I have decided, you may be glad to learn, that this will be my last post giving the reasons that scholars widely consider 2 Thessalonians not to be written by Paul, even though it claims to be written by Paul. In order to make this the last post, I have had to make it unusually long. Again, the point is both to show why scholars think what they do and to show the level at which they have to make their arguments, as opposed to the simple summary that I provide in my trade book Forged. This is the same argument that I make there (the only one I make!) only it is given in the length and depth that I have directed it to scholars. This is, once more, taken from my monograph Forgery and Counterforgery. In it, by the way, I answer many of the objections readers have been raising to my view that 2 Thessalonians is forged.

The Theology of 2 Thessalonians

As recognized already by J. E. Chr. Schmidt over two centuries ago, the theological problem of 2 Thessalonians involves the divergent eschatological outlook of 2:1-12. There are two issues involved: is the author addressing a problem of a realized or an imminent eschatology? And does his resolution of the problem contradict the views of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11?

The first issue hinges to a great extent on the exegesis of 2 Thess. 2:2, and especially the key term ἐνέστηκεν (“has come upon” or “is here”). The readers are urged, with respect to the “parousia” of Christ and “our gathering together with him” not to be “quickly shaken or disturbed – whether “by spirit, by a word, or by a letter as if from us” to the effect that ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου. (“The day of the Lord has come” or “is here”). In this context, does the perfect of ἐνίστημι mean that the day of the Lord “has already come and is now present,” an eschatology analogous to what Paul disparages in 1 Corinthians, or that “it is virtually here and is soon to be realized,” comparable, say, to the proclamation of Jesus in Mark 1:15, “the Kingdom of God is at hand” (Ἠγγίκεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ)?

The use of the term ἐνίστημι in other Christian literature of the period ....

THE REST OF THIS POST IS FOR MEMBERS ONLY. If you don’t belong yet, OH BOY, THERE IS A LOT YOU’RE MISSING!!!

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