his gospel is both the same as that of the other apostles but he can speak of it as “my gospel”³ since it came to him from Christ himself.⁴ However, Paul does not always present his gospel in the same way. When he articulates the gospel in his epistles he draws from a set body of material which come from the Jesus story, but presents varying parts of that story and with various emphases.

In 1 Thess. 1:9-10 we reconstructed a summary of some of the content of the initial preaching in Thessalonica. The summary was quite possibly only part of the initial content. But when we looked at the other gospel summaries in Paul’s epistles we noted that there was variation in all of them. We saw in 1 Cor. 15:3-5 that Paul quotes and probably modifies an early creed which emphasises the death and (particularly) the resurrection of Christ. That creed had an emphasis on both the purpose of the cross (for us) and on the resurrection. In Romans 1:3-4 we saw another gospel summary where the emphasis was on the origin of Christ (from David) and the contrast between his fleshly earthly ministry and his exalted

¹ For example, see Rom. 1:16, 1 Cor. 15:1 and Col. 1:5. Paul will sometimes add a personal pronoun to speak of “my gospel” (Rom. 2:16, Rom. 16:25, and Cf. 2 Tim. 2:8) or “our gospel” (2 Cor. 4:3, 1 Thess. 1:5 and Cf. 2 Thess. 2:14). But this is not a different gospel to “God’s gospel” (Rom. 1:1, 15:16, 2 Cor. 11:7, 1 Thess. 2:2 and 8:9), “Christ’s gospel” (Rom 15:19, 1 Cor. 9:12, 2 Cor. 2:12, 9:13, 10:14, Gal. 1:7, Phil. 1:27 and 1 Thess. 3:2), “His Son’s gospel” (Rom. 1:9) or “The Lord Jesus’ gospel” (2 Thess. 1:8). The gospel is Paul’s in the sense that God and Christ’s gospel was “entrusted” to him to preach. Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, 43.

² Gal. 1:8-9.

³ Rom. 2:16, 16:25. Cf. 2 Tim. 2:8.

⁴ Gal. 1:15-17 and 2:2 (Cf. 1 Cor. 15:1 and 3).

spiritual vindication as “Jesus Christ our Lord”.⁵ Then in Romans, which is an expansion and explanation of the gospel, we saw central gospel themes expanded in great detail.

When Paul does summarise his gospel to its absolute core it is preaching “his (God’s) Son” (Gal. 1:16). So the preaching of the Son and the content that is chosen can vary depending on the context of the gospel but it is always centralised in some way by Christ. In this way we can agree with Hays that Paul has a narrative substructure from which he draws which we can rightly call the Jesus story. In this study we have only shown that this story includes the death and resurrection of Jesus. For the relationship between Paul’s missionary preaching and the Jesus story a future study on the Pauline tradition found in Luke-Acts could be quite enlightening.

Before moving to Paul’s missionary preaching, we can see from his epistles that, according to Paul, there is only one gospel. That gospel is a non-negotiable core message and includes a collection of historical facts that form a coherent narrative. At the centre of the gospel is the person of Christ, the Son of God. His death and resurrection are the two most important historical components of the gospel narrative. But supporting, and still core, are themes of Davidic descent, resurrection appearances, judgment, grace and right response (repentance and faith). That one gospel story is presented in different ways but only in the sense that different elements of the one true gospel are included and/or emphasised in order to bring about the required response – repentance and faith.

Gospel and Paul’s Missionary Message to Gentiles

The initial aim of this study was to explore how much of Paul’s missionary message we could uncover from his Epistles. We saw that the gospel was the message Paul proclaimed to the

⁵ Rom. 1:4.

unbelieving world and it was the only way for salvation through right response to it. The term “the gospel” was also the central message for the believer. So Paul also gossiped believers so they would stand firm and be committed to that same one true gospel (that is presented in different ways in different situations). We saw that Paul used rich language to speak about the gospel with phrases such as “word of God”, “my gospel” and “mystery” and that this was normally to create an emphasis to the already believing reader about the emphasis or priority of the gospel.

As we looked at Paul’s epistles, however, we saw that there was very little we could recover about his initial preaching. The only passages that gave us clear insights were 1 Thess. 1:9-10 and Gal. 1:16 (with Rom. 2:16 as confirmation). In Gal. 1 the gospel message for unbelieving Gentiles was summarised simply as “his Son”. In 1 Thess. 1:9-10 we reconstructed that some (and probably not all) of the evangelistic message in Thessalonica was:

As opposed to your worthless idols, there is one living and true God. This God raised (his) Son from heaven and he will return in judgment. So turn to God, serve him and wait for the Son.

So there is not a lot that we can glean from Paul’s epistles about his evangelistic content. But there are conclusions we can draw that are still useful and can inform further study in the area.

First, Paul’s evangelistic message was concerning the Son of God. The very limited material we have confirms this. What is included about the Son in the evangelistic message, at least in Thessalonica, was that he is the Son of the living God. He has been raised from the dead, will return in judgment and so the right response is to turn to him.

Secondly, there was no set formula, as far as we can tell, in the way that the Son is proclaimed to unbelieving Gentiles. Again, with only the minimal data which we have we can draw this conclusion since our two summaries are different and because the way Paul reminds believers of the gospel also shows variation. The Gal. 1:16 summary of the gospel says the evangelistic message was “the Son” (Cf. Rom. 2:16). The same phrase is also in the 1 Thess. 1:9-10 outline, but we may compare that with the way that the “Son” is presented so differently in Rom. 1:3-4. We do not want to overstate this point but given the great emphasis by many scholars in the literary review on a set formula, we suggest that this needs serious reconsideration. Rather than a formula, the evidence we have seen points towards a narrative about “the Son” from which Paul selectively draws.

Third, the gospel was preached for an intended response. We see this right through Paul as even the believers he is writing to need to continue to respond rightly to the gospel. We see this explicitly in 1 Thess. 1:10 where the hearers had to respond by both “turning” and “waiting”. We also see this more broadly (particularly in Romans) where the gospel only saves those who respond in faith.⁶

⁶ Rom. 1:16.

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