

Ernst Kaesemann on Romans; The Way Forward or the End of an Era?

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Introduction

Kaesemann is explicit in noting that though earlier scholars had thought of Paul as a dogmatic theologian, this is no longer the case. Though Paul is conceded the honour of being the most important reflective theologian in the New Testament, it is now denied that he developed a system or possesses a firm methodology¹. Kaesemann only states that while both these statements *may be correct*, that does not mean that the dominating centre of Paul's theology must be denied as well. If Paul's statements are regarded as simply a collection of inter-related ideas about the encounter between God and man, this would not allow the specific and distinctive character of Pauline theology to emerge. In Paul's work, not only is there a central message, "which can be didactically formulated", but "he also, for the first time in Christian history, developed an approach to a theological hermeneutic"². Kaesemann is also quite clear that it is in the Letter to the Romans that this hermeneutic is mainly demonstrable.

In the preface to the English edition of his Commentary on Romans³ he wrote: "When on the third day of my first semester in May 1925, full of curiosity, I attended Erik Petersen's lecture on the Epistle to the Romans, the course of my study and in some sense, as befits a theologian, my life was decided. The basic problem was posed". In the following semesters I listened to the expositions of H von Soden and R Bultmann. I then turned successively to the work of K. Barth, A Schlatter, Luther, and Calvin...". He continues, "No literary document has been more important for me. Thus the circle of my theological work closes logically as I now seek to show in my own commentary what the apostle says to me and what is the result of my preoccupation with the towering mountains of scholarly production."⁴.

¹ The Spirit and the Letter, in *Perspectives on Paul*, ET, London SCM, 1971, pp.138-166 (abbreviated as PP) p.138.

² Ibid

³ *Commentary on Romans*, London, SCM Press, 1980. ET of the German, *An die Römer*, JCB Mohr, Tübingen 1973.

⁴ Commentary p.vii.

Kaesemann found himself unable to carry out his assigned task of revising Hans Lietzmann's *Handbuch*⁵. This he says, was “because within the limits of its aim and premises I still regard the work of my predecessor as unsurpassable” ... But “I could not follow his footsteps without denying myself and what for me are present-day realities and needs”. So he asserts, “I must go my own way,... Nothing from historical scholarship that seems essential is to be withheld. But the emphasis will lie on what Paul meant theologically. This criterion will decide what must be taken into account in detailed exegesis and what is dispensable to our understanding”⁶. In the event, though retaining conventions such as translating and providing a running commentary on the text, and supplying full bibliographies, Kaesemann dispensed with Introduction, formal excursuses, and indices-even the convention of arranging discussion around verse divisions is dropped. Again, whilst exegetical, historical and history-of-religions discussions are introduced as and when they are thought to be necessary, such material is not separated from wider theological comment. This is in keeping with Kas.’s express concern to subordinate everything to the central task of understanding Paul theologically. He is close enough to Karl Barth to stress the Word (rather than the words) and to refuse to allow this to be lost in the verbiage of scholarly detail⁷, though he himself does not overlook or omit what he considers relevant detail.

I Significant Aspects of Kaesemann’s Commentary on Romans

1.The Nature and Purpose of Romans

Kaesemann sees Baur as the pioneer who broke with the old dogmatic approach and opened up the way to the historical understanding of the letter.⁸ Baur made Rom 9-11 the hermeneutical centre of the letter, which he perceived as oriented to the debate with Jewish Christians, Christian universalism being championed over against Jewish particularism. The Reformation had failed to integrate Rom.9-11 into the message of justification. Baur had

⁵ The *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament* series, founded by Hans Lietzmann, had its own particular pattern which Kaesemann found uncongenial to his explicit hermeneutical task. Despite this difference in approach, a third edition of his Commentary on Romans became necessary after only one year.

⁶ *Commentary*, p.vii.

⁷ Barth reacted against the analytical historicism in which he had been schooled, asserting that subsidiary disciplines such as archaeology, philology, or textual criticism should serve only as a preamble to the true interpretation of ‘the Word’”, *The Epistle to the Romans* 6th ed. ET 1933 p.15. Similarly, CH Dodd, in his Cambridge inaugural lecture deplored the barrenness of much analytical New Testament scholarship, calling instead for a study of the process which created the parts in order to discover an inner unity in the deeper meaning of the separate parts. “The Present Task in New Testament Studies, Cambridge 1936, p.35.

⁸ *Commentary*,p. 253.

thus recognized the weakest spot in the traditional understanding of the letter as a compendium of Pauline theology. But by addressing this failure and setting the letter with these chapters in particular in a first century *Sitz im Leben*, Kaesemann sees Baur as removing from its hinges, the traditional doctrine of justification.⁹ As the subsequent period showed, what had hitherto been the criterion of Pauline theology lost its direct and universal authority, and two generations later was categorized “as a polemical stance in the Jewish conflict”¹⁰. Kaesemann is disturbed by the failure of scholarship to take into account Baur’s radical new insights on Rom 9-11.¹¹ He sees this as “facilitated by the irrefutable fact that Baur was mistaken when he ascribed a dominant position to Jewish Christians in Rome”.¹² Kaesemann is convinced that “the basic question today is still that of the relation between the doctrine of justification and salvation history.”¹³ This continues to occupy him throughout his exposition of Romans.

The letter is not simply an introduction to Paul’s beliefs for the unknown Roman church. Paul certainly addresses the concrete question of the relationship of Jewish and Gentile Christians”. The two most important factors that determine the purpose of the letter are that the apostle is seeking the support of the Roman church in his dealings with the Jerusalem church, and that he wishes to use Rome as a springboard for mission to Spain. It is the former concern that leads him to present his central message in the letter. His aim is to win over the Jewish Christian minority at Rome, in order to get rearguard protection in his relationships with Jerusalem”. “Even as a minority, these played a not inconsiderable role”.¹⁴ The Letter is to be read as a report giving a formal account of Paul’s proclamation, which reflects his earlier experiences and insights. While it offers a summary of Paul’s theology, it does so from a particular limiting perspective, and should not be read as a doctrinal tractate. Thus, essentially, Kaesemann’s view is that Romans is a summary of Paul’s theology addressed to a particular historical situation. The Roman church is, at the time of Paul’s

⁹ *Commentary*, p.253.+

¹⁰ Kaesemann is referring here to the views of Wrede and Schweitzer.

¹¹ According to Kaesemann, “ Twice in the nineteenth century the chapters achieved importance in theological history without any clear decision being reached about them or at least their importance in the interpretation of Paul as a whole being recognized”, *Commentary*, p.255.

¹² *Commentary*, pp.253-54.

¹³ *Commentary*, p.255.

¹⁴ I appreciate David Way’s correction of the English translation of this sentence-the *Commentary* states, “even as a minority, they played no very big part”, (p.405), see Way, *The Lordship of Christ: Ernst Kaesemann’s Interpretation of Paul’s Theology*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991, p.121 note7.

letter, in majority of gentile extraction. Jewish Christians, allowed to return to Rome when Claudius's decree was repealed,¹⁵ found a community in which they were now a minority. But, as we shall note later, this minority in Kaesemann's scenario is, for a variety of reasons, of real significance in the composition of the epistle. Thus Paul at least makes an attempt to dispel the suspicions of the Jewish Christians which to some extent determines the double character of the letter, addressed to Gentiles yet having many aspects that seem more relevant to Jews. "This is why he stresses the course of salvation history and the final acceptance of all Israel. This is why he is so mild and accommodating to Jewish Christians even regarding the observance of days. This is why he bases his gospel so firmly on scripture, from which too, he derives his own worldwide mission".¹⁶

Kaesemann seeks to demonstrate the unity and coherence of Romans. Here the key issue is the relation of chs.1-8 to chs.9-11, summed up under the headings of justification and salvation history. Whilst recognizing the merit of Baur's view of 9-11 as climax of the epistle,¹⁷ for Kaesemann this is also a challenge since the doctrine of justification is no longer regarded as the central concern. But he is dedicated to integrating chs.9-11 fully into the letter in a way that accords with justification as central. Kaesemann's solution is to adopt Schlatter's argument that the theme of God's righteousness is the key to the whole letter¹⁸- thus salvation history can still be affirmed but made subordinate to the doctrine of justification. There is thus a close correlation in Kaesemann's *Commentary* between the faith of Abraham and its significance as expounded in Romans 4 and the discussion of Israel's lack of faith and its significance in chs. 9-11. Though Kaesemann follows Baur in

¹⁵ Kasemann builds at this point on Wiefel's research published in German in 1970, and which later was republished as "The Jewish Community in Ancient Rome and the Origins of Roman Christianity" in *The Romans Debate* ed. K P Donfried, Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1977, pp.100-19. Wiefel stressed the fact that there was a large Jewish community in Rome without any centralized leadership as was the case in Alexandria. He concluded that "Paul's statements not only aim at elevating the stature of Jewish-Christians in the eyes of Gentile Christians to work against the former's low esteem on account of their Jewish heritage, but are also written in consideration of that overwhelming majority within the Jewish community which had closed itself off from the Christian mission" (p119).

¹⁶ *Commentary*,p.405. Kaesemann acknowledges this scenario of the Roman Christians is a reconstruction - "since history is the field of reconstructions, and whether these are right or not depends on how far they overcome the problems posed. He hold that this hypothesis "does so to a very high degree"(p.406).

¹⁷ Thus these chapters could now be integrated fully into the theme and theology of the letter rather than being viewed as a digression. As we will note later, this did not really take place until the twentieth century.

¹⁸ Way notes that the first indication of change in Kaesemann's views is to be found in a letter to Bultmann dated 18th April 1949 where, responding to Bultmann's *Urchristentum*, he writes of his "increasing distance from Petersen's and Schlier's interpretation of Romans, and pays tribute to Adolf Schlatter: "With zeal I am championing the thesis that one can only understand the Pauline doctrine of justification against the background of Jewish apocalyptic and that in it one must see an adaptation of the cosmological views of this apocalyptic. The interpretation of the Reformation did not see that and therefore deviated considerably from Paul". *The Lordship of Christ* ,p123.

recognizing the importance of chs. 9-11, he is very clear that Rom.4 holds a key place in the epistle.¹⁹ This is primarily because of the story of Abraham's faith. Kaesemann sees Romans as the Scriptural proof for the theme of the righteousness of faith expounded in 3:21-31.²⁰ The Abraham tradition only has relevance, as Kaesemann notes, "if the faith of Abraham in some respects anticipates Christian faith and was, ultimately identified with it"²¹ Thus for Paul, Abraham is made the prototype of Christian faith. But despite the fact that Abraham is viewed in this positive prefiguration, Kaesemann interprets Paul's use of the OT

polemically,

"the polemic which runs through the whole chapter shows that we are dealing here not with an extension or modification of the Jewish view but with its contrast".²² Thus the essential thing concerning faith emerging from the model of Abraham "is that we do not set ourselves in motion, but that we are called out of ourselves through God's Word and miracle.

We cannot therefore interpret our faith as our own work, but only as grace.." There can be no problem from this perspective in viewing Abraham as 'ungodly' (but note this is distinct from wicked). He is ungodly, "in so far as he cannot be called good measured by the standards of the Jewish and Greek worlds. He does not deal in works. For that very reason he is, on the other hand, the prototype of *faith, which always has to be viewed in antithesis to a piety of works*"(emphasis mine).²³

The contrast expressed here is linked closely to Kaesemann's understanding of the righteousness of God. He sees Rom.1:17 as a text where roads separate depending on the interpretive option chosen to follow. In biblical usage, "righteousness which is essentially forensic, denotes a relation in which one is set..."²⁴ Bultmann had equated 'God's righteousness' with the righteousness that God reckons to those who have faith, taking it as a genitive of authorship, as God-given or God-adjudicated righteousness.²⁵ Kaesemann argued that though this fits the general tenor of Paul's views, its interpretation as gift cannot be all that Paul meant. Kaesemann says "Paul intended the phrase *dikaiosisune theou* to convey not

¹⁹ The Faith of Abraham in Romans 4, "*Perspectives on Paul*, ET, London SCM, 1971, pp.79-101,p.79.

²⁰ In my view this is an inadequate understanding of Rom .4, which also presents Abraham as the one who found grace, the bearer of the promise etc. Kaesemann later speaks of "Abraham as the bearer of the promise *per se* who is replaceable by no other figure", PP,p.98. This view of the relation of Rom.3 to Rom.4 causes the chief figure in the narrative of Abraham to become the illustration of an abstract doctrine!

²¹ The Faith of Abraham, PP, p.79.

²² Ibid. Cf also Kaesemann's comment, " But this means that in fact the ground is cut away from under the feet of the Jewish tradition and the Jewish interpretation of the scriptures and that the patriarch himself is removed from its context", The Faith of Abraham , pp. 78-80.

²³ The Faith of Abraham ,PP, pp.84-5.

²⁴ *Commentary*, p. 24.

²⁵ Cf.Jouette Bassler, *Navigating Paul:An Introduction to Key Theological Concepts*,Louisville/London, Westminster/John Knox 2007, p.56.

simply the gift of righteousness, but to characterize God's own activity and nature. God's righteousness is primarily a reference to God's saving activity, to God's power that brings salvation to pass, a power that is also present in the gift.²⁶ Thus it is not simply gift but power and gift, and the genitive is thus understood as both subjective genitive (power) and genitive of origin (gift). For Kaesemann, Bultmann's concept of righteousness was too oriented around individual appropriation of the gift.²⁷ In contrast he stresses that the phrase refers also to God's own righteousness not, however, as a divine attribute, but as divine activity manifesting divine power.

2. God's Righteousness as both Gift and Power

Whatever its precise function in Kaesemann's own theology, it should be acknowledged that the perception of God's own righteousness as a power active in the everyday world is an insight of lasting significance for theology. In assigning priority to this aspect in an assessment of Kaesemann's contributions, recognition is also accorded to his determination to make theology relevant to post-war Germany. One way of achieving this relevance was to try to ensure as far as possible that the factors that facilitated the demonic forces of the Third Reich would never again receive support whether implicit or explicit from Christian theology. To help him achieve such an understanding of Paul, Kaesemann found in apocalyptic a multi-purpose instrument. He could be accused of using it as a construct by means of which obligatory theologoumena are depicted.²⁸ But by portraying both Jesus and Paul as apocalypticists²⁹, Kaesemann certainly created a critical distance between both of these and modern life and thought. With its strong emphasis on the turn of the ages brought about by Christ, past and present were radically separated and differentiated in the Pauline modification of apocalyptic thought.³⁰ This capacity for radical criticism of all earthly

²⁶ Thus Kaesemann argues that "the need for the righteousness of God comes to light simultaneously with its actualization". Though the world before Christ and outside him is to stand under the wrath of God, namely in lostness, bondage and rejection, "this is disclosed, not by two different revelations, but in one and the same act of revelation" (*Commentary*, p.35).

²⁷ "Mankind's justification is the actuality of God's right to his creation as this reveals itself as saving power, and this remains the basis, force, and truth of justification- a truth which transcends the individual and is directed toward a new world. Without such a distinction the doctrine dissolves into an anthropology of faith and the *extra nos* of salvation which is given with the Christ event, cannot be strongly preserved". (*Commentary*, p.93).

²⁸ As e.g in G. Sauter's "Systematische Gesichtspunkte in Ernst Kaesemann's Römerbrief-Kommentar", *Verkündigung und Forschung: Theologischer Jahresbericht*, (Evangelische Theologie), Munich 1976, p.84

²⁹ "On the Subject of Primitive Christian Apocalyptic", *New Testament Questions of Today*, ET London SCM: 1969, pp.108-137, (pp.131ff) (abbreviated as NTQT)..

³⁰ See Way, *The Lordship of Christ*, p.175.

systems and anthropological thinking was further assisted by Kaesemann's form of dialectical theology. Thus the law may be on the one hand the revelation of the divine will, but on the other perverted in demonic fashion. In the combination between the two aeons apocalyptic theology and his own dialectical approach to theology, Kaesemann created theological tools, even weapons, to attack his numerous opponents wherever and for whatever reason this was required, but primarily for use against legalism and enthusiasm. There can be no doubt but that the emphasis on conflict and the fierce polemic that characterizes his theologizing are directly related both to his theology of the cross and his contextualization within the evils of the Third Reich.

But for such a context, and all other similar contexts throughout history, what better theology than a theology of God's righteousness as salvation creating power. The power of God confronts the power of all earthly systems, bringing conflict and necessary suffering, but at the same time offers a powerful witness through his suffering servants who display in their resistance to tyranny the cruciform life of Christ.

In its first century contexts Paul's apocalyptic functions both in anti-Judaistic debates and similarly in anti-enthusiastic debates. The righteousness of God in Romans, as already noted, functions to achieve a realistic understanding of covenant and law in the new aeon. Kaesemann sees an anti-enthusiastic emphasis in Romans 8, and especially in 1 Corinthians, and both of these are countered by Paul's apocalyptic. In Romans 6, Paul's discussion of baptism does not lead to a declaration of believers as already having been resurrected with Christ; such participation is spoken of, not in the perfect tense, but in the future. Baptism equips for it, calls to it, but does not itself convey this gift."³¹ Thus apocalyptic functions in Paul to deny all forms of over-realized eschatology.³² Kaesemann also views it as having an anti-individualistic force. It would have been unthinkable for Paul that Christ's mission and presence was first and foremost to individuals.³³ Individuals do not create their own history by a series of temporal decisions, but stand within a history dominated, as Rom. 5 asserts, by

³¹ "Primitive Christian Apocalyptic", NTQT, pp.108-37 (132-33). Here Kaesemann differentiates profoundly between Christ and Christians in relation to their resurrection. The Christian does not as yet participate in the resurrection.

³² This is strongly emphasized by Kaesemann in his comments on Romans 8: "Enthusiasts are called back from the imaginary heaven of a radical realized eschatology to the messianic woes which still govern even Christian worship", *Commentary*, p.242. Cf also pp.229-33 and 237-38.

³³ *Ibid.* p.135.

the lordship of the realms of Adam or of Christ, and transfer from one to the other of these is the work of the creator alone.³⁴

Of course, the other function served by apocalyptic's anti-individualistic dimension, was as a weapon against Bultmann's existentialist individualism.³⁵ Bultmann had neglected the *extra nos* aspects of Rom 9-11. So Kaesemann uses apocalyptic to oppose this dehistoricizing, arguing that salvation must not be allowed to deteriorate into a theory concerning the rescue of the individual.³⁶ Apocalyptic also enabled Kaesemann to stress Paul's Jewish heritage³⁷ in a more significant way, and this cohered with his agenda to provide a more inclusive view of Paul's theology than the divergent formulations of the early twentieth century had promoted.

3. Emphasis on Concrete Bodily Existence and Obedience.

A constant theme in Kaesemann's understanding of Paul that emerges clearly in his exegesis of Romans, especially on Chapter 12, is the Lordship of Christ in concrete human existence. This cannot be subsumed under the concepts of personality or self-consciousness, but only of Christ's rule over one's body and thus eventually over the entire creation. The world can hence be no longer divided into the sacred and secular for there is no area of life outside or beyond Christ's lordship. Salvation should not be perceived in terms of mere inwardness, but of openness to Christ and through him to the world outside of us. Kaesemann will not encourage idealist or existentialist concepts of the superiority of the inward man or of man as artificially divided into flesh and spirit. In salvation the entire human in concrete fleshly existence is brought under the control of Christ through the Spirit and thus enters a new domain of existence. In this the power of God is at work in the believer as grace- bestowed in its individuation as *charisma*-the *agape* of God is the power from which nothing can separate (Rom.8:39) and the gift poured into believers' hearts (Rom 5:5). In and by this,

³⁴ Cf Way, *The Lordship of Christ*, p.254. Thus Kaesemann is able to make strong connections between Rom.5 and Rom 6 by virtue of the emphasis on human beings being under the dominion of powers.

³⁵ Kaesemann makes a two-fold 'correction' to Bultmann's theology: he emphasizes the 'theology' pole of the theology-anthropology dialectic, and he interprets both theology and anthropology in the light of Christ", Way, *The Lordship of Christ*, p.138.

³⁶ "New Testament Questions of Today", NTQT, pp.14-15 where Kaesemann also asks, "whether the equation of theology with anthropology does not necessarily lead to a modified form of individualism".

³⁷ This is emphasized in Kaesemann's introductory comments to Romans 9-11: "The fronts of the previous century have shifted, of course. The religio-historical alternative has steadily lost its original fascination as the Jewish heritage of the apostle has increasingly shown itself to be the native ground, and eschatology the horizon of Paul's theology" *Commentary*, p.254.

God reaches out to the world, and a human being as a small part of that world is the means in which and through which, God reclaims the world unto himself. His rightful lordship exercised in Christ is thus restored to be eventually fully realised when Christ returns his lordship to the Creator. Faith is a concrete orientation to the lordship of Christ.³⁸ The right and claim of the Creator over his creation is thus affirmed and exercised in Christ. The cosmic scope of Christ's lordship is achieved in Kaesemann's argument that Paul reinterprets the concept of God's covenant faithfulness to become faithfulness to the creation. Righteousness in the Old Testament and in Judaism centred not on a personal ethical quality, but on a relationship.³⁹ In the new obedience enabled and flowing from the reign of Christ in human beings, this relationship can now be realised. God's righteousness means God's saving activity in which the gift of grace is given but not as a separable entity, for in and with the gift comes the abiding presence and hence lordship of the Giver, from whom it is never separable at any time.⁴⁰ It is Kaesemann's boast and claim, that only in Pauline theology can we find a fully worked out anthropology.⁴¹ Whether this claim can be sustained or not, by his reworking of a Pauline anthropology in terms of gift and power, Kaesemann has in my view offered an interesting and useful understanding of Christian life in its corporateness and corporeality in the everyday world.

II Criticisms of Kaesemann's Commentary on Romans

1 Failure to distinguish the First Century Context from the Contemporary

One of the main critiques of Kaesemann's work in Romans is that whilst fault cannot be found with his desire to come face to face with the message of the text and then to express this in theological terms, he can be criticized because he does not sufficiently distinguish the two horizons-when he is speaking about what Paul was trying to say to his contemporaries, and what Kaesemann, via his Romans commentary was seeking to expound to his own generation. Way notes in relation to Kaesemann's claim that the Spirit is said to take possession of us and claim us as his own that here we have an instance where a description

³⁸ This is particularly emphasized by Kaesemann in relation to Rom.12-15., where he also stresses that no one should make his faith a norm for others, *Commentary*, p.379. As noted already this relates to Gentile Christians in association with a minority of Jewish Christians.

³⁹ "The Righteousness of God in Paul", NTQT, p.172.

⁴⁰ "The Righteousness of God in Paul", NTQT, p.174.

⁴¹ *Ibid* p.181.

of the activity of the Spirit in early Christianity is simultaneously pressed into service to commend a particular theology to Kaesemann's twentieth century readers".⁴² Whether this is related to the existential influence via Bultmann may be questioned and also whether a certain scepticism about historical continuity is also present. There is nothing to be said against theologizing using Romans, except that it ought not to be viewed as the theological summary of Paul's thought. But what is to be considered is how to do theology whilst recognizing and retaining the contextuality of both the NT letters, and contemporary interpreters.

In the period when Kaesemann was writing his essays, but to a lesser extent in the case of his Commentary, the emphasis upon the contextuality of Paul's letters and all the statements within these still in the early days of its development. The concern to separate the two horizons of the first century and the contemporary audience had not yet achieved the general recognition that this has today. To this extent, we must not judge Kaesemann too harshly. Moreover, his concern to make the message of Paul a living message for a war-torn world, and use his understanding of just by faith to demolish all false ideologies and enslaving human systems should be respected even if he failed to adequately separate the meanings of Paul's gospel in very differing centuries. He was well aware of his own tendencies when he acknowledged in the preface to his Commentary that he could not follow in Lietzmann's footsteps "without denying what are for me present-day realities and needs"⁴³ With Bultmann, Barth and others, he was seeking to bridge the cultural and social barriers that were getting in the way of the gospel. Nevertheless, it is difficult to disagree with Way's conclusion that though "Kaesemann's interpretation is a great achievement as a Pauline theology" (in the sense of a contemporary theological reflection which is constantly related to the kerygma of the Pauline epistles, and as such a contemporary statement *with* Paul), since at the same time it seeks to be defensible as a historical interpretation of the theology underlying Paul's letters, "It is a theological achievement which, because of its dual goals, is particularly vulnerable to historical criticism"⁴⁴

2 A Tendency to Generalize rather than Being Limited by the Context

⁴² Way p.117. Way notes "the characteristic use of 'us'" He also draws attention to Kaesemann's use of 'change of Lordship' which, at the historical level, is a description of the event of salvation within the Hellenistic world-view and presupposes the thoroughly mythological notion of a 'transfer of power' from the cosmic powers to Christ. This transfer however takes on theological significance for Kaesemann particularly in his critique of the individualistic tendency of Bultmann's interpretation of Paul. In this instance, historical hypotheses (from the first century scene) have been put to theological use in Kaesemann's contemporary setting.!

⁴³ *Commentary*, p.vii.

⁴⁴ *The Lordship of Christ*, p.291.

A second criticism that can be levelled at Kaeseman's Romans is his tendency to generalize, which is most obvious in his critique of Judaism and Jewish responses to the gospel message. This is obviously closely related to the previous criticism that he tends to confuse the original context addressed in Romans with the contemporary addressees. It indicates a looseness in the connection with the context, which at its most extreme leaves the immediate context behind and concentrates on the contemporary scene.

This was one of the main critiques of Kaesemann put forward by EP Sanders. Sanders notes that P's arguments against the law are mainly Christological and that this Christological criticism goes hand in hand with a criticism of Jewish legalism. Legalism then becomes generalized as the human tendency to self-achievement which true theology must counter since neither of these further steps is justified by strict exegesis of Paul's letters".⁴⁵ He takes Kaesemann's commentary as a good example of both these tendencies.

Sanders also notes that though Kaesemann does assert rightly that P does not generalize about legalism,⁴⁶ he then goes on to make his own generalization.⁴⁷ According to Sanders, Kaesemann makes an unwarranted connection between Israel, legalism, and generalized theology-with what he terms as "more or less blatant eisegesis"⁴⁸

Sanders focuses on two aspects of Kaesemann's position that help explain its long duration and persuasiveness: (1) the direct connection between Christology and the renunciation of self-striving and (2) the way in which the supposed criticism of Judaism is individualized and generalized. Instead of staying within the Pauline argument that "only Christ enables us to recognize the true will of God..." it is immediately interpreted by saying that "man", (*der Mensch*, humanity as such) "renounces his own right". Sanders points out that in this argument, "the prime point of accepting Christ becomes the renunciation of self-achievement". Once this interpretation is made, it is easy enough to read Paul's *Christological objections* to Judaism as if they were directed against Jewish *self-righteousness*. "Thus the correct exegetical perception that Paul *opposed Judaism* and that he

⁴⁵ Sanders. *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* p.155.

⁴⁶ *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*, p.155

⁴⁷ Cf Kaesemann's comment, "Unlike the Reformation, Paul had not yet developed a dialectic of law and gospel, since law for him was always related to the Torah of Moses. To the extent that this was seen as a means of perverting God's will by pious achievement, the *law could later be extended to legalism* and dialectic could replace the antithesis. The apostle lays the foundation for this generalizing in his interpretation of *nomos*, but as a Jewish Christian he does not yet undertake it...", *Commentary*, p.282. (emphasis mine).

⁴⁸ Sanders p.156. Sanders adds that a century of reading Jewish literature as evidencing self-righteousness no doubt helped to facilitate this type of argument.

argued christologically becomes.... an assertion that he *opposed the self-righteousness which is typical of Judaism* “But the supposed objection to Jewish self-righteousness is absent from Paul’s letters as self-righteousness itself is from Jewish literature”.⁴⁹ In contrast to Kaesemann, Sanders points out that Paul charges that the Jews did not do the law well enough (Rom 2:17), and that doing the law does not lead to real righteousness (Rom 10:3f) –but not that their fault consisted in zeal for pious works.

(2) Sanders second complaint against Kaesemann is that Paul’s complaint that most Jews reject the preaching of Christ (Rom. 10:18-21) is generalized by Kaesemann to mean that they reject *grace*.⁵⁰ But for Paul the burden of the criticism falls on the rejection of Christ; it is that which proves that individual Jews seek their own righteousness. There is no charge that Judaism historically inculcates what we now call self-righteousness.” Sanders concludes: “This not only individualizes and generalizes the discussion of the failure of the Jews in Romans 9-11, it makes a historicizing leap: individual Jews rejected grace as such and were thus in fact guilty of zeal for self-righteousness”.⁵¹

Of course, since he first proclaimed what became the New Perspective on Jews and Judaism, Sanders’ views have been strongly opposed but, in my view, not successfully. In particular, his analysis of Kaesemann’s argument concerning the failure of the Jews in Rom 9-11 cannot be withstood. It is not difficult to locate the generalizing tendency in much New Testament scholarship wherever Jewish practice comes into view.⁵² Moreover, Kaesemann’s extreme statement that the pious Jew is the worst enemy of the gospel and the exemplification of the *homo religiosus* is hard to justify.⁵³ Sanders’ explanation of Rom 10:3 that the Jews sought a righteousness of their own as meaning a righteousness exclusive

⁴⁹ Sanders p.156.

⁵⁰ Sanders p.157.

⁵¹ Sanders p.157. Sanders also criticizes LE Keck for generalizing law etc in his popular book on Paul

⁵² Way gives this example from Kaesemann, “Our task is to ask :what does the Jewish nomism against which Paul fought really represent? And our answer must be : it represents the community of pious people which turns God’s promises into their own privileges and God’s commandments into the instruments of self-sanctification.”, *The Lordship of Christ*, p.180,cf.also pp.176ff.

⁵³ See the reference to the boasting of the pious person (Rom: 3 27ff) *Commentary* pp103-04., also the assertion that “St Paul’s adversary is the devout Jew, not only as the mirror-image of his own past- though that too- but as the reality of the religious man”, “ Paul and Israel”, *New Testament Questions of Today*,pp.182-87 (184).See also M Barth’s comments on his failed attempt to get Kaesemann to retract some of his statements about the pious Jew, “St. Paul-a good Jew”, *Horizons in Biblical Theology: An International Dialogue*, Vol.1(1979) p.7.

to Jews makes much better sense of Paul's argument.⁵⁴ It is particularly inconsistent of Kaesemann to generalize in light of his own strong assertion of Paul's concreteness in his theological approach.

3 Divine Faithfulness to the Creation rather than to Israel?

The manner of presentation of the widening of the covenant concept of divine faithfulness to Israel to become faithfulness to the creation may also be questioned. Kaesemann claims "For the apostle is not acquainted with the idea of *the renewed covenant with Israel*, which Jewish Christianity used for a time in order to show its continuity with Judaism and to prove that it was the eschatological fulfilment of the prophetic promise of the ingathering of the scattered tribes."⁵⁵(emphasis mine). We note that Kaesemann at least recognizes that Jewish Christianity did use the concept of a renewed covenant even if it was only for a while! But not so Paul!

"For the apostle the demonstration of divine righteousness is no longer the renewal of the covenant with God's ancient people. God's righteousness reaches beyond the covenant people and is valid for everyone who believes in Jesus the Crucified." Indirectly this says that God's covenant faithfulness becomes his faithfulness to his whole creation and his right which is established in this relation."⁵⁶

One suspects that Kaesemann is using the concept of a covenant with creation as a means of avoiding the problems and implications of God's continuing faithfulness to Israel. His pupil C Mueller went further, emphasising the right and freedom of God as Creator, who as such can count whoever He wills as His seed, thereby loosing the divine election and calling from the physical seed of Abraham. This stance also met with the criticism that both Kaesemann and P.Stuhlmacher overemphasized God's creative action, thereby weakening the concept of His faithfulness to Israel.⁵⁷ Whilst one may not dispute the assertion that God's claim is on the whole of creation, nor would one want to encourage the view that salvation is "a mere

⁵⁴ Cf TL Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1997,p.130.

⁵⁵ "The Spirit and the Letter", PP, pp.138-66,(152).

⁵⁶ *Commentary*,p.101.

⁵⁷ K Kertelge strongly opposed the emphasis on faithfulness to creation arguing instead for God's concern for all sinners and that God's creative power consists in declaring the sinner righteous out of grace", *Rechtfertigung bei Paulus: Studien zur Struktur und zum Bedeutungsgehalt des paulinischen Rechtfertigungsbegriffs*,NTA (NS) 3,Muenster 1967, p.108.

inwardness”, a new individual self-understanding, I would wish to stress the priority of faithfulness to the covenant over faithfulness to the creation, viewing the latter as subordinate to and dependent upon the existence of the latter. As Way comments, the “case that Paul extends the idea of God’s faithfulness to the covenant to his faithfulness to creation is not convincing”, nor should it be regarded as “an important motif in Paul’s theology.”⁵⁸ It should rather be understood as part of Kaesemann’s rejection of Bultmann’s exclusive orientation to the individual.⁵⁹

This moving beyond the boundaries of Israel, may seem a reasonable hypothesis in light of the gospel going to the gentiles, and yet it is not simply an extension of Israel’s privileges that is intended by it. This could indeed be read as anti-Jewish in effect, because it cancels or renders redundant the priority of Israel. Yet it must be clearly acknowledged that Kaesemann is very careful to hold on to the biblical motif of Abraham/Israel as the unique bearer of the promises. He also stresses that Paul, despite his critiques of the law etc allowed the Torah to be the kernel of the Old Testament, was still Jewish enough to make the law one of the central problems of his theology, and still uses the motif of the covenant to speak of the relation of humans to God.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Kaesemann rejects the concept of a renewed covenant and views Paul as being forced into a choice between two covenants, which leads him into extreme positions with relation to Israel.⁶¹ He goes on to assert, “ Through thick and thin, Paul holds to the view that God activates his righteousness not in a renewed, but in a totally new Covenant, and the apostle can thus legitimately transfer the motif of the people of God on to the Christians as the eschatological Israel”.⁶²

4 Lord of History or Creator only of the Particular Moment?

⁵⁸ *The Lordship of Christ*, p.236. As TL Donaldson notes, “Pauline universalism is not the abandonment of the covenant for the sake of the cosmos”, Donaldson views this aspect of Kaesemann’s work as “ a fundamental misreading of Paul”. *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle’s Convictional World*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1997, pp.95- 96, cf also pp.93-100.

⁵⁹ Ibid p. 207.

⁶⁰ “The Spirit and the Letter”, PP, p.154.

⁶¹ “he has to decide between the old and new covenants instead of seeing both as a historical continuity in the light of the concept of the renewed covenant”, “The Spirit and the Letter”, PP, pp 154.

⁶² “The Righteousness of God in Paul”, NTQT, p.180.

Kaesemann's fierce opposition to any doctrine of earthly continuity, fuelled both by his experiences in the Third Reich,⁶³ his opposition to Idealism,⁶⁴ and his existential heritage via Bultmann, whilst understandable, must nevertheless be regarded as extreme.⁶⁵ Way considers Kaesemann's treatment of the law is hampered by the dominant concept of piety, and by "an inability to discuss the notion of salvation history without seeing this theme(anachronistically) in terms of immanent continuity".⁶⁶ Kaesemann opposes the widespread tendency to make ecclesiology the decisive criterion of theology and questions whether "superstition has not contributed more to the continuity of church history, theology, and Christian institutions than faith. For faith can hardly be inherited..."⁶⁷ Kaesemann's position is as usual polemical on two fronts. He distances himself from the radical stance of Gunther Klein, as well as from Oscar Cullmann and Johannes Munck's view of Heilsgeschichte.⁶⁸ He asserts that "Paul did not solve the problems of the law and the Old Testament radically by denying the divine gift and intention of the former and by abolishing the latter altogether, as if he had been the first Marcionite. Nor did he ethicize and spiritualize the law, like the later Gentile church, so that the gospel might be viewed as the *nova lex*. His view of salvation history, with its eschatological determination, made both courses impossible".

Kaesemann wants to use Abraham as the model for the faithful without falling into what he views as the errors of both past and present interpreters. In what sense is Abraham demonstrated in Rom 4 to be "the father of us all"? Kaesemann strongly rejects Cullmann's claim that salvation history is the core of Pauline theology but so also Klein's assertion that the history of Israel is "radically secularized and paganized". He states, "If the experience of the righteousness of God is limited to the post-resurrection period, and prior to that related to Abraham exclusively, both the exclusiveness and the choice of Abraham as an example are

⁶³ Cf esp. Kaesemann's comment," On the way to a theology of proclamation we rediscovered that Reformation doctrine of justification which had become largely incomprehensible to our fathers and grandfathers and which had therefore ceased for them to form the centre of the New Testament message. This discovery immunized us deeply against a conception of salvation history which broke in on us in secularized and political form with the Third Reich and its ideology. It will be understandable that as burnt children we are unwilling to add fuel to the fire.", "Justification and Salvation History", PP. p.64, similarly pp.51-.52. Way notes that one of the roots of Kaesemann's interest in eschatology is the need to find a language to speak of the power of evil in a supra-personal level, *The Lordship of Christ*, p.126.

⁶⁴ Kaesemann in particular reacted against the idealist belief that history is the evolutionary process of the Godhead."The Saving Significance of Jesus' Death", PP, pp.32-59 (p.51).

⁶⁵ Kaesemann asserts that "insofar as faith or denial results from confrontation with God's Word, there is no immanent continuity in salvation history", *Commentary*, p.255.

⁶⁶ Way, *The Lordship of Christ*, p.236.

⁶⁷ "The Spirit and the Letter", PP, p153.

⁶⁸ Justification and Salvation History, pp.60-78 (p.61).

absurd ...Marcion should then be followed and this chapter, along with much else in the New Testament, eliminated”.⁶⁹ On the other hand, argues Kaesemann, Paul does not use the concept of the holy remnant here⁷⁰ nor does he suggest that faith is in principle trust in history. Salvation history in Paul is “marked by paradoxes. In its earthly course, then, it is discontinuous and cannot be calculated....its continuity is the power of God”.⁷¹

Kaesemann. bases his views on both chapters four and five of Romans. .. “Rom 5:12ff. makes it clear that the apostle does not understand history as a continuous evolutionary process but as the contrast of the two realms of Adam and Christ” and even though faith reaches from creation to parousia, the whole of history, “faith must remain separate from a religious philosophy of life or a Christian speculation about history.”⁷² This holds true no less of Romans 9-11 than for the first eight chapters. Here the doctrine of justification also dominates; “it is the key to salvation history, just as, conversely, salvation history forms the historical depth and cosmic breadth of the event of justification”.⁷³ Just and salvation history cannot be played off against each other. They belong together but everything depends on the right co-ordination between them-“salvation history must not take precedence over justification. It is its sphere”.⁷⁴

But if there really is no continuity except in the miraculous invasion/ intervention of God, where is the rationale for any real doctrine of the church? If the divine revelation is so unpredictable, is there any virtue in seeking to maintain a doctrine that gives some at least some temporal significance to those in Christ as a living and ongoing body of people centred on worship and service to Christ? If the Spirit is no more likely to claim human beings, as a part of this world destined for divine new creation and renewal, within the sphere of the church rather than in that of the world that opposes it, why then should the *ekklesia* be given any real significance? It seems we have something of a parallel here with a certain form of predestination. An all powerful and arbitrary God determines the elect in both cases without any visible or tangible earthly continuity. Although Kaesemann rightly distances himself from Klein and Marcionite tendencies, in the end he successfully demolishes

⁶⁹ *Commentary* pp.116-17.

⁷⁰ “Except in Rom 9:27ff, and 11:13ff, Paul does not use the motif of the holy remnant”, cf also his comment that The justification of the ungodly... is radicalized. It reaches beyond Jewish Christianity as the holy remnant and thus breaks through a final barrier”. *Commentary*, pp.101 and 117.

⁷¹ *Commentary* p.117.

⁷² Justification and Salvation History,PP..69.

⁷³ *Ibid* p.75.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*.p.76. This is because “justification remains the centre, the beginning and the end of salvation history. Otherwise the cross of Christ would also inevitably lose its central position and all else would be distorted...”

heilsgeschichtlich stances⁷⁵ to such an extent that it would appear that any confidence concerning divine activity in history must be believed without evidence, rather than alongside evidence of at least a limited kind.⁷⁶ I do not see how the Lord of history can avoid, in Kaesemann's perspective, becoming only "the creator of the particular moment".⁷⁷

5 The Role of Concepts in the Theology of Paul

Another aspect of Kaesemann's theologizing in his Romans commentary that may be subject to criticism is his emphasis on the conceptuality of Pauline theology. This point can also fairly be addressed to other New Testament scholars who tend to do more or less the same. With respect to the Pauline concepts Kaesemann takes up Bultmann's understanding of 'concept analysis' (Begriffsanalyse) to elucidate Paul's theology: Bultmann had responded to Deissmann's rejection of concept analysis by asking, "How else, other than in concepts are theological ideas given and how can they be understood other than in the work of concept analysis?" Thus for Kaesemann concepts are always mirror images of an "understanding of the world" or of a self-understanding. These concepts also play a role in the task of reconstructing Paul's theology, as building blocks of a larger edifice. Kaesemann is not only interested in the individual concepts but in the way they relate to each other within Paul's theology.⁷⁸ This understanding of concepts as the way to understand Paul's theology needs to be carefully considered. Is the proper content of Biblical theology the ideas or concepts to be found in biblical texts? Is it these or a grand underlying narrative that opens up the biblical texts to readers?⁷⁹ This is the problem noted by Donaldson in

⁷⁵ Kaesemann's claims that the concept of the people of God ceased to be viable in a mainly Gentile church stating that, "The idea of the people of God could only be used figuratively and clearly no longer as an argument for a continuity of grace which could only be believed. For those who received the promise no longer coincided exactly with those who received the fulfilment", "Primitive Christian Apocalyptic," NTQT, p.129. This thesis is further developed in relation to Israel in Rom.11:11-24., *Commentary*, pp.304ff. and in "Paul and Israel", NTQT, pp.183-187.

⁷⁶ Kaesemann, in relation to salvation history does claim his own stance on continuity, "The faithfulness of God, who never leaves creation without his address and promise, is its true continuum, to which there corresponds on earth the experience that there always has been and is a band of hearers and always the scandal of those who take offense..." *Commentary*, p.255.

⁷⁷ Kaesemann does assert that the "the apostle's theology involves a definite salvation-historical perspective. The interpreter who radically denies this is forced to reduce the Lord of history to the creator of the particular moment and hence to do violence to the Pauline doctrine of God", *Commentary*, p.23.

⁷⁸ See Way, *The Lordship of Christ*, pp.114-15. Way notes that Kaesemann also has an eye for the doctrinal implications of the resulting Pauline theology for contemporary theology, and that Kaesemann's work becomes more and more concerned with the doctrinal shape of Paul's theology-and particularly the characteristically Lutheran view (pp.116-18).

⁷⁹ Cf Kaesemann's reactions to theological abstractions in his comments in relation to objections to the theology of the cross and the theology of the Word because they are perceived as being only an over-simplification-"The splitting up of faith into a number of things which have to be believed runs parallel to the hypostatization of the object of faith itself. This would seem to be a crystallization, but in reality it means a process of abstraction. Pre-

discussing Paul's convictional statements where 'righteousness' parallels membership in Abraham's family and 'by faith' parallels being in Christ, i.e what is primary- theological terms or human beings and their relationship to God?⁸⁰ If one reads Romans ch.9 in a particular way, it is in my view easy to misunderstand Paul's argument. Here we have strong emphasis on the concept of the divine freedom, almost as if the God of Israel could act arbitrarily and dictatorily if he so desired. The emphasis on divine impartiality, strengthened by its discussion in Rom 2, is used as a way of opposing any concept of favouritism arising from the concept of election and in favour of the argument that there can no longer be any distinction between Jew and gentile. Again Pharaoh can be seen as an example of hardening in contrast to election and mercy. But when Rom 9 is read as a discussion of God's relation to Israel past and present and as Paul's attempt to understand divine activity in this history, it emerges that this chapter is wrongly read if it is read as a philosophical discussion or again simply as a discussion of abstract theological concepts. This can also be illustrated from Rom ch.11. Paul begins by asking again whether God has possibly rejected his people. He repudiates this option by reminding his readers of the story of Elijah and the seven thousand faithful who had not bowed the knee to Baal. He then gives in vv.5-6 a theological summary in abstract terms. So too at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace and adds "but if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise it would no longer be grace". This would seem to suggest that it is theological abstractions that comprise Paul's primary interest. But when we read further in 11:7, it is Israel i.e historical Israel, that resumes centre stage. It may be argued from this that Paul's primary interest lies in people and their relation to God, and that the theological reflection on terms such as grace and election are very much secondary. Our problem could be that since the Reformation, particularly in Reformed scholarship, we have latched on to Paul's secondary terms of theological reflection and not kept them anchored in the concrete reality of everyday life, and particularly of the relation of humans to God.⁸¹ As already noted, when Abraham in Romans 4 is taken as proof of theological assertions made by Paul in Romans 3, then this involves actually using a concrete narrative to illustrate an abstract concept.

existence, incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, exaltation and the second coming are not facts which follow one another like beads on a string and which indicate the saving and historical process inaugurated by Christ", "The Saving Significance of the Death of Jesus in Paul", PP.pp.32-59,(p.52).

⁸⁰ Donaldson notes that the Reformation saw the first set of terms as foundational, and the second as its corollary in a specific set of circumstances-my question is whether this order is helpful in understanding Paul contextually. Cf TL Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles* ,p.120.

⁸¹ *Commentary*,p.viii.

By removing theological terms from their concrete relation to context and peoples, we can easily confuse the history of ideas with Paul's theologizing because this facilitates generalizing and abstract thought, not hindered by a relation to actual people and circumstances, not to mention their needs and demands. As Kaesemann himself asserts, "In true theology there is no place for global judgements and concreteness is always required." Moreover, the fact that Kaesemann acts rather freely in the use and relationship of these concepts⁸² is another reason for tying them to the particular context and purpose for which they are first introduced into a text. I suspect he would rationalize his methodology by reference to Paul's overall aim to promote the Lordship of Christ. In this I sympathize with his aims, but cannot but reflect that a more careful attention on the part of all New Testament scholars to concrete reality, particularly to Israel (not as a theological concept but as a specific people), and to Greek and Roman Christ-followers likewise in their particular contexts, would help towards clarity and to limit the confusion that theologising with abstractions is always prone.

III Conclusion

We have noted Kaesemann's explicit concerns to apply Paul's gospel of the righteousness of God to his contemporary German context. This is seen by many as a failure to distinguish Paul's context from that of the contemporary scene. The nature of a commentary is that it is determined by the text rather than by the agenda of its commentator. But as we now clearly recognize, the subjectivity of the writer remains despite our attempts to be as objective as possible. If it is the pattern that it is only the first century needs that we comment on in relation to the text of Paul's letters, then Kaesemann's *Commentary* should be perceived as having only a limited sphere of reference. It can have relevance to issues prior to or contemporary with Kaesemann, but not necessarily those later, or those in other parts of the world at other times. Its contextuality, however valuable, limits its sphere of reference.⁸³ This does not mean it is not an invaluable publication for that limited sphere, but it does

⁸² This is well illustrated by Way who states, "There is also the danger that supposedly Pauline concepts take on a life of their own within the hermeneutical scheme of the interpreter..." *Lordship of Christ*, p.116. Cf also his comment, "If 'apocalyptic' and justification, or justification and participation mutually interpret each other, the resultant picture gains in overall cohesiveness but the various terms and themes merge into each other. This procedure gives Kaesemann's interpretation its quality as a piece of sustained, coherent, systematic thought; at the same time, the danger of imposing a theological construct on Pauline texts and phrases becomes correspondingly greater", p.210.

⁸³ But this is difficult because Kaesemann views Romans as in some sense the basis for all Paul's theology.

limit its on-going significance. Kaesemann in the Preface acknowledges to some extent his own limits, “Having arrived at the limits set for me, I accept the provisionality of my own thought and deeds, and willingly leave the way clear for others.”⁸⁴ Perhaps the significance of this discussion is that we should try to contextualize all commentaries more precisely, and to value them accordingly.

Another aspect of Kaesemann’s *Romans* is that it is written in a German or European context rather than that of Britain or the USA. By this I mean that the understanding of Theology in Britain and the USA is as a sub-division otherwise known as Systematic Theology or Dogmatic Theology, whereas in Germany and elsewhere Theology has a much wider scope, and there is not the sharp divide between New Testament scholars and Theology proper!⁸⁵ New Testament scholars are also New Testament theologians. This is especially true of Ernst Kaesemann and this perception is relevant to his major strengths as well as the perceived weaknesses in his *Romans* commentary. He makes no attempt to evade major theological debates, quite the reverse. Whether this theological commitment sometimes sways his judgements must be considered in specific instances, but its presence cannot be doubted, nor should it be valued only from the perspective of the UK or the USA.

Perhaps the best verdict that can be accorded Kaesemann’s *Romans* Commentary, is that it reveals his dedication to understanding Paul’s gospel and theology in a very profound interaction with the subject matter of the biblical text. The best compliment that can be paid to this interpreter is to accord his comments the depth of attention they deserve, as he always did with piercing criticism in relation to the views of others. But we cannot simply lift his understanding of a topic e.g. apocalyptic and transfer this to another context without considerable modification.⁸⁶ Kaesemann, as a great interpreter of Paul, is better remembered and thus honoured, by seeking to develop for a new generation his particular insight into the theology of Paul as determined by the Lordship of Christ in corporate and corporeal existence.

⁸⁴ *Commentary*, p.viii.

⁸⁵ But dogmatic theology cannot be tied to a specific text, but is more thematically and rationally determined.

⁸⁶ I suspect that in reaction to a perceived covenantal emphasis emerging via EP Sanders’ work on Paul and Judaism, some interpreters are turning to apocalyptic as the key to Paul in contrast to a covenantal understanding. But this is not a simple matter in view of Way’s comment on Kaesemann’s failure to keep the historical and theological meanings of ‘apocalyptic’ sufficiently distinct ... so that in places it is difficult to know what Kaesemann means by the term”, *The Lordship of Christ*, p.175. Cf. also Barry Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul: Paul’s Interpreters and the Rhetoric of Criticism*, Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1996, esp. pp.235-37.

