Jews have seen Paul as a traitor because of his conversion.

Muslims revere Jesus, but do not like Paul's insistence that Jesus was the Son of God.

Modern people often see Paul as misogynistic and homophobic.

Liberal scholars view Paul as corrupting Jesus' teachings through his own imagination and religious ideas.

The attacks on Paul are many.

- "Paul is frequently accused of not being a faithful interpreter of Jesus, but distorting Jesus' message almost out of recognition. It is alleged that Paul and others turned Jesus, who was no more than a popular Jewish teacher and healer from Palestine, into a divine cult figure who came down from heaven to save humankind, died as a blood sacrifice for the sins of the world, was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven, and who will one day return to judge the world. Paul is the author or key Christian doctrines and the true founder of Christianity as we know it. But the religion he created was not that of Jesus...He was influenced by the pagan religions of the Greek world and most of all by his own experience of conversion to Christianity on the road to Damascus, when he claimed to have seen, heard, and been called by Jesus. His imagined view of Jesus dominated the early church, and the real Jesus, it is claimed, lost out." David Wenham

- "Paul's “Christ Movement” in the Diaspora differs significantly from the “Jesus Movement” led by James (brother of Jesus) in Jerusalem in terms of origins, practices and beliefs. In addition, Paul’s message is more radical than has usually been thought, contending that the time of torah is over and that no one needs to observe it, whether Gentile or Jew. Paul’s movement does not represent a seamless outgrowth of the movement in Jerusalem. He never met the historical Jesus; rarely quotes him or refers to his teachings; and never grounds his own message in what the Jesus of history taught and practiced. According to Paul, his contacts with the Jesus Movement were minimal. His movement is best understood as a separate religious enterprise. The Book of Acts, written some 40-60 years later than Paul, represents an unreliable source for information about Paul: Acts’ Paul is not Paul’s Paul. Acts was written to create a linkage between the Christ Movement and the Jesus Movement. This synthesis, however, is suspect: it is historical revisionism and stitches the two movements together retroactively. The implication of this contention is that a new model of Christian origins is needed, one that recognizes the different origins of Paul’s Christ Movement and Acts’ retroactive linkage. Paul’s Movement does not originate in the message of Jesus, nor does it represent an offshoot of the early Jesus Movement. It was, in its time, a separate religious enterprise." Barrie A. Wilson

- "This is an age old debate extending from the time of F.C. Baur, William Wrede, and Albert Schweitzer to the present through the works of recapitulated liberal scholarship such as Gerd Lüdemann, Hyam Maccoby, and Bart D. Ehrman. Their work is brought to the masses via prolific novelists such as Phillip Pullman and A.N. Wilson.

- Even the great theologian, historian, and philosopher Richard Dawkins in his popular work The God Delusion says "During the Roman occupation of Palestine, Christianity was founded by Paul of Tarsus as a less ruthlessly monotheistic sect of Judaism and a less exclusive one, which looked outwards from the Jews to the rest of the World."

- Why does the question of "Who founded Christianity?" ultimately matter?
  - The case for Christianity in the market-place of ideas is severely weakened.
  - An ordinary rabbi who considered himself a prophet and teacher does not merit the kind of
An ordinary rabbi who considered himself a prophet and teacher does not merit the kind of devotion ascribed to Jesus within orthodox Christianity. Christian preaching would not correspond to reality.

- **Reasons for Paul as the founder of Christianity**
  - **Paucity of Jesus' teachings within Paul**
    - Lüdemann makes a distinction between quotations or allusions that go back to the historical Jesus and those that are merely the summation of a "proclaimed" Jesus by Paul.
      - "Since this man [Jesus] is of central importance to the apostle’s proclamation, it seems strange indeed that the epistles so seldom make reference to his life and teachings."
      - "Paul seldom quotes Jesus...
      - "...it should be of vital concern whether or to what degree the Pauline message of Jesus Christ is consonant with the life and teachings of the historical Jesus."
      - "Of the decisive importance is the fact that Paul's theology proper, with its theological, anthropological, and soteriological ideas, is in no way either a recapitulation of Jesus' own preaching or a further development of it. It is especially significant that he never adduces any of the sayings of Jesus on the Torah in favor of his own teaching about it."
    - The examples normally given by scholars are of suspect character to Lüdemann.
      1) "The specific citations make it certain that Paul was familiar with traditions about Jesus' teaching and knew certain specific elements of that teaching. However, it goes without saying that Jesus' ethic was inadequate as a moral guide for the Church in a Hellenistic society."
      2) "One must nevertheless concede the infrequency of either explicit or implicit references to Jesus' teachings to be found in the Pauline letters."
        - The exception is the tradition about the Last Supper. Lüdemann also does recognize that the crucifixion and resurrection are central within Pauline theology.
        - Furthermore, traditions Paul passed on are direct revelations from the Lord that stem from his Damascus experience (Gal. 1:11-12; 15-17). He is not receiving teachings from the Jerusalem Church.
      3) "Not once does Paul refer to Jesus as a teacher, to his words as a teaching, or to Christians as disciples. In this regard it is of the greatest significance that when Paul cites the "sayings of Jesus," they are never so designated."
      4) "The term "law of Christ" should not be taken to mean a summary of Jesus' teachings; rather, it designates the law of love."
  - **Specific examples refuted**
    - 1 Cor. 7:10-11
      - "To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife."
        - Mark 10:1-12; Matt. 5:32; Luke 16:18
        - "Although he quotes the Lord, the historical Jesus cannot possibly have spoken the words that Paul attributes to him because he had said nothing about women initiating a separation."
    - 1 Cor. 9:14
      - "In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel."
        - Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7
        - "It does not go back to the historical Jesus but has been ascribed to him later (Deut. 24:15; Jer. 22:13)."
        - Based upon 1 Cor. 14:37, Paul bases his teaching on his own authority and not on the words of Jesus.
**Acts 20:35**

*In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*

- Agraphta/oral Tradition
- This is from Thucydides 2.97.4 (to give rather than receive) and is paralleled in 1 Clem. 2:1, but not as a saying of Jesus.

**Rom. 12:14**

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.*

- Matt. 5:44; Luke 6:27
- Paul goes beyond what we find in the gospels.

**Rom. 12:17a**

*Repay no one evil for evil*

- Matt. 5:39a
- "A dependence of Paul on Jesus at this point is excluded because Matt. 5:38-39a derives from the author of the first gospel."

**Rom. 12:21b**

*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

- Matt. 5:39b-42
- There is no parallel in the gospels.

**Rom. 13:7**

*Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.*

- Mark 12:17
- Paul's command is missing the second half of what Mark 12:17 says. A direct relation cannot be claimed.

**Rom. 13:8-10**

*Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

- There are parallels in the Rabbinic literature which makes it unlikely Paul is quoting Jesus.

**Rom. 14:10a**

*Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.*

- Matt. 7:1
- There are Rabbinic parallels.

**Rom. 14:14**

*I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean.*

- Mark 7:15; Matt. 15:11
- It remains an open question of whether or not Paul is using Mark.

**1 Thess. 4:8**

*Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.*

- Luke 10:16
- The use of the same verb constitutes a shaky foundation.

**1 Thess. 4:15-17**
"For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord."

To discover in these an oblique reference to Jesus' teachings requires a vivid imagination indeed.

It is a miniature Jewish apocalypse put in the mouth of Jesus.

"For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night."

The images used reflect Jewish tradition and cannot be used as an instance of Paul's dependency on a saying of Jesus.

"So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober."

This is frequent in Jewish apocalyptic literature.

Acts is not an accurate history of the early church

- The Jerusalem Council account and Galatians contradicts. Luke has a different Paul from his letters.
- Luke's references to incidents in world history are often inaccurate.
  - Acts 4:6 and Luke 3:2 incorrectly designates Annas, rather than Caiaphas, as the high priest during the ministry of Jesus and after his death.
  - Annas-6-15 A.D.
  - Caiaphas- 15-36 A.D.
- An assertion of a worldwide famine contradicts world history and Acts 11:29-30 itself, for there it is stated that the congregation in Antioch was able to send aid to Jerusalem.
- Luke 2:1-2 incorrectly dates the census by at least a decade; the census was also confined to Judea and Syria and was not, as Luke reports, worldwide.
- Luke strings together episodes in Acts by means of loose chronological indications which means he is not giving a continuous historical narrative.
- The chronological information offered by Luke is often conditioned by his theological intentions.
  - "Luke most often operates as a theologian and develops his chronology from proper dogma."
  - "What Mark is for Matthew and Luke, Paul is for Acts."

Parallels within Hellenistic cultic religions/ Paul the Hellenist

- Paul, under the influence of Hellenism (the mixing of Jewish, Romans, and Greek ideas, beliefs, and religions), hijacks and commandeers the Jewish message into a religion of the heart that was available to people anywhere and at any time.
  - Saul grew up in the midst of pagan religion in Tarsus, knowing particularly the Mithraic rituals and the worship of the divine Hercules.
  - Paul's mind and imagination was taken up into categories taken from pagan worship. Paul brought together the thought of Mithras and the thought of the crucified Jesus, and found himself identified with the latter. The Mithras cult was the basis of Paul's invention of the Christian Eucharist. Paul also borrowed the idea of the demi-god Hercules as the model for his picture of the dying and rising Jesus. Paul, in other
words, turned the fact of Jesus' crucifixion into the basis of a new mystery religion.

- The historicity of Jesus became unimportant from the moment Paul had his apocalypse. The word Christ became a cipher for an ideal, a religious interiority, 'the highest aspiration of which the human heart is or feel capable.'

- Different messages of Jesus and Paul
  - 
  - "...to be sure, both Paul's epistles and the gospel accounts of Jesus fail to afford a complete picture of either man's life and teaching, but one ineradicable and crucial difference remains. Paul's postulation about salvation history and mankind's changed situation with respect to it point to the fact that Christology, instead of the kingdom of God, stands at the center of Paul's system...the unavoidable conclusion is that these two men had very different visions of the role and function of religion in human life. For Jesus, faith was primarily a spiritual posture that would enable people to live together in mutual respect and support. For Paul, it was the way to ensure personal salvation. Naturally, the religion he propounded was shaped by that attractive promise." Lüdemann
  - Jesus taught the kingdom of God whereas Paul taught justification by faith.

- Rebuttals against Paul as the founder of Christianity
  - Paucity of Jesus' teachings within Paul
    - Reasons for why Paul's portrait is not a mirror image of the Gospels.
      - Jesus and Paul came from different backgrounds.
        - "Jesus was born and brought up and ministered in Palestine, mainly in villages and small towns in semi-rural Galilee, and he had no formal "higher education", as it might be called today. Paul was born in a Greco-Roman city outside of Palestine, came from a family with some status, and was trained in a top rabbinic school in Jerusalem."
      - Jesus and Paul were addressing different audiences using different languages.
        - "Jesus' teaching was addressed primarily to ordinary Aramaic-speaking Jewish people in Galilee. Paul in his letters was primarily addressing Greek-speaking people from cities in the non-Jewish Mediterranean world...teachings relevant in one setting may not be relevant in another."
      - Jesus and Paul were teaching at different times.
        - "Although Paul was teaching and ministering only a few years after Jesus, he was teaching after Jesus' death and resurrection. He was also teaching after the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost...Christ's death lay in the future for Jesus. Christ's death lay in the past for Paul."
      - Letters are different from preaching the gospel.
        - "Paul's letters were largely troubleshooting documents, responding to issues that had arisen in the churches to which he wrote...It is likely that Paul's preaching was much more accessible than his letters."
      - Paul's letters are not systematic treatises.
        - Because of their situational intention, Paul rarely fully elucidates all that he could say concerning one topic. He utilizes various elements of Jesus' life when they're pertinent to the given state of affairs. Much of what Jesus taught would not be relevant to the issues addressed within the churches.
        - "...if Paul had simply trotted out, parrot-fashion, every line of Jesus' teaching-if he had repeated the parables, if he had tried to do again what Jesus did in announcing and inaugurating the kingdom-he would not have been endorsing Jesus, as an appropriate and loyal follower should. He would have been denying him. Someone who copies exactly what a would-be Messiah does is himself trying to be a Messiah; which means denying the earlier claim. When we see the entire sequence within the context of Jewish eschatology, we are forced to realize that for Paul to be a loyal 'servant of Jesus Christ', as he describes himself, could never mean that Paul would repeat Jesus' unique announcement of the kingdom to his fellow Jews. What we are looking for is
not a parallelism between two abstract messages. It is the appropriate continuity between two people living, and conscious of living, at different points in the eschatological timetable." N. T. Wright

- **Continuity**
  - "...[Concerning] the relationship between Jesus and Paul, it should be noted that although Paul's theology legitimately expands Jesus' teachings, it in no way contradicts them...he teased out the major elements of Jesus' life and ministry in the course of his own ministry to various churches in the first century. Paul's core message was that Christ died for humanity's sins, was buried, and was raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:3-4). This coheres with Jesus' affirmations that he would die as a ransom for others (John 3:16; Mark 10:45; cf. Matt. 20:28) and rise from the dead (Matt. 20:19; Luke 9:22)." Köstenberger
  - "Continuity between Paul and Jesus...does not require uniformity. Paul was his own theological thinker. Since Paul's predominately Gentile audience (Rom. 11:13) differed from Jesus' primary Jewish audience (Matt. 15:24), Paul did not simply reiterate Jesus' teachings but developed them within the next phase of salvation history. For example, while Jesus rarely spoke of the church (Matt. 16:18; 18:17), Paul significantly expounded on this subject (Rom. 16:25-26; Eph. 3:2-11; Col. 1:25-27). Also, while Jesus focused his mission on Israel (Matt. 10:5-6; 15:24), Paul, taking the gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 9:15; Rom. 16:26), explored the salvation-historical "mystery" of believing Gentiles becoming part of God's people (Rom. 16:25-26; Eph. 3:2-11; Col. 1:25-26). Thus, Paul did not limit himself to reiterating the teachings of Jesus but...formulated his proclamation in light of the antecedent theology of the OT and on the basis of the apostolic gospel as called for by his missionary context." Köstenberger

- **The passing on of oral traditions**
  - "Paul uses the verbs "receive" and "passed on" in 1 Cor. 11:23, 15:3; 2 Thess. 3:6 which are technical terms from Paul's Jewish heritage for the transmission of religious instruction...But it is not certain exactly how we are to understand these words, especially in light of the strong affirmations and denials in Gal. 1:11-12 and 15-17 that he received his gospel directly from the Lord- by revelation and without human mediation. Some have suggested that the same is true here; however two things suggest other wise: (1) In Galatians Paul is not referring to the teachings and narratives about Jesus, but to the message of redemption through Christ's death and resurrection, offered freely by God to those who believe. (2) Paul uses the language for transmitting "tradition" to refer to these words of institution, and does not suggest that it came to him "by revelation."...Therefore, when Paul says "I received it from the Lord," he probably does not mean that Jesus gave these words to him personally and directly; rather, what he himself "received" had indeed come "from the Lord," but in the sense that Jesus himself is the ultimate source of the tradition" Fee
  - "...Paul placed a lot of weight on the authority of the tradition he had received and had passed along to others. He employed tradition to resolve problems in the church, both practical and theological (1 Cor. 7:10; 9:14; 11:23; 15:1-3, 12). Believers are to practice and hold firmly to the traditions (1 Cor. 11:2; Phil. 4:9; 2 Thess. 2:15). They are not to associate with those believers who lead a life contrary to what is taught in the tradition until they repent (2 Thess. 3:6, 14). He chides the Corinthian believers for taking the liberty to form their own policies without first consulting church leaders who have been outside of Corinth (1 Cor. 14:36). If the tradition did not address a specific topic, Paul believed as an apostle he could speak with authority on it. However, he was careful to distinguish his teaching from the tradition (1 Cor. 7:10-13, 25)." Licona

- **References, Allusions, and echoes of Jesus' teachings.**
  - "A general narrative of Jesus' life can be found within the writings of Paul. What Paul appears to know about Jesus is that he was born as a human (Rom. 9:5) to a Jewish
woman (Gal. 4:4), that he was descended from David’s line (Rom. 1:3; 15:12), that he had brothers (1 Cor. 9:5; Gal. 1:19), that he had a meal on the night he was betrayed (1 Cor. 1:23-25), that he was crucified and died on a cross (Phil. 2:8; 1 Cor. 8:11), that he was buried (1 Cor. 15:4), that he was raised three days later (Rom. 4:25, 8:34, 1 Thess. 4:14) and that he was seen by various disciples (1 Cor. 15:5-7)." Blomberg

"Despite the popular impression, there are in fact a good many echoes of the actual sayings of Jesus in the letters of Paul, though here again Paul has not been a slavish repeater of tradition so much as faithful rethinker of the rich material he has heard, using it in fresh ways for his own very different context." Wright

It is likely best to decipher and rate references of Jesus traditions as possible, possible-plus, probable, highly probable, and so on and so forth as Licona, Wenham, and others do throughout their works.

- DPL and Kim's work lists eleven references that he regards as "certain or probable." He then lists more than thirty additional examples in which possible echoes of Jesus' sayings may be found.
  - 1 Cor. 7:10-11; 9:14; 11:23-25; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; 5:1-7; Rom. 14:14; Rom. 12:14-21/1 Cor. 4:11-13; Rom. 13:8-10/Gal. 5:14; Rom. 13:7; Rom. 8:15/Gal. 4:6; references to the kingdom of God.

"In paraenesis and eschatology, in order to support his teaching with the Lord's authority in the face of contrary opinion, Paul occasionally referred explicitly to Jesus' sayings. But usually he did not need to prove the truth of his teaching. As an apostle of Christ who had the mind of Christ and spoke under the inspiration of his Spirit, he could simply impart his authoritative apostolic teaching. In this he seldom cited Jesus' sayings explicitly. But he represented them, echoing them in his own language. Although he shows a great reverence for Jesus' sayings and shapes his theology as a whole according to them, he does not use them in a literalistic or legalistic way, but adapts them to the new post-Easter situations and to his Hellenistic audiences, modifying their letter while representing their spirit...Against this background the "paucity" and allusive character of Paul's references to Jesus' sayings should no longer be used as evidence for Paul's reputed lack of knowledge of or interest in the Jesus tradition or in the historical Jesus. On the contrary, we are led to search for echoes of Jesus' sayings woven into Paul's statements." Kim

Equating the Gal 2:1–10 visit with the Jerusalem Council would mean that Paul failed to mention one of his visits to Jerusalem in his letter to the Galatians.

Thus the two visits of Paul to Jerusalem described in Galatians correspond to the first two visits described in Acts.

The idea that Galatians and the Jerusalem account only contradicts if it is meant to explain the same situation.

- Equating the Gal 2:1–10 visit with the Jerusalem Council would mean that Paul failed to mention one of his visits to Jerusalem in his letter to the Galatians.
- Thus the two visits of Paul to Jerusalem described in Galatians correspond to the first two visits described in Acts.

There are convergences between the Lucan Paul and the Paul of his letters.

- "At the outset, it should be noted that while Luke was able to portray Paul as the missionary statesman and strategist who led the Gentile mission of the early church, humility dictated that Paul represented his own work in more humble terms."
  Köstenberger

Seven Convergences

- Luke nuanced Paul’s claim to impeccable Jewish credentials (Phil. 3:6; c.f. Gal. 1:14; 2 Cor. 11:22) by teaching that Paul was educated by one of the most famous Jewish scholars of his day, Gamaliel (Acts. 22:3; c.f. Acts 5:35; see also Phil. 3:5; Acts 23:6; 26:5).
- Paul’s activity as persecutor of the early church is recounted repeatedly in the book of Acts (Acts 8:3; 9:1); in his letters, the apostle regularly acknowledges this ignominious part of his past (Gal. 1:13; 1 Cor. 15:9; Phil. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:13).
- The Pauline conversion narratives of Acts (Acts 9; 22; 26) are paralleled by statements in Paul’s letters (Gal. 1:15; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; 2 Cor. 4:6), and the location of Paul’s conversion at or near Damascus seems confirmed by Galatians 1:7.
The Paul of Acts, like the Paul of the letters, is shown to support himself by labor (Acts 20:34; 28:3; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:7-8; 1 Cor. 9:18).


The Paul of Acts who can adapt himself readily to Jew and Gentile as well as a wide variety of audiences is the Paul who speaks in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

While Luke may be the theologian of salvation history par excellence, salvation history is not an alien concept to Paul, so that he can view the age of law as a parenthesis in salvation history (Gal. 3:15-19; Rom. 5:20).

Lüdemann seems to suggest superficial readings of the text of Luke and Acts without interaction with critical scholarship done on their historicity and reliability. Various commentaries discuss the supposed contradictions of world history.

High Priest?

"The reference has an interesting peculiarity, as Luke refers to the period of the ἄρχερεσις (high priest) Annas and Caiaphas. That is, Luke uses a singular term to refer to two men. But there were not two high priests during this period...What is Luke communicating by his use of the singular term? He is communicating that actual power was really shared and that the religious authority of the region was really a two-man affair, with Annas exercising great power behind the scenes. The picture of John 18:13-27 confirms this description and shows the accuracy of Luke’s references. It will be also that Annas, though not officially in office, retained the title for life...Thus, one could speak of the time of the high priests Annas and Caiaphas without speaking of their official time of holding office. Josephus also exhibits plural references with regard to the high priests (Antiquities 20.9.1197-200; 20.10.4-5 244-251)." Bock

Famine?

"The word (οὐκουμένη) should be translated as "empire" which would render the phrase "on the whole of the empire." Passages such as Luke 2:1; 4:5; Acts 17:7; 24:5 give a thoroughly "political" nuance to the term...The advantage of the rendering is that it...conforms to Luke’s usage elsewhere...In fact there is good supporting evidence for extensive famine during the reign of the emperor Claudius." Johnson

- Suetonius’ Life of Claudius 18
- Tacitus’ Annals 12:43

"The famine that Agabus predicted occurred during the reign of Emperor Claudius, who ruled from A.D. 41-54. Luke calls it a severe famine, for in varying degrees it affected the entire Roman empire. Egypt sold grain for the benefit of the people in famine-stricken Jerusalem, Cyprus supplied figs, and Christians in Antioch sent aid to the believers in Judea. Different parts of the Roman empire suffered famines. Therefore, we interpret Luke’s description, "a severe famine all over the Roman world," not in a literal but a broad sense." Kistemaker

Census?

"See Bock’s Excursus 2 903-909.

The book of Acts and Paul’s letters are not meant to be complete biographies. Rather, they are written with larger, missional interests in mind. Of course they do not include every single event within salvation history!

The point needs to be shown whether or not any history is unbiased or completely unblemished from any ideological biases and whether or not Luke’s theological presuppositions led him to record history inaccurately.

If Acts is reliable and corresponds to what actually occurred within the early church, then Paul is not the founder of Christianity.
Paul’s borrowing from Hellenism

- Paul’s background
  - Paul’s wholesale borrowing from the mystery religions is unlikely given his Pharisaic background.
    - Saul was a Jewish theological and political zealot who believed Israel was still in exile. He was zealous in his opposition to paganism and in his promotion of Torah.
      - Saul was a Shammaite Pharisee (“a militant right-winger”) who was zealous for a political/theological revolution to defeat pagans once and for all (See Gal. 1:13-14, 1 Cor. 15:9). He promoted Torah to honor God, to identify true covenant members, and to force the coming of YHWH.
      - Saul was not “proto-Pelagian” because he wasn’t primarily concerned about a timeless system of salvation. Saul wanted God to fulfill His covenant which would redeem Israel and the entire world.
      - Paul maintained this zeal after his conversion but now realized that Jesus is Lord/King/Messiah and is “the true bearer of Israel’s God-sent destiny.” Paul’s conversion gave him a new vocation: to be a herald of the King.
  - Paul, like a good believer who is rooted in the OT, confronts paganism!
    - Paul confronts pagans and says “that certain beliefs were untrue, that certain practices were dehumanizing and simply wrong, and that certain styles of community life were not how the creator God had intended people to function.” The good news of Jesus was that God loved them “and longed to remake them.”
    - The reason why Paul confronts the pagans is that it is a part of Israel’s purpose and hope: Israel was always intended to be a blessing to the world. So Paul did not remake the message to suit a Gentile audience, he took the prophetic message and proclaimed it to Gentiles.
    - When Paul criticizes Judaism, he does it as a prophetic insider like Isaiah and Jeremiah (see Gal. 1:15 echoing Is. 49:1 and Jer. 1:5). He is not against Israelite theology, he is against Israelites who failed to fulfill their mission.
    - Paul’s message to the pagans:
      - God is the creator of the whole world and, therefore, is Lord of it (Col. 1:15-20)
      - God confronts false gods: Caesar is not lord, Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2)
      - God provides the true way of being human (Paul’s “ethical” teaching)
      - God confronts pagan mythology with a story that the whole cosmos is going somewhere. The new age has begun. Evil and death will be defeated.
      - God provides true wisdom over and against pagan philosophies.

- Judaism and Hellenism
  - Did Paul leave behind Judaism?
    - “...[the assumption is that] Judaism was a local, almost tribal religion, while the various forms of Hellenism were the universal philosophies. Paul translated Jesus’ message from Judaism to Hellenism, so that all could join in... Paul grasped something which was and is fundamental to Judaism, but which historians of religion- ironically, in the Hellenistic tradition- have always found very difficult to get their minds round: that if the one God of Judaism was also the creator of the whole world, and if his call of Israel to be his people was his chosen way of addressing the problems of the whole world, then the whole world did not need a non-Jewish message. The world had enough of them already. The world needed the Jewish message- that the one true God had conquered the idols the world had worshipped, and had thereby thrown open
the prison doors behind which the whole human race had languished." Wright

- The Cultic Religions and Paul
  - The worldview is completely different
    - Ahistorical
      - Whereas Paul speaks of the death and resurrection of Christ and places it in the middle of history, as an event which took place before many witnesses, in the recent past, the myths of the cults in contrast, cannot be dated; they appear in all sorts of variations, and do not give any clear conceptions. In short they display the timeless vagueness characteristic of real myths.
    - Depictive Symbolisms
      - The death and resurrection of deities within the cultic myths are nothing but depictions of annual events of nature in which nothing is to be found of the moral, voluntary, redemptive substitutionary meaning, which for Paul is the content of Christ's death and resurrection. The power of Christ's death and resurrection was proclaimed by Paul as a forensic and ethical emancipation.
    - Escapist mentalities
      - The entire meaning of the mystery religions is expressed in 
        \textit{athanasias}, the
        conquering of natural death, the escaping of the power of fate, and the return of the divine-in-man to its origins and end. Whereas, faith and repentance occupies an indispensable place, within the mystery religions, it is entirely superfluous, or insofar as it can be spoken of, it bears an entirely different character: the magical rules everything.
    - Dualistic nonsense
      - Paul speaks of walking in love, humility, mercy, and good works, whereas a physical, dualistic worldview is at the foundation of the mystery religions, and salvation is accomplished by the transfer of a divine vital force, expressed sometimes in asceticism and at other times in the most unrestrained libertinism.
  - The parallels are imprecise and built upon faulty assumptions.
    - Five basic assumptions behind all of the alleged parallels
      - Parallels between Jesus Christ and pagan deities can be found in any and all mystery religion.
        - Composite fallacy- No one example of the cultic religions even comes close to the Gospels' depiction of Christ or Paul's words about him.
      - Terms used in the Christian message just as naturally fit pagan religions.
        - Terminological fallacy- The terminology being used when combining the parallels is anachronistic.
      - Parallels indicate wholesale dependency.
        - Dependency fallacy- The use of common words does not logically infer the same worldview or meaning.
      - Fully developed mystery religions existed before the rise of Christianity.
        - Chronological fallacy- The mystery religions of latter history did not exist in Palestine in the first century.
        - "Only after the rise of Christianity did mystery religions begin to look suspiciously like the Christian faith."
      - The purpose and nature of key events are the same in each of these religions.
        - Intentional fallacy- The purpose and nature of the mystery religions versus the purpose and nature of Christianity are vastly different: history is linear within Christianity and not cyclical.
It would seem more likely that the idea of the Eucharist is based within the world of Judaism and the Passover celebration.

The crucified Messiah though unlikely within the Jewish messianic hope had some basis within the OT.

\begin{itemize}
\item Isa. 53; Zech. 12:10; Psa. 22:16
\end{itemize}

Jewish eschatology had a future hope of Resurrection. Jesus' resurrection was a theological mutation and development of the Judaistic viewpoint.

\begin{itemize}
\item Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:1-2; Psa. 16:8-11
\end{itemize}

Christian Development

\begin{itemize}
\item Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus’ resurrection body.
\item The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
\item The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
\item The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah \textit{right now} and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous on judgment \textit{day} (Christianity).
\item There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
\item There is a new \textit{metaphorical} concept of resurrection, referred to as being “born-again”.
\item There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn’t supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)
\end{itemize}

Different Perspectives

\begin{itemize}
\item The center of Pauline theology was not justification by faith. The crucified and risen Jesus is at the center of Pauline theology because these events vindicate him as Lord and King of all creation. Because of this, Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham.
\item "Jesus believed it was his vocation to bring Israel’s history to its climax. Paul believed that Jesus had succeeded in that aim. Paul believed, in consequence of that belief and as part of his own special vocation, that he was himself now called to announce to the whole world that Israel’s history had been brought to its climax in that way. \textit{When Paul announced 'the gospel' to the Gentile world, therefore, he was deliberately and consciously implementing the achievement if Jesus}. He was, as he himself said, building on the foundation, not laying another one (1 Cor. 3:11). He was not 'founding a separate religion'. He was not inventing a new ethical system. He was not perpetuating a timeless scheme of salvation, a new mystery-religion divorced from the real, human Jesus of Nazareth. He was calling the world to allegiance to its rightful Lord, the Jewish Messiah now exalted as the Jewish Messiah was always supposed to be. A new mystery religion, focused on a mythical ‘lord’, would not have threatened anyone in the Greek or Roman world. ‘Another king’, the human Jesus whose claims cut directly across those of Caesar, did." N.T. Wright
\item "When all this is said and done, it should be comparatively easy to work through the actions and message of Jesus, and the agenda and letters of Paul, and to show that there is between
them, not a one-for-one correspondence, but an integration that allows for the radically different perspective of each. Jesus was bringing Israel's history to its climax; Paul was living in the light of that climax. Jesus was narrowly focused on the sharp-edged, single task; Paul was celebrating the success of that task, and discovering its fruits in a thousand different ways and settings. Jesus believed he had to go the incredibly risky route of acting and speaking in such a way as to imply that he was embodying the judging and saving action of YHWH himself; Paul wrote of Jesus in such a way as to claim that Jesus was indeed the embodiment of the one God of Jewish monotheism.” N.T. Wright
Bibliography


