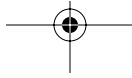


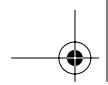


Preface

My goal in writing this book was to write a textbook on Pauline theology for students at both the college and seminary level. I do not intend, therefore, to interact extensively with other scholars, though I dialogue enough with them to demonstrate that I am conversant with what is happening in Pauline studies. Some books provide a genuine service by sketching in the landscape provided by secondary sources. My fundamental aim, however, is to explain the biblical text since students need to see that the primary sources are foundational for doing Pauline theology. My intention is to set forth and defend my particular understanding of Pauline theology. I acknowledge at the outset that I have not written the definitive Pauline theology, but I hope that others can profit from my own wrestling with the text.

When one compares my work with the recent and excellent Pauline theology by James Dunn, at least three major differences are evident. First, Dunn's theology is a mammoth work that both examines the biblical text and interacts with the secondary sources. Such an enterprise is extremely helpful, but because I do not dialogue as extensively with secondary sources here, I limited the size of my book. Second, I have tried to organize my book in a fresh way. Dunn uses Romans as the template to organize Pauline theology, and this is a valuable way to proceed. Yet I do not believe that there *is only one way* to structure a Pauline theology. I think my approach opens some new windows into Paul's theology by focusing on Paul as a missionary and on his apostolic sufferings—two topics that are often neglected in Pauline theologies. I also argue that God's work in Christ is the foundation and goal of Paul's theology. I think it is a mistake to identify some aspect of salvation, whether it is justification or salvation history, as the key to Paul's thinking. Third, Dunn excludes Ephesians and the Pastoral Letters from his study, and he thinks Colossians was written by Timothy while Paul was still living. I am persuaded, however, that





all thirteen letters are authentic. I do not argue the case for authenticity in my theology; instead I refer the readers to others who have made the case effectively.¹ The Pauline theology offered here is distinctive in that all thirteen letters ascribed to Paul are mined to decipher his theology.

Finally, I want to thank those who have assisted me in the writing of this book. I am grateful to Dan Reid, the academic reference editor at InterVarsity Press, for his encouragement and assistance in the writing of this work. Dan is himself an expert in Pauline studies, and hence he made numerous suggestions that have been incorporated into the book so that it is better than it would otherwise be. Frank Thielman, professor of New Testament at the Beeson Divinity School, read the entire manuscript, pointed out some deficiencies that needed correction and was a great encouragement to me. Boyd Luter, the dean at Criswell College, offered to read the entire work in a short time period, corrected a number of mistakes and commented helpfully at a number of places. Justin Taylor read the entire manuscript, corrected a number of errors and made many helpful suggestions. Five students at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary helped me significantly. My Garrett fellow and longtime friend Philemon Yong chased down references, copied needed articles and proofed the manuscript carefully. Jeff Evans and Jim Hamilton proofed the book under a tight deadline, and I am thankful for their help in spotting errors. I also am grateful to Randall Tan and Brian Vickers, who serve as editors at *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*. Randall Tan read the manuscript with a sharp eye and made many suggestions for improvement. A special thanks goes to Brian Vickers for his labor of love in reading the manuscript so diligently and for his numerous stylistic suggestions. Every reader made the book better than it was before, for which I am thankful. I also want to thank my wife, Diane, for her love. Her faithfulness to me over twenty-five years of marriage has been a wellspring of life to me. I dedicate this book to our children—Daniel, Patrick, John and Anna. They have been sources of unspeakable joy to me. Finally, I pray that God would be magnified and praised through Jesus Christ by what I have written here. The grace of our glorious God sustained me as I wrote.

¹Recent commentators who have defended the authenticity of the Pastoral Letters include J. N. D. Kelly, Joachim Jeremias, Donald Guthrie, Gordon Fee, George Knight III, Philip H. Towner, Luke Johnson and William Mounce. Compare also E. Earle Ellis, "Pseudonymity and Canonicity of New Testament Documents," in *Worship, Theology and Ministry in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Ralph P. Martin*, JSNTSup 87, ed. M. J. Wilkins and T. Paige (Sheffield: JSOT, 1992), pp. 212-24.

