

Outline for Interpretation of a Pauline Epistle

1. Read the passage aloud.
2. Write the passage out.
3. Outline the passage *in context*.
4. Describe *the structure* of the passage.
 - a. Outline the argument
 - b. Is a certain point emphasized by the structure?
 - c. What is essential to the argument?
 - d. What is extraneous to the argument?
 - e. What is the conclusion of the argument?
 - f. What is the connection between the argument and the conclusion?
 - g. Where is the dramatic climax?
5. Identify *the mood* of the passage.
6. Identify the *form* of the passage.
 - a. Is the passage a "thesis statement," an "exhortation," a "consolation," etc.?
 - b. Specify the components of the form.
 - c. In what ways has the form been altered or supplemented in this context?
 - d. What does the author signify by placing the form in this context?
7. Study significant *words*.
 - a. Where else is the word used in this writing and what does it mean there?
 - b. Where else is the word used by this writer and what does it mean there?
 - c. Where else is the word used in the New Testament and what does it mean there?

- d. How is the word used in the Old Testament and with what meaning?
- e. What did the word mean in its broader cultural context (Greco-Roman or Jewish)?
- f. In doing word study, bear in mind the following questions:
 - α. With which of the broader contexts does the author have contact and what attitude does he assume toward them?
 - β. Is the word used in a bald, denotative sense or a connotative sense?
 - γ. Does the word have the status of a technical term?
 - δ. Does the word have broader, theological significance?
- 8. Reconstruct *the situation* in response to which the author was writing?
 - a. What does the author reveal about the situation of the readers?
 - b. What does the author reveal about his state of mind?
 - c. What does the literary form suggest about the setting in the life of the church?
- 9. Establish *the relationship* of this passage to others by the same author on a similar theme.
 - a. Make a synoptic comparison (using parallels).
 - b. Note similarities and differences.
 - c. How are the similarities and/or differences best explained—situationally, developmentally, systematically?
 - d. Bear in mind the probable order in which the writings of this author were composed.

²¹But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, ²²the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; ²³since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins; ²⁶it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus.

PRIMARY

1 Cor 4:6-7 (§84)

⁶I have applied all this to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brethren, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. ⁷For who sees anything different in you? What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?

2 Cor 5:14-21 (§164)

¹⁴For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. ¹⁵And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not

counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Gal 3:21-25 (§205)

²¹Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not; for if a law had been given which could make alive, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. ²²But the scripture consigned all things to sin, that what was promised to faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

²³Now before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. ²⁴So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian;

Eph 2:1-10 (§220)

¹And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. ³Among these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—⁹not because of works, lest any man should

boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Phil 3:2-11 (§247)

²Look out for the dogs, look out for the evil workers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. ³For we are the true circumcision, who worship God in spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh. ⁴Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee, ⁶as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless. ⁷But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; ¹⁰that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Col 1:21-23 (§259)

²¹And you, who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him, ²³provided that you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which has been preached to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

• Rom 3:21

Rom 1 ¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live."

Gal 3 ⁸And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."

• Rom 3:22-23

Cf. Rom 1 ¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Cf. Rom 2 ⁹There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, ¹⁰but glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. ¹¹For God shows no partiality.

• Rom 3:24-25

Cf. Rom 5 ⁹Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

Cf. Eph 1 ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace . . .

Cf. Col 1 ¹³He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Cf. Col 1 ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

• Rom 3:24

Titus 3 ⁷so that we might be justified by his grace

Cf. 1 Cor 15 ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me.

Cf. 1 Cor 1 ³⁰He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption; . . .

• Rom 3:25

Cf. Acts 14 ¹⁶"In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. . . ."

Cf. Acts 17 ³⁰"The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent. . . ."

• Rom 3:26

Gal 2 ¹⁶yet who know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ.