

Introduction to the New Testament History and Literature

Lecture 17: Paul's Disciples

Transcript

<https://oyc.yale.edu/religious-studies/rfst-152/lecture-17>

Overview

In ancient times, documents that were falsely attributed to an author, called pseudepigrapha, were a common phenomenon. Both the Letters to the Colossians and Ephesians are most likely pseudonymous works attributed to the Apostle Paul. The writer of Colossians assures his readers that they already possess all the benefits of salvation and do not need to observe rules concerning feast days, Sabbaths, and worship of the angels. Ephesians seems somewhat based on Colossians, although it reads more like an ethical or moral treatise. Both letters differ from Pauline Christology in their realized eschatology and high Christology.

1. Ancient Pseudepigraphy

[1] *Professor Dale Martin:* King Abgar over in the East Syrian region writes to Jesus saying, “I’ve heard this great stuff about you, I’m a little sick, can you come heal me? The people in Jerusalem don’t like you, you’ll find a nice peaceful home here.” Jesus wrote back apparently:

[2] Blessed are you for believing in me, although you have not seen me. For it is written concerning me that those who have seen me will not believe me, and that those who have not seen me they will believe and be saved. But concerning what you wrote to me namely to come to you, it is necessary for me to complete here all for which I was sent, and after the completion to be received up to Him that sent me. But when I am received up, I shall send one of my disciples to you to heal your affliction and to impart life to you and your people.

[3] There you have it. Letter from King Abgar to Jesus, a letter to Jesus back to King Abgar; do you believe it? Kind of go like this or like this. Come on take a stand. Go out on a limb. Decide you’re just going to do something wild and crazy and have an opinion. Do you believe that those letters are authentic? No. Does anybody believe they’re authentic? If so I’ve got some land I want to sell you. Nobody believes that the letters from King Abgar to

Jesus are authentic letters, and nobody believes that the letter from Jesus to Abgar is authentic. We believe they are pseudepigrapha; remember this from before? What’s the meaning of anonymity? Name me a document in the New Testament that is anonymous.

[4] *Student:* The Gospels.

[5] *Professor Dale Martin:* The Gospels, exactly. The names in the Gospels were added by later scribes. They weren’t part of the original document, so they’re not pseudonymous, because the Gospel of Matthew actually doesn’t claim itself to be by Matthew. It just is out there, so they’re anonymous. The letter to the Hebrews is anonymous; it doesn’t even claim to be by Paul or by anybody else that we know of. It’s just a letter that’s there in the text. The text is just there by itself. Name me a document we’ve talked about that is pseudonymous, anybody? What?

[6] *Student:* I, II, III John.

[7] *Professor Dale Martin:* I, II, III John, actually they don’t claim to be by John. That’s again anonymous letters. We will get to them today. Pseudonymity means it claims to be by someone who it’s not by, who we just don’t believe it’s by. The letters of Abgar—the letter of Abgar to Jesus and of Jesus to Abgar, scholars call that pseudonymous. They’re written in their names but we don’t believe

they actually wrote them. Now why do you say you don't believe those letters are authentic? I mean obviously the tone of my voice, I was messing with them, so that could have tipped you off. And you may think, well I've just never heard that there was an actual letter of Jesus of Nazareth that survives, so you would think that you would have heard about that in The New York Times if there actually was one that was authentic. What else about the letters that you heard might tip you off that they're pseudonymous? Yes sir.

[8] *Student:* If the letter was written in Greek then that would be a good indication.

[9] *Professor Dale Martin:* Exactly, the letters are written in Greek. If the letters are written in Greek—well we don't really have any evidence that Jesus spoke Greek, and if he did speak Greek he probably didn't write Greek at the literary level that those letters were obviously written. I mean I don't know if you noticed but there's a certain style to them, even in the English translation, that sounds like these are written by educated people. They know how to write good letter forms. Jesus—we don't know anything about King Abgar much but we can certainly say that most of us don't believe Jesus had the kind of education that he could have written a Greek letter like that, so that's one indication. Anything else? Yes sir.

[10] *Student:* Sounds like the Gospel of John.

[11] *Professor Dale Martin:* It sounds like the Gospel of John exactly. Remember the line that said, some people have seen me and not believed in me, it's just almost like a quotation from the Gospel of John. You kind of think, this sounds like something that some Christian scribe would write long after the life of Jesus. And why not? I mean, if you're a Christian scribe living in the third century, some scholars date these letters to around 250, the year 250 or so, that's a guess but—if you're a scribe living in around the year 250, and to you Jesus is the Son of God, he's divine, he's this miracle—he's powerful, he's a miracle, he's the emperor of the cosmos, the world. And so you kind of think in your popular mindset, well, why wouldn't kings who lived during the time of Jesus have heard about him and know about him? He did all these miraculous deeds; wouldn't he have been world famous? In fact a lot of modern people have the same idea.

They're very surprised when they realize that Jesus actually—nobody knew anything about him in his lifetime. They say, but he did all these miracles and the Gospel—these crowds that followed him and these kinds of things, wouldn't that really have made the headlines of the time? You say, well there actually were a lot of miracle workers running around the ancient world. There were a lot of prophets; there were a lot of people claiming to raise the dead. It wasn't that unusual a thing. So, no, Jesus wasn't famous during his own lifetime. But you can imagine how a scribe, a Christian scribe, in the middle of the third century would naturally think that this person he worships as Lord must have been famous, and, therefore, it's entirely believable that there could have been correspondences between Jesus and kings around the world, and so these letters get made up as part of just basic Christian piety. If the letters didn't exist, they ought to exist, so we'll write them.

[12] We have other examples of pseudonymity. We have, for example, letters between Paul and the philosopher Seneca, which nobody believes they're authentic, nobody believes that the philosopher Seneca, who is the aide if you recall, to the Emperor Nero. He was an advisor to Nero until he fell out of favor, and Nero kicked him out and all that sort of thing. But Seneca was one of the most famous first century Stoic philosophers. Somebody wrote letters years later which Seneca writes to Paul and says, you are such a great philosopher Paul. I wonder if we could get together and have a little coffee klatch? Paul writes back and says, I'm really busy right now but we've got some—so they write letters back and forth.

[13] We have all kinds of things. These are not just Christian letters. There are a whole bunch of letters written under the names of very famous Cynic philosophers. Now the word "cynic" in this context doesn't mean just the adjective for someone who is cynical. It comes from the Greek word for "dog," *kynos*, and certainly there's a certain philosophical movement in the ancient world in which certain men, and in a few cases, women, tried to teach that you should live completely according to nature. For example, if it's natural to eat and have sex then you should—there's nothing shameful about eating or having sex, even in public. If it's natural for people to follow their desires, then you should just follow your desires. And

so these Cynics got called “doggie philosophers” by other people, because they did the kinds of stuff that humans don’t do in public but dogs do in public. Or they also got the nickname for several other reasons. Somebody in late antiquity decided that they wanted a series of letters that talk about the philosophy of Cynicism and so they have letters back and forth under the names of famous philosophers of the Cynic movement which talk about the morality of the Cynic movement or debate different issues about the Cynic movement.

[14] There are all kinds—letters of Plato, we have a big difficulty trying to figure out, are all the letters that exist in ancient Greek manuscripts that claim to be letters of the philosopher Plato, are they really by Plato? Almost no scholar believes they all are by Plato. Many scholars believe that at least some of the letters that have been passed down over tradition being by Plato may really be by Plato, but certainly not all of them. The phenomenon of pseudepigraphy, that is, writings under a false name, was very, very popular in the ancient world, and we have all kinds of evidences for it.

[15] Now you have to imagine how would this work? How would, for example, these letters be produced? Well I’ve said Christians might do it because it’s a work of piety. They think that these letters ought to exist. But then you have to say, well how would they have been published? Remember we don’t have printing presses, so you can’t just send something off anonymously or pseudonymously to a publisher, and just try to get it published with a printing press. Everything’s done one copy, by one copy by hand. Everything in the ancient world has to be copied by hand, one letter at a time. In fact, they did copy one letter at a time. You can tell by reading manuscripts: they’re almost all capital letters; they’re kind of block capital letters, and they don’t have spaces between words. Most of the time, they don’t have spaces often between sentences, and you can tell these scribes are copying one letter at a time, often. And that’s why we get so many mistakes in our New Testament manuscripts. We have thousands of New Testament manuscripts, and there’s not two of them that are alike exactly. We have more mistakes in New—in the Greek copies of the New Testament than we even have manuscripts of

the Greek copies of the New Testament, and that’s in the thousands. Nobody knows how many mistakes we have in the Greek New Testament and different manuscripts. There are so many, nobody’s ever been able to count them, and it would be almost impossible to count them. The reason we have this is because it all had to be done one letter by one letter, one scribe with one scribe, and that’s why you have them.

[16] You have to imagine, then, if you want to publish a letter from King Abgar to Jesus and then a letter from Jesus back to King Abgar, well how do you do it? Well, you know you’re a scribe so you write up these letters and then maybe you write up a few copies and send them around to people, or show them to people, or you might claim that you found this in a library of a monastery where you work, or you might just send it to a book seller and get the book seller to notice it, or you might put it in a page of another manuscript. Say you’re compiling a manuscript, a book that has the different Gospels, and you decide, I’m going to put this on the back fly leaf of this book that I’m copying. Pseudepigraphic letters were distributed and recopied and passed around the world. It’s not a Christian phenomenon; it’s not just a Jewish phenomenon. Everybody was doing it.

2. *The Pseudepigraphic Letters to the Colossians and Ephesians*

[17] Today we get to the first two letters we’re going to talk about of the Pauline Corpus. The last time we talked about the seven undisputed letters of Paul. Now we’re going to get to the time where we talk about the disputed letters of Paul. Remember I’ve talked about how Paul’s letters can be divided up into three camps, the undisputed seven letters which are listed—I’ve already listed them for you and I’m not going to do it now, they’re also in your textbook, and then there’s the letters that almost all scholars, critical scholars, believe are pseudepigraphic, which are I and II Timothy and Titus. Then there are the disputed letters that some scholars will accept as being by Paul and other scholars doubt are by Paul. The two that are the most debated probably now are Colossians and Ephesians. Some people, like me, say that they’re not written by

Paul, but they're pseudepigrapha. And some people say they are written by Paul. Yes sir.

[18] *Student:* What is the church's opinion on the letters?

[19] *Professor Dale Martin:* The church's—

[20] *Student:* The Catholic Church.

[21] *Professor Dale Martin:* The Roman Catholic Church? The Roman Catholic Church traditionally would have said there's no such thing as pseudepigraphy in the Bible, but that's changed in the twentieth century, especially with Vatican II, which happened in the 1960s. The Roman Catholic Council of Vatican II said that historical criticism as it's practiced in the twentieth century is perfectly legitimate to practice on the New Testament documents. So you will even find good faithful Roman Catholic scholars who will also either accept or reject the Pauline authorship of this. The Roman Catholic Church has no official doctrinal position on the authorship of the different pieces of the Bible. They may have at one time just assumed that everything that says it's written by Paul was written by Paul, but especially since Vatican II Roman Catholic scholars are completely free to make their own decision about this based purely on the kinds of historical and linguistic criteria that Protestant scholars use also. Any other questions before I move on?

[22] Why do I say that Colossians and Ephesians were not written by Paul but by a disciple of Paul later? The main reason I want to give is writing style. Just like if you turn in a paper to your teaching fellow, and say the first paper that you turned in early in the semester was written in a certain kind of style and then you turn in the second paper and it's in a very different style. Say it has very elaborate sentences whereas your first paper had sort of straightforward simple sentences. It uses lots of dependent clauses whereas your first paper didn't use so many dependent clauses. Your first paper used rather simple language, your second paper uses all this kind of language, and you either have all of a sudden gotten a different kind of education or you went thesaurus crazy or something. So your teaching fellow might say, I'm getting suspicious that this letter doesn't look like it's written by the same person. We can tell things

by writing style. Now you've read seven letters that almost all scholars believe Paul actually wrote. Here is the way Colossians starts out, this is Colossians 1:3-8. In fact, get your Bibles out, follow along with me because what is our motto for the semester's course? De omnibus dubitandum, doubt everything. Why do you bring your Bibles to class? Because I'll lie to you, exactly. I'm going to read my own translation of Colossians 1:3-8, notice this is a good five verses. I read my translation because you will notice in your translation that the editors have broken up this one sentence. This is all one sentence in Greek. The editors have broken it up into several different sentences because it just doesn't read like an English sentence. Here's what it is in Greek:

[23] We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ always for you when we pray, hearing of your faithfulness in Christ Jesus and the love which you have toward all the holy ones [that is, the saints] because of the hope laid in store for you in the heavens, which hope you heard about before in the word of the truth of the Gospel that came to you, just as also in all the cosmos it is bearing fruit and growing, just as also among you from which day you heard and recognize the grace of God in truth, just as you learned from Epaphras, our beloved co-slave, who is your trustworthy servant of Christ and who also made clear to us your love in the spirit.

[24] One sentence. Notice how yours was chopped up into several other clauses and smaller sentences. I kept using relative pronouns like "who did this," "which this," and using ing-words, participles, because that's what you use in the Greek to string along clause after clause after clause. Now if you turn in a sentence like this, expect to get a C on your paper because this is not good American English writing style, right? You recognize that now, don't you, right? Nod your head; yes we recognize that's not good English writing style in contemporary America. But it actually was pretty good writing style in the nineteenth century. Sometimes in the—you read older English and they—educated writers will often write with these complex sentences with dependent clause, and dependent clause, and dependent clause all nestled together. That's called periodic style, a period is this looping Greek or Latin sentence that loops around on itself and then comes into this nice big whole.

Now that was a good writing style in Latin, it was a good writing style in ancient classical Greek, and so this writer is actually writing in a fine style; there's nothing bad. Just because our styles have changed, and it's no longer considered good writing style in modern English, but it was good writing style in Greek. And you can recognize it when you read it in the original Greek in a way that you can't recognize it so much when you read it in your English translation. Now here's the first sentence—not the first sentence but Ephesians 1:3-14, again one sentence. Now if you thought that Colossians sentence was long, listen to this one.

[25] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ, just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the cosmos, that we might be holy and blameless in his presence and love, having foreordained for us the sonship [or the adoption], through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the pleasure of his will for the praise of the glory of his grace, which he granted us and the one he loves, in whom we have the washing through his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished on us in all wisdom and prudence, making known to us the mystery of his will according to his pleasure, which he set forth previously in him until the building up of the fullness of the times, recapitulating everything in Christ, things in the heavens and on the earth in him, in whom also we have become heirs foreordained, according to the plan of the one who accomplishes everything, according to the plan of his will, so that we might exist for the praise of his glory, we who were the first to hope in Christ in whom also you, hearing the word of truth, the announcement of your salvation, and in whom also you believed, who were sealed with the promise of the Holy Spirit which is the seal of our inheritance for the washing of the possession for the praise of his glory.

[26] Thank you very much. It sounds like—who's the comedian? George Carlin doesn't it? It sounds like something George Carlin would come up with, this stringing together all this stuff together, that's actually one sentence. In Greek it's 201 words by my last count, or incidentally, when I translated this into

English it actually comes out to be 250 words in the English translation, so that's a long sentence. Now I do all that just to say this is a good lesson, you should learn Greek, you should learn Greek because it's actually fun to read some of these texts in the original language because the English translations change it enough that you don't get the feel of it. You can get the feel of it even in English. If you sit there and read all those verses in the first chapter of Ephesians, just in your own English translation, you'll get some of that rhythm because they try to maintain a little bit of that long kind of feeling. But it's only in Greek that you figure out that this is one sentence. Now Paul is capable of writing a complex sentence like that, but he just doesn't. You can search all the way through the seven authentic letters of Paul and you just tell—especially the Ephesians passage, it just doesn't sound like Paul. Paul writes fairly straightforward sentences. Sometimes they have grammatical problems, sometimes he kind of starts and stops, sometimes it's hard to figure out exactly, syntactically, how a sentence works together, but Paul's capable of writing perfectly fine Greek sentences. But Paul writes his letters almost more the way you would expect somebody to talk, not like this, which is very elaborate in its construction. This author is obviously working to make an elaborate introductory sentence that's the first thing that's heard in this congregation who's hearing this letter read out loud.

[27] One of the first things that I would say is that I just don't think these letters are by Paul because they don't sound like Paul, they don't sound like his style. They're very, very different as far just the style of the writing and the Greek. Other people could say, well there's also the vocabulary, the vocabulary is quite a bit different in Colossians and Ephesians. If you noticed the Colossians sentence was long but it was not nearly as elaborate as that Ephesians sentence, right? If you notice they sounded similar in places. They both talk about the heavenlies. It's the plural for heaven, so the heavens or the heavenly places is this Greek word. They both used that kind of language. As we'll go through, they both—Colossians and Ephesians—look a lot alike, both in their theology and in their style, and in even the structure of the two letters. Were they written by the same person? Some people think so,

some people say they think it's more likely that Paul may have written Colossians because it at least is not so different from some of his other letters, and then they'll say, but a pseudonymous writer wrote Ephesians.

- [28] What I think is that Colossians was written by one disciple of Paul. He knew Pauline theology; I think that he knew Paul's theology pretty well. It's just that it's not—what he ends up teaching in Colossians is not exactly Paul's theology, as I'll show today. I think, though, that Ephesians came along and was written by somebody else using Colossians as a model. And that's why I think—if you get Ephesians you have this long, long, long sentence that is longer than the similar sentence in Colossians but seems to borrow some from it. I think a different disciple came around, knew about the letter to the Colossians, used Colossians as a model, and then wrote the letter to the Ephesians as another pseudonymous letter. The way I'm going to teach this—and this is something that some scholars won't agree with me about, obviously—but I'm going to take the seven undisputed letters of Paul as being by Paul. Colossians I'm going to teach is written by one disciple of Paul using his ideas but elaborating them differently and using a very different writing style. And Ephesians is written by another disciple of Paul using Colossians and Paul's letters as models.

3. *The Occasion of the Writing of Colossians*

- [29] What is the issue? Let's start with Colossians now, what is the issue in Colossians? First I'll stop, are there any questions or outbursts about what we've done so far? Yes sir.
- [30] *Student:* What says the seven confirmed ones are his and the other two are not his? Why is one style his and one style—
- [31] *Professor Dale Martin:* Okay the question is what says that the seven that I've called the undisputed letters are actually Paul and the others are not Paul? In other words you—basically what it is is that you've got to have something that you're willing to say is Paul if you're ever going to say something else is not Paul. The undisputed letters, we just say that's the historical Paul, if there's anything. Now of course there's a joke in scholarship that basically says, well the seven letters that are the undisputed letters of Paul—called that by

some scholars, they weren't really written by Paul, they were written by another guy named Paul. At some point you just have to say, well we're going to posit that there was a historical Paul, and if anything in the Bible was written by that guy that we're going to assume was the historical Paul, it's those seven letters. They have enough of the style the same, they cohere well together, all seven of them. Now there are scholars who will doubt some of those seven also, one of the seven, but it's sort of like somebody else said, well I don't believe Romans and Galatians were by Paul, than I kind of say, well then they're written by another Apostle who was named Paul and had the exact same ideas and the same writing style. I mean I—at some point you just have to throw up your hands, but yes it's a good question. Basically, scholars just start off saying, if there is a historical Paul then what are the letters that look enough alike to form one body of literature, and those are those seven letters. Any other questions?

- [32] Let's look at Colossians now and go through it and talk about what's at issue in Colossians and what is this letter actually about? Now I asked you to read Colossians before Ephesians, although it comes after in the Canon because I think Colossians predates Ephesians and instead of—basically you've got a choice. These are similar enough in their style and content that you sort of have to say either the same person wrote both of them and that's why they're so much alike, or if you said, like I did, that different people wrote them, one of them used the other as a model. I argue that Colossians was first and used as a model by Ephesians because I think Colossians is more elaborated in the Ephesians document. Of course Colossians doesn't come before Ephesians even though I'm saying it was written before it, and why does Colossians come after Ephesians in the Canon? You should be able to guess this now if we haven't already talked about it. I think we talked about it earlier in the semester. Why does Colossians come after Ephesians in the Canon? Why does 1 Corinthians come after Romans in the Canon? Anybody want to make a guess? How are the letters of Paul arranged in the Canon by order? Sorry, somebody said it.
- [33] *Student:* Length.

- [34] *Professor Dale Martin*: Length, exactly that's right. The longer letters are first, and they get shorter as you go, so Colossians is shorter than Ephesians and therefore it comes after Ephesians in the Canon but that's just the way the Canon got to be formed. Let's look and see what's going on here and for this what is the issue? Let's look at Colossians 2:16:
- [35] Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink, or of observing festivals, new moons or Sabbaths. These are only a shadow of what is to come but the substance belongs to Christ. Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking and not holding fast to the head from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God. If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe [remember those are the stoicheia we talked about in Galatians, the elemental spirits of the universe], why do you live as if you still belong to the world? Why do you submit to regulations? "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch," all these regulations refer to things that perish with use, they are simply human commands and teachings. These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in checking self-indulgence.
- [36] What's going on here? This is basically some form of asceticism, the control of the body. Asceticism comes from the Greek word for exercise, an ascetic is someone who disciplines the body. So "asceticism" refers to usually the avoidance of something like food or luxurious foods or sex, or anything that has desire or passion as part of it. So apparently this author is writing to a community that's been bothered by people who are teaching certain forms of self-control and discipline of the body, the worship of angels. Now there's a debate about whether this refers to people worshipping angels or whether it refers to people who think they're joining with angels in the worship of God. I think it must refer to people who believe they're worshipping angels because this author does link that to stoicheia of the universe. I think what the author is doing is something that Paul sort of did too, which is somehow equate in a sense the stoicheia of the universe with angels who try to manipulate things on the earth and below us. I think that what this author is probably referring is that somebody has come along and is teaching some churches of Paul, Paul's churches, to do some elaborate sort of ascetic practices to gain some kind of great spiritual status. Maybe these people are teaching, you live on the earth now but if you want to fly up through the different regions of the heavens—remember there are several different layers of heavens in ancient cosmology—if you want to fly up through the different layers of heavens then you have to stop eating meat, you have to stop having sex, you need to join in this worship of the angels. Why? Because angels control the gateways to all these different layers of heaven. What's going on is some aspect of asceticism is being taught to these people and some of them seem to be giving into it.
- [37] What is the answer this author gives? 1:19:
- [38] For in Him, that is in Christ [Colossians 1:19] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.
- [39] Look at 3:1-4. In other words, what the author says is, you don't need all these ascetic practices because if you are in Christ you already possess everything that the heavens have to offer. You don't need these extra practices. So he says in Chapter 3:1, "If you have been raised with Christ," that's interesting. He's basically attributing the resurrection already to these people's current state. Now maybe he's talking about baptism. Maybe the idea is that in your baptism when you go down into the water; remember in ancient baptism they all dunked them like good Baptists these days, not a little sprinkling of stuff; they dunked them in the water. If you go down in the water like you're being buried, you come up out of the water, and that's like you're being raised from the grave. He may be talking about if you've been baptized you have been raised with Christ already.
- [40] If you've been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on

earth, for you have died, [he's talking about these people as if they've already experienced death] and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

yet, according to Paul. "If we had been united with him in a death like his we will certainly be reunited with him in a resurrection like his."

[41] This author basically is saying, you don't need these different practices because you already, perhaps in your baptism, have experienced death and resurrection. The only thing these people haven't experienced, that they will experience in heaven, according to this author, is simply the revelation of their glory. They're still leather workers, and waitresses, and working in the quarry, so they don't look like kings right now. Their skin doesn't glow. When Christ is revealed then their skin will glow and all their neighbors will go, oh my God I thought you were just a waiter, now I see that you're living in glory in heaven. That's the only thing they have, now all that you would possess in the heavens, this author says, you already possess. Now compare this with Paul, keep your finger in Colossians and go back to Romans 6. "What then are we to say?" Now remember in Romans Paul is defending himself against charges that he has been antinomian—no law, just anything goes, do anything you want to do.

[44] For Paul the resurrection of Christians hasn't happened yet. Christians for Paul are living in this in between state, having been baptized into death, but not having been raised yet.

[45] We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed and we might no longer be enslaved to him. For whoever has died is freed from sin.

[46] There are some of these things like that but basically for Paul in baptism you participate in the death and burial of Christ, but you don't yet participate in the resurrection. Notice that's quite different from what you found in Colossians. Colossians pulls the resurrection, that for Paul is still in the future, and he puts it in the present. This is called by scholars "realized eschatology." What's eschatology? Somebody say it. Sorry?

[47] *Student:* The end of the world.

[48] *Professor Dale Martin:* Sorry, the end of the world, doctrine about the end of the world, doctrine about the last things, eschaton is the Greek word for "the end" or "the last," so eschatology is what do you believe about the last things, how things are going to end up. "Realized eschatology" basically is the term we scholars give, this is not Paul's term or any other ancient writer. The idea that the eschatological expectations that Paul expected to happen at the end of this world is—has already been realized in the lives of the church. What Paul has is not realized eschatology because the resurrection and all the benefits that you get from being saved by Christ are still in the future. Let's just call that "reserved eschatology." So whereas in Paul's letters it's very important for Paul's theology that the end hasn't happened yet, the resurrection hasn't happened yet. The resurrection of Christ has happened, but remember Paul says he's just the first fruits of those who sleep. He's the first apple on the tree. That's Christ's resurrection, but all the rest of us are just little apple blossoms, or little immature apples. We haven't gotten to maturity yet. We have to wait until either Jesus comes back in the parousia or we die and are resurrected at the end. Colossians has a realized eschatology and Paul

[42] What are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

[43] Paul's Christians have also been baptized into death. "Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father so we also have been raised from death." You all are like sheep, no that's not what it says! I'm lying to you, that's why I want you to read along with me. That's the way most modern Christians read that passage though. They take the Colossians account that has—the author kind of acts like they've been not only buried in baptism but also risen in baptism, and they take that Colossians and read it back into Romans 6. That's not what Paul says in Romans 6, he doesn't say they have been raised yet. Christians have been buried, but then he says, "So we too might walk in newness of life," that's not happened

has a reserved eschatology, and this is one of the major theological differences between Paul's undisputed letters and Colossians, that some of us scholars grasp onto to say it's not Pauline.

and therefore you don't need these other things.

4. *The Letter to the Ephesians as Treatise*

[49] Now other people would say, no, no, no Paul just was emphasizing different things when he wrote Colossians because the situation was different. He changed his writing style a bit because he was writing to a different group, and he wanted to have a more elevated style. He changed his eschatology a bit and emphasized current enjoyment of these things because of the different situation. That's one way to read this, so some people say either Paul's views changed or Paul just emphasized different aspects of theology—if you want to say Paul wrote Colossians, and there are many scholars who do. I say, no this is good evidence that we're talking about a different author who has a slightly different theology that would be, in some ways, pretty fundamentally different. Like Paul was doing, though, notice how these people are doing what Paul's people in Galatians did. They're looking for something else to add onto the requirements of faith that will somehow guarantee their possession of the blessings of salvation. This author though provides a different answer.

[50] Paul's answer, what was Paul's answer to people in Galatians who wanted to add on circumcision and kosher? He basically said no, you're actually nullifying the faithfulness of God. Justification for Paul in Romans has always been by faith, even Abraham was justified by faith not by circumcision. And so Paul makes a big argument by saying, justification has always been by faith, therefore nothing else can be added onto it. This is important for Paul because that's God's faithfulness. For Paul the most important thing is, if God wasn't always justifying people by faith that would mean God changed his mind and God was not faithful to the original covenant to Abraham. For Paul, God justifies by faith, he always has justified by faith, even all the way back to Abraham. The Colossians writer does it a bit differently. He also talks about faith, that's important to him, but basically he says, you don't need all these additions because you already possess them, you've already experienced the resurrection of Jesus, you already sit in the heavenly places,

[51] Now Ephesians uses Colossians as a model and then just builds on it even more. Let's look over to Ephesians and look at Ephesians 1:20:

[52] God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places far above all rule and authority, and power, and dominion, and above every name that is named not only in this age but also in the age to come. He has put all things under his feet and made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

[53] Christ is already now seated in the heavenly places, which he is for Paul theology too, but what makes it different is—look at 2:6, chapter 2, verse 6, “And raised us up with him” So again the resurrection is something the Ephesians writer says they've already experienced.

[54] ... and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable richness—riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

[55] Already—notice verse 8 of chapter 2, “For by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing it is the gift of God.” Now that's something that you might not notice, but scholars like to pick on little things like that, and most scholars will point out that if you look at just Paul's seven undisputed letters, salvation is something that for Paul exists in the future. Justification is something that you've experienced in the past. So Paul can say you have been justified, but Paul almost never acts like Christians have been saved. For example, when someone knocks on your door and someone says, “Have you been saved?” You can say, well, no, because the Apostle Paul reserves salvation for the end time. I've been justified but I haven't been saved. That's good Pauline theology. The people who talk about “have you been saved?” they're using theology from Ephesians perhaps, or from Colossians, but it doesn't really fit Paul's theology. For Paul's theology, justification is something you've experienced,

but salvation is something you still have to wait on. For Ephesians, though, salvation is something you have experienced through faith.

[56] Notice that Ephesians therefore actually looks like it's using Colossians in the example, it has some of the same themes, some of the same styles, but Ephesians actually looks even more like a treatise and not like a real letter. If you outline Ephesians, you get the first three chapters, which are very elaborate doctrinal teachings about what Christ has accomplished, what you, if you're a follower of Christ, have experienced. And one of the main focuses of Ephesians is that Gentiles and Jews, the whole world, has been joined at one humanity in the body of Christ. The dividing wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles, probably the law in this guy's thinking, has been broken down and all followers of Christ have experienced this. The first three chapters do that, and then chapters 4-6 in Ephesians look more like a section on ethics, or as scholars will often say, paraenesis. This is just a fancy, anglicization of a Greek word, which means "instruction" or "moral instruction." It's like when your mom says do this, don't do that, behave yourself, don't pick your nose at the table, say excuse me when you burp, so there's a lot of Christian material that are sort of do this, don't do that ethics and that's what the last half of Ephesians looks more like. So scholars will often say Ephesians looks like a very nice treatise, a very well organized outline of Christian doctrine and teaching; the first half of it being doctrine and the second half of it being ethics.

[57] Why do I say that Ephesians was written by a different author and not simply the same author? There's really just one reason and this was argued by a young man, Jeremy Hultin, who teaches in The Divinity School here and he did a PhD here at Yale several years ago. The PhD was mainly on foul language in early Christianity. What counts as cussing? What counts as dirty language? Why both Ephesians and Colossians talk about don't use—the term in Greek is *aischrologia*, shameful speech. Well Jeremy kind of sat there and he thought, well—back when I was a kid my mom wouldn't let us say "darn," we were really strict. You certainly couldn't say "dang," that was worse than "darn," and "damn" was worse than any of them, so don't get caught saying "damn." Now I've actually caught my mother saying it a few times lately but things change. What

makes "damn" bad for some people and "darn" okay? Well these are cultural differences, right? Why is it that in some cultures body parts, certain body parts, or excrement is considered a foul word that you're not supposed to say in polite company? Why is it that some cultures have curse words and some of those curse words are related to sacred things? Like why in some cultures is it considered bad language and offensive language to say "Jesus Christ," especially if you say "Jesus H. Christ"? Whereas, as in other cultures, calling on the name of a god or a goddess wouldn't be considered shameful language at all.

[58] So Jeremy said, what do these people mean by shameful language? How do you know shameful language when you see it in the ancient world and what were they talking about? His dissertation is on that, but one thing he points out is that although both the writer of Colossians and Ephesians tell people not to use shameful language, the writer of Colossians actually tells people in his church to use witty language. He says, and your translation may something like this, "Let your speech be seasoned with salt." And Jeremy pointed out that this is a reference to witty language, to a language of wit. The writer to Ephesians condemns that kind of language. He just noticed that these two writers are very similar in some ways but when it comes down to what counts as shameful speech, the writer of the Ephesians considered shameful speech even to include witticisms, making jokes, that also was considered shameful speech. Whereas the writer of Colossians doesn't include that. In fact, he tells people to use wit in their language. So that's just one of the reasons. Before that I kind of thought, well, probably the same person wrote both these letters, and they were just different in some ways. But he convinced me that quite probably they were written by two different, very similar, but two different followers of Jesus, with Colossians being the earlier letter and the Ephesians writer using Colossians as a model and then capitalizing on it.

[59] Another interesting thing is we don't really know whether the letter to the Ephesians was written to the Ephesians. There's an interesting problem in the Greek manuscripts. A lot of the Greek manuscripts don't have "to the Ephesians," some of them have another place

name there, and some of them seem to have just a blank. This has led some scholars to say maybe Ephesians was written as a circular letter. In fact some people have even said, maybe Ephesians was written when a collection of Paul's letters was made and some scribe or editor decided, well I'm going to write an introductory letter that will encapsulate Paul's Gospel in Paul's message, and I'm going to do it in a very elevated style, and we'll put that at the beginning of the collection to sort of be an introductory letter for all the collection of Paul's letters. One of the things is that we think that Ephesians may have been a circular letter because of this idea that not all the Greek manuscripts have Ephesians and some have other things. The idea is that the guy may have written a letter with the idea that you would leave "to the blank" and then fill it in with different place names, according to where you were going to send the letter, or that you would send it one place and then they could fill in another name and send it to other places. Ephesians, by many of our reckoning, may have been written as a circular letter, intended to be circulated around different churches, maybe even as sort of an introductory letter to a collection of Paul's other letters.

5. *Major Differences between Colossians and Ephesians and Pauline Christianity*

[60] What, though, are the other developments, and we'll close in just a few minutes here. What makes these letters different from Pauline Christianity? There are a few things. Number one, I said Colossians and Ephesians both have realized eschatology; Paul has reserved eschatology. In other words, for Paul all the enjoyments that Christians would experience are still in the future. It's like for Paul the blessings of the eschaton, the eschatology, is still horizontal. We're here, we're going there, we're on earth, we'll be in heaven. We have experienced death, we will experience resurrection. For Ephesians and Colossians, they've taken this axis and turned it like this, so that the things that—there's the cosmos and there's the heavenlies but they all still exist right now, so the rest of the world is down here on earth, but followers of Jesus have been translated already right now into the heavenly places, and they already enjoy these benefits. It's almost as if the eschatological timeline, the

axis in Paul's letter, has been just flipped up like this in Colossians and Ephesians, so that's one major difference.

[61] Another major difference is Colossians and Ephesians have a slightly higher Christology. The Colossians writer, very famously, says, in Christ the entire fullness of God was pleased to dwell. Paul never says anything quite like that. In fact, Paul's letters are kind of problematic from a good orthodox theological point of view because Paul seems to assume what we would later call a subordinationist Christology. Subordinationist Christology, which was declared heretical by the time you get to the creeds in the fourth century, says that Jesus is another person, separate from God the Father, and Jesus is inferior to God the Father, so Jesus is subordinate to God the Father. There are several passages in Paul's letters, one of them in 1 Corinthians 15 that we've talked about and read in this class already, where Paul seems to still believe that God the Father is here, Christ is here. Then there was 1 Corinthians 11 where Paul talks about, "Man is the head of woman, Christ is the head of man, and God is the head of Christ." Well that's a hierarchy. God, Christ, man, woman. So Paul seems to hold what we would call almost a subordinationist form of Christology, whereas Colossians and Ephesians tend to have Christ as more fully God.

[62] Another of the changes, and I won't go into this too much, but if you look at the household codes, and we'll get to this later when we talk about Christianity in the family. In Colossians 3:18-4:1 and Ephesians 5:21-6:9, you have an elaborate set of rules for the head of the household, the wife, the children, the slaves. Everybody has their job to do. In Colossians and Ephesians there is clearly a patriarchal household structure that's hierarchical. The wife and the children submit to the husband, the father, the slaves submit to the master. This is much more hierarchical and pro-household than what you get in Paul's authentic letters. Paul is perfectly willing to kind of have women and men, husbands and wives more mutual. He says in 1 Corinthians 7, "The husband controls the wife's body but the wife also controls the husband's body. They each have authority over each other's body." That's not the way it is in Colossians and Ephesians where it's much more hierarchical, much more patriarchal.

[63] There are some kinds of differences, but what does it say about Paul? Already by these letters, then, by these pseudonymous letters, we have Paul being thought of now as a figure in the past whose reputation can now be built on to advance a slightly different version of the Christian Gospel and Christian message than you got in Paul's letters. Paul is already starting to recede into the past now, and, as we'll see as the semester goes on, we'll read other texts that have Paul even further in the

past, and then he can be drawn on to justify or promote another form of early Christianity. Any questions about that? Next time what we'll do is we'll look at the letter of James in which we have someone who may indeed be actually opposing Paul's Gospel and Paul's message rather than just building on it. See you next time.

[end of transcript]