



# FHS 3102: PAUL AND PAULINE TRADITION

Handout for Lecture 8  
Professor Jenn Strawbridge  
Week 8, Hilary 2025

## Arguing with Paul: History of Pauline Interpretation

### I. Paul as Founder, Take II

Toledot Yeshu

(Paul responsible for the establishment of Christianity at the instigation of the rabbis)  
Wrede: Paul as the “second founder of Christianity”  
Badiou and Žižek: creator not only of Christianity, but also of Christ

### 2. Legacy in the Second Century

2 Peter 3.16  
Ignatius – Polycarp – Papias  
Marcion and Valentinus (Harnack and Vinzent)  
Kerygmata Petrou/Clementine Homilies  
Irenaeus and Tertullian  
Acts of Paul and Thecla

### 3. Other Legacy

Augustine  
Gregory of Nyssa  
Luther and Calvin  
John Wesley  
John Henry Newman  
Legacy: letters vs interpretation  
Paul’s writings as “Scripture”

### 4. More recent debates with and receptions of Paul

Jewish perspectives on Paul (Elliott, Segal, Boyarin, Nanos)  
Paul and Gender (Kittredge, Schlüsser Fiorenza, Wire, Castelli, Westfall)  
Paul and Slavery (Bowens, Bryant, Williams)

## Texts Referred to within Lecture

**2 Peter 3.15-16:** So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given to him, speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures.

**James 2.24:** You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

**Philippians 2.6-8:** ... Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the *form* of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being *born in human likeness*. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

**Romans 7.18:** For I know that *nothing good dwells within me*, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it.

**I Corinthians 15.50:** What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

**I Cor 8.6:** ...yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

**I Corinthians 2.6-9:** Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a *wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish*. But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.'

**I Corinthians 15.50:** What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

**Galatians 3.28:** There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

**Excerpt from the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, chapters 1-2  
(part of the *Acts of Paul* and dated to approximately 160 CE)**

Then Paul went to the house of Onesiphorus, and there was great joy among the family on that account; and they employed themselves in prayer, breaking bread, and hearing Paul preach the word of God concerning temperance and the resurrection, in the following manner:

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are they who keep their flesh undefiled, for they shall be the temple of God.

Blessed are the temperate, for God will reveal himself to them.

Blessed are they that abandon their secular enjoyments, for they shall be accepted of God.

Blessed are they who have wives, as though they had them not, for they shall be made angels of God.

Blessed are they who tremble at the word of God, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are they who keep their baptism pure, for they shall find peace with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Blessed are they who pursue the doctrine of Jesus Christ, for they shall be called the sons of the Most High.

Blessed are they who observe the instructions of Jesus Christ, for they shall dwell in eternal light.

Blessed are they, who for the love of Christ abandon the glories of the world, for they shall judge angels, and be placed at the right hand of Christ, and shall not suffer the bitterness of the last judgment.

Blessed are the bodies and souls of virgins, for they are acceptable to God and shall not lose the reward of their virginity, for the word of their Father shall prove effectual to their salvation in the day of his Son, and they shall enjoy rest forevermore.

(Chapter 2) While Paul was preaching this sermon in the church which was in the house of Onesiphorus, a certain virgin named Thecla (whose mother's name was Theoclia, and who was betrothed to a man named Thamyris) sat at a certain window in her house. From where, by the advantage of a window in the house where Paul was, she both night and day heard Paul's sermons concerning God, concerning charity, concerning faith in Christ, and concerning prayer; Nor would she depart from the window till with exceeding joy she was subdued to the doctrines of faith.

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