There is another aspect of the study of New Testament theology to what I discussed in yesterday's post. That post was focused on how one “does theology” with the New Testament – that is, how one uses the New Testament texts in such a way as to inform, critique, call into question, authorize, and dialogue with the important intellectual and practical aspects of life as a Christian, both individually and in community. That is the sort of thing theologians do who are interested in the sacred texts of Scripture, and it is something many of my friends who were doing PhD’s in New Testament studies were ultimately invested in, especially since most of them saw their graduate training in the field to be preparation for serving the Christian church.

But there is another equally important aspect of New Testament theology that is more historical in its focus. If you imagine a spectrum of disciplines with exegesis (the determination of what an author originally meant, to put it in its simplest terms) on one end, and theology (the sustained reflection on all aspects of God and humans in themselves and in relation to each other) on the other end, then I suppose this other aspect of New Testament theology is closer to exegesis. It involves determining not just what the words of a text mean, but more broadly what the theological views of the author were, based on a full analysis of all of his surviving writings.

This is the area of New Testament studies that I found particularly interesting myself (although, as I’ll later explain, my real passions lay in a completely different area). The reason I always found it so intriguing is that this kind of study reveals just how incredibly diverse Christianity was at the very beginning.

Here the researcher tries to determine ...

The Rest of this Post is for MEMBERS ONLY!! If you don’t belong, realize: you could get SO much interesting information just by joining. It doesn’t cost much and gives tons.

You need to be logged in to see this part of the content. Please Login to access.