

THE *GOSPEL OF THOMAS*'S REJECTION OF PAUL'S THEOLOGICAL IDEAS¹

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I. *Introduction*

The title of this essay is intentionally provocative and calls for some clarification. First, this study proceeds under the assumption that the *Gospel of Thomas* developed over a lengthy period of time before becoming fixed in the form we currently possess. This means that the final form of *Thomas* contains disparate traditions rather than a unified theological logic.² However, when I use '*Thomas*' in the present study I am referring to the final form of the document, as if it were always possible to speak of a coherent 'theology of *Thomas*'.³ Second, in using the term 'rejection' it is not my intention to suggest that *Thomas* as a whole is consciously 'anti-Pauline' or that the entire text somehow reflects a conflict with Pauline Christianity. I have argued elsewhere that such

1. Several individuals took the time to converse with me and interact with the ideas presented in this essay. In particular, I am thankful for the insights and thoughtful input provided by Michael Gorman, Kelly Iverson, Frank Moloney and Kurt Pfund. Their comments, both written and oral, have improved this essay. Any mistakes or oversights that remain are solely my own responsibility.

2. Over the years scholars have tried to trace *Thomas*'s internal logic with little success. Helmut Koester has commented that there seems to be no logic behind *Thomas*'s ordering of material: 'What is most puzzling about the composition of sayings in this wisdom book is the arrangement and order of the sayings. There is seemingly no rhyme or reason for the odd sequence in which the sayings occur in the *Gospel of Thomas*'. He goes on to say that 'several attempts have been made to find the author's compositional principle, [but] none of them [are] convincing' (*Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* [Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1992], p. 81). One of Koester's former students, Elaine Pagels ('Exegesis of Genesis 1 in the Gospels of Thomas and John', *JBL* 118 [1999], p. 481), encourages readers to adopt 'the hypothesis that the sayings are not randomly arranged, but carefully ordered to lead one through a process of seeing and finding "the interpretation of these sayings" (log. 1). This is not to suggest, however, that the author follows an obvious or syllogistic rationale'. Another Koester pupil, Allen Callahan, attempts to demonstrate the author's 'compositional principle' by examining catchphrases, conceptual links and sequential links within the gospel (see "'No Rhyme or Reason": The Hidden Logia of the *Gospel of Thomas*', *HTR* 90 [1997], pp. 411–26).

3. As a narrative critic, I recognize that *Thomas* became fixed in its final form for a reason and that it possesses an internal unity and coherence, despite problems that might suggest otherwise.

a line of reasoning is often misguided.⁴ Rather, I hope to demonstrate that in several places, traditions contained in *Thomas* show knowledge of Paul's writings and a reworking of 'Pauline language for un-Pauline ends'.⁵ In the course of its development, *Thomas* incorporated and modified traditions that were decidedly different from the emerging mainstream (viz. proto-orthodox) forms of Pauline and Johannine Christianity. Where parallels to the Johannine and Pauline traditions exist in *Thomas*, they are used quite differently than in their original sources. Finally, I must admit that in examining the relationship between Paul and *Thomas* in light of the aims of this volume, I could think of no better word than 'ideas' to serve as a drip-pan designation for the different Pauline formulations *Thomas* seems to incorporate and modify. *Thomas* is inherently theological but its seemingly random arrangement and lack of narrative structure do not lend themselves as easily to systematic discussions of topics such as Christology, soteriology, eschatology, or the use of the OT as do the writings of Paul. With these qualifications in place, it is now possible to proceed to the discussion at hand.

Identifying influences or locating parallels between *Thomas* and the Pauline literature is an undertaking not unlike jumping out of a deep well. Not only does the task seem difficult to complete, but where does one begin? Throughout its history Thomasine scholarship has been dominated by questions of *Thomas*'s relationship to the Synoptics,⁶ though a more recent trend has sought to focus on the relationship between *Thomas* and the Fourth Gospel.⁷ Apart from the

4. See Christopher W. Skinner, *John and Thomas: Gospels in Conflict? Johannine Characterization and the Thomas Question* (PTMS 115; Eugene: OR, Pickwick, 2009), esp. pp. 227–33.

5. This phrase is borrowed from Simon Gathercole, 'The Influence of Paul on the Gospel of Thomas (53.3 and 17)', in J. Frey, E. E. Popkes and J. Schröter (eds), *Das Thomasevangelium: Entstehung – Rezeption – Theologie* (BZNW 157; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), p. 84, emphasis his.

6. For a helpful overview of material related to *Thomas* and the Synoptics see Christopher Tuckett, 'Thomas and the Synoptics', *NovT* 30 (1988), pp. 132–57. See also Stephen J. Patterson, 'The Gospel of Thomas and the Synoptic Tradition: A Forschungsbericht and Critique', *FFF* 8 (1992), pp. 45–97, and the pertinent sections in Francis T. Fallon and Ron Cameron, 'The Gospel of Thomas: A Forschungsbericht and Analysis', in W. Haase and H. Temporini (eds), *ANRW* 2.25.6 (New York: de Gruyter), pp. 4213–23, and Nicholas Perrin, 'Recent Trends in Gospel of Thomas Research (1991–2006): Part I, The Historical Jesus and the Synoptic Gospels', *CBR* 5 (2007), pp. 191–98.

7. Over the last decade and a half an influential cadre of American scholars have argued that the Fourth Gospel is a conscious response to theological developments within *Thomas* or to the sayings tradition that stands behind it. See e.g. Gregory J. Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered: John and Thomas in Controversy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); Elaine Pagels, 'Exegesis of Genesis 1'; idem, *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2003); April D. DeConick, '"Blessed Are Those Who Have Not Seen" (Jn 20:29): Johannine Dramatization of an Early Christian Discourse', in John D. Turner and Anne McGuire (eds), *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* (NHMS 44; Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 381–98; idem, 'John Rivals Thomas: From Community Conflict to Gospel Narrative', in Robert T. Fortna and Tom Thatcher (eds), *Jesus in the Johannine Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), pp. 303–12; idem, *Seek to See Him: Ascent and Vision Mysticism in the Gospel of Thomas* (VCSup 33; Leiden: Brill, 1996); idem, *Voices of the Mystics: Early Christian Discourse in the Gospel of John and Thomas and Other Ancient*

occasional footnote or passing reference to potential parallels between the two, *Thomas* scholars have had little to say about the possibilities of a genetic relationship between Paul and *Thomas*, and Pauline scholars have virtually ignored *Thomas* altogether. Aside from a helpful recent essay by Simon Gathercole, little has been written on the topic.⁸ Gathercole himself acknowledges that he is ‘not aware of a single article or book on the subject’.⁹ This fact makes it even more difficult to approach the topic and obviously allows for few conversation partners. Add to this that there is little consensus on the major issues in Thomasine studies, and the prospects for exploring a possible relationship between Paul and *Thomas* seem even more tenuous.¹⁰

I find myself in substantial agreement with Gathercole’s conclusion that there are a handful of instances where *Thomas*’s knowledge of Pauline traditions can be detected, but I believe this thesis can be taken a step further. In what follows I plan to investigate instances of Pauline influence on several logia in *Thomas*. I will then consider how the Pauline traditions have been modified, reworked, or completely rejected in the light of *Thomas*’s peculiar theological interests.

II. Starting points: Problems, limitations and assumptions

a. Dating *Thomas* and the Pauline tradition

Theories abound as to the date of *Thomas*’s composition and there is no consensus in sight. The question of dating *Thomas* is often raised vis-à-vis the canonical Gospels, with some arguing that *Thomas* was composed in the mid- to late second century¹¹ and others arguing that it emerged as early as the Gospel of Mark (c.70 CE).¹² Few scholars are willing to make the extraordinarily tenuous leap to a

Christian Literature (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 2001). This idea has been challenged by the recent works of Ismo Dunderberg (*The Beloved Disciple in Conflict: Revisiting the Gospels of John and Thomas* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006]), and Skinner, *John and Thomas*.

8. Gathercole, ‘Influence’, pp. 72–94.

9. Ibid., p. 72.

10. There is significant division among scholars as to *Thomas*’s date, theological outlook, relation to the canonical gospels, and compositional language. For an overview of these debates and the major players involved in the discussions, see Christopher W. Skinner, *What Are They Saying about the Gospel of Thomas?* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist) (forthcoming).

11. The most notable recent attempt to situate *Thomas* in the second century is that of Nicholas Perrin. Reviving and reworking a theory earlier espoused by Gilles Quispel and later modified by A. F. J. Klijn, Perrin argues that *Thomas* was dependent on Tatian’s *Diatessaron*, a Syriac harmony of the four canonical gospels that is generally dated to the 170s CE. For Perrin, this means that *Thomas* is from the late second century; he also argues that it was originally composed in Syriac. For a fuller exposition of Perrin’s thesis, see *Thomas and Tatian: The Relationship between the Gospel of Thomas and the Diatessaron* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002); idem, ‘Thomas: The Fifth Gospel?’, *JETS* 49 (2006), pp. 67–80; idem, *Thomas: The Other Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2007).

12. See, for instance, the influential work of Stephen J. Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus* (Sonoma: Scholars, 1992).

pre-Pauline *Thomas* tradition, though there is at least one recent scholar to argue along these lines.¹³ There is a broad consensus among scholars that, apart from the letter of James,¹⁴ the letters of Paul are the earliest Christian writings we possess, though this consensus in itself proves nothing.¹⁵ Nevertheless, there is firm evidence that the Pauline correspondence began to appear as early as the late 40s CE, while the picture of *Thomas's* emergence is not quite as clear. There is a high degree of probability that there was a substantive body of Pauline letters in circulation prior to the emergence of the *Thomas* sayings tradition, though we will not take that assumption for granted here.¹⁶ In what follows we will examine each text on its own without assuming an overarching theory of compositional chronology.

b. *Limits of literary comparison*

Because there is only one complete extant copy of *Thomas*, and that preserved in Coptic, it naturally follows that we are severely limited when it comes to looking for strict verbal parallels in the Greek texts of Paul's letters. Nonetheless, the nature of our study is literary and we must necessarily focus on the texts themselves. This means we will seek to identify in Paul and *Thomas* the same or similar words, phrases, ideas and contexts. An investigation of this sort will then assist us in answering questions about which texts preceded and influenced the others.

13. April D. DeConick argues that the *Thomas* is the product of a 'rolling corpus'. She locates four layers of tradition. First there is the 'Kernel', which dates to 30–50 CE. The sayings represented here are essentially apocalyptic in nature and reflect the early Thomasine community's expectation that Jesus would return to bring judgement. The second layer of tradition contains accretions reflecting the community's struggle with a changing leadership. These traditions are dated to a period between 50 and 60 CE. The third layer of tradition reveals a change in the community's eschatological expectations, largely based upon the delay of the *parousia*. She dates these to the period 60–100 CE. The fourth layer is dated to around 120. See her discussion of the 'Kernel' in *Recovering*, pp. 64–110.

14. James was likely written in the mid- to late 40s and probably predates both 1 Thessalonians and Galatians – the writings usually regarded as Paul's earliest. On issues related to the early dating of James, see Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Epistle of James* (AB 37A; New York: Doubleday, 1995), pp. 118–22. Among recent commentators, Abraham Malherbe (*The Letters to the Thessalonians* [AB 32B; New York: Doubleday, 2000], pp. 71–74) dates 1 Thessalonians to 49 CE. On the dating of Galatians the ongoing debate about the letter's destination impacts the question of dating. Those who favour the so-called 'North Galatians' theory argue for a date around 57–58 CE, while the advocates of the 'South Galatians' theory place the letter between 51 and 54 CE.

15. When describing Paul's writings as 'Christian' texts, I want to be careful to avoid the trap of speaking of Paul as the 'inventor of Christianity' or 'the first Christian'. On this issue I cite my former colleague, Michael J. Gorman, who is quick to remind us that 'Paul was born a Jew, lived a Jew, and died a Jew. It was therefore obviously as a Jew that he experienced the once-crucified Jesus as the resurrected and exalted Lord. Paul did not set out to found a new religion but to call Jews and especially Gentiles to confess Jesus as Messiah. . . . In retrospect, we can of course say that Paul was a 'Christian' – one who confesses and follows Jesus as Christ and Lord. But we must do so without forgetting the inherent Jewishness of this very term ("Christian") and of the great Christian apostle Paul' (*Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], p. 40).

16. My own view is that *Thomas* developed during the period between 70 and 150 CE, and that those responsible for its composition had some awareness of the Synoptic tradition.

We must also keep in mind that the earliest Christian documents emerged in what was largely an oral culture. In the regions where Christianity developed most rapidly, few people could read and write. Scholars have long recognized that most early Christian storytelling existed in performative, liturgical and homiletic forms before it ever became fixed in a documentary form.¹⁷ This means that the vast majority of the early followers of Jesus were not able to read the story for themselves, but rather relied upon a small group of educated individuals to either read to them or perform for them. An awareness of these factors has implications for our study inasmuch as it is not always possible to establish that a relationship between two or more ancient Christian documents goes back to a written text. A given saying may have circulated widely in oral form, and the decision to incorporate that saying into a written text may have been made without recourse to a written source. This fact must be kept in mind so as to avoid the illegitimate application of a modern ‘cut and paste’ model to our discussion.

III. *Paul and Thomas: Texts and traditions*

Here we will examine several Paul-Thomas parallels. Following *Thomas*’s order of sayings we will consider the possible relationship between: (1) *Gos. Thom.* 3 and Rom. 10.5-8, (2) *Gos. Thom.* 17 and 1 Cor. 2.9, (3) *Gos. Thom.* 53 and Rom. 2.25-29, and (4) several texts from *Thomas* and Paul in which the flesh/spirit dichotomy appears. After these parallels have been examined, we will proceed to a discussion of theological formulations in *Thomas* and their relationship to Pauline ideas.

a. Gospel of Thomas 3 and Romans 10.5-8

<i>Gospel of Thomas 3</i>	<i>Romans 10.5-8</i>
Jesus said, ‘If your leaders say to you, “Look, the kingdom is in the sky,” then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, “It is in the sea,” then the fish will precede you. Rather, the kingdom is within you and it is outside you. When you know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will understand that you are children of the living Father. But if you do not know yourselves, then you live in poverty, and you are the poverty.’	⁵ Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that ‘the person who does these things will live by them.’ ⁶ But the righteousness that comes from faith says, ‘Do not say in your heart, “Who will ascend into heaven?”’ (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷ ‘or “Who will descend into the abyss?”’ (That is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸ But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart.’

17. For a helpful overview of recent scholarship on orality as it relates to biblical and early Christian studies, see Kelly R. Iverson, ‘Orality and the Gospels: A Survey of Recent Research’, *CBR* 8 (2009), pp. 71–106.

On the surface there does not seem to be much to commend the view that these two passages share a common heritage. The context associated with each saying is quite different as Paul is focused on justification (δικαιώσυνη) and its relationship to Torah while *Thomas* is interested in expounding the nature of the kingdom. There are a few verbal similarities, but how far can they be pressed? A potentially illuminating observation is that both Paul and *Thomas* seem to be adapting or borrowing from a tradition influenced by Deut. 30.12-14.¹⁸ Our analysis begins here.¹⁹

As far back as 1969, Peter Nagel sought to draw a connection between Rom. 10.5-8 and *Gos. Thom.* 3.²⁰ In an article simply titled 'Considerations on the *Gospel of Thomas*' ('Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium'), Nagel began his discussion of this potential parallel by commenting on Paul's use of Lev. 18.5 and Deut. 30.12-14 in Rom. 10.5-8. He then noted similar terminology and themes in *Gos. Thom.* 3. Nagel identified four changes that Paul made in incorporating these texts into his argument: (1) Paul has replaced the Deuteronomic phrase 'between heaven and beyond the sea' with the dichotomy 'in heaven'/'in the abyss' (εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον); (2) in Deuteronomy 30, attempting to obtain the command from heaven or beyond the sea is futile, while for Paul, these questions are refuted in light of the consequences that would result from them; (3) Paul adds the benefit that one is blessed through confession and belief, an element missing from Deuteronomy 30; and (4) Paul wants to connect 'confess' with the mouth and 'believe' with the heart.²¹ Following these observations Nagel

18. It has not been uncommon for scholars to recognize a connection between *Gos. Thom.* 3, Romans 10, and material in Deuteronomy 30. For instance, the earliest English translation of the *Gospel of Thomas* (*The Gospel According to Thomas: Coptic Text Established and Translated* [trans. by A. Guillemon, H.-Ch. Puech, G. Quispel, W. Till and Yassah 'Abd Al Masih; Leiden: Brill, 1959], p. 59) contained a note suggesting the relationship of *Gos. Thom.* 3 to Deut. 30.11-14 and Rom. 10.6-8. Cf. also T. F. Glasson, 'The Gospel of Thomas, Saying 3, and Deuteronomy xxx 11-14', *ExpTim* 78 (1967), pp. 151-52; and Richard Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas* (New Testament Readings; London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 58-59.

19. For purposes of comparison, the MT and LXX versions of Deut. 30.12-14 are provided below:

MT	LXX
<p>12 לא בשמים הוא לאמר מי יעלה לנו השמימה ויקחה לנו וישענו אתה ונעשה ויקחם לנו 13 ולא מעבר לים הוא לאמר מי יעבר לנו אל עבר הים וישמענו אתה ונעשה 14 כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאד בפך ובלבבך לעשתו</p>	<p>12 οὐκ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἄνω ἐστὶν λέγων τίς ἀναβήσεται ἡμῖν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ λή- μψεται αὐτὴν ἡμῖν; καὶ ἀκούσαντες αὐτὴν ποιήσομεν. 13 οὐδὲ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης ἐστὶν λέγων τίς διαπεράσει ἡμῖν εἰς τὸ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ λήμψεται ἡμῖν αὐτήν; καὶ ἀκουσθὴν ἡμῖν ποιήσει αὐτήν, καὶ ποιή- σομεν. 14 ἔστιν σου ἐγγὺς τὸ ῥῆμα σφόδρα ἐν τῷ στόματί σου καὶ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν ταῖς χερσίν σου αὐτὸ ποιεῖν.</p>

20. P. Nagel, 'Erwägungen zum Thomas-Evangelium', in F. Altheim and R. Stiehl (eds), *Die Araber in der alten Welt*, Vol. V, Part 2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969), pp. 368-92.

21. Nagel, 'Erwägungen', pp. 368-69.

examines the similar use of Deuteronomy 30 in *Gos. Thom.* 3 and notes that certain elements peculiar to Paul's use of this OT tradition are also present in the *Thomas* logion.²² Specifically and most importantly, *Thomas* also changes Deuteronomy's 'beyond the sea' to 'in the sea' (the Coptic reads Ⲛⲧⲛⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ though the Greek Oxyrhynchus fragment reads 'of the sea', τῆς θαλάσσης]). For Nagel, the presence of this change in both *Thomas* and Romans, and its absence in all other extant versions of the saying, means that Paul and *Thomas* are sharing a common tradition. He goes on to conclude that *Gos. Thom.* 3 is an older version of the saying, adding that the Thomasine text must have been in Paul's consciousness when he wrote his letter to the Romans.²³

Similarly, Simon Gathercole recognizes the use of Deuteronomy 30 by Paul and *Thomas* and asks, '[D]oes *GThom* employ Deut in a reasonably direct way, or is Deut 30 mediated to *GThom* through a pre-existing interpretative tradition?'²⁴ Like Nagel, he observes that all of the pre-Pauline interpretations of Deut. 30.13 (including the LXX, *Baruch*, and Philo) retain 'a contrast between "up in heaven" and "across the sea"', while Paul and *Thomas* both 'contrast the heaven above with what is below'.²⁵ The three examples from Deut. 30.13 (LXX), Philo (*De Posteritate Caini* 84-85), and Bar. 3.30 all read πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης, and this is where both Paul and *Thomas* depart. Gathercole writes:

Paul calls it the 'abyss', and presumes that it is the region where the dead reside: it is the place from which you might at least imagine 'bringing Christ up from the dead'. *Thomas* calls it the region 'under the earth', where the fish are. These are the same place – not across the sea as in *Deut*, *Baruch* and Philo, but in the *tehom* under the earth, where people sleep with the fishes.²⁶

Thus, it seems that both *Thomas* and Paul have changed not only the preposition, but also the concept associated with location 'sea'. From this, Gathercole concludes, like Nagel before him, that this is likely an instance of shared tradition, though he argues that the direction of influence goes from Paul to *Thomas* and not the other way around as Nagel suggests.²⁷

22. Ibid., p. 371.

23. Ibid., pp. 370–72. Nagel discusses some potential objections to the conclusion that Paul used *Thomas* (see especially p. 372), but defends his thesis against each one. For his part, Nagel is concerned to establish the thesis that the *Thomas* sayings tradition derived from an Aramaic tradition that found its way into Coptic without passing through a Greek intermediary.

24. Gathercole, 'Influence,' p. 80.

25. Ibid., p. 81 (emphasis in original).

26. Ibid.

27. I am indebted to Dr Gathercole for pointing me to Nagel's article. During a brief conversation in New Orleans at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (November 2009) he mentioned Nagel's essay, noting that he discovered it subsequent to his own research on the topic.

Two questions emerge from the foregoing discussion. First, the observations made by Nagel and Gathercole are compelling but are they enough to demonstrate that this is an instance where Paul and *Thomas* share a common tradition? And, if they are sharing a common tradition, is this enough to demonstrate the dependence of one document on another? To be sure, these conclusions are not as self-evident as one might hope. For his part, Nagel seems confident though Gathercole is less optimistic, giving the probability of his conclusion only a 'good sporting chance'.²⁸ Second, if there is a borrowing of tradition, who influenced whom? Once we answer the first question, the answer to the second question seems to follow quite naturally.

Even though the final forms of *Gos. Thom.* 3 and Rom. 10.5-8 are quite different, it is difficult to ignore their similar changes to Deuteronomy 30, especially in light of the other existing traditions that do not agree. When that agreement is taken into account, there are at least two points in support of the general conclusion that *Thomas* and Paul share material, and the specific conclusion that *Gos. Thom.* 3 is dependent upon Paul for the tradition.

First, Paul shows a remarkable knowledge of the OT throughout his letters, with the highest concentration of citations appearing in Romans.²⁹ Paul cites directly from Deuteronomy at least fifteen times in his writings and alludes to Deuteronomic themes throughout.³⁰ In his important book *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, Richard Hays has argued that Deuteronomy provides Paul with the salvation-historical schema that is appropriated in both Galatians and Romans; this includes God's election of a people, the subsequent rebellion of the people, God's judgement, and finally God's deliverance of his people.³¹ Significantly, Hays opens the book, and his entire discussion of 'the puzzle of Pauline hermeneutics', with a consideration of Rom. 10.6-8.³² Both Paul's use and reworking of Deuteronomic traditions have been a source of significant discussion within Pauline studies. Likewise, James Scott has argued that Deuteronomy is crucial to Paul's thinking and theological formulations. Scott's analysis of Deuteronomic traditions in Paul's thought convincingly demonstrates that Paul appropriates the tradition in both his

28. Gathercole, 'Influence', p. 83.

29. James Scott ('Paul's Use of Deuteronomic Tradition', *JBL* 112 [1993], pp. 645) notes that 'among the uncontested letters of Paul, not only are the explicit citations [of the OT] confined to the *Hauptbriefe*, but fully half are found in Romans alone. And fully half of the OT quotations in Romans are found in chaps. 9-11'.

30. Dietrich-Alex Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1986), p. 33.

31. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 163-64.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

early (e.g. 1 Thessalonians 2; Galatians 3) and later correspondences (e.g. Romans 9–11).³³

Thomas's awareness of the OT is unremarkable by comparison and it is not at all clear that it shows independent knowledge of the Deuteronomic tradition.³⁴ It is therefore difficult to imagine a scenario in which *Thomas* is responsible for the changes to Deuteronomy 30 that are found in both Rom. 10.5-8 and *Gos. Thom.* 3. Given what we are able to know with some confidence about Paul and his relationship to Torah, it seems unlikely that the tradition originated with *Thomas* and then found its way to Paul.

A second and related point can be made by appealing to the principle of Occam's razor. If we conclude that Paul and *Thomas* are sharing a common tradition, we must not only ask who is influencing whom, but also which scenario is more likely and which more problematic. Gathercole perceptively notes the problematic nature of positing Pauline dependence upon *Gos. Thom.* 3 when he writes:

[T]o suppose that *GThom* influences Paul here would mean something like the following: *Deut* 30 made an impression on the author of *GThom* who then thoroughly re-worked *Deut* 30, changing much of the language and adapting the existing contrast to one which contrasted heaven and the abyss, perhaps for cosmological reasons. Then Paul, coming across a sayings tradition which included something like *GThom* 3 adopted the saying, *but then reintroduced some of the Deuteronomic elements which the sayings-tradition had dropped*. The economy of supposing Pauline influence on *GThom* means that one need not resort to elements being dropped and then later reintroduced.³⁵

Constructing the argument in this way solves the greatest number of problems while raising the fewest questions, unlike the corollary, which would create a rather far-fetched and unlikely scenario. In light of these arguments, there is a very strong likelihood that *Thomas* made use of Rom. 10.5-8, though I do want to be careful here to recognize that we cannot know for certain that *Thomas* is relying upon a *written* text of Romans. *Thomas*'s use of this Pauline material may have been mediated through oral tradition, and this too may account for some of the differences we see in *Gos. Thom.* 3. It may indeed be the case that the Pauline form of the saying has been altered through oral delivery before reaching its final shape in *Thomas*. Nevertheless, it is safe to conclude that *Gos.*

33. Scott, 'Deuteronomic Tradition', p. 647.

34. Several Thomasine logia appear to have been influenced by traditions that were informed or shaped by Deuteronomy. These include logia 23, 32, 53. However, none of these allusions amounts to *Thomas*'s direct or independent knowledge of Deuteronomy.

35. Gathercole, 'Influence', p. 83 (emphasis in original).

Thom. 3 provides us with our first example of Paul's influence upon *Thomas*.³⁶ Although this influence is materially rather insignificant, it is important methodologically for establishing the likelihood of additional Pauline influences on *Thomas* that may be more important.

b. Gospel of Thomas 17 and 1 Corinthians 2.9

<i>Gospel of Thomas 17</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 2.9</i>
Jesus said, 'I will give you what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, what no hand has touched, what has not arisen in the human heart.'	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.'

The similarities between 1 Cor. 2.9 and *Gos. Thom.* 17 are evident right away though questions about the sharing of tradition prove difficult to answer. To begin with, the proverb appears to draw upon elements of Isa. 52.15, 64.3-4 and/or 65.16, though no part of the saying represents a direct quotation of any OT passage.³⁷ In addition, this was clearly an important proverb in the early church as different versions appear in 1 Cor. 2.9, *Gos. Thom.* 17, *1 Clem.* 34.8, *2 Clem.* 11.7, *Dial. Sav.* 57, *Acts Thom.* 36, *Acts Pet.* 39, *Protrepticus* 10.94.4, and the Turfan Fragment M 789. Similarities are also present in 1 Jn 1.1, though the context and situation addressed by the Johannine epistles suggest its independence from the tradition shared by these other texts.³⁸ The widespread appeal of this proverb makes tracing its transmission history a complex task.

If we exclude 1 Jn 1.1, *Thomas* and Paul appear to represent the two earliest extant versions of this proverb.³⁹ Therefore the first question to explore is, which version preceded the other? Scholars are split on this question. April DeConick includes *Gos. Thom.* 17 in her list of pre-Pauline *Thomas* sayings, arguing that it reflects the eschatological views of the earliest Thomasine

36. Interestingly, Uwe-Karsten Plisch (*The Gospel of Thomas: Original Text with Commentary* [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2008], p. 44) argues that *Gos. Thom.* 3 'has a decisive parallel in Gal 4:7-9, where we also find the motifs of "children of God," "knowledge of God" . . . and "poverty"'.
 37. Plisch (*The Gospel of Thomas*, pp. 72-73) comments that the source for this early Christian proverb is Isa. 52.15 and 64.3, while Gathercole ('Influence', pp. 88-89) suggests that the proverb conflates material from Isa. 64.3 and 65.16.

38. The Johannine epistles are addressing an incipient form of docetism that has caused a division in the associated faith community. This split, and the departed group's insistence that Jesus did not 'come in the flesh', together necessitate the author's use of eyewitness claims to have heard, seen and touched Jesus. For this reason, it seems unlikely that 1 John is borrowing from the same proverb used by Paul and *Thomas*.

39. Plisch (*The Gospel of Thomas*, p. 73) suggests that logion 17 'has its most obvious parallel in 1 John 1.1', but this is unlikely given the anti-docetic concerns of the author addressing the Johannine community.

Christians.⁴⁰ Patterson, who also regards logion 17 as pre-Pauline, offers the following unqualified assertion about Paul:

[I]n 1 Corinthians 2 he uses the wisdom style of these opponents to compose his own 'wisdom speech' (2:6-16), only to correct their views with a few well-placed Pauline twists. Interestingly, in the midst of this speech Paul quotes a saying from the Gospel of Thomas. . . The version of the saying quoted here by Paul is not paralleled word-for-word in Thomas, but reflects the sort of differences one would expect to have resulted from oral transmission.⁴¹

Not all scholars agree with Patterson's bold claim. Thinking along the lines of those who argue that the communities of John and *Thomas* were embroiled in a theological conflict, Plisch suggests that *Thomas* may have altered the saying in response to 1 Jn 1.1,⁴² which would mean that the former's version is later than Paul's.⁴³ Gathercole argues that *Gos. Thom.* 17 has a number of secondary features, all of which indicate that it emerged later than Paul's version.⁴⁴

Among the elements that suggest *Thomas* logion emerged later than 1 Cor. 2.9 are the former's inclusion of 'hand' alongside eye, ear and heart, and the attribution of this saying to Jesus. First, Paul's version of the proverb refers to the eye not seeing, the ear not hearing, and the heart not conceiving. *Thomas*'s version appears to add a reference to what the hand has not touched. This change would provide a fourfold structure and contribute to a greater sense of literary parallelism. Conversely, it would be difficult to explain why Paul would have omitted the phrase.

Second, as with the vast majority of its 114 sayings, *Thomas* attributes this saying to Jesus. It is also difficult to imagine Paul, who at times expends great energy in differentiating between his own words and those of the Lord,⁴⁵ altering a received tradition where Jesus was thought to be responsible for the saying. On the other hand, since nearly all of *Thomas*'s sayings begin with 'Jesus said' (ΠΕΧΕΤC) or 'he said' (ΠΕΧΛΛ), it is not a stretch to imagine that *Thomas* transformed a received tradition into a saying of Jesus to fit the content and structure of its other sayings. In addition, most of the later versions of the proverb preserve it as a saying of the Lord, while Paul does not. This is to

40. DeConick does not use the phrase 'pre-Pauline' but the implications of her discussion, as related to the present essay, are clear. See the related discussions in *Recovering*, pp. 97, 113, 118, 129.

41. Stephen J. Patterson, 'Paul and the Jesus Tradition: It is Time for Another Look', *HTR* 84 (1991), pp. 36–37 (emphasis added).

42. Plisch, *The Gospel of Thomas*, p. 73.

43. 1 John is generally dated to the last decade of the first century CE, while scholars believe 1 Cor. was written around 54 CE, during Paul's third missionary journey.

44. Gathercole, 'Influence', p. 93.

45. See e.g. Paul's teaching on the virtue of marriage, remarriage, virginity and celibacy in 1 Corinthians 7.

say nothing of the fact that attributing the saying to Jesus would invest it with greater authority than it would otherwise wield in the diverse world of early Christianity.

All of this evidence suggests that *Gos. Thom.* 17 is later than 1 Cor. 2.9 but this is not the same as demonstrating its dependence upon Paul. So the question remains: Is there any evidence to suggest that *Thomas* incorporated and modified Paul's version of the proverb? In the case of *Gos. Thom.* 3 we argued for Pauline priority, in part, on the basis of Paul's use of Deuteronomic themes and language. We can mount a similar argument here by appealing to Paul's extensive use of Isaiah. Paul cites Isaiah twenty-eight times, more than any other OT book, and his reasons for choosing Isaiah are clear. Hays comments that

Isaiah offers the clearest expression in the Old Testament of a universalistic, eschatological vision in which the restoration of Israel in Zion is accompanied by an ingathering of Gentiles to worship the Lord; that is why this book is statistically and substantively the most important scriptural source for Paul.⁴⁶

In Isaiah, Paul finds support for his major theological concepts, not the least of which is his understanding of the eschatological inclusion of Jews and Gentiles in God's plan of universal redemption. While several logia in *Thomas* show some familiarity with traditions influenced by Isaiah, little if anything can be said for *Thomas*'s direct or independent knowledge of Isaiah.

As was the case with our consideration of Rom. 10.5-8 and *Gos. Thom.* 3, we must consider which scenario is more likely and which more problematic. Given the similar uses of the proverb by Paul and *Thomas*, it is much easier to account for the changes in *Gos. Thom.* 17 if we assert Pauline priority rather than vice versa. Though the saying consists of original material from Isaiah, it is also possible that this particular form of the proverb originated with Paul, who consistently shows himself to be a sophisticated and creative interpreter of OT traditions.⁴⁷ Even if that judgement turns out to be incorrect and the proverb does come to Paul from some pre-existing tradition, he was no doubt drawn

46. Hays, *Echoes*, p. 162.

47. A version of the proverb similar to Paul's appears in Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 26.13 ('And then will I take those and many other better than they are from where eye has not seen nor ear has heard and it has not entered into the heart of man, until the like should come to pass in the world'). Gathercole ('Influence', pp. 88-89) argues that the phrase came to Paul as an existing formula from pre-Christian Judaism. However, there is strong evidence that even though *LAB* contains some ancient traditions, the final form did not emerge until the end of the first century or later. Therefore, it is not outside the realm of possibility that Paul is the originator of the proverb and, given his extensive influence, it is conceivable that it found its way into *LAB* and *Thomas*. For more on dating Pseudo-Philo, see D. J. Harrington, 'Pseudo-Philo: A New Translation and Introduction', in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (New York: Doubleday, 1985), p. 2:299.

to this proverb because of his affinity for the theology of Isaiah. In addition to this, it is clear that both *Thomas* and Paul use the proverb in ways that are similar to one another but different from other existing versions.⁴⁸ There is more than enough evidence to conclude that those responsible for the composition of *Thomas* knew and used 1 Cor. 2.9. It is not necessary to suggest that the logion in question was altered through oral tradition because both versions share such strong similarities, but we will remain open to the suggestion that the logion came to *Thomas* orally. Thus, *Gos. Thom.* 17 also shows evidence of having used a Pauline text.

c. Gospel of Thomas 53 and Romans 2.25-29

<i>Gospel of Thomas 53</i>	<i>Romans 2.25-29</i>
His disciples said to him, 'Is circumcision useful or not?' He said to them, 'If it were useful, their father would produce children already circumcised from their mother. Rather, the true circumcision in spirit has become profitable in every respect.'	²⁵ Circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law; but if you break the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. ²⁶ So, if those who are uncircumcised keep the requirements of the law, will not their uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? ²⁷ Then those who are physically uncircumcised but keep the law will condemn you that have the written code and circumcision but break the law. ²⁸ For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. ²⁹ Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart – it is spiritual and not literal. Such a person receives praise not from others but from God.

With the present parallel, we are on the firmest footing yet in suggesting the presence of a shared tradition between *Thomas* and Paul. Anyone familiar with Paul's letters and his major theological emphases will immediately recognize the Pauline shape of *Gos. Thom.* 53. Given Paul's ongoing dispute with the Judaizing factions, it can reasonably be assumed that questions about the *value* of circumcision arose first in the ministry of Paul rather than the *Sitz im Leben* of the Thomasine community.⁴⁹ Issues such as circumcision, dietary laws, and

48. Gathercole comments that it is 'striking that Paul and *Gos. Thom.* use the formula in ways which are similar to each other, but not to their predecessors. . . . As a result, we might reasonably suppose that (given the secondary features evident in *Gos. Thom.*) Paul's interpretation of the formula has influenced Thomas's usage in this respect' ('Influence', p. 92).

49. Paul's experience with the so-called Judaizers is pictured at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15,

the relationship of the believer to the Law constitute significant considerations in Paul's letters. By contrast, the Jewish practice of circumcision is not a prominent concern for the Jesus tradition represented by the Synoptics, the Fourth Gospel, or *Thomas*, and the 'the peculiar argument rejecting physical circumcision in the second sentence is quite unique and has no parallel in the New Testament or related Early Christian Literature'⁵⁰ – all of which suggests the secondary nature of *Gos. Thom.* 53.

Most commentators on *Thomas* draw a connection between Paul's discussion in Romans 2 and the disciples' question in logion 53, even if simply in a footnote. However, few state the obvious connection as clearly as Plisch when he comments that in 'the New Testament, the question of the value of circumcision is mainly *confronted and theologically mastered by Paul*', and that *Thomas*'s similarity to Paul is quite close, almost verbatim'.⁵¹ Likewise, Antti Marjanen comments that '*Thomas* proves to be part of that tradition in which the "circumcision of the heart" brought about by the Spirit is considered the prerequisite for hearing the word, awakening faith, faithful service of God, and putting off the body of flesh.'⁵² He goes on to say that this tradition is represented chiefly by Paul in Rom. 2.25-29 and Phil. 3.3 (though he stops short of arguing that *Thomas* is relying directly upon Paul), and that it is unlikely that *Thomas*'s version represents the earliest stage of the 'circumcision of heart' tradition.⁵³ These scholars affirm the general impression that *Thomas*'s version appeared later than Paul's.

There are a number of striking similarities between these texts: (1) both passages are concerned with the nature and especially the *benefit* of 'circumcision'; (2) each rejects physical circumcision to some degree in favour of a spiritual circumcision (*Thomas* speaks of 'circumcision in spirit' and Paul writes of 'circumcision of the heart'); (3) the question-answer format exists in both texts as Paul addresses an imaginary opponent in Romans 2 and Jesus addresses the direct question of his disciples in *Gos. Thom.* 53; and (4) there may be a faint connection, as Gathercole argues, between the language in Paul's comment about the benefits of circumcision in Rom. 3.2, ('much in every way', πολὺ κατὰ πάντα) and *Thomas*'s affirmation that circumcision is 'profitable in

and is addressed directly in Galatians 2. There is also an allusion to Judaizing practices in Phil 3.2. *Gos. Thom.* 53 is the third in a grouping of three sayings where the disciples question Jesus about beliefs and practices that have greater importance for proto-orthodox expressions of Christianity (viz. resurrection, prophets of Israel, circumcision).

50. Plisch, *The Gospel of Thomas*, p. 136 (emphasis added).

51. Ibid., pp. 135–36, emphasis added.

52. Antti Marjanen, 'Thomas and Jewish Religious Practices', in Risto Uro (ed.), *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* (Studies of the New Testament and Its World; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), p. 179.

53. Ibid.

every respect (lit. ‘has found absolute benefit’, ΔΨ6̄Ν 2ΗΥ ΤΗΡΨ⁴).⁵⁴ The connection between these two texts is strong and the case for Pauline influence is convincing.

As with the previous two parallels, it is difficult to imagine a plausible scenario in which the *Thomas* logion is earlier than Paul’s version, and given the multiple similarities between the two, the most logical deduction is that *Gos. Thom.* 53 made use of a Pauline text.

d. *Flesh and spirit in Thomas and Paul*

There are a few places in both *Thomas* and Paul where the flesh/spirit (body/soul or external/internal) dichotomy appears. In at least three instances a plausible argument can be made for *Thomas*’s appropriation of Pauline language and imagery in a way that advances the argument that the authors of *Thomas* knew and modified Pauline formulations.

In *Gos. Thom.* 29 there is a reflection on how the ‘great wealth’ of the spirit has come to dwell in the ‘poverty’ of the human body. This is similar to Paul’s concept of the spirit residing in fragile jars of clay (2 Cor. 4.7), though the link is admittedly weaker than the three parallels examined thus far. The two passages do not share a common vocabulary and evidence of editorial activity is missing. Still, the strong conceptual link exists and it may be that Paul has again influenced *Thomas*. There is not enough evidence to demonstrate that *Thomas* has used Paul (or vice versa), but in light of the conclusions offered above, I want to raise the suggestion in much the same way historical Jesus scholars use the ‘criterion of coherence’. The criterion of coherence states that what coheres with other established historical material is also likely to be historical. In the same way, material that coheres with established Pauline influences on *Thomas* may constitute evidence of further Pauline influence. We have already seen that the authors of *Thomas* radically reshaped several Pauline texts and, in the case of Rom. 10.5-8, the final form in *Thomas* looks very different from the original Pauline form. Therefore, it is not outside the realm of possibility that this common theme found its way into *Thomas* through Pauline influence.

A second possible body/spirit parallel drawn from material in 2 Corinthians 4 is *Gos. Thom.* 70: ‘Jesus said, “If you bring forth what is within you, that which you have will save you. If you do not have that within you, what you do not have within will kill you.’ The imagery here may be related to 2 Cor. 4.16-18, where Paul utilizes the distinction between the external (ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος) and the internal (ὁ ἔσω ἡμῶν) to make his point. There he speaks of wasting away outwardly while being renewed inwardly. The inward/outward

54. Gathercole, ‘Influence’, p. 78.

distinction is similar here in both Paul and *Thomas* but the texts reach very different conclusions. Plisch sees a potential connection between these texts:

Especially interesting in our context is 2 Cor 4:16-18, for, on the one hand the opposites there make clear what the inner self signifies, on the other, because it evidences how different the notion in *Gos. Thom.* 70 actually is. According to 2 Cor 4:16-18, the inner being – contrary to the exterior being – the part that shares in transcendence and eternity, is the core of the person.⁵⁵

This parallel may represent another instance of *Thomas* borrowing Pauline language and imagery and using the material in a way different from Paul's original intent.

Finally, in Rom. 7.13-25, Paul writes at length about the war with sin going on inside his body as he longs for spiritual victory. In v. 24 he concludes the section with the woeful statement, 'Wretched (ταλαίπωρος) man that I am! Who will rescue me from the body (ἐκ τοῦ σώματος) of this death?'⁵⁶ In *Gos. Thom.* 87 we read, 'Wretched (ΟΥΤΑΛΛΙΠΩΡΟΝ) is the body (ΠΕΩΜΑ) that depends on a body (ΝΟΥΣΩΜΑ)'. And wretched (ΟΥΤΑΛΛΙΠΩΡΟΣ) is the soul that depends on these two.' The shared vocabulary is undeniable and the contexts deal with similar reflections on the internal (soul/spirit) and the external (body). Again, there is not enough evidence here to constitute hard proof, but further investigation may show that *Thomas* was dependent upon Paul in ways we have not yet fully realized.

Space limitations preclude further discussions here, so this question will have to be investigated further in another venue or by another scholar. However, it does seem possible that several Thomasine texts that focus on the interior/exterior polarity drew from and changed Pauline texts. It is hoped that raising questions here about the possible connection between these texts will offer future prospects for further investigation of the Paul-*Thomas* relationship.

IV. *Theological ideas in Paul and Thomas*

Two questions with which this volume is concerned are, (1) 'What is the relationship between Paul and our earliest Christian Gospels', and (2) 'In what way(s), if any, are those Gospels reactions to Paul and his legacy?'

In answer to the first question, I have argued that there are at least three instances where *Thomas* is dependent upon Paul for traditions that are subsequently modified. There also appear to be other, less clearly identifiable instances of Pauline influence on the *Thomas*.

55. Plisch, *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 169.

56. Or possibly, 'This body of death'.

The second question is a little more difficult to answer. If *Thomas* made use of Pauline texts and/or traditions, it follows that substantive changes to the received materials support theological ideas different from those espoused by Paul. Some might be tempted to see a Paul-*Thomas* conflict or even an anti-Pauline polemic emerging from the *Thomas*, and while such a conclusion would certainly be convenient given recent scholarly trends, I do not think the evidence can be pressed that far.⁵⁷ However, *Thomas*'s altering of Pauline texts does raise questions that require further exploration.

In the case of *Gos. Thom.* 3 and its use of Rom. 10.5-8, what are we to make of *Thomas*'s nearly complete reworking of both the shape and the context of the Pauline version? In Romans 10, Paul's point is explicitly soteriological. The means of attaining salvation are understood quite differently in Paul and *Thomas*. For Paul, salvation is associated with a cluster of theological realities such as the sacrificial or representative death of Jesus,⁵⁸ faith in or the faith of Jesus⁵⁹ (depending on one's view on the πίστις χριστοῦ issue),⁶⁰ dying and

57. There is no question that both polemic and apologetic are present in most early Christian documents, and this has been recognized by scholars for some time. Both J. Louis Martyn (*History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* [New York: Harper and Row, 1968]) and Raymond E. Brown (*Community of the Beloved Disciple* [Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1978]) pointed this out in their analyses of the Fourth Gospel's *Sitz im Leben*. Each helped to popularize the theory that the Fourth Gospel contains a 'two-level drama', reflecting the Johannine community's internal conflict (possibly with some form of incipient gnosticism) and external conflict (with the synagogue). They argued that the drama is specifically played out in John's polemic against οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. This approach seemed to morph into a full-blown trend in gospels research in the years that followed. In 1979, Theodore Weeden introduced students of the NT to 'the heresy that necessitated the second gospel' (*Mark: Traditions in Conflict* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1979]). According to his reading of Mark, the author had a serious theological axe to grind against the historical disciples who held to a flawed and incorrect *theios aner* (divine man) Christology. Thus, for Weeden, the Gospel of Mark contains an 'anti-disciple' polemic that the Markan Jesus continually corrects. This hypothesis led to a whole series of attempts to explain the so-called 'corrective christology' of Mark's Gospel. Today it is commonplace for some Johannine scholars to speak of John's 'anti-baptist' polemic, and there are a handful who argue that John contains an 'anti-Petrine' polemic (cf. Graydon Snyder, 'John 13:16 and the Anti-Petrinism of the Johannine Tradition', *BRev* 16 [1971], pp. 5-15; Arthur Maynard, 'The Role of Peter in the Fourth Gospel', *NTS* 30 [1984], pp. 531-48; and Arthur Droge, 'The Status of Peter in the Fourth Gospel: A Note on John 18:10-11', *JBL* 109 [1990], pp. 307-11), or an 'anti-Thomas' polemic (cf. the works of Gregory Riley, April DeConick, Elaine Pagels listed in Note 6 above). There has even been a recent attempt to elucidate the 'anti-Pauline' polemic of Matthew's Gospel (cf. David C. Sim, 'Matthew 7.21-23: Further Evidence of its Anti-Pauline Perspective', *NTS* 53 [2007], pp. 325-43). While attempts at persuasion and power are clearly present in early Christian documents, these polemics are simply not as common or as pervasive as these scholars would have us believe.

58. The texts illustrating this idea in Paul's writings are too numerous to cite here. Consider the following: 1 Cor. 15.3; Phil. 2.5-8; Rom. 3.25.

59. Cf. e.g. Rom. 3.22, 26; Gal. 2.16, 20; Phil. 3.9.

60. A seemingly inexhaustible amount of material has been written on this topic over the last three-and-a-half decades and there seems to have been a resurgence of interest in the question in the last five years. Some of the early, important contributions to the discussion were made by Richard B. Hays, James D. G. Dunn and N. T. Wright, though virtually everyone with an interest in Pauline soteriology seems to have weighed in on the topic recently. For an up-to-date bibliography and recent considerations of the

rising with Christ,⁶¹ and the efficacy of the resurrection as a precursor to what will come for all believers.⁶² By contrast, *Thomas* states from the outset that eternal life can be attained by properly interpreting Jesus' teachings.⁶³ Absent from *Thomas* are discussions of Jesus' sacrificial death, participation in Christ, limitations on law observance for Gentiles, and the sufficiency of faith as the response to the gospel. Instead, Thomasine soteriological sayings (e.g. 18b, 19c, 37, 111) focus on proper interpretation of the *logia Iesou*.⁶⁴ Therefore, it makes sense that when *Thomas* makes use of a Pauline soteriological text like Rom. 10.5-8, the material is altered in a way that will not contradict the former's understanding of soteriology and will help support another Thomasine view – in this case, the internal presence of the 'kingdom'.

In *Gos. Thom.* 17, the material from 1 Cor. 2.9 has not been altered as radically as that in Rom. 10.5-8. Nonetheless, *Thomas* modifies a Pauline instruction concerning wisdom that leads to maturity in Christ, into a rather abstract promise related to inheritance, and likely salvation. In its context, Paul's statement is about the sanctification of the Corinthian believers and how God has already begun a process believers can appropriate. The version of this saying in *Thomas* deals with salvation rather than sanctification. Paul has a developed understanding of progressive growth 'in Christ' while such an emphasis is largely absent from *Thomas*. For *Thomas*, knowledge and wisdom appear to be the path to every spiritual blessing.

Finally, both *Thomas* and Paul reject circumcision as being a source of salvific merit or status, but the former's rejection is more absolute than Paul's. In Rom. 2.25-29, Paul maintains that circumcision has some value since it springs from the religious traditions of the Jews. *Gos. Thom.* 53, however, rejects circumcision completely. The only circumcision that matters is 'circumcision in the spirit', which ultimately provides an absolute benefit. Thus, in typical Thomasine fashion, a great distance is put between *Thomas*'s theological agenda and anything that would have been of value to the Jews, whereas Paul continues to draw upon early Christianity's critical link to Judaism.

All of these observations seem to indicate that the authors of *Thomas* decided

question, see Michael F. Bird and Preston Sprinkle (eds), *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010).

61. Cf. Romans 6.

62. Cf. e.g. the entire argument of 1 Corinthians 15; Rom. 6.4-6; Phil. 3.9-11; and probably 2 Cor. 5.1-10 (though the concept is never named explicitly).

63. In *Gos. Thom.* 1 we read, 'Whoever finds the interpretation of these sayings will not experience death.' A fair amount has been written on salvation in *Thomas*.

64. Koester (*Ancient Christian Gospels*, p. 115) comments that 'Thomas's hermeneutical procedure is evident. Not Jesus' words themselves but their interpretation gives life, that is, the finding of their hidden truth. This truth is hinted at by different pointers: the finding of Jesus (the Living One), the knowledge of the trees of paradise, the knowledge of one's beginnings.'

to pick and choose elements from Paul (as well as other early Christian traditions) in order to develop and support their theological views. In the end we can simply say that where the authors of *Thomas* used Pauline material, they did so in a way that amounted to a rejection of Paul's original point. Even if, in some ways, *Thomas*'s use of Paul is a begrudging nod to the validity of something in Pauline thought, the reworking nevertheless constitutes some degree of rejection. This rejection of Paul's theological ideas appears to be a part of the warp and woof of Thomasine Christianity and its different developing theological perspectives.

V. Concluding remarks

In light of the foregoing considerations, it seems clear that at least some elements of *Thomas*'s theology developed later and on a much different trajectory than that of Paul.⁶⁵ When the authors of *Thomas* found a given Pauline term, phrase, image, or discussion acceptable for use, they also invariably altered the received Pauline tradition to fit a uniquely Thomasine theological perspective. The authors of *Thomas* were familiar with certain Pauline ideas but ultimately rejected them as having any legitimacy for explaining the ongoing significance of identifying with Jesus through confession. Keeping these different presentations of Jesus in mind, I close by enumerating the conclusions of this study:

1. There are several discernible parallels in the writings of Paul and the *Thomas*.
2. In each Paul-*Thomas* parallel, it can be demonstrated that the Thomasine version is later than Paul's version.
3. In each Paul-*Thomas* parallel, the Thomasine version shows dependence upon Paul, either directly or as an indirect result of oral transmission.
4. In each Paul-*Thomas* parallel, *Thomas* modifies the Pauline tradition to support a theological idea that is uniquely Thomasine and different from the idea represented by Paul.
5. Thus, the adaptation of Pauline traditions (or the characteristic use of Pauline language for *Thomasine* ends⁶⁶) is evidence of *Thomas*'s rejection of (at least some) of Paul's theological ideas.⁶⁷

65. Though I have not demonstrated it here, it is probably the case that nearly all of *Thomas*'s theological developments are later than Paul's.

66. Here I am modifying the phrase I borrowed earlier from Gathercole. See Note 4 above.

67. I do not believe that those responsible for *Thomas* had access to all of Paul's letters or ideas. However, a comparison of Paul and *Thomas* would show that the latter rejects a great many of Paul's ideas, even those ideas that were likely not available to its authors.

Appendix: Greek and Coptic texts of the Paul and the Gospel of Thomas texts discussed above

#1:

<i>Romans 10.5-8 (NA27)</i>	<i>Gospel of Thomas 3 (POxy 654, 9-21)</i>	<i>Gospel of Thomas 3</i>
<p>⁶ ἡ δὲ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη οὕτως λέγει· μὴ εἴπῃς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου· τίς ἀναβήσεται εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν; τοῦτ' ἔστιν Χριστὸν καταγαγεῖν· ⁷ ἢ· τίς καταβήσεται εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον; τοῦτ' ἔστιν Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναγαγεῖν. ⁸ ἀλλὰ τί λέγει; ἔγγυς σου τὸ ῥῆμά· ἔστιν ἐν τῷ στόματί σου καὶ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως ὃ κηρύσσομεν.</p>	<p>(1) λέγει· ἰ[η(σοῦ)ς· ἐὰν] οἱ ἔλκοντες ἡμᾶς [εἴπωσιν ὑμῖν· ἰδοὺ] ἡ βασιλεία ἐν οὐραν[ῳ ὑμᾶς φθῆσεται] τὰ πετεινά τοῦ οὐρ[ανοῦ· (2) ἐὰν δ' εἴπωσιν ὅ] τι ὑπὸ τὴν γῆν ἐστ[ιν, εἰσελεύσονται] οἱ ἰχθύες τῆς θαλά[σσης προφθάσαν]τες ὑμᾶς· (3) καὶ ἡ βασ[ιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ] ἐντὸς ὑμῶν [ἐσ]τι [κάκτος· (4) ὅς ἂν ἑαυτὸν] γινῶ ταύτην εὐρή[σει, καὶ ὅτε ὑμεῖς] ἑαυτοὺς γινώσασθα[ι, εἴσεσθε] ὅτι υἱοί] ἐστε ὑμεῖς τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ ζ[ώντος· (5) εἰ δὲ μὴ] γινώσ<ε>θε ἑαυτοὺς, ἐν [τῇ πτωχείᾳ] ἐστε] καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἡ πτω[χείᾳ].</p>	<p>(1) ΠΕΧΕ ΤC ΧΕ ΕΥΨΑΧΟΟΣ ΝΗΤῆ ΝCΙ ΝΕΤ'CΩΚ 2ΗΤ' ΤΗΥΤῆ ΧΕ ΕΙC2ΗΗΤΕ ΕΤ'Μῆ ΤΕΡΟ 2ῆ ΤΠΕ ΕΕΙ Ε Ν2ΑΛΗΤ' ΝΔΡ' ΨΟΡΠ' ΕΡΩΤῆῆ ΝΤΕ ΤΠΕ (2) ΕΥΨΑΝΧΟΟΣ ΝΗΤῆ ΧΕ C2ῆ ΘΑΛΑCCA ΕΕΙ Ε ΝΤΒΤ' ΝΔΡ' ΨΟΡΠ' ΕΡΩΤῆῆ (3) ΑΛΛΑ ΤΜῆΤΕΡΟ CῆΠΕΤῆ2ΟΥΝ' ΑΥΩ CῆΠΕΤῆΒΑΛ' (4) 2ΟΤΑΝ ΕΤΕΤῆΨΑΝCΟΥΩΝ ΤΗΥΤῆ ΤΟΤΕ CΕΝΑCΟΥΩΝ ΤΗΝΕ ΑΥΩ ΤΕΤΝΔΕΙΜΕ ΧΕ ΝΤΩΤῆ ΠΕ ΝΩΗΡΕ ΜΠΕΙΩΤ' ΕΤΟΝ2 (5) ΕΨΩΠΕ ΔΕ ΤΕΤΝΑCΟΥΩΝ ΤΗΥΤῆ ΔΝ ΕΕΙ Ε ΤΕΤῆΨΟΟΠ' 2ῆ ΟΥΜῆ Τ2ΗΚΕ ΑΥΩ ΝΤΩΤῆ ΠΕ ΤΜῆΤ'2ΗΚΕ</p>

#2:

<i>1 Corinthians 2.9 (NA27)</i>	<i>Gospel of Thomas 17</i>
<p>ἀλλὰ καθὼς γέγραπται· ὃ ὀφθαλμοὶ οὐκ εἶδεν καὶ οὐς οὐκ ἤκουσεν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη, ὃ ἡτοίμασεν ὁ θεὸς τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν.</p>	<p>ΠΕΧΕ ΤC ΧΕ †ΝΔ† ΝΗΤῆ ΜΠΕΤΕ ΜΠΕ ΒΑΛ ΝΔΥ ΕΡΟ4' ΑΥΩ ΠΕΤΕ ΜΠΕ ΜΔΔΧΕ CΟΤΜΕ4' ΑΥΩ ΠΕΤΕ ΜΠΕ CΙΧ' CῆCΟΜ4' ΑΥΩ ΜΠΕ4'ΕΙ Ε2ΡΑΪ 2Ι ΦΗΤ' ΡΡΩΜΕ</p>

#3:

Romans 2.25-29 (NA27)

^{2:25} Περιτομή μὲν γὰρ ὠφελεῖ ἐὰν νόμον πράσσης· ἐὰν δὲ παραβάτης νόμου ᾖς ἡ περιτομή σου ἄκροβυστία γέγονεν. ²⁶ ἐὰν οὖν ἡ ἄκροβυστία τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσσει, οὐχ ἡ ἄκροβυστία αὐτοῦ εἰς περιτομὴν λογισθήσεται; ²⁷ καὶ κρίνει ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἄκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα σὲ τὸν διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς παραβάτην νόμου. ²⁸ οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ Ἰουδαῖός ἐστιν οὐδὲ ἡ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή, ²⁹ ἀλλ' ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαῖος, καὶ περιτομή καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι, οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ.

Gospel of Thomas 53

(1) ΠΕΧΔΥ ΝΔΨ ΝΣΙ ΝΕΨΜΔΘΗΤΗΣ ΧΕ ΠΣΒΒΕ
 ΡΩΦΕΛΕΙ Η ΜΜΟΝ (2) ΠΕΧΔΨ' ΝΔΥ ΧΕ ΝΕΨΡ
 ΩΦΕΛΕΙ ΝΕΠΟΥΕΙΩΤ' ΝΔΧΠΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ
 2Ν ΤΟΥΜΔΔΥ ΕΥΣΒΒΗΥ ΔΛΛΔ ΠΣΒΒΕ ΜΜΕ
 2Μ ΠΝΔ ΔΨ6Ν 2ΗΥ ΤΗΡΨ'

#4

2 Corinthians 4.7 (NA27)

ἔχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν
 τοῦτον ἐν ὀστράκinois
 σκευεσιν, ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ
 τῆς δυνάμεως ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ
 καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν.

*Gospel of Thomas 29
(POxy 1, 22)*

... ἐνοικ]εῖ [ταύτ]η [ν τ]
 ἢν πτωχεῖα(ν).

Gospel of Thomas 29

(1) ΠΕΧΕ ΤΣ ΕΨΧΕ ΝΤΔ
 ΤΣΔΡΞ' ΨΩΠΕ ΕΤΒΕ ΠΝΔ
 ΟΥΨΠΗΡΕ ΤΕ (2) ΕΨΧΕ ΠΝΔ
 ΔΕ ΕΤΒΕ ΠΣΩΜΔ ΟΥΨΠΗΡΕ
 ΝΨΠΗΡΕ ΠΕ (3) ΔΛΛΔ ΔΝΟΚ'
 †Ρ ΨΠΗΡΕ ΜΠΔΕΙ ΧΕ ΠΩΣ
 ΔΤΕΕΙΝΟΣ ΜΜΝΤΡΜΔΟ
 ΔΣΟΥΩ2 2Ν ΤΕΕΙ ΜΝΤ2ΗΚΕ

#5

2 Corinthians 4.16-18

¹⁶ Διὸ οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν, ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος διαφθείρεται, ἀλλ' ὁ ἔσω ἡμῶν ἀνακαινούνται ἡμέρα καὶ ἡμέρα. ¹⁷ τὸ γὰρ παραυτίκα ἐλαφρὸν τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν αἰώνιον βάρος δόξης κατεργάζεται ἡμῖν, ¹⁸ μὴ σκοπύντων ἡμῶν τὰ βλεπόμενα ἀλλὰ τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα. τὰ γὰρ βλεπόμενα πρόσκαιρα, τὰ δὲ μὴ βλεπόμενα αἰώνια.

Gospel of Thomas 70

(1) ΠΕΧΕ ΤΣ 2ΟΤΔΝ ΕΤΕΤΨΔΧΠΕ ΠΗ
 2Ν ΤΗΥΤΨ ΠΔΨ ΕΤΕΥΨΤΗΤΨ ΨΝΔΤΟΥΧΕ
 ΤΗΥΤΨ (2) ΕΨΩΠΕ ΜΨΤΗΤΨ ΠΗ 2Ν Τ[Η]ΥΤΨ
 ΠΔΕΙ ΕΤΕ ΜΨΤΗΤΨ 2Ν ΤΗΝΕ Ψ[ΝΔ]ΜΟΥΤ'
 ΤΗΝΕ

#6

Romans 7.24 (NA27)	<i>Gospel of Thomas</i> 87
ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος· τις με ρύσεται ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου;	(1) ΠΕΧΛΛΗ ΝΙΣΙ ΤΕ ΧΕ ΟΥΤΑΛΛΙΠΩΡΟΝ ΠΕ ΠΣΩΜΔ ΕΤΔΩΕ ΝΟΥΣΩΜΔ' (2) ΔΥΩ ΟΥΤΑΛΛΙΠΩΡΟΣ ΤΕ Τ' ΨΥΧΗ ΕΤΔΩΕ ΝΝΔΕΙ ΜΠCΗΔΥ