

Why Were the Books of the New Testament Written?

Introduction

Welcome back to the Thinking Theologically Podcast, a show where we teach you how and why you should think theologically on one of your hosts, Jack Dodgen, joined, as always by the resident master theologian and training, Spencer Shore. Spencer, how are you doing? Doing good. Busy. I know a lot of our stuff that we were talking about beforehand is everything we have going on this summer through summer. Yeah, I guess the end of the summer for me. I don't know if I've said on the podcast I'm getting married at the beginning of September. So, get through the busyness of the summer and then busy month of September. I also don't think that I've said that I was accepted into a Doctor of Ministry program at. I don't think you have Houston Theological Seminary, which is a part of Houston Christian University, used to be formerly Houston Baptist University. So, there's a lot of but, be studying there with people like Scott McKnight, Craig Evans, Lynn Cohick, those of you listening have probably heard of at one of those names, I would imagine. Maybe not. If you haven't, go look them up, go to Amazon, read everything that they've written. It's pretty good stuff. But, anyway, doctorate of ministry in New Testament. My focus will kind of continue to be on gospels, historical Jesus, early Christianity. That's what my dissertation will be on in some form or fashion. And that starts kind of after summer two. Yeah, end of August. Oh, like the week before I get married. Well, I'm already married and have been for a while, and I'm not doing school right now, but summer is busy. Then September is not so bad, for me. So,, uh. But yeah, lots, lots going on, as it always is. That's, every year. My thought is, I'm not a family minister. I'm not a youth minister. Why is my summer so busy? Why isn't it just like a normal week to week? it's because it's just not how it works. Comes for us all. Summer comes for us all. There's nothing we can do about it. But we continue with the podcast and we talked specifically about schedules so that we could talk specifically about when to record, to make sure that these things are rolling out for you. So, I want to encourage you to check out our channels where those things come through. Wherever you get your podcasts, you'll find these episodes on our website. Thinkingtheologically.org is where you will find all these webinars, these episodes, as well as additional written content that we might have, either about these things or just other stuff that were maybe thinking about at the time, stuff that maybe didn't make the cut. As far as the episode goes, which, these episodes are so long, so if it doesn't make the cut and there's a lot that doesn't make the cut, surprisingly, maybe to our audience. Yeah, there's a lot, these could be hours long. But they are not. So,, at any rate, that's thinking theologically. Org we want to add as well. We got to say this for the first time in the last episode, on our resources page on the website, you can click the link there. Follow the link there for a free trial of Logos for 60 days. Normally it's just 30 days. So, this is a this is a two month trial of Logos Bible software program. Spencer and I both use it, use it for all kinds of things. I use it the other day for, keyword, bunch of proverbs with it the other day as I was studying through that. And, it was extremely helpful and much quicker to do it that way than it would be the old fashioned way of cracking open a Hebrew Bible that I cannot read. so. Or a concordance. I don't even own one. I might have one somewhere, as I've used one back when I was like ten. Yeah. It's been there's somebody right now who's like, I use a concordance all the time to study. And you just called me a ten year old. Unsubscribe from the podcast. I apologize. But yeah, the same thing with commentaries. Same thing with commentaries too. I use well, I don't know. I read commentaries for fun. Oh, there you go. I forgot. I forgot for a minute who you were. So, check out the resources tab for the, for the logo 60 day free trial. And let us know what you're using it for. How you're using it to study. It's a it's a tremendous resource, a tremendous resource. It has the reputation. It has for a reason. It's been around for a while and, doing great stuff. So,, and then last, I'll say our Facebook page, is where you're going to be most regularly notified of when stuff goes up, whether they are podcasts or interviews, articles or maybe additional things that we put out there, like Spencer's book has been, out there on Facebook, promoted for a little while now as well. You can find all of that stuff there too. So, follow us on Facebook at Thinking Theologically. I think that's everything. As far as the stuff we normally plug. We finished with the last episode, a series on who wrote Insert Gospel Here. We did that for the last four episodes. Finished up with John. This this past episode, and decided that we wanted to continue, in this vein of authorship, and canonicity and inspiration stuff and transmission and all that. So, that's what we're going to do. This particular episode, if you've already seen the title, why were the books of the New Testament written is when, when, when Spencer first said, like, hey, should we do an episode on this? Like, I don't think I've ever thought to, like, ask that question of why they were written. They were written because God wanted them to be written. That's what the initial. So, I'm, I seen the notes and we've discussed obviously, but I was just as

interested as I hope the audience is in this particular lesson here. Before we get going in the notes proper, I think there was a I don't know what to call it, your flow of thought throughout this podcast. There was a note you wanted to make before we jump in with Paul here. So, if you want to do that and then jump in with point one, go for it. On why the books of the New Testament were written. Yeah. I'll give just like a little, I guess, disclaimer. And then we'll jump in here to our show notes. A lot of kind of what we're doing here is me thinking out loud a little bit. So, you know, a year from now we may do another episode where I'm like, I disagree with everything I said in that previous episode. We'll see. But this kind of line of thinking about the why the books of the New Testament were written and more particularly how they relate to one another. So, we'll kind of talk about, I think there's this snowballing effect that happens from one group of writings to the next group of writings, and they're kind of all in conversation with each other, which I think, on the one hand, helps us to interpret and understand these books, but also kind of where we're going to be going over the next few episodes. It helps us to kind of understand how these get the books of the New Testament get pulled together and become a coherent set of books that are considered scripture by Christians. So, in essence, how they become the New Testament. The other thing that I want to say, kind of what we're going to be doing here, is just kind of a historical analysis of moving from the first books of the New Testament that were written to the final books of the New Testament that were written, and how that process might have happened. And more particularly as the title of this episode states why that process happened. And so I'm hoping some of our listeners will enjoy that. I want to say I didn't tell Jack this beforehand, but we got some nice comments on our most recent video on YouTube, on the authorship of the Gospel of John from both Christians and non-Christians who are interested in kind of historical things and appreciate the historical analysis, even if they don't necessarily agree that, you know, the book of John is inspired, like Jack and I do, but appreciating kind of the historical analysis of how some of these things happened and occurred and maybe why. And that's kind of what we're doing here.

Paul

So, we'll begin, as Jack said, talking about Paul, because the writings of Paul are the earliest that we have in the New Testament. Paul. We don't know exactly when Paul was born or died, but he was born somewhere around five CE. She died somewhere around the year 65. Jesus, just for the record, was born probably somewhere around three BCE and died somewhere around the year 30. So, Paul is probably a little bit younger than Jesus, but a contemporary of Jesus. He lived around the same time as Jesus, and he has this experience. In his words of the resurrected Jesus. He makes the decision to begin following Jesus, and then he writes most of the books that we have in the New Testament. But as I said, Paul's letters are the first written works produced by the earliest Christians, so some other things could have been written around the time of Paul's letters, but we don't have any of them. The only written sources that we have from the earliest days of the Christian movement are the letters of Paul. His first letters are likely first Thessalonians, maybe Galatians. There could be some debate about which came first. But first Thessalonians and Galatians were both written in the late 40s or the early 50s. So, if Jesus died around the year 30 and First Thessalonians was written around the year 50, you're talking about a 20 year gap between the death of Jesus and the first book of our New Testament being written by the Apostle Paul. As we've mentioned in the title of this episode indicates, the question that we're asking is why? Why were these books written so starting with Paul? Why did Paul write his letters? Well, all of Paul's letters were written to address specific problems within specific Christian communities. And you might have heard that said before, because that's important for interpreting a letter. So, you're reading The letters to the Corinthians, and just the importance of recognizing Paul here is not writing to us in the 21st century in whatever you and your church is located. Right? Paul is writing to a church in Corinth in the first century to deal with some specific issues rights, issues of spiritual gifts or issues of the Lord's Supper. And he's addressing specific problems that they're dealing with. And that's important for the way that we interpret and think about Paul's letters. And in addressing specific situations in specific churches. Most of Paul's letters were written to churches he either established, or he had a deep personal relationship with. So, Corinthians, Galatians, Thessalonians written to churches that Paul established. So, he started the church in this city. And so he has a deep relationship with the Christians in that city. Because he met them, he converted them. He is leading them and educating them on how to continue to be the church, what it means to follow Jesus. There are some exceptions to the idea of Paul establishing the churches. So, Colossians, Philemon, if we think that Colossians is an authentic letter of Paul, we'll talk about that more towards the end of the episode. But Philemon is considered by all scholars to be authentic. Philemon lives in Colossae. So, these two letters are often read kind of in tandem to one another. But Colossians was likely not a church that

Paul established, but was established by a coworker of Paul. And so someone that Paul sent out to do missionary work. And so Colossians, the church in Colossians, Colossae gets established. And so Paul knew people there like Philemon, because he's writing to probably the church met in the home of Philemon. So, he's writing to one of the leaders that he knew, probably from his time in Ephesus. Those two cities aren't that far from each other. So, he knew Christians in Colossae. He knew the church there, even though he didn't establish the one exception to this rule of why Paul is writing is actually the book of Romans. Maybe the most well known of Paul's letters. Romans was written to a church that Paul did have a deep relationship with. Though he didn't establish the church, he didn't establish the church in Rome. He did have some kind of relationship with, because we know from Romans 16 that he knows some people who are a part of this church, and so he has some relationship with them, but not like he does in all of his other letters. And I think you actually see that we could dive into this if we want to, but we won't. You could, I think, actually see that in the way that Romans is written. I think there are some places you can tell. Yeah, Paul doesn't know these Christians. He doesn't have the kind of relationship with them like he does with some of the other churches that he writes to. So, he knows people in Rome, but he didn't actually establish the church, and he actually mentions that he wants to go there and meet them and kind of have some kind of personal relationship with them, though he's not able to at the moment in time when he's writing Romans. So, that's why Paul wrote to address specific situations in specific churches. Most of the churches are ones that Paul established himself and had a deep personal relationship with. Philippians is a prime example of deep personal relationship that he has with the people that he's writing to. So, that's why Paul wrote. What did Paul write about? So, what is he trying to address in his letters? And this is what I would argue. I would argue that Paul is primarily wrestling with the implications of Jesus death and resurrection, which stands at the core of Paul's gospel in three areas in particular. So, I want to address a couple of things that I said there real briefly. The death and resurrection of Jesus, or Paul's shorthand term is the cross. So, you read Paul's letters. There's a lot of language of the cross or the cross of Christ, the meaning of the cross. And when Paul says cross, he's not referring only to Jesus death. He's not saying that the resurrection or ascension or any of that doesn't matter. The life of Jesus doesn't matter. For Paul, Cross is a shorthand for the entire Christ event. Jesus life, death and resurrection. And it comes up so often that's at the center of Paul's gospel. So, what Paul believes the good news is the good news is the cross. It's the death and resurrection of Jesus. And so what Paul's trying to wrestle with and understand in his letters, I think, are the implications of the cross. What are the implications of Jesus death and resurrection, particularly for the churches that he's writing to? So, he's writing to a church like Corinth, and these problems has risen up. And what Paul's trying to do is understand, okay, how does the cross what what does the cross have to say to what's going on in Corinth? And so when he's writing to the Corinthians, he's in essence saying, here's how the meaning of the cross has something to say to the use of spiritual gifts or to the practice of the Lord's Supper, or to a man sleeping with his father's wife, or to wisdom, or to whatever particular thing in a section of the Corinthian letters that Paul may be dealing with. And so I think that's what Paul's doing, but particularly at least in the way that I read Paul, he's trying to understand the implications of the cross in three particular areas. These seem to me to be the primary areas that Paul deals with in his letters. The first is Jewish heritage and promises and how that relates to Gentiles, particularly Paul's earlier letters like Galatians. He deals a lot with Jew Gentile relations, and he's trying to understand in light of Jesus, what does that mean for the Jewish law? Do we still follow the law? Do we only follow parts of the law? What does that mean for God's promises to the Jews. So, God promised all these things to the Israelite nation. And Paul's thinking, what does that mean in terms of of Jesus? Has God failed to follow through with his promises? Or and this is what Paul argues. Is Jesus the fulfillment of the promises of Israel is everything that God promised Israel do those things come to fulfillment in what Jesus has done? So, he's trying to understand the cross in terms of the Jewish law, the Jewish heritage, the promises that God makes to the Jewish nation. But then Paul is an apostle to the Gentiles. So, a lot of the churches that he establishes, he begins with Jews generally in a city. But then his kind of goal is to spread the church and the community to the Gentile world. And that raises up questions of, well, how do the Gentiles relate to this Jewish heritage? And Paul deals with that in a number of different ways. So, like, do Gentiles have to be circumcised? Do Gentiles have to follow food laws? Paul deals with, in essence, that goes back to the Jewish law. Do Gentiles have to follow the Jewish law because Paul doesn't have any problem with Jews following it? He does have a problem with forcing Gentiles to follow it, so he has to deal with some of that. He also deals with places like Romans nine through 11 is a prime example of Paul has to kind of understand, how can Gentiles now become a part of the people of God? Like, how does that work? Because before the people of God were only descendants of Abraham, Gentiles are not descendants of Abraham. So, how do they get in? How do they become a part of

God's story? And so Paul has to deal with that as well. So, I think first, Paul thinks about the implications of the cross in terms of Jewish heritage promises, the law, how that relates to Gentiles. A second thing, which is a prominent feature of Paul's understanding of the cross is justification. By faith that a person is justified, they are made righteous, they are sanctified through placing their faith in Jesus. And so for Paul, and this kind of relates to that first point for Paul, what makes a person a part of the people of God is not circumcision. It's not being a descendant of Abraham. It's not any of those things. It's placing your faith in Jesus. Placing your faith in Jesus allows you to become a part of the people of God. And as a part of the people of God, you find your justification, your forgiveness, your righteousness, your sanctification, your filled with the spirit. All of these different things that Paul talks about that comes as by being a part of the people of God that happens through placing your faith in Jesus. And so what Paul, the way that Paul understands the cross in essence, is that a person benefits from the cross by placing their faith in Jesus. And so he talks a lot about the idea of justification by faith. And the third implication of the cross that Paul deals with is morality. And so in a lot of his letters, he deals with how is a person supposed to live in light of the cross in light of what Jesus has done? And so that's where you get, like in Galatians, the works of the flesh versus the fruit of the spirit. So, Paul is in essence saying there that through the lens of the cross and particularly the spirit that we now get to receive because of the cross, here's how you are to live. Here's your moral ethic love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. That's the moral way of the one who places their faith in Jesus. And so to me, it seems that Paul's writing in order to address specific situations in specific churches. and he addresses those through the lens of the cross, through the lens of the work of Jesus. And normally he's dealing with one of those three issues, but most of the time it's actually the intersection of them, the intersection of God's promises to the Jews and how the Gentiles take part in that. How one is justified by placing their faith in Jesus and what Jesus has done, and then the moral life that someone who has done those things, who is a part of the people of God, who's been justified and sanctified, how is that person to live? And so that becomes kind of the foundation of the New Testament, the place where we start all of Paul's letters, because everything else that's written comes after Paul is done writing. So, Paul writes these things. He kind of lays this foundation of dealing with some of these issues in the early church through the lens of the cross, and that kind of becomes the foundation upon which I would argue that the rest of the New Testament is built, or we're going to talk about the idea of snowballing, or that Paul lays this foundation, and then it snowballs and continues to build and expand through the other writings that we have in the New Testament. Before we move into Gospels and then eventually that snowball point, within that, when you're mentioning the three areas and this is more than just this chapter, the whole book does this. But you mentioned Romans before, which, first, when you said he may not he may know some people there, but not it's not as intimate of a book like a Philippians is where you just get name drops all over the place, throughout it. It feels very much like a really long Ephesians, kind of a book of we're dealing with a lot of things here, more in a general church sense of stuff that you need to have happen is what came to mind. But the biggest thing, speaking of Romans, these three areas you read Romans one, you're going to find all three of these areas. You have that big morality section in the second half of Romans one of, oh, look at the godless Gentiles who are doing this. But then he goes right into that next chapter of, but you're not off the hook. You Jews. And so he, he all three of these little pieces are, are everywhere. And sometimes, like you said, just altogether, weaving in and out, with one another here. So,, I'm thinking in terms of the audience right now because, I mean, because I'm curious with this, too. Every, every podcast like this, of which there have been a few we've, that I've listened to, I know you've listened to there's like, the guy who knows, and then the guy who doesn't know or pretends that he doesn't know. I just don't know. That's me. I am the audience here, with this one about the snowballing thing, though I do have some thoughts, but also the I could not tell you which works are disputed or not disputed, so I'm interested for that too. But so I'm interested in that. If you're with if you're with me or like me and thinking, okay, but which ones don't get hung up on it? We'll address more of that here in just a minute.

Gospels

But we're going to move into Gospels next. As far as are we dealing with all this chronologically? Yes. Okay. Yeah. Yeah okay. That's what I thought. Okay. So,, coming off the heels of these writings of Paul, moving into now, the Gospels here, which we just spent several episodes on. So,, if you haven't listen to those, it'll probably be a good time to do that. But then moving into the Gospels as far as why, why are they written? Why do we have four of them? I think this helps answer that question. What's the chronology for those things or the writing order for those things? Where do you want to go with this? Here? So,, after Paul writes his letters, the next books of the New Testament that we get are the Gospels. Now, speaking of, we just

mentioned that we're kind of going chronologically, and I say kind of because some of the other letters, general epistles, which are first and second Peter, first and second and third John. Is James early? That's James. James. Yeah. We'll, we'll talk about James a little bit when we talk about some of the other. But there's, there's kind of some and the disputed letters of Paul, there can be some debate there about whether or not they are after all, of the gospels. So,, like first and second and third, John, I think are have to be after the Gospel of John. So,, the Gospels are written. But you could, you could make an argument that whether even if you don't think that Peter wrote like first and second Peter, they could have been before, like the Gospel of John. And part of that depends on when you when you date some of the Gospels. But the next book after Paul's letters is the gospel of Mark. So,, there's like no question about that. There's just some debate about chronology. Chronology towards the end. I'll talk about that more. So,, Mark was written in the late 60s. So, if Paul dies in the mid 60s, let's say 65, just for easy math, Mark is written, I think before the year 70, 67 to 69, I would argue. So, anywhere from two years to, you know, four years after Paul's death. Mark writes his gospel after Mark, the next gospel written as Matthew, which I think is probably written in the 70s sometime. Then you have Luke. That's 80s or 90s. I tend to date Luke a little bit later. I think it's at the very tail end of the first century. So, I think in the 90s you could date Luke in the 80s, some people date Luke even into the second century. I don't think it is, but I think it is a little bit later in the first century than some have thought. And then you have John, which is traditionally dated to the 90s, but you can even push the Gospel of John, especially if it was written by someone working off of the traditions of John the Apostle, which is what I argued in our episode, who wrote the Gospel of John? Then it's okay to push John into the second century. So, you could have John written, I think, as late as 120. So, in our show notes, I put Gospels and I said circa 65 to 120 because I don't think Mark was written before 65. I don't think any of them were written after 120, but you could put them all in the first century. You could date Luke or John into the second century if you wanted to. And so I just kind of have the largest range possible of when these documents were written. But it does. We are pretty certain that it goes Mark, Matthew, Luke and John in that order. And so kind of like we did with Paul, we're going to think about questions of why. Why were the gospels written? And there's a lot of debate as to why the Gospels were written, because they're very different than Paul's letters. Right? Paul writes I, Paul, to the church in Corinth, and then he talks about, hey, you're doing this. Stop, start doing that. And here's some theology about why you should stop this and do that. And so a lot of Paul's letters are a little bit more straightforward. There's still plenty of things to debate about what Paul is doing and what Paul is dealing with, because we only get one side of the conversation. But the Gospels are very different because they're not directly dealing with anything. They're just telling stories about the life of Jesus. We they're anonymous, so we don't know who wrote them. And we're kind of left to figure out, well, what are they trying to do? Why were they written? What is the situation, perhaps, that they're trying to address? It seems to me that there are three primary reasons that the Gospels were written. I think there are other reasons as well. But if you had to kind of rank them to me, these are the top three. First is to preserve the stories and oral traditions of the apostles. So, I think a lot of the stories go back to the apostles. I don't think they all do. But the oral tradition about Jesus that does develop over time. It does change over time. But I think it goes back to the apostles. And as time goes on, it seems to me that communities thought it important to preserve some of that oral tradition. Some of the teaching that they had received, maybe some things that they had heard from eyewitnesses or apostles themselves. Though I don't think any of the gospel authors were eyewitnesses themselves. But I think there's some active kind of trying to preserve and to pass on some of that teaching. I think that's what's going on in John. Someone who is, a student or New John, or from a church that John was associated with, is trying to preserve some of those teachings. I think that's kind of what Luke is doing. He's going and doing these research to kind of pass this on. I think that's an act of preservation a little bit. I do think that there the Gospels are written to address needs and problems present in the church. So, I don't believe that the gospel authors are writing stories about Jesus just to write stories about Jesus. I think they're writing for a purpose. They want something to happen. Now there's debate. If they're writing for like one community, like Paul, to a church in Corinth or a church in Galatia or wherever, or they're written more generally for Christians and the church at large. And I actually think there's a little bit of both going on there. I want to do an episode at some point about specifically why the Gospels are written, and dive a little bit deeper into some of these questions, but I think there's a little bit of both going on there. I think they expected churches in a wider area to read and be influenced by the gospel, but I think the author is also influenced by the community that he is a part of. So, I think there's a little bit of both going on there, but there's things going on in churches in Christianity that the author wants to address or to change or to defend or something like that. So, like Mark has some places where he talks about like Jesus making all food clean. And so that's Mark may be wanting to defend the

practice of Gentiles eating food that Jews thought were unclean. So, there's a he's trying to do something right by telling those stories. John, the Gospel of John tells us why it's being written. Either that you may come to believe or that you may continue believing. It can be translated both ways, but either way, he's wanting something to happen. He's wanting non-Christians to come to belief. Or I think it's written to Christians. So, I would translate it, continue believing that he wants to strengthen the faith of Christians, to have them continue to place their faith in Jesus. He also deals, we talked about with being kicked out of the synagogue. So, he's trying to explain why is this phenomenon happening, why is there this divide that's happening between Christian Jews and non-Christian Jews. And he's rooting that in the story of Jesus. So, these stories are being told not just to preserve, though I think that's part of it. But primarily they're dealing with issues and things that are going on in the church of their day. But the third thing, and this may be new to some of y'all who are watching or listening to this, I think the Gospels are also trying to supplement the writings of Paul. I've become more and more convinced, and this is where I'm kind of thinking out loud. I've become more and more convinced as I've thought about this and read about this, that the authors of the Gospels know the letters of Paul, and I don't want to dive too deep into defending that. But if you just think Paul's letters are being written as early as the 50s and they're being circulated. So, Paul's letters were not intended to stay in Galatia or in Thessalonica, but they're being copied. They're being passed around. We know that travel and connection was a lot more common than we think. Like it was, it did take longer for things to travel and to be passed on and to be copied. But communities, Christian communities were probably, I think, a lot more connected to each other than a lot of people think. They weren't as isolated as sometimes we hear. And so if all that's the case, then I find it hard to believe that after 20 years, in the case of Mark 30, 40 years in the case of Matthew, 50 years in the case of Luke, maybe even longer than that for John that these authors don't know the letters of Paul. That's hard for me to believe that they're not influenced, whether positively or negatively, by Paul's writings. We know that to be true. We talked about that with the Gospel of Luke. There's some literary overlap, perhaps in Luke's account of the Last Supper and Paul's account in first Corinthians 11. So, we know that Luke at least knew the traditions of Paul. And so I find it hard to believe that they didn't know Paul. And if they knew Paul Wright and Paul writings are the first by Christians. And so Paul's writings kind of become foundational in terms of written things for the church. There's still the oral tradition going around, right? And a lot of that is codified in the Gospels. But if you're talking about written sources that were foundational to the life of the early church before Mark, it's only Paul. And so if these authors know Paul and Paul's the only or the primary written source that exists within church communities, I find it hard to believe that they'd even be capable if they wanted to, to write without being influenced by Paul, without trying to maybe counteract something in Paul or expand something in Paul. They have to be in conversation, I think, with Paul in one way or another. And that's where when we get into what are the Gospels about, I think we can see some of the snowballing from Paul to Mark to Matthew to Luke to John, and then into some of the other letters. And that's kind of where we're about to begin going. But this is the first thing that I want to say about what the Gospels about are about. On the one hand, they're addressing some of the same issues as, as Paul, sometimes in slightly different ways. So,, for example, the Gospels are also concerned with questions about Jewish heritage and promises and how that relates to Gentiles. So,, for example, Matthew presents Jesus as the continuation of Israel's story. Jesus is the fulfillment of the law. He doesn't abolish the law. He fulfills the law. He's the fulfillment of Israel's vocation. So, Matthew goes to great lengths to show the continuity between Israel and Jesus, which is something that at times Paul does. He wants to show some continuity between the Jewish law and Jesus. Mark and Luke are written to a Gentile audience, and so they demonstrate how Jesus ministry included Gentiles. So, Mark gives the statement of Jesus making all foods clean. So, saying that Gentiles, you don't have to follow the Jewish kosher laws. Or Luke demonstrates how at times in Jesus ministry. And Mark does this too. He interacts with non Jews in ways to show that yeah, Jesus ministry began only to Jews, and that's why the early church began as a Jewish phenomenon. But we get these glimpses in the ministry of Jesus, of him interacting with Gentiles. And it goes to kind of support that. Yeah, Jesus ministry always had an intention of including Gentiles. And we actually see that in some of the things that Jesus does. And then that moves Luke to acts to show how that's expanded in the life of the early church, and how that helps to facilitate the expanding among the Gentile world. And so the gospels also deal with that issue that Paul has to deal with. The Gospels obviously also deal with questions of morality. What how should followers of Jesus live as Paul does? So, one of the emphases in the gospel of Mark is discipleship. And that discipleship to Jesus, particularly Jesus as a suffering Messiah, means that one has to pick up their own cross and follow after Jesus, so that suffering is actually a part. You could say, in mark of the moral life of a disciple of Jesus. Matthew holds up the Jewish law. So, there's a lot of things in the Jewish law that. Matthew asserts, yeah, you

should still do this, but actually expands them. So, the sermon on the Mount is a prime example. You've heard that it was said, do not murder. Jesus says, but I tell you, do not be angry. So, that's Matthew on the one hand. Holding up the morality of the Jewish law, but then expanding it and saying that Jesus is calling his disciples to a radical version of obedience to the Jewish law. And then you take something like Luke, for example. Luke is concerned with like the poor and the marginalized. So, he would say, hey, morality for followers of Jesus includes a particular way of treating and interacting and including the poor and the marginalized, and not only our church communities, but also in the world around us. And so the Gospels, on the one hand, deal with some of the same things that Paul is dealing with. But on the other hand, I think that we can see some ways that they expand on the writings of Paul. And this is that snowballing effect that I was talking about, where you can see like this snowball go from Paul to Mark to Matthew to Luke to John. And I want to give you two examples, and I'll try to be quick about this, about how this snowballing works, because this is probably a new idea to you. So, first, let's think about Jesus resurrection. So, Paul talks about the death and resurrection of Jesus. First Corinthians 15 is the primary place where Paul talks about Jesus being resurrected. So, in first Corinthians 15, Paul says, Jesus died, he was buried, he was raised, and that he appeared to all these people. And then he goes on and talks about resurrection bodies. A fleshly body versus a spiritual body is the dichotomy that Paul makes there. But you'll notice if all we had is Paul's letters, we don't get an empty tomb in Paul. And so we might be left to wonder, well, did Jesus raise physically or did he raise spiritually, like these spiritual bodies that Paul goes on in first Corinthians to talk about? That would kind of be confusing to us if all we had were the letters of Paul and nothing else in the in none of the Gospels. If you're reading Paul, you also get these. Paul says he appears to all these things to all these people, but we'd have probably some questions like, how does that work? And again, what kind of body are we talking about? Like because we don't get an empty tomb, we don't get an explanation, anything like that. So, then you move to the Gospels and if you go in chronological order, here's what happens. So, you begin with Mark. Mark gives us an empty tomb, but no resurrection appearances. So, that's Mark saying, yeah, Jesus was Jesus body was raised, but we still don't get quite that much of an answer of what Jesus body was like, right? Because we don't get any resurrection appearances in the gospel of Mark. Then Matthew comes around and he uses Mark, and he's like, all right, I'm not going to stop at the empty tomb. I'm going to move on and talk about Jesus appearing. So, he's, in essence, what Matthew begins to do is explain the resurrection appearances that Paul briefly mentions in first Corinthians 15. And we get Jesus appearing to people. We get the same thing in the Gospel of Luke, right? Jesus begins to appear to these people, and Jesus you can touch Jesus, right? You can touch the marks. He still has the marks in his hands and in his feet. So, it is the body that was in the tomb that was empty in Mark. It is that body that was raised. There's some physicality to it, right? Because Jesus eats. But it's also different because he just, like, appears in locked rooms and stuff like that. So, we kind of get in Matthew and Luke, we get a fleshing out of what the Jesus resurrection body was like. But Luke goes a step further, right? Because you and I might be left to say, okay, well then what happened to Jesus body? If all we had was Mark and Matthew, right? Where did where did Jesus go? And Luke is the only one who gives us the ascension. So, at the end of his gospel, in the beginning of acts, he explains to us what happened to that body. So, Paul's like Jesus was raised. Mark says there was an empty tomb, so it was his body. Matthew is like it was the same body, and there's some physical and spiritual dimensions to it. Luke adds to that and was like, here's what happened to the body. It ascended in at the end of Luke and acts, and John's doing something a little bit different, I think, in his gospel. And so he doesn't. It seems to me that John doesn't need to expand any of those things, because we've already gotten, like most of the story. And so we get some different stories in, in John. Right. But John kind of complements those other things. So, that's the idea of a snowball. You see the movement from resurrected to empty tomb to body to ascension, and you kind of can see how they're all kind of expanding on their predecessor. And to me, that's hard to explain if they're not intentionally doing that, if they're not intentional, if Luke's not intentionally in conversation with Matthew and with Mark and with Paul, it's hard to explain why he would see the necessity of something like the Ascension, like, why do we need. Nobody's talked about that before. Luke's the only one that talks about it. Well, it would make sense if it's in conversation with some of these other ones. The other thing that we see is Jesus divinity. So, Paul talks about Jesus being the Son of God, but we don't really get in Paul. Paul never says Jesus is God, and Paul never really talks about Jesus pre-existence. The closest that we get is the Christ hymn in Philippians, which Paul didn't write, and Paul's borrowing it and citing it not to talk about Jesus divinity, but to talk about his serving. And so Paul focuses a lot more on Jesus service, on Jesus death, on Jesus resurrection, on Jesus fulfillment of the story of Israel. Paul, does it focus a lot on Jesus identity in terms of divinity, of being God, right? And for Paul, Jesus is verified as

the Son of God through his resurrection. So, again, if all you had Paul was Paul, you could make an argument that Jesus became the Son of God at His resurrection. You could, if you wanted to. I'm not sure that would be the best reading of Paul, but you could make that argument right. Then you go to Mark, and in Mark, Jesus is declared literally to be the Son of God at his baptism. And that actually was picked up by Adoptionists heresy in the second century, where Jesus wasn't God, he was human, and he was adopted as Son of God at his baptism. And if all you had was Mark, you could read it that way, right? Because in Mark you don't get any birth narrative. Jesus is just here and he's baptized. He goes out into the wilderness, he overcomes the temptations. He's baptized. And then God is like, this is my son. And that led some to, well, Jesus was human but adopted as God's son. So, that's a that's a step towards Jesus being more divine than just through his resurrection. Right? Jesus is kind of Son of God from throughout his ministry. So, from baptism on, Matthew then comes in and Matthew gives us a birth narrative. Know Jesus was Son of God from his conception. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary. He was the Son of God from the very beginning. We still don't get pre-existence like where was Jesus before? Like where or what was Jesus before? Was he anything before? We don't know. But Matthew is like Jesus is Son of God. You moved to Luke and Luke. Jesus becomes more divine. And you see that most particularly, I think, in the passion, because like where Mark focuses on Jesus suffering like the passion was. Jesus suffered greatly. Luke kind of writes out a lot of that suffering. So, Jesus is more of kind of this stoic, unphased, unemotional person going to the cross as kind of the culmination of his ministry. And so, Luke, we don't kind of get Jesus suffering or struggling. You don't get the, prayer of great suffering in the garden. You don't get some of those things in Luke's version of the passion, which is why some early copyists of Luke added the line about Jesus having the sweat drops of blood because they were reading it and they were like, hey, Jesus is in essence isn't suffering enough. He's being. They thought Jesus is presented as being too divine and not human. And so they added this human thing in there, right? So, in Luke, Jesus becomes a little bit more divine than in Matthew, Mark, or in Paul, at least the undisputed letters of Paul. And then you go to John and John. We get the highest Christology. Jesus is the most divine because John goes to the pre-existence, right? John goes all the way back to the word was with God, the word was God, and all things were created through Jesus. And so again, with the divinity of Jesus, or the identity of Jesus as the Son of God, you see this snowballing effect right from Paul. Jesus, Son of God, vindicated as his resurrection. And Paul doesn't dive any further into that. Mark moves it back to his baptism. Matthew moves it back to his conception. Luke takes the suffering element out of the passion. John goes all the way back to pre-existence and the creation coming through. Jesus. Okay. Yeah. I've never really. Well, I have noticed that before of, you know, Mark, just going right into, you know, here you go. He's baptized. We're off to the races kind of thing. Skipping over the birth. Never really thought about why that might be the case other than. Oh, that's just Mark's style of truncating a lot of things and just trying to rush through. There's a lot of movement, a lot of going fast. But that's certainly interesting. Well, the you know, you're thinking out loud. It's certainly an interesting thinking out loud if we're brainstorming if this is considered brainstorming, that I'm just sitting here listening and, it's certainly plausible, from, from this layout so far. I think what will be interesting for me is, with the disputed letters that we're going to talk about here, with Paul and all of this of, like, which ones are those? Because, and you've said this a couple times already, depending on what you do with some of those letters, because there are some of those letters attributed to Paul, by whomever, that general audience regards as attributed to Paul, that you might read and go, that seems like a high Christology or that seems like, you know, very different from these other Paul writings. So, what do we do with that?

General Epistles/Disputed Letters of Paul

So, I'm interested, in that part right here about the general epistles and disputed letters of Paul. How does this stuff fit in in the are we are we still thinking out loud at this point? Yes, yes. Awesome. So, how does that fit in with, with the thinking out loud? Yeah. So, don't, don't shoot me for some of the things that I might say. It's still kind of thinking out loud on the implications of this snowballing effect, because here's the point that I want to make for the argument that we're kind of I feel like everything we've talked about up to this point is not only plausible, but it makes the most sense of the evidence that we have. Right? Sure. So, why Mark's doing what he's doing, which isn't just, I think, functioning in a way that kind of explains some things in Paul. I wouldn't even argue that's the primary thing that he's doing. I want to get that straight. But I think that's playing a role. Right. Because Mark's in conversation with what's going on in the churches throughout the world at this time. Right. And a big part of that conversation is the letters of Paul. So, he can't be in conversation with Christianity of his day and not be in conversation with Paul, even if that's not maybe the primary thing that he's

trying to do. But it also explains how Mark and Luke are rewriting. Mark. Like why Matthew and Luke? Why does Matthew and Luke rewrite Mark in the way that they do? Well, this kind of snowballing trajectory, I think, does make the best sense of why they're choosing to rewrite things in the way that they are. Right. And you see, and in chronologically you see how. Okay. So, the previous one leaves us with these questions that the next one just happens to answer. It seems probably intentional. And so if we're like, yeah, that makes sense, then the general epistles and the disputed letters of Paul, we have to figure out a way. So, how do these fit? And this is where it becomes a little bit more difficult for me. So, by the general epistles, it's the letters not written by Paul James, first and second Peter, Jude. They're also called general because they're not like Paul I so and so to the church in Corinth. And they're also not addressing specific particular issues of, hey, you've got this guy who is sleeping with his father's wife. You need to do something about that, or Euodia and Syntyche get your act together. So, they're much more general anyway. And there's debate about whether or not they were written by the people that they say that they were. And the disputed letters of Paul also fit in there. So, the ones that are considered disputed a second Thessalonians, Ephesians, Colossians, first and second Timothy and Titus. To me, I don't have an issue with second Thessalonians. Off the top of my head, I don't think I have a problem with Ephesians, Colossians and the pastoral epistles, first, second Timothy and Titus. To me. Those are the ones I've got the most questions about because of trying to fit them into this snowballing trajectory. So, before I would say, yeah, I don't have a problem with Paul riding them. He's just he's at a different time addressing different things. And so it makes sense why they sound so different. And you could still make that argument. My problem is starting to be how they fit into this overall trajectory of the New Testament that I'm coming to believe in. So, here's why I think that the general epistles and the disputed letters of Paul were written. And then I'll talk a little bit more about how authorship and stuff fits into that. So, I think that as the apostles and leaders in the early church begin to die, their teachings are either preserved. That's what I think is going on in James. If you read through James, there are sections of games that don't fit together perfectly. In other words, it reads a little incoherent in the way that it sometimes. Proverbs is what I've heard it compared to very Proverbs. Like, yeah, it's it's like the wisdom literature. And so it to me, what makes the most sense is James is an important leader. He probably taught a lot of wise things. They get collected together after he dies. I tend to think something like that happened with James, the gospel of John. We also talked about that. That may be what's going on there, that these traditions that go back to John the Apostle get kind of preserved, maybe even written down at times, and then sometime after his life, get pulled together and edited and become the Gospel of John. So, on the one hand, I think that's what what's going on with some of them, or and or actually that they are the teachings of the early church leaders and apostles are expanded to address new needs. And that's what I think is going on with the pastoral epistles in particular, and with the Johannine letters. So, you think of like the you think of like the letters of John, for example. What I think is happening is there's been a misreading of the Gospel of John, and that misreading has to be corrected. And what the letters are doing is they're not they may be written by the same person who edited together the Gospel of John, but I don't think they're written by John the Apostle. But in essence, what they're doing is they're trying to remind them. And this is the way John begins what we've heard from the beginning. Right. So, it's trying to get them. It's addressing a new situation that didn't exist during the life of John the Apostle, but it's doing so in a way that's trying to bring the audience back to the core of what they have heard from the beginning, which was rooted in John the Apostle, if that makes sense. So, it's using the teachings to address something new that's going on in the church, and kind of bring them back to where they were, because there's a new need, there's a new problem that's arisen. To me, that's also what's going on in the pastorals. So, first, second Timothy and Titus, my big issue with authorship by Paul is you have these offices of elder and deacon that exist, and this might be another episode. I don't want to dive too deep into kind of my thinking, but based upon the other books of the New Testament, it doesn't seem that we had an office of elders and deacons that existed until the end of the first century. Like we had elders in the way that a Jewish synagogue might have elders. You have these older, wiser men that kind of help to guide the community. But the thing of like, okay, qualifications and you're finding men and almost like appointing men to these positions. I'm very skeptical if that was there from the beginning, because we have no evidence from it. What's interesting is read all of the rest of the New Testament except for the pastorals, and you don't really get offices, at least in the way that I'm reading it. Maybe I'm missing something, but I don't see an official office with like, qualifications, so to speak, or qualities that someone has to have in order to fill this role. And so to me, what makes the most sense with those is that after Paul's death, there's this new need that's arisen, the need for leaders, especially as the church becomes a more gentile thing. It moves away from being primarily Jewish, where you had elders that could function in the way that they always had. In Jewish society, you didn't

really need instructions about how to do that. That's naturally what Jews would do when they created a community, right? So, it becomes more of a Gentile phenomenon. The church, I think, becomes more institutional. It's less of just people meeting together and more of a organized entity. And as those two things happen, it becomes more important to have leaders in the church and to appoint leaders. And if you're going to appoint leaders, you need qualifications for leaders. And so, it seems to me, is like a student of Paul is taking the teachings of Paul and applying them to this new situation that's arisen in the church of dealing with leaders. So, in essence, preachers, elders, deacons. That's kind of the primary focus of first and second Timothy and Titus. That fits better later in this snowballing trajectory. Colossians is another one that I have some trouble with, because in Colossians we get creation theology in terms of Jesus, of through Jesus everything came into being, which we don't get anywhere else in the New Testament except for the Gospel of John, which is also strange. If Colossians was written before Mark. And Luke and Matthew if it was written before the general epistles. It's odd to me that we don't get it anywhere else, not just in the New Testament. We get it nowhere else in Paul. And so it's an odd thing. It the theology, the Christology. Rather, the Christology of Colossians fits better closer to the Gospel of John than it does to the life of Paul. And so that's my that's the kind of difficulty when you particularly with Colossians, even more so, I think, than the pastorals, is if we see this snowballing trajectory, and even if I'm not even saying that Paul didn't believe that the creation came to be through Jesus. What I'm saying is he never says it. So, I don't know what he believed or didn't believe. What I'm saying is, at the very minimum, the language to speak about that doesn't seem to be present early on in the movement. Even if they believed it. And Jack and I have talked in previous podcasts that an understanding of Jesus developed in the first century. Which makes sense because Jesus didn't just raise and dump all the information on his followers. And we're like, there you go, here's everything you need to know. He allowed them to think about it through the spirit that was involved and as they thought about it, the spirit slowly revealed these things to them. That's what I believe. And so these things developed, and it just seems that the Christology of Colossians fits better in a later development than an early development. So, that that kind of becomes the difficulty of how you play some of these letters in that snowballing. So, this is not a thought about Colossians. This is, as you're, thinking out loud about these things. So,, deacons is not where deacons is not the word I want to rest this on because you and I both know deacon servant. Like, that word can be used in an office way. In a very general way. We do have elder in the sense of old man in the, in the Old Testament. And then that's that. Like it holds true within the New Testament. But then there's even more built around it. But Hebrews, like the end of Hebrews, even seems to point to the Jewish idea of obeying your leaders, those elders. Because he talks about, old joints and bending over. That's that sort of thing. That's in chapter 13. That being said, so Philippians, Philippians one came to mind, and so did acts 20 because in both of those places you have overseer, that that overseer idea, which is one of the big elder words, elder office words, maybe we'd say in Timothy and Titus. And so I'm, I, I don't think that I don't think that goes against what you just said, but I'm wondering if that doesn't kind of because it's not fleshed out in either Philippians or Acts, but maybe you have conversation about the beginning stages of the way. The whole elder thing is, is going to work, that there are certain people put in, and then as time goes along, it's okay. But how do I know which guys? Because early on, it's going to be this guy who was an elder in the Jewish community just ought to be an elder in the Christian community. But now it's now we're adding in Gentiles, those sorts of things. It's what's our standard for this? I don't know, maybe that's thinking out loud with you. Yeah, it seems that it's not, at least in my reading that the, the, some of the foundational stuff is there, but it's not fleshed out. And then first, second Timothy and Titus fleshes out, fleshes it out. But the reason that I'm skeptical is that why don't we see that fleshing out anywhere else, if it was happening during the ministry, If Paul was doing the fleshing out, I would expect that to be in one of the other books, something more developed. If the terminology is going to pop up because Philippians one he says, with the overseers and deacons and deacons could be general or specific, whatever. But if the terminology is going to pop up. Okay. What did that mean when Philippians is being written? Does it mean the same thing as when, like Timothy and Titus are after that point? So,, I do think this is important for us to understand here. Elders, I, we put in new elders at the end of last year where I'm at, and one of the lessons I did in the series was specifically to talk about elders is an Old Testament idea, foundationally, of God has wanted older these older individuals to help guide the next generations. And that's true from Moses and those individuals to just people within the people that Moses said, all right, I'm going to put you guys over these groups here to help me with the whole shepherding. That's an Old Testament idea. So, our our New Testament idea of elders is built on that foundation. And so that may very well be what we're seeing. Philippians one acts 22. Things to consider that just might ruffle some people's feathers. Is that so? Excellent. Elder is presbyteros, which is an adjective that just means an older person, and it can be used as a

as a noun. And that's what we have in the New Testament. Over overseer is, episcopus? Yeah. A episcopus, Campus which. And which becomes bishop like. That's where we get the term writers in the second century, reading these terms in the New Testament under where Greek was their first language, understood these as two different offices. And that has to be that has to be given quite a bit of weight, because you and I, 2000 years later, who didn't grow up speaking the Greek language, and we read these and assume that they're referring about the same offices, we have to have a good reason to do that, because some of the early Greek speaking people reading these things in Greek understood them as two separate, two separate things. So, when you're thinking about some of those terms, that's one thing that you have to deal with. Are we talking about the same group of people, or is Paul thinking about something different than what first? Second Corinthians, first Second Timothy and Titus are thinking about the other thing to think about and not to get controversial in talking about women's roles. But I'm going to here for a second. Phoebe in Romans 16. Yes. Yeah. Is referred to as a deacon. Right. And when I've had people that have asked me about what I think about that, I said the difficult thing for me is figuring out where in the line of development from deacon being just a table servant as it was used in acts. Where that becomes an office as it is in Timothy. Like where in the lot. Because in other words, how is Paul intending to use this term? Deacon? Because. Because that's just a transliteration. Deaconess is the Greek word. And we just deacon or servant or minister is where we get into translations of servant ministry. And so. Just a whole nother thing if, if, if you read, if you read the qualifications of deacons in first Timothy and you come to the conclusion that they, the qualifications inherently prohibit a woman from filling that office. Then to me, that has to be a much later development. Then that had to have developed much later than Paul's letter to the Romans, which might be the last one that Paul wrote. Romans is late. Romans is late in the life of Paul. And so to me, there's not enough time between Romans and when Paul dies. For to have such a dramatic shift in the use of the term. And that's another example of the way that Paul uses these terms is not as refined as the pastor. Yeah, yeah. And that's not me saying, giving my opinion on the whole women issue. It's just saying that that has to be thought about the way that the way that it is used of Phoebe and the way that it is used in first Timothy and the way that those in our listeners and audience want to interpret those two things. To me, you have to do so in a way that fits with the trajectory, like because. Because if Paul believes that the role of deacon is an office throughout his ministry, then Phoebe is a deacon. She holds that office. I don't think there's any other way to. In my opinion, there's no other way to interpret that. But if you read first Timothy to say that a woman can't hold that office, then Paul wouldn't use that term in that same way in Romans. And there's two different ways to go with that. Right. You could say, well, first Timothy doesn't prohibit women, and Paul is using it as an office in Romans 16 or. first Timothy means that a woman can't and therefore that is a later development than what we have in Romans. To me, those are the only two ways to bring those two texts together. You mentioned you mentioned X6 as well so that. So, for sake of like. Divorcing the conversation from the women's role side which might give people more trouble. From the act six side, there's, there's always that like conversation of, well, these were our first deacons. Like, well, hold on, did they fit all of the things that Timothy and Titus talk about? Or is this a no, this. We're just looking for diakonos in this way. Later on, we're going to have, like, there's still this progression idea. Yeah. Yeah. So, that's another good example. So, if if Luke is writing let's date Luke early, let's say 80. It's very early date for Luke. Let's say he's writing an 80. 15 years after Paul has died, We know that he knows the writings of Paul. I think he knew Paul. If Paul was going around establishing an office of deacon in all of his churches, then when Luke writes that story in acts, we would expect them to be called by the noun deacon than to be called diakonos. And they are not. The noun is not used in that story at all. The verb is diakonos. They are chosen to go and serve tables, which is. It's very. So, the term diakonos is a table servant. In particular, it's the term that Jesus uses at the Last Supper when he talks about in in Luke of the Son of Man came not to serve, but to be served. Because they're sitting at a table, right? And in acts, they're serving food. So, they're serving the tables of the widows. So, they're sent out to serve at tables. Right. If Luke is familiar with this office of deacon who are chosen to serve, I would expect him to say they were chosen as diakonos, as deacons to go and diakonos to go and serve on tables. But that's not what we get. And that's interesting. If Paul in the 50s is already putting people in this office. To me, that that that for Luke to use the term in that way signals to me that it's not yet an office at the time that he's writing and that. And so, you know, you can fit that in as well, right? So, you go Romans 16, you go acts, then you go pastorals. And you actually see a development there in the use of the term I, I mean, I think that there's a argument that you could make. Fair enough, I do. There might be more to the, I don't know. Again, the thinking out loud thing with the office and overseer usage, because Timothy is in Ephesus. Correct. Which is where acts 20 is taking place. It's where Paul was. So, I don't know if there's like relationship continuation. What is Timothy? Timothy

and Paul obviously have a relationship. We know that. So, how does it so is Paul also in this later developing office thing here but not here. Or was it always like that. And so Phebe is this. And so acts X6. Okay. And I mean, you could that's what makes the most sense to me. And I want to say that to say it's perfectly fine to say Paul's using it generally in Romans 16 and then later on towards the end of his life, five years later or something like that, the pastorals get written. He's talking about an office, and then Luke just chooses not to use the noun because he's talking about something different. Sure. Sure. Yeah, you could do that. I'm not sure that makes the most sense. It doesn't make the most sense in my mind. But I do want to say, again, not to be deemed a heretic is the way that I'm thinking about it. It's not the only way, but more. What we're trying to do is these are the things you have to think through. We're teaching you to think theologically. These are some of the things that you have to think, particularly with words that end up getting translated in potentially. Uh. The apostles are a group of people, but someone who is sent by another is an apostle. Well, what do you mean? Yeah, it's. There are a lot of words that are general and specific in their usage. They're both. And so you have to try to you have to ask a lot of questions to go, well which one is happening here. So, we took a lot of time with that discussion. But I think it was good.

Revelation

So,, real quick before we hit conclusion of all this revelation, you wanted to bring revelation up a little bit in this discussion as well. Yeah. Just so we don't skip a book of the New Testament revelation is something that we can talk about another time, but it's an apocalypse to comfort Christians suffering persecution by saying that in the end, God or Jesus or the kingdom of God wins the victory. It's, it's more difficult to place in this snowballing trajectory because it's doing something very different than all of the other. And it's not. It's developing a theology or a Christology in particular that predates the Gospel of John. I mean, postdates the Gospel of John, but that's the only thing that it's dealing with that intersects with this snowballing that we're talking like we can just be like, yeah, it seems it had to come after the Gospel of John, but that with what it deals with, it's not, you know, it's not like what we talked about with elders and deacons like it. That's not what revelation is doing. So, one thing we didn't talk about, which we don't have time for in this, maybe we do some in the future, or maybe this is it. I don't know, but there is a if we want to use the word progression, there is a macro progression with all of this revelation is to the New Testament what Large parts of Daniel or Jeremiah or Ezekiel are for the Old Testament. You're going through suffering, but God is here and you're going to come out of this thing victorious. It's that's what revelation. That's why it's why revelation is borrowing the imagery and all of this there. And we did say that with the elder thing. It's an Old Testament idea. There's new. Well, we're talking about is progression within the New Testament, but there's also a macro progression. The only part, the only progression I think we see in revelation, or that comes to my mind at the moment, is empire wide. Persecution is, I think, what is being addressed in revelation, which is so the history that's been done recently, has demonstrated that empire wide persecution of Christians happened. It wasn't as frequent as we think that it was, and it wasn't generally as harsh as we tend to think that it was like we kind of I know growing up, I just kind of assumed, well, they were being persecuted by the Roman Empire from day one. And it's like, no, throughout most history, they were allowed to just do what they wanted to do. There are little pockets where this happens, right? And a lot of the times, even then, it probably wasn't across the entire empire, but portions of horror stories within that. But, not every Christian which makes revelation date at the date late, like you have to date revelation late because the New Testament, the other books deal with issues of suffering, but not the kind of suffering that revelation is dealing with. And so you do see a progression of when suffering moved and began to happen in a different way. Like, to me, that's obvious of the type of suffering that revelation is talking about is not the same thing that Mark's talking about. Mark, I think, is written up during the time of the beginning of the Jewish revolt that led to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. And so there's some things that are happening, but it's not to the degree that we see in revelation. Right. Like that's suffering to a different degree. It seems to me. And so you do see, I guess, a suffering progression. Yeah. I mean, so you certainly see that in acts with just like general Christian Jewish slap, verbal slap on the wrist killing Christian and then. Yeah, then that extends outward of, the Ephesians and all of their idol making are pretty upset with Paul. At one point we're going back to Ephesus a lot, in our thinking out loud here, but. Yeah, yeah, so there are progressions within here, but I get what you're saying with it's really the Christology point. There's not really anything about morality here within revelation. There is, but not anything like keep doing the things you're supposed to be doing that we've already talked about. But the, the bringing in Daniel and here here's Jesus and the fiery sword and the beast coming out, but he's going to take it down. Okay. Wow. That's pretty that's pretty lofty stuff. That is more than what we get in, like John's gospel, as you said. Okay.

Conclusion

How do you want to wrap all of this stuff up? Do you want to talk about where we might go next, or do we want to, just leave that, I don't know. Yeah. I'll, I'll try to make this fast, because this is probably turning into the longest episode we've ever done, but that's fine. This could have been two. It's been helpful to think out loud a little bit. So, yeah, just some concluding thoughts, kind of bringing together a lot of the things that we've talked about. The first thing that I want to say is that the authors of the New Testament did not believe that they were writing scripture. They weren't, you know, Paul wasn't writing thinking, hey, all of these are going to be bound together for the next thousands and thousands of years. That wasn't going on in his head. Rather, they were wrestling with the implications of Jesus death and resurrection. As the church came into existence, expanded among non-Jews, dealt with questions and difficulties, and then became a more formal or institutionalized entity. And that's kind of the snowballing that we talked about from Paul to the Gospels to the pastorals I think of. We see that they're wrestling with the implications of Jesus death and resurrection from one point to from one point in the church's history to another. And so we can see, as we've talked about a lot, the development of a theology over the course of the writings in the New Testament. So, we talked about Jesus resurrection. We talked about Jesus divinity or Christology, which we talked about church hierarchy and structure and leadership in the terms of elders and deacons and bishops and all that that we just talked about. And so, to me, this demonstrates the necessity of a group of writings in conversation with each other, which, interestingly enough, is exactly what we have in the New Testament. Rather than just one writing, one gospel, a couple of letters of Paul or something like that. I think all of these, these books of the New Testament are in conversation with each other in ways that are beneficial and helpful, and I think necessary for our theology, for our Christology, for our I mean, all of the aspects of theology, right, or ecclesiology, what it means to be the church. I think we need all of these letters and books by different people at different times, addressing different things to be in us, to be in conversation with each other. Right. Because even again, even if, you know, you think about the leadership struggles in Ephesus when first Timothy was written. Right. There's a lot of questions about, you know, are these written for all churches to function like this, or is there something specific going on in Ephesus? Right. And to me, one of the ways you answer that question is understanding how this might be in conversation with other things in the New Testament, where it might fit kind of on the development of the identity of the church. And that can kind of help you, you know, go one way or another. There's a lot of different ways that you can go about interpreting First Timothy and how it kind of fits into that context. But part of that is this overall development. But with that being said, of the necessity, I think, of these books of the New Testament being in conversation with each other that is going to lead us in the next episode to talk about how they did come to be recognized as Scripture. So, I said that the authors weren't intending to write scripture, but they become recognized as Scripture, recognized as inspired, as life giving to the people of God. And so we're going to talk about that process of the canonization of the New Testament. So, how do these books that were written in this kind of snowballing way? How do they then get pulled together kind of in a semi coherent set of what we would call the New Testament? How did we land on these 27 books? And after that, we'll talk about why other books weren't chosen. So, Apocrypha, pseudepigrapha and stuff like that. Why did why didn't they find their way in? But we got to first move from why they were written to how they get collected together as they are today. I'll add as we close here. I think acts 15 is a good example of what you've concluded this. There they come together to have a discussion with non-Jews coming in, and they're trying to figure out all this stuff. They didn't come together with this. Okay. We need to make sure that this gets this is going to be scripture. They did come together to say, we got to write some kind of little letter, which we have a letter within the letter to the Gentile. But it's Christians from different groups, bringing and arguing and trying to figure out what do we do with these Gentiles that are clearly in but how do we handle all of this? So, it's thinking of all of the New Testament in like those terms. So, acts 15, if you're trying to grasp the overall episode, maybe just read that chapter and go, oh, this is kind of the this is kind of the thought process. What we were talking about today. Okay. Lots coming up. Canonization. What book? Why? The books that didn't get in, didn't get in, and all those kinds of things. Upcoming in future episodes? Probably not as long as this one. But we hope you enjoyed the thinking out loud process of this. This is, one of my favorite things to do. One of my favorite times in school was an after. After class was over, we stuck around to work through a particularly challenging passage for like another hour and a half and ended up with like, a. Yeah, I think that's what that means. Awesome. Still remember it to this day. My favorite thing to do. So, I'm glad we got to do it. I hope the audience was, along for the ride, with that one. And, hope they join us for future episodes in these conversations about, authorship, canonization, books of the Bible, all things like that. That's been this episode. I'm Jack, that's Spencer. We'll see you next time.