



Questions about Paul

Many Issues

Many Puzzles

[Mundane Details]

- Dates: approx. 4/5 to approx. 64 AD
- Diaspora Jew – born Tarsus; died Rome
- Claimed to be a Pharisee yet operates on behalf of the Sadducee High Priest
- Underwent a life-altering mystical experience
- Religion focused on the Christ
- Traveled throughout the Diaspora – modern Turkey, Greece, Croatia, Italy. Wrote letters to new congregations that he founded.
- His autobiography: Galatians 1:11-2:10; Philippians 3:5-7.
- Roman citizen

[Question #1:

**Why Do We Have
So Many Pauls?**

[Many Pauls --]

1. Paul of the genuine letters

Letters of Paul

By Paul

- Romans
- 1 Corinthians
- 2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Philippians
- 1 Thessalonians
- Philemon

Disputed

- Ephesians
- Colossians
- 2 Thessalonians

Not by Paul but attributed to him ("Pastoral Epistles"):

- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy
- Titus

Source: Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament*, p.287.

[More Pauls]

2. Paul of the Acts of Thecla

- *Ascetic Paul – promoting the renunciation of marriage; advocating virginity*
- *Paul the supporter of female leaders*
- *Paul the supporter*

3. Paul of the Pastoral Letters

- Paul – the antagonist of female leaders

[Yet More Pauls]

4. The Ebionite Paul

- Paul: the False Teacher

5. The Marcionite Paul

- Paul: the One True Teacher

[Even More Pauls]

6. **The Gnostic Paul**

- Paul: the mystic, in communication with the Christ of personal experience

7. **Paul of the Book of Acts**

- Paul: the heroic developer of early Christianity

[Question]

To determine the views
of the historical Paul,
which source [or sources]
should we use?

Why????

[Choices]

1. Paul of the Genuine Letters
2. Paul of the Acts of Thecla
3. Paul of the Pastoral Letters
4. The Ebionite Paul
5. The Marcionite Paul
6. The Gnostic Paul
7. The Paul of the Book of Acts

[Question #2:

**What was Paul's Relationship
to Jesus?**

Paul in relation to Jesus

Approach #1.

Paul –

**the faithful developer
of Jesus' religion**

[Paul: Faithful Developer]

- Mandate -- had a unique communication from the risen Jesus
- Organizational Genius – created the basis for a separate movement (a church)
- Simplifier -- universalizing Judaism into a religion for every one
- Teacher – focusing on the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection

[Paul: Faithful Developer]

- On this view, Paul is seen as a successor to Jesus, developing his religion in a way that suited the opportunities – and the realities – of the 30's, 40's and 50's.

[Paul: Faithful Developer]

- Problems/Opportunities Faced by Paul
 - Problem: how to explain Jesus' death prior to the arrival of the Kingdom
 - Opportunity: how to expand membership outside the Jewish circle, e.g. interest on the part of the God-fearers in the new non-Torah-observant religion
 - Problem: how to explain Jesus as a messiah
 - Problem: how to resolve ethical issues – more generally, how to deal with issues Jesus did not have to face

Questions about Paul as *Faithful* Developer

- Mandate -- had a unique communication from the risen Jesus
 - **WHY DIDN'T THE OTHERS HAVE THIS, LIKE JAMES? HOW COME PAUL WAS SO PRIVILEGED?**
- Organizational Genius – created the basis for a separate movement
 - **YES**

Questions about Paul as *Faithful* Developer

- Simplifier -- universalizing Judaism into a religion for every one
 - IS REMOVING TORAH A MINOR DECISION?
 - JUST WHAT WAS AT STAKE?

Reminders re Torah

- Torah – includes 10 C's; festivals; Sabbath; circumcision; basis for understanding right behavior (ethics); dietary laws; etc. A whole lifestyle.
- The focal point of the whole of the bible prior to Paul
 - Detailed in the Torah
 - Upheld by the Prophets
- Model of the Two Ways:
 - Keep torah: land + blessings
 - Fail to keep torah: no land; no blessings
- Integral to the Jewish concept of a messiah
- Understood to have been given by God to the people of Israel through the hand of Moses. A deal/covenant ratified by the Jewish people.
- Taught and practiced by Jesus, James

Questions about Paul as *Faithful* Developer

- Teacher – focusing on the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection
 - **WAS THIS THE FOCUS OF JESUS' TEACHING?**

Questions about Paul as *Faithful* Developer

- **Moreover, where's**
 - **The Kingdom of God message as presented in the parables ... the radical political alternative to the Pax Romana? World transformation?**
 - **Torah-observance?**
 - **Summary of the law**
 - **Lord's prayer**

Paul in relation to Jesus

- **Approach #2: Paul -- the developer of a new religion, separate from that of Jesus**
 - Different origin – *Paul's mystical experience of the Christ, not the teachings of the historical Jesus*
 - Different practices – *non-Torah-observant unlike Jesus and his brother James*

Paul in relation to Jesus: Approach #2

■ Consider

- Never met the Jesus of history
- Rarely, if ever, quotes Jesus
- Rarely refers to the teachings OF Jesus
- In some instances, seems to put words in Jesus' mouth (e.g. Paul's Last Supper account vs The Didache)

Question #3:

**What was the Christ Movement's
relationship to the
Jesus Movement?**

[CM in relation to JM]

- **Approach #1 – Paul’s mission to the Gentiles authorized by James, head of the Jerusalem church.**
 - On this view, the movement has two prongs:
 - To the Jews (under James)
 - To the Gentiles (under Paul)

[CM in relation to JM]

- **Approach #2 – Paul distances himself from Jesus’ initial followers – James and the Jesus Movement**
 - Adopts different practices – *non-Torah-observant*
 - Adopts different beliefs – *focus on the dying-rising savior God-human, the Christ*

[Paul versus the Book of Acts]

- *Differ on*

- the amount of contact Paul had with the JM leadership in Jerusalem
- Nature of Paul's relationship with the JM
 - Jerusalem Conference: 2 prongs to the mission
 - Jews: Torah
 - Gentiles: Noahide laws
- The extent of Paul's Jewishness

[So...

**Should we
take what Paul says about himself
over what the Book of Acts says
about Paul?**

[Question #4]

**What was Paul's relationship
To Judaism?**

[CM in relation to Judaism]

- Denied validity of Torah
- Dismissed his Jewish heritage
- Ridiculed circumcision
- Misquotes scripture

Paul on what it Means to be a Messiah

Jewish Expectation:

- The Messiah is a human eschatological catalyst
- Is a Davidic king assisting God in bringing about world transformation
- must
 - Be the Davidic king of an independent Jewish state
 - Judge humanity -- reward the righteous and eliminate the unrighteous
 - Help usher in an era of universal peace reflecting the universal rule of God
- Exiles return; righteous dead restored to life

Paul's View

- **The Christ as Savior-Messiah**

Phase One: Savior

- Christ, dying-rising savior God-human, saves those who participate in his suffering and death

Phase Two: Messiah

- Christ returns to destroy evil, conquer death, reward the righteous with eternal life. The dead are resurrected.

[Another Question]

Looking ahead ...
How does the religion of Paul
contribute to the overall victory
of the Proto-Orthodox
later on?

Workshops

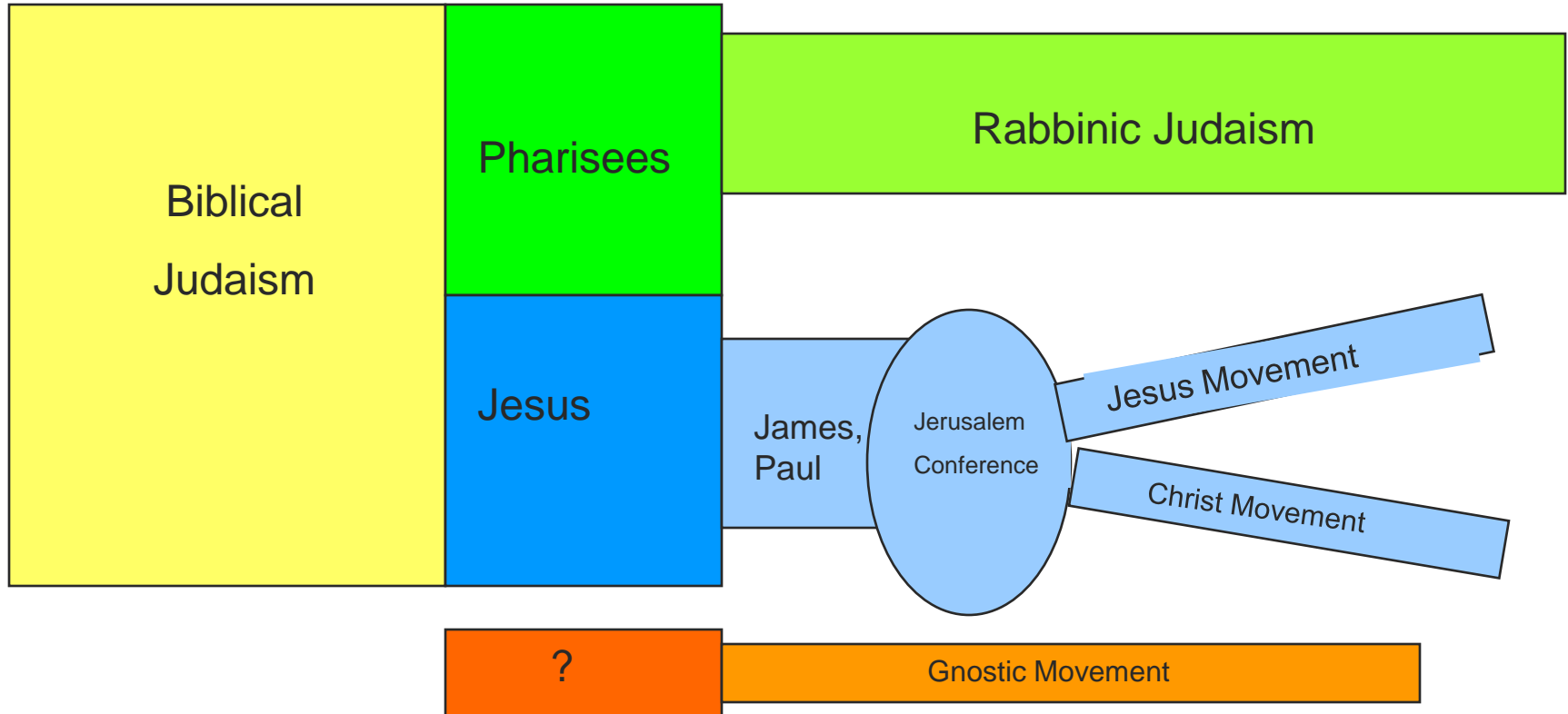
- Groups 1, 2 and 3
 - **What are some of the strengths of Paul's religion?**
- Groups 4, 5 and 6
 - **What are some of the weaknesses of Paul's religion?**
- Groups 7, 8 and 9
 - **What would you ask Paul if he were here in this room tonight?**

[Yet Another Question]

**How should we visualize
early Christian origins?**

[Should we visualize it as ...]

4 religions, 3 of which have a common origin in biblical Judaism. Also, CM and JM viewed as branches of 1 religion.



Or should we visualize it this way?

On this model, we have 4 separate religions, two of which grow out of Biblical Judaism and 2 of which have independent origins

